

**Sociosexual Attitudes and Behaviour: A Population-Based Analysis Across Sex and  
Sexual Orientation in Finland**

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**ÅBO AKADEMI UNIVERSITY – FACULTY OF ARTS, PSYCHOLOGY, AND  
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<b>Title:</b> Sociosexual Attitudes and Behaviour: A Population-Based Analysis Across Sex and Sexual Orientation in Finland	
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<b>Abstract:</b> <p>Understanding sociosexuality, the willingness to engage in uncommitted sexual relationships, provides valuable insights into human relationship dynamics. This study investigates sociosexual attitudes and behaviour across sexual orientation and sex, utilizing a large, population-based sample from Finland. Results reveal significant sex differences in sociosexuality, with men exhibiting less restricted attitudes and behaviours compared to women, consistent with evolutionary theories. However, contrary to expectations, men with same-sex interests or activities demonstrate less restricted sociosexuality than strictly heterosexual counterparts. Similar patterns are observed among women with same-sex interests, suggesting nuanced influences of sexual orientation on sociosexuality. These findings highlight the complexity of sociosexual dynamics and underscore the need for further exploration into the underlying mechanisms shaping human sexuality.</p>	
<b>Keywords:</b> Sociosexuality, sociosexual attitudes, sociosexual behaviour, general population, survey	
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<b>Handledare:</b> Patrick Jern	
<b>Abstrakt:</b> <p>Förståelse av sociosexualitet, viljan att engagera sig i oengagerade sexuella relationer, ger värdefulla insikter i mänskliga relationsdynamiker. Denna studie undersöker sociosexuella attityder och beteenden över sexuell läggning och kön med hjälp av en stor, populationsbaserad urvalsgrupp från Finland. Resultaten avslöjar betydande könsskillnader i sociosexualitet, där män uppvisar mindre begränsade attityder och beteenden jämfört med kvinnor, i linje med evolutionsteorier. Emellertid, motsägelsefullt mot förväntningarna, visar män med samkönat intresse eller aktiviteter mindre begränsad sociosexualitet än strikt heterosexuella motsvarigheter. Liknande mönster observeras bland kvinnor med samkönat intresse, vilket antyder nyanserade påverkningar av sexuell läggning på sociosexualitet. Dessa resultat belyser komplexiteten i sociosexuella dynamiker och understryker behovet av ytterligare utforskning av de underliggande mekanismer som formar mänsklig sexualitet.</p>	
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## Introduction

Understanding the intricacies of sociosexuality - the willingness to engage in uncommitted sexual relationships (Banai & Pavela, 2015; Penke & Asendorpf, 2008) - provides valuable insights into the diverse nature of human relationships. In the present study, I will investigate variations in sociosexual attitudes and behaviour across sexual orientation and sex. To overcome some limitations of previously conducted studies on the same topic, a large, population-based sample from Finland was used. In the context of the present study, sexual orientation was defined by same-sex interest and same-sex behaviour instead of using self-identification for sexual orientation. The exploration of sociosexuality becomes even more nuanced when considering the interplay of sex and sexual orientation. However, it is crucial to approach the existing body of research with careful consideration, as many studies are confined by small sample sizes and a predominant focus on college populations. These constraints in demographic representation underscore the need for a careful evaluation of how broadly applicable the findings may be. Another limitation of many previous studies is how sexual orientation has been operationalized. Most studies use self-identification for sexual orientation, which can be problematic (Gonsiorek et al., 1995; Haslam, 1997) because it relies solely on individuals' self-perception, which may not always align with their actual behaviours or attractions. Additionally, societal stigma or pressure may influence how individuals label their sexual orientation, leading to underreporting or misrepresentation of their true identities. This can introduce bias and inaccuracies into research findings, impacting the validity and reliability of the study's results. Moreover, dichotomous or trichotomous categorizations of sexual orientation (i.e., heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual) often overlook individual differences in sexual orientation (Chung & Katayama, 1996). Distinctions should also be made between same-sex sexual interest and same-sex behaviours (Muscarella, 1999),

and the definition of "sexual behaviour" may vary between gay, lesbian, and heterosexual individuals (Carpenter, 2001; Vohs et al., 2004).

### **Sociosexuality**

Sociosexuality is a term used to describe individual differences in willingness to engage in uncommitted sexual relationships (Banai & Pavela, 2015; Penke & Asendorpf, 2008). Sociosexuality exists on a continuum with restrictive individuals on one end and unrestrictive individuals on the other. Individuals with restricted sociosexuality prefer commitment and emotional closeness in the relationship before engaging in sexual activities with their romantic partner. They tend to have few sexual relationships and rarely, if ever, have had sex with a partner on one and only one occasion. Conversely, individuals on the other end of the continuum - those with unrestricted sociosexuality - tend to feel relatively comfortable engaging in sex without commitment or emotional closeness. They indicate that they could enjoy sex without commitment, have several different sexual partners, and engaged in sex with partners once and only once on several different occasions (Simpson & Gangestad, 1991).

Parental investment theory, a theory based on observation across species, posits that the sex with the higher minimum investment in offspring tends to be more discriminating in mating choice and requires longer time before consenting to sex. In contrast, the sex that invests less in the offspring tends to show more engagement in mating and is more likely to use a multi-mating strategy (Trivers, 1972). In humans, sexual reproduction involves distinct contributions from both men and women (Buss & Schmitt, 1993; Trivers, 1972). Men must invest very little to reproduce (a minimum of one ejaculation). Women, in contrast, must invest much more; a considerable amount of time (e.g., at least nine months pregnancy) and energy for every child, and in addition, women's reproductive window is considerably shorter than that of men. Therefore, some researchers suggest that women need more time and an

emotional bond with their partner, and need a more restricted sexual strategy, to increase the likelihood of survival of their offspring. Men, in turn, tend to have a less restricted sexual strategy so that they can spread their genes as much as possible (Buss & Schmitt, 1993; Trivers, 1972).

### ***Sex differences in sociosexuality***

Buss and Schmitt (1993) found that men are less discriminating than women as far as partner preferences are concerned, especially regarding short-term sex. Men have also been observed to express a greater inclination for multiple short-term sexual partners compared to women (Schmitt et al., 2003). Bailey and colleagues (1994) used an “interest in uncommitted sex” scale where the average heterosexual woman’s score was rescaled to zero. They found that heterosexual men ( $M = 4.9$ ) scored similarly to homosexual men ( $M = 4.4$ ) whereas heterosexual women ( $M = 0.0$ ) reported similar scores to homosexual women ( $M = -0.6$ ). Schmitt (2005) examined the cross-cultural universality of sex differences in sociosexuality using data from 48 nations in the International Sexuality Description Project (ISDP; Schmitt et al., 2003). The findings supported the hypothesis that men exhibit less restricted sociosexuality than women across all 48 nations (Schmitt, 2005).

### ***Sociosexual attitudes and behaviour***

Schmitt (2007) argued that “it may be more useful to distinguish between sociosexual *attitudes* and sociosexual *behaviors*” (p. 186). Schmitt (2007) proposed that individuals, regardless of their sexual orientation (heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual), exhibit similar sociosexual attitudes regarding uncommitted sex, with men generally being more unrestricted and women being more restricted. However, given that homosexual and bisexual men have access to a larger pool of potential partners who share a more unrestricted attitude towards uncommitted sex, they are likely to report higher levels of unrestricted behaviour than heterosexual men. In contrast, as lesbians exclusively have women in their

pool of potential partners, they may report relatively restricted sociosexual behaviour compared to their heterosexual and bisexual counterparts (Schmitt, 2007). To test this hypothesis, Schmitt (2007) used a sample from the International Sexuality Description Project (ISDP) and found a difference in sociosexual attitudes towards uncommitted sex between men and women (men less restricted, women more restricted). The study also found support for the hypothesis that gay and bisexual men report less restricted sociosexual behaviour than heterosexual men. Therefore, there are theoretical grounds to anticipate variability in sociosexuality based on both sexual orientation and sex. However, no support was found for the hypothesis that lesbians report more restricted sociosexual behaviour than heterosexual and bisexual women (Schmitt, 2007), with bisexual women expressing the highest scores on sociosexual behaviour, followed by lesbians, followed by heterosexual women. The ISDP sample was limited, primarily comprising college students, rendering generalizations beyond this demographic inappropriate (Schmitt, 2005). There exists a potential for notable differences in sociosexual behaviours between college-aged individuals and older, more sexually experienced, men and women (Fisher, 2000; Schmitt et al., 2001). College-aged individuals often engage in a higher degree of partner exploration and may exhibit more frequent partner turnover compared to older individuals who tend to maintain longer-term relationships with a single partner (Herlitz & Forsberg, 2010; Roberts et al., 2021). Therefore, Schmitt (Schmitt, 2005) proposed that future research should employ representative sampling, encompassing older and more sexually experienced participants, to enhance our comprehension of sex differences in sociosexuality across diverse populations.

### **Aims and Hypotheses**

The aim of the present study was to examine sociosexual attitude and behaviour differences between sex and sexual orientation in a population-based sample. Though some evidence for differences already exists, the samples used in most other studies have been

rather small or used a convenience method for obtaining the sample. Based on previous studies, I postulated the following hypotheses:

1. There will be a sex difference in sociosexual attitudes and behaviour, where men have less restricted sociosexuality compared to women.
2. For men, there will be no difference in sociosexual attitudes between different sexual orientations.
3. Men who have experienced same-sex interest or engaged in same-sex activities are hypothesized to exhibit less restricted sociosexual behaviour compared to men who have exclusively experienced heterosexual interest and activities.
4. For women, there will be no difference in sociosexual attitudes between different sexual orientations.
5. For women, there will be no difference in sociosexual behaviour between different sexual orientations.

## **Method**

### **Participants**

I used data from a large population-based sample of adults from Finland, known as the Genetics of Sexuality and Aggression (GSA) sample. Data collection was conducted in 2006 and targeted all Finnish-speaking twins residing in Finland, aged between 18 and 33, as well as their siblings of at least 18 years of age. A total of 23,577 adults met the criteria described above. An inquiry letter was sent out to all potential participants. Participants were requested to answer the survey on the internet or wait for a paper version of the survey to be sent to them. A total of 10,524 participants responded to the survey yielding an overall participation rate of 45%. Next 9737 (92.5%) had answered all or some of the questions relevant to the present study, such as the SOI and sexual orientation.

Of the 9737 participants, I removed all participation ( $n = 615$ ) with  $\geq 50\%$  missing data on the SOI measure. This left me with 9122 participants. Of these, only 7336 participants had completed data on the SOI measure. Furthermore, 29 individuals had missing data on the questions inquiring about sexual orientation. These individuals were subsequently removed prior to statistical analysis, leaving me with a final sample of 9094 participants.

The 1786 participants who had 1-3 missing observations (out of 7) on the SOI measure had their missing observations imputed using the intra-scale information in the Expectation Maximization procedure in SPSS 28.0. The sexual orientation items were not imputed, because the variables measuring same-sex attraction and same-sex behaviour are two binary variables.

### **Ethical review**

The research plan for the data collection has been approved by the Ethics Committee of Åbo Akademi University. Participants were made aware that participation was voluntary and that they were free to quit at any time without providing an explanation. In accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki, the participants also provided written informed consent before taking part in the survey.

### **Measures**

#### ***Sex***

The Central Population Registry of Finland recognizes only two sexes (male and female). Prior to data collection, addresses of 23,577 individuals from the population registry were gathered, and some data were received, from the Central Population Registry (i.e. before participants had even been contacted), namely age and sex.

When the participants were contacted, they received individualized letters inviting them to participate in the survey. When they logged in to the survey using their personal code, they received a question right at the beginning stating “According to data from

the population register, you are a [sex]. Does this match your gender identity?”. If they answered yes, they were asked sex-appropriate questions. If they answered no, they were given a series of follow-up questions and, based on their answers to these questions, they were given a customized questionnaire (for example, they were asked to choose whether they wanted questions intended for men or women, or a version of the survey which completely lacked sexed questions. They were also allowed to describe their gender identity in a different way).

### ***Sociosexual Orientation Inventory***

Simpson and Gangestad (1991) constructed the Sociosexual Orientation Inventory (SOI) as a way to measure individual differences in willingness to engage in uncommitted sexual relationships (Banai & Pavela, 2015). Many studies have used the SOI as a one-dimensional measure (Ellis, 1998; Mikach, 1999; Simpson & Gangestad, 1992). Arguments have been made about the dimension of the SOI and a few scales have been proposed. As an alternative, for example Bailey, Gaulin, Agyei, and Gladue (1994) proposed scales separating sociosexual attitude, preference and behaviour. Penke and Asendorpf (2008) made a proposition to use the SOI-R, a new measure with three-dimensional scales, namely sociosexual attitude, behaviour, and desire. Support for the use of a two-dimensional measure (sociosexual attitude and behaviour) has been found using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) (Banai & Pavela, 2015; Webster & Bryan, 2007). The argument for the two-dimensional measure is that attitude and behaviour have a higher correlation in women than in men (i.e., men want to have more partners than they have). In the present study, the two-dimensional model of the SOI was used to measure sociosexual attitude and behaviour.

### ***Sociosexual Attitude***

Sociosexual attitude was measured through four items from the SOI. Participants answered questions such as “I can imagine myself being comfortable and

enjoying "casual" sex with different partners" on a 9-point Likert scale (ranging from 1=strongly disagree, to 9=strongly agree) except for one question "How often do you fantasize about having sex with someone other than your current dating partner?" which used a 7-point Likert scale (ranging from 1=never, to 7=at least once/day). The internal consistency was acceptable for the attitude measures on the SOI (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.704$ ). Previous research found the SOI attitude to be a valid inventory (Banai & Pavela, 2015; Webster & Bryan, 2007).

### ***Sexual Behaviour***

Sexual behaviour was measured through three items from the SOI. Participants answered questions such as "With how many different partners have you had sex within the past year?" by entering the number of partners themselves. The internal consistency was acceptable for the behaviour measures on the SOI (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.754$ ). Previous research found SOI behaviour to be a valid inventory (Banai & Pavela, 2015; Webster & Bryan, 2007).

### ***Sexual orientation***

Same-sex interest was measured through one yes or no question. Men were answering "Have you ever felt sexual interest towards a man?" and women were answering "Have you ever felt sexual interest towards a woman?".

Same-sex behaviour was measured through one yes or no question. Men were answering "Have you ever engaged in sexual activities with a man?" and women were answering "Have you ever engaged in sexual activities with a woman?".

### **Data preparations**

Because the SOI behaviour variables have no upper limit, these variables were Winsorized prior to statistical analysis (i.e., these variables were given bounds of  $\pm 3$  standard deviations from the mean). For example, the first sexual behaviour variable of the SOI "With how many different partners have you had sex within the past year?" has a mean of 1.610 and

an SD of 2.4152. The cut-off value for the variable should be  $3 * 2.4152 + 1.610 = 8.856$ . Thus, all values (e.g., an individual responding that he has had sex with 1,000 individuals over the past year) that exceed 8.856 should be changed to 8.856 (i.e., the equivalent of the mean + 3 SD). Next, composite variables were computed for the sociosexual attitudes subscale of the SOI. This was achieved by computing the mean of the four items constituting the sociosexual attitudes subscale of the SOI. Composite variables were also computed for the sexual behaviour subscale of the SOI. This was achieved by computing the mean of the three Winsorized sexual behaviour variables subscale of the SOI.

### **Statistical Analyses**

Statistical analyses were conducted in IBM SPSS Statistics 28.0. I used a Generalized Estimating Equations (GEE) multilevel regression model to examine differences in sociosexual attitudes and sexual behaviour between sexual orientation and sex. I chose GEE because of the population-based sample consisting of twins and their siblings, and GEE allows control for between-subjects dependence occurring from the genetic relatedness of the subjects. Age was included as a covariate in all analyses.

## **Results**

### **Descriptive Statistics**

My total sample consisted of 3146 men (34.6%) and 5948 women (65.4%). Of the men in my sample, 409 (13.2%) had had lifetime sexual interest towards a man, and 267 (8.6%) had engaged in sexual activities with another man. Of the women in my sample, 1995 (33.8%) reported having had sexual interest towards a woman and 808 (13.7%) had engaged in sexual activities with another woman. The age range in the sample was between 18 and 49 years old ( $M = 26.1$ ,  $SD = 5.0$ ). Descriptive statistics for sociosexual attitude and behaviour for all groups can be seen in Table 1.

### **Table 1**

*Descriptive Statistics for Sociosexual Attitude and Behaviour*

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range
<i>Male participants</i>			
Sociosexual Attitude			
All men	4.327	0.022	0.75-8.5
No same-sex interest	4.303	0.023	0.75-8.5
No same-sex activities	4.306	0.023	0.75-8.5
Same-sex interest	4.487	0.058	0.75-8.5
Same-sex activities	4.585	0.073	0.75-8.5
Sociosexual Behaviour			
All men	9.765	0.276	0-35
No same-sex interest	9.107	0.272	0-35
No same-sex activities	9.002	0.266	0-35
Same-sex interest	13.836	0.999	0-35
Same-sex activities	17.797	1.395	0-35
<i>Female participants</i>			
Sociosexual Attitude			
All women	4.084	0.014	0.75-8.5
No same-sex interest	4.055	0.017	0.75-8.5
No same-sex activities	4.073	0.015	0.75-8.5
Same-sex interest	4.137	0.025	0.75-8.5
Same-sex activities	4.145	0.041	0.75-8.5
Sociosexual Behaviour			
All women	7.135	0.133	0-35
No same-sex interest	5.608	0.114	0-35
No same-sex activities	6.269	0.118	0-35
Same-sex interest	10.128	0.292	0-35

Same-sex activities	12.607	0.529	0-35
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*Note.*  $M$  = Mean,  $SD$  = standard deviation

### **Sex and Sociosexual Attitude**

There was a significant sex difference in sociosexual attitude (Wald  $\chi^2$  [1] = 72.143,  $p < .001$ ), where men had significantly less restricted sociosexual attitudes compared to women. Next, I tested for significant sex differences in the association between same-sex interest and sociosexual attitudes. However, the interaction (i.e., sex \* same-sex interest) was not statistically significant, suggesting that sex did not moderate the association between same-sex interest and sociosexual attitudes (Wald  $\chi^2$  [1] = 2.202,  $p = .138$ ). I further tested for a significant sex difference in the association between same-sex activities and sociosexual attitudes. That interaction (i.e., sex \* same-sex activities) was statistically significant, suggesting that sex did moderate the association between same-sex activities and sociosexual attitudes (Wald  $\chi^2$  [1] = 5.995,  $p = .014$ ), so that same-sex activities were associated with sociosexual attitudes in men but not women.

### **Sex and Sociosexual Behaviour**

There was a significant sex difference in sociosexual behaviour (Wald  $\chi^2$  [1] = 43.302,  $p < .001$ ), where men had significantly less restricted sociosexual behaviour compared to women. Next, I tested for a significant sex difference in the association between same-sex interest and sociosexual behaviour. However, the interaction (i.e., sex \* same-sex interest) was not statistically significant, suggesting that sex did not moderate the association between same-sex interest and sociosexual behaviour (Wald  $\chi^2$  [1] = 0.007,  $p = .931$ ). I also tested for a significant sex difference in the association between same-sex activities and sociosexual behaviour. That interaction (sex \* same-sex activities) was not statistically significant, suggesting that sex did not moderate the association between same-sex activities and sociosexual behaviour (Wald  $\chi^2$  [1] = 2.801,  $p = .094$ ).

## Sexual orientation and Sociosexual Attitude

Table 2 shows the association between sociosexual attitudes and sexual orientation. Men who reported having same-sex interest had significantly less restricted sociosexual attitudes compared to men with strictly heterosexual interests ( $\Delta M = 0.184$ ). Similarly, women who reported having same-sex interest had significantly less restricted sociosexual attitudes compared with women with strictly heterosexual interests ( $\Delta M = 0.082$ ). Men who reported having same-sex activities had significantly less restricted sociosexual attitudes compared with men with strictly heterosexual activities ( $\Delta M = 0.279$ ). There was no significant difference in sociosexual attitudes between women who reported having same-sex activities and women who had strictly heterosexual activities ( $\Delta M = 0.071$ ).

**Table 2**

### *Association between Sociosexual Attitudes and Sexual Orientation*

Sexual Orientation	Wald $\chi^2$	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>
<i>Male Participants</i>				
Same-sex Interest	8.776	0.184	0.062	.003
Same-sex Behaviour	13.499	0.279	0.076	<.001
<i>Female Participants</i>				
Same-sex Interest	7.319	0.082	0.030	.007
Same-sex Behaviour	2.683	0.071	0.044	.101

*Note.* Degrees of freedom for Wald  $\chi^2$  is 1. *B* = unstandardized regression coefficient (beta); *SE* = standard error.

## Sexual orientation and Sociosexual Behaviour

In Table 3, you can observe the association between sexual behaviour and sexual orientation. Men who reported having same-sex interest had significantly less restricted sexual behaviour compared to men with strictly heterosexual interests ( $\Delta M = 4.730$ ). Similarly, women who reported having same-sex interest had significantly less restricted sexual behaviour compared to women with strictly heterosexual interests ( $\Delta M = 4.520$ ). Men

who reported having same-sex activities had significantly less restricted sexual behaviour compared with men with strictly heterosexual activities ( $\Delta M = 8.796$ ). Similarly, women who reported having same-sex activities had significantly less restricted sexual behaviour compared with women with strictly heterosexual activities ( $\Delta M = 6.338$ ).

**Table 3**

*Association between Sexual Behaviour and Sexual Orientation*

Sexual Orientation	Wald $\chi^2$	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>
<i>Male Participants</i>				
Same-sex Interest	21.180	4.730	1.028	<.001
Same-sex Behaviour	38.613	8.795	1.415	<.001
<i>Female Participants</i>				
Same-sex Interest	218.873	4.520	0.306	<.001
Same-sex Behaviour	139.750	6.338	0.536	<.001

*Note.* Degrees of freedom for Wald  $\chi^2$  is 1. *B* = unstandardized regression coefficient (beta); *SE* = standard error.

## Discussion

The present study sought to investigate variations in sociosexual attitudes and behaviour across sexual orientation and sex using a large population-based sample from Finland. The findings shed light on the complex interplay between sociosexuality, sexual orientation, and sex, while also addressing methodological considerations.

### Main Findings and Interpretations

The findings of the present study align with the first hypothesis, indicating significant sex differences in both sociosexual attitudes and behaviour. Men exhibited less restricted sociosexuality compared to women, consistent with evolutionary theories such as parental investment theory, which suggests that men, who invest less time and effort in their offspring, are predisposed to pursue a more unrestricted mating strategy compared to women,

who invest more in reproduction and therefore tend to be more discriminating in their choice of mate (Buss & Schmitt, 1993; Trivers, 1972). The sex disparity in sociosexuality underscores the complexity of human mating strategies and highlights the importance of considering sex differences in studies of human sexuality. Future research should continue to explore the underlying mechanisms driving these differences, taking into account both biological and sociocultural factors.

The second hypothesis, for men, there will be no difference in sociosexual attitudes between different sexual orientations, was not supported by the present study. Despite Schmitt's proposition that unrestricted sociosexuality is partly an evolved feature of biological sex, suggesting that gay and bisexual men would exhibit sociosexual attitudes similar to heterosexual men (Schmitt, 2007), the findings of the present study indicate otherwise. The present study revealed that men who reported same-sex interest or activities demonstrated significantly less restricted sociosexual attitudes compared to those reporting strictly heterosexual interests or activities. It is possible that this difference can be explained by different factors. For instance, the availability of potential partners with similar sociosexual attitudes could play a role. Men who are attracted to other men may be more likely to encounter partners who share a more unrestricted attitude towards uncommitted sex, thereby reinforcing and normalizing these attitudes within their social circles. Moreover, the discrepancy could be attributed to social desirability. Men who engage in sexual activity with women may feel a greater pressure to conform to social norms, potentially inhibiting the expression of unrestricted sociosexual attitudes, especially if such attitudes are perceived as socially disadvantageous (for instance, if they make them less appealing to women). Conversely, this social pressure might not be as pronounced within the community of men who have sex with men. Further investigation into these underlying mechanisms is essential

for a deeper understanding of the relationship between sexual orientation and sociosexual attitudes in men.

The third hypothesis was supported by the study findings, indicating that men who reported same-sex interest or activities indeed exhibited significantly less restricted sociosexual behaviour compared to those with strictly heterosexual interests or activities. This finding aligns with previous empirical research, which indicates that homosexual men tend to have the highest levels of unrestricted sociosexual behaviour at the group level (Glick et al., 2012). This supports the notion that men with same-sex attractions may have access to a larger pool of potential partners who share more unrestricted attitudes towards uncommitted sex (Schmitt, 2007). Additionally, it is possible that some of the sexual behaviour observed is only a small part of men engaging in sexual behaviours with other men (Ethan E., 2020). Future research should aim to explore the underlying factors contributing to these differences in sociosexual behaviour, such as cultural, social, and psychological influences.

The fourth hypothesis, predicting no difference in sociosexual attitudes between different sexual orientations for women, was not entirely supported by the present study. The findings revealed that women who reported same-sex interest exhibited significantly less restricted sociosexual attitudes compared to women with strictly heterosexual interests. However, there was no significant difference in sociosexual attitudes between women who reported same-sex activities and those with strictly heterosexual activities. Schmitt's proposition that restricted sociosexuality is, in part, an evolved feature of biological sex, lesbians and bisexual women will be similar to heterosexual women in sociosexual attitudes (Schmitt, 2007). This hypothesis was partially supported in the current study. Additionally, Schmitt's findings indicated that bisexual women scored significantly higher on sociosexual attitudes than did lesbians and heterosexual women (Schmitt, 2007). It is possible that a high sex drive, which I did not check for, can explain why women who reported same-sex interest

from the present study had significantly less restricted sociosexual attitudes compared to women with strictly heterosexual interests. It is conceivable that a high sex drive can lead to significantly less restricted sociosexual attitudes and greater sexual interest in both men and women. Moving forward, future research could delve deeper into understanding the nuanced factors influencing sociosexual attitudes among women of different sexual orientations.

The fifth hypothesis, suggesting no difference in sociosexual behaviour between different sexual orientations for women, was not supported by the findings. Contrary to expectations, women who reported same-sex interest or activities indeed exhibited significantly less restricted sociosexual behaviour compared to those with strictly heterosexual interests or activities. However, this contradicts the hypothesis proposed by Schmitt (2007) that lesbians would demonstrate more restricted sociosexual behaviour compared to heterosexual and bisexual women. Nevertheless, Schmitt's hypothesis cannot be ruled out due to how sexual orientation was operationalized in the present study. Interestingly, the study found that bisexual women expressed the highest scores on sociosexual behaviour, followed by lesbians, and then heterosexual women. Several factors could contribute to the observed differences in sociosexual behaviours among women with different sexual orientations. Firstly, societal attitudes and norms regarding same-sex relationships and sexuality have evolved over time (Aksoy et al., 2020). It is possible that women who identify as lesbian or bisexual may feel more comfortable expressing their sexuality openly, leading to a less restricted approach to sociosexual behaviours. Additionally, individual differences in sexual desire could also contribute. It's conceivable that women who report same-sex interest or activities may have higher levels of sexual desire overall, which could manifest in less restricted sociosexual behaviour with men and women.

## **Strengths and Limitations**

The use of a large, population-based sample from Finland is a strength of this study, providing more robust and generalizable findings compared to previous studies which relied on smaller or convenience samples, often restricted to college populations. It is possible that the distinctions in sociosexuality between groups are subtle, thereby making a sizable sample size crucial for robustly discerning and validating these differences.

Despite its strengths, this study is not without limitations. One limitation of this study is the response rate, which stood at 45%. While efforts were made to obtain a representative sample from the population, the response rate suggests that a sizable portion of eligible individuals did not participate. This raises the possibility of non-response bias, where the characteristics of non-respondents differ from those of respondents, potentially affecting the generalizability of the findings. Despite attempts to mitigate this limitation through various recruitment strategies, including both online and paper-based surveys, the impact of non-response bias cannot be ruled out. Future research may benefit from employing additional methods to enhance participation rates and reduce the risk of bias, such as targeted follow-up surveys or incentives for participation.

Another limitation of the study is that the reliance on self-reporting measures introduces the potential for social desirability bias, where participants may underreport or overreport their sociosexual attitudes and behaviour instead of being measured as multifactorial dimensions of desire, attraction, fantasy, and behaviour over time (Klein et al., 1985; Savin-Williams, 2006). Additionally, the cross-sectional nature of the data limits our ability to draw causal conclusions about the relationships observed. Future research could employ longitudinal designs to explore how sociosexual attitudes and behaviour evolve over time within different sexual orientation and sex groups.

Furthermore, while this study focused on sociosexuality within the context of sex and sexual orientation, other factors such as cultural norms, relationship status, and personality traits may also influence sociosexual attitudes and behaviour. Future research should consider these additional variables to provide a more comprehensive understanding of human sexuality.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

Future research could benefit from conducting longitudinal studies to explore changes in sociosexual attitudes and behaviour over time within different demographic groups. By tracking individuals' sociosexual development across various life stages, researchers can gain insights into the stability of sociosexual traits and how they are influenced by life events and experiences.

It would be valuable for researchers to compare sociosexual attitudes and behaviour across different cultures. This comparative approach could help clarify the extent to which cultural norms and values influence sociosexual variation. By examining sociosexuality within diverse cultural contexts, we can better understand the cultural factors that shape human sexuality.

In addition to quantitative methods, future research could employ qualitative research approaches, such as interviews or focus groups, to gain a deeper understanding of the factors influencing sociosexual attitudes and behaviour. Qualitative investigations can capture nuanced perspectives and provide rich contextual insights into the complexities of sociosexuality that quantitative methods alone may not reveal.

### **Conclusions**

This study aimed to investigate variations in sociosexual attitudes and behaviour across sex and sexual orientation using a large population-based sample from Finland. In accordance with much of the previous research, the results show significant sex differences in

sociosexual attitudes and behaviour, with men generally exhibiting less restricted sociosexuality compared to women. Furthermore, sexual orientation emerged as a significant factor influencing sociosexual attitudes and behaviour, with individuals reporting same-sex interest or activities demonstrating less restricted sociosexuality, particularly among men. While some of the stated hypotheses were supported by the data, others deviated from the expected outcomes, pointing to the need for continued research to fully understand the complexities of human sociosexuality.

## Summary in Swedish – Svensk sammanfattning

### Sociosexuella attityder och beteende: en befolkningsbaserad analys över kön och sexuell läggning i Finland

Denna studie undersökte korrelationen mellan sociosexuella attityder och beteenden över sexuell läggning och kön, baserat på en omfattande datamängd med tvillingar och deras närmsta släktingar. Sexuell läggning definierades som samkönat sexuellt intresse och samkönat sexuellt beteende. Tidigare forskning på detta område har ofta haft begränsningar såsom små urvalsstorlekar och ett starkt fokus på högskolestudenter, vilket påverkar generaliserbarheten av resultaten.

Sociosexualitet beskriver individuella skillnader i viljan att engagera sig i oengagerade sexuella relationer (Banai & Pavela, 2015; Penke & Asendorpf, 2008). Personer med begränsad sociosexualitet föredrar engagemang och känslomässig närhet innan de ägnar sig åt sexuella aktiviteter med sin romantiska partner. Å andra sidan känner sig individer med obegränsad sociosexualitet sig bekväma med att ha sex utan engagemang och kan ofta ha flera sexpartners. De kan njuta av sex utan engagemang och har ofta sex med olika partners vid flera olika tillfällen (Simpson & Gangestad, 1991).

Enligt föräldrainvesterings teorin tenderar könet med högre minimiinvestering i avkomma att vara mer selektivt i valet av partner och kräver längre tid innan sex. Detta gäller vanligtvis kvinnor, som investerar mer i avkomman och därför behöver en känslomässig anknytning och längre tid innan de engagerar sig i sexuella relationer. Män, som investerar mindre, tenderar att ha en mindre begränsad sexuell strategi för att maximera spridningen av sina gener (Trivers, 1972). Studier har visat att män är mindre diskriminerande än kvinnor när det gäller partnerpreferenser, särskilt för kortvariga sexuella relationer, och är mer benägna att ha flera kortvariga sexpartners (Buss & Schmitt, 1993; Trivers, 1972).

Forskare som Buss och Schmitt (1993) har funnit att män uttrycker en större benägenhet för kortvariga sexuella relationer och har ofta fler sexpartners jämfört med kvinnor (Schmitt et al., 2003). Denna könsskillnad i sociosexuella attityder och beteenden kan förstås genom att studera de evolutionära och biologiska grunderna för mänsklig reproduktion och parningsstrategier (Schmitt, 2005). Utifrån tidigare forskning stipulerade jag följande hypoteser:

1. Det kommer att finnas en könsskillnad i sociosexuella attityder och beteenden, där män har mindre begränsad sociosexualitet jämfört med kvinnor.
2. För män finns det ingen skillnad i sociosexuella attityder mellan olika sexuella läggningar.
3. Män som har upplevt intresse av samma kön eller ägnat sig åt samkönade aktiviteter antas uppvisa mindre begränsat sociosexuellt beteende jämfört med män som uteslutande har upplevt heterosexuella intressen och aktiviteter.
4. För kvinnor finns det ingen skillnad i sociosexuella attityder mellan olika sexuella läggningar.
5. För kvinnor finns det ingen skillnad i sociosexuellt beteende mellan olika sexuella läggningar.

### **Metod**

De data som användes kom från ett stort populationsbaserat sampel från tvillingar och deras syskon. Sammanfattningsvis kontaktades 23,577 personer. Av dem svarade 10,524 personer (45%) men efter att ha raderat de personer som inte svarat på relevanta frågor bestod samplet av 9094 personer. Sociosexuella attityder mättes med fyra frågor från Sociosexual Orientation Inventory (SOI) och personerna svarade på frågor så som "Jag kan föreställa mig att jag är bekväm och njuter av "casual" sex med olika partners" på vilket deltagarna svarade med en nioskalig likertskala, förutom på en fråga som var en

sjuskalig likertskala. Sociosexuella beteenden mättes med tre frågor från SOI och personerna svarade på frågor så som "Med hur många olika partners har du haft sex under det senaste året?" på vilket deltagarna svarade med en nioskalig likertskala. Interna validiteten var acceptabel (attityder Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.704$ , beteende Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.754$ ).

Statistiska analyser utfördes i IBM SPSS Statistics 28.0. Jag använde en Generalized Estimating Equations (GEE) multilevel regressionsmodell för att undersöka skillnader i sociosexuella attityder och sexuellt beteende mellan sexuell läggning och sex. Jag valde GEE på grund av det populationsbaserade urvalet som består av tvillingar och deras syskon, och GEE möjliggör dessutom att man kan hantera den samvariation som uppstår från deltagarnas genetiska släktskap. Ålder ingick som en kovariat i alla analyser.

### **Resultat**

Se Tabel 1 för deskriptiv statistik för sociosexuella attityder och beteenden. Män hade betydligt mindre begränsade sociosexuella attityder jämfört med kvinnor. Män hade också betydligt mindre begränsade sociosexuella beteenden jämfört med kvinnor. Män som rapporterade att de hade ett sexuellt intresse av och sexuellt beteende med samma kön hade betydligt mindre begränsade sociosexuella attityder jämfört med män med strikt heterosexuella intressen och beteenden. Kvinnor som rapporterade att de hade ett sexuellt intresse av samma kön hade betydligt mindre begränsade sociosexuella attityder jämfört med kvinnor med strikt heterosexuella intressen. Det fanns ingen skillnad i attityder mellan kvinnor som rapporterade sexuellt beteende med samma kön jämfört med kvinnor med strikt heterosexuella beteenden. Män som rapporterade att de hade ett sexuellt intresse av och sexuellt beteende med samma kön hade betydligt mindre begränsat sexuellt beteende jämfört med män med strikt heterosexuella intressen. Kvinnor som rapporterade att de hade ett sexuellt intresse av och sexuellt beteende med samma kön hade betydligt mindre begränsat sexuellt beteende jämfört med kvinnor med strikt heterosexuella intressen.

## Diskussion

Denna studie undersökte variationer i sociosexuella attityder och beteenden över sexuell läggning och kön med ett stort urval från Finland.

Studien stödjer den första hypotesen, som visar betydande könsskillnader i sociosexuella attityder och beteenden. Män uppvisade mindre begränsad sociosexualitet jämfört med kvinnor, vilket överensstämmer med föräldrainvesterings teorin (Buss & Schmitt, 1993; Trivers, 1972). Denna teori föreslår att män, som investerar mindre i avkommor, tenderar att ha en mer obegränsad parningsstrategi, medan kvinnor är mer selektiva på grund av deras större investering i reproduktionen.

Den andra hypotesen, att män inte skulle skilja sig i sociosexuella attityder mellan olika sexuella läggningar, stöddes inte. Män med samkönat intresse eller aktiviteter uppvisade mindre begränsade sociosexuella attityder än heterosexuella män, möjligen på grund av sociala kretsar som förstärker dessa attityder.

Den tredje hypotesen, att män med samkönat intresse skulle ha mindre begränsade sociosexuella beteenden, stöddes. Detta stöder uppfattningen att män med samkönade attraktioner kan ha tillgång till en större pool av potentiella partners som delar mer obegränsade attityder till oengagerat sex (Schmitt, 2007).

Den fjärde hypotesen, att kvinnor inte skulle skilja sig i sociosexuella attityder mellan olika sexuella läggningar, stöddes delvis. Kvinnor med samkönat intresse visade mindre begränsade attityder jämfört med heterosexuella kvinnor, men det fanns ingen skillnad mellan kvinnor med samkönade och heterosexuella aktiviteter. Det är möjligt att en hög sexdrift kan förklara varför kvinnor som rapporterade samkönat intresse hade mindre begränsade sociosexuella attityder.

Den femte hypotesen, att kvinnor inte skulle skilja sig i sociosexuella beteenden mellan olika sexuella läggningar, stöddes inte. Flera faktorer kan bidra till dessa observerade

skillnader i sociosexuella beteenden bland kvinnor med olika sexuella läggningar, inklusive samhälleliga attityder och normer samt individuella skillnader i sexuell lust. Det är tänkbart att kvinnor som rapporterar intresse eller aktiviteter av samma kön kan ha högre nivåer av sexuell lust totalt sett, vilket kan visa sig i mindre begränsat sociosexuellt beteende med män och kvinnor.

Användningen av ett stort, populationsbaserat urval från Finland är en styrka i denna studie, vilket ger mer robusta och generaliserbara resultat jämfört med tidigare studier med mindre urval. Det är möjligt att skillnaderna i sociosexualitet mellan grupper är subtila, vilket gör att ett stort urval är avgörande för att tydligt urskilja och validera dessa skillnader. En begränsning är svarsfrekvensen på 45%, vilket kan leda till bortfallsfel om de som inte svarade skiljer sig från de som svarade. Trots olika rekryteringsstrategier kvarstår risken för bias. Framtida forskning bör använda ytterligare metoder för att öka deltagarfrekvensen, som riktade uppföljningar eller incitament. Självrapporteringsmått innebär risk för social önskvärdhet bias, där deltagare kan underrapportera eller överrapportera sina attityder och beteenden (Klein et al., 1985; Savin-Williams, 2006). Den tvärsnittsliga data begränsar möjligheten att dra kausala slutsatser. Framtida forskning bör använda longitudinella designers för att studera förändringar över tid inom olika grupper. Utöver kön och sexuell läggning kan andra faktorer som kulturella normer, relationsstatus och personlighetsdrag påverka sociosexuella attityder och beteenden. Framtida studier bör överväga dessa variabler för en mer omfattande förståelse av mänsklig sexualitet.

Framtida forskning kan använda longitudinella studier för att utforska förändringar i sociosexuella attityder och beteenden över tid inom olika grupper. Genom att följa individer genom olika livsstadier kan forskare förstå hur sociosexuella egenskaper påverkas av livshändelser och erfarenheter. Det vore också värdefullt att jämföra sociosexuella attityder och beteenden mellan olika kulturer. Detta kan klargöra hur kulturella

normer och värderingar påverkar sociosexualitet. Att undersöka sociosexualitet i olika kulturella sammanhang ger insikt i de kulturella faktorer som formar mänsklig sexualitet. Förutom kvantitativa metoder kan kvalitativa metoder som intervjuer och fokusgrupper ge djupare insikt i de faktorer som påverkar sociosexuella attityder och beteenden. Kvalitativa studier kan fånga nyanserade perspektiv och ge rikare förståelse än bara kvantitativa studier.

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## Pressmeddelande

### **Sociosexuella attityder och beteenden varierar med sexuell läggning och kön**

En ny studie från Finland har undersökt hur sociosexuella attityder och beteenden varierar mellan olika sexuella läggningar och kön. Resultaten belyser komplexiteten i sociosexualitet och dess koppling till sexuell läggning och kön.

Studien bekräftar tidigare forskning som visar att män har mindre restriktiv sociosexualitet jämfört med kvinnor. – Detta överensstämmer med evolutionära teorier som föräldrainsiveringsteorin, vilken föreslår att män, som investerar mindre tid och resurser på sin avkomma, är benägna att ha en mindre restriktiva parningsstrategi jämfört med kvinnor, säger Andreas Renman, magisterstuderande vid Åbo Akademi och studiens författare.

Resultaten i studien motsäger hypotesen att det inte skulle finnas några skillnader i sociosexuella attityder mellan män med olika sexuella läggningar. Män med samkönat intresse eller beteende uppvisade mindre restriktiva sociosexuella attityder jämfört med heterosexuella män. – Detta kan möjligen förklaras av att män som attraheras av andra män kan ha större tillgång till potentiella partners med liknande attityder.

Studien visar att män med samkönat intresse eller beteende har mindre restriktivt sociosexuellt beteende jämfört med heterosexuella män. - Detta stödjer tidigare forskning att män med samkönade attraktioner kan ha tillgång till en större pool av potentiella partners som delar mindre restriktiva attityder till oengagerat sex.

Kvinnor med samkönade attraktioner uppvisade mindre restriktivt sociosexuella attityder jämfört med heterosexuella kvinnor. Det fanns ingen skillnad i sociosexuella attityder mellan kvinnor med samkönade beteenden och heterosexuella kvinnor. – Det är möjligt att en hög sexdrift kan förklara varför kvinnor som rapporterade samkönat intresse hade mindre restriktiva sociosexuella attityder jämfört med kvinnor med strikt heterosexuella intressen.

Det är tänkbart att en hög sexdrift kan leda till mindre restriktiva sociosexuella attityder och större sexuellt intresse för både män och kvinnor.

Kvinnor med samkönade attraktioner och beteenden uppvisade mindre restriktivt sociosexuellt beteende jämfört med heterosexuella kvinnor. – Det är tänkbart att kvinnor som rapporterade samkönade attraktioner eller beteenden, uppvisar högre sexuell lust, med män och kvinnor.

Över niotusen finländska tvillingar och deras syskon deltog i enkätstudien. Renmans avhandlingsarbete handledes av professor i psykologi Patrick Jern.

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