

UNDERSTANDING AND DEFINING HATE SEX

A Quantitative and Qualitative Approach to  
Understanding and Defining Hate sex

by

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

In

The Department of Psychology

State University of New York

New Paltz, New York 12561

May 2020

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### Acknowledgements

I want to thank all of the members of my thesis committee, Dr. Glenn Geher, Dr. Tabitha Holmes, and Dr. Rebecca L. Burch, for their exceptional guidance and support throughout my thesis process. I want to give special thanks to my incredible, super-human of a thesis advisor and friend, Glenn Geher. Glenn, I am forever grateful for your endless support and encouragement throughout my time at SUNY New Paltz. I also want to thank Hunter Berg, my friend and fellow graduate student, for helping me with the qualitative analyses for my thesis. I would also like to thank the members of the New Paltz Evolutionary Psychology Lab for their advice and support during these last few years. Lastly, I would like to thank my family and friends, especially my parents, for inspiring me to be the person I am today. Together, you all have given me incredible strength and motivation throughout my graduate career—I do not know where I would be without you all.

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### Abstract

Although a popular topic in the media, there is no research to date on hate sex. The purpose of this study was to attain a better understanding of hate sex and operationally define the construct utilizing both quantitative and qualitative methods to understand and define hate sex. An anonymous survey was completed by 771 individuals (69.8% females, 28.8% males, 1.4% other; mean age = 23.21,  $SD = 6.59$ ). It was found that individuals who reported having had hate sex in their lifetime were more sexually experienced than individuals who reported never having had hate sex. Individuals who report having had hate sex also appear to hold a different perception of hate sex than the portrayal of hate sex in the media. Using these findings, A definition of hate sex is introduced. Implications and future directions of this line of research are discussed.

*Keywords:* Hate Sex, Rough Sex, Sexual Experience

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### A Quantitative and Qualitative Approach to Understanding and Defining Hate sex

Although there has not yet been scholarly work on *hate sex*, the so-called act of having sexual intercourse with someone you are not in a relationship with and absolutely despise, it is a popular topic in the media. The term hate sex appears in many television shows, movies, and even popular science blog posts.

### **Cultural Narrative of Hate Sex**

There are numerous articles on the internet on the topic of hate sex, with popular opinions suggesting its unhealthy nature. It is suggested that hate sex is particularly unhealthy because it may not resolve issues and feelings of hate with the individual, people may feel worse about themselves or the situation after, and also that the sex may get out of hand (e.g., sex is too rough, making the sex dangerous; Chatel, 2016). These popular-culture articles also suggest hate sex tends to be typically rougher in nature, and stress the importance of safety should someone choose to engage in hate sex (Chatel, 2016).

On the other hand, many individuals insist that their hate sex experience was the best sex of their life (“My best sex ever,” 2018). An article on hate sex found in the Times of India suggest being ‘passionate’ and ‘high on energy and emotions for someone you hate’ can make for amazing, enjoyable sex (“Here’s what you need to know about ‘hate sex,’” 2017). Dating coach Jo Barnett believes that hate sex can be particularly appealing to women since many women may have trouble *letting go* in the bedroom, therefore, having zero expectations out of hate sex (other than the sheer pleasure itself) can help women enjoy the sex and feel freer during sex (Barnett in Cullinane, 2015). Further, Cullinane (2015) argues that since hate sex is, in theory, non-emotional attachment sex, there should, in theory, be more orgasms involved in hate sex.

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Many articles on the internet suggest that hate sex may have short-term benefits and can be used to deal with anger and frustration toward an individual (Groome, 2017; Chatel, 2016). However, these articles acknowledge that hate sex may not resolve major issues and that sex may further complicate an already strained relationship (Groome, 2017; Chatel, 2016). Articles also stress the importance of differentiating between hate sex and make-up sex, where make-up sex can be used to ‘rekindle a flame’ and is ‘underpinned by love,’ while hate sex is not (Custers in Abgarian, 2019). Therefore, using hate sex as a form of release of negative emotions may be a ‘misguided way of dealing with your emotions’ (Borrelli, 2015).

Metro (2013) argues individuals have hate sex because of repression and suggests people who are having hate sex should dig deeper into their unresolved conflict in order to determine why they have hatred for their sexual partner. Similarly, Kahn (in Del Russo, 2017) suggests that lusting over individuals whom we do not like may point to underlying psychological issues. Further, Kahn claims, that while being attracted to things that were once harmful to us is not uncommon, it is important to recognize our preferences and be wary of potential harm in a relationship (in Del Russo, 2017).

As previously stated, many of these articles suggest that hate sex is particularly rough because it may involve feelings of frustration, anger, and disgust (“Here’s what you need to know about ‘hate sex,’” 2017). The article in the Times of India advises having a conversation about boundaries and limits while engaging in hate sex (“Here’s what you need to know about ‘hate sex,’” 2017).

Articles surrounding hate sex emphasize the need for open-communication during hate sex regarding exactly what the sex means, especially while engaging in hate sex with an ex-partner (Chatel, 2016). Masini warns individuals that, “When people have hate sex and think it means

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something other than what it is, it's not so healthy" (in "Why you love 'hooking up' with someone you hate," 2015). Ultimately, hate sex should not be expected to fix a damaged relationship.

Although empirical research on hate sex is non-existent, there are few lines of research examining other types of sex that may be deemed *unhealthy*. For example, there are studies that investigate rough sex, revenge sex and break-up sex.

### **Research on *Unhealthy* Types of Sexual Behavior**

Like hate sex, there are types of sex that many would suggest may have negative consequences. For instance, popular opinions on break-up sex, or sex with an ex, may advise against having sex with an ex-partner because it may hinder emotional recovery after the break-up. A 2019 longitudinal study (Spielmann, Joel, & Impett) geared at investigating the age-old belief that sexual pursuit of an ex after a break-up is detrimental to one's emotional recovery after said break-up found quite the opposite—pursuing sex with an ex does not appear to hinder breakup recovery. In fact, the researchers found that the pursuit of sex with an ex was associated with a greater positive affect within and across days (Spielmann, Joel, & Impett, 2019). However, the 2019 study did not account for whether or not these individuals were successful in their sexual pursuits and how actually having sex with an ex affected breakup recovery. Still, these researchers' findings suggest that perhaps the societal belief that having sex with an ex is dangerous may not be accurate.

Similarly, as an attempt to empirically study the relationship between sex with an ex and breakup recovery, a study on separations from spouses found that among the individuals in the sample that were having the most difficulty with accepting their separation, individuals who continued to have a sexual relationship with their ex-spouse exhibited better psychological

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adjustment in the divorce than individuals who were no longer having a sexual relationship with their ex-partner (Mason, Sbarra, Bryan, & Lee, 2012). These findings challenge popular beliefs that you should not engage in sex with an ex-partner. Similar to sex with an ex, hate sex is also viewed as an act that may not resolve uneasy feelings and could potentially make matters worse. Future research should investigate whether or not the belief that hate sex could be emotionally damaging holds any truth.

There are, however, studies on rebound and revenge sex suggesting negative consequences of engaging in those types of sex. A longitudinal study done on rebound and revenge sex after a breakup suggests individuals engaging in rebound and revenge sex after a breakup in order to cope with distress and get back at their ex-partner were more likely to engage in sex with strangers and more sex with new partners in general (Barber & Cooper, 2014). This behavior is seen as unhealthy, because engaging in sex with more partners, especially strangers, can put an individual at an increased risk for sexually transmitted infections and diseases (Barber & Cooper, 2014). This study suggests that using sex as a means to cope, particularly to cope from heartbreak, can have dangerous consequences. It is unknown if using hate sex to cope with feelings of hatred towards an individual may also result in negative or dangerous consequences.

### **Misattribution of Arousal**

When thinking about hate sex, one may wonder why in fact someone would have a sexual relationship with an individual whom they supposedly hate. The desire to have a sexual relationship with an individual whom you have strong, negative feelings for may be explained in part by the theory of *misattribution of arousal* (Schachter & Singer, 1962). In other words, it may be possible that individuals engaging in hate sex may be misinterpreting feelings of hatred for sexual arousal. Because feelings of hatred and anger may exhibit similar physiological

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symptoms to those of sexual relations (e.g., increased blood pressure), it makes sense that perhaps individuals may be mistaking feelings of hatred toward an individual as sexual attraction. Therefore, it may be possible that there is a relationship between hate sex and misattribution of arousal.

### **Dark Triad and Sexual Promiscuity**

In terms of mating behavior, the Dark Triad (i.e., narcissism, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism; Paulhus & Williams, 2002) has been studied considerably. For example, the Dark Triad has been linked to a host of short-term mating behaviors, a relationship that appears to be stronger for males than females suggesting that Dark Triad behavior may be used as a short-term mating strategy in males (Jonason, Li, Webster, & Schmitt, 2008). Specifically, narcissism has been positively correlated with a preference for one-night-stands and friends-with-benefit-relationships, with psychopathy being positively correlated with preferences for booty-calls (Jonason, Luevano, & Adams, 2012).

In a study examining the Dark Triad and sexual infidelity, it was found that infidelity positively correlated with the Dark Triad (Jones & Weiser, 2014). Further, this research found that psychopathy and Machiavellianism were direct predictors for infidelity in females. However, only psychopathy appeared to be a predictor for infidelity in males.

The Dark Triad traits also appear to be linked to sexual fantasies, where psychopathy was the most strongly correlated Dark Triad trait to overall sex drive and fantasies involving exploratory, impersonal, and sadomasochistic themes, whereas narcissism correlated most with most frequent engagement in sexual fantasies (Baughman, Jonason, Veselka, & Vernon, 2014). Similarly, perhaps frequent engagement in hate sex may correspond to higher scores on the Dark Triad.

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In a study assessing preferences for sex acts, it was found that being less sexually restricted corresponds to greater preferences for sex acts, such as masturbation, oral sex, vaginal and anal sex, and that sociosexuality is a significant predictor of an individual's preferences for self-masturbation, performing and receiving oral sex, and vaginal sex (Peterson, Geher, & Kaufman, 2011).

It may be possible that individuals having hate sex are also higher in the Dark Triad and lower in terms of sexual restriction. It is also possible that similarly to the Dark Triad approach to mating, hate sex may be utilized as a short-term mating strategy. Because of hate sex being a sexual act with an individual whom one supposedly hates, it would make sense that having a sexual relationship with someone you do not like is beneficial in terms of short-term mating because of the decreased risk of any long-term relationship.

### **Rough Sex**

Often times, the literature surrounding rough sex paints a picture of abuse and sexual aggression. Unfortunately, there are not many studies that investigate the pleasure associated with having a rough sexual encounter. In a recent study by Burch and Salmon (2019), the researchers suggest the need for the distinction between consensual rough sex and sexual violence. In their study, Burch and Salmon (2019) found that rough sex is triggered by curiosity and the desire for novelty in one's sex life. The researchers also found that rough sex did not correlate with violence or abuse in a relationship, a finding of particular importance considering how the lines between rough sex and consent can be blurry (Burch & Salmon, 2019).

A 2019 study (Vogels & O'Sullivan) investigating the relationship between exposure to online sexually explicit material and the desire to have rough sex found that 91.4% of their sample desired to engage in at least one rough sexual behavior after being exposed to rough sex

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through online sexually explicit material. The researchers also found that exposure to rough sex via online material positively correlated with the desire for and participation in rough sex, suggesting the utmost importance of distinguishing between consensual rough sex and sexual violence (Vogels & O'Sullivan, 2019).

As previously stated above, media surrounding hate sex suggests the rough nature of this type of sex. However, since there is not any research on hate sex to date, the relationship between hate sex and rough sex is one that has not yet been explored. Investigating this relationship is imperative, but to examine the roughness of hate sex, we must start with the definition.

In order to study hate sex, a completely novel concept in research, it needs to be operationally defined. The main purpose for this study was create a short survey with questions aimed at determining what individuals believe hate sex to be. The design of the current study was mixed methods in nature, using both qualitative and quantitative methods to tackle the main goal of the study: what terms, contexts and behaviors define hate sex.

### **Method**

An online survey was distributed to all students at the State University of New York at New Paltz and shared on Facebook via a Qualtrics link to the questionnaire. The current study was approved by the Human Research Ethics Board at the State University of New York at New Paltz.

### **Participants**

Participants included English-speaking adults aged 18 and older. The final number of participants in the pilot study was 771 ( $M$  age = 23.21,  $SD$  = 6.59). A large percentage of the sample was female (69.8%), with 28.8% of the sample being male and 1.4% reporting as other

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(e.g., genderqueer, non-binary). In terms of sexual orientation, 71.1% of the sample reported being heterosexual, 5.1% reported being homosexual, 18% reported being bisexual, and 5.8% reported being other (e.g., asexual, pansexual, queer). For relationship status, 37.3% of the sample reported being single, 50.5% reported being in a relationship, 8.9% reported being married, .6% reported being divorced, and 2.6% reported other (e.g., engaged, in an open relationship). Participants were also asked who primarily raised them (67.3% reported being raised by two married parents, 11.9% reported being raised by divorced parents, 4% reported being raised by two non-married parents, 13.6% reported being raised by a mother only, .6% reported being raised by a father only, 1.2% reported being raised by a grandparent, and 1.3% reported being raised by other (e.g., an aunt, stepparent)).

### **Questionnaire**

The online survey consisted of both open-ended and forced-choice questions. In addition to the demographic questions, participants were also asked the number of times per month that they use pornographic resources and the number of long-term partners (i.e., relationships lasting longer than 6 months) that they have had in their lifetime. Participants were also asked whether or not they have done particular sex acts in their lifetime (e.g., performed oral sex, had anal sex). For the open-ended questions, participants were asked, “In your own words, what do you think hate sex is,” “What do you think leads up to two individuals having hate sex,” “How do you think someone might feel after having hate sex,” and “Please list the acts that you would associate with having hate sex (e.g., kissing, touching, etc.)” Participants are also asked to rate the degree to which they agree with the following statements:

1. Hate sex comes with “no strings attached.”
2. Hate sex has both consenting parties explicitly hating each other.

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3. Hate sex is a one-time sexual encounter.
4. Hate sex does not include sex between individuals who have previously been in a relationship with one another.
5. Hate sex can lead into a relationship.
6. Hate sex is a real thing.

At the end of the survey, participants were also asked if they have ever heard of someone they know having hate sex and if they personally have ever had hate sex themselves.

### **Results**

Given that the current study utilized a mixed-methods approach, the data included both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative analyses were used to explore the following:

1. Descriptive statistics for variables in the study
2. Differences between individuals who reported having hate sex in their lifetime and individuals who reported never having hate sex
3. Sex differences
4. Correlates of sexual experience
5. Investigating popular stereotypes of hate sex
6. Exploratory zero-order correlations

The main purpose of the qualitative analyses was to create a definition of hate sex through individuals' perceptions of hate sex. More specifically, participants were asked to describe what hate sex means, in their own words. Participants' definitions of hate sex were analyzed and used to create a definition of hate sex.

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### Quantitative Analyses

#### *Descriptive Statistics*

Table 2: Descriptive statistics for number of times per month pornographic resources are used by participants (with the lowest possible response being 0 and the highest possible response being 30 or more)

	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
How many times a month do you use pornographic resources (e.g., watch porn, read porn, listen to porn)?	764	8.08	8.58

Table 2: Descriptive statistics for participants' number of long-term relationships in their lifetime

	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
How many long-term relationships have you been in during your lifetime (i.e., longer than 6 months)?	771	8.25	8.69

Table 3: Frequencies for participants who know someone who has had hate sex

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Have you ever heard of an instance where someone you knew had hate sex?	Yes	166	30.40%
	No	380	69.60%

Table 4: Frequencies for participants who report having had hate sex in their lifetime

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Have you ever had hate sex?	Yes	99	18%
	No	452	82%

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### *Differences Between Individuals Who Have Had Hate Sex Versus Individuals Who Have Not*

Monthly pornographic resource usage does not differ significantly among individuals who reported having had hate sex ( $M = 9.39, SD = 9.07$ ) and individuals who have not had hate sex ( $M = 8.04, SD = 8.63; t(547) = 1.40, p = .16; Cohen's d = .15$ ).

The difference in age between individuals who reported having had hate sex ( $M = 24.43, SD = 6.65$ ) and individuals who have not had hate sex was not significant ( $M = 23.26, SD = 7.15; t(548) = 1.50, p = .14; Cohen's d = .17$ ).

There was no significant difference in number of long-term relationships in a lifetime (i.e., longer than 6 months) between individuals who reported never having had hate sex ( $M = 8.23, SD = 8.77$ ) and individuals who reported having had hate sex ( $M = 7.57, SD = 7.80; t(549) = -.70, p = .49; Cohen's d = .08$ ).

### *Sex Differences*

In terms of who reported having heard of an instance where someone they knew had hate sex in their lifetime, 70% of participants who reported having had hate sex were female, whereas 28% were male and 2% other.

Regarding who reported having had hate sex in their lifetime, 73% of participants who reported having had hate sex were female, whereas 25% were male and 2% other.

Males report using pornographic resources significantly more times a month ( $M = 14.96, SD = 10.10$ ) than females ( $M = 5.26, SD = 5.88; t(751) = 16.42, p = .00; Cohen's d = 1.17$ ).

Females report having more long-term relationships (i.e., longer than 6 months) in their lifetime ( $M = 8.86, SD = 8.89$ ) than males ( $M = 6.95, SD = 8.16; t(758) = -2.77, p = .01; Cohen's d = .22$ ).

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There was no significant difference in sexual experience between males ( $M = 5.98$ ,  $SD = 2.48$ ) and females ( $M = 6.23$ ,  $SD = 2.26$ ;  $t(761) = -1.32$ ,  $p = .19$ ; Cohen's  $d = .11$ ).

### *Correlates of Sexual Experience*

In order to analyze the effects of sexual experience on the dispositional variables, a new variable, *sexual experience*, was computed by adding up the number of sex acts (e.g., masturbation, oral sex) a participant reported having done in the past. For example, if a participant reported having only masturbated and performed oral sex in their lifetime, their sexual experience score was 2. In terms of internal reliability, the Cronbach's alpha for the sexual experience variable was .87.

Individuals who reported having had hate sex were significantly more sexually experienced ( $M = 7.44$ ,  $SD = .99$ ) than individuals who reported never having had hate sex ( $M = 6.20$ ,  $SD = 2.23$ ;  $t(549) = 5.43$ ,  $p = .00$ ; Cohen's  $d = .72$ ). This finding suggests a relationship between sexual experience and likelihood of having had hate sex in one's lifetime.

A small and significant correlation was observed between sexual experience and monthly pornographic resource usage ( $r(764) = .09$ ,  $p = .01$ ). The more sexually experienced a participant was, the more times a month they reported using pornographic resources.

The correlation between number of long-term relationships (i.e., longer than 6 months) in a lifetime and sexual experience was not significant ( $r(771) = .05$ ,  $p = .16$ ).

A small and significant correlation was observed between sexual experience and age ( $r(771) = .16$ ,  $p = .00$ ). The older a participant was, the more sexually experienced they were.

### *Investigating Popular Stereotypes of Hate Sex*

As previously mentioned above, hate sex is a popular topic in the media. With that, there comes many popular stereotypes of what hate sex is. In order to investigate further into the

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accuracy of these beliefs about hate sex, participants were asked on a 5-point Likert scale the degree to which they agree or disagree with a particular statement regarding hate sex (statements can be found in the subsequent table).

Table 5: Independent sample t-test between hate sex statements and whether or not the participant reported having had hate sex (*t* with Cohen's *d* in parentheses)

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t(d)</i>
Hate sex comes with “no strings attached.”	2.43	1.28	-1.23(.13)
	2.58	1.10	
Hate sex has both consenting parties explicitly hating each other.	2.63	1.28	-3.22(.35)*
	3.05	1.12	
Hate sex is a one-time sexual encounter.	2.13	1.08	-2.10(.24)*
	2.36	.91	
Hate sex does not include sex between individuals who have previously been in a relationship with one another.	1.52	.97	-4.32(.49)*
	2.00	.99	
Hate sex can lead into a relationship.	3.02	1.27	-.18(.02)
	3.04	1.07	
Hate sex is a real thing.	4.45	1.01	4.49(.50)*
	3.95	.99	

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\**p* < .05; *N*s range 523-528; For means and standard deviations, top line is individuals who reported having had hate sex

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There are four noteworthy findings in table 5. Individuals who reported having had hate sex agree significantly more ( $M = 4.45$ ,  $SD = 1.01$ ) than individuals who reported never having had hate sex ( $M = 3.95$ ,  $SD = .99$ ) with the statement that hate sex is a real thing ( $t(521) = 4.49$ ,  $p = .00$ ; Cohen's  $d = .50$ ).

Individuals who reported having had hate sex *disagree* significantly more ( $M = 2.63$ ,  $SD = 1.28$ ) than individuals who reported never having had hate sex ( $M = 3.05$ ,  $SD = 1.12$ ) with the statement that hate sex has both consenting parties explicitly hating each other ( $t(518) = -3.22$ ,  $p = .00$ ; Cohen's  $d = .35$ ). This finding suggests that individuals who have engaged in hate sex believe that mutual hate is not necessary to have hate sex.

Individuals who reported having had hate sex disagree significantly more ( $M = 2.13$ ,  $SD = 1.08$ ) than individuals who reported never having had hate sex ( $M = 2.36$ ,  $SD = .91$ ) with the statement that hate sex is a one-time sexual encounter ( $t(518) = -2.10$ ,  $p = .04$ ; Cohen's  $d = .24$ ). This finding suggests that individuals who have engaged in hate sex believe that hate sex can happen more than once with an individual.

Lastly, Individuals who reported having had hate sex disagree significantly more ( $M = 1.52$ ,  $SD = .97$ ) than individuals who reported never having had hate sex ( $M = 2.00$ ,  $SD = .99$ ) with the statement that hate sex does not include sex between individuals who have previously been in a relationship with one another ( $t(519) = -4.32$ ,  $p = .00$ ; Cohen's  $d = .49$ ). This finding suggests that individuals who have engaged in hate sex believe that you can have hate sex with an individual whom you have previously been in a relationship with.

Together, these findings suggest that some stereotypes of hate sex do not match the perceptions of hate sex held by individuals who have actually engaged in hate sex (see discussion).

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Table 6: Correlations between sexual experience and hate sex statements ( $r$ )

	Sexual Experience
Hate sex comes with “no strings attached.”	-.03
Hate sex has both consenting parties explicitly hating each other.	-.004
Hate sex is a one-time sexual encounter.	.16
Hate sex does not include sex between individuals who have previously been in a relationship with one another.	-.03
Hate sex can lead into a relationship.	.006
Hate sex is a real thing.	.10*

---

\* $p < .05$ ,  $N$ s range 523-528

One finding in table 6 is noteworthy. A small and significant correlation was found between sexual experience and individuals agreeing that hate sex is a real thing ( $r(526) = .10, p = .03$ ). This finding suggests that the more sexually experienced an individual is, the more likely they are to agree that hate sex is a real construct.

### ***Exploratory Zero-Order Correlations***

The correlation between number of long-term relationships (i.e., longer than 6 months) in a lifetime and monthly pornographic resource usage was not significant ( $r(764) = -.02, p = .56$ ).

The correlation between age and monthly pornographic resource usage ( $r(762) = -.05, p = .18$ ) was not significant.

A small and significant negative correlation was observed between age and number of long-term relationships in a lifetime (i.e., longer than 6 months;  $r(769) = -.14, p = .00$ ). It

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appears that the older the participant is, the number of long-term relationships in their lifetime goes down.

### **Qualitative Analyses**

The question most imperative to the goal of defining hate sex was the question asking participants to describe hate sex in their own words ( $n = 779$ ). Examples of responses given by participants are, “Someone who uses another person as an object to release their aggression onto,” “Engaging in sex with hate as the motivating force,” and “Having sex with someone purely based on the fact that you want to hit them and sex is the next best thing.” In order to analyze these responses, this study utilized three independent raters.

### ***Coding***

Three independent coders were used to analyze the qualitative data for the current study. One rater analyzed a subset of 100 responses that were randomly chosen to analyze the question, “In your own words, what is hate sex?” Of that subset, the same 30 responses were randomly chosen and given to the remaining two raters to analyze. All three individuals used the same technique to analyze the question: pull out themes from each response and then organize responses by theme. After responses were coded for themes by all three raters, the percentage of the presence of each theme was determined by calculating the average percent presence of a theme from each coder. In other words, the percent of responses with a particular theme in each raters’ subsets were added up and divided by three in order to get the average percent of each themes’ presence in participants’ responses.

### ***Inter-rater Reliability***

In order to assess inter-rater reliability, percent agreement between the two raters who received the same subset of responses ( $n = 30$ ) were calculated for each theme. For *negatively*

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*charged emotions*, the percent agreement between raters was 87%. The percent agreement between raters for *sex as an outlet for frustration* was 82%. Finally, the percent agreement between raters for *rough sex* was 100%.

### **Themes**

In analyzing the question of what is hate sex, the coders pulled out the three most common themes found in participants' responses to the question. The themes were then used to create the operational definition of hate sex.

#### **Negatively Charged Emotions.**

Fifty-six percent of responses from participants included the presence of negatively charged emotions. Most of these responses used words such as, "hate," "anger," and "frustration." An example of a response that included some sort of negatively charged emotion was, "Having sex with someone you hate (due to the transference of passion from that hate into sexual desire)."

#### **Sex as an Outlet for Frustration.**

The theme that all three coders felt was unique to participants' definition of hate sex was the idea that individuals have hate sex in order to release feelings of frustration and anger. Twenty-nine percent of the population included language suggesting hate sex may be an outlet of frustration for the individuals engaging in hate sex. Examples of responses that suggest hate sex may be used as a release of negative emotions are, "Hate sex is when two people are frustrated or angry with one another, but still feel an intense level of sexual desire or chemistry and want to take out that frustration through consensual sex," and, "Fucking the tension out."

#### **Rough Sex.**

Consistent with popular literature on hate sex, some participants in this study suggest the

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component or manifestation of rough sexual behaviors during hate sex. About 14% of the population described hate sex being rough and/or aggressive. An example of a response that suggests hate sex being rough in nature was, “The act of forceful intercourse between two people who do not like each other.” Another example suggesting the roughness of hate sex was, “aggressive/rough sex with consent.”

### *Defining Hate Sex*

For the purpose of this research, hate sex is defined *as having a sexual encounter with an individual whom you have feelings of anger and hatred for; this encounter may also be rough or aggressive and may serve the function of a release of negative emotions or as an outlet for frustration.* This definition will be used in subsequent research following the current study.

### **Discussion**

The current study was designed to address the non-existence of psychological literature on hate sex, with intentions on adding to the conversation of different types of human sexual behavior. This study stands as the first of its kind with an attempt to answer the question of what hate sex really is. One of the main findings in the current study in relation to hate sex is the relationship between sexual experience and hate sex. It was found that individuals who reported having had hate sex were more sexually experienced than individuals who reported never having had hate sex. It may also be possible that individuals who are having hate sex have had more sexual partners in their lifetime than individuals who are not engaging in hate sex. Similarly, it may be possible that these individuals engaging in hate sex are also less sexually restricted than individuals who are not engaging in hate sex because of less sexually restricted individuals’

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greater preference for engaging in more sex acts than more sexually restricted individuals (Peterson, Geher, & Kaufman, 2011).

This study also found that individuals who reported having had hate sex seem to hold different perceptions of hate sex than how hate sex is portrayed in the media. For instance, individuals who reported having hate sex seem to disagree more than individuals who have not had hate sex that there is a mutual hatred in hate sex, that hate sex is a one-time sexual encounter, and that hate sex cannot be between two individuals who have previously been in a relationship with one another. These findings suggest that individuals who have hate sex believe that hate sex does not necessarily need mutual hate, that the hate sex can happen more than once with an individual, and that that individual may be an ex-partner. Since individuals who have engaged in hate sex may believe that hate sex is not necessarily a one-time sexual encounter, this finding may be evidence that hate sex does not relieve tension, a popular stereotype of hate sex, if individuals are engaging in hate sex with the same individual on multiple occasions (Groome, 2017; Chatel, 2016). Future research should explore the possibility of hate sex relationships—people may be having a sort of *enemies with benefits* situation with a person they supposedly despise. Individuals who reported having had hate sex also were more likely to believe that hate sex is a real thing, in relation to individual who have not had hate sex.

### **Limitations & Future Research Directions**

While this research provided insight on hate sex and allowed for the creation of a formal definition of hate sex, several limitations exist. When creating this study, the intention was to make the survey short and easy to fill out, and in doing so, a few questions in the survey had some issues.

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As previously stated in the introduction, while talking about rough sex, it is important to keep the issue of consent in the conversation. The current study did not address consent while asking participants their perceptions of hate sex. Future research on hate sex should ask participants questions about consent regarding any sexual experience. Also, in the open-ended responses in the current study, it appeared that multiple individuals misinterpreted hate sex for sexual violence. This misinterpretation could be due to misinformation or lack of information all together. Therefore, it is important to further research on hate sex so we can make these distinctions between rough sexual behaviors and sexual violence. This message mirrors the goals of Burch and Salmon (2019) and Vogels and O'Sullivan (2019), who argued the urgency for research to investigate rough sexual behaviors and their intentions and contexts.

Participants were asked how many times a month they use pornography, and a dropdown menu of options *zero* through *30 or more* was provided. The dropdown menu, however, is quite limiting because it does not accurately capture the monthly pornographic resource usage for individuals who use these resources more than 30 times a month. For individuals who chose the *30 or more* option, we do not know if they use pornographic resources 31 times a month or 100 times a month. Future studies using a monthly pornographic usage variable should leave the response for this question on the survey blank in order to let the participant write in their own response.

This survey should have also included *number of sexual partners* as a variable. The idea was to keep the current survey short with another study to follow that went into much more detail, but it would have been beneficial to ask participants the number of sexual partners in their lifetime in this study. If we had obtained the data for number of sexual partners, perhaps it would have led to some interesting findings in relation to hate sex. For example, it can be hypothesized

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that individuals who report having had hate sex may have a higher total number of sexual partners in their lifetime. Future studies should investigate the relationship between sexual partners and hate sex.

In the survey, participants were asked if they have ever heard of someone they knew having hate sex, and if they have ever had hate sex themselves. Because this study is the first in its attempt to investigate hate sex as a construct, participants should have also been asked if they have ever heard of hate sex in order to get more evidence supporting hate sex as an actual construct.

Another variable that may be limiting is the *sexual experience* variable. In the survey, participants were asked what type of sex acts they have done before in their lifetime and to check all that apply. The acts that were listed are *self-masturbated*, *self-masturbated with a partner (touched myself with a partner present)*, *preformed genital touching (touched a partner's genitals)*, *received genital touching (had my genitals touched by a partner)*, *received oral sex*, *performed oral sex*, *had vaginal sex (i.e., vaginal penetration)*, and *had anal sex*. Participants were also given the option to check *never had any sexual contact* or to write in their own response in an *other* box. The *sexual experience* variable was then computed by adding up the number of sex acts a participant reported having done in the past. The issue with this variable is that it does not accurately measure sexual experience account in individuals who are not exclusively heterosexual or bisexual. Future studies should try to create a more appropriate way of measuring sexual experience in an individual.

The next step in this line of research is to dig deeper into hate sex by exploring the differences between hate sex and the typical sexual encounter, who is having hate sex, and is it as rough and aggressive as it is believed to be. In order to investigate the differences between

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hate sex and the participants' typical sexual encounter, participants will be asked detailed questions on both their last hate sex encounter and their last regular sexual encounter.

Participants will also be given a measure of rough sex to assess the roughness of both sexual encounters. In order to better understand the qualities of an individual that may lead to that individual engaging in hate sex, the following study will also include measures of the Dark Triad personality traits (Jonason & Webster, 2010), the Big Five personality traits (Gosling, Rentfrow, & Swann, 2003), and sociosexuality (Penke & Asendorpf, 2008). Future research should also examine the possibility of different types of hate sex (i.e., there may be multiple types of hate sex with differing qualities, such as having hate sex with an abusive partner, or having a short-term sexual relationship with someone). Research should also investigate the possible evolutionary implications of engaging in hate sex; there may be possible mating benefits (i.e., hate sex may be utilized as a mating strategy) to having a sexual relationship with an individual whom you do not like. Research should also attempt to address the question of why an individual may hate the person they are having sex with, and there may be a great variation of reasons why someone may hate their sexual partner (i.e., they may hate them because their partner will not commit to them or they hate them because they should not be attracted to them but are anyway).

### **Conclusion**

At this point in time, no other research has investigated hate sex, a popular topic in the media. The current research provides a first glance into hate sex by asking participants questions regarding hate sex. Findings suggest that engaging in hate sex is linked to sexual experience. This research also created an operational definition of hate sex to be used in subsequent research. This study clearly demonstrates the need for further research on hate sex.

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