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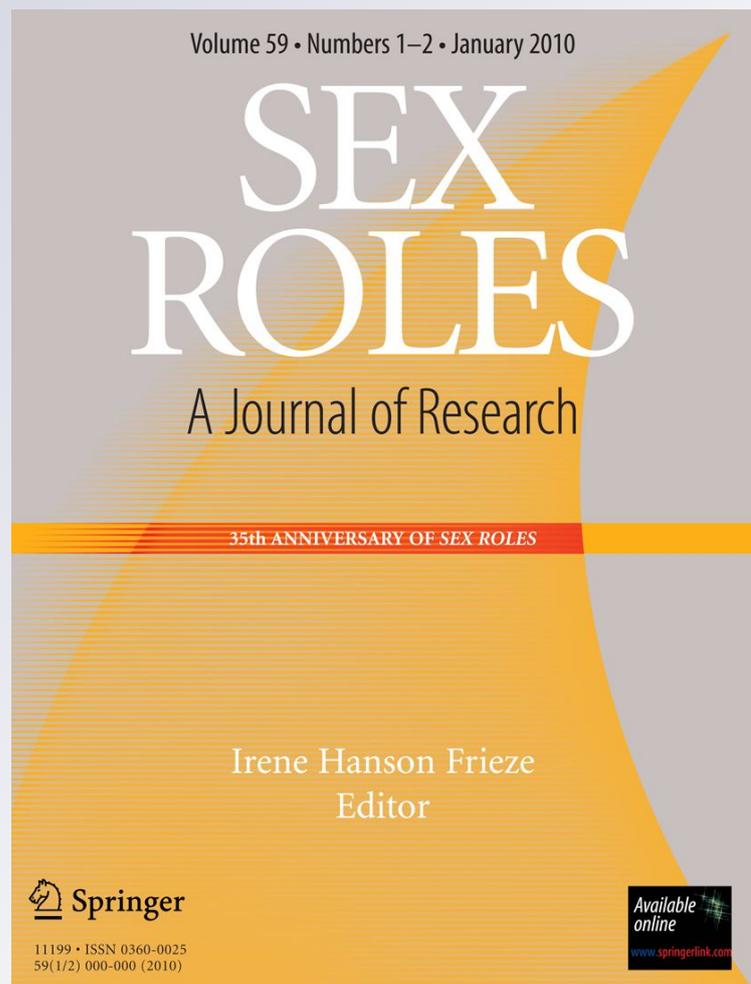
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Sexism and Assertive Courtship Strategies

Jeffrey A. Hall · Melanie Canterberry

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Abstract The popularity of speed-seduction techniques, such as those described in *The Game* (Strauss 2005) and advocated in the cable program *The Pickup Artist* (Malloy 2007), suggests some women respond positively to men's assertive mating strategies. Drawing from these sources, assertive strategies were operationalized as involving attempts to isolate women, to compete with other men, and to tease or insult women. The present investigation examined whether hostile and benevolent sexism and sociosexuality, the degree to which individuals require closeness and commitment prior to engaging in sex, were associated with the reported use of assertive strategies by men and the reported positive reception to those strategies by women. It was predicted men and women who were more sexist and had an unrestricted sociosexuality would report using more and being more receptive to assertive strategies. Study 1 ($N=363$) surveyed a Midwestern undergraduate college student sample, and regression results indicated that sociosexuality was associated with assertive strategy preference and use, but sexism only predicted a positive reception of assertive strategies by women. Study 2 ($N=850$) replicated these results by surveying a larger, national U.S. volunteer sample via the internet. In addition to confirming the results of Study 1, regression results from Study 2 indicated that hostile sexism

was predictive of reported assertive strategy use by men, suggesting that outside of the college culture, sexism is more predictive of assertive strategy use. Implications for courtship processes and the dating culture are discussed.

Keywords Ambivalent sexism · Assertive behaviors · Courtship · Relationship initiation · Sociosexuality

Introduction

In the United States, a book on speed seduction entitled *The Game: Penetrating the Secret Society of Pick-up Artists* (Strauss 2005) has recently captured public attention—even reaching the New York Times Bestseller List in September through October of 2005 (Hawes 2005). The memoir chronicles journalist Neil Strauss's training in speed-seduction, as he learns the techniques and strategies of several prominent so-called pick-up artists. One character from the narrative, Mystery, subsequently hosted a U.S. cable program on speed-seduction on VH1 called *The Pickup Artist* where naïve men were trained and then competed against one another in the game of seducing women at clubs and bars (Malloy 2007). The first season of *The Pickup Artist* averaged 1.8 million viewers and was picked up for a second season (Brady 2007). Whatever their actual efficacy, the popularity of these programs demonstrates that young men are seeking information about how to seduce women aggressively and successfully (St. John 2006). The strategies and techniques documented in *The Game* and its spin-offs have several prominent themes. After initiating a conversation with a woman, men should compete with other men, even if the woman is in conversation with other potential suitors or is in the company of friends. Men should then attempt to tease

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women with back-handed compliments and by use of “negs” or minor insults, and attempt to remove her from the company of friends by isolating her. Once isolated, men should initiate sexual contact.

In the popular media in the U.S., the tactics recommended to facilitate speed-seduction have been condemned for being misogynistic (Johnson 2005). Rather than testing the efficacy of such strategies or questioning their ethical value, the present investigation seeks to understand the characteristics of men who use such strategies and the characteristics of women who find such strategies appealing. Specifically, the present investigation will employ ambivalent sexism theory (Glick and Fiske 1996; 2001) to understand men's reported use of aggressive strategies and the reported appeal of these strategies to women. Ambivalent sexism theory suggests that sexism is composed of two types of attitudes: Hostile Sexism (HS), which includes negative attitudes toward women and an overt justification of male privilege, and Benevolent Sexism (BS), which is seemingly more positive toward women, but is paternalistic and views women as lovable but helpless (Glick and Fiske 1996; 2001). Prior research has demonstrated that ambivalent sexism is related to the characteristics desired in a romantic partner (Johannesen-Schmidt and Eagly 2002; Travaglia et al. 2009), mate selection processes (Bohner et al. 2010; Kilianski and Rudman 1998), and romantic scripts (Rudman and Heppen 2003). The present research seeks to extend these prior investigations by evaluating ambivalent sexism's role in the reported use of and preference for dominant courtship strategies, specifically the techniques advocated by speed seduction literature.

In addition, because these strategies are ostensibly for the purpose of short-term mating, sociosexuality (Gangestad and Simpson 1990) will be employed. Sociosexuality concerns the degree to which individuals are open to short-term mating and sex outside the context of a relationship, wherein more unrestricted individuals are more open to short-term mating. Because direct and dominant courtship messages convey an interest in sex (Hall et al. 2008; Lannutti and Monahan 2002), individuals who are more open to short-mating were predicted to be more likely to use and respond positively to dominant courtship strategies.

To test our research hypotheses, two surveys were conducted using a sample of college students from a large Midwestern university in the U.S. (Study 1), and a larger national (i.e., U.S.) volunteer sample of adults recruited via the internet (Study 2). The influence of sexism and sociosexuality on reported dominant strategy use and preference was tested using regression analyses.

Ambivalent Sexism Theory

Unlike other accounts of sexism, ambivalent sexism theory suggests that sexism is composed of two types of attitudes that reflect the deeply ambivalent nature of the relationship between men and women (Glick and Fiske 1996, 2001). Hostile Sexism reflects negative attitudes toward women and an overt justification to preserve male privilege in the face of threats to patriarchal power. Benevolent Sexism is deeply paternalistic and chivalrous, where women are characterized as “wonderful but vulnerable creatures who need men's protection” (Rudman and Glick 2009, p. 40). Benevolent sexists believe their attitudes toward women are positive in nature, however, such attitudes perpetuate traditional gender roles and inhibit equality. Both components of sexism reflect culturally-espoused beliefs about the relationship between men and women and about the roles that each should take in society. Although not originally conceived for the purpose of exploring dating and courtship, recent research has suggested that sexism affects romantic relationships and plays an important role in mate selection (Lee et al. 2010).

Several articles exploring mate preferences have demonstrated that sexism informs the attributes desired in the opposite gender. Travaglia et al. (2009) found that typical patterns of mate preference (i.e., men prefer attractiveness/vitality, women prefer status/resources) were most pronounced for individuals who endorsed sexist ideologies. Because BS reinforces the need for men to provide for and protect women, women who scored high in BS desired ideal male partners who had resources to do so. Likewise, high BS females were more likely to prefer an older mate with good earning potential (Johannesen-Schmidt and Eagly 2002). In contrast, men who advocated HS ideology sought ideal female partners who were more physically attractive, because attractive women serve as status markers (Travaglia et al. 2009). Research on cross-cultural mate preference (Lee et al. 2010) found that for both genders BS predicted a desire for a traditional and, importantly, gender-stereotypic romantic partner (i.e., a warm woman, a strong man).

Sexist beliefs shape mate preferences and when sexist attitudes are behaviorally enacted by potential partners, such attitudes influence partner attractiveness and desirability. Kilianski and Rudman (1998) demonstrated that men who are described as benevolent sexists are somewhat attractive to women, and that women are dubious that hostile and benevolent sexist attitudes could be held by the same man. In replicating and expanding Kilianski and Rudman (1998), Bohner et al. (2010) found that men who were described as benevolent sexists were rated as more attractive for both short- and long-term mating than men who were hostile sexists. Interestingly, men who were benevolent sexists were also rated as more attractive than

non-sexist men. This suggests that when men display BS attitudes, they are not necessarily undesirable to women. Furthermore, men and women respond with more BS to a woman who conforms to the chaste stereotype in comparison to a promiscuous woman (Fowers and Fowers 2010). That is, both men and women respond to the sexual behavior of an individual woman in accord with sexist attitudes in general. Taken together, these findings suggest that sexism may influence the choice of romantic partner, the attractiveness of potential partners, and judgments about individuals' sexuality. Because courtship involves engaging, learning about mutual interest, and seeking affection from potential mates (Mongeau et al. 2006), it stands to reason that sexism may influence the use of and response to courtship strategies.

Sexism and Courtship

Courtship scripts are highly proscribed by gender roles. Despite progress in equality between the genders, men are still expected to approach women and to initiate verbal contact during courtship (Impett and Peplau 2003; La France 2010; Mongeau et al. 2006). Men who possess traditional courtship styles are more likely to take an active role during courtship, while traditional women are more likely to adopt a passive approach to courtship (Hall et al. 2010). Traditional gender role scripts are amplified in the 'hook-up' culture found on college campuses and in young adult social environments (Paul 2006; Paul and Hayes 2002). In these courtship contexts, men are motivated to exaggerate a cavalier and assertive masculine role and women are encouraged to interact with aggressive men and submit to unwanted sexual advances (Boswell and Spade 1996; Paul and Hayes 2002). In fact, the success of 'jerks' in comparison to 'nice-guys' has been attributed, in part, to jerks' masculine and macho characteristics (McDaniel 2005; Urbaniak and Kilmann 2003) and assertive and persistent courtship tactics (Herold and Milhausen 1999; Urbaniak and Kilmann 2006). How might BS and HS influence the acceptance and use of courtship scripts that are macho, assertive, and cavalier?

The power relationships between men and women within a national culture strongly relate to ambivalent sexism (Glick et al. 2004). Women often espouse BS in response to encountering high HS from men. This interplay between types of sexism plays a role in stabilizing traditional gender relations. Similarly, it is certainly possible that individuals' sexist attitudes inform their enjoyment of and participation in particular gendered social contexts, such as the hook-up culture. Young adults' sexual scripts can be understood as an expression of men's role as pursuer and a reinforcement of women's role as gatekeeper (La France 2010). In fact, BS is strongly related to a belief in a romantic script, wherein a gallant prince rescues a weak but beautiful princess (Rudman and Heppen 2003; Travaglia et

al. 2009). Similarly, Viki et al. (2003) demonstrate that in the context of courtship, paternalistic chivalry is related to courteous and considerate behaviors toward women and an attempt to place restrictions on women's behavior. However, the courtship strategies advocated by *The Game* (Strauss 2005) and *The Pickup Artist* (Malloy 2007) go beyond the traditional courtship script, which is more benevolent in nature. These texts advocate aggressiveness and intentional manipulation for the purpose of perpetual sexual conquest.

The strategies illustrated in *The Game* (Strauss 2005) and advocated by *The Pickup Artist* (Malloy 2007) encourage men to use manipulative and assertive strategies to select, pursue, isolate, and sexually conquer women. These strategies can be understood as an exaggerated representation of traditional gender role scripts in courtship as well as an expression of HS. Assertive courtship strategies permit men's expression of authority and power and restrict women's agency in choosing or rejecting potential suitors. Underscoring the use of such strategies is sexist ideology, wherein women are objects to be conquered and these conquests are to be counted. Because HS in men is understood as a competition for status and power, competing for women, particularly attractive and seemingly unavailable women, is an exercise in relational control (Lee et al. 2010). However, *The Game* and its spin-offs encourage adopting BS as well. To explain why the blatant use of assertive strategies and tactics is not necessarily bad for the women targets, speed-seduction is romanticized on *The Pickup Artist* as being an exhilarating experience for women (Malloy 2007). Advocates of the approach claim that speed-seduction, if done properly, will result in women feeling idolized and excited by the seduction (Strauss 2005).

From women's perspective, it is less clear why such strategies would be appealing. Past research on the efficacy and interpretation of courtship behaviors have generally found that direct and especially sexual approach strategies are disagreeable, off-putting, and may be threatening to women (Bale et al. 2006; Cooper et al. 2007; Kleinke et al. 1986). However, women are not entirely unresponsive to assertive and direct strategies. In exploring the effectiveness of several approach strategies, Hall et al. (2008) found that strategies most akin to those advocated by *The Game* (i.e., those that taunted, teased, or attempted to elicit a defensive reaction from women) were not as ineffective as expected. Hall et al. (2008) argue that such strategies are appealing to some women because they clearly communicate an interest in sex on a first date, which, if expressed by attractive men, can be particularly appealing. Furthermore, young adults who participate in the hook-up culture understand that aggressive and sometimes obnoxious behaviors by men are not indicative of a lack of romantic interest, rather, such strategies are expected to be understood by women to be responded to with submissive playfulness (Boswell and Spade 1996; Paul and Hayes 2002). Although none of these

past perspectives use ambivalent sexism theory directly, it is clear that such strategies may be used by men who adopt traditional attitudes toward courtship (Viki et al. 2003) and be attractive to women who seek a stereotypically masculine partner (McDaniel 2005; Travaglia et al. 2009). Ambivalent sexism influences both genders similarly in the context of mate selection and courtship (Johannesen-Schmidt and Eagly 2002; Travaglia et al. 2009), therefore we anticipate that sexism will similarly influence men and women in the reported use of and preference for assertive courtship strategies. In summary, we offer two hypotheses:

- H1: For men, both HS and BS will positively predict the reported use of assertive strategies.
 H2: For women, both HS and BS will positively predict the reported desirability of assertive strategies used by men.

Relationship Expectations and Sociosexuality

The Game

(Strauss 2005) clearly advocates the use of assertive strategies to engage in short-term mating (e.g., one-night stands). Similarly, assertive and explicit pick-up strategies convey an interest in short-term mating rather than long-term relationship initiation or friendship (Hall et al. 2008). More direct and dominant messages convey sexuality through the assertion of relational control (Lannutti and Monahan 2002), and more dominant men are preferred when women are seeking a short-term mate (Snyder et al. 2008). Obnoxious men (i.e., operationalized as men with low agreeableness) are more likely to have more casual sex and one-night sexual experiences (Urbaniak and Kilmann 2006). This suggests that the assertive strategies advocated in speed-seduction literature may serve a purpose of communicating an interest in short-term mating opportunities by men, and be more attractive to women who are interested in short-term mating as well. Essentially, in using dominant behavior to initiate courtship, men are both signaling their availability for short-term mating and attempting to identify women who share similar goals. If this is so, then individuals who are interested in short-term mating are more likely to use assertive strategies and find them appealing.

The sociosexuality construct, developed by Gangestad and Simpson (1990), measures the degree to which individuals require closeness and commitment prior to engaging in sex. Unrestricted individuals tend to be oriented to short-term mating and avoid long-term commitment (Cunningham and Barbee 2008). Given women's preference for dominant men for short-term mating (Snyder et al. 2008), it is reasonable to assume that women with unrestricted sociosexuality would be more likely to find assertive approach strategies appealing. Similarly, men with unrestricted sociosexuality often engage in dominant nonverbal behaviors, independent of

their personality and physical attractiveness (Simpson et al. 1993). Studies of individual differences in communicating attraction and preference for approach strategies have offered additional evidence for the link between dominant approaches and sociosexuality. Individuals who have greater comfort using a more physical style of flirting during courtship are more likely to experience a faster pace of relational development with more sexual chemistry (Hall et al. 2010). In summary, we offer two hypotheses:

- H3: Men who are high in sociosexuality are likely to report more use of assertive strategies.
 H4: Women who are high in sociosexuality are more likely to report assertive strategies appealing when used by men.

The first two hypotheses predict that both HS and BS will be positively associated with the reported use of dominant strategies by men and women's receptiveness to men's dominant strategies. The third and fourth hypotheses predict that sociosexuality will be positively related to both the reported use of and positive reception to dominant courtship strategies. To test the hypothesized relationships, two studies were conducted. Using a sample of undergraduate students from a Midwestern university in the U.S., regression analyses conducted in [Study 1](#) tested the relationships among sexism, sociosexuality, and assertive approach strategies.

Study 1

For Study 1, we created a measure of assertive approach strategies and tested our hypotheses that HS, BS, and sociosexuality would predict the use of (for men) and desirability of (for women) assertive approach strategies.

Method

Procedure

Participants were recruited from introductory communication courses at a large Midwestern university. Selecting from several study options, participants completed an online survey instrument about "heterosexual courtship" in return for partial course credit (less than .5% of final grade). After consenting to participate in the study, participants completed measures of ambivalent sexism and sociosexuality, and answered demographic questions, then, depending on their gender, reported their use of (males) or the desirability of (females) assertive courtship strategies.

Participants

Three hundred sixty-three undergraduate students aged 18–26 ($M=19.42$, $SD=1.30$; $n=228$ female) participated in the

study. Eighty-one percent were Caucasian, 5% were African-American, 3% were Latino/Hispanic, with the remaining participants reporting other or mixed ethnicities or declining to answer. Although sexual orientation was not measured in Study 1, we did not anticipate that gay, lesbian, or bisexual students would have chosen to participate due to the description of the study (i.e., heterosexual courtship).

Measures

Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI; Glick and Fiske 1996)

The ASI is a measure of sexist attitudes toward women along two dimensions, calculated separately to form indexes of hostile sexism (HS) and benevolent sexism (BS). HS (11 items) measures antipathy towards women who are viewed as trying to take men's power (e.g., "Women seek to gain power by getting control over men"). BS (11 items) measures endorsement of subjectively positive yet stereotypic beliefs towards women (e.g., "A good woman should be set on a pedestal by her man"). Participants rated their agreement with each statement on a Likert-type scale of 0 (*disagree strongly*) to 5 (*agree strongly*). The measures were reliable (HS, $\alpha=.89$; BS, $\alpha=.85$). Scores on the two dimensions were averaged separately to form one BS score and one HS score.

Sociosexual Orientation Inventory (SOI; Simpson and Gangestad 1991)

The SOI is a 7-item scale measuring the extent to which a person is willing to engage in uncommitted or short-term sex. The scale includes items for sexual behaviors and attitudes about sex. Three open-ended items assess the number of past and predicted future sexual partners, and the number of one time sexual partners (e.g., "With how many different partners have you had sex on one and only one occasion?"). Participants are asked to rate their agreement with four statements items regarding frequency of sexual fantasy (0 = *never* to 9 = *at least once a day*) and attitudes toward sex on a Likert-type scale (0 = *strongly disagree* to 9 = *strongly agree*) (e.g., "Sex without love is OK"). Because some of the responses are open-ended, the SOI score was calculated using the weighted formula provided by Simpson and Gangestad (1991; $SOI = 5 \times (\text{no. of partners in the past year}) + 1 \times (\text{no. of partners foreseen}) + 5 \times (\text{no. of one - night stands}) + 4 \times (\text{frequency of sexual fantasy}) + 2 \times (\text{attitudes toward engaging in casual, uncommitted sex; aggregate of 3 items})$). Thus, scores may range from 10 to over 200. In the current sample, the mean scores for men ($M=63.45$) and women ($M=39.37$) were typical (e.g., Simpson and Gangestad 1991). The measure was reliable ($\alpha=.79$). Individuals scoring high

on this scale are considered to be sexually unrestricted (i.e., more accepting of short-term mating).

Dominant Strategy Use and Reception

This 14-item scale was created by the study authors to measure the extent to which participants use (men) or find desirable (women) assertive strategies of relationship initiation. *The Game* (Strauss 2005) and *The Pickup Artist* (Malloy 2007) were reviewed to identify tactics, strategies, and particular behaviors that are recommended for speed- seduction. Items were created to measure approach strategies involving competition (e.g., "compete with other men who are interested in her/you"), the use of teasing or "negging" (e.g., "picks on her/your appearance or behavior"), and isolation of the female "target" (e.g., "try to get her/you alone"). Males indicated how often they use each of the strategies when first meeting a potential partner from 1 (*never*) to 7 (*all the time*) and females indicated the desirability of the strategies when used by potential suitors from 1 (*not at all desirable*) to 7 (*very desirable*). The 14 items were reliable ($\alpha=.84$ for men; $\alpha=.88$ for women), and were averaged to create a dominant strategy score. See Appendix A for complete instructions and items.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to examine any gender differences in the scores on the study variables. Scores on the BS, HS, sociosexuality, and dominant strategy scales, in addition to age, were entered as dependent variables. Because the multivariate test showed an overall effect of gender (Wilks' Lambda), $F(4, 341)=32.47, p<.001$, each variable was evaluated separately. Univariate tests revealed that men scored significantly higher than women on HS, BS, and sociosexuality, $p<.001$ (see Table 1). There was no difference in dominant strategy use/appeal scores, and the ages of men ($M=19.54, SD=1.45$) and women ($M=19.37, SD=1.24$) did not differ. Correlations among the predictor variables were evaluated separately by gender. Among women and men, HS was positively correlated with BS. Scores on the SOI were not correlated with HS or BS for women or for men (see Table 2).

Predictors of Assertive Strategy Use/Appeal

It was predicted that both HS and BS would predict the use of assertive strategies by men (H1) and the positive reception to assertive strategies by women (H2). Sociosexuality was also predicted to positively relate to the use of (H3) and reception to assertive strategies (H4). To test

Table 1 Gender differences on variables for Studies 1 and 2

	Men		Women		Partial η^2
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Study 1	<i>n</i> =127		<i>n</i> =220		
HS	3.72 _a	.69	2.99 _b	.90	.15
BS	3.66 _a	.64	3.18 _b	.92	.08
SOI	63.45 _a	41.21	39.37 _b	24.68	.12
DS	2.80	.85	2.86	.98	.00
Study 2	<i>n</i> =305		<i>n</i> =545		
HS	3.76 _a	1.18	3.30 _b	1.21	.04
BS	3.92 _a	1.18	3.46 _b	1.18	.04
SOI-R	4.66 _a	1.68	3.36 _b	1.59	.13
DS	2.84	.83	2.90	.94	.00

Reported are univariate results indicating differences between women and men (*df*=1). *HS* hostile sexism (scale 0–5), *BS* benevolent sexism (scale 0–5), *SOI* sociosexuality (SOI in Study 1 and SOI-R in Study 2), *DS* dominant strategy use/appeal (scale 1–7). SOI scale range was 10–256; SOI-R scale range 1–9. Different subscripts across rows represent a significant difference ($p < .001$)

these hypotheses, multiple regression analysis was conducted separately for men and women. Each of the predictor variables—HS, BS, and SOI scores—and the interaction effects among HS and SOI and BS and SOI were entered simultaneously. Scores were mean centered separately for men and women prior to regression analyses. Tests indicated low levels of multicollinearity ($VIF < 1.5$ for all variables).

For men, neither measure of sexism predicted assertive strategy use, indicating a lack of support for H1. In support of H3, sociosexuality directly predicted using assertive strategies for men, $B = .004$, $SE = .002$, $\beta = .21$, $t(122) = 2.39$, $p = .018$, $R^2 = .09$. There were no significant interactions among sexism and sociosexuality for men.

Table 2 Correlations among predictor variables for women and men in Studies 1 and 2

	1	2	3
Study 1			
1. HS	–	.55**	–.01
2. BS	.33**	–	–.13
3. SOI	.08	–.00	–
Study 2			
1. HS	–	.52**	–.06
2. BS	.41**	–	–.23**
3. SOI-R	.06	–.14*	–

HS Hostile Sexism, *BS* Benevolent Sexism, *SOI* sociosexuality (SOI in Study 1 and SOI-R in Study 2). Correlations for women (S1 *n*=228, S2 *n*=545) are reported above the diagonal, correlations for men are reported below the diagonal (S1 *n*=135, S2 *n*=305)

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

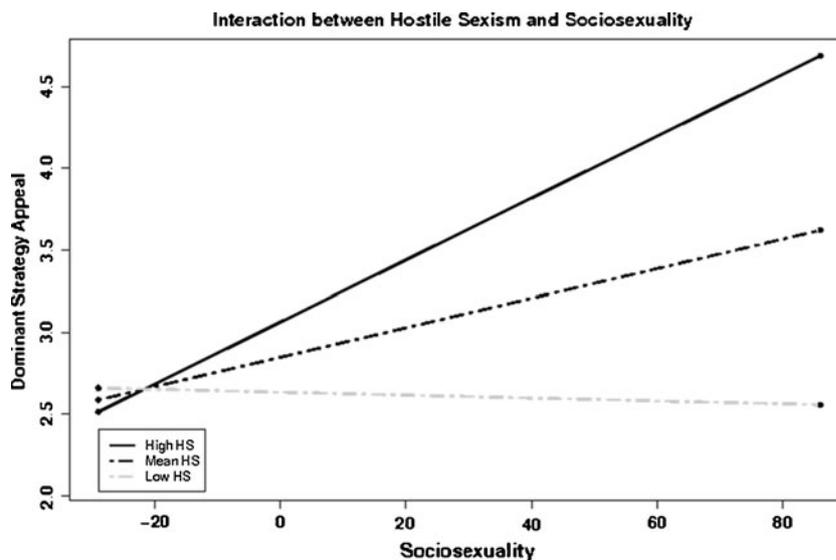
For women, H2 was supported, in that HS, $B = .24$, $SE = .08$, $\beta = .22$, $t(215) = 3.04$, $p = .003$; and BS, $B = .18$, $SE = .08$, $\beta = .16$, $t(215) = 2.23$, $p = .027$, uniquely predicted finding assertive strategies desirable. In addition, sociosexuality was a unique predictor of finding assertive strategies appealing, $B = .01$, $SE = .002$, $\beta = .24$, $t(215) = 3.86$, $p < .001$, which supports H4. Among women, the interaction between BS and SOI was not significant. However, the main effects were qualified by an interaction between HS and SOI scores, $B = .01$, $SE = .00$, $\beta = .23$, $t(215) = 3.12$, $p = .002$. The model explained 21% of the variance for women, $R^2 = .21$. For both men and women, controlling for age did not affect significance levels.

To better understand the interaction effect, HS was plotted at ± 1 SD from the mean, and simple slopes were calculated (Preacher et al. 2006). The analysis showed that when women were low on HS, their level of sociosexuality did not affect the appeal of dominant strategies (simple slope = $-.00$). However, for women at the mean (simple slope = $.01$, $t(214) = 3.67$, $p < .001$) and high (simple slope = $.02$, $t(214) = 5.21$, $p < .001$) on HS, increases in sociosexuality were associated with greater preference of dominant strategies. The greatest preference for dominant strategies was shown by women high on both HS and sociosexuality (see Fig. 1).

Discussion

The results of Study 1 indicate that while sociosexuality was predictive of assertive strategy use and reception (H3 & H4), the two measures of sexism were only predictors of females' reception of assertive strategies (H2). Study 1 showed no support for H1, which suggests that college

Fig. 1 Plot depicting the interaction between HS (hostile sexism) and sociosexuality on the appeal of dominant strategies for women. High and low HS is plotted at one SD above and below the mean. All predictors are mean centered



men's sexist attitudes are not related to their use of assertive courtship strategies. In addition, an interaction between HS and sociosexuality indicated that dominant strategies are most appealing to women who are high on both HS and sociosexuality. This suggests two types of females enjoy beginning courtship with males using speed-seduction tactics: women who are both open to short-term mating opportunities and who believe that women are manipulative and trying to take control over men; and women who, regardless of sociosexuality, believe women are helpless, but precious creatures who should be put on a pedestal by men.

Study 2

Study 2 was undertaken to confirm the regression analyses conducted in [Study 1](#) with a non-college student, national U.S. sample. This increased the generalizability of the findings and provided additional evidence of the predictive value of sociosexuality and sexism. In addition, a larger sample was sought to individually explore the three hypothesized factors of the new dominant strategy scale (i.e., compete, isolate, tease). This was anticipated to provide a more clear understanding of the particular types of assertive strategies used/preferred by individuals high in sexism and sociosexuality.

Method

Procedure

Participants were recruited from a survey link associated with a university press release regarding a publication on courtship conducted by the lead author of the present investigation. The press release came out on Nov. 1, 2010

and was distributed to a science and research internet news distribution service. The press release generated national media attention and was picked up by Reuters, which has an international press reach. The press release included a website link which provided more information about the original study. On this website, a second link to an online survey was available for individuals who wished to participate in "a new study on courtship." There were no incentives for the completion of the survey. The university's Institutional Review Board approved these procedures. After consenting to participate in the study, participants completed the ASI, a measure of sociosexuality, and answered demographic questions, then, depending on their gender, indicated their reported use of (males) or the desirability of (females) assertive courtship strategies.

Two-thousand, nine-hundred and twenty-eight participants initiated the survey, but only 2,330 participants completed all study measures (i.e., ASI, SOI-R, assertive strategies). The data set was cleaned to identify responses that were likely to have been faked. Participants' age and gender were requested in different forms in different sections of the survey (e.g., "What is your age?" "What year were you born?"). If participants' reported age differed by more than 2 years or if their response to biological gender differed, they were excluded from analysis (3% of sample). Once removed, other indicators of faked data did not uncover any additional suspect participants. Because of our interest in courtship initiation, of the remaining 2,261 participants, married ($n=480$) participants were excluded. In addition, all analyses conducted in [Study 2](#) included only participants currently residing in the U.S. This was done because attitudes about courtship and sexism are likely to vary by culture (Glick et al. 2004; Lee et al. 2010), and because there was a sufficiently large sample from the U.S., while sample sizes from other countries varied considerably.

A nominal measure of sexual orientation was provided prior to the portion of the survey regarding dominant courtship strategies. Out of 2,928 participants who initiated the study and reported their sexual orientation, 62 identified themselves as gay or lesbian, 135 as bisexual, and five as transgendered (7% of total sample). However, no gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered participants were included in the final sample for Study 2. Of the 202 GLBT participants who initiated the survey, all either failed to complete the sociosexuality and sexism measures ($n=158$), had apparently faked data ($n=9$), or were married ($n=35$).

Participants

The final sample size included 850 participants from the U. S. (545 female, 64.1%). Participants' mean age was 32.6 years (range 18 to 82, $mdn=28$, $mode=22$). All participants were self-reported to be heterosexual. Participants were from 48 unique states, with Kansas ($n=249$), California ($n=104$), Missouri ($n=53$), and Texas ($n=36$) well-represented. Participants were asked to indicate their race/ethnicity. Eighty-two percent were White/Caucasian, 6% Asian-American, 5% Latino/Hispanic, 5% Black, and 1% Native American. Overall, the sample was highly educated, with 10% completing an associate's degree, 34% completing a 4-year college degree, and 17% completing a graduate degree. The median education level of participants was an associate's degree. Finally, 55% of participants described their current relationship status as "not in a romantic relationship," 19% were casually dating, and 26% indicated they were in a committed relationship or engaged to be married.

Measures

Ambivalent Sexism Inventory

The same measure as Study 1 was used. Both dimensions were reliable (HS, $\alpha=.91$; BS, $\alpha=.88$), and were averaged into two sexism scores.

Revised Sociosexual Orientation Inventory (SOI-R; Penke and Asendorpf 2008)

The SOI-R is a 9-item revised version of the original sociosexuality scale that does not include open-ended items. The scale measures the extent to which a person is willing to engage in uncommitted or short-term sex on 9-point scales. As with the SOI, individuals scoring high on this scale are considered to be sexually unrestricted (i.e., more accepting of short-term mating). The SOI-R, rather than the original SOI, was used in Study 2 to reduce participant attrition due to discomfort caused by participants responding to a potentially sensitive topic in an

open-ended manner. For instance, instead of asking for the number of previous one-time sexual partners in an open-ended question, as required by the SOI, the SOI-R asks participants to choose a response from nine ordinal scale options ranging from "0" to "20 or more." The measure was reliable ($\alpha=.87$), and all items were averaged for a total sociosexuality score. Thus, scores on the SOI-R can range from 1 to 9.

Dominant Strategy Use and Reception

We used the same measure as Study 1. Women indicated the level of desirability of dominant initiation strategies and men indicated their use of such strategies. The dominant strategy items were created in consultation with speed-seduction literature (e.g., Strauss 2005), and included items measuring three commonly identified strategies: competing, isolating, and teasing. To determine if the three sub-factors were supported in the data, we conducted an exploratory factor analysis using promax oblique rotation and principal axis factors, recommended for correlated factors (Fabrigar et al. 1999; Floyd and Widaman 1995; Russell 2002). The analysis was conducted separately for men and women. More than half of the variance (55.5% for women; 53.8% for men) was explained by a 3-factor solution, which was consistent with our theorized assertive approach strategy categories. The three factors were reliable and included Compete (four items, women $\alpha=.79$, men $\alpha=.70$), Isolate (four items, women $\alpha=.76$, men $\alpha=.74$), and Tease (six items, women $\alpha=.73$, men $\alpha=.80$). The total dominant courtship strategy use/appeal scores (the average of all 14 items) were reliable as well (females: $\alpha=.85$; males: $\alpha=.84$).

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Like in Study 1, a MANOVA was conducted to examine whether there were gender differences on any variables. We first examined potential gender differences on the demographic variables as potential variables to be controlled for in the subsequent analyses. The multivariate test showed an overall effect of gender (Wilks' Lambda), $F(4, 830)=3.14$, $p=.014$. The univariate tests revealed no gender differences in state of residence, ethnicity, or education level. However, women (mean age=31.46; $SD=12.59$) were significantly younger than men (mean age=34.27; $SD=13.62$) in this sample, $F(1, 833)=9.03$, $p=.003$. Because of this difference the reported results in all subsequent analyses control for age.

We next examined any gender differences on the predictor variables with MANOVA. Scores on the BS, HS, and sociosexuality scales were entered as dependent variables and age was entered as a covariate. Because the

multivariate test showed an overall effect of gender (Wilks' Lambda), $F(3, 845)=63.63$, $p<.001$, we examined each variable separately by gender. As in [Study 1](#), univariate tests revealed that men scored significantly higher than women on HS, BS, and sociosexuality, $p<.001$ (see [Table 1](#)). Correlations among the predictor variables were evaluated separately by gender. For men and women, BS was positively correlated with HS and negatively correlated with SOI-R scores. HS was not correlated with SOI-R scores for men or women (see [Table 2](#)).

Predictors of Dominant Strategy Use/Appeal

Based on the results of [Study 1](#), we expected that HS, BS, and sociosexuality would predict women's positive reception to assertive strategies used by men. For men, sociosexuality was expected to predict the use of assertive strategies. Like in [Study 1](#), multiple regression analysis was conducted separately for men and women. Each of the predictor variables—HS, BS, and SOI scores—and the interaction effects among HS and SOI and BS and SOI were entered simultaneously, controlling for age. Scores were mean centered separately for men and women prior to regression analyses. Tests indicated low levels of multicollinearity ($VIF<1.5$ for all variables).

In partial support of H1, but in contrast to the findings of [Study 1](#), for men, HS was a significant predictor of assertive strategy use, $B=.18$, $SE=.04$, $\beta=.25$, $t(298)=4.39$, $p<.001$. Confirming the results of [Study 1](#), BS did not predict assertive strategy use. In support of H3 and [Study 1](#), sociosexuality, $B=.17$, $SE=.03$, $\beta=.34$, $t(298)=6.45$, $p<.001$, positively predicted using assertive strategies. For men, the independent variables explained 23% of the variance in assertive strategy use, $R^2=.23$. The interactions were not significant.

For women, H2, H4, and [Study 1](#) were supported in that HS, $B=.16$, $SE=.04$, $\beta=.20$, $t(538)=4.50$, $p<.001$; BS, $B=.13$, $SE=.04$, $\beta=.16$, $t(538)=3.50$, $p<.001$; and sociosexuality, $B=.19$, $SE=.02$, $\beta=.32$, $t(538)=8.03$, $p<.001$, all uniquely predicted finding assertive strategies desirable, $R^2=.23$. These results replicated those found in [Study 1](#). However, in [Study 1](#) there was a significant interaction between HS and sociosexuality, and that interaction did not reach significance in [Study 2](#) ($p=.067$). Like in [Study 1](#), the interaction between BS and sociosexuality was also not significant.

We separately analyzed each of the assertive strategy factors for men and women using multiple regression (see [Table 3](#)). For women, sociosexuality, BS, and HS positively predicted the appeal of isolating and competing approach strategies. In addition, HS and sociosexuality predicted the appeal of teasing strategies among women. For women, only BS failed to predict the appeal of teasing strategies. Among men, socio-

sexuality and HS predicted the use of isolating, competing, and teasing strategies. BS predicted the use of competing strategies, but did not predict the use of isolating or teasing strategies for men.

Discussion

Results of [Study 2](#) were mainly consistent with the results of [Study 1](#), indicating that sociosexuality was predictive of assertive strategy use (H3) and reception (H4), and that HS and BS were associated with females' reception of men's assertive strategy use (H2). Additionally, in [Study 2](#), we found a relationship that was not found in [Study 1](#). Specifically, that HS predicted assertive strategy use among men (H1). Thus, men who have negative attitudes toward women and believe women are a threat to male dominance are more likely to use assertive strategies during courtship. This may serve a goal of "putting women in their place"—in a submissive or yielding role during courtship. Women who have negative attitudes about members of their own gender find men who treat them in a dominant way during courtship more desirable because it is consistent with their sexist ideology. In addition, for both genders an unrestricted attitude toward sex predicted assertive strategy use and preference. This suggests that short-term mating may be facilitated by assertive strategy use among men and a positive reception from women.

Analyses of the three assertive strategies (i.e., isolate, compete, tease) indicated that for women, HS, BS, and sociosexuality predicted the appeal of each of the strategies, except that BS was not associated with women's preference for being teased. BS was also not predictive of men using teasing strategies either. This is likely because individuals high in BS believe that women are delicate and should be protected by men, thus insulting comments would likely be interpreted as offensive and disrespectful. For men, BS did not predict the use of the isolating strategies. Thus, isolating women during courtship initiation may be deemed too forward for 'delicate' and 'helpless' women. High BS men still appear to use the competing tactic, however, as it shows their dominance over other men, rather than over women. For individuals high on HS and sociosexuality, teasing, isolating, and competing strategies were used by men and preferred by women. Therefore, all three of these strategies may be used (or preferred) in pursuit of a short-term mating partner, and/or they may be indicative of sexist attitudes. These types of competitive behaviors allow a man to show his dominance over other men and prove that he is a worthy pursuer, while isolation may allow him to then display his dominance over a woman directly.

Table 3 Multiple regressions predicting dominant approach factors among women and men in Study 2

	Men				Women			
	B	SE	β	<i>t</i>	B	SE	β	<i>t</i>
Isolate								
HS	.19	.05	.21	3.71**	.19	.05	.18	3.88**
BS	.04	.05	.04	.69	.15	.05	.14	3.00*
SOI-R	.23	.03	.36	6.73**	.29	.03	.36	9.00**
Tease								
HS	.21	.05	.23	4.03**	.14	.04	.17	3.68**
BS	−.09	.05	−.10	1.66	.01	.04	.01	.13
SOI-R	.19	.03	.28	5.45**	.15	.03	.23	5.63**
Compete								
HS	.10	.05	.12	1.95*	.14	.05	.13	2.80*
BS	.10	.05	.12	1.96*	.32	.05	.28	5.97**
SOI-R	.10	.03	.17	3.05*	.17	.03	.21	5.08**

Separate multiple regressions were conducted for each assertive strategy factor separately for women and men. *HS* Hostile Sexism, *BS* Benevolent Sexism, *SOI-R* sociosexuality. For men, $df=300$, for women, $df=540$. Age was controlled for in all analyses

* $p \leq .05$ ** $p < .001$

General Discussion

The purpose of the current studies was to explore the predictors of men's reported use of and women's reported reception to assertive courtship strategies, similar to those espoused in popular media (i.e., *The Game*, *The Pickup Artist*). In support of the hypotheses, results from Study 1 suggested that sociosexuality positively predicted men's reported use of and women's reception to assertive courtship strategies. Additionally, for women, both indicators of ambivalent sexism predicted finding such strategies desirable. In Study 1, among women an interaction effect was detected, where women with a combination of an unrestricted approach to sex and high HS preferred men's dominant strategy use the most. Study 2 mainly replicated Study 1 with a larger ($N=850$), older ($M_{age}=32.6$), and unmarried sample. Study 2 found robust support for most of the hypothesized relationships, suggesting that HS and sociosexuality uniquely and positively predicted the reported use of such strategies by men and the reported desirability of such strategies by women. The relationship between BS and general assertive strategies, however, was unique to women. In addition, despite (or perhaps due to) the diversity of the second sample, a larger percent of the variance was accounted for in Study 2 (men $R^2=.23$, women $R^2=.23$) in comparison to Study 1 (men $R^2=.09$, women $R^2=.21$). The results are interpreted in light of past research on sociosexuality and sexism below.

Sociosexuality and Courtship

In demonstrating that sociosexuality was a robust and consistent predictor of men's use of and women's receptiveness to assertive courtship strategies, the present investigation provides evidence for the association between assertive and persistent courtship strategies and interest in short-term mating (McDaniel 2005; Urbaniak and Kilmann 2006). In using and responding positively to these strategies, individuals who are seeking short-term sex are able to identify one another. This supports past research suggesting that messages that convey dominance and relational control are more likely to be interpreted as conveying sexual interest (Hall et al. 2008; Lannutti and Monahan 2002). By conveying an interest in short-term, rather than long-term relational interest, partners are able to efficiently increase the possibility that such a relationship will transpire.

Courtship and Sexism

Several past studies have attempted to explain when and why women would find 'jerks' (McDaniel 2005; Urbaniak and Kilmann 2003, 2006) and obnoxious men (Herold and Milhausen 1999) desirable, and why women would respond positively to controlling and negative pick-up lines (Hall et al. 2008). Underscoring the rationale of several of these investigations is that the exemplar 'jerk' is necessarily a sexist man (McDaniel 2005; Urbaniak and Kilmann 2003, 2006). Investigations into the ambivalent

sexism construct have revealed that sexism does indeed play a role in selecting the preferred qualities of romantic partners (Johannesen-Schmidt and Eagly 2002; Travaglia et al. 2009). The present investigation extends past research by demonstrating that sexism also affects the types of courtship strategies that men use and women find appealing.

Although sexism did not predict the use of assertive strategies for men in Study 1, HS was a strong predictor of men's strategy use in Study 2. One explanation for the different findings is that all of the participants in Study 1 were undergraduate students. Past research on the collegiate hook-up culture (Paul 2006) and fraternity parties (Boswell and Spade 1996) suggests that assertive strategies may be culturally reinforced for men in such environments. That is, the use of assertive courtship behaviors may be culturally reinforced behaviors for college men. By comparison, Study 2 revealed that men who use assertive strategies during the first stages of courtship are more likely to espouse HS beliefs toward women. This finding is not merely a product of sample size (i.e., the ability for large samples to detect small effect sizes) because of the substantial amount of variance in men's strategy use explained in Study 2 ($R^2=.23$). An additional explanation for the predictive value of HS in Study 2 is that attitudes about women are more egalitarian among men on college campuses, and the second sample included participants throughout the U.S. Although mean HS scores did not differ for men between samples, the variance was greater in the national sample. For the undergraduate sample, two-thirds of the men scored between 3.36 and 3.82 on the HS measure, while in the national sample, two-thirds of the men scored between 3.18 and 4.18 on the same measure. The restriction of range of HS for men in Study 1 may have attenuated the relationship between HS and dominant strategies. Whatever the explanation, the results of Study 2 offer strong support for the finding that for men HS plays an important role in the use of assertive relationship initiation strategies.

For women, the relationship between sexism and courtship strategies was consistent between study samples. In both studies, women who scored higher on HS and BS were more receptive to men who used assertive strategies. Why women adopt sexist attitudes has been a frequent topic of inquiry in past research (Bohner et al. 2010; Lee et al. 2010; Moya et al. 2007). As Moya et al. (2007) point out, when affectionate behaviors are blended with dominant and manipulative tactics, women often find it difficult to distinguish men's desire to care from men's desire to control. Cunningham and Barbee (2008) identify the subtle use of manipulative mating strategies for the purpose of partner control as

parasitic. The results of the present investigation extend both perspectives by demonstrating that parasitic courtship behaviors are predicted by men's and women's underlying HS. Assertive courtship messages used by men convey dominance through relational control (Hall et al. 2008; Lannutti and Monahan 2002), and in doing so they appear to confirm women's underlying conception of the relationship between men and women. This suggests that men and women who believe women can be isolated and teased into sex have a low regard for women in general. Using an item from the HS scale as an example, it stands to reason that men and women who think that feminists make too much of men's sexually aggressive behavior would also find such behavior acceptable in their own dating life.

Taken together, the results of the present studies suggest that assertive courtship strategies are a form of mutual identification of similarly sexist attitudes shared between courtship partners. The present investigation supports the concept that women who adopt sexist attitudes are more likely to prefer men who adopt similar attitudes (Bohner et al. 2010). That is, individuals' sexism affects their preference for sexism in opposite-gender partners. Not only do sexist men and women prefer mates who are representative of gender ideals (Lee et al. 2010; Travaglia et al. 2009), but the present investigation demonstrates that they prefer courtship strategies that enact gender ideology inherent to the courtship script (i.e., men as aggressor, women as gatekeeper). Indeed, we found that certain people prefer the particular types of strategies espoused by speed-seduction gurus. Specifically, competitive and isolating tactics are preferred by both men and women high in HS or by women high in BS, while teasing tactics are uniquely preferred by individuals high in HS, perhaps due to benevolent sexists' views that women should be protected and cherished by men, not teased with back-handed compliments. Consistent with this perspective is the finding that women who adopt more sexist attitudes are more agreeable to aggressive sexual advances by men (Chapleau et al. 2007).

What is particularly concerning about this apparent matching between men's behavior and women's receptivity during courtship, is that HS is related to the use of sexual coercion by men (Forbes et al. 2004; Masser et al. 2006) and BS is related to higher rape myth acceptance for both men and women (Chapleau et al. 2007). One of the premises of this investigation was that by using assertive courtship tactics men are identifying like-minded women both in terms of sexist attitudes and sociosexuality. The results of this study suggest that the matching of men who use such strategies and women who are receptive to them would be a potentially dangerous combination in terms of unwanted sexual advances and the possibility of date rape.

This provides evidence that reifying traditional gender ideology during courtship can socialize and make acceptable men's sexual aggression (Boswell and Spade 1996).

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

The current research has some limitations. Some of the three dominant strategy subscale measures had somewhat low reliabilities, which is a limitation. As an additional limitation, participants self-reported their use of and receptiveness to assertive strategies. It is unknown whether these results would be behaviorally replicated in a real-world courtship context. Although we predict that assertive strategies allow men and women to engage in assortment mating, future research should examine the ideologies and strategies of people who have successfully initiated a relationship. Dyadic research involving both people involved in courtship may provide insight into the effectiveness of assertive strategies as a type of assortment mechanism.

Although Study 2 had a diverse sample from multiple countries, the present investigation focused on assertive courtship in the U.S. only. Attitudes about courtship and sexism vary by country (Glick et al. 2004; Lee et al. 2010). Therefore, it is likely that the relationships among sexism, sociosexuality, and assertive strategy use and preference may differ among countries. Future research should initiate a theoretically grounded approach as to whether similar effects can be detected both within and between countries, and whether differences in gender ideology at the national level can help to explain the use and acceptance of assertive courtship strategies.

The present investigation explored only men's assertive courtship strategies, therefore future research should explore females' use of assertive strategies and male receptivity from the perspective of ambivalent sexism. The creation of a new measurement of assertive strategy use and appeal will aid in future work on this topic. Future research should also explore what happens when the assertive strategies are used and desired, but for differing motivations. For instance, a woman may be high in BS and prefer assertive strategies, but low in sociosexuality, thus be uninterested in a short-term relationship. The man adopting the assertive approach may be looking for a short-term relationship or, alternatively, because he is sexist. Thus, there could end up being a challenging mismatch in relationship goals. The mismatch of mating intentions may help to better account for miscommunication that occurs during the early development of romantic relationships, especially in hook-up or short-term mating relationships (Paul and Hayes 2002).

Appendix A: Dominant Strategy Use and Reception

Instructions for female participants: The following is a list of possible strategies that men use to pick up a woman. Imagine a guy who is interested in you uses the following strategies. Rate how desirable a man is who uses each of the strategies. Please indicate the desirability of the strategies from 1 (not at all desirable) to 7 (very desirable).

Instructions for male participants: Imagine you are going to try to pick up a woman you are interested in. Consider your general approach to picking up women when evaluating the following possible strategies that men use. For each strategy, try to accurately estimate how often you use that strategy when you are trying to pick up a woman from 1 (never) to 7 (all the time)

Compete

9. Compete with other men who are interested in you/her
10. Even if you are/she is with another guy, he tries/you try to pick you/her up
12. If you reject him/she rejects you, he/you wouldn't give up easily
13. If you get/she gets defensive, he/you wouldn't let up

Isolate

4. Make/s sexual comments about what he'd/you'd do to you/her
5. Try to get you/her alone
7. Let you/her know he is/you are in control
8. Find out if you/she came to the party alone, so he/you can take control of the situation

Tease

1. Teases you/her
2. Gives you/Give her a hard time
3. Picks on you/Pick on her appearance or behavior
6. Be a little insulting to you/her
11. He acts/You act like a bit of a jerk
14. He makes/You would make a few jokes at your/her expense

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