



Devaluation of Women's Sexual Pleasure: Role of Relationship Context and Endorsement of the Madonna-Whore Dichotomy

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Abstract

In two pre-registered experiments with German samples, we tested the role of endorsement of the Madonna-whore-dichotomy and the relationship context (sex in a committed relationship vs. casual sex) in the devaluation of women's sexual pleasure. Using the context of dating apps in Study 1, men who reported higher endorsement of the Madonna-whore-dichotomy believed that other men would be less interested in fulfilling a woman's sexual desires, show her less respect, and be less likely to wear a condom independent of relationship context (i.e., casual hookup dating app vs. a dating app for a serious relationship). In Study 2, men who reported higher endorsement of the Madonna-whore-dichotomy rated their partner as less entitled to sexual pleasure than men lower on Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement. In addition, women who reported higher endorsement of the Madonna-whore dichotomy devalued their own pleasure by rating their partner as more entitled to sexual pleasure than themselves, compared to those lower on the Madonna-whore dichotomy. Although relationship context and Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement did not interact, they were both found to negatively predict women's sexual pleasure. These results provide further support for the potential costs of enacting traditional, patriarchal gender roles for women's experiences of sexual pleasure and safety.

Keywords Madonna-whore-dichotomy · Sexual pleasure · Gender inequality · Orgasm gap · Orgasm · Sexism · Relationship context

When using orgasm as a marker of sexual pleasure, men report having more orgasms than women, a phenomenon referred to as the orgasm gap (for a review see Mahar et al., 2020). Scientists and the lay public widely recognize these differences in orgasm capacity as variously innate and biological-determined (e.g., Andrejek et al., 2022; Wetzel & Sanchez, 2022), though previous theories attributing

anatomical or biological reasons for women's lower experience of sexual pleasure (i.e., reduced likelihood of experiencing orgasms) have been consistently discredited (for a review see Conley & Klein, 2022; Laan et al., 2021). More robust explanations point to sociocultural rather than biological mechanisms (Conley et al., 2011; Mahar et al., 2020; Matsick et al., 2016), and the culturally shared beliefs that privilege men's sexual pleasure over women's in Westernized societies (Herbenick et al., 2018; Klein & Conley, 2022). More research is needed to understand and identify the social psychological mechanisms underlying the reduced interest in women's sexual pleasure, and in particular the role of gender beliefs and attitudes that devalue and disadvantage women (Wade et al., 2005; Wade, 2015).

Women's sexual pleasure is viewed as more complicated and an "extra" (more than an essential) part of heterosexual sexual interactions (Wade et al., 2005). Women are portrayed as experiencing orgasms only with great difficulty and not caring about orgasms, while men "need" orgasms for their sexual fulfillment and accordingly are "entitled" to them (Klein & Conley, 2022). Studies have found that men

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are less interested in their partner's orgasm than women (Barnett et al., 2018), men are perceived as more entitled to have orgasms than women by both women and men (Klein & Conley, 2022), and sex is considered to end after the man has climaxed (Jozkowski & Satinsky, 2013; Opperman et al., 2014). Expanding the current literature, the goal of the present work was to test the role of the relationship context and endorsement of the Madonna-whore-dichotomy in the devaluation of women's sexual pleasure.

Endorsement of the Madonna-Whore Dichotomy and Women's Sexual Pleasure

We theorize that the endorsement of sexist attitudes is a significant factor contributing to the disregard for women's pleasure. In the current study, we focused on a patriarchal mechanism that may explain the weak interest in and devaluation of women's sexual pleasure—the endorsement of a dichotomous set of stereotypes about women as either good, chaste, and pure Madonnas or as bad, promiscuous, and seductive whores (Bareket et al., 2018; Japko, 2023; Kahalon et al., 2019; Tanzer, 1985; Tavis & Wade, 1984), which is known as the Madonna-whore dichotomy. It was hypothesized that men who endorse this polarized perception of women express affection and respect for women they perceive as modest, despite not actually being drawn to them. Conversely, they are attracted to women they consider promiscuous, yet simultaneously despise and devalue them (Hartmann, 2009; Tanzer, 1985; Tavis & Wade, 1984).

Past research has shown that for men, endorsing the Madonna-whore dichotomy is associated with a series of patriarchy-enhancing ideologies (Bareket et al., 2018; Japko, 2023; Kahalon et al., 2019) such as social dominance orientation (a preference for hierarchical social structures), gender-specific system justification (a desire to maintain the existing gender system), sexist attitudes in the form of benevolent and hostile sexism, and sexual objectification of women, suggesting that Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement may be associated with wider social views about the deservingness of different gender groups. Consequently, these results were said to support the feminist view of the Madonna-whore dichotomy, by showing that endorsing this belief in women serves to promote male dominance over women. Accordingly, the Madonna-whore-dichotomy was also positively associated with the endorsement of sexual double standards (i.e., having favorable views of sexual activity for men but not for women). Therefore, people who score high on the Madonna-whore dichotomy seem to devalue sexually permissive women, whereas sexually permissive behaviors are valued in men. This finding provides an initial indication that the endorsement of the

Madonna-whore dichotomy as a trait is associated with negative perceptions of women and potential behaviors towards them within the sexual context. In other words, these dichotomous stereotypes can be used to penalize women for being sexually autonomous, and to control women (Japko, 2023).

Beyond the possible social effects such beliefs can have on women, the endorsement of the Madonna-whore dichotomy was shown to negatively affect men as well. Specifically, heterosexual men who endorse the Madonna-whore dichotomy were found to have reduced relationship and sexual satisfaction, as indicated by self-report measures (Bareket et al., 2018; Kahalon et al., 2019). These results support the psychoanalytic literature on the Madonna-whore dichotomy, which discusses it as a potential troubling experience for heterosexual men which in turn might result in relationship dysfunction (Hartmann, 2009; Josephs, 2006; Silverstein, 1998), and an inability to maintain sexual interest within a committed relationship (Kaplan, 1988). This result is in line with the feminist view that sexist attitudes have negative consequences for heterosexual dating (Alba et al., 2023) and romantic relationships (e.g., Hammond & Overall, 2013). Although previous research did not find support for such an association among women, it was suggested that women's relationship and sexual satisfaction are affected by the Madonna-whore dichotomy in indirect ways (Kahalon et al., 2019). For example, it is possible that women's partners endorsement of the Madonna-Whore dichotomy negatively affects their sexual and/or relationship satisfaction irrespectively to their own endorsement. Another possibility is that women's endorsement of the Madonna-Whore dichotomy is associated with the devaluation of their own pleasure. In this case, it is possible that high endorsement of the Madonna-Whore dichotomy will be associated with the perception that they are less entitled to sexual pleasure than their partners.

Based on the above, in the proposed research we tested the Madonna-Whore dichotomy as a potential mechanism contributing to the devaluation of women's pleasure. We predicted that people who score high on the Madonna-whore dichotomy will devalue women who they perceive to be sexually permissive and devalue their sexual pleasure.

Relationship Context and the Madonna-Whore Dichotomy

There have been recent calls in the social psychological literature to incorporate context into what shapes human behavior, beyond the sole use of social categories in research and theorizing (Cikara et al., 2022). Responding to this call, in the present research we also examined relationship context as a possible contextual predictor of the devaluation of women's

sexual pleasure. Previous findings support the role of context in women's sexual pleasure, by showing that women experience higher orgasm rates in committed relationships compared to casual sexual encounter activity (Armstrong et al., 2009, 2012; Conley et al., 2013; Mahar et al., 2020; Piemonte et al., 2019). This decrease in the orgasm gap can be mainly attributed to the fact that male partners provide more clitoral stimulation to their partners in committed relationships than in casual ones which increases the likelihood of women's orgasm experiences (Armstrong et al., 2012). Moreover, committed partnerships often provide more time for men to understand their partners' desires, improve their skills at satisfying them, and feel a greater sense of responsibility for their partners' pleasure (Laumann et al., 1994; Waite & Joyner, 2001). Additionally, in a committed relationship, sexual likes and dislikes might be more openly discussed and a shared learning curve is more possible than in casual contact (Armstrong et al., 2009). Although men in committed relationships tend to be more proactive and knowledgeable about their partners' orgasms, they seem to be more selfish in casual sexual encounters. For example, female college students in the U.S. bring their male partners to orgasm through oral sex during hookups but, conversely, rarely receive oral sex from their male partners (England et al., 2012; Jozkowski & Satinsky, 2013).

Considering the Madonna-Whore dichotomy as a trait and analyzing the interactions with the relationship context, that is, whether the encounter took part in the context of casual sex (i.e., casual hookup dating apps) or within a committed relationship (i.e., dating apps for finding a serious relationship) can provide a fruitful first step. Specifically, we propose that a key reason contributing to the relatively large, gendered orgasm gap in casual relationships is that the casual context is highly interwoven with patriarchal and sexist attitudes that privilege heterosexual men's pleasure over women's. One could argue that within the casual context, men who more strongly endorse the Madonna-whore dichotomy would be more likely to view these women as the "whore," whereas, in the context of committed relationships, men who more strongly endorse the Madonna-whore dichotomy would view these women as the "Madonna." Based on this line of reasoning, two predictions are possible. Since men who more strongly endorse the Madonna-whore dichotomy view promiscuous women (i.e., whores) in a derogating and objectifying manner (Bareket et al., 2018; Kahalon et al., 2019), it is likely that they will care less about the sexual pleasure of these women (in comparison to the context of a serious relationship). Yet, men who endorse the Madonna-whore dichotomy may also care less about women's sexual pleasure in the context of committed relationships since they perceive them as chaste (i.e., Madonna) because they do not view women as sexual

beings with needs and desires of their own (Hartmann, 2009). Therefore, an alternative prediction is that men who more strongly endorse the Madonna-whore dichotomy will also see women as less entitled to sexual pleasure independent of the context. By examining the person-situation interactions, we can gain further insights into the influence of the Madonna-whore dichotomy on women and extend past research focused on men's sexual satisfaction (Bareket et al., 2018; Kahalon et al., 2019).

The Present Research

In two pre-registered experiments, we manipulated the relationship context to explore whether men's sexist beliefs manifest differently in casual versus committed relationships. In Study 1 (https://aspredicted.org/DT8_115), using the popular context of dating apps, we examined whether the endorsement of the Madonna-whore dichotomy and relationship context affect the devaluation of women's sexual pleasure among men (i.e., how women are perceived and treated in hypothetical sexual encounters). In Study 2 (<https://osf.io/f47aw>), we manipulated the relationship context in a hypothetical scenario (in which participants were asked to imagine themselves in a committed relationship or a casual hook-up) to examine if the devaluation of women's pleasure (i.e., interest in the partner's orgasm and entitlement to sexual pleasure) changes as a function of the relationship context and Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement. Extending past research, we not only looked at men's devaluation of women's pleasure but also included women's devaluation of women's pleasure in Study 2. This allowed us to test if women's endorsement of the Madonna-whore dichotomy is associated with less interest in their own pleasure/orgasms among women. Any deviations from the pre-registrations are mentioned in the text. Data files, syntaxs and study protocols are available on OSF: <https://osf.io/jk37h>. The studies received IRB approval from the author's home institution.

Study 1

In Study 1, we examined virtual relationship contexts in the form of dating apps. We chose the domain of dating apps for two primary reasons. First, over the past few years, the popularity of dating apps has risen substantially (for a review see Wu & Trottier, 2022), making them a realistic setting for an experiment. Second, the wide variety of apps available caters to different intended relational outcomes. Some dating apps focus on seeking casual sexual encounters, while others emphasize finding committed relationships, providing us

with the opportunity to manipulate the relationship context using authentic, real-life scenarios. Consequently, we varied the relationship context to portray a woman using an app to seek a committed relationship or an app to find a casual hook-up. We then assessed the Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement. We first examined how these factors influence how men perceive women on dating apps. We incorporated (a) a set of person perception variables to examine whether men high on the Madonna-whore dichotomy judge women differently based on the context of the relationship (casual sex versus committed relationship). We included this perception variable because it is highly probable that women who are perceived negatively will also be treated poorly. We then measured how the Madonna-whore-dichotomy and the relationship context contribute to perceived intentions toward women with a focus on the devaluation of their pleasure, which was assessed by testing: (b) men's inclination to devalue a potential female partner's pleasure, (c) their tendency to exhibit disrespectful behavior, and (d) condom use refusal as a form of sexual violence against women.

Our predictions were as follows: Hypothesis 1 (H1): Men high in Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement will perceive women in the hookup app condition more negatively than women in the committed relationship app context (i.e., an interaction between the virtual context and Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement). Hypothesis 2 (H2): Men high in Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement will be less likely to be interested in meeting the targets' sexual needs (H2a), to respect the target (H2b), and to report safe sex intentions (i.e., condom use) (H2c) in the hookup context in comparison to the relationship context (i.e., an interaction between the virtual context and Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement).

Method

Participants and Procedure

A power analysis revealed that at least 356 participants are needed to detect a small-medium interaction of $f^2=0.03$ with 80% power and two predictors. We recruited 509 German male participants through the Clickworker survey company (2.50 Euro compensation). Clickworker is an online crowdsourcing marketplace where workers can complete different task for varying compensation. Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 75 years ($M=34.38$, $SD=10.63$). Concerning their relationship status, 221 participants indicated being single, 276 indicated in a relationship, and 12 participants preferred not to provide an answer. All participants self-identified as heterosexual.

After providing informed consent, participants were asked about their age, gender, and sexual orientation. They were then randomly assigned to one of the two conditions where they were presented with either a dating profile of a woman active on a dating app for committed relationships or on a hookup app. The study was advertised for heterosexual men and participants were told that the study was about dating app usage behavior. Participants then viewed a fictitious dating profile for a target individual named Anna or Julia (the name was counterbalanced). Since participants were heterosexual men, they were presented with the other binary gender target's profile (i.e., a woman). Each profile contained the target's name, age, and unidentifiable photo, which was held constant across all conditions. To place the information about the app type, in the dating app for committed relationships condition, targets' profiles read: "This is Julia. She recently signed up for a dating site designed to help singles find a partner." Participants in the hookup app condition read: "This is Julia. She recently signed up for an app that is usually used for casual sex."

After viewing the dating profile, participants answered a manipulation check that tested whether participants indeed evaluated the women in the hookup app as more interested in different sexual practices. They then completed the measures of the dependent variables: (a) perception of the target, (b) men's inclination to devalue a potential female partner's pleasure, (c) their tendency to exhibit disrespectful behavior, and (d) condom use refusal. Finally, participants filled out a measure assessing their level of Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement. At the end of the study, participants provided additional demographic information and were thanked and debriefed. Note that we also measured the target's dehumanization. For brevity, and due to the low reliability of the dehumanization measure in our study, these results are presented in the OSF Appendix: <https://osf.io/jk37h/>.

Measures

Manipulation Check

To test whether the woman in the hookup app condition was perceived as more sexually interested than the woman on the relationship dating app, participants completed a 6-item manipulation check. Using a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*very interested*) to 6 (*not interested at all*), participants were asked to rate the following items: "Hypothetically speaking: What sexual practices do you think the woman would be interested in on a first date?" Afterward, they were presented with the following sexual practices: kissing, breast touching, genital touching, oral sex, penile vaginal intercourse (PVI), and anal sex. Practices were summed, such that higher numbers represent men belief

that the woman is more interest in various sexual activities ($\alpha=0.91$).

Madonna-Whore-Dichotomy Endorsement

Participants completed the 9-item German version (Kahalon et al., 2019) of the *Madonna-Whore Dichotomy* scale (Bareket et al., 2018), which assesses the tendency to view women's nurturance and sexuality as mutually exclusive (e.g., "A sexy woman is usually not a good mother") and negative views toward promiscuous women (e.g., "Women who are interested in and very liberal about sex are often problematic in terms of their personality"). The items were rated on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Items were averaged; higher scores indicated stronger endorsement of the Madonna-whore dichotomy, $\alpha=0.88$). Past research among Israeli, U.S. American, and German men and women (Bareket et al., 2018; Kahalon et al., 2019) found support for a unidimensional factorial structure of the Madonna-whore dichotomy scale via both exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses. The validity of scores on the Madonna-whore dichotomy was previously supported by its positive correlations with ideologies that reinforce patriarchal arrangements and reduced satisfaction in romantic relationships, even when controlling for ambivalent sexism (Bareket et al., 2018; Kahalon et al., 2019).

Perception of the Target

Participants completed semantic differential scales reflecting their perception of the woman presented in the app ("I think Julia/Anna is..."). Participants rated how (1) good-bad, (2) dirty-clean, (3) moral-immoral, (4) sexually attractive-sexually unattractive, and (5) promiscuous-chaste they perceived the target (Conley et al., 2013). Each item was rated on a 6-point scale, such that higher scores indicated more negative perceptions (e.g., where 1 is "good" and 6 is "bad"). These scale items have been used in previous person-perception experiments (Conley et al., 2013; Klein et al., 2021).

Intentions

Intentions were measured with three separate items: (1) Interest in fulfilling the target sexual needs: participants were asked: "Hypothetically speaking, a man who meets Julia/Anna when it comes to sex would be interested in fulfilling Anna's sexual needs?", (2) Respect: "Hypothetically speaking, a man who meets Julia/Anna, when it comes to sex would treat Julia/Anna with respect?", and (3) Condom usage intention and consequently condom use refusal as a form of sexual violence against women: "Hypothetically

speaking, a man who meets Julia/Anna, when it comes to sex would use a condom?" Higher unwillingness to use a condom reflects more inclination to sexually violent behavior towards women (e.g., Bagwell-Gray, 2021). Asking about "another" man is a technique previously used in research that can be useful to avoid social desirability bias (Spokes et al., 2014). Participants rated the three items on a 6-point scale ranging from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 6 (*totally agree*), with higher scores indicating more positive behavioral intentions.

Results

Regression analyses were conducted for each of the dependent variables of interest. The predictor variables were the relationship context (coded such that app for hookup purposes=0; app for committed relationship=1), Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement (standardized), and their two-way interaction, and entered in the model in this order. Missing data analysis showed that approximately 35% of the cases and 25% of the values had missing data. Little's MCAR test (Little, 1988) suggested that the data was missing completely at random, $\chi^2(37)=43.96, p=.201$. We used listwise deletion.

Manipulation Check

A *t*-test was conducted to test whether the manipulation of app type was successful. As expected, the target was perceived as significantly more interested in different sexual practices in the context of a hookup app ($M=27.77, SD=7.99$) than in the context of a dating app for committed relationships ($M=20.27, SD=27.77$), $t(532)=10.27, p<.001$, Cohen's $d=0.85$.

Perception of the Target

The results for the target perception are displayed in Table 1. H1a was confirmed only for the perception of the target as moral-immoral. Relationship context and Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement were both significant. In addition, an interaction emerged between the two predictors. Interpreting the interaction suggested no difference between the contexts for those lower on Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement, *simple slope* = $-0.02(0.16), t = -0.11, p = .916$, while those who reported higher Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement judged the woman on the hookup app as less moral than the woman on the app for committed relationships, *simple slope* = $-0.64(0.16), t = -3.94, p < .001$.

As for the perception of the target as clean-dirty, a main effect was found for relationship context and

Table 1 Results of Regression Analyses on Target perception

	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>pr</i>
Moral-immoral					
Intercept	3.27	0.08		41.91***	
MWD	0.35	0.08	0.27	4.26***	0.19
Context	-0.33	0.11	-0.13	-2.86**	-0.13
MWD × Context	-0.31	0.11	-0.17	-2.72**	-0.12
$R^2 = 0.05, F(3,501) = 8.60^{***}$					
Clean-dirty					
Intercept	3.01	0.08		36.56***	
MWD	0.22	0.09	0.16	2.52*	0.11
context	-0.47	0.12	-0.17	-3.93***	-0.17
MWD × Context	-0.23	0.12	-0.12	-1.93	-0.09
$R^2 = 0.04, F(3,501) = 7.08^{***}$					
Innocent-promiscuous					
Intercept	3.95	0.08		39.84***	
MWD	0.09	0.08	0.07	1.15	0.05
Context	-0.54	0.11	-0.21	-4.85***	-0.21
MWD × Context	0.01	0.11	0.01	0.10	0.01
$R^2 = 0.05, F(3,501) = 8.92^{***}$					
Good-bad					
Intercept	2.96	0.09		34.65***	
MWD	0.08	0.09	0.06	0.91	0.04
Context	-0.002	0.13	-0.001	-0.02	-0.001
MWD × Context	0.03	0.12	0.02	0.26	0.01
$R^2 = 0.01, F(3,501) = 0.87$					
Attractive-unattractive					
Intercept	3.36	0.10		33.98***	
MWD	0.11	0.10	0.07	1.04	0.05
Context	0.20	0.14	0.06	1.41	0.06
MWD × Context	0.03	0.14	0.01	0.22	0.01
$R^2 = 0.01, F(3,501) = 1.76$					

Note. *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$. MWD = Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement.

Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement, such that women in the hookup app context and higher levels of Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement were associated with the perception of the target as dirtier. The interaction between the app context and Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement did not reach significance. As for the perceptions of the target as innocent-promiscuous; woman in the hookup app context was perceived as more promiscuous than on the relationship dating app context. No other effects of interaction were found. Finally, no main effect or interactions were found for the perception of the target as good-bad or attractive-unattractive.

Intentions

Intentions, that is interest in fulfilling the targets' sexual desires, respect, and condom use, are presented in Table 2. Men higher on Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement reported that another man would be less interested in

Table 2 Results of Regression Analyses on Intentions

	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>pr</i>
Interest in Meeting the Target's Sexual Needs					
Intercept	3.94	0.09		44.37***	
Context	0.12	0.13	0.04	0.95	0.04
MWD	-0.23	0.09	-0.16	-2.42*	-0.11
MWD × Context	0.13	0.13	0.06	1.01	0.05
$R^2 = 0.02, F(3,505) = 2.56$					
Respect					
Intercept	4.10	0.08		48.60***	
Context	0.14	0.12	0.05	1.10	0.05
MWD	-0.19	0.09	-0.14	-2.14*	-0.10
MWD × Context	0.16	0.12	0.08	1.28	0.06
$R^2 = 0.01, F(3,505) = 1.93$					
Condom Use Intentions					
Intercept	4.71	0.08		58.90***	
Context	-0.11	0.12	-0.04	-0.91	-0.04
MWD	-0.27	0.08	-0.20	-3.18**	-0.14
MWD × Context	0.24	0.12	0.13	2.02*	0.09
$R^2 = 0.02, F(3,505) = 3.78^*$					

Note. *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$. MWD = Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement.

fulfilling the woman's sexual desires and will show her less respect. No effects were found for relationship context and no interactions were found. Therefore, H2a and H2b were not supported.

As for condom use intention, relationship context did not predict condom use intention, yet Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement did, such that men who were higher on Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement reported that another man would be less willing to use a condom. The interaction between Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement and relationship context was also significant, such that although no difference was found for those higher on Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement, *simple slope* = 0.13(0.17), $t = 0.75, p = .452$, those lower on Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement reported that another man would be more likely to use a condom with a woman who they met on a hook-up app in comparison to a woman they met on an app for committed relationships, *simple slope* = -0.35(0.17), $t = -2.07, p = .039$. Therefore, although an interaction emerged between the two factors, H3c was not supported. Note that we ran the analyses again while controlling for relationship status (coded as 1- "in a relationship" vs. 0- "not in a relationship"). Doing so did not change our statistical conclusions. The results of these analyses are available in the OSF appendix.

Discussion

Study 1 shows that those who reported higher Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement judged the woman on the hook-up app as less moral than the woman on the app for committed relationships. Those high on the Madonna-whore dichotomy also perceived women as dirtier irrespective of the relationship context. Men high on Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement also reported that other men would be less interested in fulfilling the woman's sexual desires, show her less respect, and be less willing to use a condom. Attributing the unwillingness to use a condom to other men can be understood as a form of sexual violence toward women since the women's physical integrity is not respected. It can also reflect prioritizing one's own pleasure, as condom use is often associated with men's decrease in pleasure (Randolph et al., 2007). Overall, these results suggest that Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement is an especially important predictor of men's intrusive behaviour toward women on dating apps, often independent of the relationship context examined.

That we mostly did not find the hypothesized interactions between the Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement and relationship context might be because men high on the Madonna-whore dichotomy tend to view women in dating apps in general as more promiscuous. This idea is in line with previous research showing that women often encounter disrespect, harassment, and misogyny in the online sexual marketplace such as dating apps (Thompson, 2018). Ample evidence indicates that women users may face intrusive behavior from men on online dating platforms, including harassment, unsolicited sexually explicit images, and even instances of sexual violence during app-facilitated meetings (Anderson et al., 2020; Chan, 2018; Gillett, 2021; Phan et al., 2021; Thompson, 2018).

Study 2

Study 2 had three purposes. First to answer the possible limitation of Study 1 that men high on the Madonna-whore dichotomy might view women on dating apps, in comparison to women who do not use dating apps, more negatively (i.e., promiscuous, dirtier) in general. Therefore, in Study 2 we applied a more general scenario as an experimental manipulation. Second, the devaluation of women's pleasure was assessed with two different variables—interest and entitlement. Answering about one's own interest (rather than other men's interest as in Study 1) might lead people to answer in a way that portrays them in a more positive light. In addition, one can be interested in their partners' orgasm, but less than their own orgasm. We, therefore, added an additional measure, sexual entitlement, which

allows us to test perceptions of who's orgasm is perceived as more important and deserved. This additional measure allowed us to test whether unequal importance is placed on men's orgasms compared to women's orgasms in heterosexual relationships, and whether this creates a lack of gender equality in sexual dynamics as observed in previous research (Klein & Conley, 2022).

Finally, Study 2 included both women and men. While in the present research we mostly focused on how men contribute to the devaluation of women's pleasure, it is also possible that higher Madonna-whore dichotomy beliefs among women might also affect women's own sexuality. Therefore, the third purpose of Study 2 was to examine whether women's own Madonna-whore-dichotomy endorsement is associated with the devaluation of women's (own) pleasure (i.e., their interest in their partner's orgasm and entitlement to sexual pleasure) and whether this is also affected by the relationship context (casual hookup sex vs. committed relationship sex). The feminist perspective on the Madonna-whore dichotomy suggests that this polarized perception of women affects women's self-perception and expression of their own sexuality (e.g., Wolf, 1997; Young, 1993). According to this perspective, a society in which women's sexuality is perceived in a binary way (i.e., as either promiscuous or chaste), pressures women to follow the chaste path or else they are at risk of being perceived as unsuitable for long-term relationships (Fassinger & Arseneau, 2008). This might lead women to feel ashamed about their sexual desires, and reduce their sexual agency (Tolman, 2002). In turn, women might devalue their own pleasure by perceiving themselves as less entitled to sexual pleasure in sexual encounters and place more importance on their partners' orgasms to avoid being perceived as promiscuous by their partners. Our predictions were as follows: Hypothesis 1 (H1): Men will report less interest in their partner's orgasms (H1a) and greater sexual entitlement (H1b) than women do (i.e., main effects for gender). Hypothesis 2 (H2): Within committed relationships, men (H2a) and women (H2b) will show more interest in their partners' orgasm compared to hookups (i.e., an ordinary interaction between relationship context and gender). Hypothesis 3 (H3): The relation between relationship context and Madonna-whore dichotomy would be different for men and women. For men, higher Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement would predict less interest in their partners' sexual satisfaction in both relationship context conditions (H3a). For women, higher Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement would predict more interest in their partners' orgasm in hookups compared to committed relationships. We did not expect a difference between the relationships contexts for women lower on Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement (H3b) Hypothesis 4 (H4): Men will feel more entitled to sexual pleasure in the

context of a hookup than in the context of a committed relationship (H4a), while the opposite pattern will be evident for women (i.e., higher sexual entitlement in the context of a committed relationship than a hookup, H4b) i.e., an interaction between relationship context and gender. Hypothesis 5 (H5): As for the interaction between relationship context and Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement we predicted that these would look different for men and women (i.e., an interaction between relationship context, MWD and gender). For men, we had two alternative predictions. On the one hand, for men who report higher Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement, the perceived entitlement of women to sexual pleasure will be significantly greater for women in a committed relationship compared to a casual hook-up, compared to men who report lower on Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement (i.e., an interaction between relationship context and MWD). On the other hand, it is plausible that men with higher Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement will perceive women in both relationship contexts as less entitled to sexual pleasure, compared to men who with lower Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement (i.e., a main effect of MWD but no interaction between relationship context and MWD), because women in a committed relationship are not perceived as sexual beings (H5a). As for women, we predicted that women who are higher on Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement, compared to women who are lower on Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement, will perceive themselves as less entitled to sexual pleasure in both relationship contexts, consistent with patriarchal beliefs about men's greater entitlement to sexual pleasure. We did not anticipate a difference between relationship contexts for women lower on Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement (i.e., an interaction between relationship context and MWD; H5b).

Method

Participants and Procedure

As we expected a small to medium effect size for a three-way interaction with a continuous variable, we aimed to recruit at least 1000 participants (Aguinis et al., 2005; Kenny, 2018). We were able to collect 1,179 German participants through a snowball sampling recruited through social media. Two participants who were younger than 18 years old were removed from the analysis. Of the remaining participants, 1124 indicated they were heterosexual ($n=1013$) or bisexual ($n=111$) and were included in the analysis. Of these participants, 606 identified as women (54%), 518 identified as men (46%), and 13 identified as non-binary. Due to the small number of non-binary participants, we did not include them in the analysis. The age range of those who

were included in the analysis ranged from 18 to 69 years ($M=29.56$, $SD=8.02$). Most participants indicated that they are in a committed relationship ($n=758$), whereas 365 participants indicated that they are single. Note that instead of collecting data from two samples as was stated in the pre-registration, we collected data from one larger sample with more power to detect the hypothesized interactions.

After giving informed consent, participants were asked to indicate their age, gender, and sexual orientation. After indicating their preferred gender of a sexual partner, participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions where they were asked to read about a casual sex scenario or sex within a committed relationship scenario. The hookup vignette included the following story: “*One Saturday evening you are going out to a bar. You are single and meet a (wo)man that night. Later that night, you are headed back to your apartment with her/him, for casual sex.*” In the committed relationship scenario vignette participants read the following story: “*One Saturday evening you are going out to a bar with your significant other. Later that night, you are headed back home, where you have sex.*”

After reading the assigned vignette, participants answered an awareness check in which they were asked to imagine if they were single or in a relationship. They then completed measures of the dependent variables: interest in partners' orgasm and sexual entitlement. Finally, they filled out a measure assessing their level of Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement. The Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement measure was administered after the manipulation to avoid revealing the purpose of the research. At the end of the study, participants provided additional demographic information and were thanked and debriefed. Note that for exploratory purposes we also measured participants' precarious manhood (Vandello et al., 2008) as a predictor and cunnilingus performance as a dependent variable. Interested readers can find the data set in the OSF. The results for these measures appear in the OSF Appendix.

Measures

Madonna-Whore-Dichotomy Endorsement

We used the same questionnaire as in Study 1. Z-scores were created separately for women, $\alpha=0.82$, and men $\alpha=0.83$.

Interest in Partner Orgasm

Participants responded to the 9-item version of the Interest in Partners' Orgasm Scale (IPOS; McKibbin et al., 2010) to assess the importance of a partner having an orgasm. Participants read the following instructions, which we have adapted for the purpose of our study: “Thinking about

the scenario you just read in which you and your partner have sex...”. The questionnaire covers four factors: Interest (two items, e.g., “How important is it to you for your partner to have an orgasm?”), persistence (two items, e.g., “How persistent would you be in making sure your partner has an orgasm?”), distress (three items, e.g., “How frustrated would you be if you thought your partner did not orgasm?”), and relief (two items, e.g., “How relieved would you be if you thought your partner had an orgasm?”). Participants answered the items on a scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 8 (*extremely*). The scores are summed so that higher scores indicate greater interest in the partner having an orgasm. Construct validity of the scale was supported in a sample of U.S. college students (McKibbin et al., 2010) by showing a positive correlation between men’s self-reported relationship satisfaction and interest in their partner having an orgasm. Two studies reported internal consistency of the scale ranging from Cronbach’s $\alpha=0.73$ to 0.88 in U.S. student samples (Barnett et al., 2018; McKibbin et al., 2010). The reliability in this study was high ($\alpha=0.83$).

Sexual Entitlement

Sexual entitlement was conceptualized as the participant’s tendency to prioritize their own or their partner’s sexual pleasure. Therefore, the participant’s and the partner’s orgasm were pitted against each other on a bipolar scale. Underlying its content validity, previous research has indicated that sexual pleasure is viewed as a privilege that men are more entitled to than women (see Klein & Conley, 2022). Three items measured the value of sexual pleasure for self and partner during sex (e.g., “Generally speaking, during a sexual encounter whose orgasm is more important?”) with a response scale ranging from 1 (*my orgasm*) to 9 (*my partner’s orgasm*). In the current study, internal consistency reliability was high, $\alpha=0.80$.

The interest in partners’ orgasms and sexual entitlement measures were translated into German by the first and second authors, who decided together which translation was

the most accurate in cases where there were discrepancies. The measures were then back-translated into English by a bilingual social psychology researcher. Comparisons were made between the original and back-translated versions, and where discrepancies existed, the authors worked with the bilingual researcher to resolve them.

Results

Before running the main analyses, we conducted an awareness check. Of the participants, 96.1% (1080 participants) indicated the correct response regarding the relationship status they read. We report the results without those who failed the awareness check in the OSF appendix. Note that the pattern of results remained the same when excluding these participants.

For the main analyses, we conducted two regression analyses, with interest in the partner’s orgasm and sexual entitlement as the dependent variables. The predictors were the relationship context (hookup=0 and committed relationship=1), Madonna-whore dichotomy (standardized), participant gender (women=0, men=1), and all two-way and three-way interactions (predictors were entered in the reported order). SPSS version 25.0 was used for the analyses. There were no missing values.

Interest in Partners’ Orgasm

As can be seen in Table 3, contrary to H1, men showed more interest in their partners’ orgasm than women did, and in general, Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement was associated with more interest in the partners’ orgasm. No effect was found for relationship context, and none of the two- or three-way interactions reached significance, thus, the results did not support H2 and H3 as well.

Sexual Entitlement

As can be seen in Table 4, participant gender did not significantly predict variability in sexual entitlement. Relationship context significantly predicted more sexual entitlement for the partner than self, such that being in a committed relationship was associated with more sexual entitlement for the partner. Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement was positively associated with more interest in the partners’ orgasm. These effects were qualified by a two-way interaction between gender and relationship context and a two-way interaction between gender and Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement.

Interpretation of the interaction between gender and relationship context using Preacher et al.’s (2006) online

Table 3 Results of Regression Analysis on Interest in Partners’ Orgasm

	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>pr</i>
Intercept	4.31	0.07		66.34***	
Gender	0.29	0.10	0.13	3.04**	0.09
Context	0.17	0.09	0.07	1.86	0.06
ZMWD	0.23	0.06	0.20	3.82***	0.11
ZMWD×Context	−0.09	0.09	−0.05	−0.99	−0.03
ZMWD×Gender	−0.03	0.09	−0.02	−0.34	−0.01
Gender×Context	−0.19	0.13	−0.07	−1.41	−0.04
ZMWD×Context×Gender	0.10	0.14	0.04	0.71	0.02

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

$R^2=0.04$, $\Delta R^2=0.03$, $F(7,1116)=6.44$, $p < .001$.

MWD=Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement.

Table 4 Results of Regression Analysis on Sexual Entitlement

	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>pr</i>
Intercept	4.89	0.09		52.62***	
Gender	0.21	0.14	0.06	1.52	0.05
Context	0.61	0.13	0.19	4.69***	0.14
ZMWD	0.24	0.08	0.15	2.81**	0.08
ZMWD×Context	-0.10	0.13	-0.04	-0.72	-0.02
ZMWD×Gender	-0.44	0.13	-0.19	-3.47***	-0.10
Gender×Context	-0.41	0.19	-0.11	-2.17*	-0.06
ZMWD×Context×Gender	0.13	0.19	0.04	0.68	0.02

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

$R^2 = 0.03$, $\Delta R^2 = 0.03$, $F(4, 1116) = 5.65$, $p < .001$.

MWD = Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement.

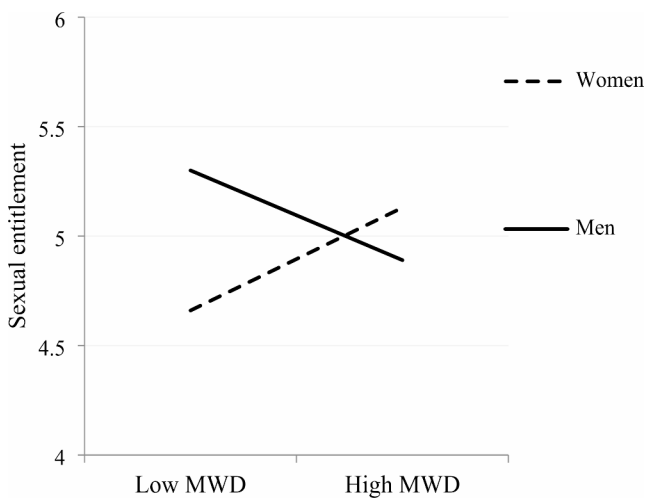


Fig. 1 Sexual Entitlement for Men and Women Who are High (+1SD) or Low (-1SD) on the MWD

Note. Higher scores represent placing more importance for the partners' orgasm and less for one's own orgasm. MWD = madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement.

calculator revealed that, in line with H4b, women perceived their partner as more entitled to orgasm in a committed relationship than in a hookup, *simple slope* = 0.61(0.13), $t = 4.67$, $p < .001$. For men, H4a was not supported, as the difference between the two relationship contexts was not significant, *simple slope* = 0.19(0.14), $t = 1.40$, $p = .162$.

As for the interaction between gender and Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement, the results supported H5a first prediction. Men higher on Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement perceived their partners as less entitled to orgasm than men lower on Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement, *simple slope* = -0.21(0.09), $t = -2.22$, $p = .030$. As for women, H5b was supported as those higher on Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement perceived their partner as more entitled to orgasm than themselves compared to women who were lower on Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement, *simple slope* = 0.24(0.08), $t = 2.81$, $p = .005$. The pattern of results is presented in Fig. 1. Note

that we ran the analyses again while (a) controlling for relationship status and (b) while excluding those who identified as bisexuals. Doing so did not change our statistical conclusions. The results of these analyses are available in the OSF appendix.

Discussion

When asked directly about interest in their partners' sexual pleasure, men and those who scored higher on the Madonna-whore dichotomy reported more interest in their partners' orgasms compared to women and those who are low on the Madonna-whore dichotomy. Yet, when participants had to choose whose orgasm is more important (i.e., sexual entitlement), men higher in Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement rated their partner as less entitled to sexual pleasure than those lower in Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement. In other words, men higher in Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement reported that although they are interested in their partners' orgasm, they still prefer their own orgasm over their partners'. Overall, this pattern of results indicates that sexual entitlement rather than sexual interest might be the one explaining the pleasure gap that was observed in the literature between women and men (e.g., Mahar et al., 2020).

Moreover, these results suggest that using measures that consider personal costs (i.e., asking about who's orgasm is more important) or measures that reduce social desirability (e.g., asking about other men as was done in Study 1) yield different results than direct measures (i.e., asking about one's own interest in their partners' orgasm). This points to the subtle nature of this phenomenon and highlights the importance of choosing the right measures when studying this topic, as measures that are more prone to social desirability might yield different results.

For women, the opposite pattern emerged, such that women higher in Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement rated their partner as more entitled to sexual pleasure than those lower in Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement. This finding suggests that women's own Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement can negatively affect their sexual pleasure through the belief that their pleasure is less important than that of their partners. As for relationship context, this factor was found to be especially meaningful for women, as women perceive their partner as more entitled to orgasm when in a committed relationship compared to a hookup, while this difference was not found for men. This result was surprising since there is evidence showing that men, compared to women, frequently report having orgasms independent of the sexual context (casual sex vs. relationship sex; Mahar et al., 2020).

General Discussion

In two studies, we tested two potential factors in relation to the devaluation of women's sexual pleasure. Specifically, we examined whether endorsement of the Madonna-whore dichotomy and the relationship context in which sex was occurring, as well as their interaction, contribute to the devaluation of women's sexual pleasure. Although Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement and relationship context did not interact, both of the variables were significant predictors for women's sexual pleasure.

Endorsement of Patriarchal Beliefs – The Madonna-Whore-Dichotomy

Expanding previous research on men's interest in their female partner's sexual pleasure (e.g., Barnett et al., 2018), our results show that men's tendency to feel more entitled to sexual pleasure than their partners is associated with their patriarchal beliefs regarding women's sexuality. In Study 1, men higher in Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement perceived women as dirtier, reported that other men will be less interested in fulfilling the woman's sexual desires, and that other men will show her less respect and be less likely to use a condom, independent of the relationship context. These results show that men higher on Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement tend to derogate women and care less about women's pleasure in the sexual realm. Therefore, Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement could be an important factor explaining not only the devaluation of women's sexual pleasure, but also other different negative experiences that happen during sexual encounters (e.g., feeling disrespected, condom use resistance).

A similar trend was found in Study 2, as men with higher Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement felt more entitled to orgasm than their partner in comparison to those with lower Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement. Men with lower Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement showed the opposite pattern. This result might explain research showing a negative association between Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement and sexual satisfaction for men, as being in a sexual encounter where both partners' pleasure is viewed as important might be related to more sexual satisfaction (e.g., Johansen et al., 2022).

Moreover, in both studies, men higher on Madonna-whore-dichotomy endorsement devalued women's sexual pleasure independent of the relationship context. This similar pattern across contexts might stem from different motivations. In the context of a committed relationship, men higher on Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement might not be interested in their partners' orgasm because they do not consider their female partners as sexual beings. In

a hookup context, these men's lack of interest might stem from derogating women that are interested in casual sex and who display sexual agency, thus denying them the right to sexual pleasure.

Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement was also found to influence women's own feelings of entitlement to sexual pleasure. The tendency for women higher on Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement to report that their partners' pleasure is more important than their own, might suggest that women who endorse these stereotyped beliefs about women internalize a binary perception of their own sexuality. These women might feel pressured to follow the chaste path which might explain their relatively low sexual entitlement. Indeed, research shows that the desire to live up to gender ideals (e.g., being chaste) negatively affects sexual and relationship satisfaction, in part due to reduced sexual autonomy (Sanchez et al., 2012). Interestingly, previous research did not find any correlations between women's Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement and relationship and sexual satisfaction (Kahalon et al., 2019), yet the results presented here suggest that this might be because women higher on Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement do not perceive themselves as entitled to sexual satisfaction.

To summarize, our results corroborate the findings of previous work on Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement by showing how these patriarchal beliefs harm women. First, men buying into the idea of recognizing women's nurturance and sexuality as mutually exclusive are also more likely to attribute intrusive intentions (i.e., disrespect, condom use refusal) toward women than men lower on these beliefs. Second, women who have internalized these patriarchal beliefs tend to de-prioritize their own sexual pleasure at the expense of their partner's pleasure.

Relationship Context

As for sexual entitlement, relationship context was found to be an important predictor for women, as women but not men, perceived their partner as more entitled to an orgasm in a relationship than a hookup. This result could be explained by the idea that women are expected to have a relationship-centered view of sexuality, which defines both the context in which sexuality occurs (stable, monogamous relationship) and the purpose of sexuality (enhancement of intimacy and partnership bonding; Levant et al., 2012). Although speculative, this perspective on sexuality, which is influenced by gender dynamics and centered around women's role as nurturers in relationships, could potentially consider the act of taking care of a male partner's needs as part of what men are entitled to within the context of committed sexual relationships. Contrary to our predictions, men perceived

women equally entitled to sexual pleasure in hookups and relationships.

Matching this tendency, men in our study were also more interested in their partner's orgasm than women independent of relationship context. We predicted that men would show more interest in their partners' orgasm within committed relationships in comparison to hookups as a potential explanation for the orgasm gap, which is particularly pronounced within the realm of casual sexual encounters (Armstrong et al., 2009, 2012; Conley et al., 2013; Mahar et al., 2020; Piemonte et al., 2019). The results of the present study indicate that men were more interested in their partner's orgasm than women in both relationship contexts, despite the continued existence of the orgasm gap, which was therefore puzzling. This counterintuitive finding may stem from adherence to masculinity norms related to sexuality (e.g., the pressure to be considered as "good in bed", Sakaluk et al., 2014), or from the general belief that men's orgasms are more easily achieved than women's and thus the latter requires more effort (Klein & Conley, 2022; Wetzel & Sanchez, 2022), and consequently is a challenge to master.

Taking Measurement into Consideration

Beyond its theoretical contribution, our study also provided evidence that the way people are asked about the devaluation of women's sexual pleasure is important. When people do not have personal costs (as in the case of interest in partner's orgasms) they seem to express more equalitarian views. Men higher on Madonna-whore-dichotomy endorsement in the present study expressed a keen interest in their partner's orgasm, which led to higher scores on the interest measure. However, when they were asked whose pleasure is more important (i.e., the entitlement measure), men higher on Madonna-whore-dichotomy endorsement tended to place greater importance on their own pleasure. While men may express interest in their partner's sexual pleasure, they may respond differently when faced with making a choice that directly impacts their own pleasure. Indirect measures, such as those asking about other men, rather than themselves might also encourage participants to answer more honest, as such responses reduce social desirability. To conclude, our studies suggest that using measures that consider personal costs or reduce social desirability is preferable.

Limitations and Future Directions

There are several limitations to this study. A constraint on generalizability (Simons et al., 2017) is that data were collected in Germany and should be treated with caution when generalized to other contexts. For instance, research

provides evidence for country-level variations in endorsement of the Madonna-whore dichotomy, such that German men scored higher on Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement than Israeli men, but lower than men from a US sample (Kahalon et al., 2019). Our results might be an underestimation of these associations for men in other countries. Assessing cross-cultural comparisons on how patriarchal beliefs impact perceptions of entitlement to sexual pleasure and the valuation of a partner's sexual pleasure would be a fruitful avenue for future research.

Moreover, our research results are further limited to the sexual behaviors of cisgender women and men in a heterosexual context. Although the academic literature focuses on gendered power inequalities that influence our idea of sex/sexual pleasure mainly concentrated on straight women and men, it is very likely that those patriarchal ideas also affect sexual minority individuals. For instance, bisexual women experience the same disadvantage when it comes to the orgasm gap as straight-identified women (e.g., Frederick et al., 2018). To develop a full picture of how patriarchal beliefs influence the sexual experiences of sexual minorities, additional studies including more gender diverse populations and people of different sexual orientations will be needed (e.g., Fahs & McClelland, 2016).

Practice Implications

The results presented here suggest that Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement among both women and men is related to women's pleasure in sexual encounters. It is therefore important that those who work with young adults (e.g., teachers and sex educators) will encourage a more complex discussion about sexuality and the importance of sexual pleasure for both partners. Age-appropriate curricula could be developed that consider how relationship context affects social sexual scripts, and how social constructs, such as the dichotomous gender stereotypes held about women, shape perceptions about sex and sexuality as well as how these scripts and ideologies develop (Kim et al., 2007; Laan et al., 2021).

Understanding how these factors contribute to the devaluation of women in the sexual realm (by others and by women themselves) as well as their negative consequences for women's sexual pleasure, could also be beneficial in psychotherapy. Sex therapists and clinicians who work with couples or individuals who experience difficulties in their romantic relationships could use the knowledge gained in the current investigation to develop helpful interventions to change existing beliefs about sexuality.

Conclusion

Women tend to report less positive sexual experiences than men do (Conley & Klein, 2022). Establishing a better understanding of this gender inequality, we identified Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement, among both women and men, as an important predictor of the devaluation of women's sexual pleasure, and relationship context as an important predictor among women (but not men). Adding to the growing literature on Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement, our results indicate that men higher on Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement indeed perceive and treat women differently than men lower on Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement. Further, women who score higher on Madonna-whore dichotomy endorsement tend to prioritize their partner's pleasure over their own. The present study provides further support for the potential cost of enacting traditional, patriarchal gender roles for women and their experience of sexual pleasure and safety.

Authors' Contributions All authors contributed to the study conception and design. Material preparation, data collection and analysis were performed by Rotem Kahalon, Verena Klein and Eden Kosman. The first draft of the manuscript was written by Rotem Kahalon and Verena Klein and all authors commented on previous versions of the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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Availability of data and material The datasets generated by the survey research during and/or analyzed during the current study are available in the Open Science Framework, <https://osf.io/jk37h/>.

Code Availability Syntax is also available on the OSF.

Declarations

Conflict of interest The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

Ethics Approval All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards. The local ethic committee approved the study protocol (LPEK-0050). Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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