

Perceptions of Interactions at a Strip Club

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Abstract

Strip clubs make up a popular entertainment establishment, and this traditionally male locale is catering to female patrons now as well. In the present study, perceptions of strip club interactions between patrons and dancers were explored. A convenience sample of 265 participants (75 men and 190 women) completed an online survey and sex-role attitude scale. The survey presented one of six vignettes which varied on patron gender (male or female), who, while at a strip club, either only watched the dancers, bought a private dance that included touching, or conversed with the dancer about private sexual fantasies (dancers were of the opposite sex). Questions were asked regarding acceptability of the behaviours, perceived motivations, and perceptions of the dancers. While no differences were found due to participant or patron gender, certain activities were judged more unacceptable than others, certain motivations were associated with different activities, female dancers were viewed more negatively than male dancers, and sex-role attitudes influenced perceptions and judgments of male and female patrons differently. Implications of the study and suggestions for future research are discussed.

Perceptions of Interactions at a Strip Club

Inequalities between men and women have traditionally been apparent in sexual double standards, stressing premarital virginity and stricter limits on acceptable sexual behaviour for women (Francoeur, Perper, Scherzer, Sellmer, & Cornog, 1991, as cited in Haavio-Mannila & Kontula, 2003). However, a cultural shift took place with the sexual revolution of the 1960s, placing greater importance on female satisfaction and sexual freedom (Barbach, 1982). Indeed, the recent popularity of films such as 'Magic Mike' and of Harlequin romance novels highlight a profitable niche for encouraging female sexuality. As such, the sexual double standard for promiscuity seems to be improved but still present. For example, Haavio-Mannila and Kontula (2003) found that 73% of people they surveyed had a single sexual standard, regarding infidelity similarly across gender, whereas 18% viewed male infidelity as more acceptable and 9% viewed female infidelity as more acceptable (with women being more likely to hold a single sexual standard than men). Thus, a sexual double standard, or sexist attitudes, may influence judgments of sexual behaviour.

Interestingly, there may be sexual double standards favouring members of either sex; males and females differ when condemning certain forms of infidelity. Cann, Magnum, and Wells (2010) found that 79% of males in their study were more distressed by sexual infidelity while 76% of females were more distressed by emotional infidelity. This was mediated by both romantic beliefs (those who valued communication and romance tended to be more distressed by emotional infidelity while those who viewed sex as a close form of bonding were more distressed by sexual infidelity) and by socialized gender characteristics (those who scored high on masculinity were more likely

to be distressed by sexual infidelity and those who scored high on femininity were more likely to be distressed by emotional infidelity) (Bohner & Wanke, 2004).

Of course, personal characteristics and ideologies may not be the only things influencing judgements of adulterous men and women. For example, women in general may be more stringent than men when defining infidelity. In one study by Thornton and Nagurney (2011), when examining thirteen behaviours that might constitute infidelity, female participants selected an average of 10.13 as constituting infidelity, whereas men only selected an average of 8.16 as constituting infidelity. Similarly, Whitty (2003) found that women are more likely to view sexual activities as cheating than are men. Thus, while attitudes toward infidelity between the genders may possibly be mediated by whether or not someone holds traditional or egalitarian views, women may also be more likely than men to view ambiguous behaviour as constituting infidelity, and may therefore judge more harshly.

As is clear in gendered and individual differences in perceiving infidelity, whether certain behaviours should be classified as unfaithful is unclear. For example, while some may argue that visiting a strip club does not constitute cheating, partners of strip club patrons may still be disapproving. In a study of women who attend male strip clubs, Pilcher (2011) found that 41% of those surveyed attended these clubs despite their partners' expressed disapproval. Frank (2005) studied men who attended strip clubs and likewise found that most patrons she interviewed concealed their visits from their partners, believing they would disapprove because of different ideas about what comprises monogamy. Indeed, many of the male patrons of these strip clubs either knew that their partners disapproved or likely would disapprove of their visiting strip clubs.

This suggests that there is a certain level of perceived unfaithfulness associated with attending a strip club while being in a committed relationship. Perhaps it may be an indication of present/future infidelity by these patrons or perhaps the club atmosphere may encourage or cause infidelity. Indeed, Whitty (2003) found that when participants were presented with a list of activities and asked to rate them on a scale of 1 (not considered infidelity) to 5 (extreme infidelity), the mean rating for visiting a strip club was $M = 2.23$ ($SD = 1.32$). This suggests that while attending a strip club represents a degree of perceived infidelity it is not extreme and is open to personal interpretation, as is evidenced by the standard deviation, and indeed, those involved in relationships may have a different attitude toward attending strip clubs than their partners. This study failed to articulate the variability in strip club interactions, and 'attending a strip club' could mean very different things to different people.

When one considers that individuals may be uncomfortable with their partners attending strip clubs, one may wonder if this is influenced by the sexual revolution. Are those with more egalitarian sex role attitudes equally accepting or judgmental of male and female strip club patrons, and are those with more traditional sex role attitudes more critical of female strip club patrons (since traditionally, women have experienced more sexual restrictions than men) (Barbach, 1982)?

Not all strip club patrons attend under similar circumstances, nor do they all behave in the same manner. A typology of female patrons showed that some were regulars while others were there for a party, such as a bachelorette party; still others were first-time or one-time patrons who were merely curious to see the club (Montemurro, Bloom, & Madell, 2010). In a study of female patrons, Pilcher (2011) noted that

attending a strip club could be a liberating experience with one interviewee stating that her attendance helped support the 'equality of the sexes.' This illustrates the impact the sexual revolution may have had in expressions of female sexuality as being equally acceptable as expressions of male sexuality. Furthermore, while some women focused more on enjoying the sexual nature of the environment, 88% claimed that the strip club provided an opportunity to bond with other women and have a good time. Indeed, many viewed it as a feminine, rather than a sexy, place (Pilcher, 2011).

Males who attend strip clubs have also shown varying motives and visit the clubs under different circumstances. Frank (2005) distinguished between men who attend strip clubs for bachelor parties, first time curious customers, and regulars. She also noted that motivations for regulars include being able to relax in a masculine space, being personally and sexually accepted, having a sexualized experience (that they did not consider cheating), and the fulfillment of fantasies. Erickson and Tewksbury (2010) noted that some male patrons appeared to be interested primarily in connecting and conversing with the female dancers while others were more adamant about sexually objectifying the female dancers to varying degrees. Pilcher (2011) found that at a male strip club, female patrons were encouraged to be sexually aggressive toward the dancers, however, the majority of the patrons emphasized the importance of having fun and bonding with their friends. This contrasted with the behaviour of male patrons, since participants felt that it was not an intimate environment - that counterfeit intimacy (a false sense of emotional intimacy), which was central to male patrons' experience of female dancers, had not been achieved between the female patrons and male dancers (Pilcher, 2011).

Interestingly, Linz et al. (2000) found that nude dancers (more than partially clothed dancers) were perceived by male patrons as interested in them personally and patrons reported believing they were special, thus increasing the patrons' sense of relational intimacy. Furthermore, the male patrons were more likely to feel that nude dancers (rather than partially clothed dancers) had a greater level of sexual freedom, one that was equal to that of male sexual freedom (Linz et al., 2000). This supports Frank's (2005) finding that male patrons desired a sense of personal and sexual acceptance from a beautiful woman. Greater physical proximity to the dancers (6 inches with or without touching) was also viewed as more erotically charged and relationally intimate by the patrons than being a distance of four feet away from the dancers (Linz et al., 2000), suggesting that closer proximity to the dancers is more intimate and sexual. Perhaps then sexually charged proximity (i.e., a private dance) is viewed as less acceptable or as more unfaithful than merely watching a dancer on stage.

When one considers the plethora of motivations strip club patrons may have for visiting the club, and consequently their unique experiences of the club, one may wonder what are the perceived motivations of the patrons. One may also infer that the reasons for attending a strip club may influence the acceptability of attendance in the partner's eyes. Could going out for a bachelor party be more acceptable than regularly visiting the club? Could the activities engaged in influence the perceived level of unfaithfulness (i.e., just looking vs. private dance with touching allowed)? Furthermore, could this be influenced by sex differences in perceptions of infidelity, or by sex role attitudes? Perhaps, since men are more likely to be distressed by sexual infidelity, they will be more critical of strip club clients who buy private dances (in which touching is allowed) and perhaps

women, who are more likely to be distressed by emotional infidelity, will be more critical of strip club patrons who engage in personal conversation with the dancers (i.e., sharing secret fantasies or insecurities). Perhaps those with more egalitarian sex role attitudes will view certain behaviours as less acceptable for male or female patrons, or perhaps sex role attitudes will influence the perceived motivations of the patron?

Of course, the strip club patrons are not the only ones who may be judged. There are numerous negative perceptions of the dancers themselves and dancers are clearly viewed as deviant. Skipper and McCaghy (1970) found that college students described female exotic dancers as unintelligent, uneducated, lower class, oversexed, immoral, prostitutes, and as unable to find better jobs. More recently, Thompson, Harred, and Burks (2011) interviewed topless dancers, noting their perceived stigmas and stereotypes. Many of the dancers felt they were perceived as drug addicts and as being 'whores' or 'loose.' Many were also negatively stereotyped by their male boyfriends/ husbands and this caused tension in their relationships (Bradley, 2007). A study of male strippers revealed that they believed male stripping was also viewed negatively (Dressel & Petersen, 1982). Therefore, dancers themselves are often negatively stereotyped and are aware of the stigma and stereotypes associated with them. It seems reasonable to believe that those with more egalitarian sex role attitudes will have similar views of male and female strippers, and that these views will be less negative than those of people with more traditional sex role attitudes. Although a direct comparison of the effects of stigma on male and female exotic dancers was not found, a literature review by Vanwesenbeeck (2013) on male and female sex workers demonstrated that male sex workers seem less affected by stigma than are female sex workers, and it is reasonable to infer that this also

applies to exotic dancers. Thus, it would be interesting to determine whether there are differences in how harshly male and female dancers are judged.

The complex nature of interactions at strip clubs, as well as perception, is of interest. While most research on strip clubs examines exotic dancers through the lens of deviance (i.e. stigma) and feminism (i.e. issues of power relations between exotic dancers and patrons) (Frank, 2007), there seems to be a paucity of research on the factors that influence perceptions of the acceptability of patrons' and dancers' strip club behaviour.

The current study seeks to examine the perceptions of strip club behaviour. More specifically, whether or not male and female participants differ in their perceptions, whether male and female patrons are perceived differently, whether certain activities are viewed more negatively than others (e.g., touching vs. conversing with a dancer), and whether certain behaviours are associated with certain perceived motivations. It will also examine whether or not male and female dancers are perceived differently, and if participant sex-role attitudes influence their perceptions.

Furthermore, while there has been some research indicating that women are more stringent in defining infidelity than are men (Thornton & Nagurney, 2011), and that there is disagreement among people about the level of infidelity involved in attending a strip club (Whitty, 2003), studies have not assessed differences in perception as a function of what strip club attendance comprises. Since motivations of patrons, circumstances of visiting the club, and interactions between dancers and patrons are all subject to variation, 'visiting a strip club' may take on vastly different meanings for different people. By studying perceptions of the acceptability of married patron's strip club behaviour, light will be shed on the circumstances that result in harsher judgments or more lenient

judgments. Furthermore, if there are indeed differences between men and women in judging behaviours as unfaithful (Thornton & Nagurney, 2011), or between egalitarian and traditionally-minded people, then this finding could have implications for marriage counselors. Since issues of infidelity may cause problems and deep feelings of hurt in a marriage (Whisman, Dixon, & Johnson as cited in Blow & Hartnett, 2005), and since there is not a single, unified definition of infidelity in the literature (Blow & Harnett, 2005), this research could be useful in helping counsellors sort out and understand each partner's differing perspectives on the acceptability of visiting strip clubs.

This research will help shed light on whether sex-role attitudes influence judgments of male and female strip club patrons and dancers, and their interactions. If those with more egalitarian views are judging male and female patrons and dancers equally, then this supports the success of the sexual revolution in reducing sexual double standards. If, however, there is a large portion of more traditionally minded participants who judge one sex more harshly than the other, this will be an indication that sexual equality has not been achieved. Indeed, sexual double standards and traditional views toward women are problematic. For example, in one study participants with more traditional views of women were more likely to blame rape victims than were those with less traditional views toward women (Lee, Kim, & Lim, 2010). Thus, the traditional and unequal attitudes toward either sex represents an issue which further education should seek to improve.

The current study will be conducted using vignettes to manipulate the sex of strip club patrons and dancers, the interactions between them, and the circumstances under which the patrons visited the club in order to help shed light on perceptions of the

acceptability of these interactions, the dancers themselves, and what ideologies may influence these judgements. Hypotheses include:

1. Since men are more distressed by sexual infidelity and women are more distressed by emotional infidelity (Cann, Magnum & Wells, 2010), it is hypothesized that males will view married patrons who pay for a private dance as exhibiting less acceptable behaviour, that females will view married patrons who engage in a personal conversation with a dancer about private sexual fantasies as less acceptable behaviour, and that for both groups, watching the dancers without interacting with them will be viewed as the most acceptable behaviour.
2. It is also hypothesized that women will overall be more likely than men to rate a behaviour as unfaithful/unacceptable (Thornton & Nagurney, 2011)
3. Because attending a strip club for a bachelor/bachelorette party is a one-time event, it is hypothesized that participants will view this as more acceptable than regular, weekly attendance of a strip club (which denotes that visiting the club is more important to the married patron).
4. Because previous research examining motivations has been qualitative in nature, exploratory analysis will be conducted to see if a patron's gender and the activities in which he/she engages influence what participants perceive as the patron's motivations. Given that there is no previous research assessing this, no specific hypotheses will be made.
5. It is hypothesized that female exotic dancers will be viewed more negatively than male exotic dancers, as it was previously found that female sex workers were more stigmatized than male sex workers (Vanwesenbeeck, 2013).

6. Finally, it is hypothesized that patrons behaviour is influenced by sex-role attitudes (Havio-Mannila & Kontula, 2003), with women's activities being perceived as less acceptable than men's behaviour for those with more traditional sex-role attitudes will be explored.

Methods

Participants

Participants were recruited from among the Grenfell Campus student population through a mass email, and from the general population by placing the survey on Facebook. There were 265 participants in the study, 75 males (mean age = 27.28, SD = 9.81) and 190 females (mean age = 25.37, SD = 8.54).

Scenarios

Participants were presented with one of six possible vignettes in which a married man or woman attended a strip club with his or her friends (the dancers were of the opposite sex), and engaged in one of three activities. He or she either only looked at the dancers, paid for a private dance (and touches were exchanged), or conversed with a dancer about sexual fantasies that he/she was not comfortable discussing with his/her spouse.

Participants were then asked to answer a series of questions that assessed the perceived motivation for visiting the club, acceptability of the patron's behaviour, and patron's perceptions of the dancers on a scale of 1 (very unlikely) to 7 (very likely). Participants next completed a sex-role attitudes questionnaire which assessed how strongly they agreed with traditional or egalitarian sex-role attitudes on a scale of 1 (I disagree completely) to 5 (=I disagree completely). The sex-role attitude scale was used with permission from van Yperen and Buunk (1991). They designed a 17-item Likert sex-role attitudes scale, in which 8 items were negatively keyed, each item presenting either a traditional or egalitarian sex-role attitude statement which the participant indicated his or her level of agreement. The averages is then taken to provide a raw score.

A high score on this scale indicates more traditional sex-role attitudes and a low score indicates more egalitarian sex-role attitudes. Finally, participants were asked to provide demographic information.

Procedure

An online survey was constructed using Survey Monkey and circulated through Facebook profiles and through a mass email sent to Grenfell students. It was clearly stated that participation was voluntary and anonymous, that participants had to be at least 16 years of age, and that they could discontinue participating at any time. Participants read a vignette, answered questions, completed a sex role attitudes survey, and were asked demographic questions.

Results

The surveys were analyzed to determine the perceptions of strip club behaviour. In particular, analysis was completed to determine if participant gender had any effect on perceptions of the acceptability of patron behaviour (and if certain behaviours were viewed as less acceptable than others), if the behaviour of the patrons influenced their perceived motives, if male and female dancers were perceived differently, and if participant sex-role attitudes influenced their perception of patrons.

Preliminary analysis revealed that male and female participants did not differ significantly in judgments of the acceptability of patron behaviours (hypothesis 1). Furthermore, male and female patrons were not perceived as behaving significantly differently. Consequently, gender was not included in subsequent analysis.

Effects of patron gender and activity on motivation and perceptions of behaviour

To determine whether there were any differences due to patron gender or activity, a 2 (male patron x female patron) x 3 (looking x touching x conversation) MANOVA assessing perceived acceptability of behaviours and perceived motivations (socializing with friends, sexual desire, emotional connection with the dancer, feeling a sense of freedom, and relaxation) of the patrons was completed. A significant main effect was found for activity, $F(22, 488) = 1.93, p = .007, \text{Wilks' } \lambda = .846, \eta^2 = .080$ (but not for patron gender, nor were any interactions found). To explain the differences in perceptions of behaviours and motivations as a function of one-way ANOVAs were completed for each dependent variable. There were subsequently 6 significant ANOVAs.

Three of these ANOVAs focused on the acceptability of patron behaviour.

Differences were found for ratings of unfaithfulness, given that the patron visited the club weekly, $F(2, 254) = 5.82, p = .003, \eta^2 = .044$, for unacceptability, given that the patron visited the club weekly, $F(2, 254) = 4.36, p = .014, \eta^2 = .033$, and comfort level of the spouse in regards to patron behaviour, given that the patron visited the club weekly, $F(2, 254) = 3.41, p = .034, \eta^2 = .026$ (hypothesis 1). The means for each activity are found in Table 1.

Post-hoc tests revealed that the patron who was visiting the club as a part of his/her weekly routine was perceived as more unfaithful when touching than when only looking at the dancer, mean difference = .78, $p = .011$, and when conversing with the dancer about private sexual fantasies than when he/she was only looking at the dancer, mean difference = .80, $p = .009$. There was no significant difference between perceptions of the behaviour as being unfaithful for touching versus conversing.

When the patron visited the club as a part of his/her weekly routine, the patron's behaviour was perceived as more unacceptable when the patron was touching the dancer than when he/she was only looking at the dancer, mean difference = .62, $p = .009$. There was no significant difference in perceived acceptability of looking versus conversation, or in perceived acceptability of conversation versus touching.

Table 1. Judgment of Patron Behaviour

| | Activity | | |
|---------------|----------|------------|----------|
| | Looking | Conversing | Touching |
| Unfaithful | | | |
| M | 4.63 | 5.43 | 5.42 |
| SE | .17 | .19 | .18 |
| Unacceptable | | | |
| M | 5.24 | 5.86 | 5.78 |
| SE | .17 | .16 | .16 |
| Uncomfortable | | | |
| M | 5.56 | 6.17 | 6.04 |
| SE | .17 | .16 | .16 |

Ratings on a scale of 1 (= very unlikely) to 7 (= very likely)

For the patron who visited the club as a part of his/her weekly routine, his/her behaviour was perceived to cause greater discomfort for his/her spouse when he/she was touching the dancer than when he/she was only looking at the dancer, mean difference =

.59, $p = .037$. No significant differences were found in perceptions of spousal discomfort when patrons were looking versus conversing, or when patrons were conversing versus touching.

The other three one-way ANOVAs focused on the perception of the patron's motivations. Significant differences between activities were found for motives of 'sexual desire', $F(2, 254) = 7.59$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2 = .056$, developing an emotional connection with the dancers, $F(2, 254) = 5.43$, $p = .005$, $\eta^2 = .041$, and feeling a sense of freedom: $F(2,254) = 7.02$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2 = .052$ (hypothesis 3). Means for each motivating factor are provided below in Table 2.

Pairwise comparisons showed that the motive to obtain sexual desire was seen to be stronger when the patron conversed with dancers than when the patron only looked at the dancers, mean difference = .943, $p = .001$. Sexual desire was also seen to be a stronger motivation when the patron conversed with the dancer than when he/she touched the dancer, mean difference = .622, $p = .032$. Developing an emotional connection with the dancer was seen as a stronger motive when the patron conversed with the dancer than when he/she only looked at the dancers, mean difference = .77, $p = .006$. Feeling a sense of freedom was perceived as a more important motivation when the patron touched the dancer than when he/she only looked at the dancer, mean difference = .67, $p = .026$. Furthermore, feeling a sense of freedom was perceived as a stronger motivating factor when the patron conversed with the dancer, than when he/she only looked at the dancer, mean difference = .783, $p = .001$.

Table 2. Perceived motivations of patrons

| | Activity | | |
|---------------|----------|------------|----------|
| | Looking | Conversing | Touching |
| Sexual desire | | | |
| M | 4.27 | 5.21 | 4.57 |
| SE | .18 | .17 | .17 |
| Connection | | | |
| M | 1.61 | 2.18 | 1.75 |
| SE | .13 | .13 | .13 |
| Freedom | | | |
| M | 4.63 | 5.41 | 5.20 |
| SE | .16 | .15 | .15 |
| Socializing | | | |
| M | 5.73 | 5.30 | 5.52 |
| SE | .18 | .18 | .18 |
| Relaxation | | | |
| M | 4.35 | 4.32 | 4.46 |
| SE | .19 | .18 | .18 |

ratings on a scale of 1 (= very unlikely) to 7 (= very likely)

Perceptions of Dancers

To examine what factors influenced perceptions of the dancers (i.e., how likely the dancer was to be in a committed relationship, was intelligent, was respectable, used illegal drugs, was raised in a low-income family, and had an STI), a 2 (male dancer vs. female dancer) x 3(looking vs. touching vs. conversation) MANOVA was completed. There was a main effect for dancers' gender, $F(1, 253) = 2.569$, Wilks' $\lambda = .943$ $p = .020$, $\eta^2 = .057$ (hypothesis 4).

A series of ANOVAs were used to determine where gender differences in the perception of dancers occurred. There were differences in perceptions of intelligence, $F(2, 258) = 9.576$, $p = .002$, $\eta^2 = .036$, and respectability, $F(2, 258) = 9.012$, $p = .003$, $\eta^2 = .034$. As seen in Table 3, male dancers were perceived as more intelligent than female dancers, mean difference = .49, SE = .16, $F(2, 258) = 9.958$, $p = .002$, $\eta^2 = .036$, and that male dancers were perceived as more respectable than female dancers, mean difference = .45, SE = .15, $F(2,258)$, $p = .003$, $\eta^2 = .034$.

Table 3. Perception of Dancers

| | Dancer Gender | |
|-----------------------------|---------------|--------|
| | Male | Female |
| Intelligent | | |
| M | 2.95 | 2.46 |
| SE | .11 | .12 |
| Respectable | | |
| M | 2.66 | 2.21 |
| SE | .10 | .11 |
| In a committed relationship | | |
| M | 2.02 | 1.96 |
| SE | .11 | .11 |
| Used illegal drugs | | |
| M | 4.40 | 4.69 |
| SE | .13 | .14 |
| Raised low-income | | |
| M | 4.20 | 4.24 |
| SE | .14 | .14 |
| Has STI | | |
| M | 4.14 | 4.10 |
| SE | .15 | .16 |

Ratings on a scale of 1 (= very unlikely) to 7 (= very likely)

Acceptability of behaviour when accounting for context: Weekly routine vs. a **friend's bachelor/bachelorette party**

A series of within subjects ANOVAs (weekly routine vs. bachelor/bachelorette party) were completed to assess whether the frequency of visits affected perceived unfaithfulness, acceptability, and spousal comfort level with the patron's behaviour (hypothesis 2). There was a difference in the perception of unfaithfulness, $F(1,258) = 502.30$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .661$, with pairwise comparisons revealing that visiting as part of a weekly routine ($M = 5.17$, $SE = .11$) was viewed as being more unfaithful than visiting as part of a friend's bachelor/bachelorette party, ($M = 2.45$, $SE = .09$), mean difference = 2.72, $p < .001$. Likewise, there was a significant difference in the perceived acceptability of the patron behaviour, $F(1,258) = 411.00$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .614$, with pairwise comparisons revealing that visiting as part of a weekly routine situation ($M = 5.63$, $SE = .09$) was viewed as more unacceptable than visiting as part of a friend's bachelor(ette) party, ($M = 3.08$, $SE = .11$), mean difference = 2.55, $p < .001$. Finally, there was a significant difference in the perceptions of the spouse's comfort level, $F(1,258) = 208.49$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .447$, with pairwise comparisons revealing that participants believed that the spouse would more uncomfortable with visits that occurred as a part of the patron's the weekly routine situation ($M = 5.94$, $SE = .09$) than with visits as part of a friend's bachelor(ette) situation, ($M = 4.07$, $SE = .12$), mean difference = 1.87, $p < .001$.

Effects of Sex-Role Attitudes

In order to determine whether traditional or egalitarian sex-role attitudes were associated with perceptions of patron's behaviour, correlations were completed. Overall, it was found that higher scores on the sex-role attitudes scale were correlated with higher

levels of perceived unacceptability of the patron's behaviour, $r = .14$, $n = 259$, $p = .028$. The more traditional a person was, the more unacceptable he or she thought the patron's behaviour was. Higher scores on the sex-role attitudes scale were also correlated with a higher perceived motivation for socializing with friends as a motive of the patron, $r = -.19$, $n = 261$, $p = .002$. Thus, more egalitarian sex-role attitudes are correlated with being more likely to view socializing with friends as a motive of the patron. More traditional sex-role attitudes were also correlated with being more likely to view socializing with friends as a motive of the patron. In addition, higher scores on the sex-role attitudes scale were negatively correlated with viewing 'feeling a sense of freedom' as a motive for the patron, $r = -.16$, $n = 261$, $p = .010$. Thus, more modern sex-role attitudes were associated with being more likely to view 'feeling a sense of freedom' as a motive for the patron.

Given the interest in determining whether perceptions differed for male and female patrons, additional correlations were completed. Higher scores on the sex-role attitudes scale were negatively correlated with viewing a female patron's motive for attending the strip club to be bonding with friends, $r = -.23$, $n = 139$, $p = .008$. Therefore, those with more egalitarian sex-role attitudes were more likely to view socializing with friends as a motive for female patrons. Furthermore, those with higher scores on the sex role attitudes scale were more likely to view a female patron's behaviour as more unacceptable, $r = .20$, $n = 137$, $p = .018$. Thus, those with more traditional sex-role attitudes were more likely to view the female patron's behaviour as unacceptable. It was also found higher scores on the sex-role attitudes scale were negatively correlated with perceiving 'feeling a sense of freedom' as a motive for male patrons, $r = -.21$, $n = 122$, p

= .024. Thus more egalitarian attitudes were associated with believing the male patron was motivated by a desire to feel a sense of freedom.

Discussion

The current study examined the perceptions of strip club behaviours to determine whether there were any effects of participant gender, participant sex-role attitudes, or patron gender on judgments of the acceptability of patron behaviour. The study also assessed whether patron gender and behaviour influenced the perception of motivations patrons were believed to have in visiting the strip club. The study sought to also determine if there were differences in the perceived acceptability of attending a strip club as a part of the patron's weekly routine versus as a part of a friend's bachelor/bachelorette party were examined. Finally, perceptions of male and female exotic dancers were explored to determine whether they are perceived differently on the basis of their gender.

Participant gender did not influence perceptions of acceptability of patron behaviour, or perceptions of patron motivations, and neither did patron gender. However, certain behaviours were perceived as more strongly associated with certain motivations. Furthermore, certain behaviours (e.g., touching) were deemed as less acceptable or as less faithful than were others (e.g., looking). It was also found that male and female dancers are perceived differently, in that males are viewed as more intelligent and as more respectable than females. Finally, a participant's sex-role attitudes did influence his/her perceptions of the acceptability of patron behaviour and of patron motivations.

Traditionally, there have been stricter limits on the expression of female sexuality than of male sexuality (Francoeur, Perper, Scherzer, Sellmer, & Cornog, 1991, as cited in Haavio-Mannila & Kontula, 2003), and this still exists today in the form of sexual double standards. For example, more people view male infidelity as more acceptable than female

infidelity (Haavio-Mannila & Kontula, 2003). However, in contrast to the present study, male versus female visits to a strip club were not perceived differently. This may make sense when one accounts for the trend that, since the sexual revolution, expressions of female sexuality have become more acceptable (Barbach, 1982). Furthermore, in Haavio-Mannila and Kontula's (2003) study, 73% of participants had a single sexual standard, viewing male and female infidelity as equally acceptable or unacceptable. The lack of differences in perceptions of the acceptability of strip club behaviours of male and female patrons may reflect a more egalitarian way of thinking about the sexes that has been growing since the beginning of the sexual revolution of the 1960s.

Previous research suggested that male and female participants may view infidelity differently. Magnum and Wells (2010) found that 79% of males in their study were more distressed by sexual infidelity while 76% of females were more distressed by emotional infidelity. Furthermore, each sex may have different ideas of what constitutes infidelity. Thornton and Nagurney (2011) found that female participants rated more behaviours as constituting infidelity than did male participants, indicating that women may have more stringent definitions of infidelity. However, in the present study the failure to find gender differences suggests that both males and females perceive visits to the strip club as not being unfaithful.

In the current study, sexual infidelity was intended to be represented by buying a private dance in which touches were exchanged, and emotional infidelity was intended to be represented by conversing with a dancer about private sexual fantasies which the patron was not comfortable discussing with his/her spouse. Male and female participants did not differ in their judgments of the acceptability or unfaithfulness of these behaviours.

This could be because the emotional infidelity scenario also had elements of sexuality (i.e., discussing sexual fantasies) and perhaps, therefore, was also viewed as a form of sexual infidelity.

Another possibility is that both scenarios involve close proximity to a naked dancer. Linz et al. (2000) found that close proximity to a naked dancer resulted in increased feelings of both sexual desire and relational intimacy (when compared to a dancer who was farther away). Since both touching and conversing with a dancer involve close proximity, perhaps both involve an emotional and a physical component. This may indicate that it is difficult to cleanly separate emotional and physical infidelity from each other in the highly sexualized setting of a strip-club.

Furthermore, there were not found to be any gender differences in rating patron behaviours as unfaithful. This may indicate converging ways of thinking about sexual matters, or it may merely indicate that, while male and female participants may still differ in perceptions of certain behaviours, they simply do not differ in their perceptions of strip club activities.

Although there were no gender differences, there were still differences in perceived behaviours. Previous research has indicated that, on a scale of 1 (not considered infidelity) to 5 (extreme infidelity), the mean rating for viewing visiting a strip club as unfaithful was $M = 2.23$ ($SD = 1.32$) (Whitty, 2003). This indicates that while visiting a strip club is seen as unfaithful to some extent, there is variation in this perception. Whitty's study did not take into account the different activities visiting a strip club might entail. Erickson and Tewksbury (2010) noted in their study of male patrons that some were more interested in conversing and bonding with the dancers, others were

more interested in sexual attraction and in touching the dancers, and others merely observed the dancers.

The current study helps shed light on how these different behaviours are evaluated. In the context of attending a strip club as a part of the patron's weekly routine, certain behaviours were judged more harshly than were others. As may be expected, both touching a dancer in a private dance and conversing about sexual fantasies were seen as more unfaithful than merely watching a dancer on stage. However, there were no differences in the perceived unfaithfulness of conversing and touching. Touching the dancer was seen as less acceptable than looking, but no differences were found between conversing and touching or between conversing and looking. Finally, touching was seen to cause more discomfort for the patron's spouse than looking at the dancer. No differences were found between touching and conversing, and between conversing and looking. While conversation was viewed as more unfaithful than looking, it was not viewed as less acceptable. This may indicate that certain behaviours may be viewed as constituting a certain level of unfaithfulness, but are not seen as so unfaithful as to make them unacceptable.

The patrons who attend strip clubs may also do so with various reasons. While no gender differences were found in regard to the perceived motivations of the patrons, patron behaviour did influence what participants believed to be the patron's motives. While previous research indicated that 88% of female patrons in one sample listed bonding with their friends as a motivation for attending the strip club (Pilcher, 2011), and other research found that male patrons are motivated by a desire for relaxation and for a sexual experience (Frank, 2005), or to form an emotional bond with the dancers

(Erickson and Tewksbury, 2010), the current study examined differences in the perceived motivations of the patrons.

It was found that sexual desire was perceived to be a stronger motivation for the patron when he/she conversed with the dancer than when he/she either touched or looked at the dancer. Developing an emotional connection with the dancer was seen as a stronger motive when the patron conversed with the dancer than when he/she looked at the dancers and feeling a sense of freedom was seen as a stronger motive for the patron when he/she touched or conversed with the dancer than when he/she only looked at the dancer. Perceptions of the motivation of socializing with friends and relaxing did not change for different behaviours.

In her study, Frank (2005) distinguished between patrons who attend the strip club for one-time events, such as bachelor parties, and regular patrons. In the current study the common sense hypothesis that visiting a strip club as a part of the patron's weekly routine would be viewed more negatively than visiting the strip club for a friend's bachelor/bachelorette party was examined. Indeed, it was found that visiting the strip club as a part of the patron's weekly routine was perceived as more unfaithful, less acceptable, and as causing more discomfort to the spouse than visiting the strip club for a friend's bachelor/bachelorette party. This makes sense because visiting a strip club weekly indicates that it is an important activity for the patron, whereas the bachelor/bachelorette party scenario gives the patron a legitimate excuse to make a visit to the strip club.

The dancers who work at strip clubs are subject to stigmatization. Research shows that female dancers may be labeled as 'whores', unintelligent, uneducated, and as drug addicts (Skipper & McCaghy, 1970; Thompson et al., 2011). Research shows that male

dancers are also stigmatized (Dressel & Petersen, 1982). However, there is no research comparing perceptions of male and female exotic dancers. The current study found that male dancers are viewed as more intelligent and more respectable than are female dancers. Perceptions of male and female dancers did not differ with regard to having an STI, being raised in a low-income family, using illegal drugs, or being in a committed relationship. The finding that male dancers are perceived more positively than female dancers in terms of intelligence and respectability is in line with previous research on sex workers that indicates that male sex workers are less affected by stigma than are female sex workers (Vanwesenbeeck, 2013).

Finally, with changing sexual attitudes (Barbach, 1982), it was expected that participant sex-role attitudes would influence their perceptions of the patrons. Overall, those with more traditional sex-role attitudes were more likely to view the patron's behaviour as unacceptable. Participants with more egalitarian sex-role attitudes were more likely to perceive the patron as being motivated by a desire to socialize with friends and to feel a sense of freedom.

Sex-role attitudes were more closely examined to see if they influenced perceptions of male and female patrons differently. It was found that more traditional sex role attitudes were associated with being more likely to view a female patron's behaviour as unacceptable, but not a male patron's behaviour. This illustrates that those with more traditional sex role attitudes may have a single sexual standard favouring men.

Furthermore, those with more traditional views were less likely to view female patrons as being motivated by a desire to socialize with friends (despite this being a major motivation for female patrons (Pilcher, 2011)), which means that they may be

overlooking a harmless motivating factor. Those with more traditional values were also less likely to view male patrons as being motivated by a desire to feel a sense of freedom.

Future Research and Conclusion

Future research should examine several things. For one, the current study focused on patrons who have been married for five years, future research may wish to examine the unfaithfulness or acceptability of strip club behaviours in the context of marriage, long-term relationships, short-term relationships, and casual relationships. The current study was also conducted in a heterosexual framework. Thus more research could focus on different sexual frameworks, such as homosexual frameworks, or heterosexual patrons who attend strip clubs with same-sex dancers.

Future research may also wish to take into account participants' level of experience with strip clubs. Perhaps participants who have visited strip clubs, and thus know more about the interactions that take place there, will have different perceptions than participants who have never actually visited a strip club. Other factors which influence perception of strip club behaviours could also be researched, such as education level.

The current study examined the perceptions of strip club activities of strangers. Future research may seek to examine more directly participants in relationships in which they and/or their partners have attended strip clubs. Perhaps people have stronger opinions regarding strip club behaviours when it is themselves, or their partners, engaging in the activities.

Finally, future research should compare emotional and physical infidelity in a strip club, as it may be helpful to ensure that each scenario is clearly emotional or

physical. For example, in this study, the emotional infidelity scenario was given as discussing private sexual fantasies with a dancer. This contains a sexual component; a better scenario may have been discussing financial pressures or hardships at work.

In conclusion, the current study helps shed light on the nature of the perception of the interactions at a strip club. The current sample, overall, yielded no gender differences in terms of differences between male and female participants and in perceptions of male and female patrons. This seems to reflect the values of the sexual revolution (Barbach, 1982). However, different activities are perceived differently in terms of level of unfaithfulness. Couples in which one or both partners are visiting strip clubs will thus wish to focus discussion around the acceptability of particular activities.

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Appendix A

Perceptions of Strip Club Patrons and Dancers: Possible Scenarios

1.a) John (age 35) has been married to Anna (age 34) for 7 years. On a Thursday evening John drives downtown to a local strip club where he meets up with some friends. They sit down at a table and order a round of drinks. There, he relaxes and catches up with his friends while watching the female dancers remove their costumes and dance to pop music. He takes breaks from chatting with his friends to watch the exotic dancers perform and strip. After a few hours at the club John returns home.

1.b) John (age 35) has been married to Anna (age 34) for 7 years. On a Thursday evening John drives downtown to a local strip club, where he meets up with some friends. They sit down at a table and order a round of drinks. There, he relaxes and catches up with his friends while the female dancers on stage remove their costumes and dance to pop music. As a dancer makes her rounds offering private dances, John pays for a private dance and touches are exchanged. After a few hours at the club John returns home.

1.c) John (age 35) has been married to Anna (age 34) for 7 years. On a Thursday evening John drives downtown to a local strip club, where he meets up with some friends. They sit down at a table and order a round of drinks. There, he relaxes and catches up with his friends while the female dancers on stage remove their costumes and dance to pop music. He also engages in conversation with a dancer, telling her about private sexual fantasies that he is not comfortable discussing with Anna. After a few hours at the club John returns home.

2.a) Anna (age 34) has been married to John (age 35) for 7 years. On a Thursday evening Anna drives downtown to a local strip club, where she meets up with some friends. They

sit down at a table and order a round of drinks. There, she relaxes and catches up with her friends while watching the male dancers remove their costumes and dance to pop music. She takes breaks from chatting with her friends to watch the exotic dancers perform and strip. After a few hours at the club Anna returns home.

2.b) Anna (age 34) has been married to John (age 35) for 7 years. On a Thursday evening Anna drives downtown to a local strip club, where she meets up with some friends. They sit down at a table and order a round of drinks. There, she relaxes and catches up with her friends while the male dancers on stage remove their costumes and dance to pop music. As a dancer makes his rounds offering private dances, Anna pays for a private dance and touches are exchanged. After a few hours at the club Anna returns home.

2.c) Anna (age 34) has been married to John (age 35) for 7 years. On a Thursday evening Anna drives downtown to a local strip club, where she meets up with some friends. They sit down at a table and order a round of drinks. There, she relaxes and catches up with her friends while the male dancers on stage remove their costumes and dance to pop music. She also engages in conversation with a dancer, telling him about private sexual fantasies that she is not comfortable discussing with John. After a few hours at the club Anna returns home.

Appendix B

Perceptions of the Interactions at a Strip Club: Survey (as applied to the male, John)

Please read carefully before answering. Each response is scaled from 1 to 7 with 1 being very unlikely and 7 being very likely.

1. How likely is it that each of the following would act as motivating factors in John's decision to visit a strip club?

A) Socializing with friends to John (male-bonding)?

| | | | | | | |
|----------|---|---|---|---|---|--------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Very | | | | | | Very |
| Unlikely | | | | | | Likely |

B) Sexual desire?

| | | | | | | |
|----------|---|---|---|---|---|--------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Very | | | | | | Very |
| Unlikely | | | | | | Likely |

C) Developing an emotional connection with the dancers?

| | | | | | | |
|----------|---|---|---|---|---|--------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Very | | | | | | Very |
| Unlikely | | | | | | Likely |

D) Feeling a sense of freedom?

| | | | | | | |
|----------|---|---|---|---|---|--------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Very | | | | | | Very |
| Unlikely | | | | | | Likely |

E) Achieving relaxation?

| | | | | | | |
|----------|---|---|---|---|---|--------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Very | | | | | | Very |
| Unlikely | | | | | | Likely |

If John had gone to the strip club for a friend's bachelor party what is the likelihood that Anna would:

2. Say John was being unfaithful?

| | | | | | | |
|----------|---|---|---|---|---|--------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Very | | | | | | Very |
| Unlikely | | | | | | Likely |

3. Say John's behavior was unacceptable?

| | | | | | | |
|----------|---|---|---|---|---|--------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Very | | | | | | Very |
| Unlikely | | | | | | Likely |

4. Say she was uncomfortable with John's behaviour?

| | | | | | | |
|----------|---|---|---|---|---|--------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Very | | | | | | Very |
| Unlikely | | | | | | Likely |

If John goes to the strip club as a part of his weekly routine what is the likelihood that Anna would:

5. Say John was being unfaithful?

| | | | | | | |
|----------|---|---|---|---|---|--------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Very | | | | | | Very |
| Unlikely | | | | | | Likely |

6. Say John's behavior was unacceptable?

| | | | | | | |
|----------|---|---|---|---|---|--------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Very | | | | | | Very |
| Unlikely | | | | | | Likely |

7. Say she was uncomfortable with John's behaviour?

| | | | | | | |
|----------|---|---|---|---|---|--------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Very | | | | | | Very |
| Unlikely | | | | | | Likely |

8. How do you think John would perceive the dancers? For each of the following indicate on a scale of 1 to 7 (where 1 = very unlikely and 7 = very likely) how you think John would perceive the dancer(s). How likely is John

A) To think that the dancer is in a committed relationship?

| | | | | | | |
|----------|---|---|---|---|---|--------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Very | | | | | | Very |
| Unlikely | | | | | | Likely |

B) To think that the dancer is intelligent?

| | | | | | | |
|----------|---|---|---|---|---|--------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Very | | | | | | Very |
| Unlikely | | | | | | Likely |

C) To think that the dancer is respectable?

| | | | | | | |
|----------|---|---|---|---|---|--------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Very | | | | | | Very |
| Unlikely | | | | | | Likely |

D) To think that the dancer uses illegal drugs?

| | | | | | | |
|----------|---|---|---|---|---|--------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Very | | | | | | Very |
| Unlikely | | | | | | Likely |

E) To think that the dancer was raised in a low-income family?

| | | | | | | |
|----------|---|---|---|---|---|--------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Very | | | | | | Very |
| Unlikely | | | | | | Likely |

F) To think that the dancer has an STD?

| | | | | | | |
|----------|---|---|---|---|---|--------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Very | | | | | | Very |
| Unlikely | | | | | | Likely |

Appendix C

Sex-Role Attitudes Scale

Please answer all questions as truthfully as possible on a range from 1 (= disagree completely) to 5 (= agree completely).

1. Everything should be geared toward assuring that as many women as men are employed in all professions.^a
2. It looks worse for a woman than for a man to be drunk.
3. A woman who has children should be a mother before all else.
4. I think it is wrong that a man cannot as easily take on the name of his wife when he marries- if he should want to, that is.^a
5. I think it is wrong that the media (newspapers, television) pay more attention to men's sports than to women's sports.^a
6. It is not appropriate for a women to tell dirty jokes.
7. It is ridiculous for a woman to help a man put on his coat.
8. It is acceptable for a woman to have a career, but marriage and family should come first.
9. I think feminism is an important cause.^a
10. A woman must insist that the domestic chores be divided equally between the two spouses.^a
11. A woman should not attempt to take on all kinds of typically male tasks.
12. A man who easily becomes emotional and breaks into tears is a softie.
13. It annoys me that men are better off than women in all possible respects.^a
14. As long as men dominate in our society, it's not possible for women to be really happy.^a
15. From the beginning of a relationship, a woman has to be careful that she isn't pushed into the traditional female role.^c
16. The development of traditional gender roles are a logical consequence of getting married and having children,
17. It is best to maintain more or less traditional gender roles in a relationship.

* For scorer only: ^a Negatively keyed item.

Appendix D

Permission to Use Sex-Role Scale

Thank you very much!

From: Nico W. Van Yperen [n.van.yperen@rug.nl]
Sent: Saturday, November 10, 2012 1:08 PM
To: Head, Kayla L.
Subject: Re: Sex-Role Attitudes Scale- permission

Of course, it's free for use.

[[Logo]]

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On Nov 10, 2012, at 5:17 PM, "Head, Kayla L."
<khead@grenfell.mun.ca<<mailto:khead@grenfell.mun.ca>>>
wrote:

Hello Dr. Van Yperen,

I am a fourth year undergraduate Psychology student at Grenfell Campus, Memorial University of Newfoundland. I am working on my honours thesis, and was wondering if I could obtain your permission to use the Sex-Role Attitudes Scale used by you and Dr.Buunk in your article, Sex-Role Attitudes, Social Comparison, and Satisfaction with Relationships, 1991.

Thank you for your time,

Kayla Head

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