

A Theory on Multiple Sexual Partnership

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Abstract

Human sexual partnership has evolved over time, from single partnerships to multiple partnerships. The reasons for people engaging these sexual relationship arrangements vary from person to person. Some studies have already been made about multiple sexual partnership that evokes the biological needs of humans, but the occurrence of MSP due to social modelling has bunched to be unstudied and was not explored thoroughly. This study examines the underlying reasons and practice of multiple sexual partnerships through societal exemplifications, understanding of individuals' preference towards pleasure not just by man's innate biological needs. The formulated theory in this study describes, explains and justifies the enumerated reasons of committing multiple sexual partners outside or within the context of marriage. With it, this study relinquishes another perspective about the occurrence of multiple sexual partnerships.

Keywords: multiple sexual partnership, theory, societal models

1.0 Introduction

Sex is a gift endowed to mankind. It is a universal physiological need of humans for survival. This desire of humans to have sex is an existential need to replicate the existence of human on earth. In any forms and practices, Sinauer (2001) stated that sex is sexually a motivated goal and behavior of humans (including multiple sexual partners, early age at first sexual intercourse, and sexual habits of partners). Choosing to have sex with someone just acquainted, totally a stranger or loved in either shorter or longer span of time, is a big decision. It requires great responsibility and acceptance of consequences before committing to perform such act. Roughly speaking, sex was categorized by Baumeister, et al. (2001) into three which are the genotypic sex, phenotypic sex and gender. Genotypic sex pertains specifically to a person's two sex chromosomes (X and Y

chromosomes). Phenotypic sex talks about to a person's sex identified by their internal and external genitalia, expression of secondary sex characteristics and behaviors. And lastly the gender, which is referred to as a sexual orientation and person's subjective perception of his or her sex. Moreover, individuals have different levels of sexual pleasure. Some have more and some have less. Over time, human sexual affairs change one's level of sexual satisfaction and pleasure from single affinity to multiple partnerships. In this study, multiple sexual relationships are those in which an individual has more than one sexual partner sequentially or concurrently (Chirwa, et al, 2009). Multiple sequential sexual partnerships are relationships with no overlapping time in sexual affinity within subsequent partners. While, multiple concurrent sexual partnerships are relationships with overlapping sexual affinity of more than one

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person. According to Msolomba (2009), these are for fun, leisure and emotional relief.

Previous studies state that there are a number of reasons as to why people do engage in multiple sexual activities. Reason may include financial stability, gender scarcity (skewed sex ration), human beings physiological beings (wanting to satiate the carnal need), egoistic reason (wanting to have a male heir), and keeping properties among relatives (Monomarital Principle), prolonged male absence and father effects (Cassidy, et al., 1989). Tibetan communities were said to be opened to this kind of arrangement because husbands were gone for lengthy periods leaving their wives at home for work. Wives were allowed to take in more than one husband to fill in the absence of their own husbands. Das (2009) found out that the two major motivational factors influencing the increasing counts of multiple sexual partnerships were (1) conservative sexual outlooks and recognition of female stereotypes have only indirect impacts on men's inclination for multiple sexual partnerships (2) male's resources and achievements have positive impacts on men's inclination for multiple partners despite less acceptance of female stereotypes and liberal thinking about sexual behavior. These reasons mentioned above are tackled in a research by Ptak and Lachmann (2001). Their study was anchored on the Polygamy Threshold Model which advocates that women are choosier in selecting their partners than men. This leads to a belief that men are more likely to choose a polygamous life than women. Additionally, men of high prestige and wealth have often acquired many mates, whether in the form of numerous wives, concubines, mistress or short sexual encounters (Betzing, 1996). Kenrick and Keefe (2003) hypothesized that men with profuse assets more often publicized to physically attractive women. Women revealing their physical attractiveness more often advertised for men with

high incomes. This is corroborated on the study of Berscheid & Walster (1994) that men with low self-esteem are reluctant to approach women who are physically attractive. Changes in sexual behavior have resulted in longer periods of multiple sequential or concurrent relationships. A number of adolescent relationships are of short duration. Majority of teenagers do not have multiple concurrent sexual partners; however, most of them have practiced multiple sequential partners. Sexual partners of adolescents are strongly related to the length of time (Santelli, et. al , 1998). Moreover, in a study of Chizimbi (2009), findings revealed that a married person, either male or female, may have a regular or irregular extra-marital sexual relationship with a former lover, depending on how often they see and interact with each other. The results of the study showed that this was quite common among married people of both sexes. This only means that previous experiences are hard to forget - or "they are just simply unforgettable".

The majority of studies in reference to multiple sexual partnerships (MSP) evolve around the various definitions it holds, the trivial relationship it has to health, the prevalence of the phenomenon, and the attempts to design and scale up strategies to promote MSP reduction. However, there is no in depth exploration of the interplay of societal tolerance and man's rational choices as crucial factors leading to a full understanding of the phenomenon.

From a psychological stance, this study aims to explain, describe, and predict the incessant occurrence of the phenomenon in context.

2.0 Theory Formulation and the Theory

This section probes on the important set of axioms or universal truths which generated the theory of the study. The set of sufficient axioms were anchored on existing studies and researches

and referred journals analyses. The evolving states of relationships underwent significant transitions over time. The changes evolved from the traditional set-ups to open partnerships. The phenomenon grew rampant and became more severe as society tolerated these multiple sexual partnerships leading to multiple sexual partnerships (either of similar or opposite sexes). This paper is bounded on the following axioms:

Axiom 1: Human instinctually seeks for pleasure and avoids discomfort.

Sigmund Freud's most important and enduring idea of the human psyche is stressed on more than one aspect. Freud (1923) viewed the essence of being into three structured components namely the id, ego and superego, all emerging at various stages in man's lives.

The primeval and inbred component of one's personality is the id. It consists of all the innate (biological) components of personality, including the sex (life) instinct which contains the libido or the energy created by survival and sexual instincts and aggressive (death) instinct. The id is the imprudent part of the being which functions under pleasure principle (Freud, 1920). This brings in the very concept that every aspiring desire of an individual should be immediately gratified or established regardless of the consequences in order to experience pleasure otherwise when it is denied tension arises resulting to pain or discomfort. Moreover, the realities, logic, or day-to-day experiences of psyche do not affect the id.

On the other hand, the ego is a part of the id which has been altered by the direct influence of the "actualities of the world" (Freud 1923). Ideally, the ego works by reason whereas the id is chaotic and totally unreasonable. It is the decision making component of personality. Accordingly, the functions of ego are based on reality principle. It works on genuine customs of compromising or

satisfying the demands of id to avoid negative consequences on life. Societal norms and realities, rules and ethics in deciding how to behave are greatly considered by the ego as well. Like the id, the ego avoids pain and seeks pleasure but unlike the id, the ego is concerned with contrived and realistic scheme to obtain one's pleasure.

Furthermore, the ego does not stress on what is right or what is wrong. Something is better when it succeeds its end of supporting or sustaining without causing harm to the id or to itself. Through it, the function of the superego then is to incorporate the accepted morals and values of society which are learned from ones parents and others. Its primary purpose is to control the id's compulsions, especially those which society prohibits, such as sex and violent behaviors. It also has the function of persuading the ego to turn to moralistic goals rather than simply the realistic ones and to strive more for excellence (McLeod, 2008).

Axiom 2: Humans are insatiable.

According to Ricker (2006), humans in any walks of life possess a gifted, curious and unquenchable intellect. Curiosity of one person triggers humans unending quest of new truth (knowledge, discoveries, and objects). This holds true at the same time that wants of something (both tangible and intangible) are unsalable. Based on the theory of wants, curiosity is a stronger predictor of life satisfaction. A man who actively exhibits an increasing curiosity has a greater sense of meaning in life, sustainable and lasting happiness and attains high level of self-satisfaction. While the less curious individuals derive more pleasure from hedonistic behaviors such as sex and drinking. Kashdan (2009) stated that the real way to make oneself happy is doing something that challenges and motivates a person to learn even more based on the focus of curiosity.

Axiom 3: Modeling is an aspect of social learning.

Humans are surrounded by many influential models, such as teachers in school, parents within the family, characters on television, friends and peers and celebrities. People learn through observing models' attitudes, behaviors, and aftermaths of those behaviors in any society (Walters, 1996). Most human behavior is learned observationally through effective modeling conditions such as motivation, retention, reproduction, and attention. Through social observation, learning is supported by Vygotsky's social development theory and Lave's situated learning theory. The idea of Vygotsky posits that the cognitive development of a person depends upon the "zone of proximal development" (ZPD). This level of growth is attained when a person actively engages in societal manners. Complete progress of the ZPD is influenced upon by full societal engagements and interactions to any activities. It attempts to explain responsiveness and awareness as the end products of socialization. Moreover, a critical component of situated learning of man's experience involved a "community of practice" which represents acquired beliefs and behaviors. By observation, man is capable of learning that enables him or her to acquire numerous integrated pattern of behavior supplemented by examples and also with tedious trial and error. Hence, learning of individuals from exemplary models and societal observations mold his cognition and behavior.

Axiom 4: Humans are capable of creating self-regulative influences.

A person must be able to anticipate apparent consequences of different events, choices of action and regulation of his behavior accordingly in order to function effectively. To control one's behavior, people must manage the stimulus determinants of given activities and resolving consequences

for their own actions. Self-perception theory posits that people reflect on their own feelings and attitudes based on their self-observation on how they behave and relate with others in various situations at any time. The person understands rationally their own blatant behaviors in the same way they attempt to describe others' behaviors (Bem, 1972). Furthermore, according to Ajzen et. al (1991) a person's definite attitudes and reactions toward the situation can be expected to predict his or her behavior. Individual's intention determines what behavior to perform and that this intention is, in turn, a function of his or her subjective norm and attitude towards the behavior. Intention is the greatest predictor of behavior. It is a direct antecedent of behaviors and a rational exemplification of a person's eagerness to execute a given behavior. This intention is determined by three things: their perceived behavioral control, their attitude towards the specific behavior and their subjective norms. The stronger is the perceived control of the person's intention to perform the behavior, the more favorable the positive attitudes and the subjective norms.

Axiom 5: Human's choice and preference is influenced by his own personal and cognitive perspective.

Man's perspective determines not only how he will be affected by his experiences but the future direction his actions may take. The Attribution theory (Heider, 1958) explores about how people make sense of the world. Ascribing cause to the varied events around us (positive or negative) gives us a greater intellect of control. How a person constructs and processes the underlying implications of any event within his or her environment is based on his or her choices, intentions, reasons, and truthful causes of individual's actions. The primary purpose of it is to attain higher cognitive control over one's

environment by explaining and understanding the causes behind behaviors and environmental occurrences.

Proposition 1: Multiple sexual partnerships are dominated by societal examples, individuals' choices and what is more pleasurable.

Humans' quest for pleasure and avoidance of discomfort (axiom 1) is insatiable (axiom 2). Sexual practices of mankind are highly influenced by various societal models (axiom 3) and its tolerance to such act. Thus, if man's sex life towards a single partner is not pleasurable based on his own preference, he seeks gratification from other partner or partners. Moreover, if society neglected its obligations towards such act, this may augment more individuals to have more partners sexually.

3.0 Theory of Multiple Sexual Partnerships

The sexual urges of human beings are driven not just by the innate biological needs but proliferates with societal exemplification and advances upon individuals' immanent predisposition. Thus, society's increasing tolerance towards multiple sexual partners in congruence with an individual's inclination to what is pleasurable, propels a person's proclivities to multiple sexual partnership.

4.0 Conclusion

The occurrence of humans having multiple sexual partnership is caused not just by the biological needs it necessitate but also with the examples demonstrated and adept by the society based on the accepted norms, rightful deeds and well-founded beliefs towards sex (human's ability to produce new living organisms, sacredness and sex ratio). Moreover, with the increasing tolerance towards multiple partners and human's desire and propensity to make it more pleasurable in the society impels people to whack more partners

during sexual activity to achieve more pleasure and satisfaction.

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