

Moral Judgments of Sexual Behavior and Its Influence on Perceptions of Social Status

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Background

Social Status

- Shapes access to resources, cooperation, and reproductive opportunities
- High-status individuals gain:
 - Increased cooperation
 - Better access to resources
 - Higher reproductive success
- Low-status individuals face challenges and may rely on prosocial behaviors (Koski et al., 2015)

Sexual Morality

- Moral judgments shape perceptions of social status, with adherence to norms increasing status and violations reducing it (Wojciszke, 2015)
- Despite the influence of moral judgments, few studies directly examine how sexual morality shapes pathways to status

Research Aim

► Investigate how moral judgments of sexual behavior affect perceived social status across sociosexual orientation and sex differences

H1: - Short-term oriented → **higher status** ↑ for casual sex

- Long-term oriented → **lower status** ↓ for casual sex

H2: Sex differences: Men perceive sexual behaviors in **emotional contexts** (e.g., emotional infidelity, love) and **short-term sexual behavior** as **less status-reducing** ↑ than women

Method

- 15-minute survey via Qualtrics
- UT Austin undergraduate sample (N = 99, M_{age} = 20.5, SD = 1.1; 68% female)

Basic demographics
Contextual variables (e.g., political orientation, religious affiliation)

Assesses behavior, attitudes, and desires toward uncommitted, casual sex
Higher scores → more unrestricted (short-term oriented)
Lower scores → more restricted (long-term oriented)

Demographic Questionnaire

Sociosexual Orientation Questionnaire: SOI-R (Penke & Asendorpf, 2008)

Sexual Morality & Status Questionnaire: SMI (Asao et al., 2023)

Assesses perceived social status of sexual behaviors (e.g., short-term sex, long-term sex, infidelity, incest, sexual coercion, same-sex sexuality)
Higher scores → more permissive attitudes

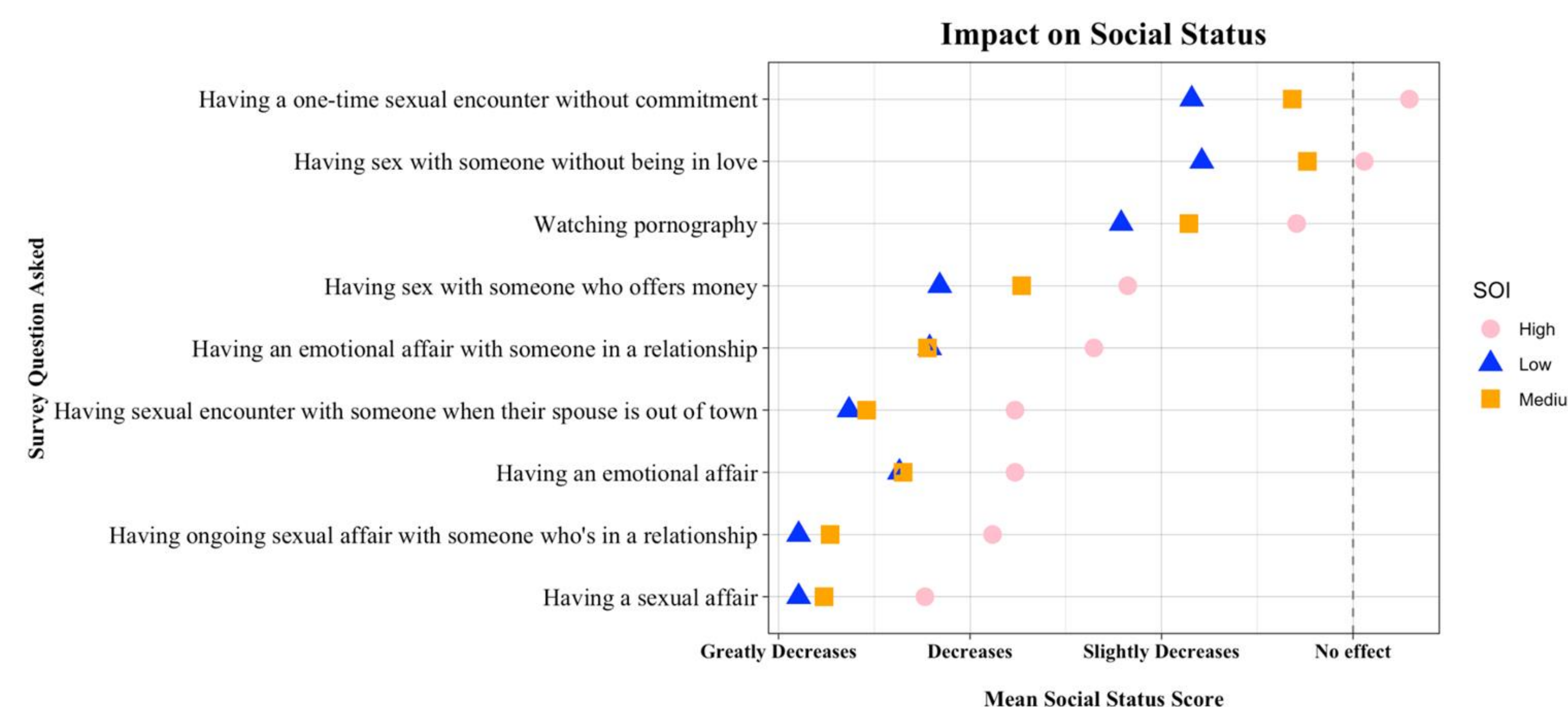
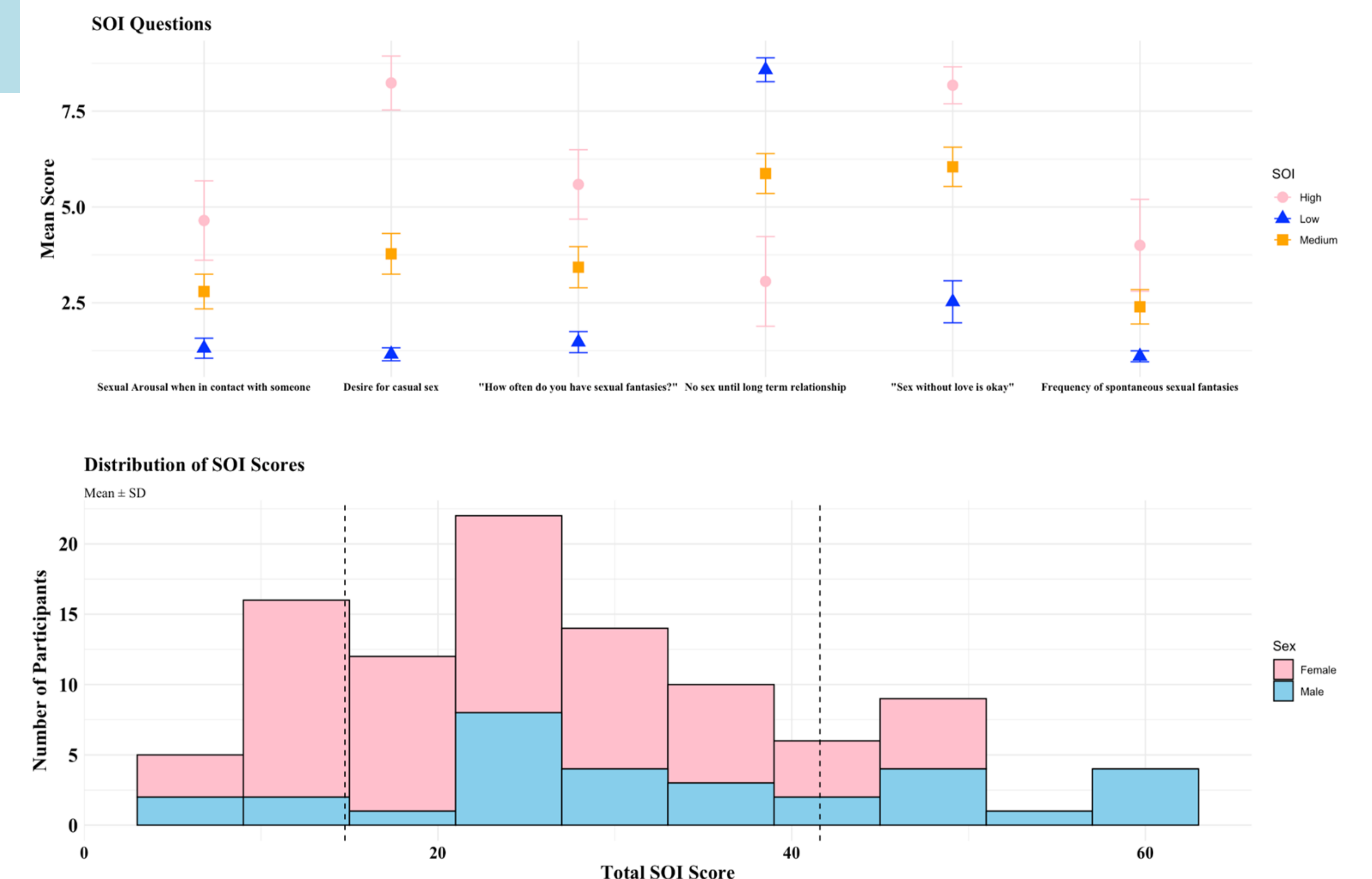
"For each item below, please indicate how your opinion about a person's social status would change if they performed this behavior."



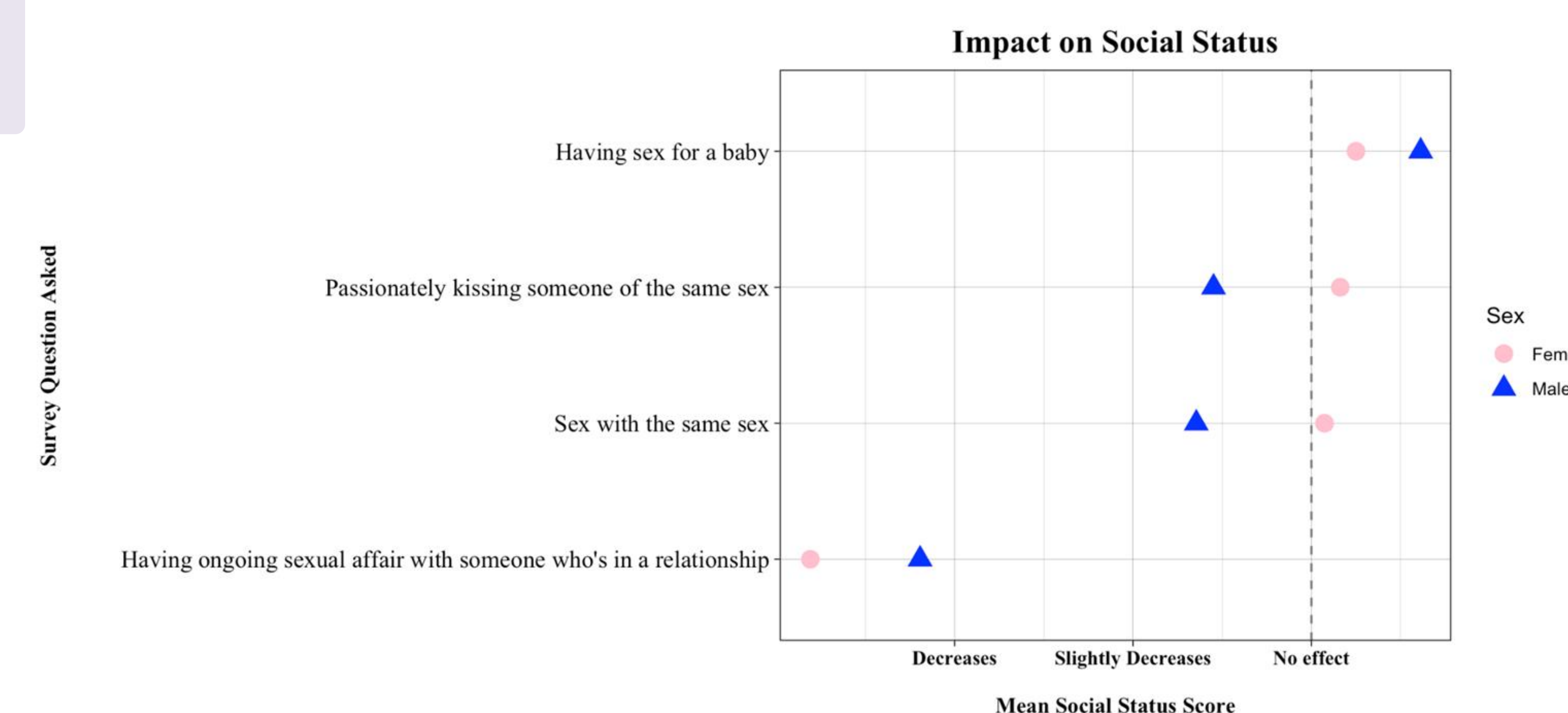
Results

High SOI participants scored significantly higher than Low SOI participants for all behaviors ($p < .001$ to $< .05$), and often higher than Medium SOI participants ($p < .05$ to $< .01$)

Question	H	p	Dunn's test
Having a one-time sexual encounter without commitment	11.72	0.002	High - Low, $p < 0.001$ High - Medium, $p < 0.03$ Low - Medium, $p = 0.05$
Having an ongoing sexual affair with someone who is already in a steady relationship with someone else	14.19	< 0.001	High - Low, $p = 0.001$ High - Medium, $p = 0.001$ Low - Medium, $p = 0.27$
Having sex with someone because they offered to pay money	9.07	0.01	High - Low, $p < 0.001$ High - Medium, $p = 0.06$ Low - Medium, $p = 0.09$
While involved in a steady relationship, having a sexual affair with someone else	13.56	< 0.001	High - Low, $p = 0.001$ High - Medium, $p = 0.001$ Low - Medium, $p = 0.32$
While involved in a steady relationship, having an emotional affair with someone else	6.67	0.03	High - Low, $p < 0.05$ High - Medium, $p < 0.05$ Low - Medium, $p = 0.8$
Having sex with someone without being in love with them	12.81	0.002	High - Low, $p < 0.001$ High - Medium, $p = 0.08$ Low - Medium, $p = 0.01$



Male participants scored significantly higher than female participants for same-sex sexual behaviors ($p < .05$)



Conclusion

- Short-term oriented individuals attributed **higher status** ↑ to casual sex, whereas long-term oriented individuals attributed **lower status** ↓ (H1 supported)
- Men viewed emotional sexual behaviors (e.g., emotional infidelity) as **less status-reducing** ↑ than women (H2a supported)
- Unexpected finding:** men rated same-sex sexual behavior as **more status-reducing** ↓ than women

In conclusion, individuals with higher SOI and most males perceive these sexual moral situations as having a smaller impact on social status than others

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