

Extending the Study of Non-Erotic Thought: Implications for Understanding South Asian Women's Sexuality



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Introduction

Purity Culture: a culture of sexual norms, values, and behaviours studied in Evangelical Christian and LDS communities, characterized by

- Premarital sexual abstinence
- Modesty
- Prizing of virginity
- Traditional Gender Roles
- Responsibility of women to be sexual gatekeepers
- Some support for lower sexual wellbeing outcomes

We are interested in how this construct may overlap with South Asian sexual norms, values, and behaviours, which are characterized by

- Marital expectations
- Self-sacrificing duty to family
- Heteronormative partnerships
- Gendered/sexualized bodies
- Procreative
- Connection to family social status
- Connection to cultural preservation



Non-erotic thoughts: commonly experienced attentional process that leads to reduced sexual well-being by interfering with the ability to attend to the pleasurable and erotic aspects of a sexual experience

Goals

Goal 1: Explore whether South Asian women endorse purity culture

- H: South Asian women will be more likely to endorse purity culture

Goal 2: explore how purity culture endorsement impacts sexual wellbeing

- H: South Asian women will be more likely to report more NETs and experience lower sexual functioning

Methodology

- Recruited one sample of second generation South Asian-Canadian female-identifying participants (n = 150) and one sample of white Canadian women (n = 150)
- Completed purity culture belief endorsement across the two groups
- Compared the frequency, content, and associated anxiety of different categories of non-erotic thoughts across different cultural groups using lab-developed non-erotic thought measure
- Compared sexual functioning across the two groups using the Female Sexual Function Index (satisfaction, arousal, lubrication, pain, orgasm)
- Ran analyses using multiple regression models and t-tests

Results

South Asian Sample		White Sample
↑	Endorsement of Purity Culture **	↓
↑	Frequency of Thoughts related to Morality, Guilt, or Regret **	↓
↑	Frequency of Thoughts related to Pain *	↓
↑	Frequency of Thoughts related to Pregnancy/STI/Health Concerns *	↓
↑	Frequency of Thoughts related to Partner's Emotional Thoughts *	↓
↓	Frequency of thoughts about Body Appearance *	↑
↑	Anxiety associated with Non-Erotic Thoughts *	↓
↑	Anxiety related to thoughts about morality, guilt, or regret **	↓
↑	Anxiety related to thoughts about Pain *	↓
↑	Anxiety related to Pregnancy/STI/Health Concerns *	↓
↑	Anxiety related to thoughts about Positive Emotional Quality of Relationship *	↓
↑	Anxiety related to thoughts about Partner's Body *	↓
	No significant differences in sexual functioning outcomes	

** p < .001

* p < .05

Conclusion

- South Asian women endorse purity culture beliefs more strongly than a sample of White women
- South Asian women experience more non-erotic thoughts related to moral concerns, guilt, or regret related to a sexual act
- White women experience more non-erotic thoughts related to body appearance
- No significant differences in sexual functioning

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