RELATIONSHIPS AMONG PEDOHEBEPHILIC MEN

Romantic and Sexual Relationships with Adult Partners Among Pedohehebephilic Men

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Abstract

This study examined reasons for romantic and sexual relationships with adult partners among men with pedohebephilic preferences ($N = 125$). We also explored whether age sexual orientation impacted reasons for engaging in sex with adult partners. Pedohebephilic men endorsed both non-sexual and sexual reasons for engaging adult-partnered relationships. The top reasons for sexual relationships with adult partners were pleasure, love and commitment, physical desirability, experience seeking, and practicality. The top reasons for romantic relationships with adult partners were to gain companionship, love towards romantic partner, to escape loneliness, to engage in sexual activities, and it seemed natural. The exclusivity of attraction to children was found to be significantly related to some of the factors. These findings support differential reasons for pedophilic men engaging in adult-partnered relationships. Professionals should seek to understand the nature of their clients' relationships and age sexual orientation to determine whether such factors are relevant. Professionals can then support clients in their search for meaningful relationships.

Romantic and Sexual Relationships with Adult Partners Among Pedohebephilic Men

Chronophilias refer to primary sexual attraction to age/maturity categories other than young, sexually mature adults and are increasingly being examined as possible sexual orientations (Seto, 2017). *Minor attraction* is an umbrella term that encompasses all sexual attractions to age categories that are under the age of legal adulthood; this age varies by region. The term minor attraction can include having attraction to infants (i.e., *infantophilia/ nepiophilia*), pre-pubescent children (i.e., *pedophilia*), or pubescent children (e.g., *hebephilia*). Existing research has suggested that many persons with pedohebephilic attractions explicitly label their attraction to minors as a sexual orientation or as part of their overall sexuality (Walker, 2019). Further, pedohebephilic persons often indicate that they identify their attractions as such because they cannot be changed and/or are permanent, which also aligns with the sexual orientation criteria outlined by Seto (2012, 2017). Research by Cash (2016) has noted that people with pedohebephilic attractions tend to rank their attraction to children at the top of their hierarchy of sexual orientation identities. Despite most pedohebephilic persons expressing such views, it is important to recognize that not all participants conceptualized their attractions as a sexual orientation, but rather conceptualized these desires as a mental illness (Walker, 2019). How such individuals conceptualize their pedohebephilic attractions likely plays a critical role in their relationships with romantic partners, family, friends, and the community at large, and what they choose to disclose.

Mixed-Orientation Relationships & Relationship Outcomes

Given that persons with pedohebephilic attractions cannot engage in a legal relationship with a minor, it is expected that many may turn to adult-partnered relationships for companionship, among other reasons. Previous literature has suggested that those with pedohebephilic attraction experience heightened levels of distress and loneliness upon realizing that they may never

experience a satisfying romantic relationship with a partner they are attracted to due to legal constraints (Cash, 2016). An extension of this is the recognition that they will never receive, or give, physical companionship. These concerns likely impact pedohebephilic persons' decisions to engage in romantic and sexual relationships with adult partners, even though these partners may not be congruent with their preferred age of sexual orientation. We do not know if such relationships are truly fulfilling; nor do we know if they are able to self-express and fully engage within such relationships.

The term *mixed-orientation relationship* has been used to describe a relationship in which one partner identifies as homosexual or bisexual and the other partner identifies as heterosexual (Adler & Ben-Ari, 2018). The term "mixed" refers to the incongruity that exists between the partners' sexual orientations. Existing research on mixed-orientation relationships has found that individuals often choose to engage in these relationships for non-sexual reasons. Higgins' (2006) review of literature on mixed-orientation relationships indicated that the most common reasons for these relationships were social expectations, desires to fit in, wanting children, and overcoming their homosexual desires. Research investigating gay men within heterosexual relationships found that gay men engaged in these relationships to avoid acknowledging their homosexual identity (Ross, 1978), as a conscious flight from homosexuality (Kissil & Itzhaky, 2015; Ross, 1978, 1979), to have children and a family (Higgins, 2002; Ross, 1978, 1979), to fulfill community expectation (Kissil & Itzhaky, 2015), and to escape loneliness (Ross, 1978, 1979). Like mixed-orientation relationships, some pedohebephilic persons have partners who are not necessarily congruent with their attractions. Although persons with pedohebephilic attractions may experience high levels of sexual and/or romantic attraction to adults, many do not. Therefore, reasons for engaging in

relationships with adult partners may parallel many of the reasons gay men and lesbian women chose to engage mixed-orientation relationships.

Research examining why individuals engage in sex has been primarily conducted using cisgender, heterosexual samples (e.g., Meston et al., 2009) with a few studies conducted on samples of sexual minority women (Ronson et al., 2012; Wood, Milhausen, & Jeffrey, 2014). Heterosexual men and women typically reported pleasure, feeling desired, attraction, and expressing love to their partner as the most frequent reasons for engaging in sex (Meston & Buss, 2007). Similarly, regardless of sexual orientation, research has found that the most frequent reasons given for engaging in sex among sexual minority women were pleasure, physical desirability, commitment, and love (Wood et al., 2014). Together these findings suggest that these populations engage in sex for both sexual and non-sexual reasons.

Hopwood et al. (2019) found that societal views towards compulsory heterosexuality allows the opportunity for mixed orientation relationships to arise, and if those individuals try to compartmentalize their identity (i.e., gay or bisexual) it increases internalized stigma and mental health issues. The authors suggested that these negative aspects can be reduced when the person “comes out” within the relationship and can feel integrated. Another study examining mixed-orientation relationships within the context of religious institutions (i.e., the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) found that sexual satisfaction was impacted by sexual attraction. Within the context of mixed-orientation relationships, the authors found that the more same-sex attraction the person had, the less attraction and more sexual aversion they experienced towards their current partner (Bridges et al., 2019). The same study found that bisexual partners had higher sexual satisfaction than those with only same-sex attraction; however, they had the highest levels of mental health distress. These findings seem to suggest the more exclusive the attraction is, the

harder it may be to maintain a mixed-orientation relationship. Mixed-orientation relationships involving pedohebephilic persons would likely experience a similar trajectory, dependent upon exclusivity of attractions.

Although personal and sexual satisfaction is involved in relationships, partner satisfaction also can play a key role. Jolene Sloan (2015) examined the use of bondage/discipline, dominance/submission, and sadism/masochism (BDSM) among asexual individuals and their romantic partners suggested that asexual individuals participated in BDSM activities primarily to produce sexual arousal for their partners. These individuals reported that engaging in these sexual activities results in intimacy and non-sexual benefits with their partner, therefore making it a worthwhile activity. Consequently, gaining intimacy and other non-sexual benefits appears to be a primary reason that asexual individuals engage in sexual activity with their partners. For pedohebephilic persons that experience exclusive attractions to children, such reasons may be more prevalent than those seen among those with less-exclusive attraction to children.

Pedohebephilic Attractions & Relationships

Research examining the dimensional structure of men's sexual interest in children found two core dimensions: biological sex and sexual maturity of the child (Bailey et al, 2020). The overall findings suggested that, for men, patterns of sexual arousal and self-reported sexual attraction seem to be congruent. Emerging research found that those who identify as pedohebephilic experience subjective feelings of falling in love, especially when exclusively attracted to children (Martijn et al., 2020). However, many people with pedohebephilic attraction do not identify as exclusively attracted to children; Tozdan and Briken (2015) found that up to 80% of pedohebephilic men identify as having non-exclusive attractions. Therefore, it can be expected that pedohebephilic persons' reasons for engaging in romantic or sexual relationships

with adult partners may parallel the reasoning provided by mixed-orientation partners. However, reasoning may also parallel asexual individuals, as these individuals acknowledged engaging in sexual activities that are incongruent with their sexual orientation to connect with their partners. Unfortunately, most of the existing literature on this population is based on individuals who are exclusive in their attractions (e.g., asexual individuals who identify as not sexually attracted to any partner). In contrast, pedohebephilic persons have reported experiencing varying levels of exclusivity in their attraction to adult partners (Cash, 2016).

Study Objectives

Although research has examined the reasons for engaging in romantic and sexual relationships for some sexual orientations, no studies have yet to examine the reasons pedohebephilic men have for such relationships. The present study sought to address this gap through a quantitative examination of the reasons identified by pedohebephilic men for engaging in romantic and sexual relationships with adult partners. Based on the mixed-orientation relationship literature (e.g., Higgins 2002, 2006; Ross, 1978, 1979), it was expected that pedohebephilic men similarly engage in romantic relationships with adult partners for primarily non-sexual reasons due to sexual orientation incongruencies. This exploratory examination of reasons for engagement and age sexual orientation was expected to show that the more exclusively attracted to children the individual is, the more likely they would identify non-sexual reasons for engaging in adult-partnered relationships.

Method

Participants

The sample consisted of 148 self-identified pedohebephilic participants (125 men, 23 women). Participants were recruited from two online support forums for pedohebephilic men:

B4U-ACT (<http://www.b4uact.org>) and Virtuous Pedophiles (<https://www.virped.org>). All participants were 18 years of age or older, fluent in English, and were currently in, had been in, and/or desired to be in a romantic relationship with an adult romantic partner.

Procedure

The study was advertised on the two support forums for minor attraction. The advertisement included a brief description of the study, eligibility requirements, and the link to the questionnaire. The participants were informed that the study would take a maximum of 30 min to complete. Individuals interested in participating in the study were required to review the online consent form, which outlined their right to choose to participate and informed them that their responses were anonymous. Once participants consented, they then completed a demographic questionnaire, the Why Humans Have Sex Short Form, and the Reasons for Romantic Relationships survey. The order of presentation was randomized for the second and third measure. Upon completion of the study, participants were presented with a debriefing form that described the purpose of the study, provided the researchers' contact information, and outlined resources for pedohebephilic men if they were distressed by participating in the research. The research was reviewed by the University of British Columbia – Okanagan's Behavioural Research and Ethics Board, certification number H19-02346.

Materials

Demographic Information

Participants provided basic demographic information including their age, sex, gender, race, gender sexual orientation, and current relationship status. Participants were also asked whether they identified as pedohebephilic and whether they had ever desired or experienced a romantic

relationship with an adult partner to determine their eligibility for the study. Information on participants' previous and current involvement with adult partners was also collected.

Reasons for Sex with Adult Partners

The Why Humans Have Sex Short Form is a 28-item scale designed to measure reasons for engaging in sex (Meston, Kilimnik, Freihart, & Buss, 2019). The Why Humans Have Sex Short Form is derived from the original Why Humans Have Sex (Meston & Buss, 2007) survey and has been used in several studies. The survey is comprised of 14 factors: pleasure, love and commitment, physical desirability, experience seeking, practical, self-esteem boost, stress reduction, duty and pressure, expression, mate guarding, reproduction, social status, resource, and revenge. Each item is rated from 1 (*none of my sexual experiences*) to 5 (*all of my sexual experiences*) based on the frequency participants report engaging in sex for each of the given reasons. If a participant has not had sex with a partner in the past, they are instructed to report the likelihood that they would engage in sex for each of the given reasons. The scale was modified for the present study; statements and response options were made to explicitly refer to sexual experiences with adult partners. No definition of sex was provided to allow participants to self-define sex. Internal consistencies for each of the factors ranged from $\alpha = .42$ to $.93$. In addition, 12 of the 14 factors have been found to have excellent cross-form validity (Meston et al., 2019). The full items are included in the Supplemental Materials.

Reasons for Romantic Relationship with Adult Partners

Reasons for engaging in romantic relationships were assessed using a modified version of a 7-item scale created by Edser and Shea (2002). This scale was created to measure reasons for romantic relationships among bisexual men in heterosexual marriages. For the present study, the wording of Edser and Shea's (2002) scale was modified to apply to adult romantic relationships

among pedohebephilic men rather than bisexual men's marriages. Additional items were included from the possible reasons suggested by Ross (1978, 1979) to enhance the breadth of the measure. Explicit instructions were added to inform participants that they should indicate the likelihood that they would engage in a romantic relationship for each of the reasons if they had not previously engaged in a romantic relationship with an adult partner. These additional items resulted in a 14-item questionnaire. To improve the clarity of the response options, the response scale was also modified from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*much*) to 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The full items are included in the Supplemental Materials.

Kinsey Scale – Age Sexual Orientation

The Kinsey Scale (Kinsey et al., 1948) was designed to assess an individual's gender sexual orientation from 0 (*exclusively heterosexual*) to 6 (*exclusively homosexual*). In the present study, the Kinsey Scale was modified to measure age sexual orientation of the participants' degree of attraction to minors compared to adults. The wording of the Kinsey Scale response options was changed to 0 (*exclusively attracted to adult*) to 6 (*exclusively attracted to minors*) to measure age sexual orientation rather than gender sexual orientation. No participants were exclusively attracted to adults, whereas 5 participants (3.4%) were predominantly attracted to adults and incidentally attracted to minors, 16 participants (10.7%) were predominantly attracted to adults and more than incidentally attracted to minors, 23 participants (15.4%) were equally attracted to minors and adults, 46 participants (30.9%) were predominantly attracted to minors and more than incidentally attracted to adults, 43 participants (28.9%) were predominantly attracted to minors and incidentally attracted to adults, and 16 participants (9.1%) were exclusively attracted to minors.

Results

Participant Characteristics

Data analyses were restricted to those that identified as a biological male ($N = 125$). Participants' age ranged from 18 to 70 years ($M = 34.02$, $SD = 13.42$). The sample had some racial diversity, but most of the participants identified as Caucasian ($n = 105$, 84.0%). The remainder of the participants identified as "Hispanic or Latino" ($n = 12$, 9.6%), "African-American or Black" ($n = 2$, 1.6%), "Other" ($n = 5$, 4.0%), or "Asian" ($n = 1$, 0.8%). Most participants indicated that they desired a romantic relationship with an adult partner ($n = 104$, 83.2%) and 96 participants had previously been in, or were currently in, a romantic relationship with an adult partner (76.8%). Half the participants' current relationship status was "single" ($n = 66$, 53.7%) or "in a long-term, committed relationship" ($n = 27$, 22.0%). The remainder of the participants identified as "married or common law" ($n = 20$, 16.3%) or "divorced or separated" ($n = 10$, 8.1%).

Reasons for Having Sex with Adult Romantic Partners

To determine the most endorsed reasons pedohebephilic men engage in sex with adult romantic partners, the mean score of each Why Humans Have Sex Short Form factor was calculated (Meston et al., 2019) and rank-ordered (refer to Table 1). Overall, the five most endorsed Why Humans Have Sex Short Form factors by pedohebephilic men were pleasure, love and commitment, physical desirability, experience seeking, and practicality.

Correlations were used to assess the relationship between age orientation and each of the reasons for romantic relationships, provided in Table 2. Several reasons for having sex were significantly correlated with age orientation, including pleasure ($r = .44$, $p < .001$), stress reduction ($r = .37$, $p < .001$), duty and pressure ($r = -.33$, $p = .002$), experience seeking ($r = .23$, $p = .03$), expression ($r = .28$, $p = .01$), and physical desirability ($r = .30$, $p = .004$).

Table 1. Mean of Ranked Why Humans Have Sex Factors for Pedohehebephilic Men

Why Humans Have Sex Factor	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>
Pleasure	7.49 (2.07)	7.02	7.92
Love and Commitment	7.18 (2.26)	6.69	7.64
Physical Desirability	6.53 (2.34)	6.01	7.02
Experience Seeking	6.12 (2.26)	5.67	6.61
Practical	4.97 (2.04)	4.56	5.38
Self-Esteem Boost	4.89 (2.38)	4.40	5.37
Stress Reduction	4.63 (2.01)	4.22	5.07
Duty and Pressure	3.83 (2.08)	3.44	4.27
Expression	3.72 (1.69)	3.38	4.08
Mate Guarding	3.53 (2.00)	3.12	3.92
Reproduction	3.18 (2.18)	2.78	3.62
Social Status	2.84 (1.80)	2.50	3.22
Resource	2.30 (0.79)	2.15	2.47
Revenge	2.20 (0.62)	2.09	2.35

Note. LL = 95% Confidence Interval Upper Limit. UL = 95% Confidence Interval Upper Limit. Values calculated using bootstrapping ($n = 1000$).

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Table 2. Correlation Matrix of Age Orientation and Why Humans Have Sex Factors

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1. Age Orientation	-														
2. Stress Reduction	.37**	.72													
3. Pleasure	.44**	.41**	.77												
4. Physical Desirability	.30**	.30**	.64**	.76											
5. Experience Seeking	.23*	.22*	.38**	.31**	.75										
6. Resource	.15	.22*	.14	.02	.18	.62									
7. Reproduction	-.14	-.01	-.08	-.01	-.09	.06	.97								
8. Social Status	-.10	.00	-.11	.02	.11	.24	.27	.87							
9. Revenge	.20	.23*	.24*	.30**	.11	.18	-.02	-.01	.40						
10. Practical	.23*	.53**	.42**	.35**	.45**	.20	-.05	.02	.15	.51					
11. Love & Commitment	.19	.38**	.57**	.44**	.31**	.13	.10	-.09	.13	.57**	.86				
12. Expression	.27**	.62**	.34**	.25**	.15	.17	.06	.11	.28*	.51**	.39**	.62			
13. Self-Esteem Boost	.05	.41**	.10	.13	.34**	.39**	-.01	.28**	.17	.34**	.05	.33**	.81		
14. Duty & Pressure	-.33*	-.01	-.40**	-.19	-.14	.21*	.24*	.44**	-.14	-.11	-.22*	.06	.27**	.77	
15. Mate Guarding	-.03	.21*	-.11	-.11	.11	.20	.00	.28**	.02	.32**	.08	.42**	.43**	.39**	.76

Note. *p < .05, **p < .01. Diagonal provides internal consistency of that factor in the sample.

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Reasons for Romantic Relationships with Adult Partners

To examine the reasons pedohebephilic men engaged in romantic relationships with adult partners, the mean score of each item in the Reasons for Romantic Relationships Questionnaire was calculated and ranked (see Table 3). The top five most endorsed items were to gain companionship, love towards romantic partner, to escape loneliness, to engage in sexual activities, and it seemed natural. Participants also could provide text responses for romantic relationship reasons. Their answers included themes such as their partner physically resembled a child or could act like a child, boredom, a desire to legally experience love and sex, to prove to themselves that they could maintain an adult relationship, to help manage fantasies or feelings towards children.

Correlations were used to assess the relationship between age orientation and each of the reasons for romantic relationships, provided in Table 4. The only reason for romantic relationships that was significantly correlated to age orientation was seeing others in relationships ($r = -.47$, $p = .01$), it seemed natural ($r = .42$, $p = .03$), societal pressure ($r = -.41$, $p = .03$), and thinking their attraction to children would go away ($r = -.39$, $p = .046$).

Table 3. Mean of Reasons for Romantic Relationships for Pedohebephilic Men

Reason	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>
Gain Companionship	4.25 (1.24)	3.76	4.67
Love for Partner	4.04 (1.14)	3.57	4.43
Escape Loneliness	3.96 (1.20)	3.50	4.39
Engage in Sexual Activities	3.82 (1.16)	3.35	4.19
It Seemed Natural	3.49 (1.35)	3.21	3.74
Desire to Be Looked After	3.07 (1.25)	2.63	3.55
Children and Family Life	3.05 (1.61)	2.75	3.38
Societal Pressures	3.04 (1.48)	2.45	3.58
Others in Relationships	2.88 (1.48)	2.59	3.17
Worried About Attractions	2.63 (1.55)	2.34	2.97
Family Pressures	2.57 (1.53)	2.00	3.10
Think Attraction Will Stop	2.50 (1.48)	2.22	2.79
Advice from Someone	2.46 (1.48)	1.96	2.96

Note. LL = 95% Confidence Interval Upper Limit. UL = 95% Confidence Interval Upper Limit. Values calculated using bootstrapping ($n = 1000$).

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Table 4. Correlation Matrix of Age Orientation and Reasons for Romantic Relationships

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Age Orientation	1.00													
2. It Seemed Natural	.42*	1.00												
3. Children and Family Life	-.13	.24	1.00											
4. Think Attraction Go Away	-.39*	0.13	.32	1.00										
5. Others in Relationships	-.47*	-.13	.26	.60**	1.00									
6. Worried About Attractions	-.22	-.03	.22	.65**	.58**	1.00								
7. Gain Companionship	-.05	-.23	.09	.22	.14	.16	1.00							
8. Escape Loneliness	-.13	-.24	.03	.31	.29	.27	.71**	1.00						
9. Engage in Sexual Activities	-.03	-.01	.03	-.13	-.02	-.14	.63**	.43*	1.00					
10. Family Pressure	-.03	.33	.01	.11	.10	.40*	-.42*	-.05	-.49*	1.00				
11. Societal Pressure	-.41*	-.05	.11	.34	.42*	.28	-.27	.07	-.42*	.58**	1.00			
12. Desire to Be Looked After	.02	-.23	-.12	.21	.16	.45*	.33	.28	.12	.10	.06	1.00		
13. Advice from Someone	.02	.24	-.17	-.04	.09	.17	-.36	-.05	-.51**	.70**	.49*	.22	1.00	
14. Love for Partner	-.09	-.17	.03	.30	.23	.16	.82**	.49**	.60**	-.52**	-.41*	.16	-.43	1.00

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

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Age Orientation and Demographic/Relational Factors

A stepwise linear regression was used to determine how well demographic and relationship factors predicted age sexual orientation, controlling for the reasons for romantic relationships. The step one regression model including demographic and relationships factors and age sexual orientation was significant, $F(4, 36) = 5.40$, $p = .008$, $\text{Adj } R^2 = .23$. The step two regression model, controlling for the reasons for romantic relationships, was not significant, $F(9, 27) = 1.44$, $p = .21$, $\text{Adj } R^2 = .13$. Full regression statistics are provided in Table 5. Relationship status was the only significant predictor of age sexual orientation before controlling for the reasons for romantic relationships. There were no significant predictors after step two.

Table 5. Linear Regression of Demographic and Relationship Factors on Age Orientation Controlling for Reasons for Romantic Relationships Subscales

	B	Bias	Std. Error	<i>p</i>	LL	UL
<i>Step 1</i>						
Constant	4.807	.011	.939	.001	2.940	6.714
Gender Orientation	-0.067	-.002	.086	.453	-0.238	0.104
Desire Adult Partner	-0.614	.004	.489	.207	-1.465	0.426
Previous Adult Relationship	-0.615	.012	.451	.161	-1.437	0.384
Relationship Status	-0.499	-.010	.195	<u>.011</u>	-0.900	-0.150
<i>Step 2</i>						
Constant	3.362	-.411	2.134	.112	-1.815	6.776
Gender Orientation	0.015	.008	.145	.920	-0.268	0.322
Desire Adult Partner	-0.650	-.045	.700	.292	-2.013	0.804
Previous Adult Relationship	-0.387	-.001	.967	.648	-2.199	1.725
Relationship Status	-0.446	-.008	.315	.143	-1.118	0.207
Gain Companionship	0.022	-.015	.526	.967	-1.007	1.047
Escape Loneliness	-0.222	-.024	.486	.651	-1.341	0.533
Engage in Sexual Activities	0.155	.036	.320	.622	-0.448	0.818
Pressure from Family	0.070	.028	.270	.786	-0.437	0.658
Societal Pressure	-0.128	-.005	.278	.632	-0.684	0.449
Desire to be Looked After	0.068	.018	.187	.702	-0.267	0.476
Advice from Someone	0.197	-.007	.290	.454	-0.422	0.760
Love Towards Partner	0.324	.088	.460	.460	-0.454	1.341
Other Reason	-0.233	-.001	.253	.327	-0.684	0.338

Note. All values are based on bootstrapped values (n = 1000). LL = 95% Confidence Interval Lower Limit. UL = 95% Confidence Interval Upper Limit.

A stepwise linear regression was then used to determine how well demographic and relationship factors predicted age sexual orientation, controlling for the why humans have sex factors. The step one regression model including demographic and relationships factors and age sexual orientation was significant, $F(4, 106) = 10.81$, $p < .001$, $\text{Adj } R^2 = .26$. The step two regression model, controlling for the reasons for human sex, also was significant, $F(14, 92) = 3.53$, $p < .001$, $\text{Adj } R^2 = .29$. Full regression statistics are provided in Table 6. Gender orientation, desire for an adult partner, and relationship status were significant predictors of age sexual orientation before controlling for the reasons for human sex. After controlling for the reasons humans have sex, desire for an adult partner and relationship status were still significant predictors of age sexual orientation.

Table 6. Linear Regression of Demographic and Relationship Factors on Age Orientation Controlling for Why Humans Have Sex Subscales

	B	Bias	Std. Error	<i>p</i>	LL	UL
<i>Step 1</i>						
Constant	4.984	-.001	0.525	.001	3.998	6.001
Gender Orientation	-0.118	.004	0.048	<u>.014</u>	-0.211	-0.025
Desire Adult Partner	-1.079	-.013	0.318	<u>.002</u>	-1.676	-0.489
Previous Adult Relationship	-0.238	.006	0.263	.362	-0.749	0.301
Relationship Status	-0.484	-.001	0.108	<u>.001</u>	-0.691	-0.269
<i>Step 2</i>						
Constant	3.173	-.107	1.011	.004	1.115	5.011
Gender Orientation	-0.049	.003	0.055	.363	-0.158	0.061
Desire Adult Partner	-0.825	-.024	0.397	<u>.021</u>	-1.671	-0.108
Previous Adult Relationship	-0.066	.026	0.343	.838	-0.706	0.655
Relationship Status	-0.512	-.011	0.118	<u>.001</u>	-0.764	-0.295
Stress Reduction	0.037	-.014	0.076	.627	-0.126	0.166
Pleasure	0.076	.001	0.079	.334	-0.077	0.243
Physical Desirability	0.010	.009	0.057	.849	-0.086	0.139
Experience Seeking	0.048	-.003	0.056	.403	-0.062	0.152
Resource	0.169	.019	0.141	.186	-0.065	0.480
Reproduction	0.003	-.004	0.053	.955	-0.113	0.096
Social Status	0.024	.005	0.074	.729	-0.108	0.178
Revenge	< .000	.015	0.197	1.000	-0.339	0.433
Practical	0.039	-.002	0.071	.578	-0.106	0.178
Love and Commitment	-0.033	.002	0.062	.585	-0.153	0.090
Expression	0.045	.002	0.069	.507	-0.087	0.185
Self-esteem	0.015	.007	0.059	.801	-0.099	0.139
Duty and Pressure	-0.066	.005	0.062	.255	-0.192	0.057
Mate Guarding	-0.086	-.001	0.067	.197	-0.222	0.044

Note. All values are based on bootstrapped values (n = 1000). LL = 95% Confidence Interval Lower Limit. UL = 95% Confidence Interval Upper Limit.

Discussion

Research examining mixed-orientation relationships has suggested incongruent partners engage in relationships for reasons related to avoiding their identity, increasing companionship, and confirming to societal expectations. Asexual individuals instead have been found to engage in the sexual component of relationships specifically to connect with their partner and to allow their partner to attain sexual satisfaction. Like other mixed-orientation relationships, the pedohebephilic men who participated in the present study clearly have partners who are not necessarily congruent with their attractions; nearly 77% of the participants identified having been involved in a relationship with an adult partner. In the present study, we examined the reasons pedohebephilic men reported for engaging in romantic and sexual relationships with such adult partners, and whether these reasons parallel those reported in the existing literature.

Endorsed Reasons for Engaging in Sex with Adult Romantic Partners

Pedohebephilic men endorsed all the provided reasons for having sex to varying degrees. The existing literature on the reasons that heterosexual individuals (e.g., Meston & Buss 2007, 2009) and lesbian, bisexual, queer, and questioning women (e.g., Wood et. al., 2014) engage in sex are consistent with the reasons pedohebephilic men collectively endorsed engaging in sex with adult partners. Specifically, the existing literature has suggested that pleasure, physical desirability, and love and commitment are the most highly endorsed reasons for sex in heterosexual undergraduate students, heterosexual individuals with various ages, and sexual minority women (Meston & Buss 2007, 2009; Wood et al., 2014). Hence, these populations engage in sex both for sexual and non-sexual reasons that are consistent with the reasons endorsed by pedohebephilic men. In contrast to the literature exploring relationships among asexual individuals, pedohebephilic men reported engaging in sex for pleasure reasons including because “it felt good”

or they were “horny.” Conversely, the existing literature on asexual individuals suggests that they engage in sex to produce sexual arousal for their partners. One explanation for these disparate findings may be that the pedohebephilic men in our sample experience varied with respect to age sexual orientations. As some of these individuals are sexually attracted to adults, they may have sexual reasons for engaging in sex unlike the asexual population. Moreover, these findings represent the sample without accounting for variations in age sexual orientations.

Endorsed Reasons for Romantic Relationships with Adult Partners

The analyses both supported, and contradicted, the expected results. Consistent with the existing literature on mixed-orientation relationships (e.g., Ross, 1978, 1979), the most frequently endorsed reasons for romantic relationships with adult partners included several non-sexual reasons. The most endorsed reasons for engaging in romantic relationships among pedohebephilic men were “to gain companionship,” “love towards a romantic partner,” and “to escape loneliness.” Such reasons are like those provided by other mixed-orientation relationships (Edser & Shea, 2002). These findings suggest that pedohebephilic men engage in romantic relationships for non-sexual reasons related to gaining social contact and interaction. However, in contrast to past research on mixed-orientation relationships (e.g., Higgins, 2006), pedohebephilic men did not highly endorse “societal pressure” or “desire for children and family life” as reasons for engaging in romantic relationships. Rather, they were more likely to endorse “it seemed natural” as a reason for their romantic relationships. One potential explanation may be that pedohebephilic men are concerned about experiencing attraction to their own children or being accused of such attractions. It is also possible that although pedohebephilic men experience societal stigma due to their attraction to children (Jahnke, 2018), they may not feel pressure to engage in romantic relationships with adult partners. This can be explored more directly in future research.

Contrary to our expectations and the existing literature on mixed-orientation relationships (e.g., Higgins, 2002; Kissil & Itzhaky, 2015), pedohebephilic men endorsed engaging in sexual activities as the fourth most frequent reason for being in romantic relationships with adult partners. These findings suggest that, unlike bisexual and homosexual individuals in mixed-orientation relationships, many pedohebephilic men chose to engage in these relationships for both non-sexual and sexual reasons. Accordingly, pedohebephilic men's romantic relationships with adult partners appear to have a sexual function – at least for some pedohebephilic men. Participants were asked to provide further reasons for romantic relationships that may be specific to pedohebephilic men. Some pedohebephilic men expressed engaging in romantic relationships to help manage their fantasies and feelings towards children. Therefore, such individuals may also be looking for legal ways to express, control, or manage their attraction towards children in much the same way that gay men did before homosexual acts were legalized.

Several demographic and relationship factors were found to be predict age sexual orientation, after controlling for reasons for human sex. Specifically, having fewer adult relationships and lower desire for an adult romantic partner predicted more exclusive sexual interest to minors. Conversely, after controlling for reasons for romantic relationships, no significant demographic or relationship predictors were found for age sexual orientation.

Relationships and Age Sexual Orientation

The reasons for engaging in adult-partnered relationships among pedohebephilic men were further examined to determine the impact of age sexual orientation. About sexual relationships, age orientation was significantly correlated with pleasure, stress reduction, duty and pressure, experience seeking, expression, and physical desirability. When examining romantic relationships,

age orientation was significantly correlated to seeing others in relationships, it seemed natural, societal pressure, and thinking their attraction to children would go away.

The results indicate that reasons for engaging in romantic relationships among pedohebephilic men parallel different sexual orientation groups based on age sexual orientation. Specifically, those with less exclusive child attraction parallel the existing literature on heterosexual individuals and sexual minority women. Research has found that reasons such as pleasure and physical desirability are common within these populations (e.g., Meston & Buss, 2007; Wood et al., 2014). A potential explanation for such results is that as pedohebephilic men with less exclusive child attraction experience more attraction to adult partners, they may be more likely to fall in love with their partners and engage in adult relationships for this reason.

Conversely, the willingness of individuals with exclusive child attraction to engage in sex with adult partners despite a lack of attraction parallels the literature on asexual individuals, which suggests that individuals engage in sex to produce sexual pleasure for their partners rather than themselves (e.g., Jolene Sloan, 2015). Such acts often serve to increase intimacy with their partner and gives them a sense of satisfaction in the relationship. Wolkomir (2009) suggested this act of negotiation in mixed-orientation relationships can allow for long-term relationships (e.g., asexual non-monogamous marriage) that may not fit the normative profile. Among pedohebephilic men, age orientation was found to be related to societal expectations including that those relationships seem natural, thinking their child attraction would go away, seeing others in relationships, and societal pressure. Overall, pedohebephilic men' reasons for engaging in romantic relationships appear to parallel the existing literature depending on the exclusivity of their attractions.

Limitations and Future Research

Societal stigmatization of child attraction can result in pedohebephilic men feeling uncomfortable engaging in research due to concerns about how their experiences will be framed (Imhoff, 2015), which undoubtedly impacted the representativeness of our sample to the population of pedohebephilic men. Participants were recruited from two support forums for pedohebephilic men (B4U-ACT and Virtuous Pedophiles), potentially leading to volunteer bias. A large portion of the pedohebephilic men in our sample identified as Caucasian; therefore, the generalizability of these findings to more racially and/or ethnically diverse populations of pedohebephilic men has not been established. Accessing participants via online forums could have limited the ability of the most marginalized pedohebephilic men to participate given that they are not members of those forums. Moreover, the forums for child attraction we used are orientated towards supporting those who refrain from engaging in relationships or sexual activity with children; therefore, this sample primarily represents pedohebephilic men who have sought peer support to avoid acting on their attractions.

Future research examining pedohebephilic men reasons for engaging in romantic relationships should also consider further modifying the romantic relationship scale used. The questionnaire used was a modified version of the scale developed by Edser and Shea (2002) with additional reasons added from existing the mixed-orientation relationship literature (e.g., Ross, 1978, 1979). Because the scale reflected reasons previously endorsed by individuals in mixed-orientation relationships most of the items focused on non-sexual reasons for romantic relationships. As a result, a bias may exist in this scale as it provides primarily non-sexual reasons for such relationships. Future research should include more sexual reasons for romantic relationships within this scale. Adding these additional reasons will clarify our understanding of

whether pedohebephilic men' reasons for romantic relationships with adult partners are primarily non-sexual. The additional reasons pedohebephilic men textually provided should also be added to this questionnaire to make it more applicable to child-attracted persons.

The reasons pedohebephilic men engage in sexual relationships with adult partners appears to vary by age sexual orientation. Specifically, the reasoning of pedohebephilic men with more exclusive child attraction parallels the existing research on asexual individuals (e.g., Jolene Sloan, 2015); whereas the reasoning given by pedohebephilic men with less exclusive child attraction are consistent with the heterosexual and homosexual literature (e.g., Meston et al., 2009; Ronson et al., 2012). Differences exist within pedohebephilic men with respect to reasons for engaging in sexual relationships with adult partners based partly on their exclusivity with respect to child attraction. Age orientation was found to be positively correlated to endorsing pleasure, stress reduction, duty and pressure, experience seeking, expression, and physical desirability as reasons for sexual relationships with adult partners. Future research needs to consider such heterogeneity when examining pedohebephilic men and their lived experiences.

Both measures modified for the study were relatively simple and had low-item difficulty. Although the data yielded sufficient variation to allow for correlation, it should be recognized that the wording of the measures accounts for those that have, are, or would engage in adult relationships. Further modifications of the measure should separate out by this factor and examine how it influences the relationship. The measure assessing romantic relationships would also benefit from additional items and further psychometric analyses to determine the optimal sub-factors and items needed.

Other remaining questions relate to the quality of, and experiences within, mixed-orientation relationships among pedohebephilic men. Research among bisexual and gay men has

shown that “coming out” can assist in self-integration and decrease mental health distress and increase relationship quality (Hopwood et al., 2019). Whether this also occurs within mixed-orientation relationships involving pedohebephilic men remains to be explored. When disclosure occurs, how disclosure occurs, and what partners’ reactions are, likely influences the outcomes of the disclosure and relatedly, internalized stigma among pedohebephilic men. Kays et al. (2014) found that 43% of the variation in mix-orientation couples’ relationship quality was predicted by commitment, partner-focused forgivingness, and marital values. Relationship commitment was the single largest predictor of relationship quality, highlighting the importance of connection versus simply attraction. Whether such findings would extend to mixed-orientation relationships can be examined in the future.

Conclusion

The current study examined pedohebephilic men’ romantic relationships with adult romantic partners. Additionally, we explored pedohebephilic men’ age sexual orientation and the potential effect of this on their adult romantic relationships. The findings indicate that the existing literature on heterosexual and homosexual individuals is congruent with pedohebephilic men’ engagement in sex with romantic partners for sexual and non-sexual reasons. Participants also endorsed non-sexual and sexual reasons for romantic relationships with adult partners. Such findings can assist clinicians and researchers working with pedohebephilic men.

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