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# The influence of power on online sexual activities among Chinese men and women in committed relationships



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#### ABSTRACT

Power has been empirically demonstrated to influence infidelity. This study investigated the influence of power on online sexual activity (OSA), as a form of online infidelity, among Chinese men and women in committed relationships. We also explored the potential mediating effect of attitude toward infidelity on the relationship between power and OSA. We hypothesized that powerful individuals would engage in OSA more frequently than would less powerful individuals. Participants (N=425) completed questionnaires assessing their OSA experience within the past 12 months, as well as their own sense of power and their attitude toward infidelity. The OSAs were categorized as viewing sexually explicit material, sexual partner seeking, cybersex, and flirting. Three aspects of power were measured: position, perceived power, and sense of power. The results showed that individuals with higher positions engaged in all types of OSA more frequently than did individuals with lower positions. Power, a latent variable comprising perceived power and sense of power, also significantly predicted OSA, while attitude toward infidelity played a mediating role in this relationship. The findings demonstrate a common mechanism underlying the effect of power on both offline and online infidelity.

#### Introduction

Power, which has numerous definitions, has been a longstanding and important research topic in the fields of sociology and politics. Psychologists typically define power as exerting control over valued resources, such as money, information, or decision-making (Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003). Numerous researchers have explored the relationship between power and sexuality. For example, feminist theorists have examined the associations between power or social hierarchy and sexual arousal, violence, and desire (Brezsnyak & Whisman, 2004; Gage & Hutchinson, 2006). More recently, studies have investigated how power influences infidelity (Lammers & Maner, 2016; Lammers, Stoker, Jordan, Pollmann, & Stapel, 2011), and sexual aggression (Zurbriggen, 2000; Zurbriggen & Yost, 2004). So far, however, no study has examined the potential influence of power on online infidelity. Therefore, this study investigated the impact of power on online sexual activities (OSA) among Chinese men and women in committed relationships. We also examined the potential mediating effect of attitude toward infidelity on the aforementioned relationship.

Researchers focused on the effects of power on different levels. Some researchers used power priming in the laboratory (e.g., Galinsky, Gruenfeld, & Magee, 2003), while some researchers used questionnaires

to measure individuals' sense of power (Anderson & Galinsky, 2006). In addition, actual positions in work units or organizations were also used as a power index (Lammers & Maner, 2016). Sometimes, participants' perceived power was also used to establish the power index (Lammers et al., 2011; Lammers, Stapel, & Galinsky, 2010).

#### Online sexual activities.

Use of the Internet for sexual purposes has become popular worldwide, in part due to the Internet's rapid growth and its three key features (Triple 3A Engine)-access (ease of logging onto a computer as well as ease of finding what is desired), affordability (size and abundance of a simple economic construct established on the Internet, especially about sexuality), and anonymity (the real and perceived belief that participation is unknown and its effect on sexuality) (Cooper, 1998; Cooper, Morahan-Martin, Mathy, & Maheu, 2002; Döring, Daneback, Shaughnessy, Grov, & Byers, 2017; Döring, 2009). Researchers have created classification systems for OSAs. For instance, Döring (2009) proposed six areas of online sexuality: pornography, sex shops, sex work, sex education, sex contacts, and sexual subcultures. Other researchers divided OSAs into (1) viewing sexually explicit material (SEM), (2) sexual partner seeking, (3) cybersex, and (4) online flirting (Li & Zheng, 2017; Månsson, 2003). The majority of studies indicated the high prevalence of OSA in some countries (Faulkner &

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Lannutti, 2016). For example, some studies found that over 70% of study participants have used the Internet for sexual entertainment (Albright, 2008; Shaughnessy, Byers, Clowater, & Kalinowski, 2014; Shaughnessy, Byers, & Walsh, 2011). Research has revealed that 44%–72% of U.S. college students have reported accessing sex information online; 50% and 79% of Canadian college students reported using the Internet to engage in cybersex and for searching for sexual information, respectively; and 51% of UK adolescents (Doring et al., 2017; Powell, 2008). Similarly, cross-cultural studies found a similarly high prevalence of OSAs (Shaughnessy et al., 2011; Zheng, Zhang, & Feng, 2017; Zheng & Zheng, 2014). There is also a high prevalence (over 51–82%) of OSA in China and the majority of participants experienced at least one type of OSA via their smartphone or PC (Zheng et al., 2017; Zheng & Zheng, 2014).

Many researchers have viewed certain OSAs as a form of infidelity for individuals in committed relationships, reporting that they can have a number of negative outcomes (Li & Zheng, 2017; Nelson, Piercy, & Sprenkle, 2005). Studies have supported the idea that engaging in online sexual conversations and sharing online emotional information with other parties was generally considered online infidelity and has led to conflicts and lower relationship quality (Martins et al., 2016; McDaniel & Coyne, 2016; McDaniel, Drouin, & Cravens, 2017; Roberts & David, 2016; Whitty, 2003).

#### Power and offline/online sexual activities.

Powerful people are reportedly more likely to engage in offline infidelity than are those lacking in power. Lammers (2011) conducted a large-scale survey and found that higher power was positively associated with infidelity—both actual infidelity and intention to engage in infidelity in the future—because power increased individuals' confidence in their ability to attract partners. In a later experiment, Lammers (2016) found that power "psychologically released" people from the inhibiting effects of social norms, thereby increasing their appetite for counter normative forms of sexuality. Infidelity is widely seen as a counter normative behavior, which might explain why rates of infidelity are particularly high among powerful people. Additionally, others have found that the possession of power might increase psychological distance from one's current partner (Lee & Tiedens, 2001), as well as directly increase infidelity (DeMaris, 2009).

Studies also suggested that there may be a connection between online and offline sexual activities in terms of sharing several related factors (Ballester-Arnal, Gimenez-Garcia, Dolores Gil-Llario, & Castro-Calvo, 2016; Li & Zheng, 2017). Online environments offer a ripe opportunity for online infidelity-related behaviors and research has proven that online dating can be a fashionable and successful approach for meeting real-world sexual partners (Döring, 2009). Some researchers have also posited that they share common mechanisms (Nelson et al., 2005; Shaw, 1997). Thus, based on previous studies, we predicated that power might affect OSA as well as offline sexual activities.

### Attitude toward infidelity and online sexual activities.

Attitude toward infidelity might significantly influence infidelity-related OSAs. Having a more permissive attitude toward infidelity, for instance, has been noted as a consistent predictor of personal involvement and willingness to engage in infidelity at some point in one's life (Fincham & May, 2017; Glass & Wright, 1992; Martins et al., 2016; Treas & Giesen, 2000). Interestingly, there appear to be sex differences in attitudes toward infidelity. Specifically, men were more likely to rate infidelity as more acceptable than were women. Furthermore, men are more likely to engage in romantic relationships over the Internet, which suggests that they might be predisposed to engaging in infidelity-related behaviors online (Cooper, Delmonico, & Burg, 2000; Luo, Cartun, & Snider, 2010; Martins et al., 2016).

This potential link between attitude toward infidelity and OSA is directly related to the known link between sexual attitudes and sexual behaviors (Döring et al., 2017). A recent study revealed the effect of perceived infidelity on OSAs (Li & Zheng, 2018; Liu & Zheng, 2019).

Individuals who are less likely to perceive OSAs as infidelity were more likely to engage in OSA. People with positive attitudes toward infidelity were less likely to view OSAs as infidelity and were more likely to engage in OSAs. Therefore, we predicted that attitude toward infidelity would play an essential role on OSAs.

#### The potential mediating effect of attitude toward infidelity on the association between power and OSA.

Researchers found that power had a close correlation with individuals' approach/inhibition and confidence which led to sexual "overperception," or an individual's assumption that a potential partner is sexually interested in the individual, thus increasing the individual's confidence. We found that sexual overperception and confidence mediated the relationship between power and sexually tinged behavior including infidelity (Berman & Frazier, 2005; Gonzaga, Keltner, & Ward, 2008; Kunstman & Maner, 2011; Lammers & Maner, 2016; Lammer et al., 2011). Importantly, there is evidence showing that people who feel powerful tend to become disinhibited (Anderson & Berdahl, 2002; Galinsky et al., 2003; Guinote, 2007; Keltner et al., 2003). Powerful people tend to be able to act on their desires and urges without having to worry about punishment or sanction for their undesirable behavior, when compared to powerless people (Lammers & Maner, 2016). Naturally, then, they might take a more positive attitude toward infidelity. Other studies have also suggested that the experience of having power might decrease people's sensitivity to the risks involved in extramarital affairs. Powerful people appear to be less influenced by risks and make more optimistic assessments of the outcomes of infidelity behaviors (Anderson & Galinsky, 2006). For all these reasons, powerful people might have a more positive attitude toward their partner finding out about potential affairs than might less powerful people, and thus, be more likely to engage in OSAs. Accordingly, attitude toward infidelity might mediate the relationship between power and OSAs.

#### The present study.

Previous studies have documented the effect of power on offline infidelity (Berman & Frazier, 2005; Lammers et al., 2011; Lammers & Maner, 2016). Given the apparent connection and common mechanisms between OSAs and offline sexual activities, we investigated the relationship between power and OSAs. We predicted that individuals in higher power positions would conduct OSAs more frequently than would those in lower positions. Participants' sense of power could predict the frequency of OSAs. Moreover, we expected that attitude toward infidelity would have a mediating effect on the association between power and OSAs.

#### Method

#### Participants and procedure.

Data were collected via electronic web-based questionnaires created and administered by the professional survey website *Wenjuanxing* (www.sojump.com). Participants were recruited online using advertisements via popular social networking services such as QQ, WeChat, SinaWeibo, and Baidu Post Bar (the largest Chinese online community) and provided their contact information in order to receive the survey results.

A total of 450 participants completed the questionnaires and 425 participants were deemed eligible. The inclusion criteria were: being aged 18 years or older and being in a committed relationship with a member of the opposite sex (dating or married). The mean age of the sample was 28.66 years (SD=5.87 years), and ranged from 18 to 53 years. Participants had had an average of 3.01 (SD=2.13) sex partners in their lives. The full sample demographic and background characteristics are presented in Table 1.

#### Measures.

#### Demographic characteristics.

The demographic characteristics included age, sex, education, occupation, income, relationship status, duration of relationship, and

Table 1 Demographic characteristics of the sample (N = 425).

|                     |                            | N   | %    |
|---------------------|----------------------------|-----|------|
| Sex                 |                            |     |      |
|                     | Men                        | 209 | 49.2 |
|                     | Women                      | 216 | 50.8 |
| Education           |                            |     |      |
|                     | Junior high school or less | 5   | 1.2  |
|                     | Senior high school         | 43  | 10.1 |
|                     | College                    | 330 | 77.6 |
|                     | Postgraduate or higher     | 47  | 11.1 |
| Occupation          |                            |     |      |
| _                   | Students                   | 57  | 13.4 |
|                     | Employed                   | 344 | 80.9 |
|                     | Job-waiting                | 24  | 5.6  |
| Relationship status | · ·                        |     |      |
| -                   | Dating                     | 238 | 56   |
|                     | Married                    | 187 | 44   |
| Position            |                            |     |      |
|                     | Non-managements            | 126 | 29.6 |
|                     | Junior managements         | 153 | 36   |
|                     | Middle managements         | 85  | 20   |
|                     | Senior managements         | 61  | 14.4 |
| Monthly income (¥)  |                            |     |      |
| •                   | 0                          | 33  | 7.8  |
|                     | 2000 or less               | 25  | 5.9  |
|                     | 2000-4000                  | 79  | 18.6 |
|                     | 4000-6000                  | 111 | 26.1 |
|                     | 6000-10,000                | 113 | 26.6 |
| 10,000 or more      |                            | 64  | 15.1 |

number of sex partners. Relationship duration was measured via a 9-point basic question ranging from 1 (< 3 months) to 9 (> 10 years). Number of sex partners was tested using a basic question about the total number of sexual partners they had had in their life (from 0 to 100).

#### Online sexual activities.

Participants' OSAs within the last 12 months were measured using the Online Sexual Behavior Scale (Zheng & Zheng, 2014). This scale contains 14 items assessing individuals' performance of four types of OSA: viewing sexually explicit material (SEM, 4 items), partner seeking (PS, 2 items), cybersex (4 items), and online flirting or relationship maintenance (4 items). SEM were rated on a 9-point scale ranging from 1 (never) to 9 (at least once a day) assessing frequency of visiting erotic webs, watching and downloading erotic videos, and reading erotic material online in the past year. Seeking out sexual partners, cybersex, and online flirting or relationship maintenance were assessed on a 9point scale ranging from 1 (0 times) to 9 (20 or more times), including "How many times did you seek a sexual partner through the Internet in the past year?"; "How many times did you masturbate or view strangers masturbating through the Internet in the past year?"; "How many times did you date other heterosexuals online last one year?"; respectively. The four subscales had high internal consistencies (Cronbach's alpha = 0.91, 0.85, 0.84, and 0.86, respectively) and the Cronbach's alpha of the whole scale was 0.92.

#### Power.

We assessed participants' power in terms of the following indicators. *Position* First, participants were asked to select their present position in their work units or organizations from among four options: non-

management, junior management, middle management, and senior management.

*Perceived power* Second, participants were asked to mark on a vertical scale from 0 to 100 the perceived power of their position in the workplace, with higher scores indicating that participants regard themselves as having a higher perceived power in the organization. Many previous studies have used a similar method of measuring power, and it has proven to be a simple but robust measure (Lammers et al., 2010; Lammers et al., 2011). A correlational analysis revealed a strong and significant relationship between actual and perceived power (r = 0.68, p < .001).

Sense of power Finally, participants' sense of power was measured using the generalized version of the Sense of Power Scale (Anderson & Galinsky, 2006). This scale, which contains 8 items, measures participants' generalized beliefs about the power they have in their relationships with others on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (disagree strongly) to 7 (agree strongly). The scale has high internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha = 0.84).

#### Attitude toward infidelity.

The Attitudes Toward Infidelity Scale was used to measure the participants' attitudes toward infidelity (Whatley, 2012). This scale contains 12 items, each rated on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (disagree strongly) to 7 (agree strongly). Example items include "Being unfaithful never hurt anyone" and "Online/internet behavior (e.g., sex chatrooms, porn sites) is an act of infidelity." The sum of these 12 item scores was used as an indicator of attitude toward infidelity, with higher scores indicating more positive attitudes toward infidelity. In this survey, the Cronbach's alpha was 0.81.

#### Results

#### Demographic variables and OSA.

The prevalence of the four subtypes of OSA are listed in Table 2. We examined how OSA experience differed according to demographic variables. Data from a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) showed a main effect for sex  $F_{sex}$  (4, 420) = 22.63, p < 0.001, partial  $\eta^2 = 0.117$ . For all four subtypes OSA, significant sex differences also existed and men participated in OSA more frequently than women ( $F_{SEM} = 83.97$ , partial  $\eta^2 = 0.166$ , d = 0.88;  $F_{PS} = 34.84$ , partial  $\eta^2 = 0.076$ , d = 0.56;  $F_{cybersex} = 32.20$ , partial  $\eta^2 = 0.071$ , d = 0.55;  $F_{fitrting} = 18.72$ , partial  $\eta^2 = 0.042$ , d = 0.42; d = 0.001).

Duration of relationship and number of sex partners were treated as continuous variables. A correlational analysis revealed that the number of sex partners had a positive and significant correlation with all four OSAs ( $rs=0.28,\ 0.51,\ 0.37,\$ and 0.40, ps<0.001). Duration of relationship had no notable correlation with OSA. As for relationship status, a MANOVA was used, but revealed no significant main effect of relationship status.

#### Actual power (position) and OSA.

We then examined how frequency of OSA experiences differed by actual power (i.e., hierarchical position) controlling for the sex. The MANOVA yielded a main effect for power,  $F_{position}$  (4, 417) = 3.595, p < 0.001, partial  $\eta^2 = 0.033$ , while  $F_{sex}$  (4, 417) = 17.074, p < 0.001, partial  $\eta^2 = 0.141$ . The results of Univariate tests were presented in Table 3. Bonferroni post-hoc tests for power (position)

**Table 2**The Means (Standard Deviations) of the OSAs between different positions.

|                   |     | Viewing sexually exp | licit material | Partner | seeking | Cyb  | ersex | Flir | ting | Overa | ill OSA |
|-------------------|-----|----------------------|----------------|---------|---------|------|-------|------|------|-------|---------|
|                   | N   | М                    | SD             | М       | SD      | М    | SD    | М    | SD   | М     | SD      |
| Non-management    | 126 | 2.89                 | 1.65           | 1.13    | 0.41    | 1.59 | 1.16  | 1.56 | 0.81 | 1.89  | 0.91    |
| Junior management | 153 | 3.33                 | 1.47           | 1.52    | 1.03    | 1.75 | 1.09  | 1.87 | 1.02 | 2.2   | 0.84    |
| Middle management | 85  | 3.85                 | 1.74           | 1.95    | 1.46    | 2.22 | 1.61  | 2.12 | 1.39 | 2.62  | 1.35    |
| Senior management | 61  | 4.08                 | 2.1            | 2.2     | 1.59    | 2.1  | 1.64  | 2.19 | 1.52 | 2.71  | 1.46    |

**Table 3**Results of the MANOVA by different position controlling for sex.

| _   | F             | p                | Partial $\eta^2$ | Post-hoc            |
|---|---------------|------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| Viewing sexually explicit material<br>Partner seeking | 3.79<br>11.17 | 0.011<br>< 0.001 | 0.026<br>0.074   | 3,4 > 1<br>4 > 1,2; |
| Cybersex  | 2.56          | 0.05             | 0.018            | 3 > 1 3 > 1         |
| Flirting  | 3.83          | 0.01             | 0.018            | 3,4 > 1             |

 $1 = \text{Non-Management}, \ 2 = \text{Junior Management}, \ 3 = \text{Middle Management}, \ 4 = \text{Senior Management}.$ 

were used to parse out these significant results, revealing that participants in middle management and senior management had higher rates of viewing SEM than did participants in non-management (d = 0.57, p < 0.05; d = 0.63, p < 0.05, respectively). For partner seeking, participants in senior management had the highest score, which was significantly higher than that of non-management and junior management (d = 0.92, p < 0.001; d = 0.51, p < .001, respectively). Participants in middle management also scored higher than did those in nonmanagement (d = 0.76, p < 0.001). Participants in middle management scored higher than did those in junior management (d = 0.34, p = 0.074), meanwhile participants in junior management had higher scores than did those in non-management (d = 0.50, p = 0.084). With the respect to cybersex, participants in middle management scored higher than did those in non-management (d = 0.45, p = 0.064). Finally, for flirting, those in middle management and senior management had significantly higher scores than did those in non-management positions (d = 0.49, p < 0.05; d = 0.52, p < 0.05, respectively).

# The mediating effect of attitude toward infidelity on the relationship between power and OSA.

The correlation coefficients between these six variables are shown in Table 4. Both perceived power and sense of power were positively correlated with four subtypes of OSA. To analyze the mediating effect of attitude toward infidelity, we used the Mplus 7.0 data modeling and analysis tool to test the hypothesized structural model (Fig. 1). Because the majority of study participants (78.4%) did not consider SEM infidelity (Li & Zheng, 2018), we deleted this factor from the latent variables. We used 1000 bootstrap resamples to test the indirect effect of attitude toward infidelity on the relationships between power and OSA controlling for the sex. Indicators of an acceptable model are considered a comparative fit index (CFI) and Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) > 0.95, a standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) < 0.08, and a root mean square error of approximation of (RMSEA) < 0.08 (Browne & Cudeck, 1992; MacCallum, Browne, & Sugawara, 1996). The model demonstrated a satisfactory fit in predicting OSA  $(\chi^2 = 28.696,$  $df = 10, \quad p < .01, \quad \text{CFI} = 0.98,$ TLI = 0.958,RMSEA = 0.067 [90% CI = 0.039, 0.095], SRMR = 0.026).

The results of the different pathways are presented in Fig. 1. These findings indicated that power (perceived power and sense of power) and attitude toward infidelity significantly predicted participation in OSA, and that attitude toward infidelity had a significant partial mediating effect on the relationship between power and OSA. The indirect effect of the attitude toward infidelity on the relationship between

**Table 4**Pearson correlations between power, attitude toward infidelity and OSA.

|                               | 1       | 2       | 3       | 4       | 5       |
|-------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 1. Perceived power            |         |         |         |         |         |
| 2. Sense of power             | 0.48**  |         |         |         |         |
| 3. Attitude toward infidelity | 0.254** | 0.121*  |         |         |         |
| 4. Sexual partner seeking     | 0.254** | 0.253** | 0.444** |         |         |
| 5. Cybersex                   | 0.19**  | 0.212** | 0.388** | 0.625** |         |
| 6. Flirting                   | 0.204** | 0.239** | 0.421** | 0.702** | 0.722** |

 $<sup>^*</sup>P < 0.05, ^{**}P < 0.001.$ 

power and OSA was 0.122 (SE = 0.032, 95% CI = [0.07, 0.175], p < 0.001).

#### Discussion

The main purposes of this study were to investigate the influence of power on OSA, and to determine the mediating effect of attitude toward infidelity on this relationship. As expected, both actual and perceived power had significant positive effects on OSA. Furthermore, attitude toward infidelity had a partial mediating effect on the relationship between power and OSA.

We found that power was a predictor of participation in OSA. As power increased, the frequency of engaging in OSAs also increased, which is consistent with the findings of previous studies showing that elevated power leads to an increase in infidelity behavior (Lammers et al., 2011; Lammers & Maner, 2016). Other variables highly related to offline infidelity, such as sex and number of sex partners, also had a close relationship to OSA. This is similar to the results of the past studies, and further suggests that offline and online infidelity may have common mechanisms. (Ballester-Arnal et al., 2016; Li & Zheng, 2017). Interestingly, we found different results for duration of relationship, which is certainly worth researching (Li & Zheng, 2017).

In previous studies, researchers found that powerful people are more likely to report infidelity and have a greater intention to engage in infidelity when compared with less powerful people (Lammers et al., 2011). In the current study, power significantly predicted individuals' OSA, and people who had a higher sense of power were more likely to engage in OSA. These findings verified our hypothesis that power, which influences offline infidelity, is closely related with online infidelity.

Theoretical research on power and behavior by Keltner et al. can potentially explain our findings. Experiencing power can influence psychological status and behavior (Keltner et al., 2003). More specifically, Keltner et al. found that elevated power is associated with positive affect, attention to reward, automatic information processing, and behavioral disinhibition. Lammers (2016) similarly found that the mechanism underlying the relationship between power and infidelity was that increased power was linked to the increased tendency to disregard social norms as well as engage in socially inappropriate or counter normative behaviors. Powerful people have the capacity to alter others' states by providing or withholding resources and administering punishments (Keltner et al., 2003). This allows them to meet their own needs and desires without considering others' views and attitudes, or even social norms, and prevents them from fearing punishment or sanction for their inappropriate behavior (Lammers & Maner, 2016).

Another potential mechanism, which we found in this study, was attitude toward infidelity. This attitude was associated with OSA, which is consistent with previous research that attitudes toward infidelity were significant predictors of greater intentions to be unfaithful (Toplu-Demirtas & Fincham, 2018). Specifically, people with a more positive attitude toward infidelity are more likely to engage in infidelity behavior such as OSA. In addition, people who are skeptical of the idea that OSA is a form of infidelity (due to the idea that cyberspace is entirely virtual and lacks any bodily contact), also have a higher frequency of engaging in OSA.

We also found that attitude toward infidelity mediated the association between power and OSA. Anecdotal evidence from various previous studies suggests that elevated power influences behavior and is associated with increased moral hypocrisy, counter normative behaviors, betrayal experiences, and antisocial behaviors (Berman & Frazier, 2005; Hirsh, Galinsky, & Zhong, 2011). Further, experiencing power can influence one's cognitive process, particularly by promoting more automatic information processing and interfering with attitudes toward sexual behaviors or infidelity (Keltner et al., 2003). This influence might lead powerful people to show more behavioral

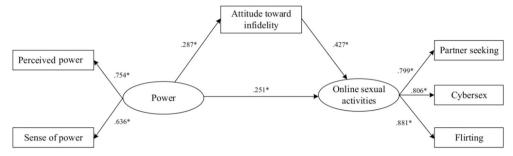


Figure 1. The mediating effect of attitude toward infidelity on the relationship between power and online sexual activities.  $^{\circ}P < 0.001$ .

disinhibition, leading to greater infidelity or betrayal behavior. Some studies found that powerful people are more attentive to rewards and less attentive to information about threat, which might decrease people's sensitivity to the risks involved in extramarital affairs (Anderson & Galinsky, 2006; Galinsky, Magee, Gruenfeld, Whitson, & Liljenquist, 2008; Guinote, 2007; Keltner et al., 2003). As a result, people with higher power might develop a more positive attitude toward infidelity and have more optimistic expectations of the consequences of their behavior, thereby leading them to engage in more OSA.

Cultural factors may contribute to the associations between power and OSAs. Chinese people endorse the traditional hierarchical role relationships prescribed by Confucian social ethics (Farh, Earley, & Lin, 1997). The traditional values shape the high power distance in Chinese society compared with Western countries (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2001). Power distance refers to "the extent to which a society accepts the fact that power in institutions and organizations is distributed unequally" (Hofstede, 1980: 45). Studies have supported the idea of greater acceptance of hierarchy in East Asia than in countries where low power distance prevails (e.g., Bond, Wan, Leung, & Giacalone, 1985). Therefore, power would have more negative effects on lower power individuals in high power distance environments, and participants in higher power positions in this study tended to engage in OSAs more frequently. It is also important to examine the influence of power on other sexual behaviors (e.g., sexual harassment) in China in the context of traditional values and high power distance.

#### Limitations.

Our study has some limitations. Obviously, as this was an Internet survey, we could not ensure the accuracy of the questionnaires (e.g., potential bias of self-selection of network users). Furthermore, the retrospective reports from our participants limited the generalizability of our findings. Power in this study was conceptualized as degree of control in their work position; we did not consider political or relationship-related power, both of which have been found to be associated with infidelity. A future study should investigate whether these other types of power also influence OSA. Finally, we measured only four types of OSA; other types of OSA (non-arousal-related OSA, such as sex education or sexual shopping) were not considered, which limits the generalizability of our results.

#### Conclusion

This study found that power was significantly associated with OSA, which is consistent with previous research showing that power is strongly associated with offline infidelity. Thus, our results expand our understanding of how power influences sexual behavior from offline to online sexual activities. In addition, attitude toward infidelity played a mediated role in the relationship between power and OSA. This suggests that powerful individuals endorse a more permissive attitude toward infidelity, which makes them more likely to engage in online infidelity-related behavior. This implies a common mechanism underlying the effect of power on these types of infidelity.

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