Sexual Scripts as Risk Factors for Sexual Victimization: A Prospective Study with Female College Students in Brazil

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Previous Brazilian Research

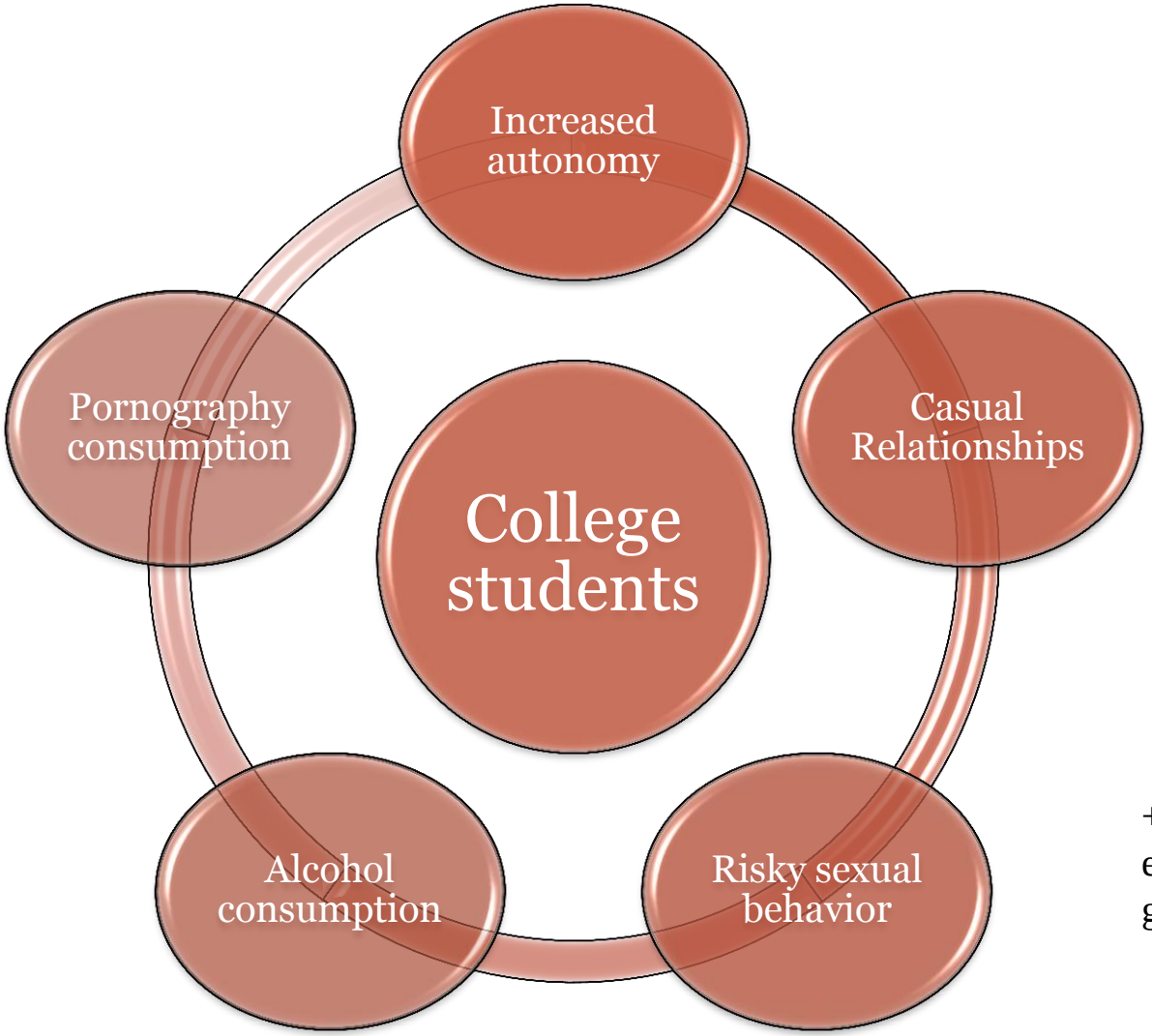
Author	*N*	Age (years)	Victimization (%)
			Women
Prevalence			
de Moraes et al., 2006	4,634	18-24	**17**
Moura et al., 2009	278	15-49	**29**
Schraiber et al., 2008	5,040	16-65	**12**
Schraiber et al., 2007	2,128	15-49	**11**
Incidence			
Chan et al. , 2008	439	*M*= 21.3	**38.5**
Hines, 2007	231	*Mfemale*= 20 *Mmale=23*	**39.5**
Zotarelli et al., 2012	2,430	18-24	**9.4**

Limitations of Brazilian Studies

Despite the increasing number of studies on the issue:

1. Focus on women with low socioeconomic status
2. Only cross-sectional studies
3. Little insight into potential vulnerability factors for sexual victimization
4. Operationalization: use of a single screening item (e.g., de Moraes et al., 2006) or only few questions (e.g., Moura et al., 2009) elicits lower rates

College Students: a Group at Risk



+ **Impunity in Latin America,** especially for social privileged groups (Contreras et al., 2010)

Aims

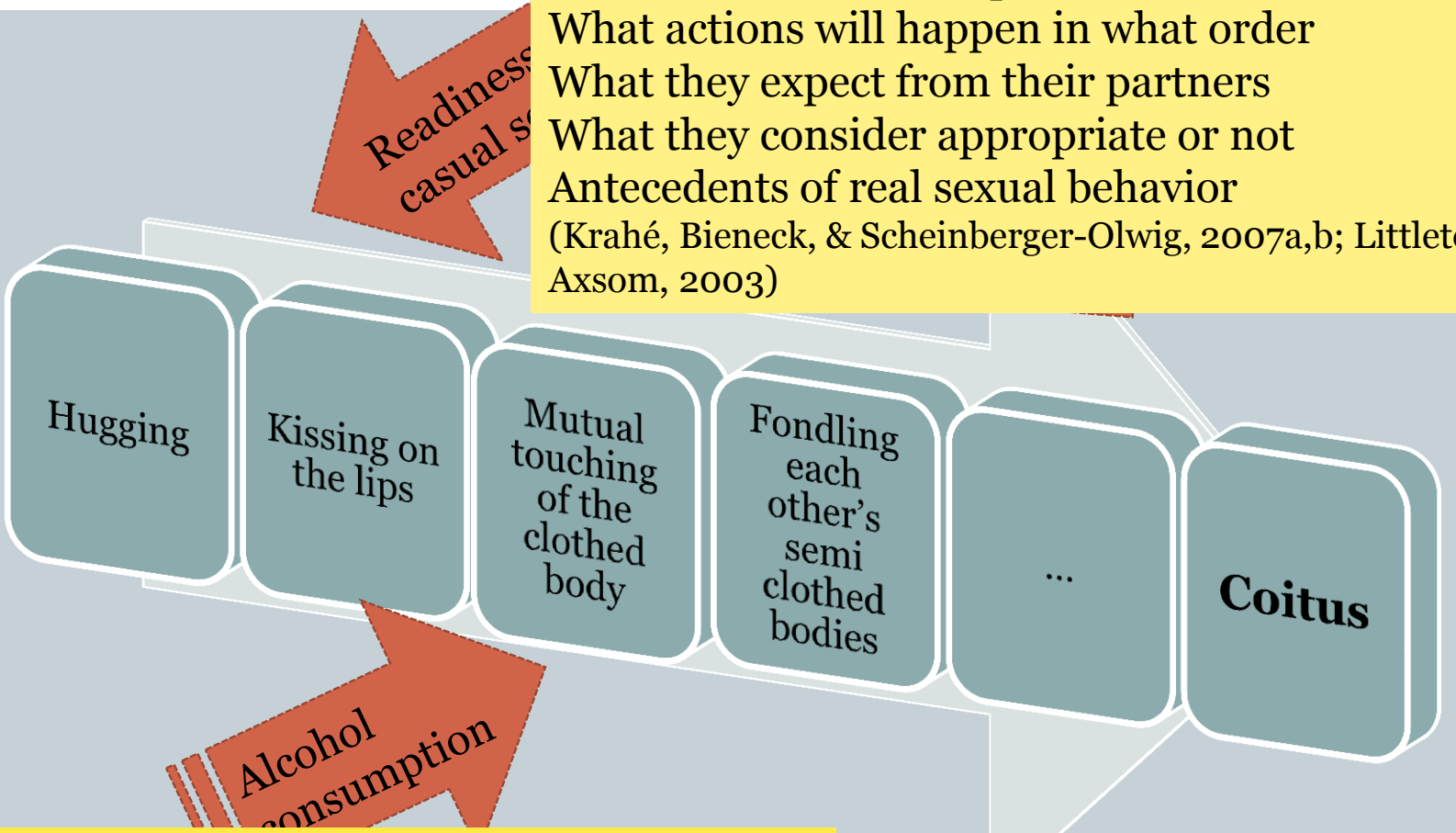
1) Identify prevalence rates of sexual victimization since the age of 14 among female college students in Brazil;

2) Identify vulnerability factors for sexual victimization and re-victimization in Brazil:

1. Demonstrate the interplay between cognitive representations of consensual sexuality in the form of **sexual scripts** and **sexual behavior** as predictors of sexual victimization, both cross-sectionaly and prospectively.
2. Replicate the role of childhood experiences of **sexual abuse** in the etiology of sexual victimization as established in numerous studies from the USA.

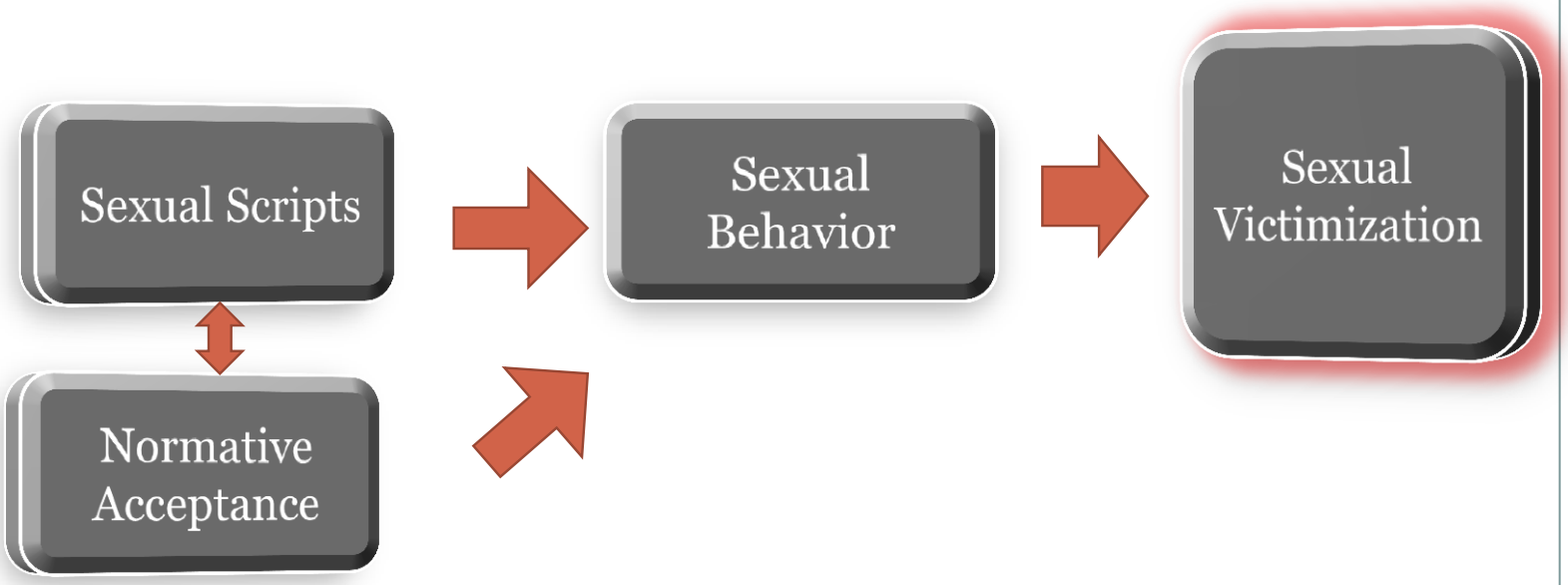
Sexual Scripts

How individuals conceptualize a sexual encounter
What actions will happen in what order
What they expect from their partners
What they consider appropriate or not
Antecedents of real sexual behavior
(Krahé, Bieneck, & Scheinberger-Olwig, 2007a,b; Littleton & Axsom, 2003)



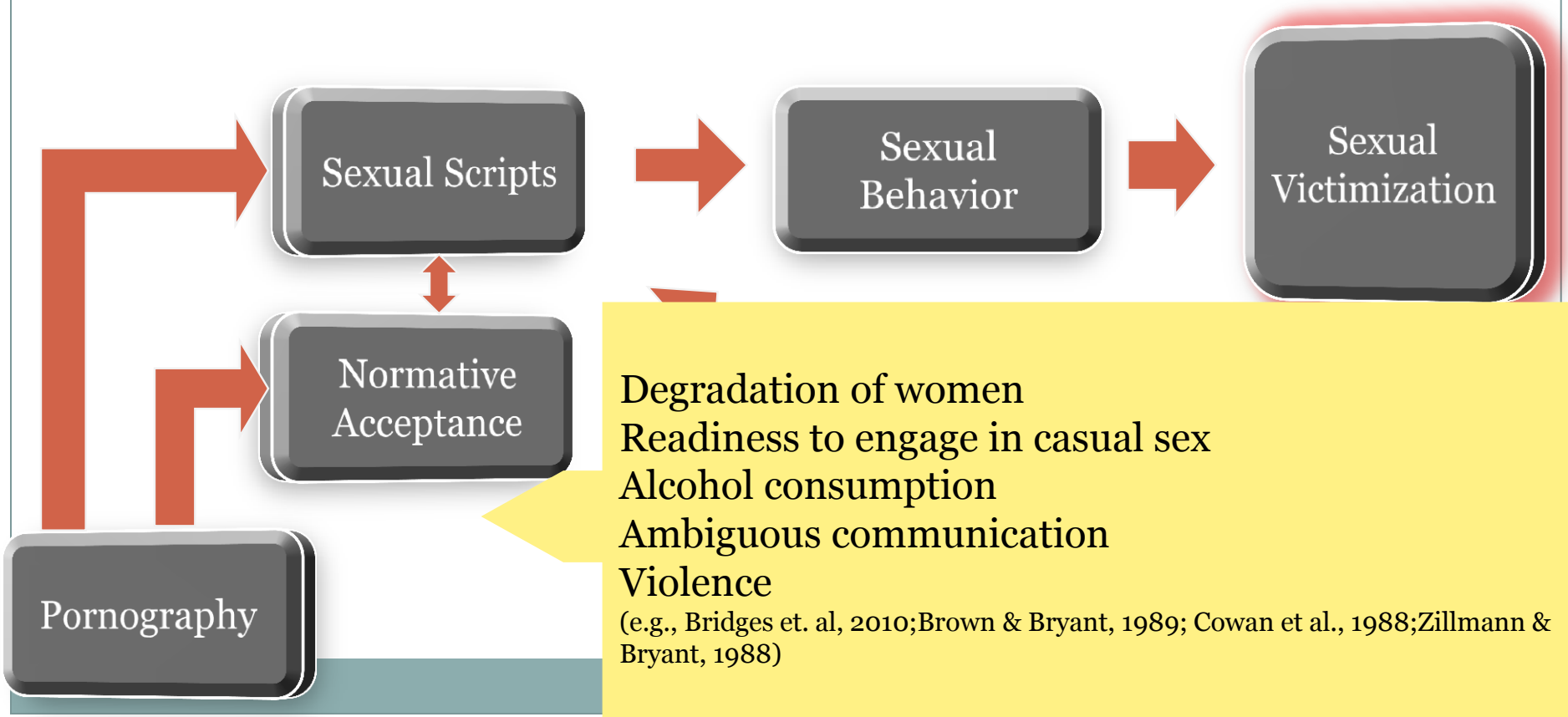
"Cognitive representations of prototypical sequences of events in sexual interactions"
(Simon & Gagnon, 1986)

Hypothesis 1:



?

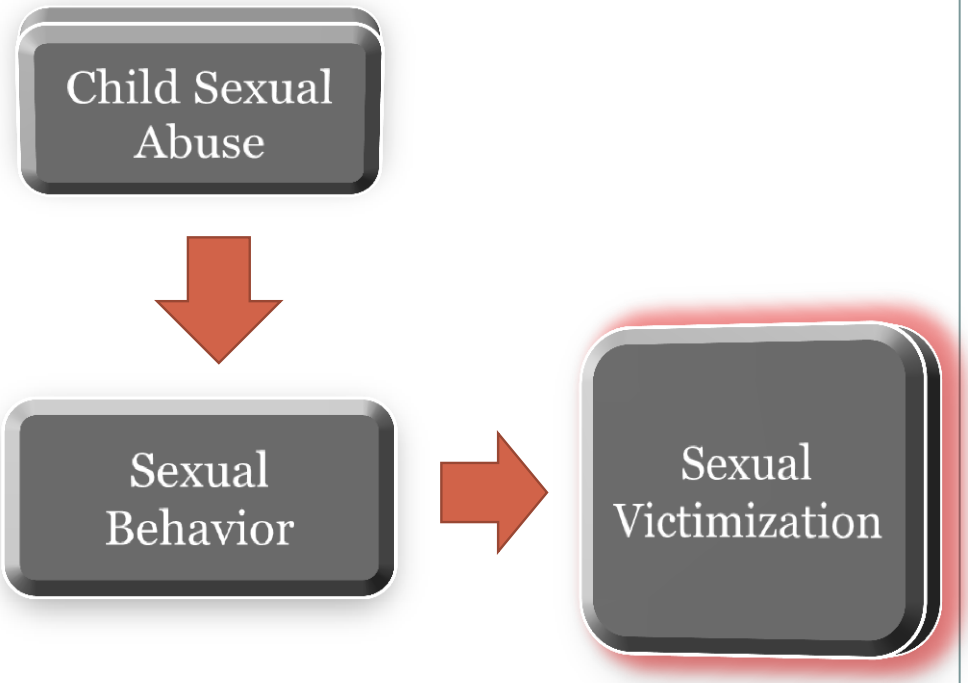
Hypothesis 2



Degradation of women
Readiness to engage in casual sex
Alcohol consumption
Ambiguous communication
Violence

(e.g., Bridges et. al, 2010;Brown & Bryant, 1989; Cowan et al., 1988;Zillmann & Bryant, 1988)

Hypothesis 3:

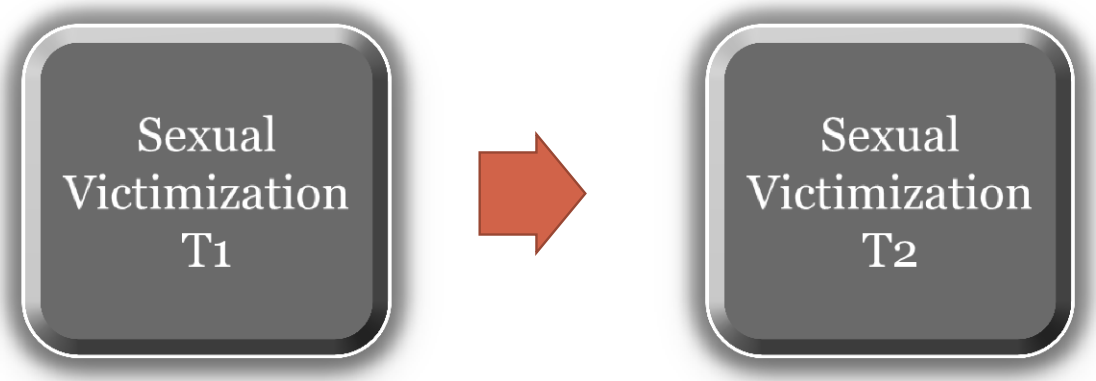


- Sexual abuse has negative impact on behavioral development:
  - alcohol and substance abuse
  - lack of commitment and stability in romantic relationships
  - multiple sexual partners
  - earlier age of first sexual intercourse

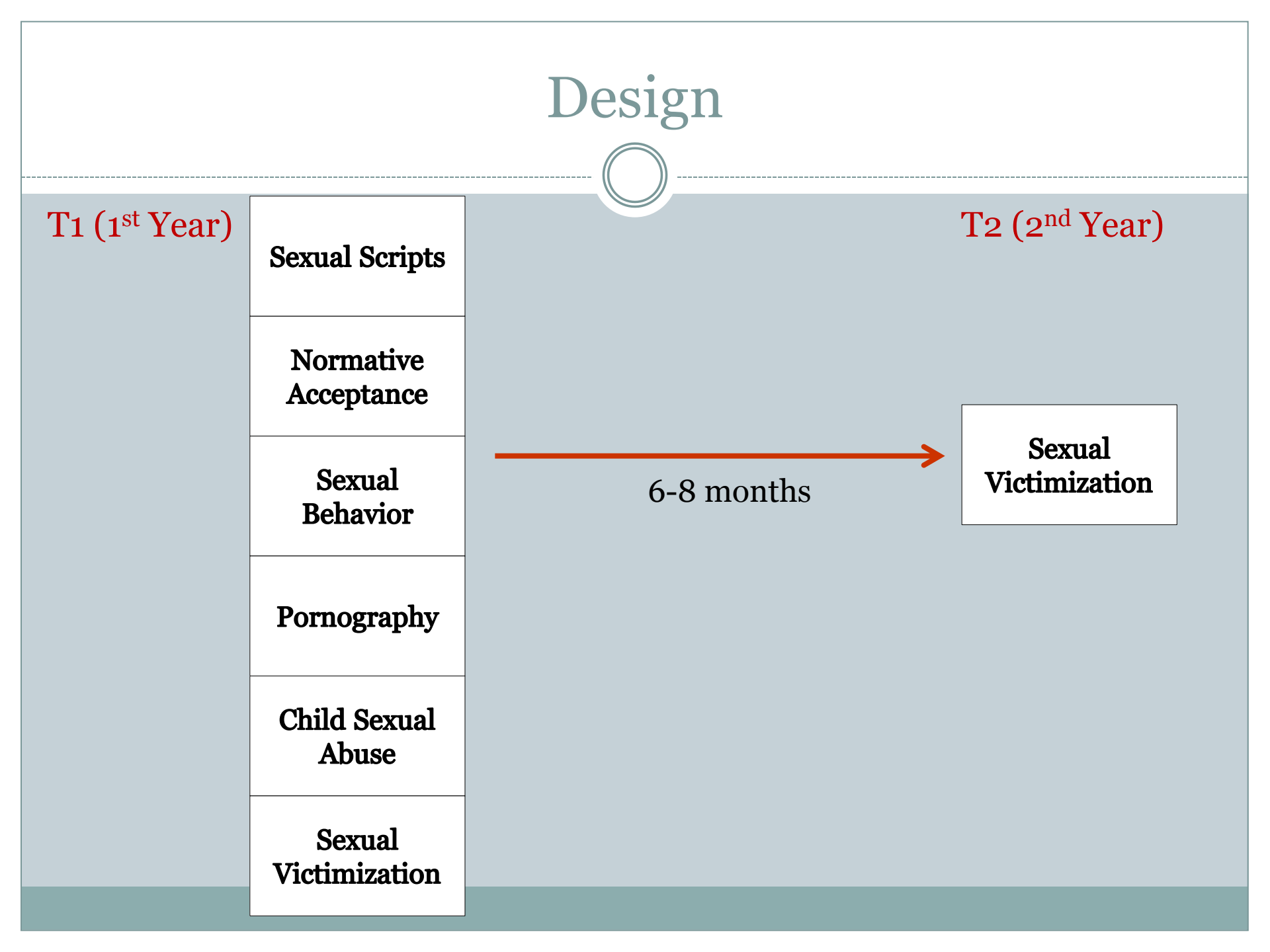
(Duncan et al., 2008; Polusny & Follette, 1995; Wilson & Widom, 2011)

Hypothesis 4:

Re-victimization hypothesis:
The more recent the victimization, the more strongly it predicts the following victimization



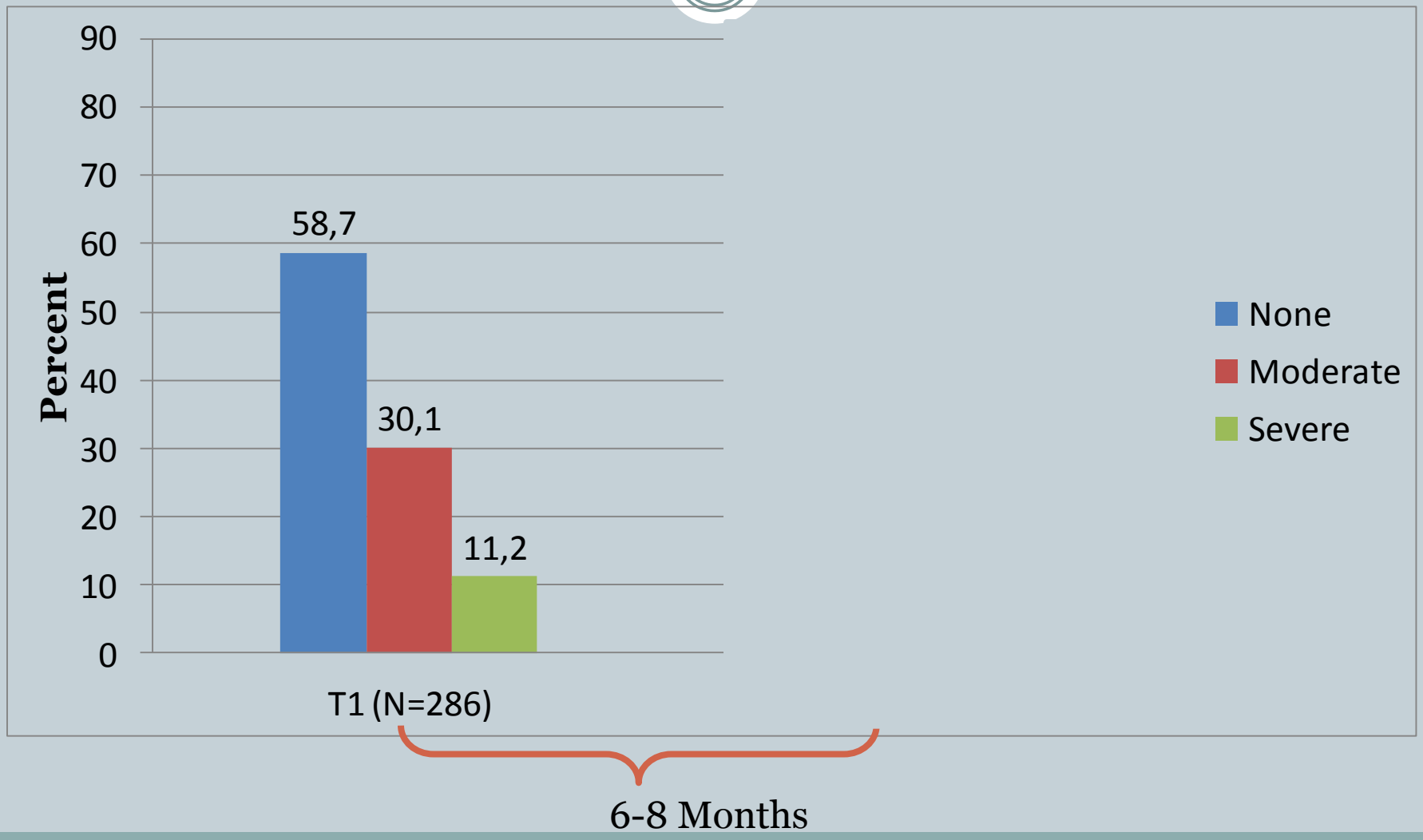
Design


T1 (1st Year)
Sexual Scripts
Normative Acceptance
Sexual Behavior
Pornography
Child Sexual Abuse
Sexual Victimization
6-8 months
T2 (2nd Year)
Sexual Victimization

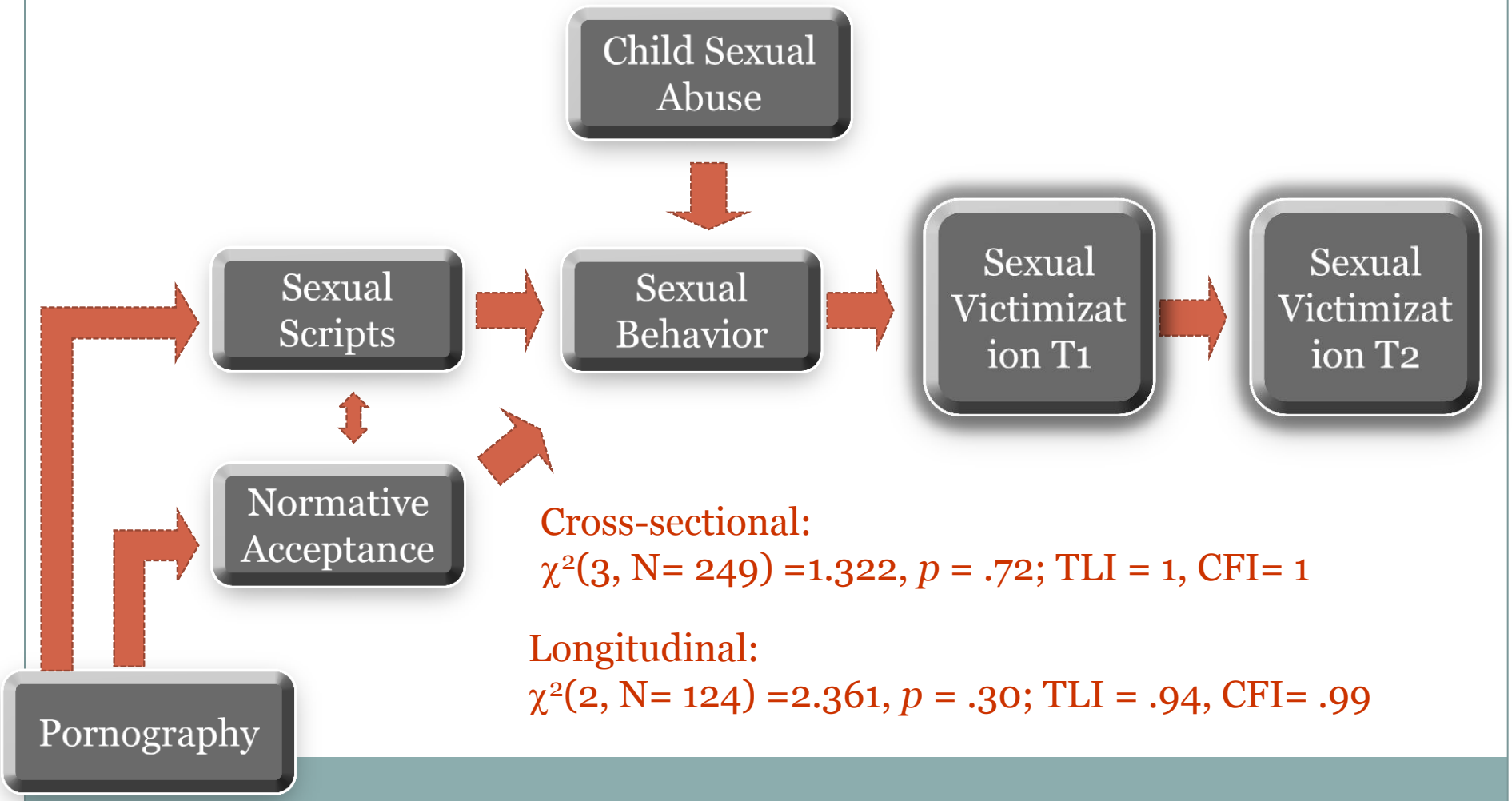
Participants

	Brazilian College Women (1st. Year)
N T1 (*N* T2)	286 (144)
M Age	19.9
Ever had a steady partner (%)	88
Sexual intercourse* (%)	89
M Age at 1st. intercourse*	17
M Number of sexual partners*	2.4

Victimization Level



Structural Equation Model

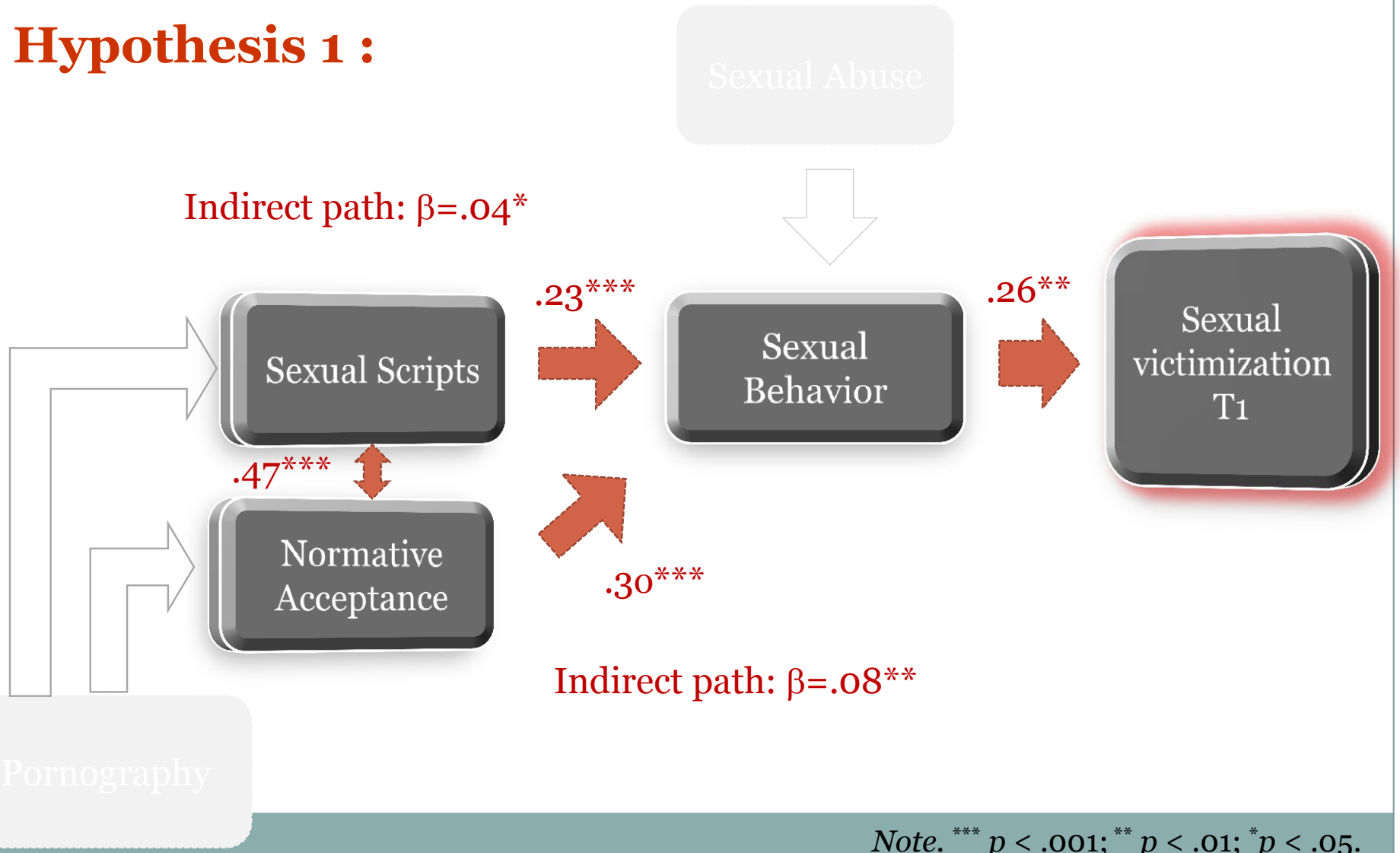


Cross-sectional:
$\chi^2(3, N= 249) =1.322, p = .72$; TLI = 1, CFI= 1

Longitudinal:
$\chi^2(2, N= 124) =2.361, p = .30$; TLI = .94, CFI= .99

Structural Equation Model (Cross-sectional)

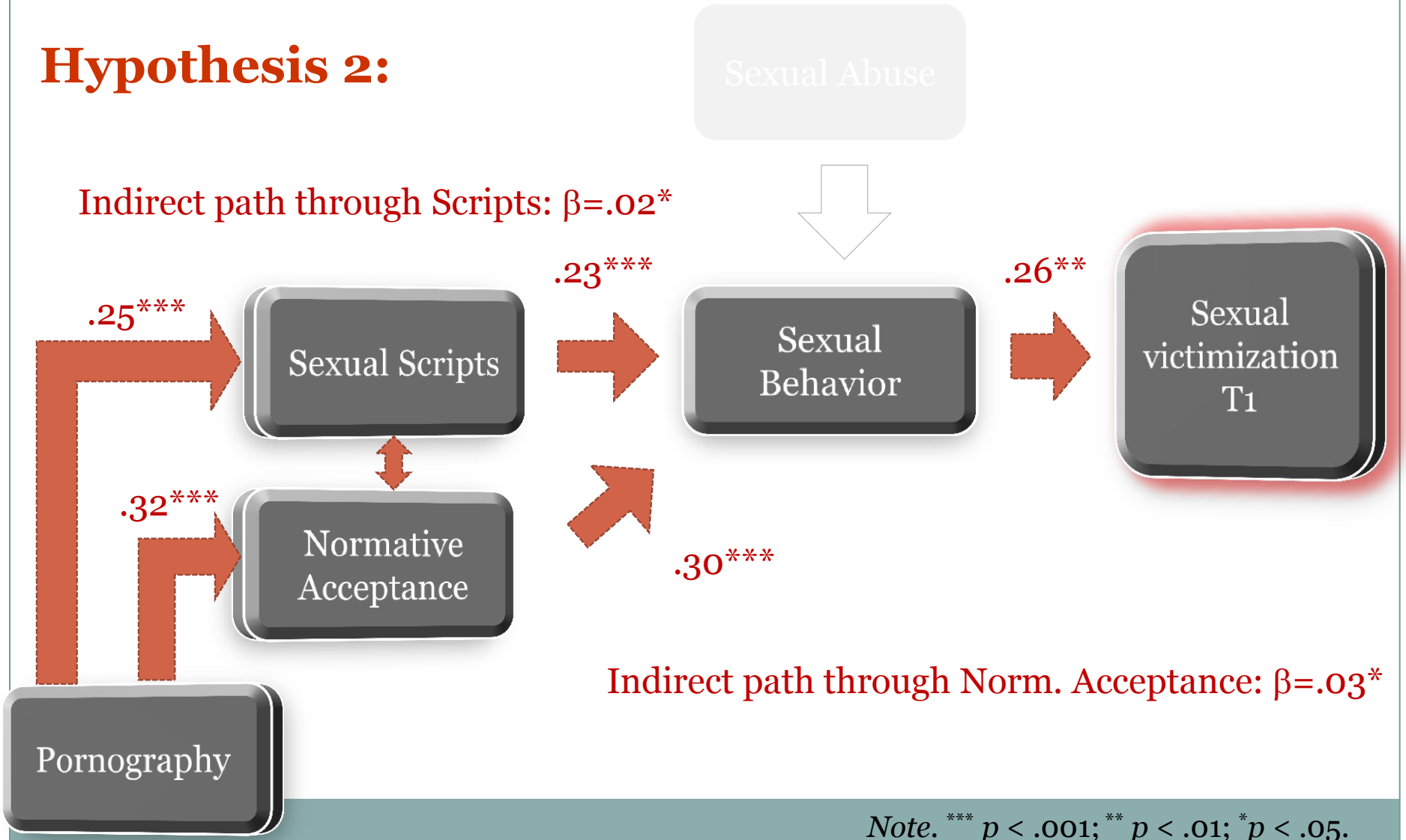
Hypothesis 1 :



Note. *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

Structural Equation Model (Cross-sectional)

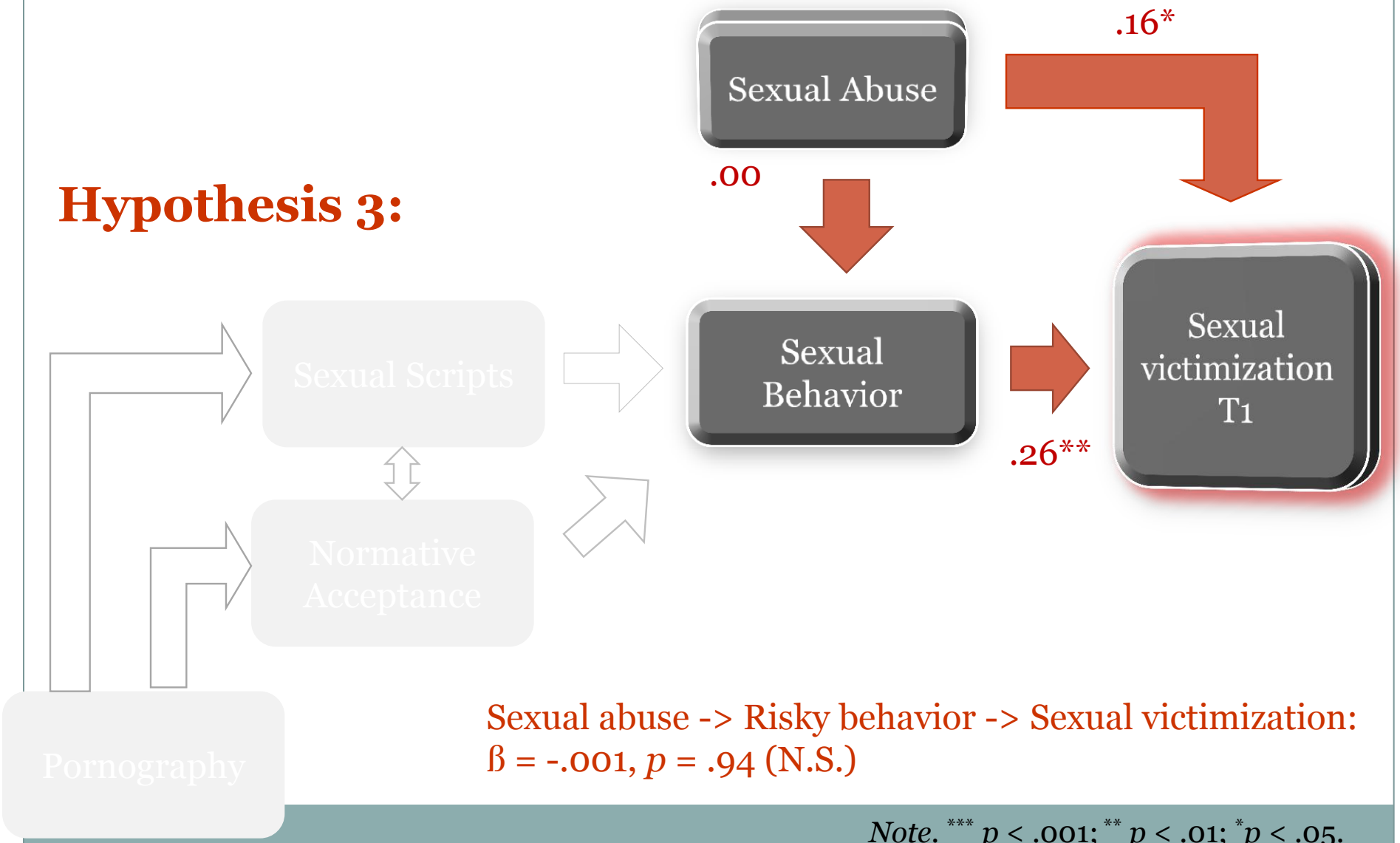
Hypothesis 2:



Note. *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

Structural Equation Model (Cross-sectional)

Hypothesis 3:

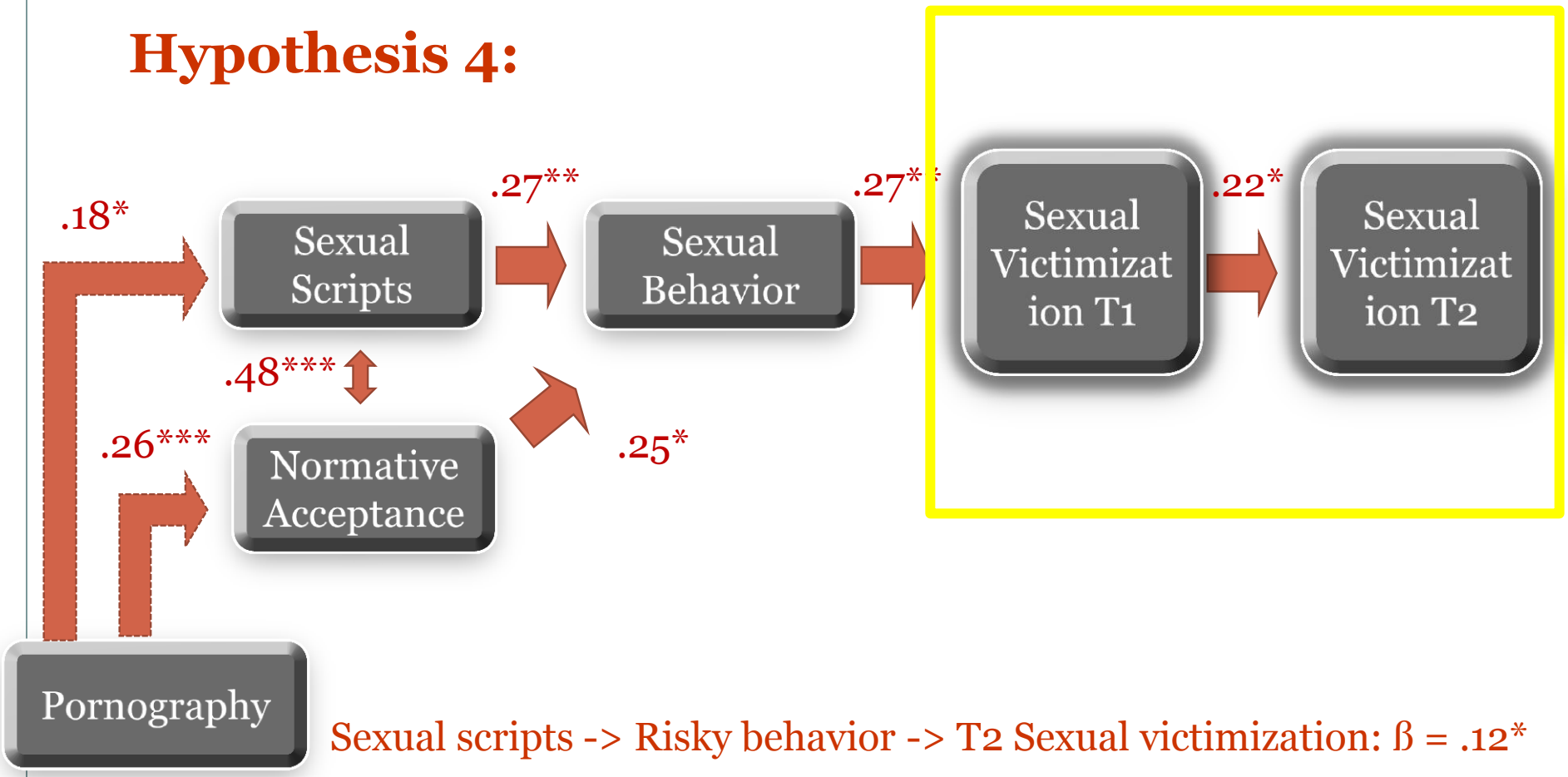


Sexual abuse -> Risky behavior -> Sexual victimization:
ß = -.001, p = .94 (N.S.)

Note. *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

Structural Equation Model (Longitudinal)

Hypothesis 4:



Sexual scripts -> Risky behavior -> T2 Sexual victimization: ß = .12*

Pornography use -> Risky behavior -> T2 Sexual victimization: ß = .12*

Note. *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

Summary

- Substantial prevalence rates of sexual victimization among female college students;
- The role of sexual scripts as antecedents of real sexual behavior: *effective prevention/interventions depend upon a good understanding on how sexual behavior is scripted*;
- Pornography use as an input variable to sexual behavior mediated by sexual scripts;
- The problem of **re-victimization** was confirmed (through child sexual abuse and adult victimization).

Contributions of the Present Study

- The first study in Brazil that examines the joint contribution of **cognitive, behavioral and biographical** in predicting sexual victimization both **cross-sectionaly and prospectively**;
- It measures sexual victimization and investigates underlying factors in a setting where little information is available in Latin America;
- It demonstrates correspondence between Brazilian findings and evidence from the International Literature.

Thank you for your attention!

Extra Slides

Instruments

Sexual victimization (10 items). Portuguese version of the Short Form of the Sexual Experiences Survey (SES) (Koss et al., 2007).

Individual sexual scripts (10 items / Scale 1-5) (Krahé, Bieneck, & Scheinberger-Olwig , 2007a,b)

"*You spend the evening with someone. In the course of the evening, you sleep together for the first time. Please imagine this situation and describe how it might take place. You are not asked to describe one particular situation you have experienced in the past. Rather, we would like to know what you think a situation like this would normally look like.*"

E.g., How long have you known each other?

How likely is it that you have drunk alcohol?

How likely is it that you first say "no" even though you want to have sex with the other person?

Normative Acceptance of risk elements (6 Items / Scale 1-5) (Krahé, Bieneck, & Scheinberger-Olwig, 2007)

E.g.: *It is ok to have sex with someone on the first night out.*

Instruments

Sexual behavior. Information on (1) age at first sexual intercourse, (2) number of sexual partners; (3) frequency of alcohol consumption in sexual interactions by the participants and her/his partners; (4) use of ambiguous communication by the participant (Krahé, Bieneck, & Scheinberger-Olwig, 2007)

E.g.: *How often have you drunk alcohol in situations where you had intercourse with someone?*

Pornography consumption. (8 Items / Scale 1-5) (Krahé, 2011)

E.g.: Have you ever seen explicit images of sexual intercourse…?: (a) on TV, (b) in internet, (c) in the cell phone and (d) in books or magazines;

Experiences of child sexual abuse. (4 Items/ yes-no)

(a) exposure of genitals (by an adult or by the participant through an adult's request) ; (b) touching of genitals (by an adult or by the participant through an adult's request); (c) attempted penetration; (d) complete penetration before the age of 14.

Levels of Victimization (based on Koss et al., 2008)

Level	Most severe form of sexual victimization reported in SES	
NONE	no victimization experiences reported	-
MODERATE	sexual contact attempted coercion sexual coercion	Not penalized by Brazilian Law
SEVERE	attempted rape rape	Penalized by Brazilian Law

Indirect Effects: Cross-sectional Model

Indirect effects	Women
Sexual scripts -> Risky behavior -> Sexual victimization	√
Normative acceptance -> Risky behavior -> Sexual victimization	√
Pornography use -> Sexual scripts -> Risky behavior -> Sexual victimization	√
Pornography use -> Normative acceptance -> Risky behavior -> Sexual victimization	√
Pornography use -> Risky behavior -> Sexual victimization	√
Sexual abuse -> Risky behavior -> Sexual victimization	n.s. *

* Among women, child sexual abuse showed a direct path to sexual victimization, unmediated by sexual behavior.

Note.
√ Significant; **m.s.** marginal significant; **n.s.** non-significant

Indirect Effects: Prospective Model

Indirect effects	Women
Risky behavior -> T1 Sexual victimization -> T2 Sexual victimization	m.s.
Sexual scripts -> Risky behavior -> T1 Sexual victimization -> T2 Sexual victimization	n.s. *
Sexual scripts -> Risky behavior -> T2 Sexual victimization	√
Pornography use -> Risky behavior -> T2 Sexual victimization	√
Pornography use -> Sexual scripts -> Risky behavior -> T1 Sexual victimization -> T2 Sexual victimization	n.s. *

* Women had significantly more new cases of sexual victimization between T1 and T2, which may explain why the path through T1 sexual victimization was not significant.

Note.
√ Significant; **m.s.** marginal significant; **n.s.** non-significant

Limitations

- Relatively small sample size => generalizability is limited;
- Attrition => Loss of statistical power at T2;
- Assurance of anonymity does not preclude social desirability;
- Retrospective reports=> possible memory distortion.