



The Relation between Disclosure and Suicide Ideation among LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ BDSM Practitioners: The Role of Thwarted Interpersonal Needs



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Introduction

- Research examining suicide among BDSM practitioners (BDSM-P) is limited but suggests increased risk for suicide ideation (SI, Roush, Brown, Mitchell, & Cukrowicz, 2016).
- The interpersonal theory of suicide (Joiner, 2005; Van Orden et al., 2010) posits three key variables related to suicide risk (Van Orden et al., 2008).
 - Thwarted belonging (TB): Feelings of loneliness and a lack of reciprocal caring relationships.
 - Perceived burden (PB): Feelings of self-hate and liability on others.
 - Acquired capability for suicide (ACS): Increased pain tolerance and fearlessness about death.
- TB and PB are associated with SI (Joiner, 2005; Van Orden et al., 2010).
- The majority of BDSM-P belong to a BDSM organization for the purpose of entering and maintaining a sense of community (Spratt, 2010); therefore, the BDSM community may decrease TB.
- "Some" BDSM-P report accepting experiences when disclosing their involvement (Bezreh et al., 2012), which may decrease TB.
- However, the majority of BDSM-P reported being aware of the stigma toward BDSM (Bezreh et al., 2012), which may increase PB.
- LGBTQ individuals are at greater risk for SI explained by minority stress, stigma, and discrimination (Testa et al., 2015; Meyer, 2003).
- However, individuals who engage with the LGB community are able to access support that may buffer against some minority stressors (Meyer, 2003).
- The aim of the current study is to examine the role of theoretically-based risk factors (i.e., TB and PB) in the relation between disclosure of BDSM involvement and SI among LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ individuals.

Hypotheses

- Greater percentage of BDSM disclosure to others will be associated with lower TB and in turn lower SI.
- Greater percentage of BDSM disclosure will be associated with higher PB and in turn higher SI.
- These relations will be stronger for LGBTQ individuals compared to non-LGBTQ individuals.

Method

PARTICIPANTS

- Sample:** Participants were 327 BDSM-P who were recruited online from BDSM-related groups or forums on social networking websites (i.e., Facebook, Yahoo Groups, Reddit, Literotica).
- Age:** $M = 29.42$ ($SD = 10.64$) years
- Gender:** Female ($n = 110$; 33.8%); Male ($n = 202$; 62.2%); Transgender (male to female; $n = 7$; 2.2%), Transgender (female to male; $n = 2$; 0.6%), Other ($n = 4$; 1.2%)
- Race/Ethnicity:** White ($n = 300$, 92.3%); Hispanic or Latino ($n = 14$, 4.3%); Black or African American ($n = 10$, 3.1%); Asian or Asian American ($n = 12$, 3.7%); American Indian ($n = 10$, 3.1%); Other ($n = 7$, 2.2%). Participants were provided the option to identify as more than one race/ethnicity; therefore, the sum of the percentages exceeds 100%.

MEASURES

- Demographic and Sexuality Questionnaire:** Self report of basic demographic information, suicide risk, mental health treatment history, sexuality and BDSM involvement and disclosure.
- Positive and Negative Suicide Ideation Inventory (PANSI; Osman et al., 1998):** Self-report assessment consisting of two scales: negative ideation (i.e., SI) and positive ideation (i.e., positive thoughts about life).
- Interpersonal Needs Questionnaire (INQ; Van Orden et al., 2012):** Self-report assessment of TB and PB.
- Center for Epidemiological Studies – Depression Scale (CES-D; Radloff, 1977):** Self-report assessment of recent depressive symptoms.

Results

- Non-parametric bootstrapping mediation procedures were used to test the hypothesis (Hayes, 2013) where 95% CIs not containing zero are considered statistically significant.
- After controlling for CES-D scores, the indirect effect of BDSM disclosure on SI through TB did not contain zero (95% CI = [-0.301, -0.008]), indicating that TB significantly mediated the relation between BDSM disclosure and SI.
- After controlling for CES-D scores, the indirect effects of BDSM disclosure on SI through PB did not contain zero (95% CI = [-0.008, 0.015]), indicating that PB did not significantly mediate the relation between BDSM disclosure and SI; however, there was a significant positive association between PB and SI (95% CI = [0.260, 0.478]).
- The direct effect of BDSM disclosure on SI was not significant (95% CI = [-0.013, 0.041]).

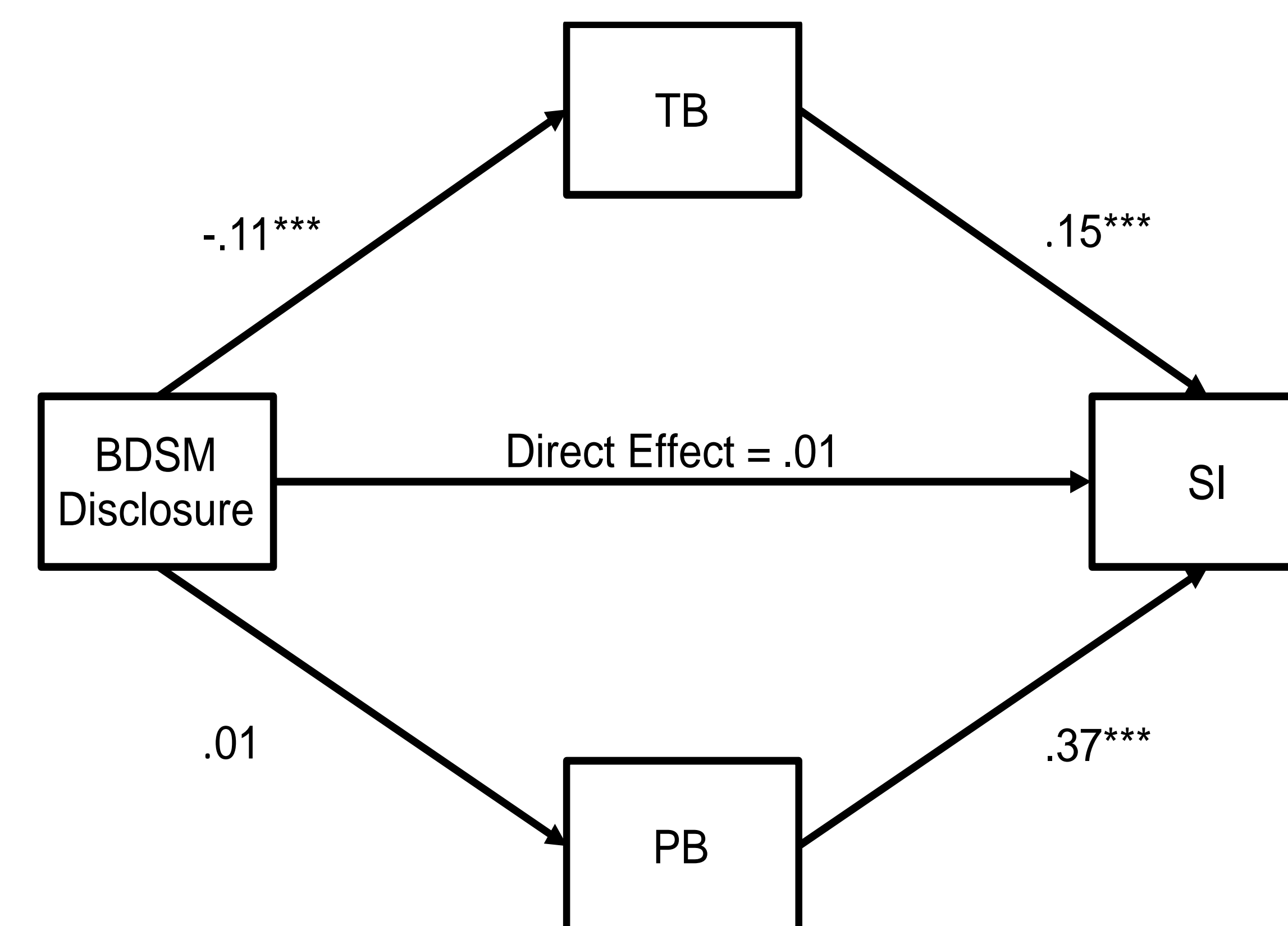


Figure 1. Unstandardized path coefficients. TB and PB as parallel mediators in the relation between BDSM Disclosure and SI. Total indirect effect = $-.2$ (95% CI = $-0.44, -0.11$). Total model summary: $F(4,301) = 92.80$, $R^2 = .55$, $p < .001$; $***p < .001$.

Conclusions

MAIN FINDINGS

- Disclosure of BDSM involvement may serve as a protective factor for SI, such that greater disclosure was associated with lower TB, and subsequently lower SI.
- When analyzed separately in the LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ groups, there were not differences in these relations overall, suggesting that disclosure may serve as a protective factor through TB similarly for LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ individuals
- Disclosure of BDSM involvement was not associated with PB or SI; therefore, and SI through PB suggests that feelings of PB associated with disclosure are less important.

IMPLICATIONS

- This information can provide clinicians with a better understanding of BDSM practices among clients and how these impact their emotional health.
- This information can provide clinicians with a better understanding of how disclosure of BDSM practices can have a different relation to TB and PB.
- Clinicians should assess BDSM disclosure and potentially help clients identify supportive others or communities that may facilitate disclosure to reduce SI through reducing feelings of TB.
- Clinicians should assess and target feelings of TB and PB as these are associated with higher SI.



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