Sexual Double Standard in Icelandic Society: Effects of Gender, Sexual History and the Impact on Self-esteem and Depression
Íris Hilmarsdóttir

2016
BSc in Psychology

Author: Íris Hilmarsdóttir
ID number: 280594-2889

Department of Psychology
School of Business
Foreword

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the BSc psychology degree, Reykjavík University, this thesis is presented in the style of an article for submission to a peer-reviewed journal.
Abstract
The aim of this study was to examine sexual double standard in Icelandic society and to examine the impact of experiencing sexual double standard, on symptoms of depression and self-esteem. Participants \((n = 1211)\), recruited through Facebook, completed a 70-item questionnaire. Sexual double standard was measured with a 14-item four-point Likert scale called Sexual Double Standard Scale (SDSS). The Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale was used to evaluate participant’s self-esteem. Information about symptoms of depression was measured with the Symptom Checklist-90-R. Results showed that there was no, or very low sexual double standard among the sample as assessed with the SDSS. However over 90% of the participants believed that there is sexual double standard in the Icelandic society and over 50% reported that they had experienced sexual double standard. The result also indicated that women who had experienced sexual double standard had lower self-esteem and higher levels of depression than those who had not. Experiencing sexual double standard did not affect self-esteem or depression among males. Overall, the findings indicate that sexual double standard is low in the Icelandic society and that woman who have experienced sexual double standard might be at risk for depression and low self-esteem.

Keywords: sexual double standard, sexual history, gender, self-esteem and depression

Útdráttur

Lykilhugtök: Tvöfaldur staðall, kynferðisleg reynsla, kyn, sjálfstraust og þunglyndi
Sexual Double Standard in Icelandic Society: Effects of Gender, Sexual History and the Impact on Self-esteem and Depression

“As a moral code that restricts women’s sexual freedom, the sexual double standard both reflects and reinforces the subordination of women” (Jonason & Fisher, 2008). According to the definition by Petersen and Hyde (2010), the sexual double standard involves men and women being judged by different standards. Sexual activity is more tolerated and even encouraged among men while it is both restricted and controlled among women. If a woman breaks out of the norm she is subjected to censure (Crawford & Popp, 2003). According to the sexual double standard it is stigmatizing for woman to have multiple sexual partners while at the same time it is considered to raise a man’s status in the society and among peers (Jonason & Marks, 2008; Kaeager & Staff, 2009).

One of the first researchers to document a sexual double standard was Ira Leonard Reiss in his research from 1964. Participants were asked to rate their agreement or disagreement with whether specific sexual was acceptable for men and woman. The scale he used was slightly-, medium- or strongly-dis/agree. Results showed that participants thought sex before marriage, especially if it was by “hook ups” or without affection, was more acceptable for men than women. As discussed below since this initial study, several studies have followed using different methodologies to examine the sexual double standard.

Time has changed and marriage is no longer considered the only proper context for sexual activity (Ronen, 2010), however in modern society gendered sexual expectations might support a new double standard (Crawford & Popp, 2003). This applies to when it is expected of men to always desire and pursue sexual opportunities regardless of context or situation (Hamilton & Armstrong, 2009), meanwhile women
are expected to take the more inactive role were they are supposed to be “sexual gatekeepers”.

People with more sexual experience tend to have more permissive sexual attitudes than those who are less experienced (Kelly & Bazzini, 2001; Zuckerman, Tushup, & Finner, 1976). Research shows that a positive correlation can be found between sexual experience and more favorable perceptions of a permissive female.

Previous research has shown that men seem more approving of sexual behavior in themselves and other males than sexual behavior in females. Men also seem to report more permissive sexual attitudes and behavior than women. Their attitudes and behavior are considered more acceptable than if a woman expresses the same attitude and behavior (Alexander & Fisher, 2003; Reid, Elliott, & Webber, 2011).

Sakaluk and Milhausen (2012) carried out a research examining the factors influencing sexual double standard by using the Sexual Double Standard Scale (SDSS). The results showed that both men and women endorsed a traditional sexual double standard, however men seemed to endorse the standard more strongly than women. The same results were found by England and Bearak (2014) in their research on university students using data from the OCSLS survey (n = 24,289).

Marks and Fraley (2005) examined the existence of sexual double standard among graduate students (n = 144) by using experimental targets of both genders. They found that people derogate targets more with increased number of sexual partners. They did on other hand not find evidence of sexual double standards among the sample.

Research conducted by Milhausen and Herold in 1999, showed that 93% of university women (n = 163) agreed that women are judged more harshly than men for
having many sexual partners. Almost half of the women believed that females were the harshest judges on women’s sexual behavior. Meanwhile 42% believed males and females were equally harsh and only 12% believed that males were the harshest judges. Michael J. Marks found similar results in his research in 2002 where 85% of participants shared the believe that, in Western societies, women were not given as much sexual freedom as men (as cited in Marks & Fraley, 2006).

The majority of the studies on sexual double standard have been conducted in the United States of America, but recent studies show that there are cultural and subcultural differences in sexual double standard (Chesler, 2010). In countries like the Nordic ones, gender equality is higher following with a decrease in the most gender differences in sexual attitudes and behavior (Petersen & Hyde, 2010). Haavio-Maauila and Kontula (2003) explored the difference between people in Finland, Estonia and St. Petersburg to see who showed the highest levels of sexual double standard. Results showed that Finns were the ones who most tended to judge the two genders equally and therefor not to have a sexual double standard. They also found that Finish men showed higher acceptance of women’s imitation of sexual activity, than women themselves.

Given the numerous studies that have focused on sexual double standard surprisingly little is known about the psychological or behavioral impact of having experienced sexual double standard. Research by Dunn, Gjelsvik, Pearlman, and Clark (2014) provided some evidence that a sexual double standard may play a prominent role in bullying victimization among girls. In their study girls who were more sexually active, were more likely to get bullied and showed more than five times the odds of developing depression and three times the odds of suicidal ideation.
The present study examined sexual double standard in Iceland but to the best of the researchers' knowledge, sexual double standard has not been investigated in Iceland. Iceland is one of the Nordic countries and would therefore be considered a country with high gender equality (Petersen & Hyde, 2010). In addition, the impact of having experienced sexual double standard on depression and self-esteem was examined.

**Method**

**Participants**

Participants were recruited through Facebook. A total of 1794 individuals responded to the survey but 583 people were excluded from the analyses, as they did not meet the current study criteria. The following individuals were excluded: age under 18 \((n = 216)\) did not specify gender \((n = 23)\), not heterosexual \((n = 228)\) and incomplete questionnaires \((n = 116)\). Thus, the final sample consisted of 1211 heterosexual people, 416 males and 795 women. The mean age was 26 years old \((SD = 8.34; range: 18 to 64)\). Of the participants 49.7% were students, 44.9% were working full time and 5.5% answered “unemployed” or “other”. Of the participants 37.9% were single or divorced and 62.1% were in a relationship or married. When asked about education 30.2% reported their highest education level to be elementary school and 53.3% secondary school. Of the participants 16.5% had a bachelor degree or higher education. Participants were not awarded in any way for participating in the present study and were given full anonymity (See Appendix A).

**Instruments and measures**

Participants were asked to answer a 70-item questionnaire with questions regarding background information, their sexual history and opinions on different sexual behavior (see Appendix B). They were also asked to answer questions related
Sexual Double Standard in Icelandic Society

Background information. Background information was assessed with questions considering demographic information (i.e. gender, age, education, employment status and marital status) as well as information on sexual history such as whether participants had ever had sexual intercourse, at what age the participant had their first sexual intercourse and if he/she had experienced a one nightstand. How many individuals the participant had had sexual intercourse or one night stands with

Sexual double standard. The sexual double standard was measured with the Sexual Double Standard Scale (SDSS) (Muehlenhard & Quackenbush, 1998). The Scale consists of 26 items (𝛼 = .73 for women, 𝛼 = .76 for men), thereof six individual items comparing men and women’s sexual behavior in the same item. The other 20 items occur in pairs, with parallel items about men and women’s sexual behavior. To reduce the participants’ burden only the paired items were included and items not relevant to the Icelandic culture (e.g. being a virgin when you are married) were excluded. The final list, therefore, consisted of 14 items. On all of the items participants were asked to rate how well the agreed with each statement on a four-point Likert Scale, ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (4) strongly agree. All 14 items came in pairs, with one item about women’s sexual behavior and the other about men’s sexual behavior. Examples of items are: “It’s worse for a woman to sleep around than it is for a man” and “It’s okay for a man to have more than one sexual relationship at the same time”. The response from one item, from each pair, was subtracted from the response to the other. Scores ranged from -21 to 21, with higher score indicating traditional sexual double standard position, where women are judged more harshly than men for the same sexual behavior. A lower score indicates however a reverse sexual double standard, where men are judged more harshly than women for
the same sexual behavior. A Score of 0 indicates an identical standard, where men and women are judged equally. The coefficient alpha for the present scale had a fairly good internal validity, $\alpha = .67$.

**Self-esteem.** The Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale (RSE) was used to evaluate participant’s self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965). It is a 10-item scale that measures global self-worth by measuring both positive and negative feelings that the individual has about himself. Participants were asked how well the statements applied to them and examples of items are: ”At times I think I am no good at all” and “I take a positive attitude towards myself”. All items are answered using a four-point Likert scale format ranging from strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (2). The questions were computed together and the sum score ranged from 10 to 40, with higher scores corresponding to higher self-esteem. Cronbach’s alpha indicated good internal validity $\alpha = .917$.

**Depression.** Information about symptoms of depression was measured with the Symptom Checklist-90-R (RSCL 90) (Derogatis & Savitz, 1999). Participants were asked the following: How many times did you experience the following indisposition or discomfort over the last 30 days”. Examples of items are: 1=“You were sad or had little interest in doing things” and “You were depressed or sad”. The response options were following: 1= “Nearly never”, 2= “Rarely”, 3= “Sometimes”, 4= “Often”. Mean scores for depression variables were obtained by computing the questions together. By computing the questions together the lowest possible score was 9 and the highest 36. Higher scores indicate higher levels of symptoms of depression. Cronbach’s alpha indicated good internal validity $\alpha = .919$.

**Procedure**

A survey with 70 questions (see Appendix B) was administered online in
April 2016 by the researcher posting it on Facebook. The survey was open for responses for three days. People were asked to open a link that led them to the questionnaire. The link was shared by other Facebook members and posted on three popular Facebook groups. Before answering the questions participants read a consent (see Appendix A) form, which described the study and informed participants that they could decline at any time and skip questions that they did not want to answer. Participants were asked to answer the questions as truthfully as possible and informed that their answers could not be traced back to them. They were also given the researcher’s contact information if they had any questions related to the research. After finishing and submitting their answers participants were thanked for their participation.

**Design and data analysis**

The current study is a cross-sectional anonymous self-report survey. The data was analyzed with 2 x 2 fixed factor ANOVA, with gender (male and female) and experience of sexual double standard (yes and no) as the between subject factors and with self-esteem as the dependent variable. Another 2 x 2 fixed factor ANOVA was performed, with the same subject factors but with depression as a dependent variable. Questions on sexual experience were added and each divided into two groups; low promiscuity and high promiscuity based on the median. The questions were not computed. The correlation between sexual double standard position and promiscuity and gender was examined as well as the correlation between depression and experience of sexual double standard and between self-esteem and experience of sexual double standard. Frequency and crosstab were performed on both dependent and independent variables for the descriptive statistics. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to assess the assumption of normality and the Levene’s test was used to
examine the assumption of homogeneity of variance. A criterion of $\alpha = .05$ was used in significance tests.

**Results**

**Test of normality for the dependent variables**

Scores for self-esteem ranged from 10 to 40. The mean value was $31.71 (n = 1158, SD = 6.44)$ indicating that majority of participants have rather high self-esteem. The value of skewness was $-0.764 (SE = .07)$ and the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was significant, $(1158) = 0.101, p = 0.00$ which supports that the distribution was not normal.

Scores for depression ranged from 9 to 36. The mean value was $19.45 (n = 1164, SD = 7.29)$ which indicates that majority of the participants have a low number of symptoms of depression. The value of skewness was $0.435 (SE = .07)$ and the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was significant, $(1164) = 0.093, p = 0.00$ which supports that the distribution was not normal.

The distribution for sexual double standard was not normal, as evident by a calculated value of skewness of $0.42 (SE = .07)$ and supported by a significant Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, $(1211) = 0.10, p = 0.00$.

**Sexual history**

A majority of the participants (96.5%) reported having had sexual intercourse, with 63.8% having their first sexual intercourse when they were 16 years old or younger. Of the sample 43.2% reported having had sexual intercourse with more than 10 individuals. The most common number of sexual intercourse partners was 6 to 10 people (21.2%). A majority or 76% had experienced a one-night stand of which 58.2% had experienced it with one to five different people. The most common number of one-night stand partners was 6-10 (18.6%).
Sexual double standard

As shown in Table 1, Over 90% of participants thought that there was a double sexual standard in Iceland and half of the sample thought that women were maintaining the standard by judging other women’s sexual behavior. Almost half of the female participants thought women are to blame for the sexual double standard and around 40% thought both women and men were equally to blame. Thus over 90% of female participants thought women were judging other women’s sexual behavior and therefore endorsing the sexual double standard. When asked about personal experience of sexual double standard, 58% of female participants reported having experienced it first hand. Around 39% of male participants also reported having experienced sexual double standard, or so called reverse sexual double standard.

Table 1.

Descriptive statistics for sexual double standard in Iceland.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sexual double standard</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prevalent in Iceland:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>85.6%</td>
<td>95.2%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintained by:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>52.7%</td>
<td>49.6%</td>
<td>50.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both men and women</td>
<td>37.7%</td>
<td>43.9%</td>
<td>41.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal experience:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>39.3%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>51.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>60.7%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>48.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mean for the sexual double standard questionnaire was .39 given that the scale ranges for -21 to 21 with 0 indicating no double standard. This suggests that this sample does not show high levels of sexual double standard. To further look at the sexual standard questionnaire each question was examined. Table 2 shows a summary of the frequency of participants agreeing with statements regarding sexual behavior. Participants were divided into two groups based on their gender. Chi-Square test
showed that the percentage of agreement differed by gender for six statements. The statements were the following: “I consider a woman who has sex on the first date “easy””, $\chi^2(1, N = 1211) = 4.23, p = .04$, “I kind of feel sorry for 20-year-old man who has not had sexual intercourse”, $\chi^2(1, N = 1211) = 35.66, p = .00$, “I kind of admire a guy who has had sex with many girls”, $\chi^2(1, N = 1211) = 4.69, p = .03$, “I kind of feel sorry for a 20 year old woman who has not had sexual intercourse”, $\chi^2(1, N = 1211) = 15.19, p = .00$, “The woman should initiate sex”, $\chi^2(1, N = 1211) = 76.23, p = .00$ and “Icelandic women are more promiscuous than Icelandic men”, $\chi^2(1, N = 1211) = 6.62, p = .01$.

Table 2.

Summary of the percentage of participants that agreed to statements regarding sexual behavior in the Sexual Double Standard scale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements Agree</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1a. It’s worse for a woman to sleep around than it is for a man</td>
<td>62.3%</td>
<td>67.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1b. It’s worse for a man to sleep around than it is for a woman</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2a. I kind of feel sorry for 20-year-old man who has not had sexual intercourse</td>
<td>48.8%</td>
<td>31.3%*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2b. I kind of feel sorry for 20-year-old woman who has not had sexual intercourse</td>
<td>34.9%</td>
<td>24.3%*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a. It’s okay for a man to have more than one sexual relationship at the same time</td>
<td>28.8%</td>
<td>31.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3b. It’s okay for a woman to have more than one sexual relationship at the same time</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
<td>37.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4a. I kind of admire a guy who has had sex with a lot of girls</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>8.2%*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4b. I kind of admire a girl who has had sex with a lot of guys</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5a. The man should initiate sex</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
<td>26.70%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5b. The woman should initiate sex</td>
<td>48.3%</td>
<td>23.6%*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6a. I consider a woman who has sex on the first date “easy”</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>6.5%*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6b. I consider a man who has sex on the first date “easy”</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7a. Icelandic women are more promiscuous than Icelandic men</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7b. Icelandic men are more promiscuous than Icelandic women</td>
<td>44.7%</td>
<td>37%*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *P-values are based on Chi-Square test, significant at $p < .05$. Agreeing with items $a$ indicates a sexual double standard and agreeing with items $b$ indicates a reverse sexual double standard.
Relationship between sexual double standard and outcome variables

Table 3 contains Pearson correlation coefficients for participant’s gender, levels of sexual double standard, depressive symptoms, self-esteem, sexual history and experience of sexual double standard. Results show that there is not a significant correlation between sexual double standard and levels of sexual history or gender ($p > .05$). There was however a significant negative correlation between depression and having experienced sexual double standard ($r = -.19, p < .001$). There is also significant negative correlation between gender and depression ($r = -.18, p < .01$) as well as gender and having experienced sexual double standard ($r = -.18, p < .001$).

Significant positive correlation was found between gender and self-esteem ($r = .10, p < .01$).

Table 3.

Summary of Correlations for sexual double standard, depression, self-esteem, levels of sexual experience and experience of sexual double standard.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. SDSS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. RSCL 90</td>
<td></td>
<td>.04</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. IC</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. ONS</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-01</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. SI number</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. ONS number</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. SI age</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. PEOSDS</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>-.19</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Gender</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>-.18</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-.18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. SDSS = Sexual Double Standard Scale scores. SE = Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale score. RSCL 90 = Symptom Checklist-90-R. IC = having had sexual intercourse. ONS = having had one-night stand. SI number = number of sexual intercourse partners. ONS number = number of one-night stand partners. SI age = age of first sexual intercourse. PEOSDS = personal experience of sexual double standard. G = participants gender.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

The effects of gender and experience of sexual double standard on depression and self-esteem
Figure 2 shows the results of the 2 (gender) x 2 (experience double standard) ANOVA for depression. The main effect for gender was significant $F(1, 951) = 25.363, p = .000, \eta^2 = .026$, indicating that females have higher level of depression ($M = 20.41$) than males ($M = 17.61$). The main effect for personal experience of sexual double standard was also significant $F(1, 951) = 16.124, p = .000, \eta^2 = .017$. The amount of symptoms of depression differed according to if the individual had experienced double standard first hand or not. Those who had experienced sexual double standard showed higher levels of depression symptoms than those who had not experienced double sexual standard. There was a significant interaction between gender and personally personal experience of sexual double standard $F(1, 951) = 5.471, p = .020, \eta^2 = .006$. As shown in Figure 1, experiencing sexual double standard affected depression among females but not among males.

![Figure 1](image-url)  
*Figure 1. The interaction between gender and personal experience of sexual double standard on depression.*

Figure 2 shows the results of the 2 (gender) x 2(experience double standard) ANOVA for self-esteem. Results show that there is a significant main effect of gender, $F(1, 951) = 0.6807, p = .009, \eta^2 = .007$. This indicates that women have
lower self-esteem ($M = 31.25$) than men ($M = 32.54$). There was not a significant main effect of personal experience of sexual double standard $F(1, 951) = 0.438, p = .508, \eta^2 = .000$. There was, however, a significant interaction between gender and personal experience of sexual double standard $F(1, 951) = 5.502, p = .019, \eta^2 = .006$. As shown in Figure 2, personal experience of sexual double standard had a stronger impact on female’s self-esteem than males’.

![Figure 2. The interaction between gender and personal experience of sexual double standard on self-esteem.](image)

**Discussion**

The present study examined sexual double standard in Iceland and the impact of having experienced sexual double standard on depression and self-esteem. The results showed that the average score on SDSS was close to zero which suggests that there is no or very low sexual double standard in Icelandic society. However by looking at individual items on the scale the findings suggest that in some areas there might be some form of sexual double standard in Iceland. Despite the mainly unanticipated findings, there were individual statements that were traditionally endorsed. For example: “It’s worse for a woman to sleep around than it is for a man”.

There were also signs of reverse double standards in some individual statements. For example: “Icelandic men are more promiscuous than Icelandic women”. In addition result showed that women who had experienced sexual double standard had lower self-esteem and higher levels of depression.

The low levels of sexual double standard in Icelandic society is consistent with studies by Haavio-Maauila and Kontula (2003) and Marks and Fraley (2005) who did not detect sexual double standard in their sample. Haavio-Maauila and Kontula found that Finish men showed higher acceptance of women’s initiation of sexual activity, then women themselves. This is also consistent with the results of the current study where Icelandic men were more accepting of woman initiating sex than women were themselves. Interestingly almost 45% of male participants believed Icelandic men to be more promiscuous than Icelandic women, against around 8.5% female participants believing Icelandic women to be more promiscuous than Icelandic men. This might be connected to the findings of Alexander and Fisher (2003) and Reid, Elliott, and Webber (2011) where men seemed to report more permissive sexual attitudes and behavior than women.

Despite the low levels of sexual double standard as assessed by SDSS, a majority (92%) of the participants believed that sexual double standard could be found in Icelandic society. Half of the participants believed women to be maintaining sexual double standard, around 42% believed men and women were equally maintaining it and only 8% believed men to be maintaining it. These results are in line with the research by Milhausen and Herold (1999) who found that 93% of female university students believed that sexual double standard was prevalent and research by Michael J. Marks (2002) where 85% of participants believed that women did not have as much sexual freedom. Similar to the present study, half of the women in the
study by Milhausen and Herold (1999) believed women to be the harshest judges on other women’s behavior. Meanwhile 42% believed men and women were equally harsh and only 12% believed that men were the harshest judges. Dunn et al., 2014 found that women who had experienced sexual double standard showed higher levels of depression, which is in accordance with the results of the present study.

The findings need to be interpreted with cautions due to its limitations including, social desirability and outdated measurements. When using a survey there is always the risk of the participant answering in manner that will be viewed favorable by others. That means that participants could be over-reporting their acceptance on various sexual behaviors or under-reporting their own sexual history. There is a risk of participants realizing what the questionnaire is investigating and a possibility that they will not answer the questions honestly. Thus, it is impossible to declare if the participants were telling the truth or not. Another limitation has to do with how the sample was recruited. Requesting participation through Facebook brings an increased risk of only those who are more liberal responding to the questionnaire. Due to the fact that the nature of sexual double standard is changing, there is a possibility that the SDSS (which is 18 years old) might not capture it as it is today.

The study also had some important strengths, the most important had to do with the sample size. The sample is big which increases the research external validity and makes it therefor easier to generalize the results over to the Icelandic population. It is also a strength that by using an anonymous questionnaire online, participants were able to reflect on their attitudes without the fear of being condemned by the researcher or being identified. Respondents may also be more willing to share personal information because they are not disclosing it directly to another person.
Future research should put emphasis on using implicit methods while investigating sexual double standard. By using implicit methods the researcher will get the participants’ insights without relying solely on what the respondent is able and willing to self-report. Future research should also employ both implicit and explicit methods to investigate sexual double standard, and compare the results. Future research should consider the envelope and test scale that capture changes that have occurred in sexual double standard. The identification of sexual double standard may be hindered by the use of instruments based on outdated definitions, which, therefore, would not be able to detect it.

Despite its limitations, this is the first time sexual double standard has been investigated in Iceland and therefore gives insight into the opinions of Icelandic people regarding different sexual behavior. The findings, adding to the limited research on the impact of experiencing sexual double standard, show that women who experience sexual double standard may be at risk for developing depression and low self-esteem.
References


Appendix A
Concent form

Viðhorf gangvant kynhegðun

**Upplýsingar til þátttakanda**

Kæri viðtakandi

Vinsamlega lestu neðangreindar upplýsingar vandlega áður en þú ákveður hvort þú viljir taka þátt í þessari rannsókn.

Rannsóknin er lokaverkefni í BSc námi í sálfræði og er tilgangur hennar að kanna viðhorf Íslendinga, 18 ára og eldri, gagnvant kynhegðun.

Í þátttöku fellst að svara órekjanlegum spurningalista, sem tekur um þátttöku í rannsókninni. Spurningalistinn inniheldur persónulegar spurningar sem þátttakandi er einnig beðinn um að svara af hreinskilni. Þátttaka er að óllu leyti nafnlaus og ekki verður hægt að rekja svör til einstaka þátttakanda. Rannsakandi telur ekki lítið þátttöku í rannsókninni. En ef þátttakanda finnst persónulegar spurningar of persónulegar er honum frjálst að hætta þátttöku hvært sem er eða sleppa þvi að svara stökkum spurningum.

Þátttakendur fá ekki greitt fyrir þátttöku sina í rannsókninni. Rannsóknargögnverður eytt að lokinni úrvinslur þeirra og eigi síðar en fimm árum eftir rannsóknarlok.

Ef ef einhverjar spurningar vakna að lokinni þátttöku er hægt að hafa samband við rannsakanda, Íris Hilmarsdóttur, iris13@ru.is.

Með von um góðar undirtektir,
Íris Hilmarsdóttir

☐ Ëg hef kynnt mér ofangreindar upplýsingar og veiti samþykki mitt fyrir þátttöku
Appendix B
Questionnaire

Vinsamlegast settu kross við þann valmöguleika sem á best við þig

Hvaða kyn skilgreinir þú þig sem?
☐ Karlkyn
☐ Kvenkyn
☐ Annað

Fæðingarár?

Hver er atvinnustaða þín?

☐ Nemi
☐ Í vinnu
☐ Nemi og í vinnu
☐ Atvinnulaus
☐ Ellilifeyrisþegi
☐ Annað

Hvaða menntunarstígíi hefur þú lokið?

(Merktu við hæsta menntunarstíg.)
☐ Grunnskólamenntun
☐ Starfs- og/eða framhaldsskólamenntun
☐ Háskólamenntun (BA/BS)
☐ Framhaldsmenntun á háskólastígí (MA/MS/MBA/PHD)

Hver er núverandi hjúskaparstaða þín?

☐ Einhleyp/ur
☐ Í sambandi
☐ Gift/ur
☐ Fráskilin
☐ Ekill/ekkja

Hver er kynhneigð þín?

☐ Samkynhneigð/ur
☐ Gagnkynhneigð/ur
☐ Tvíkynhneigð/ur
☐ Annað

Hefur þú haft samfarir?

☐ Já
☐ Nei

Aldur við fyrstu samfarir?

☐ Yngri en 12 ára
☐ 13 ára
14 ára
15 ára
16 ára
17 ára
18 ára
19 ára
20 ára
Eldri en 20 ára

Hvað hefur þú haft samfarir við marga einstaklinga?
Hef ekki haft samfarir
1
2
3
4
5
6 – 10
11 – 15
16 – 20
21 – 25
26 – 30
Fleiri en 30

Hefur þú stundað munmök?
Já, oft
Já, stundum
Nei, aldrei

Hefur þú stundað endaðarmsmök?
Já, oft
Já, stundum
Nei, aldrei

Hefur þú átt skyndikynni?
(haft samfarir við einstakling/a í eitt skipti án skuldbindinga um samband (e. One night stand))
Já
Nei
Hef ekki haft samfarir

Ef já, með hversu mörgum einstaklingum?
Hef ekki haft samfarir
Hef ekki átt skyndikynni
1
2
3
4
5
6 – 10
Hversu sammála eða ósammála eftirfarandi fullyröingum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mjög ósammála</th>
<th>Frekar ósammála</th>
<th>Frekar sammála</th>
<th>Mjög sammála</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Það er verra fyrir konu að vera talin lauslát en það er fyrir karl</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Íslandið er vannanleg</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Íslandið er miðanleg</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Íslandið er einnig</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Íslandið er lengri</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Íslandið er længst</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Íslandið er mikið</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Íslandið er lengri</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Íslandið er længst</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Íslandið er mikið</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Íslandið er lengri</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Íslandið er længst</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Íslandið er mikið</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mjög náin vinkona þín er að leita að manneskju til að deita. Hún hitti strák sem henni likar við og finnst aðlaðandi. Þú veist að þessi strákur er búnin að sofa hjá fleiri en 15 stelpum. Myndir þú mæla gegn því að hún deitaði hann?

Já, alltaf
Já, stundum
Nei, aldrei

Hvað finnst þér ásættanlegt að kona hafi samfarir við marg fyrstu af því að hún deitaði hann?

(Merktu við þann fjölda sem þú telur vera innan velsæmismarka)

Engan
1
2
Fleiri en 30

Hvað finnst þér ásættanlegt að karlmaður hafi samfarir við marga einstaklinga yfir ævina?
(Merktu við þann fjölda sem þú telur vera innan velsæmismarka)
Engan
1
2
3
4
5
6 – 10
11 – 15
16 – 20
21 – 25
26 – 30
Fleiri en 30

Hvað finnst þér ásættanlegt að þú hafir samfarir við marga einstaklinga yfir ævina?
(Merktu við þann fjölda sem þú telur vera innan velsæmismarka)
Engan
1
2
3
4
5
6 – 10
11 – 15
16 – 20
21 – 25
26 – 30
Fleiri en 30

Hvað telur þú að öðrum finnust ásættanlegt að þú hafir samfarir við marga einstaklinga yfir ævina?
(Það sem þú upplifir/heldur)
Engan
1
2
3
4
Hversu sammála eða ósammála ertu eftirfarandi fullyrðingum varðandi skyndikynni (e. one night stand)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mjög</th>
<th>Frekar</th>
<th>Frekar</th>
<th>Mjög</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ósammála</td>
<td>ósammála</td>
<td>sammála</td>
<td>sammála</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ef ég myndi/þegar ég stunda skyndikynni þá finnst mér sjálfsagt að veita bólfélaga munnmök við kynfæri</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ef ég myndi/þegar ég stunda skyndikynni þá finnst mér sjálfsagt að bólfélagi veiti mér munnmök við kynfæri</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ef ég myndi/þegar ég stunda skyndikynni þá finnst mér sjálfsagt að hafa endaþarmsmök</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mér finnst munnmök vera sjálfsagður hluti af kynlifinu

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mjög</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ósammála</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mér finnst endaþarmsmök vera sjálfsagður hluti af kynlifinu

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mjög</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ósammála</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hversu sammála eða ósammála ertu eftirfarandi fullyrðingum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mjög</th>
<th>Frekar</th>
<th>Frekar</th>
<th>Mjög</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ósammála</td>
<td>ósammála</td>
<td>sammála</td>
<td>sammála</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>það er verra fyrir karl að vera talinn lauslátur en það er fyrir konu</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ég hálf vorkenni 20 ára konu sem hefur ekki haft samfarir við aðra manneskju</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mér finnst í lagi að karl eigi í nokkrum kynferðíslegum samböndum í einu</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SEXUAL DOUBLE STANDARD IN ICELANDIC SOCIETY

Ég vil ekki hafa samfarir við einstakling sem hefur haft samfarir við marga einstaklinga

Ég lit upp til karla sem hafa haft samfarir við marga einstaklinga

Íslenskar konur eru lauslátari en íslenskir karlmenn

Karlinn ætti að eiga frumkvæðið að kynlífi

Ég tel karl vera lauslátan ef hann stundar kynlíf við fyrstu kynni

Mjög náinn vinur þinn er að leita að manneskju til að deita. Hann hitti stelpu sem honum likar við og finnst aðlaðandi. Þú veist að þessi stelpa er búin að sofa hjá fleiri en 15 strákum. Myndir þú mæla gegn því að hann deitaði hana?

Já, alltaf
Já, stundum
Nei, aldrei

Hefur þú verið kallaður/kölluð drusla?

Já
Nei
Veit ekki

Kallar þú aðra einstaklinga sem hafa haft samfarir við marga einstaklinga druslur?

Já, oft
Já, stundum
Nei, aldrei

Er neikvætt fyrir karl að vera kallaður drusla?

Já, alltaf
Já, stundum
Nei, aldrei

Er neikvætt fyrir konu að vera kölluð drusla?

Já, alltaf
Já, stundum
Nei, aldrei

Hver er þín skilgreining á orðinu drusla?

Upplifir þú þig sem druslu?

Já, alltaf
Já, stundum
Nei, aldrei
Gerði það einu sinni, ekki lengur
Veit ekki

Finnst þér vera tvöfaldur staðall á Íslandi þegar kemur að kynhegðun (e. double sexual standard)?
(Að konur séu dæmdar harkalegar en karlar fyrir sömu kynhegðun t.d. fjölda bólfélaga)
Já
Nei
Veit ekki

Hefur þú persónulega upplifað tvöfaldan staðal á Íslandi þegar kemur að kynhegðun?
Já
Nei
Veit ekki

Hver heldur þú að dæmi konur meira fyrir þeirra kynhegðun?
Konur dæma aðrar konur
Karlar dæma konur
Karlar og konur dæma jafnt

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hversu vel finnsta þær eftirfarandi staðhæfingar eiga við um þig?</th>
<th>Á mjög vel við um mig</th>
<th>Á frekar vel við um mig</th>
<th>Á frekar illa við um mig</th>
<th>Á mjög illa við um mig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mér finnsta þeg vera að minnsta kosti jafn mikils virði og aðrir</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mér finnsta þeg hafa marga góða eiginleika</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>þegar allt kemur til alls sýnist mér þeg vera misheppnaður/-heppnuð</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Þeg get gert hlutina jafn vel og flestir aðrir</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mér finnsta ekki vera margt sem þeg get verið stolt(ur) af</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Þeg hef jákvæða afstöðu til sjálfs/sjálfrað min</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>þegar allt kemur til alls er þeg ánægðð(ur) með sjálfa(n) mig</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Þeg vildi óska að þeg bæri meiri virðingu fyrir sjálfum mér</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stundum finnsta þér þeg sannarlega vera til einskis nýð(ur)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stundum finnsta þér þeg einskis virði</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Þú varst leið(ur) eða hafðir litinn áhuga á að gera hluti</td>
<td>Nær aldréi</td>
<td>Sjaldan</td>
<td>Stundum</td>
<td>Öft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Þú hafðir litla matarlyst</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Þér fannst þú einmana</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Þú grést auðveldlega eða langaði til að gráta</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Þú áttir erfitt með að soðna eða halda þér sofandi</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Þú varst niðurdréginn(n) eða dapur/döpur</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Þú varst ekki spennt(ur) fyrir að gera nokkur hlut</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Þér fannst þú vera hægfara eða hafa litinn mát</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Þér fannst framtíðin vonlaus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>