The “Sextual” Double Standard:
An Experimental Examination of Variations in Judgments
of Men and Women Who Engage in Computer-Mediated
Sexual Communication

A Plan B

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA DULUTH

BY

Carissa Ann Harvey

IN PARTIAL FULLFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

Ashley Thompson, Ph.D.

September 2018

© Carissa Ann Harvey 2018
All Rights Reserved

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge and express my sincere gratitude to the following people for helping me reach this crucial milestone. First, I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Ashley Thompson, for her patience, guidance, kindness, and encouragement in this arduous process. You have helped me achieve goals I never thought I could or would reach and I am eternally grateful. I must also express my gratitude to my committee members, Dr. Edward Downs and Dr. Robert Lloyd, for providing your expertise and alternative perspectives that have enriched this project. I feel privileged for having worked with you both.

I would also like to thank my mother for her support in face of others' opposition over the years in the pursuit of my dreams. Your unconditional love and support always has, and always will, mean more than words can aptly express. I continue to strive to be the independent, determined woman you have raised me to be.

Finally, I would like to thank my twin sister, Tiffany, for supporting me while I dealt with my fears and concerns. Through tears and self-doubt, you have pushed me to be persistent and to never give up nor to lose hope when life is difficult. I would not be where I am now and have achieved what I have in my life without you.

Abstract

Although computer-mediated sexual communication (i.e., sexting) is a common behavior, research indicates that perceptions of sexting are generally negative. However, no research has attempted to quantitatively examine how perceptions of sexting vary according to the gender of the individuals involved. Thus, the current study investigated the endorsement of the sexual double standard (i.e., the tendency to judge women more harshly than men for engaging in comparable sexual behavior) when evaluating hypothetical individuals who engage in sexting. A total of 663 U.S. adults (347 men, 316 women) participated in a between-subject experimental paradigm, in which they were randomly assigned to read one of 16 vignettes depicting a hypothetical sexting scenario and evaluate one of the individuals involved. The results revealed that, although participants reported neutral perceptions of sexting overall, hypothetical men were judged as less moral for their involvement in sexting than were women. Morality judgments of those who sext were also influenced by the target's role in the interaction (sender/receiver, requester/non-requester) and the familiarity of those involved (casual/committed partners). Overall, these results indicate that the traditional sexual double standard has given way to an egalitarian standard, perhaps due to recent societal shifts. Implications for investigators, educators, and practitioners are discussed.

Table of Contents

List of Appendices	iv
List of Tables	v
List of Figures	vi
Introduction	1
Sexting	1
Sexual Script Theory	5
The Sexual Double Standard	6
The Sexual Double Standard and Sexting	10
The Current Thesis	14
Research Questions and Hypotheses	16
Method	17
Participants	17
Measures	18
Procedure	19
Results	19
Discussion	23
Limitations and Future Directions	27
Conclusions and Implications	29
References	31

List of Appendices

Appendix A - Amazon Mechanical Turk Recruitment Message	45
Appendix B – Consent Document	46
Appendix C – Experimental Vignettes	48
Appendix D – Morality Scale	51
Appendix E – Demographics Questionnaire	52
Appendix F – Debriefing Statement	58

List of Tables

Table 1 - Differences in Judgments of Morality for Hypothetical Individuals	60
Table 2 - Differences in Morality Judgments by Vignette	61
Table 3 - Morality Judgments by Role and Requesting Status	62
Table 4 - Morality Judgments of Role Status for Casual Relationships	63
Table 5 - Women Participants' Morality Judgments for Hypothetical Individuals	64

List of Figures

Figure 1 - Morality Judgments by Role and Requesting Status	65
Figure 2 - Morality Judgments of Role Status for Casual Relationships	66
Figure 3 - Women Participants' Morality Judgments for Hypothetical Individuals	67

**The “Sexual” Double Standard: An Experimental Examination of Variations in
Judgments of Men and Women Who Engage in Computer-Mediated Sexual
Communication**

Computer-mediated sexual communication, or sexting, can be broadly defined as “sexually explicit content communicated via text messages, smart phones, or internet activities such as social networking sites” (Ringrose, Harvey, Gill, & Livingstone, 2012, p. 9). Sexting is a fairly new behavior that emerged from the development of cellular devices as well as the internet (Cooper, Quayle, Jonsson, & Svedin, 2016; Drouin, Vogel, Surbey, & Stills, 2013). Although it was originally defined exclusively as occurring via text message, within recent years, the term has expanded to encompass various computer-mediated mediums, including social networking sites such as Facebook® (Drouin et al., 2013; Silva, Teixeira, Vasconcelos-Raposo, & Bessa, 2016). This expansion is reflected in recent research revealing that the most popular electronic platforms for sending sexts are text messaging and Snapchat™ (Brand, 2015). In addition, the content of sexts was traditionally described as including sexual images and/or sexual text messages (Mitchell, Finkelhor, Jones & Wolak, 2012). However, with the advancements of technology, the content of sexts now includes sexually-suggestive nude, or partial nude, videos, images, and text messages (Cooper et al., 2016).

Frequency of Sexting

Overall, an estimated 53% of individuals worldwide engage in sexting (Klettke, Hallford, & Mellor, 2014). Despite the substantial proportion of adults who report experience with sexting, reports from adolescents and young adults appear to be even higher and steadily increasing from year to year. For example, a study from 2009

examining adolescent and young adult sexting rates found that only 4% of its participants reported sexting (Lenhart, 2009). However, in recent studies between 60% - 80% of adolescents and young adults report having engaged in sexting as some point in their lives (Crimmins & Seigfried-Spellar, 2014; Samimi & Alderson, 2014; Weisskirch, Drouin, & Delevi, 2016).

The aforementioned variability in sexting rates may be the result of a variety of factors. First, research indicates that one's role in sexting (e.g., sender/receiver) may influence their rate of participation. For example, one study examining sexting in young adults found that, of their sample, only 2% sent sexts whereas 13% received sexts (Gordon-Messer, Bauermeister, Grodzinski, & Zimmerman, 2013). In a nationally representative sample, 13% of adults aged 18–29 years reported experience sending sexts, whereas 31% reported experience receiving sexts (Lenhart, 2010).

Second, sexting prevalence rates have also been documented to vary according to one's gender, with research indicating young men ($M = 2.25$) report more sexting experience than do young women ($M = 1.86$) (Delevi & Weisskirch, 2013; West et al., 2014). However, some studies indicate that there is no meaningful difference between women and men in sexting experience (Benotsch, Snipes, Martin & Bull, 2013; Crimmins & Seigfried-Spellar, 2014; Gordon-Messer et al., 2013). Interestingly, however, a gender difference in sexting experience appears to vary according the role an individual plays in the sexting interaction. For example, although women (30%) appear to report slightly higher rates of sending sexts compared to men (27%), men (17%) report higher rates of receiving sexts as compared to women (9%) (Gordon-Messer et al., 2013; Liong & Cheng, 2017).

Third, rates of sexting also vary according to the content included in the sext. For example, research indicates that individuals are less likely to report engaging in more explicit forms of sexting (e.g., sending nude photos) as compared to more benign forms (e.g., sexually suggestive text messages) (Henderson, 2011; Scholes-Balog, Francke, & Hemphill, 2016; NCPTUP, 2008; Weisskirch et al., 2016). In fact, rates of sending sexually suggestive text messages have been as high as 80% (Weisskirch et al., 2016), whereas rates of sending/receiving semi-nude photos range from 17% to 55% (Scholes-Balog et al., 2016; NCPTUP, 2008; Weisskirch et al., 2016).

Attitudes toward Sexting

Despite the relatively common occurrence of sexting, discourse surrounding sexting has historically depicted those who engage in this behavior as “deviant,” with the media’s focus typically on the potential risks involved (Dir, Coskunpinar, Steiner, & Cyders, 2013; Reyns, Burek, Henson, & Fisher, 2013). These risks include feeling pressured or coerced into sexting, facing cybervictimization, experiencing negative affective states, and fearing one’s sexts will be shared with a third party (Crimmins & Seigfried-Spellar, 2014; Drouin, Ross & Tobin, 2015; Hudson, 2011; Morelli et al., 2016; Ross, Drouin & Coupe, 2016; Scholes-Balog et al., 2016).

Because of the discourse surrounding sexting and the assumed damaging outcomes, attitudes toward sexting are overwhelmingly negative. For example, in a large-scale study investigating single U.S. adults’ attitudes toward sexting, 60% to 70% reported that sexting is harmful and that it would negatively impact their reputation, career, self-esteem, and relationships (Garcia, Siliman, Perry, & Fisher, 2016). Such concerns are reflected in Weisskirch and Delevi’s (2011) study which indicated that

adults perceive sexting as a negative and risky behavior, as evidenced by a mean score of 3.56 on a 5-point scale from 1 (not at all true) to 5 (frequently true).

In the most recent study assessing sexting attitudes, Liong and Cheng (2017) measured U.S. adults' attitudes toward sexting using statements assessing whether they found sexting to be favorable or pleasant (e.g., "I think that sending my sexy or nude photos by means of a cell phone or internet to someone I know personally is pleasant"). Their results revealed that adults' perceived sexting as fairly unfavorable and unpleasant, as evinced by mean scores ranging from 2.00 to 3.00 on a 7-point scale (Liong & Cheng, 2017). Overall, these results indicate that participants hold negative or unpleasant attitudes toward sexting, specifically as they relate to the perceived risks involved.

Although the research on attitudes toward sexting is increasing and has added to our understanding of this recent phenomenon, some limitations associated with this research must be noted. First, these studies have primarily focused on attitudes toward sexting overall. Because attitudes toward a general behavior have been documented to differ markedly from attitudes toward an individual (Kite & Whitley, 1996; Thompson & Byers, 2017), researchers need to examine attitudes toward individuals involved in sexting, rather than just the behavior. Second, research investigating other aspects of sexuality have discovered that the gender of the individual being evaluated is an important variable to consider when examining attitudes (Ahrold & Meston, 2010; Maas, Shearer, Gillen, & Lefkowitz, 2015; Sprecher, Tregor, & Sakaluk, 2013). However, researchers focusing on sexting have overlooked the influence of gender. Therefore, the goal of thesis is to investigate attitudes toward hypothetical men and women involved in sexting.

A Conceptual Framework for Studying Variations in Attitudes toward Men and Women Involved in Sexting

Sexual Script Theory is the most commonly used theory utilized when explaining the role of gender with respect to sexuality (Simon & Gagnon, 1984). Sexual Script Theory states that sexual behavior is governed by cognitive schemas which dictate how individuals should act in given sexual situations (Simon & Gagnon, 1984; Masters, Casey, Wells, & Morrison, 2013). These sexual scripts provide meaning and direction in response to sexual cues, thus reducing anxiety by decreasing uncertainty about what to do in sexual scenarios (Simon & Gagnon, 1984; Masters et al., 2013; Wiederman, 2005). The cognitive schemas used to navigate sexual situations operate on cultural, interpersonal, and intrapsychic levels, which interact and subsequently guide an individual's sexual beliefs and behaviors (Simon & Gagnon, 1984, 1986). A well-known example of a sexual script is the baseball analogy which uses bases to depict the progression of intimacy, from kissing to genital fondling to sexual intercourse. This analogy serves as a guide for how to act in a sexual relationship.

Gender Differences in Sexual Scripts

Proponents of Sexual Script Theory argue that, because of men's and women's different social experiences and expectations, men and women adopt different scripts resulting in discrepant sexual roles and approaches to sexuality (Masters et al., 2013; Wiederman, 2005). Although there are many ways with which young boys and girls are first exposed to sexual scripts, differences in sexual scripts for men and women are most commonly believed to form as a result of different messages children receive about their genitalia (e.g., boys are encouraged to explore their genitals as they mature whereas girls

are socialized to believe that their genitals are unclean and off-limits; Wiederman, 2005). These early messages, coupled with enforced gender roles and internalized stereotypes about one's gender (Maas et al., 2015), are theorized to encourage men to be independent, assertive, and explorative in their sexual behavior and women to be more restrained and controlled (Wiederman, 2005).

The Sexual Double Standard

This gender disparity in sexual scripts, coupled with enforced traditional gender roles, creates a double standard in terms of what is deemed appropriate sexual behavior for men and women. This is referred to as the sexual double standard (SDS) and is described as the tendency to judge women more harshly for engaging in sexual behavior as compared to men (Fowers & Fowers, 2010; Papp et al., 2015; Zaikman & Marks, 2014). The SDS has been the focus of many sexuality studies, covering differential judgments of men and women related to sexual partner selection (Danube et al., 2016), condom use (Boone & Lefkowitz, 2004; Penhollow, Young, & Nnaka, 2017), involvement in casual sexual behaviors (England & Bearak, 2014; Kettrey, 2016; Reid, Elliott, & Webber, 2011), engagement in unconventional sexual behaviors (multi-person sexual activity; Jonason & Marks, 2009), and more.

For example, Kreager and Staff (2009) examined the SDS by analyzing data retrieved from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health), which is an ongoing longitudinal study assessing the social, economic, physical, and psychological well-being of American adolescents in grades 7-12 from the 1994-1995 academic year. By using the Add Health data, the authors were able to assess the potential relationship between the number of sexual partners adolescents report and peer

acceptance (which was measured by the number of times peers listed an individual as one of their top five best friends in their high school at the time of assessment). Their results revealed that the correlation between the self-reported number of sexual partners and peer acceptance was positive for boys and negative for girls, indicating that girls are derogated and boys are commended for participating in comparable sexual behaviors.

In another study documenting the endorsement of the SDS, Conley, Ziegler, & Moors (2013) recruited 195 undergraduate students and had them read vignettes depicting either a man or a woman accepting a casual sex offer from a stranger. The researchers then asked participants to evaluate the target in the vignette on different dimensions (e.g., intelligence, promiscuity, attractiveness). Both men and women evaluated women in the hypothetical vignette more immoral for accepting an offer to participate in casual sex than they did men (Conley et al., 2013). In particular, using a multi-faceted dependent measure, hypothetical women engaging in casual sex were judged as less intelligent, less competent, more promiscuous, and more mentally unstable than were hypothetical men engaging in the same behavior. These findings, again, demonstrate an endorsement of the SDS, particularly regarding participation in casual sexual behaviors.

Shifts in Sexual Script Theory and the sexual double standard. Despite the overwhelming evidence of the endorsement of a SDS, recent research has demonstrated that sexual scripts are beginning to shift, resulting in inconsistencies in the presence and robustness of the SDS. This shift in sexual scripts is argued to be a result of an increasing emphasis on individualism (Twenge, Sherman, & Wells, 2015), the fostering of liberal attitudes toward various sexual behaviors (Twenge et al., 2015; Wright, 2015),

and the equal sexual socialization of men and women in Western cultures (Petersen & Hyde, 2010; Techasrivichien et al., 2016). Resulting from this shift toward more liberal attitudes, is an egalitarian standard that is now being applied to both men and women for various sexual behaviors (Allison & Risman, 2013; Milhausen & Herold, 2001; Penhollow et al., 2017). In fact, many scholars argue that this egalitarian standard in sexuality has resulted in the narrowing, disappearance, or reverse of the SDS (Marks & Fraley, 2005; Milhausen & Herold, 1999; Milhausen & Herold, 2001; Zaikman & Marks, 2014).

For example, in a recent study conducted by Penhollow and colleagues (2017), there was no evidence of a SDS when asking participants to judge hypothetical peers who engaged in a variety of stigmatized behaviors. In particular, no statistically significant differences were detected between evaluations of hypothetical men and women who were described as hooking up with or without a condom or committing infidelity (Penhollow et al., 2017).

Reverse sexual double standard. In addition to the narrowing and disappearance of the SDS, emerging research also supports the presence of a reverse sexual double standard (defined as the “the notion that men are viewed more negatively than women engaging in high levels of sexual activity:” Papp et al., 2015, p. 59). For example, Sakaluk and Milhausen’s (2012) study examining factors influencing university students’ implicit or explicit endorsement of the SDS, found that female participants held a strong implicit reverse SDS. In particular, 55% of female participants believed men with many past sexual partners were more at risk for contracting a sexually transmitted infection

than were women with a similar number of past sexual partners (Sakaluk & Milhausen, 2012).

Additionally, Papp and colleagues (2015) investigated the endorsement of an SDS by using a popular social media website, Facebook®. The researchers had 308 young adults read a vignette depicting a hypothetical male or female target (i.e., “shamer”) who was shaming another male or female target (identified as the “slut.” After reading the vignettes, participants were asked a series of questions that evaluated both the “shamer” and the “slut.” The results indicated that male “sluts” were judged less favorably than their female “slut” counterparts. In addition, the “shamer” was judged as being less moral when the “slut” they were shaming was female than when the “slut” they were judging was male.

Thompson, Hart, Stefaniak, and Harvey (2017) similarly found in their investigation of the SDS when evaluating individuals initiating varying forms of consensual nonmonogamy support for a reverse SDS. In their study, participants were randomly assigned to read one out of ten experimental vignettes and respond to a morality scale regarding the hypothetical individual depicted in the vignette. The results of their study specifically revealed that women initiators were judged more favorably than were men initiators in such domains as cognitive ability ($M = 4.75$ versus $M = 4.39$), morality ($M = 4.88$ versus $M = 4.62$), and relationship satisfaction ($M = 4.86$ versus $M = 4.70$). The results of these recent studies support the presence of a reverse SDS, whereby men are judged as being more immoral than women for participation in comparable sexual behaviors.

Behavior-specific variations in the endorsement of the sexual double

standard. One proposed reason for the inconsistencies documented in the literature related to the endorsement of the SDS (e.g., disappearance, reverse), is that many of the existing studies have examined evaluations of targets who have engaged sexual acts that are routine by today's standards (Oliver & Hyde, 1993), such as sexual intercourse, oral sex, sex on the first date, and casual sexual behavior (Sprecher, McKinney, & Orbach, 1991). In fact, because shifts in sexual scripts are argued to be a result of increased sexual permissiveness, it is no surprise that the SDS is narrowing or reversing when investigating routine behaviors. Many scholars have asserted that the SDS has disappeared or reversed for common sexual acts (Sprecher & Hatfield, 1996), but may still exist for unusual or unconventional sexual acts. For example, in a study conducted by Jonason and Marks (2009), participants judged hypothetical female targets engaging in three-person sexual behaviors less favorably ($M = 3.50$) than hypothetical male targets engaging in the same behavior ($M = 2.69$). However, this trend was not true when judging hypothetical targets engaging in dyadic sexual behavior. Consequently, adults appear to endorse a SDS when evaluating those engaging in unconventional behaviors but not routine behaviors. With respect to the current thesis, because sexting is a relatively new behavior and is perceived as a deviation from normative sexual acts (Klettke et al., 2014), it is likely that the endorsement of a SDS will emerge when evaluating men and women who engage in sexting.

The Sexual Double Standard and Sexting

Only a few studies to date have addressed how the SDS manifests when evaluating individuals who are involved in sexting. First, a qualitative study assessing

gender inequality in youth digital image exchange found through focus groups, interviews, and analysis of online posts found that both men and women participants believed that men's solicitation of sexts was viewed as desirable, but that women's solicitation was undesirable (Ringrose et al., 2013). In fact, men's soliciting of sexts was viewed as a mark of masculinity, with approval gained by tagging, sending, and showing pictures of women's bodies, whereas women's solicitation was viewed as an indication of a lack of respect ("she has no shame"), intelligence, and responsibility in protecting one's self-image.

Comparable results were also discovered in another qualitative study, with negative attitudes expressed about women sending sexts, but not men. Specifically, participants stated that a woman who sexts is "just an idiot for sending [a sext] in the first place" and "... supposed to respect herself for who she is and not just give it out for free" (Walker, Sanci, & Temple-Smith, 2013, p. 699). In essence, the authors found that individuals viewed sexting is an acceptable means for men to gain a higher social status, but not women.

Despite the valuable information gained from these studies, there are several shortcomings worth noting. First, all existing studies investigating the SDS related to sexting have relied on qualitative methods. Consequently, causal claims about the effect of the gender of the sexter on character judgments cannot be made. Second, these studies assessed judgments of individuals engaged in sexting broadly and failed to examine certain variables that may influence the extent to which women are judged as more immoral for sexting than men. In fact, related research indicates that the gender of the participant, the role of the target (i.e., sender/receiver), and the familiarity of those

involved in sexting are variables worthy of further exploration. Thus, these variables will be assessed as part of the current thesis' experimental exploration of the endorsement of the SDS when judging hypothetical men and women involved in sexting.

Variables Influencing the Endorsement of a Sexual Double Standard among Individuals Who Sext

The gender of the participant. Researchers have discovered robust gender differences in attitudes toward sexting, with men consistently endorsing more positive attitudes toward sexting than women (Brand, 2015; Liong & Cheng, 2017; Samimi & Alderson, 2014). For example, men are more likely to have higher ratings on such sexting domains as openness to sexting (e.g., "sexting is fun") whereas women are more likely to have higher ratings on control and prevention (e.g., "you should be careful about sexting") and negative consequences ("I think sexting will cause me problems in the future") (Samimi & Alderson, 2014). These results are consistent with other sexuality studies which indicate that men are more sexually open and permissive than are women (Petersen & Hyde, 2010).

As noted earlier, research also demonstrates the existence of gender differences in the endorsement of the SDS (Allison & Risman, 2013; Conley et al., 2012; Fowers & Fowers, 2010), with men endorsing a traditional SDS to a greater extent than do women (England & Bearak, 2014; Petersen & Hyde, 2010; Rudman et al., 2013). These gender differences in endorsement of the SDS are attributed to defined social norms about gender roles and appropriate sexual behaviors for each gender (Simon & Gagnon, 1986; Wiederman, 2005). These defined roles are reflected in traditional sexual scripts, in which men are encouraged to behave in sexual explorative ways and women are

encouraged to behave in ways with which they constrain their sexual behavior, creating a double standard for engagement in the same sexual behavior (Maas et al., 2015; Wiederman, 2005). Therefore, it is likely that the gender of the participant will influence judgments of hypothetical men and women involved in sexting, with men endorsing sexting SDS to a greater extent than women.

The role of the target. Missing within the literature is research assessing variations in attitudes depending on whether the target is a sender or a receiver, and whether the target is making the request or not. To clarify, a *sender* is the source of a message and a *receiver* is the target of the sender's message (Shannon, 1948); a *requester* would be an individual asking to receive a message and a *non-requester* would make no such request. Although the role of the target has never been assessed with respect to attitudes toward sexting, this variable is important to assess given that research on sexting frequency is largely devoted to differentiating frequency of sexting engagement between senders and receivers (Crimmins & Seigfried-Spellar, 2014; Drouin et al., 2013).

Although little is known about how adults evaluate senders versus receivers and requesters versus non-requesters, it is likely that the role of the target will impact the endorsement of the SDS. In particular, because Sexual Script Theory portrays women as the gatekeepers of sexual activity and men as the initiators of sexual activity (Maas et al., 2015; Wiederman, 2005), norm-violating behavior is likely to be met with judgment. For example, Sakaluk and colleagues (2014) found that women who initiated sexual activity were judged more negatively than were women who did not initiate. Men, however, were not judged negatively for initiating sexual behavior (Sakaluk et al., 2014) because they adhered to traditional sexual scripts. Therefore, it is likely that this double standard

will also apply to hypothetical senders and requesters of sexts (i.e., women who send and request sexts are likely to be judged as being more immoral than women who receive and avoid requesting, whereas men are likely to be judged similarly regardless of their role).

The familiarity of those involved. Existing research reports that both men and women have relatively positive thoughts and emotions about sexting when the target of their sexts is known (Brand, 2015; Samimi & Alderson, 2014). However, negative affect is often reported when sexts are sent to a non-intimate partner, including feelings of embarrassment and shame (Brand, 2015). Thus, it is likely that judgments of those involved in sexting will vary according to the familiarity of the individuals involved.

Furthermore, the familiarity of the individuals will likely influence the extent to which a SDS is endorsed. According to Sexual Script Theory, men are socialized to seek non-monogamous, casual sexual relationships whereas women seek monogamous, committed sex (Maas et al., 2015; Sakaluk et al., 2014). These different sexual preferences of men and women result in a double standard with which men are “allowed” to engage in sexual behavior with unfamiliar others, but women are not (Kettrey, 2016). Consequently, since deviations from traditional sexual scripts are met with negative responses (Masters et al., 2013; Vrangalova et al., 2014), hypothetical male targets engaging in sexting behaviors while being in a casual relationship will likely be evaluated more positively than will hypothetical women targets engaging in sexting behaviors while being in a casual relationship.

The Current Thesis

To advance research on sexting and the SDS, the primary objective of the current thesis is to examine the endorsement of a SDS when evaluating hypothetical men and

women involved in sexting behavior. The secondary objective of the current thesis was to examine the variables influencing the endorsement of the SDS when evaluating hypothetical individuals who engage in sexting. Specifically, the gender of the participant, the role of the target, and the familiarity of those involved are all variables that are expected to influence judgments as well as the extent to which the SDS is endorsed.

Judgments of individuals involved in sexting will be assessed by using morality as the construct of interest (consistent with previous research on sexual judgments, Grunt-Mejer & Campbell, 2016). Morality was chosen as this construct has been consistently assessed in the sexuality literature as well as produced the most robust findings when examining sexual behavior (e.g., Allison & Risman, 2013; Xiao, Li, & Zhu, 2017). The well-documented halo and the devil effect will be used to explain why evaluations individuals involved in sexting are expected to be generalized to this construct. The halo effect (Thorndike, 1920) states that a person may be globally viewed more positively based on a single, socially desirable attribute. In contrast, the devil effect refers to a negative global evaluation of an individual based on a single negative attribute.

According to these two related phenomena, people find it difficult to separate the role features play in their evaluations of a target, and thus, evaluate the target by grouping together many features (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977). Once an individual has formed an impression of a target based on an initial positive or negative trait (involvement in sexting in this case), any following impressions will be formed with reference to the original trait. Therefore, it is likely that the devil effect will help to explain why morality judgments of

hypothetical men and women involved in sexting are expected to vary based upon the few variables manipulated in the current thesis.

Based on previous research, Sexual Script Theory and the SDS literature, the following research questions and hypotheses were developed:

RQ1 – What are U.S. adults' attitudes toward sexting?

H1 – U.S. adults were expected to judge sexters as immoral.

RQ2 – Do adults endorse a SDS when judging hypothetical targets who engage in sexting?

H2 – Hypothetical women who engage in sexting were hypothesized to be judged as less moral than were men.

RQ3 – Does the gender of the participant, the role of the target, and the familiarity of those involved influence judgments of those involved in sexting as well as the endorsement of a SDS?

H3 – Men were expected to judge hypothetical individuals who engage in sexting as more moral than were women.

H4 - Men were expected to endorse a SDS to a greater extent than were women.

H5 – Senders were expected to be judged as less moral than receivers and requesters were expected to be judged as less moral than were non-requesters.

H6 - Hypothetical women senders and requesters were expected to be judged as less moral than women receivers and non-requesters.

Morality judgments of hypothetical men were not expected to vary based on their role in the sexting interaction.

H7 – Targets described as being in a casual relationship were expected to be judged as less moral than those described as being in a committed relationship.

H8 - Hypothetical women who were described as sexting with a casual partner were expected to be judged as less moral than were women who were described as sexting with a committed partner. Morality judgments of hypothetical men were not expected to vary based on their relationship with the other sexting individual.

No additional hypotheses were generated due to the exploratory nature of this current thesis.

Method

Participants

A total of 800 participants were recruited from Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk®) to participate in this study. However, nine people were removed for failing the infrequency question included in the study surveys. In an effort to be consistent with the literature (e.g., Kreager & Staff, 2009; Rudman et al., 2017), 128 individuals identifying as non-cisgender and non-heterosexual were also removed from the dataset. Thus, the final sample consisted of 663 heterosexual adults (347 men, 316 women) with a mean age of 35.50 ($SD = 10.71$, $mdn = 33$, $range = 18 - 73$). The majority of participants identified as being White/Caucasian (73.81%), married (44.80%), and having completed

some postsecondary education (45.20%). Additionally, most participants (75.60%) reported having sexual experiences with members of the opposite sex.

Measures and Research Apparatus

Vignettes. A total of 16 vignettes were created for the purposes of the current thesis. These vignettes depicted a hypothetical target involved in a sexting scenario. All vignettes varied according to whether the hypothetical target was a man or woman (gender of the target manipulation), a sender or receiver (role manipulation), a requester or non-requester (request manipulation), and whether the individuals involved were in a committed relationship or casual dating relationship (familiarity manipulation). Please see Appendix C for examples of these vignettes.

Morality Scale (MS). After reading the vignette, participants were asked to complete questions from the 6-item MS, adapted from Grunt-Mejer and Campbell (2016) (see Appendix D). Participants rated the hypothetical targets using a seven-point scale, ranging from 1 (“the person does not possess this trait”) to 7 (“the person possesses the trait to a large extent”). The MS scale score was calculated by obtaining the mean for all six items, with higher scores indicating that the target was perceived as more moral. The current study found adequate internal consistency for the MS, with a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.88.

Demographics Questionnaire. The participants also completed a demographics questionnaire including such items assessing age, gender, ethnicity, education, relationship status, sexual history, sexting experience, and frequency of sexting. Please see Appendix E for items from the Demographics Questionnaire.

Procedure

Upon approval from the author's institutional review board, participants were recruited via MTurk[®]. All participants were informed that they were participating in a 20-minute anonymous online survey about the psychology of sexting (see Appendix A). Interested participants were automatically directed to a consent form (see Appendix B) which provided more information about the study. Participants providing consent were then sent to the online vignette and surveys hosted via Qualtrics[®] (an online survey tool). Each participant was randomly assigned to read one of the 16 vignettes and provide ratings on the MS pertaining to that specific vignette. Additionally, each participant completed the demographics questionnaire and were debriefed by reviewing the debriefing statement (see Appendix F). Participants were then compensated for their time by receiving a \$0.50 deposit into their MTurk[™] account.

Results

Data was screened and cleaned using procedures outlined by Tabachnick and Fidell (2013). Prior to running analyses, participants' responses were examined at the item and participant level for missing values. The results of a missing values analysis revealed that participants were missing no more than 1.00% of their data. The percentage of missing values varied across items and ranged from 0.00% to 1.00%. Upon running missing values analysis, these values were found to be missing completely at random and thus all missing data was handled using pairwise deletion.

Descriptive Information

Of the 663 participants, 447 (66.80%) reported having sent or received a sext at some point in their lives. Among those with sexting experience, 430 (64.86%) reported

having sent a sext and 427 (64.40%) reported that they received a sext within the past 12 months. In addition, the participants who reported experience with sexting indicated that they sent an average of 5.15 sexts per month ($SD = 14.60$) and received an average of 5.83 sexts per month ($SD = 14.45$). The platforms most commonly used to send sexts included text message (56.56%), Facebook® private message (10.86%), email (10.11%), and Snapchat® (9.80%).

Attitudes toward Sexting

Contrary to H1, participants' attitudes toward sexting were neutral. Specifically, participants' average MS scores ranged from 3.93 to 5.21 on the seven-point scale. Participants' scores indicate that hypothetical individuals engaged in sexting are viewed fairly neutral to slightly positive attitude with respect to their morality.

Sexting and the SDS

To explore variations in morality judgments of hypothetical targets who engage in sexting (H2 – H7), a 2 (gender of the target) x 2 (gender of the participant) x 2 (relationship status) x 2 (role of the target) x 2 (requesting status) between-subjects factorial ANOVA was conducted. For all descriptive information, please see Table 1. Of note, an ANCOVA was not conducted with participants' sexting experience as a covariate due to the exploratory nature of this study. Additional analyses were conducted to examine vignette-specific endorsement of a SDS (please see Table 2).

The results revealed a significant main effect of gender of the target, $F(1, 631) = 4.23, p = .04, \eta p^2 = 0.01$. However, contrary to predictions (H2), hypothetical men ($M = 4.57, SD = 1.18$) were judged as being significantly less moral as compared to hypothetical women ($M = 4.75, SD = 1.03$). There was also a significant main effect of

relationship status, $F(1, 631) = 50.53, p < .001, \eta p^2 = 0.07$. Consistent with expectations (H7), hypothetical targets who were in a casual relationship ($M = 4.36, SD = 1.09$) were judged as being less moral than were those hypothetical targets who were in a committed relationship ($M = 4.97, SD = 1.05$). The remaining main effects were not statistically significant.

The results of the ANOVA also revealed a significant two-way interaction between the role and the requesting status of the target, $F(1, 631) = 21.40, p = .01, \eta p^2 = 0.03$. Although there was no main effect of role/requesting status (contrary to H5), the results of a simple effects analysis indicated that the nature of the effect of requester status was different for those that sent sexts ($F[1, 665] = 21.49, p < .001, \eta p^2 = 0.03$) than it was for those that received sexts ($F[1, 665] = 5.52, p = .02, \eta p^2 = 0.01$). In particular, those that sent a sext that was requested were judged as more moral than were those that sent a sext that was unrequested. This effect was reversed for receivers. In particular, those that received a sext that was requested were judged as less moral than were those that received a sext that was unrequested. See means for this interaction in Table 2.

Interestingly, this two-way interaction between the role and the requesting status of the target was qualified by a three-way interaction effects between relationship status, role of the target, and requesting status of the target, $F(1, 631) = 7.46, p = .006, \eta p^2 = 0.01$. Follow-up simple interaction effects analysis revealed that the two-way interaction between role of the target and requesting status of the target was significant for those in a casual relationship, $F(1, 340) = 27.36, p < .001, \eta p^2 = 0.07$, but not for those in a committed relationship, $F(1, 321) = 3.02, p = .08, \eta p^2 = 0.01$. Thus, to follow-up the two-way interaction between role and the requesting status for those in casual

relationships, follow-up simple effects analysis was conducted. The results revealed that, the effect of requesting status was significant when judging hypothetical individuals who were senders, $F(1, 340) = 28.28, p < .001, \eta p^2 = 0.08$ and receivers, $F(1, 340) = 4.19, p = .04, \eta p^2 = 0.01$. An examination of the means indicated that hypothetical individuals who sent sexts in a causal relationship without being requested to do so were judged as less moral in comparison to those who sent sexts in a casual relationship after being requested to do so. See Table 3 for associated descriptive statistics.

Finally, the results revealed another significant three-way interaction effect for relationship status, gender of the target, and gender of the participant, $F(1, 631) = 7.83, p = .005, \eta p^2 = 0.01$. Follow-up simple interaction effects analysis indicated that the two-way interaction between relationship status and the gender of the participant was significant when evaluating men targets, $F(1, 336) = 4.78, p = .03, \eta p^2 = 0.01$, but not women targets, $F(1, 319) = 3.54, p = .06, \eta p^2 = 0.01$. To follow-up the significant two-way interaction between relationship status and participant gender, a simple effects analysis was conducted using only those evaluating men targets. The results indicated that, among those judging men targets, the effect of relationship status was significant for women participants ($F[1, 346] = 20.55, p < .001, \eta p^2 = 0.06$) but not for men participants ($F[1, 313] = 2.57, p = .11, \eta p^2 = 0.01$). Specifically, women participants judged hypothetical targets described as being in a committed relationship as more moral than those described as being in a casual relationship. See Table 4 for the means and standard deviations associated with this effect.

Discussion

Although previous research has examined the SDS of sexting (e.g., Ringrose et al., 2013; Walker, Sanci, & Temple-Smith, 2013), no research to date has investigated the endorsement of the SDS using an experimental design. In addition, no previous research has examined what variables may influence variations in judgments of those who engage in sexting. Thus, this thesis sought to empirically examine the endorsement of the SDS regarding sexting as well as what variables (sender/receiver, requester/nonrequester, casual relationship/committed relationship, men/women participants) influenced the extent to which the SDS was endorsed when making judgments of those who engage in this specific sexual behavior. This aim was accomplished by using a between-subjects design utilizing vignettes depicting a hypothetical scenario in which two individuals were involved in a sexting encounter.

Attitudes toward Sexting

Although attitudes toward sexting were expected to be negative, as found in previous research (e.g., Ringrose et al., 2013; Walker, Sanci, & Temple-Smith, 2013), participants' judgments of morality toward those involved in sexting were fairly neutral. This finding may be attributed to participants' experience with sexting, as previous research has found individuals who have experience with a variety of sexual activities possess more accepting attitudes towards various sexual behaviors (Byers & Shaughnessy, 2014; Træen, 2016). Additionally, shifting societal attitudes may account for these neutral morality judgments, as sexual behaviors which formerly elicited negative attitudes may no longer do so (e.g., premarital sex) due to changes in generational trends (Sprecher, Treger, & Sakaluk, 2013; Twenge et al., 2015). Also, participants' attitudes may have been primed by their recent sexting experiences, which

possibly were benign, and thus resulted in neutral morality judgments of individuals' sexting behavior.

Evidence of a Reverse Sexual Double Standard

The results from this study did not support the existence of a traditional SDS related to sexting and instead provided evidence for a reverse SDS in which hypothetical men were judged as being less moral for sexting in comparison to hypothetical women. One possible explanation for this result is that possibly more attention is being paid to how women are viewed and judged for various behaviors, especially sexual behavior, due to recent societal movements such as the #MeToo and #TimesUp. As such, individuals may be concerned with perpetuating socially unacceptable beliefs and attitudes, thus leading participants to conform their responses so that they be viewed more favorably by others (Tourangeau & Yan 2007; Tracey, 2015). Additionally, increasing societal sexual liberalism towards individual sexual behavior (Allison & Risman, 2013; Kettrey, 2016) may also contribute to the emergence of an egalitarian or reverse SDS. Thus, the period in which participant data was collected, as well as overall societal advances, provide important context when interpreting the results.

Contrary to predictions, men participants did not endorse a SDS to a greater extent than women. This finding may be explained by the possible disappearance of the traditional SDS documented in the current thesis but also in previous research (Marks & Fraley, 2005, 2006; Penhollow et al., 2017) due to societal advances which promote gender equality (Allison & Risman, 2013; Techasrivichien et al., 2016). As found in previous studies, gender equality is associated with an increased occurrence and acceptance of casual sexual behaviors (Baumeister & Mendoza, 2011) as well as fewer

gender differences in sexual behavior (Petersen & Hyde, 2010). Thus, gender equality could possibly explain why the men and women participants in this study did not differ in their evaluations of hypothetical individuals engaged in sexting.

The lack of gender differences may also be due to similarities between men and women. This is known as the Gender Similarities Hypothesis in which men and women are similar in most aspects (Hyde, 2005). Supporting meta-analytic studies elucidate that men and women are similar regarding many sexual behaviors and attitudes including extramarital sex, pornography use, condom use, casual sex, masturbation, and same-sex sexuality (Petersen & Hyde, 2010, 2011). Additionally, a recent study examining online sexual activities (i.e., accessing sexual materials and activities through the Internet) among men and women across four countries found small differences between men and women in this form of sexual behavior (Döring, Daneback, Shaughnessy, Grov, & Byers, 2015). Thus, the failure to find a gender difference associated with the endorsement of the SDS may be due to the similarities in men and women participants' attitudes toward sexting overall.

Additional Variables Influencing Morality Judgments of Hypothetical Sexters

Variables that significantly influenced participants' judgments of those who sext included the relationship status, role, and requesting status of the hypothetical target. Relationship status was particularly important in terms of providing context for morality ratings as it produced the largest effect size among all the experimental variables. Consistent with previous research (Brand, 2015; Samimi & Alderson, 2014), hypothetical individuals who sexted with a committed partner were viewed as more moral than were those who sexted with a casual partner. Previous research demonstrates that individuals

espouse positive attitudes toward sexual activity with familiar others (Brand, 2015; Samimi & Alderson, 2014) and that sexting is considered more acceptable in the context of a relationship (Lippman & Campbell, 2014). Due to the perceived risks of sexting with unknown individuals (e.g., having one's sexts shared with a third party; Garcia et al., 2016), the results lend support to the level of familiarity (i.e., relationship status) being important in terms of judging those who engage in sexting.

In addition, hypothetical individuals who took an active role (i.e., sender/requester) in a sexting scenario were judged as being less moral compared to those hypothetical individuals in a passive role (i.e., receiver/nonrequester) by participants, as evidenced by the differences in means across these experimental manipulations. These observed trends are supported by previous research (Fetterolf & Sanchez, 2015; Sakaluk et al., 2014), in which individuals who initiate sexual behavior are judged less favorably than those who do not because their behavior may be perceived as being risky. Specifically, sending or requesting sexts may be perceived as being dangerous due to the possible consequences the person may face (e.g., hurting current or potential relationships; Garcia et al., 2016). Subsequently, these active sexters are met with harsher judgments for their behavior compared to individuals who did not take on an active role.

Interestingly, however, the tendency to judge those in active roles as less moral than those in passive roles only applied to individuals who were described as sexting with a casual partner. Again, this supported by previous research indicating that individuals view those who actively sext, especially with a casual partner, as "risky" (Rodríguez-Castro, Alonso-Ruido, González-Fernández, Lameiras-Fernández, & Carrera-Fernández,

2017; Weisskirch & Delevi, 2011). This view is reinforced by the negative encounters of some individuals (i.e., 1 in 10), who report feeling regret, worry, discomfort, and even traumatic experiences when actively sexting with a casual partner (Drouin, Coupe, & Temple, 2017), thus possibly accounting for the negative judgments of those who engage in this sexting behavior. However, this tendency to judge individuals who actively sext in a casual relationship as less moral was especially true for hypothetical men, who were judged as being less moral for this behavior in comparison to hypothetical women. Cumulatively, these concerns in addition to the influence of recent societal movements (i.e. #MeToo, #TimesUp) during which this study was conducted may have produced a reverse SDS, leading to intensified scrutiny of men's sexual behavior. These findings highlight the importance of the role individuals take when sexting and their relationship to the recipient.

Limitations and Future Directions

Although this study meaningfully contributes to the sexting literature, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the sample for this study was comprised mostly of heterosexual, cisgender U.S. adults in their early to mid-30s. As such, important information from adults belonging to other demographic groups (i.e., sexual gender minority adults, older adults) is missing. Additionally, moderators (e.g., sexting experience) were not examined in terms of their potential influence on the findings of this study due to its exploratory nature. However, previous research elucidates that experience with sexting increases positive perceptions as well as participation in that specific sexual behavior (Samimi & Alderson, 2014; Walrave et al., 2015). Future studies should seek to address these limitations by obtaining a more diverse sample from

various age groups as well as examining various moderators to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of judgments of sexters.

Second, research indicates that individuals are more apt to engage in socially desirable responding (SDR) when administered sexuality-based self-report measures (Alexander & Fisher, 2003; Meston, Heiman, Trapnell, & Paulhus, 1998), despite the anonymity afforded by completing measures online. Thus, it is possible that the neutral morality judgments of sexters may be due to SDR and may not reflect their true judgments of individuals who engage in sexting. In fact, previous research supports that individuals who hold negative or offensive beliefs often conceal them in fear of rejection or social isolation (Askay, 2015; Crandall, Eshelman, & O'Brien, 2002; Lerman, Yan, & Wu, 2016). Future studies should work to incorporate innovative, implicit measures that work to minimize the tendency of participants to engage in SDR.

Fourth, the sexting behavior in the study vignettes was defined as a nude photo. This was purposefully done in an attempt to obtain the most robust results possible, as photos are the most explicit form of sexting. However, morality judgments of sexters are likely to vary according to the type of sext (e.g., fully nude photo versus a sexually-explicit text message) as well as the electronic platform used (e.g., sending a sext through a social media platform versus through Skype). Thus, future studies should extend the research presented here by manipulating the form of sexting and as well as the platform depicted in experimental vignettes.

Finally, although some significant results were found, the accompanying effect sizes for these results were small. Therefore, the practical significance of the results found is questionable, as larger effect sizes are considered more meaningful in

comparison to smaller effect sizes (Lantz, 2012). Researchers should work to reproduce the results from the current thesis to ascertain whether the results found are robust to replication.

Conclusions and Implications

The results of the current thesis contribute to the sexting literature by illuminating how the SDS manifests in relation to sexting and identifying the specific variables that influence individuals' judgments of those who sext. As participants' judgments of hypothetical individuals who engaged in sexting were predominantly neutral, the results suggest that sexting becoming a more normative sexual behavior instead of a risky sexual practice.

This study has practical implications for sex educators' psychoeducational programming. In fact, these results may be used to update the current curriculum modules on the consequences of sexting by including the circumstances in which men and women are judged differentially for sexting and how such information may impact individuals' electronic self-disclosure with current or prospective sexual partners.

Additionally, this study has important practical implications for counselors and other mental health practitioners. In fact, because judgments of sexters were generally neutral to positive (especially when judging those in committed relationships), therapies may be targeted to assist clients who engage in sexting while in a committed relationship to improve sexual communication with current and prospective partners. In addition, because of the evidence of a reverse SDS documented here, counselors should work to inform male clients as to how they may possibly be judged for their sexting behavior by others in their lives. Therapies may be tailored to individuals who were judged as less

moral (i.e., men and those in casual relationships) to mitigate the negative effects or experience backlash (e.g., depression, anxiety, low self-esteem; Conley et al., 2012; Rudman, Glick, Marquardt, & Fetterolf, 2017), thus improving individual personal and sexual functioning.

References

- Ahrold, T. K. & Meston, C. M. (2010). Ethnic differences in sexual attitudes of U.S. college students: Gender, acculturation, and religiosity factors. *Archive of Sexual Behavior*, 39, 190-202. doi: 10.1007/s10508-008-9406-1
- Alexander, M. G. & Fisher, T. D. (2003). Truth and consequences: Using the bogus pipeline to examine sex differences in self-reported sexuality. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 40, 27-35. doi: 10.1080/00224490309552164
- Allison, R. & Risman, B. J. (2013). A double standard for "hooking up": How far have we come toward gender equality? *Social Science Research*, 42, 1191-1206. doi: 10.1016/j.ssresearch.2013.04.006
- Askay, D. A. (2015). Silence in the crowd: The spiral of silence contributing to the positive bias of opinions in an online review system. *New Media & Society*, 17, 1811-1829. doi: 10.1177/1461444814535190
- Baumeister, R. F. & Mendoza, J. P. (2011). Cultural variations in the sexual marketplace: Gender equality correlates with more sexual activity. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 151, 350-360. doi: 10.1080/00224545.481686
- Benotsch, E. G., Snipes, D. J., Martin, A. M. & Bull, S. S. (2013). Sexting, substance abuse, and sexual risk behavior in young adults. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 52, 307-313. doi: 10.1016/j.jadohealth.2012.06.011
- Brand, A. N. (2015). From locked doors to locked screens: The implications of sexting as a gendered performance (master's thesis). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 1591469)

- Boone, T. & Lefkowitz, E. (2004). Safer sex and the health belief model: Considering the contributions of peer norms and socialization factors. *Journal of Psychology & Human Sexuality*, 16, 51-68. doi: 10.1300/J056v16n01_04
- Buss, D. M. & Schmidt, D. P. (1993). Sexual strategies theory: An evolutionary perspective on human mating. *Psychological Review*, 100, 204-232. doi: 10.1037/0033-295X.100.2.204
- Byers, E.S. & Shaughnessy, K. (2014). Attitudes toward online sexual activities. *Cyberpsychology: Journal of Psychosocial Research on Cyberspace*, 8(1), 1-18. doi: 10.5817/CP2014-1-10
- Conley, T. D., Ziegler, A., & Moors, A. C. (2012). Backlash from the bedroom: Stigma mediates gender differences in acceptance of casual sex offers. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 37, 392-407. doi: 10.1177/0361684312467169
- Cooper, K., Quayle, E., Jonsson, L. & Svedin, C.G. (2016). Adolescents and self-taken sexual images: A review of the literature. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 55, 706-716. doi: 10.1016/j.chb.2015.10.003
- Crandall, C. S., Eshleman, A. & O'Brien, L. (2002). Social norms and the expression and suppression of prejudice: The struggle for internalization. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 82, 359-378. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.82.3.359
- Crawford, M. & Popp, D. (2003). Sexual double standards: A review and methodological critique of two decades of research. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 40, 13-26. doi: 10.1080/00224490309552163
- Crimmins, D. M. & Seigfried-Spellar, K. C. (2014). Peer attachment, sexual experiences, and risky online behaviors as predictors of sexting behaviors among

- undergraduate students. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 32, 268-275. doi: 10.1016/j.chb.2013.12.012
- Danube, C. L., Norris, J., Stappenbeck, C. A., Davis, K. C., George, W. H., Zawacki, T., Morrison, D. M., & Abdallah, D. A. (2016). Partner type, sexual double standard endorsement, and ambivalence predict abdication and unprotected sex intentions in a community sample of young women. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 53, 601-613. doi: 10.1080/00224499.2015.1061631
- Dir, A. L., Coskunpinar, A., Steiner, J. L., & Cyders, M. A. (2013). Understanding differences in sexting behaviors across gender, relationship status, and sexual identity, and the role of expectancies in sexting. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 16, 568-574. doi: 10.1089/cyber.2012.0545
- Döring, N., Daneback, K., Shaughnessy, K., Grov, C., & Byers, E. S. (2015). Online sexual activity experiences among college students: A four-country comparison. *CUNY Academic Works*. http://academicworks.cuny.edu/sph_pubs/149
- Dovidio, J. F., Major, B., & Crocker, J. (2000). Stigma: Introduction and overview. In T.F. Heatherton, R. E. Kleck, M. R. Hebl, & J. G. Hull (Eds.), *The Social Psychology of Stigma* (pp. 1-29). New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- Drouin, M., Vogel, K. N., Surbey, A. & Stills, J. R. (2013). Let's talk about sexting, baby: Computer-mediated sexual behaviors among young adults. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 29, A25-A30. doi: 10.1016/j.chb.2012.12.030
- Drouin, M., Ross, J., & Tobin, E. (2015). Sexting: A new, digital vehicle for intimate partner aggression? *Computers in Human Behavior*, 50, 197-204. doi: 10.1016/j.chb.2015.04.001

Drouin, M., Coupe, M., & Temple, J. (2017). Is sexting good for your relationship? It depends ... *Computers in Human Behavior*, 75, 749-756. doi: 10.1016/j.chb.

2017.06.018

England, P. & Bearak, J. (2014). The sexual double standard and gender differences in attitudes toward casual sex among U.S. university students. *Demographic Research*, 30, 1327-1338. doi: 10.4054/DemRes.2014.30.46

Fowers, A. F. & Fowers, B. J. (2010). Social dominance and sexual self-schema as moderators of sexist reactions to female subtypes. *Sex Roles*, 62, 468-480. doi: 10.1007/s11199-009-9607-7

Garcia, J. R., Gesselman, A. N., Siliman, S. A., Perry, B. L., & Fisher, H. E. (2016).

Sexting among singles in the USA: Prevalence of sending, receiving, and sharing sexual messages and images. *Sexual Health*, 13, 428-435. doi: 10.1071/SH15240

Gordon-Messer, D., Bauermeister, J. A., Grodzinski, A. & Zimmerman, M. (2013).

Sexting among young adults. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 52, 301-306. doi:

10.1016/j.jadohealth.2012.05.013

Grunt-Mejer, K. & Campbell, C. (2016). Around consensual nonmonogamies: Assessing attitudes toward nonexclusive relationships. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 53, 45-

53. doi: 10.1080/00224499.2015.1010193

Henderson, L. (2011). Sexting and sexual relationships among teens and young adults.

McNair Scholars Research Journal, 7, 31-39.

Hudson, H. K. (2011). *Factors affecting sexting behaviors among selected undergraduate students* (doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and

Theses database. (UMI No. 3478177)

- Hyde, J. S. (2005). The gender similarities hypothesis. *American Psychologist*, 60, 581-592. doi: 10.1037/0003-066X.60.6.581
- Jonason, P. K. & Marks, M. J. (2009). Common vs. uncommon sexual acts: Evidence for the sexual double standard. *Sex Roles*, 60, 357-365. doi: 10.1007/s11199-008-9542-z
- Kettrey, H. H. (2016). What's gender got to do with it? Sexual double standards and power in heterosexual college hookups. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 53, 754-765. doi: 10.1080/00224499.2016.1145181
- Kite, M. E., & Whitley, B. E., Jr. (1996). Sex differences in attitudes toward homosexual persons, behavior, and civil rights. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 22, 336- 353. doi: 10.1177/0146167296224002
- Klettke, B., Hallford, D. J. & Mellor, D. J. (2014). Sexting prevalence and correlates: A systematic literature review. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 34, 44-53. doi: 10.1016/j.cpr.2013.10.007
- Kreager, D. A. & Staff, J. (2009). The sexual double standard and adolescent peer acceptance. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 72, 143-164. doi: 10.1177/019027250907200205
- Lenhart, A. (2009). *Teens and sexting: How any why minor teens are sending sexually suggestive nude or nearly nude images via text messaging*. Retrieved from Pew Research Center Website: <http://www.pewinternet.org/2009/12/15/teens-and-sexting-major-findings/>.
- Lenhart, A. (2010). Teens, adults, and sexting: Data on sending and receipt of sexually

suggestive nude or nearly nude images by Americans. Retrieved from Pew Research Center Website: <http://www.pewinternet.org/2009/12/15/teens-and-sexting-major-findings/>.

Lerman, K., Yan, X., & Wu, X-Z. (2016). The “majority illusion” in social networks.

PLoS ONE, 11, 1-13. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0147617

Liong, M. & Cheng, G. H. L. (2017). Sext and gender: Examining gender effects on

sexting based on the theory of planned behaviour. *Behaviour & Information*

Technology, 1-11. doi: 10.1080/0144929X.2016.1276965

Lippman, J. R. & Campbell, S. W. (2014). Damned if you do, damned if you don't... if

you're a girl: Relational and normative contexts of adolescent sexting in the

United States. *Journal of Children and Media*, 8, 371-386. doi: 10.1080/1748279

8.2014.923009

Maas, M. K., Shearer, C. L., Gillen, M. M., & Lefkowitz, E. S. (2015). Sex rules:

Emerging adults' perceptions of gender's impact on sexuality. *Sexuality &*

Culture, 19, 617-636. doi: 10.1007/s12119-015-9281-6

Marks, M. J. & Fraley, R. C. (2005). The sexual double standard: Fact or fiction? *Sex*

Roles, 52, 175-186. doi: 10.1007/s11199-005-1293-5

Marks, M. J. & Fraley, R. C. (2006). Confirmation bias and the sexual double standard.

Sex Roles, 54, 19-26. doi: 10.1007/s11199-006-8866-9

Masters, N. T., Casey, E., Wells, E. A., & Morrison, D. M. (2013). Sexual scripts among

young heterosexually active men and women: Continuity and change. *The*

Journal of Sex Research, 50, 409-420. doi: 10.1080/00224499.2012.661102

- Meston, C. M., Heiman, J. R., Trapnell, P. D. & Paulhus, D. L. (1998). Socially desirable responding and sexuality self-reports. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 35, 148-157. doi: 10.1080/00224499809551928.
- Milhausen, R. R. & Herold, E. S. (1999). Does the sexual double standard still exist? Perceptions of university of women. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 36, 361-368. doi: 10.1080/00224499909552008
- Milhausen, R. R. & Herold, E. S. (2001). Reconceptualizing the sexual double standard. *Journal of Psychology & Human Sexuality*, 13, 63-83. doi: 10.1007/s11199-014-0417-1
- Mitchell, K. J., Finkelhor, D., Jones, L. M. & Wolak, J. (2012). Prevalence and characteristics of youth sexting: A national study. *Pediatrics*, 129, 13-20.
- Morelli, M., Bianchi, D., Baiocco, R., Pezzuti, L. & Chirumbolo, A. (2016). Sexting, psychological distress and dating violence among adolescents and young adults. *Psicothema*, 28, 137-142. doi: 10.7334/psicothema2015.193
- National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy (NCPTUP). (2008). Sex and tech: Results from a survey of teens and young adults. Retrieved on 20 November, 2016, from http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/sextech/pdf/sextech_summary.pdf.
- Nisbett, R. E., & Wilson, T. D. (1977). The halo effect: Evidence for unconscious alteration of judgments. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 35, 250-256. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.35.4.250
- Oliver, M. B., & Hyde, J. S. (1993). Gender differences in sexuality: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, 114, 29-51. doi: 10.1037/0033-2909.114.1.29

- Papp, L. J., Hagerman, C., Gnoleba, M. A., Erchull, M. J., Liss, M., Miles-McLean, H., & Robertson, C.M. (2015). Exploring perceptions of slut-shaming on Facebook: Evidence for a reverse sexual double standard. *Gender Issues*, 32, 57-76. doi: 10.1007/s12147-014-9133-y
- Penhollow, T. M., Young, M., & Nnaka, T. (2017). Alcohol use, hooking-up, condom use: Is there a sexual double standard? *American Journal of Health Behavior*, 41, 92-103. doi: 10.5993/AJHB.41.1.10
- Petersen, J. L. & Hyde, J. S. (2010). A meta-analytic review of research on gender differences in sexuality, 1993-2007. *Psychological Bulletin*, 136, 21-38. doi: 10.1037/a0017504
- Petersen, J. L. & Hyde, J. S. (2011). Gender differences in sexual attitudes and behaviors: A review of meta-analytic results and large datasets. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 48, 149-165. doi: 10.1080/00224499.2011.551851
- Reid, J. A., Elliott, S., & Webber, G. R. (2011). Casual hookups to formal dates: Refining the boundaries of the sexual double standard. *Gender & Society*, 25, 545-568. doi: 10.1177/0891243211418642
- Reyns, B. W., Burek, M. W., Henson, B., & Fisher, B. S. (2013). The unintended consequences of digital technology: Exploring the relationship between sexting and cybervictimization. *Journal of Crime and Justice*, 36, 1-17. doi: 10.1080/0735648X.2011.641816
- Ringrose, J., Harvey, L., Gill, R., & Livingstone, S. (2013). Teen girls, sexual double standards and 'sexting': Gendered value in digital image exchange. *Feminist Theory*, 14, 305-323. doi: 10.1177/1464700113499853

- Rodríguez-Castro, Y., Alonso-Ruido, P., González-Fernández, A., Lameiras-Fernández, M., & Carrera-Fernández, V. (2017). Spanish adolescents' attitudes toward sexting: Validation of a scale. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 73, 375-384. doi: 10.1016/j.chb.2017.03.049
- Ross, J. M., Drouin, M. & Coupe, A. (2016). Sexting coercion as a component of intimate partner polyvictimization. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 1-23. doi: 10.1177/0886260516660300
- Rudman, L. A. (1998). Self-promotion as a risk factor for women: The costs and benefits of counterstereotypical impression management. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 74, 629-645. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.74.3.629
- Rudman, L. A. & Fairchild, K. (2004). Reactions to counterstereotypic behavior: The role of backlash in cultural stereotype maintenance. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 87, 157-176. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.87.2.157
- Rudman, L. A., Fetterolf, J. C., & Sanchez, D. T. (2013). What motivates the sexual double standard? More support for the male versus female control theory. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 39, 250-263. doi: 10.1177/0146167212472375
- Sakaluk, J. K. & Milhausen, R. R. (2012). Factors influencing university students' explicit and implicit sexual double standards. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 49, 464-476. doi: 10.1080/00224499.2011.569976
- Sakaluk, J. K., Todd, L. M., Milhausen, R., & Lachowsky, N. J. (2014). Dominant heterosexual sexual scripts in emerging adulthood: Conceptualization and measurement. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 51, 516-531.

doi: 10.1080/00224499.2012.745473

Samimi, P. & Alderson, K. G. (2014). Sexting among undergraduate students. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 31, 230-241. doi: 10.1016/j.chb.2013.10.027

Shannon, C. E. (1948). A mathematical theory of communication. *The Bell System Technical Journal*, 27, 379-423. doi: 10.1002/j.1538-7305.1948.tb01338.x

Scholes-Balog, K., Francke, N., & Hemphill, S. (2016). Relationships between sexting, self-esteem, and sensation-seeking among Australian young adults. *Sexualization, Media, & Society*, 2, 1-8. doi: 10.1177/2374623815627790

Silva, R. B. R., Teixeira, C. M, Vasconcelos-Raposo, J., & Bessa, M. (2016). Sexting: Adaptation of sexual behavior to modern technologies. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 64, 747-753. doi: 10.1016/j.chb.2016.07.036

Simon, W. & Gagnon, J. H. (1984). Sexual scripts. *Society*, 22, 53-60.

Simon, W. & Gagnon, J. H. (1986). Sexual scripts: Permanence and change. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 15, 97-120. doi: 10.1007/BF01542219

Sprecher, S., McKinney, K., & Orbuch, T. (1991). The effect of current sexual behavior on friendship, dating, and marriage desirability. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 28, 387-408. doi: 10.1080/00224499109551615

Sprecher, S. & Hatfield, E. (1996). Premarital sexual standards among U.S. college students: Comparison with Russian and Japanese students. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 25, 261-288. doi: 10.1007/BF02438165

Sprecher, S., Tregor, S., & Sakaluk, J. K. (2013). Premarital sexual standards and sociosexuality: Gender, ethnicity, and cohort differences. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 42, 1395-1405. doi: 10.1007/s10508-013-0145-6

- Tabachnick, B. G. & Fidell, L. S. (2013). *Using multivariate statistics* (6th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Techasrivichien, T., Darawuttimaprakorn, N., Punpuing, S., Musumari, P. M., Lukhele, B. W., El-saaidi, C., Suguimoto, S. P., Feldman, M. D., Ono-Kihara, M., Kihara, M. (2016). Changes in sexual behavior and attitudes across generations and gender among a population-based probability sample from an urbanizing province in Thailand. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 45, 367-382. doi: 10.1007/s10508-014-0429-5
- Thompson, A. E., & Byers, E. S. (2017). Heterosexual young adults' interest, attitudes, and experiences related to mixed-gender, multi-person sex. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 46, 813-822. doi: 10.1007/s10508-016-0699-1
- Thompson, A. E., Hart, J., Stefaniak, S., & Harvey, C. (2017). Exploring adults' endorsement of the sexual double standard among initiators of consensually nonmonogamous relationship behaviors. *Sex Roles*. doi: 10.1007/s11199-017-0866-4
- Thorndike, E. L. (1920). A constant error in psychological ratings. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 4, 25-29. doi: 10.1037/h0071663
- Tracey, T. J. G. (2015). A note on socially desirable responding. *Journaling of Counseling Psychology*, 63(2), 224-232. doi: 10.1037/cou/0000135
- Træen, B. (2016). Norwegian young adults' attitudes toward and experience with kinky sexual activities. *Scandinavian Psychologist*, 3, 1-20. doi: 10.15714/scandpsychol.3.e15.

- Twenge, J. M., Sherman, R. A., & Wells, B. E. (2015). Changes in American adults' sexual behaviors and attitudes, 1972-2012. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 44, 2273-2285. doi: 10.1007/s10508-015-0540-2
- Vrangalova, Z., Bukberg, R. E., & Rieger, G. (2014). Birds of a feather? Not when it comes to sexual permissiveness. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 31, 93-113. doi: 10.1177/0265407513487638
- Walker, S., Sanci, L., & Temple-Smith, M. (2013). Sexting: Young women's and men's views on its nature and origins. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 52, 697-701. doi: 10.1016/j.jadohealth.2013.01.026
- Walrave, M., Ponnet, K., Van Ouytsel, J., Van Gool, E., Heirman, W., & Verbeek, A. (2015). Whether or not to engage in sexting: Explaining adolescent sexting behaviour by applying the prototype willingness model. *Teleinformatics and Informatics*, 32, 796-808. doi: 10.1016/j.tele.2015.03.008
- Weisskirch, R. S. & Delevi, R. (2011). "Sexting" and adult romantic attachment. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 27, 1697-1701. doi: 10.1016/j.chb.2011.02.008
- Weisskirch, R. S., Drouin, M., & Delevi, R. (2016). Relational anxiety and sexting. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 6, 685-693. doi: 10.1080/00224499.2016.1181147
- West, J. H., Lister, C. E., Hall, P. C., Crookston, B. T., Snow, P. R., Zvietcovich, M. E., & West, R. P. (2014). Sexting among Peruvian adolescents. *BMC Public Health*, 14, 1-7. doi: 10.1186/1471-2458-14-811
- Wiederman, M. W. (2005). The gendered nature of sexual scripts. *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families*, 13, 496-502. doi: 10.1177/1066480705278729

- Wright, P. J. (2015). Americans' attitudes toward premarital sex and pornography consumption: A national panel analysis. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 44, 89–97. doi: 10.1007/s10508-014-0353-8
- Xiao, Q., Li, A., & Zhu, Y. (2017). Moral judgments on short-term sexual behaviors among Chinese college students: Exploring the roles of gender and physical attractiveness. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 8, 1-6. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2017.00191
- Zaikman, Y. & Marks, M. J. (2014). Ambivalent sexism and the sexual double standard. *Sex Roles*, 71, 333-344. doi: 10.1007/s11199-014-0417-1

APPENDICES

Appendix A
Amazon Mechanical Turk™ Recruitment Message

You are invited to participate in a research study titled “The Psychology of Sexting”. This study is conducted by Dr. Ashley Thompson and Carissa Harvey from the Department of Psychology at the University of Minnesota Duluth. The purpose of this research study is to examine people’s thoughts and feelings related to the sending and receiving of sexual text messages. The study will require that you complete a variety of online questionnaires which should take no longer than 20 minutes.

To participate in the study, you must be:

- 18 years of age or older
- Currently a resident of the United States

If you agree to participate:

- The online survey will take approximately 20 minutes of your time.
- You will be compensated \$0.50.

In order to participate:

- You must click on survey link below.

Appendix B

Consent Document

The Department of Psychology at the University of Minnesota Duluth supports the practice of protecting human participants in research. The following information is provided so that you can decide whether you wish to participate in the present study.

Why is this study being done and what do you want me to do? This study is designed to assess people's thoughts and feelings related to the sending and receiving of sexually explicit text messages (e.g., sexting). If you decide to participate in this study, you will complete several surveys assessing your background, relationship/sexual history, your thoughts and feelings toward sexting, and your sexting experiences. Completion of all study components will take about 20 minutes.

Are there any benefits to participating? Yes. You will receive a deposit of \$0.50 into your MTurk™ account. In addition, you can choose to receive a summary of the findings of this research by providing your email on the debriefing form at the end of the study.

Are there any risks? It is unlikely that you will experience any discomfort during the study. However, feel free to stop the study or skip any questions that make you uncomfortable. Participation in the study is completely voluntary and you may stop answering questions without the loss of compensation. Any information collected from you that makes you feel uncomfortable can be destroyed if you so desire.

Are my answers confidential? Yes. Although the researchers will be asking for your worker ID, it will not be connected to your survey responses in any way. Please be aware that any work performed on Amazon MTurk™ can potentially be linked to information about you on your Amazon® public profile page, depending on the settings that you have for your Amazon® profile. We will not be accessing any personally identifying information about you that you may have put on your Amazon® public profile page. We will store your MTurk™ worker ID separately from the other information you provide to us to ensure confidentiality. If you do choose to provide your e-mail address for a summary of the results, it will not be connected with your survey responses in any way.

Who will have access to my data? Only the primary investigators (Ashley Thompson, Ph.D. and Carissa Harvey, M.A.), will have access to your information and answers (but not your identities). Your consent form (containing your signature and email address, should you choose to provide them) will be stored separately from your survey responses, thus any identifying information will not be connected with your survey responses in any way.

How can I get more information about this research project? If you have any questions before, during, or after the study, or if you would like to learn more about our research, please feel free to contact the primary investigators:

Dr. Ashley Thompson
Department of Psychology
1049 University Drive
thompsoa@d.umn.edu

Carissa Harvey
Department of Psychology
1049 University Drive
harve455@d.umn.edu

If you have any complaints about your treatment as a participant in this study, please call or write:

Executive Director, Institutional Review Board
c/o Human Research Protection Program
University of Minnesota
D528 Mayo Memorial Building
420 Delaware St. SE
Minneapolis, MN 55455-0392
(612) 626-5654

Consent Statement: By selecting "yes, I agree to participate" below, I am confirming that I am at least 18 years old, currently residing in the United States, and have received an explanation of the study. I agree to participate. I understand that my participation in this study is strictly voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without penalty.

If you do not wish to participate, please click "no, I do not agree to participate"

- Yes, I agree to participate
- No, I do not agree to participate

Appendix C

Experimental Vignettes

1. Woman/committed/requested/sender

Kelly and John have been in a **committed romantic relationship** with one another for over two years. They have agreed that they are exclusive with one another and keep in contact by texting frequently. Late one evening while Kelly and John are texting, **he sends her a message asking her to send him a nude photo of herself. Kelly agrees and moments later sends the photo to John.**

2. Woman/not committed/requested/sender

Kelly and John met about a week ago and have went out on one date. They have **yet to discuss whether they are exclusively with one another** but they keep in contact by texting frequently. Late one evening while Kelly and John are texting, **he sends her a message asking her to send him a nude photo of herself. Kelly agrees and moments later sends the photo to John.**

3. Woman/committed/not requested/sender

Kelly and John have been in a **committed romantic relationship** with one another for over two years. They have agreed that they are exclusive with one another and keep in contact by texting frequently. Late one evening while Kelly and John are texting, **Kelly decides to send him a nude photo of herself. John was not expecting this photo of Kelly.**

4. Woman/not committed/not requested/sender

Kelly and John met about a week ago and have went out on one date. They have **yet to discuss whether they are exclusively with one another** but they keep in contact by texting frequently. Late one evening while Kelly and John are texting, **Kelly decides to send him a nude photo of herself. John was not expecting this photo of Kelly.**

5. Woman/committed/requested/receiver

Kelly and John have been in a **committed romantic relationship** with one another for over two years. They have agreed that they are exclusive with one another and keep in contact by texting frequently. Late one evening while Kelly and John are texting, **Kelly asks John to send her a nude photo of himself. John agrees and moments later Kelly receives the photo.**

6. **Woman/not committed/requested/receiver**

Kelly and John met about a week ago and have went out on one date. They have **yet to discuss whether they are exclusively with one another** but they keep in contact by texting frequently. Late one evening while Kelly and John are texting, **Kelly asks John to send her a nude photo of himself**. John agrees and moments later **Kelly receives the photo**.

7. **Woman/committed/not requested/receiver**

Kelly and John have been in a **committed romantic relationship** with one another for over two years. They have agreed that they are exclusive with one another and keep in contact by texting frequently. Late one evening while Kelly and John are texting, **Kelly receives a nude photo of John**. **Kelly was not expecting this photo of John**.

8. **Woman/not committed/not requested/receiver**

Kelly and John met about a week ago and have went out on one date. They have **yet to discuss whether they are exclusively with one another** but they keep in contact by texting frequently. Late one evening while Kelly and John are texting, **Kelly receives a nude photo of John**. **Kelly was not expecting this photo of John**.

9. **Man/committed/requested/sender**

John and Kelly have been in a **committed romantic relationship** with one another for over two years. They have agreed that they are exclusive with one another and keep in contact by texting frequently. Late one evening while John and Kelly are texting, **she sends him a message asking him to send her a nude photo of himself**. John agrees and moments later sends the photo to Kelly.

10. **Man/not committed/requested/sender**

John and Kelly met about a week ago and have went out on one date. They have **yet to discuss whether they are exclusively with one another** but they keep in contact by texting frequently. Late one evening while John and Kelly are texting, **she sends him a message asking him to send her a nude photo of himself**. John agrees and moments later sends the photo to Kelly.

11. **Man/committed/not requested/sender**

John and Kelly have been in a **committed romantic relationship** with one another for over two years. They have agreed that they are exclusive with one another and keep in contact by texting frequently. Late one evening while John

and Kelly are texting, **John decides to send her a nude photo of himself. Kelly was not expecting this photo of John.**

12. **Man/not committed/not requested/sender**

John and Kelly met about a week ago and have went out on one date. They have **yet to discuss whether they are exclusively with one another** but they keep in contact by texting frequently. Late one evening while John and Kelly are texting, **John decides to send her a nude photo of himself. Kelly was not expecting this photo of John.**

13. **Man/committed/requested/receiver**

John and Kelly have been in a **committed romantic relationship** with one another for over two years. They have agreed that they are exclusive with one another and keep in contact by texting frequently. Late one evening while John and Kelly are texting, **John asks Kelly to send him a nude photo of herself.** Kelly agrees and moments later **John receives the photo.**

14. **Man/not committed/requested/receiver**

John and Kelly met about a week ago and have went out on one date. They have **yet to discuss whether they are exclusively with one another** but they keep in contact by texting frequently. Late one evening while John and Kelly are texting, **John asks Kelly to send him a nude photo of herself.** Kelly agrees and moments later **John receives the photo.**

15. **Man/committed/not requested/receiver**

John and Kelly have been in a **committed romantic relationship** with one another for over two years. They have agreed that they are exclusive with one another and keep in contact by texting frequently. Late one evening while John and Kelly are texting, **John receives a nude photo of Kelly. John was not expecting this photo of Kelly.**

16. **Man/not committed/not requested/receiver**

John and Kelly met about a week ago and have went out on one date. They have **yet to discuss whether they are exclusively with one another** but they keep in contact by texting frequently. Late one evening while John and Kelly are texting, **John receives a nude photo of Kelly. John was not expecting this photo of Kelly.**

Appendix D
Morality Scale (Grunt-Mejer & Campbell, 2016)

Using the scenario presented above, please rate your opinion of Kelly/John using the scale from 1 to 7, where 1 means “Kelly/John does not possess the given trait” and 7 “that Kelly/John possess it to a large extent.” If you have no assumptions, let yourself be guided by your intuition. Kelly/John is...

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Kelly/John do not possess the given trait						Kelly/John possess it to a large extent

_____ is honest
_____ is trusting
_____ is brave
_____ is trustworthy
_____ is tolerant
_____ behaves appropriately

Appendix E
Demographics Questionnaire

Please provide a response for the following questions. All information provided will be kept confidential and will be used only for the purposes of this study.

1. Age: _____ (in years)
2. What gender do you identify with?
 - a. Man
 - b. Woman
 - c. Transgender man
 - d. Transgender woman
 - e. Gender queer/gender nonconforming
 - f. I would prefer not to disclose
 - g. Other (please specify): _____
3. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
 - a. ___ Some high school
 - b. ___ High school or equivalent
 - c. ___ Some college/university
 - d. ___ Completed college/university
 - e. ___ Post graduate training/degree
 - f. ___ Other: please specify: _____
4. What is your family or household's income level?
 - a. ___ Less than \$10,000
 - b. ___ \$10,000-\$20,000
 - c. ___ \$20,000-\$55,000
 - d. ___ \$55,000-\$75,000
 - e. ___ \$75,000-\$100,000
 - f. ___ \$100,000+
 - g. ___ Don't know or prefer not to answer
5. Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?
 - a. _____ Heterosexual (Straight)
 - b. _____ Gay
 - c. _____ Lesbian
 - d. _____ Bisexual
 - e. _____ Queer
 - f. _____ Unlabeled
 - g. _____ Don't know

h. _____ Other, please specify: _____

6. Circle the number that best describes your sexual experience:

Entirely with the same sex 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Entirely with the opposite sex

7. Circle the number that best describes your current feelings of sexual attraction:

Entirely to the same sex 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Entirely to the opposite sex

8. Current relationship status

- a. Single
- b. Dating
- c. In a monogamous relationship
- d. In a polyamorous relationship
- e. In an open relationship
- f. Cohabiting
- g. Married
- h. Divorced
- i. Other (please specify): _____

9. With how many people have you engaged in oral, anal, and/or vaginal sex?

10. How old were you the first time you engaged in (put a zero if you have never engaged in this activity)?:

Oral sex _____

Vaginal sex _____

Anal sex _____

11. Have you ever sent or received a sext before (defined as the sending and receiving of sexually explicit text)?

- a. Yes
- b. No (if not, skip to the debriefing form)

12. How old were you when you sent your first sext (put a zero if you have never engaged in this activity)? _____ (in years)

13. How old were you when you received your first sext (put a zero if you have never engaged in this activity)? _____ (in years)

14. Have you sent a sext within the past 12 months?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Not applicable

15. Have you received a sext within the past 12 months?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Not applicable

16. How many sexts do you send during the average month? _____

17. How many sexts do you receive during the average month? _____

18. Thinking back to the most recent sext you sent, who did you send it to? Please describe the nature of your relationship with this person.

19. Thinking back to the most recent sext you received, who sent it to you? Please describe the nature of your relationship with this person.

20. Thinking back to the most recent sext you sent, what was the content of this sext? Please describe the content in detail (e.g., an image of my breasts, a dirty joke about him/her).

21. Thinking back to the most recent sext you received, what was the content of this sext? Please describe the content in detail (e.g., an image of my breasts, a dirty joke about him/her).

22. Which of the following platforms have you used to send sexts? (Check all that apply)

- a. Text message
- b. Facebook
- c. Facebook private message
- d. Twitter
- e. Twitter direct message
- f. Snapchat
- g. Instagram
- h. Tinder
- i. Tinder private message
- j. Email
- k. Chatroom
- l. Private chat within a chatroom
- m. Dating websites
- n. I do not send sexts
- o. Other : _____ (please specify)

23. Which of the following platforms have you used to receive sexts? (Check all that apply)

- a. Text message
- b. Facebook
- c. Facebook private message
- d. Twitter
- e. Twitter direct message
- f. Snapchat
- g. Instagram
- h. Tinder
- i. Tinder private message
- j. Email
- k. Chatroom
- l. Private chat within a chatroom
- m. Dating websites
- n. I do not send sexts
- o. Other : _____ (please specify)

24. Please rate the following items from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much so) on the extent which sexting serves the following function for you:

- a. _____ Fun
- b. _____ Distraction

- c. _____ Sexual gratification
- d. _____ Cure for boredom
- e. _____ Masturbatory aid
- f. _____ Mental satisfaction
- g. _____ Foreplay
- h. _____ Access to infidelity
- i. _____ Establishing new relationships
- j. _____ Maintaining existing relationships
- k. _____ Enhancing existing relationships
- l. _____ I don't know

25. Which of the following text-only messages do you believe constitutes sexting?
(Check all that apply)

- a. Text messages describing kissing
- b. Text messages describing touching
- c. Text messages describing oral sex
- d. Text messages describing masturbation
- e. Text messages describing penetration
- f. I don't know
- g. Messages describing other sexual acts: _____ (please specify)

26. What of the following image-only messages do you believe constitutes sexting?
(Check all that apply)

- a. Photographs with full nudity
- b. Photographs with partial nudity
- c. Photographs with no nudity
- d. Photographs with suggestive facial expressions
- e. Photographs with suggestive body posing
- f. I don't know
- g. Other images: _____ (please specify)

27. Thinking about sexts that you have ever sent, please rate on a scale from 1
(strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) how does *sending* a sext make you feel?

- a. _____ Amused
- b. _____ Angry
- c. _____ Anxious
- d. _____ Disappointed
- e. _____ Disgusted
- f. _____ Embarrassed
- g. _____ Excited
- h. _____ Happy
- i. _____ Scared

- j. _____ Sad
- k. _____ Surprised
- l. _____ Satisfied
- m. _____ Aroused
- n. _____ More interested in the recipient
- o. _____ Less interested in the recipient

28. Thinking about the sexts that you have ever received, please rate on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) how does *receiving* a sext make you feel?

- a. _____ Amused
- b. _____ Angry
- c. _____ Anxious
- d. _____ Disappointed
- e. _____ Disgusted
- f. _____ Embarrassed
- g. _____ Excited
- h. _____ Happy
- i. _____ Scared
- j. _____ Sad
- k. _____ Surprised
- l. _____ Satisfied
- m. _____ Aroused
- n. _____ More interested in the recipient
- o. _____ Less interested in the recipient

Appendix F Debriefing Statement

Thank you for participating in our study. Your responses on the survey and the experiences you have provided us will greatly improve our research and understanding of the psychology of sexting. We would now like to give you some additional information about the study.

Your completion code is: 5127

You **MUST** enter this code on the Mechanical Turk HIT in order to complete the work and receive compensation. Once your survey completion has been confirmed you will receive compensation. We try to approve work as quickly as possible, although sometimes this can take up to 24 hours.

The sexual double standard is the tendency to judge women more harshly for engaging in sexual behavior as compared to men (Fowers & Fowers, 2010; Papp et al., 2015; Zaikman & Marks, 2014). Research suggests that different factors influence why people judge men and women differently when both genders engage in the same sexual behavior (England & Bearak, 2014; Fowers & Fowers, 2010; Papp et al., 2015). A growing amount of research is examining the possibility that certain variables may influence how people judge other's participation in sexting (Walker, Sanci, Temple-Smith, 2013; Ringrose et al., 2013). Thus, the study you just participated in was designed to assess what influences how people judge men and women who engage in sexting.

We want you to know that we appreciate your time in helping us with this research. We think that one way to understand sexual behavior is to learn more about the kinds of issues we investigated today. We hope that your responses provided in today's study will help us answer these questions.

Because sexting can sometimes result in negative outcomes, it is possible that some may have experienced negative outcomes. If you experienced any distress while participating in this study, we urge you to utilize the following resources:

- The National Domestic Violence Hotline
 - <http://www.thehotline.org>
 - 1-800-799-7233/ 1-800-787-3224 (TTY)
- National Sexual Assault Hotline
 - <https://www.rainn.org>
 - 1-800-656-4673
- Love Is Respect
 - <http://www.loveisrespect.org>

- 1-866-331-9474/ 1-866-331-8453 (TTY)

If you have any additional questions about the study, you may reach the Primary Investigator, Dr. Ashley Thompson and/or the co-investigator, Carissa Harvey, by mail or email:

Dr. Ashley Thompson
Department of Psychology
1049 University Drive
thompsa@d.umn.edu

Carissa Harvey
Department of Psychology
1049 University Drive
harve455@d.umn.edu

To be compensated for taking part in the study, please provide your Mechanical Turk® worker ID in the space provided.

If you wish to receive a summary of the results of this study once it is complete, please type your email address in the space provided. Your e-mail address will not be connected to your survey responses.

Email address: _____

Thank you again for your participation. You will receive credit for the study on Amazon Mechanical Turk within the next 24 hours.

TABLES

Table 1. *Differences in Judgments of Morality for Hypothetical Individuals*

Relationship Status	Target Role	Requesting Status	Participant Gender	Target Gender	
				Man <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	Woman <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)
Committed Relationship	Sender	Requester	Men	4.83(1.19)	5.24 (1.02)
			Women	5.10 (1.12)	5.21 (0.91)
		Nonrequester	Men	4.60 (1.05)	5.54 (1.21)
			Women	4.73 (1.47)	4.96 (0.85)
Committed Relationship	Receiver	Requester	Men	4.63 (1.15)	5.09 (1.01)
			Women	5.18 (1.13)	4.61 (0.85)
		Nonrequester	Men	4.99 (0.77)	4.88 (0.91)
			Women	4.85 (0.72)	5.31 (0.95)
Casual Relationship	Sender	Requester	Men	5.06 (0.97)	4.53 (0.78)
			Women	5.04 (1.07)	5.00 (1.50)
		Nonrequester	Men	4.08 (0.78)	4.31 (0.81)
			Women	3.47 (1.32)	4.34 (0.91)
Casual Relationship	Receiver	Requester	Men	4.27 (1.09)	4.16 (0.94)
			Women	3.90 (1.30)	4.24 (1.06)
		Nonrequester	Men	4.56 (1.14)	4.24 (0.86)
			Women	4.38 (0.63)	4.70 (1.06)

Note. $N = 350$ men and 317 women. All items were rated on a 7-point scale from 1 (not at all) to 7 (very much so) to which a hypothetical individual possessed a given trait.

Table 2. *Differences in Morality Judgments by Vignette*

Relationship Status	Target Role	Requesting Status	Target Gender		<i>p</i>
			Man <i>M (SD)</i>	Woman <i>M (SD)</i>	
Committed Relationship	Sender	Requester	5.08 (1.14)	5.23 (0.95)	0.53
		Nonrequester	4.66 (1.27)	5.19 (1.03)	0.05
Committed Relationship	Receiver	Requester	4.70 (1.18)	4.82 (0.94)	0.60
		Nonrequester	4.92 (0.74)	5.16 (0.94)	0.23
Casual Relationship	Sender	Requester	4.93 (1.03)	4.67 (1.05)	0.26
		Nonrequester	3.74 (1.15)	4.32 (0.84)	0.01*
Casual Relationship	Receiver	Requester	4.07 (1.22)	4.20 (1.00)	0.60
		Nonrequester	4.49 (0.98)	4.44 (0.97)	0.81

Note. *N* = 350 men and 317 women. All items were rated on a 7-point scale from 1 (not at all) to 7 (very much so) to which a hypothetical individual possessed a given trait. Values with an asterisk indicate statistical significance, with $p < .05$.

Table 3. *Morality Judgments by Role and Requesting Status*

Target Role	Requesting Status	<i>M (SD)</i>
Sender	Requester	4.99 (1.06)
	Nonrequester	4.44 (1.20)
Receiver	Requester	4.45 (1.13)
	Nonrequester	4.74 (0.96)

Note. $N = 350$ men and 317 women. All items were rated on a 7-point scale from 1 (not at all) to 7 (very much so) to which a hypothetical individual possessed a given trait.

Table 4. *Morality Judgments of Role Status for Casual Relationships*

Target Role	Requesting Status	<i>M (SD)</i>
Sender	Requester	4.87 (1.04)
	Nonrequester	4.01 (1.05)
Receiver	Requester	4.14 (1.12)
	Nonrequester	4.46 (0.97)

Note. $N = 350$ men and 317 women. All items were rated on a 7-point scale from 1 (not at all) to 7 (very much so) to which a hypothetical individual possessed a given trait.

Table 5. *Women Participants' Morality Judgments for Hypothetical Individuals*

Relationship Status	Target Gender	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)
Committed Relationship	Man	4.95 (1.15)
	Woman	5.02 (0.92)
Casual Relationship	Man	4.13 (1.31)
	Woman	4.56 (1.13)

Note. *N* = 350 men and 317 women. All items were rated on a 7-point scale from 1 (not at all) to 7 (very much so) to which a hypothetical individual possessed a given trait.

FIGURES

Figure 1. *Morality Judgments by Role and Requesting Status*

Figure 2. *Morality Judgments by Role Status for Casual Relationships*

Figure 3. *Women Participants' Morality Judgments for Hypothetical Individuals*