

Extra Credit Week 9-2

POPULAR CONCEPTIONS OF GENDER DIFFERENCES IN SEXUAL BEHAVIOR AND ATTITUDES: HOW ARE MEN AND WOMEN DIFFERENT?

Purpose: This exercise is designed to assess people's beliefs about gender differences and similarities in sexual behavior and attitudes and compare them to Oliver and Hyde's (1993) meta-analysis of a large number of surveys.

Instructions: Recruit two women and two men who are willing to complete a short questionnaire that assesses popular conceptions of the gender differences that have been studied by psychologists. Include four people who vary not only by sex but by other social categories (for example, age, race or ethnicity, sexual orientation, social class, etc.). Be sure to describe each participant by indicating her or his sex, age, and social attributes (for example, race or ethnicity, social class, etc.) at the top of each interview form.

Explain to your volunteers that they questionnaire contains descriptions of sexual attitudes or behaviors. Your participants should read each description and think about whether they believe men and women differ on the trait or behavior. Then, they should provide their estimation of the size of this gender difference using this scale.

- 3: Women are more likely than men to have permissive attitudes or engage in this behavior. There is a large gender difference favoring women.
- 2: Women are more likely than men to have permissive attitudes or engage in this behavior. There is a moderate gender difference favoring women.
- 1: Women are more likely than men to have permissive attitudes or engage in this behavior. There is a small gender difference favoring women.
- 0: No difference. Women's and men's attitudes or behaviors are similar.
- +1: Men are more likely than women to have permissive attitudes or engage in this behavior. There is a small gender difference favoring men.
- +2: Men are more likely than women to have permissive attitudes or engage in this behavior. There is a moderate gender difference favoring men.
- +3: Men are more likely than women to have permissive attitudes or engage in this behavior. There is a large gender difference favoring men.

Participant A

Sex _____

Age _____

Characteristics/Comments

Psychologists have studied whether men and women differ on each of the following behaviors or traits. In some cases large gender differences have been found. In others, small to no gender differences have been established. Read each of the following descriptions and provide your estimate of the degree to which women and men (as a group) differ on each trait or behavior.

1. *Sexual Permissiveness*: In general, do men or women hold more permissive attitudes toward sex?

Estimation of gender difference: _____

2. *Double Standard*: Who is more likely to advocate the double standard (that is, premarital sex is acceptable for men, but not women)? Men or women?

Estimation of gender difference: _____

3. *Masturbation*: Who is more likely to masturbate? Men or women?

Estimation of gender difference: _____

4. *Frequency of Intercourse*: Do women or men report having intercourse more frequently?

Estimation of gender difference: _____

5. *Number of Sexual Partners*: Who reports a larger number of sexual partners in a lifetime? Women or men?

Estimation of gender difference: _____

6. *Attitudes Toward Homosexuality*: Do women or men report more permissive attitudes toward homosexuality?

Estimation of gender difference: _____

Participant B

Sex _____

Age _____

Characteristics/Comments

Psychologists have studied whether men and women differ on each of the following behaviors or traits. In some cases large gender differences have been found. In others, small to no gender differences have been established. Read each of the following descriptions and provide your estimate of the degree to which women and men (as a group) differ on each trait or behavior.

1. *Sexual Permissiveness*: In general, do men or women hold more permissive attitudes toward sex?

Estimation of gender difference: _____

2. *Double Standard*: Who is more likely to advocate the double standard (that is, premarital sex is acceptable for men, but not women)? Men or women?

Estimation of gender difference: _____

3. *Masturbation*: Who is more likely to masturbate? Men or women?

Estimation of gender difference: _____

4. *Frequency of Intercourse*: Do women or men report having intercourse more frequently?

Estimation of gender difference: _____

5. *Number of Sexual Partners*: Who reports a larger number of sexual partners in a lifetime? Women or men?

Estimation of gender difference: _____

6. *Attitudes Toward Homosexuality*: Do women or men report more permissive attitudes toward homosexuality?

Estimation of gender difference: _____

Participant C

Sex _____

Age _____

Characteristics/Comments

Psychologists have studied whether men and women differ on each of the following behaviors or traits. In some cases large gender differences have been found. In others, small to no gender differences have been established. Read each of the following descriptions and provide your estimate of the degree to which women and men (as a group) differ on each trait or behavior.

1. *Sexual Permissiveness*: In general, do men or women hold more permissive attitudes toward sex?
Estimation of gender difference: _____
 2. *Double Standard*: Who is more likely to advocate the double standard (that is, premarital sex is acceptable for men, but not women)? Men or women?
Estimation of gender difference: _____
 3. *Masturbation*: Who is more likely to masturbate? Men or women?
Estimation of gender difference: _____
 4. *Frequency of Intercourse*: Do women or men report having intercourse more frequently?
Estimation of gender difference: _____
 5. *Number of Sexual Partners*: Who reports a larger number of sexual partners in a lifetime? Women or men?
Estimation of gender difference: _____
 6. *Attitudes Toward Homosexuality*: Do women or men report more permissive attitudes toward homosexuality?
Estimation of gender difference: _____
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Participant D

Sex _____

Age _____

Characteristics/Comments

Psychologists have studied whether men and women differ on each of the following behaviors or traits. In some cases large gender differences have been found. In others, small to no gender differences have been established. Read each of the following descriptions and provide your estimate of the degree to which women and men (as a group) differ on each trait or behavior.

1. *Sexual Permissiveness*: In general, do men or women hold more permissive attitudes toward sex?
Estimation of gender difference: _____
 2. *Double Standard*: Who is more likely to advocate the double standard (that is, premarital sex is acceptable for men, but not women)? Men or women?
Estimation of gender difference: _____
 3. *Masturbation*: Who is more likely to masturbate? Men or women?
Estimation of gender difference: _____
 4. *Frequency of Intercourse*: Do women or men report having intercourse more frequently?
Estimation of gender difference: _____
 5. *Number of Sexual Partners*: Who reports a larger number of sexual partners in a lifetime? Women or men?
Estimation of gender difference: _____
 6. *Attitudes Toward Homosexuality*: Do women or men report more permissive attitudes toward homosexuality?
Estimation of gender difference: _____
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Summarize your results by answering the questions below.

1. Oliver and Hyde (1993) report large gender differences favoring men on these variables. How accurate were your respondents?

Sexual permissiveness

Masturbation

Frequency of intercourse

Number of sexual partners

2. Were your respondent's accurate in estimating the small difference favoring men in the number of sexual partners reported? Did your respondents accurately estimate no gender differences in attitudes toward homosexuality?

3. Evaluate your respondents' knowledge of these gender differences and similarities. Some of the findings from this meta-analysis are consistent with gender stereotypes and sexual scripts whereas other findings are contradictory. Were your respondents more likely to estimate differences along the lines of traditional stereotypes? Or were your respondents more likely to underestimate difference?

Adapted from Hyde, Janet Sibley. *Half the human experience: The psychology of women* (5th ed.). Copyright © 1996 by D.C. Heath and Company. Used with permission of Houghton Mifflin Company.

Reference: Oliver, Mary B., & Hyde, Janet S. (1993). Gender differences in sexuality: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, 114, 29-51.