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Reluctant virginity: the relationship between sexual status and self-esteem

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RELUCTANT VIRGINITY: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SEXUAL
STATUS AND SELF-ESTEEM

by
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ABSTRACT

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RELUCANT VIRGINITY: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SEXUAL
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The purpose of this study is to identify group differences between sexual status (reluctant virgins, satisfied virgins, and non-virgins) in college students. Specifically, this study explored differences between groups in self-esteem (global, social, and body), dating (length of relationship and number of dating partners), and the beliefs in the double standard mediating differences in self-esteem. It was hypothesized that reluctant virgins would have lower self-esteem and shorter relationships than satisfied virgins and non-virgins. There was modest support for the stated hypotheses: reluctant virgins had lower social self esteem ($M = 114.4$) than non-virgins ($M = 138.5$). Reluctant virgins also had a poorer body image ($M = 153.9$) than both satisfied virgins ($M = 196.57$) and non-virgins ($M = 155.12$). Lastly, reluctant virgins experienced shorter dating relationships ($M = 6.00$) than non-virgins ($M = 25.5$).

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate the frequency of reluctant virginity on a college campus, report dating habits (e.g., number of partners, age of first date, and length in time of longest relationship), investigate the social-self-esteem of reluctant virgins compared with satisfied virgins, and to investigate the influence of the traditional double standard as a possible contributor to the esteem of male and female virgins in college. The importance of this study is evident by noting the lack of research on retaining virginity in college.

Since the 1970's, the majority of Americans have reported engaging in sexual intercourse for the first time by the age of 19 years (Blank, 2007). Therefore, the majority of American college students have engaged in sexual intercourse. Though some college students remain virginal there is a paucity of research available focusing on college virgins. Virginal college students are unique because, unlike in high school, college students are provided with many opportunities for social interaction with peers to form relationships in the absence of parents and teachers. In addition, sexual relationships in college appear to be the norm. With so many opportunities to form sexual relationships available it would be interesting to know what factors influence the decision to remain virginal (e.g., what motivates college students to remain virginal and what prevents college students from having sexual intercourse).

College virgins can fall into two categories: satisfied virgins and reluctant virgins (McCabe, 1987). Satisfied virgins are virgins by choice and have no desire to engage in sexual intercourse. Many satisfied virgins report religious reasons for remaining virginal such as waiting until marriage (Young, 1986; Sprecher & Regan, 1996). Satisfied virgins have chosen to be chaste and do not feel ashamed of their virginity because it signifies to them a proactive and pragmatic decision.

Reluctant virgins want to have sexual intercourse and have not made a proactive decision to remain virginal. Circumstances that prevent reluctant virgins from engaging in sexual intercourse in college can include, but are not limited to, a lack of opportunity, a paucity of appropriate sexual partners, or a deficiency in social skills needed to connect with a sexual partner. In past research, reluctant virgins attributed their lack of sexual experience to shyness, poor body image, rarely or never dating, a lack of social skills, certain living arrangements, work arrangements, and transportation problems (Donnelly, Burgess, Anderson, Davis, & Dillard, 2001). Reluctant virgins report being too shy or embarrassed to initiate sex with a partner, having a partner who is not willing to engage in sexual intercourse, and not feeling physically attractive or sexually desirable (Sprecher & Regan, 1996, p.7). Because reluctant virgins have not made a proactive decision to remain virginal they may report less positive thoughts and more concern about themselves and their lack of sexual experience when compared to satisfied virgins (Sprecher & Regan, 1996).

The number of people identifying themselves as reluctant virgins increases as men and women age (McCabe, 1987). There are more reluctant virgins at the age of 25 then there are at 18 years of age for both genders (McCabe, 1987). Perhaps this is

because at the age of eighteen reluctant virgins have hope that they will meet a person willing to be a dating or sexual partner. Unfortunately, the majority of reluctant adult virgins never dated as teenagers (Donnelly et al., 2001) and may not have acquired the skills necessary to woo a potential partner. Reluctant virgins reported struggling with their roles in the dating process: women reported that they were not invited on dates by men while men reported difficulty initiating dates with women (Donnelly et al., 2001).

In a related line of research, college students who rarely or never date have been researched under the terms *low-frequency daters* and *minimal daters*. There are similarities between personal characteristics of minimal daters in college and people who identify themselves as reluctant adult virgins. Shyness, poor body image, and a lack of social skills have all been identified in research to be related to minimal dating (Leck, 2006; Prisbell, 1989) and reluctant virginity (Donnelly et al., 2001). Researchers have yet to study the possible link between low-frequency daters and reluctant virginity.

Students in college live in an environment that is conducive to refining social and assertive skills and developing interpersonal relationships with peers (Prisbell, 1989, Prisbell, 1986). Dating is one socially acceptable way to develop interpersonal relationships but it is also very important for future romantic relationships. Dating requires *heterosocial skills* such as "initiating a conversation, knowing how to plan a date, conversational appropriateness and timing, and nonverbal communicative behaviors" (Prisbell, 1986, p.9). Some researchers suggest that these heterosocial skills are learned through experience (Galassi & Galassi, 1979; Prisbell, 1986; Prisbell, 1989). Socializing with peers is essential to develop heterosocial skills. Dating is very important in developing these special skills because heterosocial skills cannot be practiced without

some dating experience. In college there is an abundance of social interaction available with peers. Students live in close proximity to many other students in dorms or apartments and can find a wide variety of activities on campus and off to enjoy in their free time. Theorists postulate that college students who are reluctant virgins do not experience age- and position-related cultural norms (Hagestad, 1990). In other words, if a college student has never dated and never experienced a one-on-one relationship with a peer, that college student would not be able to demonstrate the heterosocial skills that other students had learned in earlier years.

College students report that finding someone to date and initiating sexual activity while on a date are two of the most difficult endeavors associated with dating situations (Klaus, Hersen, & Bellack, 1977). As a reluctant virgin in college, individuals may find the above endeavors to be not only difficult but nearly impossible if they lack social assertiveness. Competent or high-frequency daters have individual qualities that differ from low-frequency daters including social assertiveness (LeSure-Lester & Chapman, 2001) and maintaining appropriate eye contact (Cherulnik, Neely, Flanagan, & Zachau, 1978). Low-frequency daters who have one date or less per month lack social assertiveness (LeSure-Lester, 2001), rate their social skills as inadequate, and report having difficulty finding dating partners (Klaus, Hersen, & Bellack, 1977). Women who are low-frequency daters are shy, anxious, introverted, and feel physically unattractive. They also report having low social self-esteem and less satisfaction with dating (Leck, 2006). Shy individuals evaluate themselves negatively on the ability to be relaxed in a social situation and report having fewer social opportunities than individuals who are not shy (Prisbell, 1991).

The traditional double standard may influence the way that reluctant virgins perceive themselves and others. Men and women have traditionally followed different guidelines for sexual behavior (Sprecher & Regan, 1996; Crawford & Popp, 2003). In accordance with the traditional double standard, women should wait for a commitment before engaging in sexual activity, while men should become sexually active to transition to manhood (Sprecher, Barbee, & Schwartz, 1995). Adherence to this double standard suggests that there would be more male than female reluctant virgins. This appears to be the case. In every study reporting reluctant virginity, there were more male than female reluctant virgins; in fact, the majority of reluctant virgins were always men (McCabe, 1987; Donnelly et al., 2001; Sprecher & Regan, 1996).

There is evidence that members of both genders subscribe to the guidelines that men should have sex while women should wait. Engaging in sexual activity has a negative social effect on women and both genders rate a sexually active woman as having less respect, being less popular, and more irresponsible than a sexually active man (Sheeran, Spears, Abraham, & Abrams, 1996; Crawford & Popp, 2003). Men are not viewed negatively for displaying the same sexual behavior as a woman (Crawford & Popp, 2003). For reluctant virgins the opposite is likely true: men view themselves negatively for being virginal and women will view themselves more positively than men for being virginal.

There is evidence that boys and girls as young as 14 years adhere to these double standards (Spencer, Zimmet, Aalsma, & Orr, 2002). Specifically, girls with lower self-esteem were found to be three times more likely than girls with higher self-esteem to initiate sexual intercourse. Boys with higher self-esteem were 2.4 times more likely than

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boys with low self-esteem to initiate sexual intercourse. Both genders label sexually active and promiscuous girls with undesirable nicknames such as "sluts" or "whores" (Martin, 1996; Crawford & Popp, 2003; Blank, 2007).

The influence of sexual double standards is evident in college-age individuals. Male college students identify women who are appropriate for a long-term relationship by how many sexual partners she has had and how early in the relationship she engages in sexual activity (Fromme & Emihovich, 1998; Crawford & Popp, 2003). Women who engage in sexual activity too early in the relationship are not appropriate for a long-term relationship, yet the men in the study identified engaging in this behavior with no consequences to their reputation (Crawford & Popp, 2003). Sexual double standards can often be subtle and, in turn, widely accepted such as those that are embedded in our language. For example, there are many more negative terms for sexually active women than there are for men in the English language (Crawford & Popp, 2003).

Sexual double standards can influence a woman's sexual identity. Women in college reported feeling guilty during first sexual intercourse while men report more performance anxiety and pleasure (Sprecher, Barbee, & Schwartz, 1995). Women may feel guilty because at an early age "girls learn to look sexy but say no, to be feminine but not sexual, and to attract boys' desire but not to satisfy their own" (Crawford & Popp, 2003, 24). In other words, a woman should be sexually attractive to men but she should not act on her sexual urges until she meets the man she will marry.

Sexual double standards influence virgins differently by gender. In a study of virginal college students, more virginal men rated their feelings toward their sexual status negatively than women. Specifically, virginal men were more anxious, guilty, and

embarrassed than virginal women (Sprecher & Regan, 1996). Peer pressure may play a role in a virginal man's reaction to his sexual status. When men are bragging to each other about sexual prowess, a virginal status may reflect undesirable traits or be viewed as a rarity (Blank, 2007), especially if a man is a reluctant virgin. Similar gender differences may also exist for reluctant virgins but have yet to be studied.

As mentioned above there is a paucity of research available on reluctant virginity in college-aged individuals. Therefore, a primary objective of this study is to simply identify the frequency of virginal college students. Theoretically, college students are in a prime arrangement to be sociable with a wide variety of peers and engage in sexual activity. Reluctant virgins in college may lack the skills, knowledge, or ability to form social connections that lead to intimate sexual relationships. The current study will investigate the factors found to be associated with reluctant virginity in adults (minimal dating, lack of social skills, and poor body image) in order to identify differences between reluctant virgins, satisfied virgins, and non-virgins in college. Further investigation will identify the effect of the reluctant virgin's strong belief in the traditional double standard.

It was hypothesized that reluctant virgins will differ from non-virgins and satisfied virgins in the following ways: (1) reluctant virgins will have lower social self-esteem and a poorer body image than satisfied virgins and non-virgins, (2) within the sample of reluctant virgins men who adhere to the traditional double standard will have lower social self-esteem than women, and (3) reluctant virgins will have a shorter length of dating relationships and less dating experience than non-virgins.

Further exploratory analysis was aimed at identifying differences by sexual status on sexual variables (e.g., sexual anxiety, sexual motivation, sexual satisfaction, fear of sex, and sexual depression) and sexual desires by sexual status and gender. No directional hypotheses were proposed as these were exploratory analyses.

CHAPTER II

Method

Power Analysis

The software program GPOWER 3.0.5 was utilized to complete a power analysis (Erdfelder, Faul, & Buchner, 1996). Based on use of an analysis of variance prior to collecting data, with fixed effects and three groups, power equal to .80, error probability .05 and effect size equal to .25, the total sample size for a medium effect size was thought to be 159. Because there is very little prior research on the topic of reluctant virginity a sample of approximately 200 participants was selected to ensure a medium effect size.

Participants

A sample of 279 Rowan University students participated in the study. Students were recruited through introductory psychology classes and received course credit for attending the session. Of the total sample, 2 participants were removed because their reported ages were outside of the typical college age range (40 and 42 years old). Due to a computer glitch, 152 participants were removed from the sample because they did not respond to two important questions assessing virginity.

The remaining sample included 127 participants with a mean age of 20.26 years (SD = 3.68). The majority of participants reported their ethnicity as Caucasian (75.9%), followed by Hispanic/Latino (10.5%), African American (9.2%), and Asian American/Pacific Islander (3.1%). The reported sexual orientation of the participants was largely heterosexual (97.3%) with only three participants subscribing to either bisexuality or homosexuality.

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Measures

Demographics were collected for each participant. Questions were asked regarding an individual's sexual history and dating history. Participants were asked the following three questions to assess dating history: (1) How many lifetime dating partners have you had, (2) What was the longest relationship that you've had in measurement of months, and (3) What was the age that you first started dating? Participants are asked to specify their answer to the latter question by explaining what they mean by "dating." Examples provided include, "Hooking up, going to the movies, a group date with friend, etc.).

Participants were classified as virginal or non-virginal by the following question: Do you consider yourself to be a virgin? Virginal participants were asked two further questions: (1) Are you a virgin by choice (ex: religious or moral values) or circumstances (ex: living conditions, difficulty finding a sexual partner, shyness, physical problems, etc.); and (2) what is your personal reason for remaining virginal?

Body Attitudes Questionnaire. The Body Attitudes Questionnaire (Story, 1984) was utilized to rate an individual's satisfaction with 49 of their own body parts and will measure a component of self esteem: self perception of body image. The questionnaire consists of a list of body parts with a 5-point Likert scale ranging from (1) *having strong negative feelings and wishing a change could be made* to (5) *having strong positive feelings and desiring no change to be made.* Participants are also asked what factor (attractiveness or effectiveness) contributed most to the satisfaction rating. The BAQ has a high test-retest reliability of .91.

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Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale. Rosenberg's (1989) Self-Esteem Scale is a well-known measure of global self-esteem consisting of 10 statements and a four-point scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Statements include, *"On the whole, I am satisfied with myself"* and *"I certainly feel useless at times."* The Self-Esteem scale scores was utilized to assess and compare the overall self-esteem of participants. Higher scores on this scale indicate higher global self-esteem. This test has high test-retest reliability and validity. Cronbach's coefficient alpha for this scale is .86, indicating high test-retest reliability (Conseur, Hathcote, & Kim, 2008).

Social Self-Esteem Inventory. The Social Self-Esteem Inventory (Lawson, Marshall, & McGrath, 1979) is a 30-item scale. The inventory measured another component of self-esteem that is relevant to this research. The score from this measure will gauge a better understanding of the participants' overall social functioning and ability to communicate with others in a social situation. The inventory relies on a six-point Likert scale ranging from completely unlike me (1) to exactly like me (6). Statements include, *"I find it hard to talk to strangers"* and *"I am quite good at making people feel at ease with me."* The Social Self-Esteem Inventory has high test-retest reliability with a Cronbach's coefficient alpha of .88.

Sexual Desire Inventory. The Sexual Desire Inventory (Spector, Carey, & Steinberg, 1996) was administered to measure an individual's interest in engaging in sexual activity. Three items are questions about the frequency of sexual thoughts or behavior, such as, *"during the last month, how often have you had sexual thoughts involving a partner?"* The remaining eight items are rated with an 8-point Likert scale and ask specific situational questions concerning desire such as, *"when you first see an*

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attractive person, how strong is your sexual desire?" The inventory addressed both dyadic and solitary sexual desires. The Cronbach's coefficient alpha for this inventory is .96 for solitary sexual desires and .86 for dyadic sexual desires.

Multidimensional Sexual Self-Concept Questionnaire. The Multidimensional Sexual Self-Concept Questionnaire (Snell, 1995) measures 20 psychological aspects of sexuality including anxiety, self-efficacy, consciousness, motivation to avoid risky sexual behavior, chance and luck control, preoccupation, assertiveness, optimism, problems and self-blame, monitoring, motivation, problem management, esteem, satisfaction, other's control, self schemata, fear, problem prevention, depression, and internal sexual control. The Multidimensional Sexual Self-Concept Questionnaire provided a comprehensive understanding of an individual's feelings concerning their own sexuality and consists of 100 statement items. Scoring is based on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from (0) *not at all characteristic of me* to (4) *very characteristic of me*. The Cronbach coefficient for reliability is between .72 and .94 for the subscales.

Double Standard Scale. The Double Standard Scale (Caron, Davis, Halteman, & Stickle, 1993) consists of 10 items and measures an individual's approval of the traditional sexual double standard. Scoring is based upon a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from (1) *strongly agree* to (5) *strongly disagree*. Lower scores indicate greater adherence to the double standard. The Cronbach coefficient for the Double Standard Scale is .72.

Procedure

All participants completed the questionnaires in a computer laboratory using MediaLab Software with a maximum capacity of ten participants per session in the Fall

semester of 2007 and the Spring semester of 2008. Participants received classroom credit for attending research sessions. A Latin square counterbalance for measures was used to prevent the order of the questionnaires from influencing the results of the study.

CHAPTER III

Results

Frequency of Virginity

Within the sample there were 21 total virgins. Specifically there were 8 reluctant virgins, 8 satisfied virgins, and 5 unclassified virgins (those who endorsed virginity but did not cite a reason for remaining virginal). The remaining 106 participants were non-virgins. There were a total of 72 female participants and 56 male participants.

Participants who endorsed virginity typed their reasons for remaining virginal. Interestingly, most satisfied virgins provided similar reasons for remaining virginal (moral values or waiting until marriage). Reluctant virgins subscribed to more diverse reasons, as shown in Table 1.

In terms of dating partners and length of relationship, two preliminary ANOVAs were conducted to examine potential differences between sexual status groups. Although there is a trend in the hypothesized direction, there were no statistically significant differences by sexual status on number of dating partners, $F(2, 117) = 2.15$, $p = .121$, *ns*. Reluctant virgins (3.75) having fewer partners than non-virgins (5.3). Satisfied virgins (1.83) had the fewest dating partners. Interestingly, four virgins reported never having a dating relationship (two satisfied virgins and two reluctant virgins). This finding is consistent with earlier findings that some reluctant virgins never date as teenagers.

There was a significant effect for length of relationship, $F(2,116) = 4.55$, $p = .012$, partial $\eta^2 = .07$. Post hoc analysis (LSD) revealed that reluctant virgins ($M = 6.00$) had

significantly shorter relationships than non-virgins (M = 25.5). Reluctant virgins also had shorter relationships than satisfied virgins (M = 10.57) though this difference was not statistically significant.

The age that reluctant virgins (M = 14.63), satisfied virgins (M = 15.33) and non-virgins (M = 14.77) started dating was very similar, as were descriptions of dates. Most participants described dating as hooking up, going to the mall or to the movies, or going out somewhere with one person instead of as a group.

Differences in Self-Esteem by Sexual Status

Four tests of one-way between-subjects analysis of variance (ANOVA) were conducted to investigate self-esteem differences between sexual status groups. Table 2 summaries the differences between sexual status groups on four measures of self-esteem.

An ANOVA examining social self-esteem by sexual status revealed a significant main effect for sexual status on social self-esteem, $F(2, 125) = 5.10$, $p = .007$, partial η^2 = .075. Post hoc analysis (LSD) revealed that reluctant virgins (M = 114.4) had significantly lower social self-esteem when compared non-virgins (M = 138.5). Though non-significant, reluctant virgins also had lower social self-esteem than satisfied virgins (M = 132.14).

A second one-way between-subjects ANOVA examining body image by sexual status revealed a significant main effect for sexual status on body image, $F(2,124) = 6.01$, $p = .003$, partial $\eta^2 = .088$. Post hoc analysis (LSD) revealed that reluctant virgins (M = 153.9) had a significantly poorer body image than both satisfied virgins (M = 196.57) and non-virgins (M = 155.12). Reluctant virgins felt worse about their bodies than both satisfied virgins and non-virgins.

A third one-way between-subjects ANOVA examining global self-esteem by sexual status revealed no significant differences between sexual status groups, F (2,124) = .719, p = .489, *ns*. There was a trend in the hypothesized direction with reluctant virgins (M =14.1) scoring lower than satisfied virgins (M =14.7) and non-virgins (M = 14.6).

A fourth one-way between subjects ANOVA examining sexual self-esteem by sexual status revealed a significant main effect of sexual status on sexual esteem (F = 2, 125) =4.54, p = .012, η^2 = .068). Post hoc analysis (LSD) revealed reluctant virgins (M = 2.92) have significantly lower sexual esteem than satisfied virgins (M = 4.0) and non-virgins (M = 3.77).

Self-Esteem by Gender

Due to the small sample of participants endorsing a virginal status, no statistical test could examine the hypothesis of whether belief in the double standard mediates differences in self esteem between male and female reluctant virgins. There were no statistically significant differences between virginal men and virginal women on any measure of self-esteem. However, two t-tests that analyzed differences by gender on social self-esteem and global self-esteem revealed statistically significant differences between men and women for both measures. Women differed from men on social self-esteem, $F(1,124)$ = 5.645, p =.019 η^2 = .044, with women (M = 137.23) having significantly higher social self-esteem than men (M = 133.76). Women also differed from men on global self-esteem, $F(1,131)$ = 4.149, p =.044 η^2 = .031, with women (M = 14.32) having significantly higher global self-esteem than men (M = 14.88).

Sexual Desires

A one-way between-subjects ANOVA revealed a significant main effect for sexual status on both subscales of the Sexual Desires Inventory. There was a significant main effect for sexual status on dyadic sexual desires, $F(2, 124) = 6.002, p = .003,$ $\eta^2 = .088$. Post hoc analyses (LSD) revealed that reluctant virgins had significantly higher dyadic sexual desires ($M = 51.60$) than satisfied virgins ($M = 36.71$). Non-virgins ($M = 49.5$) did not differ from reluctant virgins on dyadic sexual desires.

There was a significant main effect for sexual status on solitary sexual desires, $F(2,125) = 3.9, p = .023, \eta^2 = .050$ with reluctant virgins having significantly higher solitary sexual desire ($M = 26.90$) than satisfied virgins ($M = 18.57$). Non-virgins ($M = 24.8$) also had significantly higher solitary sexual desires than satisfied virgins. In accordance with prior research, there was no difference in sexual desires between non-virgins and reluctant virgins.

Exploratory Analysis of Sexual Status on Sexual Variables

One-way between subjects ANOVAs revealed a significant main effect for sexual status on the following subscales: sexual anxiety ($F = 2, 125) = 9.05, p = .000, \eta^2 = .126$), sexual motivation ($F = 2, 125) = 9.35, p = .000, \eta^2 = .130$), sexual satisfaction ($F = 2, 125) = 9.99, p = .000, \eta^2 = .138$), fear of sex ($F = 2, 125) = 5.46, p = .005, \eta^2 = .080$), and sexual depression ($F = 2, 125) = 22.9, p = .000, \eta^2 = .268$). As shown in Table 3, post hoc analysis (LSD) revealed that reluctant virgins have significantly higher sexual anxiety and sexual depression than both satisfied virgins and non-virgins. Reluctant virgins have significantly higher sexual motivation than satisfied virgins and significantly higher fear of sex than non-virgins. Reluctant virgins have significantly lower sexual satisfaction than both satisfied virgins and non-virgins.

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CHAPTER IV

Discussion

There is some modest support for the hypothesis that self-esteem differs between reluctant virgins, satisfied virgins, and non-virgins. The first hypothesis, which stated that reluctant virgins would have lower social self-esteem than non-virgins, was supported. These findings are consistent with prior literature. Reluctant virgins have a poorer body image and lower social self-esteem than non-virgins and satisfied virgins.

The second hypothesis could not be tested due to the small number endorsing virginity. There were no differences by gender for reluctant virgins on any of the self-esteem measures. A larger sample in future research may allow for the analysis of this hypothesis.

There is some modest support for the third hypothesis that dating experience differs between reluctant virgins and non-virgins. Reluctant virgins have shorter lengths of relationships than non-virgins and although there were no statistically significant differences between the sexual status groups on the number of dating partners, there was a trend in the hypothesized directions with reluctant virgins having fewer dating partners than non-virgins.

Also in accordance with prior literature, there were more men endorsing virginity than women in this study and there was no difference between the sexual desires of reluctant virgins and non-virgins. Interestingly, reluctant virgins had stronger sexual desires than satisfied virgins. Strong sexual desires without being able to acquire a sexual partner may lead to frustration in reluctant virgins.

Exploratory analyses revealed that some features of sexuality differed between reluctant virgins and non-virgins. Reluctant virgins had more sexual anxiety, more sexual depression, and a greater fear of sex than non-virgins. Fear and anxiety concerning sexual experiences may decrease the likelihood of a reluctant virgin engaging in future sexual intercourse. Sexual depression may be the result of the combination of a lack of sexual experiences and a strong desire to engage in sexual intercourse.

Exploratory analyses revealed that reluctant virgins also differed from non-virgins. Reluctant virgins were much more motivated than satisfied virgins to engage in sexual intercourse. This indicates that satisfied virgins and reluctant virgins represent two very different sub-groups of the same population of college virgins: one group (reluctant) with the desire and motivation to engage in intercourse and another group (satisfied) with no desire and less motivation to engage in intercourse.

A major limitation of this study is the small number of participants endorsing virginity, which, in turn, limited the power of the statistical analyses and the generalizability of the results to other college virgins. A larger sample of participants endorsing virginity may have assisted in identifying further differences between reluctant virgins and satisfied virgins. Within the sample a large majority of the participants were Caucasian and heterosexual. All participants were from a small eastern University. The homogeneous sample may decrease the generalizability of the results to other more diverse populations. Cultural and social views that differ from the homogeneous sample may influence the relationship between sexual status and self-esteem in ways that have not been examined in this study. Across cultures virginity may be viewed by society in

contrasting ways to the United States, thus decreasing or increasing the frequency of reluctant virginity within a population of college virgins.

Considering that many satisfied virgins cited marriage and moral values as the reasons for remaining virginal, it would be interesting to note any religious or spiritual differences between reluctant and satisfied virgins. The raised religion of participants as children and practicing religion of the participants were not recorded in this study. It would be interesting to note any differences between virginal participants by religion. Perhaps participating in a religion is another protective factor in maintaining the self-esteem of college virgins by providing a socially acceptable reason for remaining virginal such as waiting until marriage.

If moral values did not stem from a religious background, perhaps satisfied virgins had other similarities that assisted them in becoming proactive in their decision to remain virginal. Fear of sexually transmitted diseases may also play a role in the decision to remain virginal.

Within the population of reluctant virgins there are individuals who cannot have sexual intercourse due to physical or biological problems. There may be differences between reluctant virgins who have no known physical deficits versus reluctant virgins who have physical deficits that prevent them from having sexual intercourse, such as individuals who are born with partially developed sex organs.

It is hoped that continual research in this area will shed light on potential social deficits of reluctant college virgins and provide avenues to improve social functioning. Future research can focus on specific deficits in social skills and possible means of intervention to prevent reluctant virgins from having low social self-esteem. Adherence

to the traditional double standards have yet to be explored as an explanation of low self-esteem in reluctant virgins. Further research may focus on the identifying environmental (religious background, knowledge and fear of sexually transmitted diseases) and biological factors (sexual deficits due to physical abnormalities) that explain why reluctant college virgins remain virginal and to further separate reluctant virgins into sub-groups based upon similar life experiences or physical deficits.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Table 1: Reasons for Endorsing Virginal Status

Christian Beliefs (s)
Moral Values (s)
Moral Values (s)
Unmarried (s)
Waiting Until Marriage (s)
I Want to be Married (s)
Have not Found that Special Someone Yet (r)
Have not Found the Right Person (r)
Need to find a steady partner who I truly love (r)
Not finding the right person to give my virginity to (r)
Raised Christian and still feel some stigma about my sexuality, also haven't found the right person (r)
Never have had a Relationship (r)
No Boyfriend (r)
No Partner (r)
Shyness and Insecurity (r)

Notes: (s) means satisfied virgin
(r) means reluctant virgin

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APPENDIX B

Table 2: Differences in Self-Esteem by Sexual Status

	Reluctant Virgins M(SD)	n	Satisfied Virgins M(SD)	n	Non-Virgins M(SD)	n
Social Self-Esteem	114.4(33.35)ₐ	10	132.14(31.68)	7	138.49(21.48)ₐ	111
Global Self-Esteem	14.1(1.73)	10	14.7(2.43)	7	14.6(1.50)	111
Body Image	153.9(26.98)_b	10	196.57(21.79)_b	7	175.13(23.18)_b	111
Sexual Self-Esteem	2.92(.885)_ab	10	4.0(1.33)ₐ	7	3.77(.862)_b	111

Notes: $_a$ means statistically significant differences when compared with reluctant virgins with $p < .05$

$_b$ means statistically significant differences when compared with reluctant virgins with $p < .01$

Table 3: Exploratory Analysis of Sexual Status on Sexual Variables

	Reluctant Virgins M(SD)	n	Satisfied Virgins M(SD)	n	Non-Virgins M(SD)	n
Sexual Anxiety	2.98(.84)	10	1.8(.98)	7	1.93(.73)	111
Sexual Depression	3.08(.98)b	10	1.42(.42)b	7	1.6(.67)b	111
Sexual Motivation	3.16(.96)b	10	1.62(.57)b	7	3.16(.96)	111
Fear of Sex	2.92(.89)a	10	4.0(1.3)	7	3.77(.86)a	111
Sexual Satisfaction	2.44(.99)b	10	3.91(1.03)b	7	3.81(.94)b	111

Notes: a means statistically significant differences when compared with reluctant virgins with $p < .05$

b means statistically significant differences when compared with reluctant virgins with $p < .01$