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# College Students' Perceptions Of An Uncomfortable Sexual Experience

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# COLLEGE STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF AN UNCOMFORTABLE SEXUAL EXPERIENCE

by

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**Dedication**

This dissertation is dedicated to

My husband, Wayne Parent,

for his unwavering love and support throughout this long process,

My five grandchildren,

Riley, Haley, Ella

Gavin, and Preston,

who provided me with refreshing diversions,

and in loving memory of my mother,

Ethel Phillips,

who died just as I was beginning my Ph.D. journey.

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# Chapter I

## Introduction

Rape continues to be a major problem on college campuses across the United States (Karjane, Fisher, & Cullen, 2002). Although there is increased awareness concerning the problem of rape, even educated people that one would assume were free of prejudice have been shown to react negatively toward victims (Idisis, Ben-David, & Ben-Nachum, 2007). It is important to understand how rape victims are perceived in order to help others become more supportive, which affects victims' recovery process (Ahrens, 2006). The present study was designed to understand factors that predict how much support victims receive from their social network, including how much others acknowledge the incident as rape, blame the victim, and deem the incident should be reported to the police.

Many victims receive negative reactions from others, such as not considering the incident to be rape (Jenkins & Dambrot, 1987; Mason, Riger, & Foley, 2004; Peterson & Muehlenhard, 2004; Willis, 1992), blaming the victim due to character or situational factors (Filipas & Ullman, 2001), and not believing the incident should be reported to the police (Frese, Moya, & Megías, 2004). Research has demonstrated that these and other negative reactions from others have a detrimental impact on victims' recovery (Ahrens, 2006; Campbell et al., 1999; Ullman, 1996b, 1996c; Ullman & Filipas, 2001a). Victims of crimes such as robbery are rarely questioned about their role in the assault; however, rape victims are often blamed or at least held partially responsible for the assault (Best, Dansky, & Kilpatrick, 1992; Ward, 1995). Most rape victims disclose their experience to someone and many are subjected to negative reactions, which is strongly related to

poorer psychological outcomes on global measures (Briere & Jordon, 2004; Campbell, Ahrens, Sefl, Wasco, & Barnes, 2001; Chivers-Wilson, 2006; Davis, Brickman, & Baker, 1991; Koss & Figueredo, 2004; Stein, Lang, Laffaye, Satz, Lenox, & Dresselhaus, 2004; Ullman, 1996a; Ullman & Filipas, 2001b). After being exposed to negative reactions, many rape victims will stop speaking about the assault, which may also affect their recovery by inducing self-blame and/or by supporting the doubt that the incident qualified as rape (Ahrens, 2006).

A vast majority of rape victims will first disclose the assault to an informal support provider such as family, friends, or their partners (Ahrens, Campbell, Ternier-Thames, Wasco, & Self, 2007; Fisher, Daigle, Cullen, & Turner, 2003; Ullman, 1996a; Ullman & Filipas, 2001a). Previous research has demonstrated that positive reactions such as practical assistance, emotional support, and assistance with contacting necessary professional services (Davis et al., 1991) have little effect on psychological adjustment following rape (Ahrens, 2006; Campbell et al., 1999; Ullman, 1996c; Ullman & Filipas, 1996a). However, more recent research (Filipas & Ullman, 2001) has found that positive reactions from friends, but not other support sources, are especially important in the recovery process. Victims receiving positive support from friends had greater self-esteem and better post-rape adjustment than those receiving positive support from other support sources.

Although victims' recovery process is important, it is also important to examine the beliefs of those people that victims may confide in after rape in order to better educate students on how to help victims of rape. Using vignette methodology, the present study explored how college students perceived rape scenarios and which

factors played a role in their perceptions. Several key factors have been the focus of prior research and were identified in the current study as potential predictors. Specifically, the purpose of the study was to determine whether participants' gender, situational characteristics (e.g., setting), personal characteristics (e.g., victim's attire), belief in a just world, rape myth acceptance, and sex role stereotyping significantly predicted respondents' acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police. Frese et al. (2004) asserted that the interaction between stereotypical beliefs and situational factors affects how people judge victims following rape. Since belief in a just world, rape myth acceptance, and sex role stereotyping are all based on stereotypical beliefs, these three factors were studied to investigate their roles in attribution of rape.

**Attribution Theory and Belief in a Just World**

Attribution theory is concerned with the way individuals explain the behavior of others. The theory is a valuable tool that helps identify the types of causal inferences being made, as well as the characteristics of the observers who made the inferences (Gilmartin-Zena, 1983; Maes & Schmitt, 1999; Shaver, 1970; Sheridan, Gillett, Davies, Blaauw, & Patel, 2003). Observers who encounter a situation make decisions regarding why the situation occurred using available information and background/experiential characteristics. People are motivated to believe the world is just and that behavioral consequences are deserved in order to maintain a sense of efficacy and control over the environment (Anderson, Beattie, & Spencer, 2001). Attitudes and beliefs drive the attribution people make in response to situations. Thus, this theoretical approach is useful in exploring factors that may be involved in acknowledging the incident as rape,

blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police. Several factors have been identified as important elements in formulating decisions about rape including: victims' characteristics, observers' demographics, type of event encountered, and consequences of the event (Freeman, 2006; Gilmartin-Zena, 1983; Murray, Spadafore, & McIntosh, 2005; Shaver, 1970). Elements of these factors were included in the current study.

The belief in a just world theory is a perspective of the attribution theory that examines causality, victim's responsibility, and especially the reactions of the observer (Furnham, 2003; Lerner, 1980). According to the belief in a just world theory, individuals believe that people get what they deserve and deserve what they get. Belief in a just world creates a basis for deservingness or entitlement. If people fail to take adequate precaution, fail to prepare, or are not productive, then they deserve the negative consequences associated with their behavior. When people observe others who are victimized, they assume the victims are getting what they deserve. Several studies have found that a stronger belief in a just world was related to more denigrating perception of victims (Foley & Pigott, 2000; Mohiyeddini & Montada, 1998; Reichle, Schneider, & Montada, 1998).

Lerner (1998) argued that belief in a just world is a "fundamental delusion". It is 'fundamental' in the sense that is vital for most people's sense of security and sanity. It is 'delusional' in the sense that these are factually false beliefs that most people are reluctant to surrender. When people are confronted with undeserved suffering in others, their belief in a just world is threatened (Correia & Vala, 2003; Correia, Vala, & Aguiar, 2007; Lerner, 1980). To restore belief in a just world, people will alter the situation in

order for it to be 'just'. People may try to preserve their belief in a just world through supporting or compensating victims. However, if the cost of support or compensation is too great, they are inclined to blame the victims for their suffering. Thus, in order to maintain a belief in a just world, people are less likely to classify the incidents as rape, more likely to blame rape victims, and if they do not classify the incidents as rape, they are less likely to suggest that victims report the incident to the police.

**Potential Predictors of Acknowledgment of Rape, Blame, and Reporting Beliefs**

There are many potential factors that may contribute to acknowledging that rape occurred, blaming victims, and beliefs about whether or not the incident should be reported to the police. Based on theoretical and empirical literature, the following variables were examined for their potential predictive capacity: Belief in a just world, rape myth acceptance, sex role stereotyping, participant's gender, and two situation and victim specifics--setting of rape and the victim's attire. Previous research has demonstrated that it is the interaction between attitudinal factors and situational factors that account for the differences in rape attributions such as acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim' and deeming the incident should be reported to the police (Frese et al., 2004). The potential roles of these factors in understanding acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police are described in the following sections.

**Belief in a just world**. Studies on belief in a just world appear to primarily focus on blaming rape victims but do not appear to focus on rape acknowledgment or reporting. Previous studies have investigated the link between belief in a just world and blame (Lambert & Raichle, 2000) and the link between belief in a just world and blame

in relation to other variables such as priming with rape-related words (Murray et al., 2005) and the likable character of victims (Haynes & Olson, 2006). Many studies indicated that those who believe in a just world were more likely to blame victims of rape for their misfortune in order to maintain their belief that the world is just (Correia & Vala, 2003; Correia, et al., 2007; Lambert & Raichle, 2000; Murray et al., 2005). Theoretically, belief in a just world reduces fears that the same misfortune can happen to them.

**Rape myth acceptance**. Rape myths are "attitudes and beliefs that are generally false but are widely and persistently held, and that serve to deny and justify male sexual aggression against women" (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994, p. 134). Research has demonstrated that those who adhere to rape myths generally do not acknowledge the incident as rape (Jenkins & Dambrot, 1987; Mason et al., 2004; Peterson & Muehlenhard, 2004) and/or are more likely to blame victims (Frese et al., 2004; Mason et al., 2004). Thus, rape myth acceptance appears to contribute to the attribution one makes about rape. Additionally, in hypothetical rape scenarios researchers have found that those with greater rape myth acceptance were less likely to recommend that the incident should be reported to the police (Frese et al., 2004; Mason et al., 2004).

**Sex role stereotyping**. Sex role stereotyping is concerned with the idea that each sex has a standard set of behaviors and characteristics that society expects them to follow (Singleton, 1987). In Western society, men should be domineering, powerful, and sexually aggressive while women should be passive, submissive, and sexually reluctant (Yamawaki, 2007). Sex role stereotyping also contributes to the attribution one makes about rape. Sex role stereotyping studies however, appear to primarily focus on blame attributed to rape victims but do not appear to focus on rape acknowledgment or

reporting. Previous studies have demonstrated that those who endorsed traditional sex roles were more likely to blame victims for rape (Anderson & Lyons, 2005; Simonson & Subich, 1999; Yamawaki & Tschanz, 2005). Some studies have found that stereotypical attitudes toward women were more predictive of blaming the victim than was the participant's gender (Anderson & Lyons, 2005; Simonson & Subich, 1999).

**Victims' and situational characteristics.** Studies on victims' and situational characteristics have also primarily focused on blame but do not appear to focus on rape acknowledgment and reporting. Studies have examined common rape myths that endorse the relation between victim blame and a number of victim and situational characteristics including race of victim (Furnham & Boston, 1996; Mulder & Winkle, 1996), physical size of perpetrator (Ryckman, Graham, Thornton, Gold, & Lindner, 1998), alcohol consumption (Finch & Munro, 2005), past/current relationship with perpetrator (Frese et al., 2004; Monson, Langhinrichsen-Rohling, & Binderup, 2000; Simonson & Subich, 1999), and degree of injury (Frazier, Candell, Arikian, & Tofteland, 1994). However, Filipas and Ullman (2001) reported that three of the most common rape myths endorsed by individuals that victims had told about the rape were related to what the victim was wearing, being alone with the perpetrator in his home or in the victim's home, and the impossibility of being raped by a boyfriend.

Some older studies have examined the relation between setting and blame (Muehlenhard, 1988; Muehlenhard, Friedman, & Thomas, 1985), but most studies have focused on investigating a link between victims' attire and being blamed for rape. Often, using scenarios describing a sexual assault, studies have demonstrated that women dressed in revealing clothing were assigned more responsibility for rape than women

dressed in non-revealing clothing (Furnham & Boston, 1996; Whatley, 2005; Workman & Freeburg, 1999). Other studies used questionnaires to elicit opinions from professionals regarding the relation between clothing and sexual assault (Feldman-Summers & Palmer, 1980; Vali & Rizzo, 1991). Results indicated that the judges, police officers, prosecutors, and psychiatrists believed that women dressed in revealing attire invited sexual advances and were at greater risk of being raped than those dressed in non-revealing clothing. However, other studies employed scenarios and found no significant relation between attire and rape (Johnson, 1995; Johnson & Lee, 2000). Nevertheless, attire and setting appear to be part of the attributions one develops and were, thus, included in the current study. Therefore, the present study examined the role of belief in a just world, rape myth acceptance, sex role stereotyping, victim's dress, and setting of the rape in the attributions and judgments one develops about the rape.

**Demographics.** Previous studies have demonstrated that demographic variables such as age, gender, marital status, and race/ethnicity, are related to adherence to stereotypical beliefs about rape that may support victim blaming. Younger people have been found to be less accepting of rape myths than older people (Burt, 1980; Du Mont, Miller, & Myhr, 2003; Kalra, Wood, Desmarais, Verberg, & Senn, 1998; Nagel, Matsuo, McIntyre, & Morrison, 2005) and those who were married were found to be more accepting of rape supportive beliefs than those who were single. Studies that focused on race found that black college students (Giacopassi & Dull, 1986), Hispanic college students (Fischer, 1987; Jimenez & Abreu, 2003; Lefley, Scott, Llabre, & Hicks, 1993), and Asian college students (Mori, Bernat, Glenn, Selle, & Zarate, 1995) were more likely than white college students to endorse rape myths.

It has been well established that gender plays a significant role in perceptions regarding rape, particularly that males are more supportive of rape myths than females (Anderson, Simpson-Taylor, & Herrmann, 2004; Brown & King, 1998; Gylys & McNamara, 1996; Jimenez & Abreu, 2003; White & Kurpius, 1999). Anderson et al. (2004) surveyed middle school, high school, and college students on their beliefs related to rape supportive rules. They found that both boys and men endorsed more rape supportive rules than did girls and women. In a study that compared rape supportive beliefs among police officers and college students, Brown and King (1998) found that in both samples men were more supportive of rape myths than women.

Gylys and McNamara (1996) surveyed prosecuting attorneys and found that male prosecuting attorneys were more likely to endorse rape myths than female prosecuting attorneys. In another study, Jimenez and Abreu (2003) investigated attitudes of Latino and European American college students and found that regardless of race, males were more accepting of rape myths than were females. Using upper-class undergraduates, beginning graduate students, and mental health professionals, White and Kuprius (1999) found that regardless of professional status males adhered to more rape myth beliefs than females.

There does not appear to be a standard for selecting an age range when studying college students' attitudes regarding rape. Many previous studies used convenience samples when studying college students' attitudes (Anderson, et al., 2004; Arata, 1999; Ben-David & Schneider, 2005; Cowan & Ullman, 2006; Frese, Moya, & Megías, 2004; Johnson & Lee, 2000; Littleton & Axsom, 2003). The current study

followed suit and students were recruited from the available population, with age controlled in statistical analyses where appropriate.

Many studies conducted with college students have skewed populations regarding age, marital status, and race/ethnicity; thus, many previous studies have used age, marital status (Ben-David & Schneider, 2005; Simonson & Subich, 1999; Yamawaki, 2007; Yamawaki, Darby, & Queiroz, 2007; Yamawaki & Tschanz, 2005) and race/ethnicity (Esqueda & Harrison, 2005; Stockdale, Visio, & Batra, 1999; Tiegs, Perrin, Kaly, & Heesacker, 2007) as demographic descriptive variables and not research variables. Marital status and race/ethnicity were used in the present study as demographic descriptive variables. Age was used as a covariate where appropriate and gender was used as a demographic descriptive variable and a research variable.

**Limitations of Past Research and Purpose of the Current Study**

Previous research has demonstrated that negative reactions from others have an adverse affect on victims' recovery. As mentioned, throughout this paper, belief in a just world, rape myth acceptance, sex role stereotyping, participant's gender, victim's dress and setting of rape were selected for inclusion in the present study because of their relation to attribution theory. They are all factors that help to understand the role of attribution theory in predicting one's attitudes about rape. It appears that no published studies have examined the predictability of belief in a just world, rape myth acceptance, sex role stereotyping, and participants' gender with the combination of acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police.

**Research Questions**

Based on these limitations, the current research study was designed to expand the existing knowledge on prediction of respondents acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police. The specific research questions were:

1) Were there differences between rape victims, those who knew a rape victim, and those who did not know a rape victim by their belief in a just world, rape myth acceptance, sex role stereotyping, acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police?

2) Were there differences for gender and various dress and setting combinations in predicting acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police?

3) Were there significant correlations among belief in a just world, rape myth acceptance, sex role stereotyping, acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police?

4) Could acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police be predicted from gender, belief in a just world, rape myth acceptance, sex role stereotypes, dress, and setting?

It was expected that there would be differences between rape victims, those who knew a rape victim, and those who did not know a rape victim in predicting belief in a

just world, rape myth acceptance, sex role stereotyping, acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police. It was expected that rape victims would have lower belief in a just world, be less likely to adhere to rape myths, and be less accepting of sex role stereotyping than those who knew a rape victim and those who did not know a rape victim. It was expected that rape victims would be more likely to acknowledge the incident as rape, less likely to blame the victim, and more likely to deem the incident should be reported to the police than those who knew a rape victim and those who did not know a rape victim.

It was hypothesized that there would be an interaction effect among dress, setting, and gender in acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police. It was predicted that participants would be more likely to acknowledge the incident as rape when victim wore non-revealing clothing than when she wore revealing clothing. It was predicted that participants would be more likely to blame the victim when she wore revealing clothing than when she wore non-revealing clothing. It was predicted that participants would be more likely to deem the incident should be reported when victim wore non-revealing clothing than when she wore revealing clothing.

It was expected that participants would be more likely to acknowledge the incident as rape when victim expected her roommate to be home than when she knew her roommate was not home. It was expected that participants would be more likely to blame the victim when she knew her roommate was not home than when she expected her to be home. It was expected that participants would be more likely to deem the

incident should be reported when victim expected her roommate to be home than when she knew her roommate was not home.

It was hypothesized that females would be more likely than males to acknowledge the incident as rape. It was hypothesized that males would be more likely than females to blame the victim. It was hypothesized that females would be more likely than males to deem the incident should be reported.

It was predicted that there would be a positive correlation between just world beliefs, rape myth acceptance, sex role stereotyping, and blaming the victim, and a negative correlation between just world beliefs, rape myth acceptance, sex role stereotyping, and acknowledging the incident as rape and deeming the incident should be reported to the police.

It was predicted that acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police could be predicted from gender, belief in a just world, rape myth acceptance, sex role stereotypes, dress, and setting. It was predicted that the incident would be more likely to be viewed as rape by females, by participants who have lower belief in a just world, lower rape myth acceptance, adhere to fewer stereotypic sex roles, when victim wore non-revealing clothing, and when victim did not know roommate was out. It was predicted that the victim would be blamed less by females, by participants who have lower belief in a just world, lower rape myth acceptance, adhere to fewer stereotypic sex roles, when victim wore non-revealing clothing, and when victim did not know roommate was out. It was predicted that deeming the incident should be reported to the police would be supported more by females, by participants who have lower belief in a just world, lower rape myth

acceptance, adhere to fewer stereotypic sex roles, when victim wore non-revealing clothing, and when victim did not know roommate was out.

**Significance of study**

Despite years of campaigning, debating, and educating to increase awareness about the misconceptions of rape, many people continue to blame the victim (Anderson & Lyons, 2005). College age women are at greater risk of being raped than any other age group (Department of Justice, 2005), and research has shown that positive reactions from friends are important in the recovery process (Filipas & Ullman, 2001). Thus, the current study is important to help identify college students' attitudes regarding rape. Since belief in a just world creates a basis for deservingness or entitlement, it may be that college students who believe in a just world believe rape victims deserve what they got because they did not take adequate precaution or were in some way to blame for the rape. Understanding attitudes regarding rape may help in the development of educational and informational programs that teach others how to support rape victims and thus, prevent victims from being revictimized by those they confide in.

**Note**

In recent history, the term "survivor" has replaced the term "victim" when referring to those who live through an assault. The term survivor acknowledges the courage that women have to continue with their life after experiencing a sexual assault. The word "victim" was used throughout this paper to emphasize the fact that negative attitudes towards those who have been sexually assaulted contribute to continued victimization.

# CHAPTER II

## Literature Review

It is estimated that one in four college aged women will experience rape (Karjane et al., 2002; Rozee & Koss, 2001). These women may not only suffer from the emotional and physical trauma of rape, but they often experience being revictimized through negative reactions from family and friends (Ahrens, 2006). Thus, it is important to understand how others perceive rape victims in order to help minimize post-rape trauma and increase favorable support (Ahrens, 2006).

Ahrens (2006) conducted semi-structured face-to-face interviews with eight survivors of sexual assault. The average interview lasted 2.20 hours. The interview covered a wide range of content including questions regarding the assault, first disclosures, disclosure to formal support providers, disclosure to informal support providers, and reasons for non-disclosure. The results indicated that for most of the victims, they were blamed for the assault no matter what they did or how they responded. Many reported that they became silent about the assault because of being blamed, and the inappropriate, insensitive, and ineffective response from others.

Being blamed for the assault, insensitive reactions, and lack of support resulting from the disclosure were common responses received from formal support providers (Ahren, 2006). However, inappropriate support was common when victims disclosed to family and friends. Inappropriate support was described as behaviors or suggestions that were intended to be supportive but was experienced by the victim as harmful or ineffective in helping her to cope. Thus, it is important to examine the beliefs and attributions of those that victims may turn to for support.

**Attribution Theory and Belief in a Just World**

Attribution theory is concerned with the way people make casual explanations about why things happen (Försterling, 2001). Heider (1958), Jones and Davis (1965), and Kelley (1967) are all key figures in the development of the attribution theory. Fritz Heider is widely regarded as the originator of the attribution theory. Heider argued that people try to make sense of a situation by linking it to stable, predictable, and controllable facts or conditions about the world. Heider suggested that people are amateur scientists who search for cause and effect relation by piecing together available information until they produce a reasonable explanation. He called this process “naïve” or “commonsense” psychology.

According to Heider (1958), attribution is a three-step process: perception of the behavior, judgment of the intention, and attribution of the cause. First, the behavior in question must be perceived or observed. Next, a judgment of the deliberateness of the action must be determined. Finally, it must be decided if the person was forced to perform the behavior or if the person acted upon his or her own will.

Heider (1958) further contends that all behavior can be attributed to either internal or external factors. External factors are considered to be beyond the control of the person; therefore, he or she is not responsible for the outcome of the situation. Internal factors are considered to be within the person; thus, he or she is directly responsible for the outcome of the event.

To understand the outcome of an event, Heider argued that the perceiver evaluates both the external (environmental) and internal (personal) factors. He claimed that personal factors include both “ability” and “trying” (p.83). Ability is the stronger of

the two factors. If a person is judged to have high ability to control what is happening, he or she is more likely to be held responsible for the outcome of the event than if he or she is judged to have low ability. Trying is seen as the person's intention and how much effort he or she is exerting to accomplish the goal. Thus, if a person is seen to have high ability and low intention and effort, the perceiver is more likely to assign responsibility for the outcome to internal factors as opposed to external factors.

Building upon Heider's theoretical framework, Jones and Davis (1965) developed the correspondent inference theory. According to the correspondent inference theory, a person's intentions are inferred by the consequences of his or her behavior. This theory suggests that the perceiver judges a person's behavior and then attributes that behavior to an underlying disposition or personality trait. First, the perceiver determines whether the behavior was intentional or unintentional. If the perceiver decides the behavior was intentional, it is then inferred that the behavior corresponds to an underlying disposition or personality trait.

Kelley (1967, 1973) further extended Heider's theory by developing the covariation model. According to the covariation model, people observe clues and then make rational and logical attributions as to why people do what they do. He examined the factors that influence how people make internal and external attributions. He believed that causal attributions are developed depending on the information available to the perceiver. He argued that there are three types of information used when drawing inferences about others' behavior: consistency information, distinctiveness information, and consensus information. Consistency information refers to the degree that people perform the same behavior toward the same stimulus across time and circumstance.

Distinctiveness information refers to how people behave when presented with a different stimulus. Consensus refers to how other people react to the same stimulus.

Kelley (1967) argued that people make attributions about what caused a behavior when these three sources of information combine into one of two distinct patterns. High consistency, low distinctiveness, and low consensus lead to forming an internal attribution about the person's behavior. When consistency, distinctiveness, and consensus are all high, people are more likely to make external attributions than internal attributions. When consistency is low, regardless of state of distinctiveness and consensus, it is difficult to make an internal or external attribution. With low consistency, high distinctiveness, and low consensus, the behavior is seen to be caused by an interaction of the person and the environment. However, with low consistency, low distinction, and high consensus, there is no way to determine whether the behavior is due to an internal or external cause.

During the past five decades the theory of attribution has evolved and as a result, a number of diverse attribution theories have emerged. However, all attribution theories are concerned with how people interpret behavior in terms of its causes then use these interpretations to determine their reaction to the behavior. Attribution theories not only help identify types of causal inferences but they also help identify characteristics of the observers who made the inferences (Gilmartin-Zena, 1983; Maes & Schmitt, 1999; Sheridan et al., 2003). Generally, inferences are made according to available information and observers' background/experiential characteristics. Factors that may be considered before inferences are made regarding a situation include the specifics of the situation, the victim's characteristics, and demographics of the observer.

In order to demonstrate the role of both causal inferences and observer characteristics, Gilmartin-Zena (1983) interviewed 150 medical students from two Midwestern medical schools. The majority of the participants were middle class, Caucasian (90%), male (73%), and had a mean age of 26. Based on a scenario developed by Alexander (1980), Gilmartin-Zena manipulated five victim characteristics to test attribution of responsibility. The manipulation of factors resulted in two versions of the scenario; an "ideal" and a "non-ideal" rape victim. Manipulated factors were marital status, relationship, victim resistance, attire, and degree of injury. The "ideal" rape victim was married, did not know the perpetrator, struggled with the perpetrator, dressed in non-revealing clothing, and sustained severe injuries. The "non-ideal" rape victim was divorced, knew the perpetrator casually, did not struggle, dressed in revealing clothes, and sustained minor injuries. Participants read both scenarios and rated how responsible the victim was for the rape on a scale of 0 (no responsibility) to 9 (total responsibility). Results indicated that scores for the "non-ideal" scenario ranged from 0 to 7 ($M$ = .853, $SD$ = 1.37) whereas scores for the "ideal" scenario ranged from 0 to 5 ($M$ = .293, $SD$ = .729). Results also indicated that participant's sex was a significant predictor of assigning responsibility to victims.

Maes and Schmitt (1999) developed two new scales to investigate the difference between immanent justice and ultimate justice. The authors suggested that immanent justice is related to the belief that everything that happens must be just and thus victims are assigned more responsibility and more severe judgments. Ultimate justice, on the other hand, holds that today's injustice will be reconciled with justice in another world or in a larger span of time, thus victim are viewed in a more favorable light.

A sample of 2,531 participants was recruited from West and East German. The East Germany sample consisted of 58% males and the sample had a mean age of 49.15. The West Germany sample consisted of 61% males and the sample had a mean age of 44.56. Participants completed a series of five questionnaire booklets with about 2,500 items. Each booklet was administered about six weeks apart. The questionnaires measured beliefs in a just world, beliefs in control, draconian beliefs (tendency to react severely toward human faults and weaknesses), emotions, preferences for rules of distributive justice, and dispositional sensitivity to injustice. Results demonstrated that immanent justice was related to beliefs of internal control while ultimate justice correlated with the belief that situations and outcomes depend on fate. As previously stated, these attribution styles not only make causal inferences, but they also help to identify characteristics of the observers who make the inferences.

Belief in a just world is an attribution theory that focuses on causality, the victim's responsibility, and the reactions of observers (Lerner, 1977). The basic tenet of the belief in a just world theory is that people have a basic need to believe that the world is just and generally people get what they deserve and deserve what they get (Lerner & Miller, 1978). Belief in a just world helps people view their surroundings as orderly and stable. When people encounter injustices, dissonance is created. In order to restore equilibrium, people often use irrational tactics such as denial, reinterpreting the outcome of the event, reinterpreting the cause of the event, or reinterpreting the character of the victim.

In numerous experimental situations, researchers have found that the more unjust a situation appeared, the more the innocent victim was denigrated (Foley &

Pigott, 2000; Lerner & Miller, 1978; Reichle et al., 1998). When bad things happen to good people it creates a dissonance. In a just world bad things do not happen to good people; thus in order to eliminate dissonance and maintain belief in a just world, victims are often blamed for their misfortune.

Foley and Pigott (2000) surveyed 47 undergraduate psychology students and 59 jury-eligible residents to investigate the link between belief in a just world and victim blame. Participants completed a series of questionnaires including Rubin and Peplau's Just World Scale (1975). Then using a civil court case, participants were shown one of two photographs of a plaintiff that differed by the plaintiff's age. After viewing the photograph, participants listened to a 20-minute audio recording concerning the facts about the case and instructions for the jurors. Participants were then asked to assign a percentage of responsibility to the victim and the perpetrator; the total percentage had to equal 100%. They were also asked to assign a monetary award to the victim. Results indicated that students, but not residents, who scored high on just world beliefs attributed more responsibility to the victim and assigned a smaller monetary award than those who scored low on just world beliefs.

In a literature review, Lerner and Miller (1978) examined numerous experimental research articles that supported the just world belief theory. Lerner reported that there was a consistent pattern among the research articles, which demonstrated that those who witnessed suffering derogated the victim. However, the review also indicated that sometimes victims were not derogated if they could be compensated for their suffering or if they could be held responsible for their behavior.

Reichle et al. (1998) recruited 434 individuals to participant in a study investigating the relation between just world beliefs, guilt, and willingness to act prosocially toward disadvantaged people. Participants ranged from 18 to 86 years of age. Participants completed a series of questionnaires on two separate occasions five months apart, which measured general belief in a just world, existential guilt, and willingness to act prosocially. Results indicated that those who scored high on just world beliefs were more likely to alter their cognitions about the situation in order to maintain their belief regarding the justness of the world than those who did not score high on just world beliefs.

**Potential Predictors of Acknowledgment of Rape, Blame, and Reporting Beliefs**

The aim of the present study was to investigate the potential predictive factors that may contribute to acknowledging that rape occurred, blaming victims, and beliefs about whether or not the incident should be reported to the police. Based on previous rape research, the following variables were examined for their potential predictive capacity: belief in a just world, rape myth acceptance, sex role stereotyping, two situation and victim specifics--setting of rape and victim's attire, and participant's gender. The following sections describe the potential roles of these factors in understanding rape acknowledgement, victim blame, and belief that rape should be reported.

**Belief in a just world.** Previous research has clearly demonstrated a link between belief in a just world and blaming the victim. Studies have examined the role of belief in a just world and blame along with other factors including victim's attractiveness (Correia & Vala, 2003) and likable character of the victim (Haynes & Olson, 2006). In

each of these studies results demonstrated that the higher the belief in a just world the more likely the rape victim would be blamed.

The relation between belief in a just world and victim blame was examined using a convenience sample of 139 undergraduate psychology students (Lambert & Raichle, 2000). Participants completed questionnaires that measured general political ideology and just world beliefs. In addition, they read a date rape scenario and responded to a series of questions that measured their perceptions of the victim and the perpetrator. Results indicated that participants who scored high on belief in a just world scale were more likely than those who scored low on the scale to blame the victim for rape.

In another study, 34 undergraduate women were exposed to a series of single words on a computer screen then they read a vignette that described the first date between a college-aged man and woman (Murray et al., 2005). Half of the women were shown rape related words such as victimize, aggressive, and scream; the other half of the women saw neutral words such as rank, musically, and unlike. Results indicated that women who scored high on the belief in a just world scale and were exposed to rape related words were more likely to blame the victim than those who scored low on the belief in a just world scale and were exposed to neutral words.

Haynes and Olson (2006) recruited 186 undergraduate psychology students to participate in a study to investigate the relation between belief in a just world and victim character and responsibility. Participants were given one of four scenarios to read. The victim's character (likeable/unlikeable) and responsibility (high/low) for causing an accident were varied in each of the four scenarios. Because people may experience a threat to their belief in a just world when they are confronted with undeserved suffering

and will often try to modify the situation through compensation (Correia & Vala, 2003; Correia et al., 2007), the researchers asked participants how large of a monetary compensation they thought the victim deserved.

Results showed that participants with high belief in a just world were more likely than participants with low just world beliefs to diminish the worth of victims who were unlikeable in order to maintain their belief in a just world, which support the idea that bad people deserve to suffer. In accordance with Correia and Vala's (2003) findings, the results demonstrated that unlikeable/low-responsible victim's worth was diminished more than the unlikeable/high-responsible victim's worth because blaming the former victim served as an alternative way to preserve belief in a just world. Finally, those who scored high in belief in a just world and scored the victim as likeable/low-responsibility awarded greater monetary compensation than any other group. This suggested that more extreme defensive reactions were triggered in people with high belief in a just world thus creating a need to make the world just again through a large monetary compensation.

In summary, belief in a just world studies have demonstrated that people with high belief in a just world are more likely to blame victims than those with low belief in a just world. Blaming the victim for the outcome of the situation reduces dissonance and restores their belief that good things happen to good people and bad things happen to bad people. The literature has clearly demonstrated a link between belief in a just world and blaming the victim. However, no studies were found that examined the relation between belief in a just world and acknowledging the incident as rape or deeming the incident should be reported to the police.

**Rape myth acceptance.** Burt (1980) described rape myths as stereotyped, prejudicial, and false beliefs about rape and rape victims. Previous studies have shown that an incident was less likely to be defined as rape by those who endorse rape myths than by those who did not endorse rape myths (Jenkins & Dambrot, 1987; Mason et al., 2004; Peterson & Muehlenhard, 2004; Willis, 1992). In a sample of 655 freshman college students, Jenkins and Dambrot (1987) employed three different scenarios to investigate rape myth acceptance. Students were randomly given one of three conditions related to a concert date: (a) Monetary investment (male paid for both tickets), (b) Dutch-treat (each person paid for their own ticket), or (c) Pick-up (they saw each other at the concert). After reading the scenario, the students rated the statement "Keith raped Cathy" on a 5-point Likert type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Results indicated that males were less likely than females to agree that rape had occurred regardless of which scenario they read. Women were less likely to say rape had occurred in the "monetary investment" date scenario compared to the "pick-up" scenario. In other words, women indicated that they were more likely to acknowledge the incident as rape when the date was not planned than when the couple planned the date and the male paid for the tickets.

In another study investigating the link between rape myths and acknowledging the incident as rape, 157 female psychology students at a Florida university read a scenario that described a date between two college juniors (Mason et al., 2004). The participants were classified through a survey in one of three ways: acknowledged rape victim, unacknowledged rape victim (individual who had an experience that met the legal definition of rape but did not acknowledge the incident as rape), or non-victimized.

There was no difference in rape myth beliefs between the groups, but, overall, those who scored higher on the rape myth acceptance scale were more likely to blame the victim and less likely to acknowledge that rape had occurred.

Peterson and Muehlenhard (2004) surveyed 396 female undergraduate students enrolled in introductory psychology classes. Participants were asked to respond to a series of questions that determined if they had an experience that met the legal definition of rape. Eighty-six women reported having an experience that met the legal definition of rape; however, not every woman acknowledged the incident as rape. The researcher examined participants' rape acceptance using the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (Payne, Lonsway, & Fitzgerald, 1999). They found that women who did not acknowledge the incident as rape were more likely to support the myths that concerned blaming the victim. Unacknowledged rape victims were also more likely to support the idea that women who tease a man deserve to be raped and if victims do not fight back then it is not rape.

Many rape myths support the notion that women are somehow responsible for rape, with victims being blamed and not encouraged to report the incident to the police. Frese et al. (2004) examined the link between rape myth acceptance and blaming the victim using a sample of 182 undergraduate psychology students. They developed three scenarios for the study and varied them by one of three situations: acquaintance rape, marital rape, and stranger rape. Each participant read all three scenarios. Results indicated that across all three situations, those who scored high on rape myth acceptance also attributed more blame to the victim. Mason et al. (2004) also found that those who scored higher on rape myth acceptance were more likely to blame the victim.

In addition, Frese et al. (2004) and Mason et al. (2004) found that those with greater rape myth acceptance were less likely to recommend reporting the rape to the police.

In summary, rape myth studies have clearly shown that rape myths acceptance is related to acknowledging the incident as rape and blaming the victim. Studies have demonstrated that an incident was less likely to be considered rape and victims were more likely to be blamed if the attack did not meet the criteria for a classic rape, which is a violent attack by a stranger. Thus, as indicated by these studies, rape myth acceptance seems to affect perceptions of rape victims. The literature appears to be weaker in regards to the link between rape myth acceptance and deeming the incident should be reported to the police. Further research is warranted to investigate whether deeming the incident should be reported to the police is related to rape myth acceptance or other factors such as negative views of the legal system.

**Sex role stereotyping.** Sex role stereotyping is the culturally supported behaviors, attitudes, values, and beliefs that are considered appropriate for males and females on the basis of their biological sex. One hundred fifty Israeli undergraduate students participated in a study that examined the connection between sex role attitudes and attribution of rape (Ben-David & Schneider, 2005). Results indicated that traditional sex role norms were related to increased tolerance of rape and contributed to attributions made about rape. Yamawaki (2007) asserted that in heterosexual interactions it is conventional for men to be domineering, powerful, and sexually aggressive but convention for women indicates that they should be passive, submissive, and sexually reluctant.

Anderson and Lyons (2005) investigated the relation between gender roles and blame in rape. They recruited 121 undergraduate students, ages 18 to 40 years. Participants were randomly assigned one of four scenarios that had been patterned after an actual newspaper article reporting a rape. The results indicated that men were more likely than women to blame victims and have less liberal attitudes toward gender roles. However, when gender role attitudes were controlled for, participants' gender was no longer significant in predicting victim blame. This suggests that even though men and women differ on their tendency to blame victims of rape, it is primarily due to gender role attitudes rather than their gender.

Simonson and Subich (1999) assessed gender role attitudes using four different scenarios each describing a distinct type of rape: marital, date, acquaintance, or stranger. Two hundred nineteen undergraduate students, ages 17 to 52, were randomly assigned one of the four rape scenarios. Results demonstrated that the higher the score on gender-role stereotypes scale, the more likely the participant was to blame the victim and less likely to perceive the seriousness of the rape. In accordance with Anderson and Lyons (2005), gender was not found to be a significant predictor of rape attitudes when gender role attitudes were controlled.

Using the same model and three of the same four scenarios as Simonson and Subich (1999), Yamawaki and Tschanz (2005) examined the differences between American and Japanese students' perceptions of rape. One of three scenarios was randomly assigned to each of the 150 American students and the 150 Japanese students. The scenarios described either a marital, date, or stranger rape; the acquaintance rape scenario was not used due to limited number of participants. The

results supported the Simonson and Subich findings that gender role attitudes attributed to both victim blame and minimizing the seriousness of the incident. As found in other studies, gender was not found to be a significant predictor of rape attitudes when sex role attitudes were controlled (Anderson & Lyons, 2005; Simonson & Subich, 1999). However, in the marital rape scenario only, Japanese females were more likely than Japanese males to blame the victim and minimize the rape. The authors hypothesized that Japanese women may be self-protecting in order to deny their own vulnerability to sexual assault.

In summary, sex role stereotyping has been found to be a significant predictor of rape attitudes. Interestingly, sex role stereotyping studies have demonstrated that gender is not a significant predictor of rape attitudes when sex role attitudes are controlled. Many studies have examined the relation between sex role stereotyping and blaming the victim; however, the link between sex role stereotyping and participants' perception of acknowledging the incident as rape or deeming the incident should be reported to the police has not been studied.

**Victims' and situational characteristics.** Previous studies have demonstrated that victims' and situational characteristics contribute to blaming victims of rape. Previous studies have examined the relation between victim blame and either victim or situational characteristics such as the race of the victim (Furnham & Boston, 1996; Mulder & Winkle, 1996), physical size of perpetrator (Ryckman et al., 1998), alcohol consumption (Finch & Munro, 2005), past/current relationship with perpetrator (Frese et al., 2004; Monson et al., 2000; Simonson & Subich, 1999), and degree of injury (Frazier et al., 1994).

Filipas and Ullman (2001) examined the social reactions that 323 sexual assault victims received from informal and formal support providers. Informal support included friends and family. Formal support included clergy, police, physicians, mental health professionals, and rape crisis center personnel. The participants in the study included 202 community residents, 98 college students, and 23 women from mental health agencies. Results indicated that the most commonly endorsed rape myths concerned the victim's attire, being alone with the perpetrator in his home or in the victim's home, and the impossibility of being raped by a boyfriend or husband. Therefore, attributions and judgments one makes about rape were examined in the current study.

Some older studies have established a link between setting and blame or justification of rape (Muehlenhard, 1988; Muehlenhard et al., 1985). Two related studies examined 268 undergraduate males' attitudes regarding justification of rape under various circumstances (Muehlenhard et al., 1985). Vignette methodology was employed to describe dating situations. In both studies, two variables each with three conditions were manipulated: a) who initiated the date (she hinted, she asked, or he asked) and b) the dating activity (his apartment to talk, religious event, or movie). In the first study, an additional variable with two conditions regarding who paid for the date (they split the expenses or man paid all expenses) was also manipulated.

The first study included 100 males who were given a questionnaire that contained 11 vignettes in which all three variables were manipulated within each subject. The second study consisted of 168 males who read vignettes in which who initiated the date was manipulated between subjects and dating activity was manipulated within each subject. Both studies found participants perceived the rape as

more justifiable if the woman initiated the date and the couple went to the man's apartment than if the man initiated the date and they went to a religious event. In addition, results of the first study indicated that rape was more justifiable if the man paid for all expenses then if they split expenses. In another study, Muehlenhard (1988) employed the same 11 dating scenarios and investigated the attitudes of 540 male and female introductory psychology students. Findings from a previous study, that used only males, were replicated in this study (Muehlenhard et al., 1985).

A large number of studies have established a link between dress and blaming the rape victim. Research has demonstrated that the way a woman dresses may be interpreted as an indication of her character and her willingness to have sex (Workman & Freeburg, 1999). To examine attributions of fault to a rape victim, Furnham and Boston (1996) asked 121 university students ranging in age from less than 20 to over 60 years to respond to questions pertaining to 12 rape scenarios. The scenarios were exactly the same except clothing (non-revealing/revealing), race (White/Black/Asian), and level of resistance (kicked and screamed/froze and did not move or make a sound) were manipulated. Results indicated that the victim's dress was the most powerful determinant of victim blame. Significantly more blame was assigned to the victim dressed in revealing clothes. Contrary to previous findings (Anderson & Lyons, 2005; Simonson & Subich, 1999), the gender of the participant was found to be a significant predictor of rape attitudes. Anderson and Lyons (2005) and Simonson and Subich (1999) found that gender was not a significant predictor of rape attitude if sex role stereotypes were held constant. Thus, the inconsistency in the findings may be related to the fact that Furnham and Boston (1996) did not examine sex role stereotypes.

Whatley (2005) examined the link between dress and blame in marital rape. One hundred sixty undergraduate students, ages 17 to 42, were randomly assigned to read a scenario about a victim dressed in either revealing or non-revealing attire. The results supported previous research (Furnham & Boston, 1996; Workman & Freeburg, 1999; Workman & Orr, 1996), which demonstrated that victims dressed in revealing attire are blamed more than those dressed in non-revealing attire.

In another study, Workman and Freeburg (1999) examined the role of dress as an attribution of responsibility for date rape. Participants in a sample of 632 university students, ages 17 to 63, were presented with a rape scenario and one of three randomly assigned photographs of the victim. Three identical photographs of a female model were taken; the only difference was the length of the skirt. In the first pose the skirt was 3 inches below the knee, in the second pose the skirt was at the knee, and in the third pose the length was raise to 3 inches above the knee. The researchers found that the length of the skirt was significantly related to attribution of the victim's responsibility for date rape. Men attributed greater responsibility to the victim than women did.

In a 1980 study, Feldman-Summers and Palmer investigated beliefs about rape held by 17 judges, 22 prosecuting attorneys, 15 police officers, and 29 social service staff members. Findings showed that judges, prosecuting attorneys, and police officers were more likely to place blame and responsibility on the victim if she was dressed in revealing clothing.

Vali and Rizzo (1991) recruited 581 randomly selected U.S. psychiatrists to participate in a study investigating the role of revealing apparel in sexual assault against

women. The psychiatrists responded to a series of questions regarding their beliefs about revealing clothing and the risk of sexual assault. Results indicated that 82% of the participants believed that revealing clothing increases the risk of sexual assault for women and 72% supported the idea that short skirts increase potential risk of sexual assault.

In a more recent study, Whatley (2005) investigated the role of clothing and blame using marital rape scenarios. One hundred sixty undergraduate students were randomly assigned to read one of two scenarios in which the victim was dressed in either non-revealing or revealing clothing. Results indicated that the victim dressed in revealing clothing was rated as more responsible and deserving of rape than the victim dressed in non-revealing clothing.

Johnson (1995) and Johnson and Lee (2000) found no significant relation between the victim's dress and rape in two different studies with college students. In Johnson's (1995) study he asked 703 college students to read one of four versions of a vignette describing a date rape and to view a photograph of the victim. Clothing was manipulated in the photographs but not in the vignettes; however, type of date (planned, unplanned) and money spent (expensive, inexpensive) were varied in the vignettes. Johnson reported that in this study clothing may not have influenced attribution of blame because there were only subtle differences in clothing, whereas in other studies more drastic differences between non-revealing and revealing clothing were used.

Similarly, in Johnson and Lee's (2000) study regarding the effects of clothing on perceptions of date rape, 368 college students read one of four versions of a vignette in which two variables were manipulated, clothing (form fitting dress/ankle-length skirt with

oversized sweater) and behavior (provocative/nonprovocative). The vignette consisted of the woman's and the man's version of what happened. The researchers stated that in this study they made no attempt to draw special attention to the victim's clothing, which may have contributed to the non-significant finding. Nonetheless, the victim's clothing and setting appear to be part of the attributions one develops.

In summary, research has been weak on examining the relation between setting and blame; however, the relation between dress and blame has been more comprehensively investigated. During the 1980s, Muehlenhard (1988) and Muehlenhard et al. (1985) demonstrated that rape victims were judged according to where the rape took place. However, the location of the rape has not been a topic of research in the past 20 years. It appears that attitudes regarding the belief that woman dressed in revealing attire invite sexual advances and are at greater risk of being raped has not changed much over the past 25 years (Feldman-Summers & Palmer, 1980; Vali & Rizzo, 1991; Whatley, 2005). There appears to be a gap in the literature; studies have not focused on victims' dress or setting of incident and participants' perceptions of the rape in regards to acknowledging the incident as rape or deeming the incident should be reported to the police.

**Significance of study**

The current study is important to help identify college students' attitudes regarding rape in hopes of finding ways to reduce revictimizing victims. It is important to study the college population because college age women are at greater risk of being raped than any other age group (Department of Justice, 2005). Anderson and Lyons (2005) stated that even after many years of campaigning, debating, and educating to

increase awareness about the misconceptions of rape, many individuals continue to blame the victim. They found that rape victims were blamed even more when they did not appear to be socially supported. Filipas and Ullman (2001) reported that positive reactions from friends were important in the recovery process. Thus, it is important to understand college students' attitudes regarding rape in order to develop educational and informational programs that teach students how to be more supportive and hopefully, be less likely to revictimize rape victims.

# CHAPTER III

## Method

### Research Design

A one sample, experimental design was employed using college students and vignette methodology. Participants were randomly assigned to one of four vignettes that had been developed for the present study. Each vignette had two variables that were manipulated. This type of research design was appropriate due to random assignment of vignettes and manipulation of variables within the vignettes. The survey consisted of three sections. In the first section, participants read one of the four vignettes and answered questions about the degree to which they acknowledged that the incident was rape, blamed the victim, and deemed the incident should be reported to the police. This section also included three questions to determine if the participants perceived the two variables being manipulated in the scenario (victim's dress and setting of the incident). In the second section, participants responded to a series of items from three instruments regarding belief in a just world, rape myth acceptance, and sex role stereotyping. Participants responded to items in the first two sections using interval scales of measurement. The final section was a demographic questionnaire, which included age, gender, marital status, and race/ethnicity.

The scenarios were assigned by rotation to ensure equal distribution. Participants' responses were screened for missing data. Participants with greater than 20% of missing data were excluded from analyses. Mean substitution for individual items was utilized for participants with less than 20% missing data (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1995). The mean substitution was calculated separately for each

gender, as gender was expected to be an important factor in the relations among variables in this study. Participants' responses were screened for non-genuine responses such as a large number of same responses in a series or extreme outlier responses. Three manipulation check questions were used to determine if participants were aware of the two variables (dress and setting) that were controlled in the scenarios. The responses to these questions were screened for incorrect responses. Participants who answered the questions incorrectly were eliminated from data analyses that included the dress and setting variables.

**Data Collection Procedure**

After receiving Human Investigation Committee (HIC) approval, 315 instructors were contacted by e-mail to request permission to recruit students in their classes. One hundred and eight instructors responded to the e-mail. Seventy-nine instructors gave permission to visit their classes, 13 declined the request, and the remaining 16 instructors failed to set an appointment.

The principal investigator visited 85 classes to recruit participants. Students were informed about the study using the recruitment script (see Appendix B). Then e-mail addresses were collected from those interested in participating. A total of 739 students provided e-mail addresses and 337 students completed the surveys for an overall response rate of 45.6%.

**Participants**

Participants in this study were recruited from a large commuter university in a metropolitan area. A total of 337 students participated in the study. Nine participants were eliminated due to having more than 20% of missing data and 32 participants were

eliminated because participants reported that they had been victims of rape. No participants were eliminated due to a large number of same responses in a series or extreme outlier responses. For the remaining 296 participants, missing data were replaced with mean substitution values, which was calculated separately for each gender. Incorrect responses to the manipulation check questions were treated as missing data and excluded pairwise.

The participants were asked to provide their gender, age, marital status, and race/ethnicity on the survey. For statistical analyses, age and marital status were dichotomized. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the responses. The majority of participants indicated their gender as female (*n* = 162, 54.7%), with 134 (45.3%) reporting their gender as male.

The mean age of the participants was 25.86 (*SD* = 7.56) years, with a median of 23 years. Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 60 with most students' (82.6%) ages ranging from 18 to 30 years. Age was dichotomized, using the median age, to 23 and under (*n* = 157, 53.4%) and older than 23 (*n* = 137, 46.6%). Previous studies have considered students aged 23 and under to be traditional age students and students over age 23 to be non-traditional age students (Hermon & Davies, 2004; Justice & Dornan, 2001). For the purpose of establishing eligibility for financial aid, students age 23 and under have been considered financially dependent (U. S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2009). Traditional students typically finish their undergraduate education by age 23. Therefore, for the purpose of the current study, age was dichotomized to 23 years or younger and older than 23 years.

Most of the participants (*n* = 181, 61.4%) reported their marital status as single, with 47 (15.9%) indicating they were married. Thirty-six (12.2%) were living with a significant other. Marital status was dichotomized to single (*n* = 213, 72%) and married/cohabitating (*n* = 83, 28%). The largest group of participants indicated their race/ethnicity as Caucasian (*n* = 192, 64.9%), with 37 (12.5%) participants reporting their race/ethnicity as African American. Race/ethnicity was not used as a research variable due to the small number of participants in self-reported ethnic groups other than Caucasian. The responses to these demographic questions were summarized using frequency distributions for presentation in Table 1.

Table 1

*Frequency Distributions – Demographic Characteristics of the Sample*

| Demographic Characteristics | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Gender | | |
| Female | 162 | 54.7 |
| Male | 134 | 45.3 |
| Total | 296 | 100.0 |
| Marital status | | |
| Single | 181 | 61.4 |
| Married | 47 | 15.9 |
| Divorced | 13 | 4.4 |
| Widowed | 1 | 0.3 |
| Live with significant other | 36 | 12.2 |
| Other | 17 | 5.8 |
| Total | 295 | 100.0 |
| Missing | 1 | |
| Marital status dichotomized | | |
| Single/all other marital status classifications | 213 | 72 |
| Married/cohabitating | 83 | 28 |
| Total | 296 | 100.0 |
| Race/Ethnicity | | |
| African American | 37 | 12.5 |
| Arab American | 18 | 6.1 |
| Asian American | 15 | 5.0 |
| Caucasian | 192 | 64.9 |
| Hispanic American | 12 | 4.1 |
| Other | 22 | 7.4 |
| Total | 296 | 100.0 |

The participants provided their college majors on the survey. The sample included 63 different majors, which were recoded into six major areas: Business (11.2%), education (20.4%), engineering (10.2%), fine and performing arts (11.6%), helping profession and allied health (15.6%), and liberal arts (31.0%). Their responses were summarized using frequency distributions for presentation in Table 2.

Table 2

*Frequency Distributions – College Major*

| College Major | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Liberal arts | 91 | 31.0 |
| Education | 60 | 20.4 |
| Helping profession and allied health | 46 | 15.6 |
| Fine and performing arts | 34 | 11.6 |
| Business | 33 | 11.2 |
| Engineering | 30 | 10.2 |
| Total | 294 | 100.0 |

Missing 2

**Measures**

All participants read one of four scenarios and completed a series of instruments designed to measure the variables in the current study as well as a demographic survey. These are each described next. All instruments are included in Appendix A.

**Acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police.** To measure these constructs, vignette methodology was utilized. Numerous researchers have used vignettes in rape studies (Abbey, Buck, Zawacki, & Saenz, 2003; Ben-David & Schneider, 2005; Johnson & Lee, 2000; Mason, et al., 2004). Researchers develop vignettes that describe a rape situation and often include manipulated factors of interest. Some authors only use one vignette because they manipulate factors that are not within the vignette (Abbey et al., 2003; Mason et al., 2004).

However, other studies have used multiple vignettes in order to evaluate the effects of one or more variables (Ben-David & Schneider, 2005; Johnson & Lee, 2000). Ben-David and Schneider (2005) developed three vignettes in which they varied the

degree of acquaintance between the perpetrator and the victim. Each participant read only one of the three vignettes. Results showed that the severity of the rape was minimized as the degree of acquaintance increased. Johnson and Lee (2000) developed six vignettes (four from the victim's point of view and two from the perpetrator's point of view) in which they manipulated the victim's clothing (revealing, non-revealing) and her behavior (provocative, nonprovocative). The victim's clothing in the perpetrator vignette always matched the victim vignette. Each participant received a vignette describing the victim's version of the rape and another one describing the perpetrators point of view. Results indicated that participants' gender and the victim's behavior influenced participants' perceptions but clothing did not.

For the current study, four different heterosexual vignettes were developed using prior literature as models. After participants read the vignette assigned to them, they were asked to respond to a variety of questions about the situation, the most relevant to the present study's hypotheses were, the degree to which they acknowledged the incident as rape, blamed the victim, and deemed the incident should be reported to the police. In accordance with previous research, the words victim, perpetrator, rape, sexual assault, and force were not used in the vignettes in order to guard against biasing the reader (Ewoldt, Monson, & Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2000; Mason et al., 2004; Workman & Orr, 1996).

The vignettes depicted a hypothetical situation in which a female college student (Sarah) met with a male classmate (Brett) at a party and later that evening they went to her apartment where they engaged in kissing and fondling. Brett began to press Sarah for sex but she stated that she did not know him well enough to have sex with him.

Sarah persistently resisted Brett's pressure to have sex, but he continued until sexual intercourse occurred. The facts remained constant throughout each vignette, but two factors were varied, based on a review of literature detailed in chapters 1 and 2—dress and setting. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the four conditions: (a) non-revealing dress/unknowingly alone, (b) non-revealing dress/knowingly alone, (c) revealing dress/unknowingly alone, and (d) revealing dress/knowingly alone. Frequency distributions were used to summarize the number of surveys that used each of the scenarios as the basis of determining perceptions of factors associated with an uncomfortable sexual experience. The four groups were similar in size, with the scenario regarding non-revealing dress/unknowingly alone setting (*n* = 77, 26.0%) having the greatest number of participants. The scenario using revealing dress/unknowingly alone settings (*n* = 69, 23.4%) had the fewest number of participants. Table 3 presents results of this analysis.

Table 3

*Frequency Distributions – Type of Scenario*

| Type of scenario | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Non-revealing dress/unknowingly alone setting | 77 | 26.0 |
| 2. Non-revealing dress/knowingly alone setting | 75 | 25.3 |
| 3. Revealing dress/unknowingly alone settings | 69 | 23.4 |
| 4. Revealing dress/knowingly alone settings | 75 | 25.3 |
| Total | 296 | 100.0 |

The following nine questions were developed for the purposes of the current study in order to assess respondents' perceptions about the vignette assigned to them.

Each response was rated on a Likert type scale: (a) To what extent were Sarah's friends responsible for what happened? (b) To what extent do you think Sarah will be psychologically affected by this situation? (c) To what extent do you think Sarah should report this incident to the police? (d) To what extent was Brett promiscuous? (e) To what extent was Sarah promiscuous? (f) To what extent do you blame Brett for the outcome of this situation? (g) To what extent do you blame Sarah for the outcome of this situation? (h) To what extent did Brett have the right to expect Sarah to have sex with him? and (i) To what degree do you think rape occurred? Three of these questions (To what extent do you think Sarah should report this incident to the police? To what extent do you blame Sarah for the outcome of this situation? To what degree do you think rape occurred?) were the key factors being investigated in the present study. The other six questions provided additional information related to participants' perceptions of the vignette. For these nine questions, crosstabulations were used to summarize the responses to the factors by type of scenario. Table 4 presents results of this analysis. Additionally, to ensure that participants comprehended the factors in the scenario that were varied, three questions were added as a manipulation check: (a) What was Sarah wearing? (b) Was Sarah's roommate home? and (c) Did Sarah expect her roommate to be home? Participants with incorrect responses to these three questions were eliminated from analyses that included the dress and setting variables.

Table 4

*Factors Associated with an Uncomfortable Sexual Experience by Scenario (N = 296)*

| Factor | Scenario | | | | | | | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 (*n* = 77) | | 2 (n = 75) | | 3 (*n* = 69) | | 4 (*n* = 75) | | | |
| | *n* | % | *n* | % | *n* | % | *n* | % | *n* | % |
| To what extent were Sarah's friends responsible for what happened? | | | | | | | | | | |
| Not at all | 31 | 40.3 | 40 | 53.3 | 36 | 52.2 | 46 | 61.3 | 153 | 51.7 |
| Slightly | 21 | 27.3 | 15 | 20.0 | 13 | 18.8 | 19 | 25.3 | 68 | 23.0 |
| Somewhat | 10 | 13.0 | 13 | 17.3 | 8 | 11.6 | 6 | 8.0 | 37 | 12.5 |
| Moderate | 9 | 11.7 | 6 | 8.0 | 5 | 7.2 | 2 | 2.7 | 22 | 7.4 |
| Very much | 5 | 6.5 | 1 | 1.3 | 5 | 7.2 | 2 | 2.7 | 13 | 4.4 |
| Extremely | 1 | 1.3 | 0 | 0.0 | 2 | 2.9 | 0 | 0.0 | 3 | 1.0 |
| To what extent will Sarah be psychologically affected by this situation? | | | | | | | | | | |
| Not at all | 1 | 1.3 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 3 | 4.0 | 4 | 1.4 |
| Slightly | 2 | 2.6 | 2 | 2.7 | 3 | 4.3 | 7 | 9.3 | 14 | 4.7 |
| Somewhat | 8 | 10.4 | 9 | 12.0 | 12 | 17.4 | 16 | 21.3 | 45 | 15.2 |
| Moderate | 24 | 31.2 | 24 | 32.0 | 18 | 26.1 | 12 | 16.0 | 78 | 26.3 |
| Very much | 34 | 44.2 | 33 | 44.00 | 29 | 42.0 | 28 | 37.3 | 124 | 41.9 |
| Extremely | 8 | 10.4 | 7 | 9.3 | 7 | 10.1 | 9 | 12.0 | 31 | 10.5 |
| To what extent do you think Sarah should report this incident to the police? | | | | | | | | | | |
| Not at all | 22 | 28.6 | 18 | 24.0 | 15 | 22.1 | 34 | 45.3 | 89 | 30.2 |
| Slightly | 9 | 11.7 | 13 | 17.3 | 17 | 25.0 | 11 | 14.7 | 50 | 16.9 |
| Somewhat | 9 | 11.7 | 14 | 18.7 | 10 | 14.7 | 9 | 12.0 | 42 | 14.2 |
| Moderate | 19 | 24.7 | 8 | 10.7 | 11 | 16.2 | 10 | 13.3 | 48 | 16.3 |
| Very much | 11 | 14.3 | 14 | 18.7 | 9 | 13.2 | 5 | 6.7 | 39 | 13.2 |
| Extremely | 7 | 9.1 | 8 | 10.7 | 6 | 8.8 | 6 | 8.0 | 27 | 9.2 |
| Missing 1 | | | | | | | | | | |
| To what extent was Brett promiscuous? | | | | | | | | | | |
| Not at all | 3 | 3.9 | 1 | 1.4 | 1 | 1.4 | 1 | 1.3 | 6 | 2.0 |
| Slightly | 2 | 2.6 | 2 | 2.7 | 1 | 1.4 | 3 | 4.0 | 8 | 2.7 |
| Somewhat | 4 | 5.3 | 8 | 10.8 | 4 | 5.8 | 11 | 14.7 | 27 | 9.2 |
| Moderate | 15 | 19.7 | 11 | 14.9 | 14 | 20.3 | 11 | 14.7 | 51 | 17.3 |
| Very much | 27 | 35.5 | 32 | 43.2 | 30 | 43.5 | 25 | 33.3 | 114 | 38.9 |
| Extremely | 25 | 32.9 | 20 | 27.0 | 19 | 27.5 | 24 | 32.0 | 88 | 29.9 |
| Missing 2 | | | | | | | | | | |

| Factor | Scenario | | | | | | | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 (*n* = 77) | | 2 (n = 75) | | 3 (*n* = 69) | | 4 (*n* = 75) | | | |
| | *n* | % | *n* | % | *n* | % | *n* | % | *n* | % |
| To what extent was Sarah promiscuous? | | | | | | | | | | |
| Not at all | 3 | 3.9 | 2 | 2.7 | 3 | 4.3 | 4 | 5.3 | 12 | 4.1 |
| Slightly | 14 | 18.2 | 12 | 16.0 | 11 | 15.9 | 7 | 9.3 | 44 | 14.9 |
| Somewhat | 20 | 26.0 | 15 | 20.0 | 11 | 15.9 | 13 | 17.3 | 59 | 19.9 |
| Moderate | 28 | 36.4 | 24 | 32.0 | 23 | 33.3 | 21 | 28.0 | 96 | 32.4 |
| Very much | 10 | 13.0 | 16 | 21.3 | 19 | 27.5 | 24 | 32.0 | 69 | 23.3 |
| Extremely | 2 | 2.6 | 6 | 8.0 | 2 | 2.9 | 6 | 8.0 | 16 | 5.4 |
| To what extent do you blame Brett for the outcome of this situation? | | | | | | | | | | |
| Not at all | 0 | 0.0 | 2 | 2.7 | 2 | 2.9 | 3 | 4.1 | 7 | 2.4 |
| Slightly | 1 | 1.3 | 1 | 1.3 | 2 | 2.9 | 2 | 2.0 | 6 | 2.0 |
| Somewhat | 9 | 11.7 | 6 | 8.0 | 6 | 8.8 | 8 | 9.9 | 29 | 9.9 |
| Moderate | 16 | 20.8 | 18 | 24.0 | 17 | 25.0 | 20 | 24.1 | 71 | 24.1 |
| Very much | 31 | 40.3 | 23 | 30.7 | 24 | 35.3 | 27 | 35.7 | 105 | 35.7 |
| Extremely | 20 | 26.0 | 25 | 33.3 | 17 | 25.0 | 14 | 18.9 | 76 | 25.9 |
| Missing 2 | | | | | | | | | | |
| To what extent do you blame Sarah for the outcome of this situation? | | | | | | | | | | |
| Not at all | 4 | 5.2 | 3 | 4.0 | 3 | 4.3 | 4 | 5.3 | 14 | 4.7 |
| Slightly | 6 | 7.8 | 5 | 6.7 | 3 | 4.3 | 8 | 10.7 | 22 | 7.4 |
| Somewhat | 16 | 20.8 | 10 | 13.3 | 15 | 21.7 | 10 | 13.3 | 51 | 17.2 |
| Moderate | 31 | 40.3 | 26 | 34.7 | 24 | 34.8 | 30 | 40.0 | 111 | 37.6 |
| Very much | 18 | 23.4 | 20 | 26.7 | 20 | 29.0 | 18 | 24.0 | 76 | 25.7 |
| Extremely | 2 | 2.6 | 11 | 14.7 | 4 | 5.8 | 5 | 6.7 | 22 | 7.4 |
| To what extent did Brett have the right to expect Sarah to have sex with him? | | | | | | | | | | |
| Not at all | 42 | 54.5 | 35 | 46.7 | 44 | 63.8 | 36 | 48.0 | 157 | 53.0 |
| Slightly | 10 | 13.0 | 10 | 13.3 | 6 | 8.7 | 9 | 12.0 | 35 | 11.8 |
| Somewhat | 13 | 16.9 | 9 | 12.0 | 7 | 10.1 | 15 | 20.0 | 44 | 14.9 |
| Moderate | 4 | 5.2 | 11 | 14.7 | 6 | 8.7 | 7 | 9.3 | 28 | 9.5 |
| Very much | 7 | 9.1 | 8 | 10.7 | 5 | 7.2 | 5 | 6.7 | 25 | 8.4 |
| Extremely | 1 | 1.3 | 2 | 2.7 | 1 | 1.4 | 3 | 4.0 | 7 | 2.4 |
| To what extent do you think rape occurred? | | | | | | | | | | |
| Not at all | 19 | 24.7 | 18 | 24.0 | 17 | 24.6 | 23 | 30.7 | 77 | 26.0 |
| Slightly | 8 | 10.4 | 13 | 17.3 | 15 | 21.7 | 12 | 16.0 | 48 | 16.2 |
| Somewhat | 13 | 16.9 | 9 | 12.0 | 9 | 13.0 | 8 | 10.7 | 39 | 13.2 |
| Moderate | 13 | 16.9 | 9 | 12.0 | 13 | 18.8 | 13 | 17.3 | 48 | 16.2 |
| Very much | 15 | 19.5 | 15 | 20.0 | 9 | 13.0 | 10 | 13.3 | 49 | 16.6 |
| Extremely | 9 | 11.7 | 11 | 14.7 | 6 | 8.7 | 9 | 12.0 | 35 | 11.8 |

As indicated in Table 4, when asked “To what extent were Sarah’s friends responsible for what happened?” the largest group of participants (*n* =153, 51.7%) indicated that her friends were “not at all” responsible. Included in this number were 31 (40.3%) from scenario 1, 40 (53.3%) from scenario 2, 36 (52.2%) from scenario 3, and 46 (61.3%) from scenario 4.

The greatest number of participants (*n* = 124, 41.9%) indicated that Sarah would be “very much” psychologically affected by the sexual experience. This number included 34 (44.2%) who had read scenario 1, 33 (44.0%) who had read scenario 2, 29 (42.0%) who had read scenario 3, and 28 (37.3%) who had read scenario 4.

The greatest number of participants (*n* = 89, 30.2%) indicated “not at all” in regard to thinking Sarah should report the incident to the police. Twenty-two (28.6%) of the participants who had read scenario 1, 18 (24.0%) who had read scenario 2, 15 (22.1%) who had read scenario 3, and 34 (45.3%) who had read scenario 4 indicated that Sarah should not report the incident to the police. One participant did not provide a response to this question.

When asked to respond to the question, “To what extent was Brett promiscuous?” the largest group (*n* = 114, 38.9%) reported “very much”. Included in this number were 27 (35.5%) who read scenario 1, 32 (43.2%) who read scenario 2, 30 (43.5%) who read scenario 3, and 25 (33.3%) who read scenario 4. Two participants did not provide a response to this question.

The participants were asked, “To what extent was Sarah promiscuous?” the greatest number of participants (*n* = 96, 32.4%) answered “moderately”. This number

included 28 (36.4%) who had read scenario 1, 24 (32.0%) who had read scenario 2, 23 (33.3%) who had read scenario 3, and 21 (28.0%) who had read scenario 4.

The question, “To what extent do you blame Brett for the outcome of this situation?” was answered by the largest group of participants as “very much” (*n* = 105, 35.7%). Thirty-one (40.3%) participants who had read scenario 1, 23 (30.7%) participants who had read scenario 2, 24 (35.3%) who had read scenario 3, and 27 (35.7%) who had read scenario 4 responded that Brett was “very much” to blame. Two participants did not provide a response to this question.

When asked to indicate the extent to which they blamed Sarah for the outcome of the situation, the greatest number of respondents (*n* = 111, 37.6%) reported “moderate” blame. Among these participants were 31 (40.3%) who had read scenario 1, 26 (34.7%) who had read scenario 2, 24 (34.8%) who had read scenario 3, and 30 (40.0%) who had read scenario 4.

The majority of the participants (*n* = 157, 53.0%) answered “not at all” to the question, “To what extent did Brett have the right to expect Sarah to have sex with him?” Included in this number were 42 (54.5%) participants who had read scenario 1, 35 (46.7%) who had read scenario 2, 44 (63.8%) who had read scenario 3, and 36 (48.0%) who had read scenario 4.

The participants’ responses were generally mixed in regard to the question, “To what extent do you think rape occurred?” The largest group (*n* = 77. 26.0%) reported “not at all”, with this number including 19 (24.7%) who had read scenario 1, 18 (24.0%) who had read scenario 2, 17 (24.6%) who had read scenario 3, and 23 (30.7%) who had read scenario 4. Of the 35 (11.8%) who indicated “extremely” in response to this

question, 9 (11.7%) had read scenario 1, 11 (14.7%) had read scenario 2, 6 (8.7%) had read scenario 3, and 9 (12.0%) had read scenario 4.

The participants were asked to answer an open-ended question, “What two or three factors seem most important in reaching the judgments you assigned to the above questions?” As the participants were given the opportunity to provide more than one answer, the total number of responses exceeded the number of participants. The percentages for the nine open-ended questions were divided by the number of female (*n* = 162) and male (*n* = 134) respondents. Percentages for the summated items, her fault and his fault, were based on the total number of female (n = 338) and male (*n* = 263) responses. Responses to the open-ended question were categorized into nine themes. Table 5 provides results of the frequency distributions used to summarize their answers to this question.

Table 5

*Frequency Distributions – Scenario Responses* (*N* = 296)

| Scenario responses | Females (*n* = 162) | | Males (*n* = 134) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *n* | % | *n* | % |
| She did not say no, she consented, she kissed him, she didn't ask him to leave* | 99 | 61.1 | 80 | 59.7 |
| She invited him into her apartment* | 86 | 53.1 | 62 | 46.3 |
| He pressured her, he persisted, he was a jerk** | 62 | 38.3 | 44 | 27.2 |
| She resisted, she said no, she did not want to, he forced her** | 48 | 29.6 | 26 | 19.4 |
| The way she was dressed* | 15 | 9.3 | 12 | 9.0 |
| No force used* | 11 | 6.8 | 17 | 12.7 |
| They were both at fault | 8 | 4.9 | 12 | 9.0 |
| Her friends were at fault | 6 | 3.7 | 6 | 4.5 |
| Males can not help themselves | 3 | 1.9 | 4 | 3.0 |
| Her fault | 211 | 62.4 | 171 | 65.0 |
| His fault | 110 | 32.5 | 70 | 26.7 |

* Items that indicate her fault
** Items that indicate his fault
*Note*: Participants provided multiple responses; therefore the total number of responses exceeded the number of participants.

To summarize Table 5, the majority of both the female responses (*n* = 211, 62.4%) and male responses (*n* = 171, 65.0%) indicated that the incident was her fault. When looking at the specific comments, the greatest number of female responses (*n* = 99, 61.1%) and male responses (*n* = 80, 59.7%) indicated that she did not say no, she consented, she kissed him, or she did not ask him to leave, demonstrating that she was responsible for the incident. The second largest group of responses (female = 86, 53.1%; male = 62, 46.3%) indicated that the participants believed that she had invited

him into her apartment, which also placed the onus on her for the incident. Sixty-two (38.3%) female responses and 44 (27.2%) male responses provided an indication that the participants perceived that he pressured her, he persisted, or he was a jerk, providing support that he was at fault for the incident. Forty-eight (29.6%) female responses and 26 (19.4%) male responses demonstrated that the participants held the male responsible for the incident based on the responses, which indicated that she resisted, she said no, she did not want to, or he forced her. According to 15 (9.3%) female responses and 12 (9.0%) male responses, the female was responsible for the incident because of the way she was dressed. Eleven (6.8%) female responses and 17 (12.7%) male responses showed that the participants thought that the female was at fault for the incident because no force was used. The remaining items on the table did not assign responsibility for the incident to either the male or female in the scenario.

An additional question, “If you had to decide, do you think rape occurred?” was used to narrow participants’ response to a yes or no answer. Crosstabulations were used to summarize the responses by gender. Table 6 presents results of this analysis.

Table 6

*Crosstabulations –Did Rape Occur? (N = 296)*

| Did rape occur? | Female | | Male | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *n* | % | *n* | % | *n* | % |
| Yes | 76 | 47.2 | 45 | 33.8 | 121 | 41.2 |
| No | 85 | 52.8 | 88 | 66.2 | 173 | 58.8 |
| Total | 161 | 100.0 | 133 | 100.0 | 294 | 100.0 |

Missing Female 1
Male 1

As shown in Table 6, the majority of the participants (*n* = 173, 58.8%) indicated they thought that a rape had not occurred. Included in this number were 85 (52.8%) female students and 88 (66.2%) male students. Two students did not respond to this question.

**Belief in a just world.** Even though the Just World Scale was developed in 1975 (Rubin & Peplau, 1975), it continues to be the most widely used scale to measure just world beliefs (Furnham, 2003; Hafer & Bègue, 2005). The Just World Scale is a 20-item scale that measures the degree to which people believe the world is a just place where people get what they deserve (Rubin & Peplau, 1975). Loo (2002) determined that the 20-item scale included two subscales: Just World and Unjust World. Eleven of 20 items endorse "just world" views with statements such as "Students almost always deserve the grade they received in school" (Loo, 2002). The remaining 9 items endorse "unjust world" views with statements such as "In professional sports, many fouls and infractions never get called by the referee." Participants indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with statements on a 6-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 6 (strongly disagree).

The original 20-item Just World Scale was developed using a sample of 90 male and 90 female undergraduates (Rubin & Peplau, 1975) and the validation of two distinct subscales was determined using a sample of 253 undergraduate management students (Loo, 2002). The Cronbach alphas for the two subscales were relatively low for both males and females: Just World ($\alpha$ = 0.60; $\alpha$ = 0.77), Unjust World ($\alpha$ = 0.57). Loo stated that even though the two subscales produced only moderate internal consistency

reliability, there were no “bad” items since all items were positively correlated with the other items in the scale and there were significant item-total correlations.

Cronbach alphas for the 20-item scale have been found to be in the modest to satisfactory range: .64 (Loo, 2002), .66 (DePalma, Madey, Tillman, & Wheeler, 1999), .78 (Hergovich, Ratky, & Stollreiter, 2003), .80 (Rubin & Peplau, 1975), and .83 (Braman & Lambert, 2001). Even with moderate internal reliability, Just World Scale continues to be the most widely used scale for measuring belief in a just world (Furnham, 2003; Hafer & Bègue, 2005). The newer just world scales have been found to have response biases, which is evident by their significant correlation with social desirability scales (Hafer & Bègue, 2005). The 20-item Just World Scale Cronbach alpha for the present study ($\alpha$ = .63) was comparable to previous studies (see Table 7).

Statements such as “Basically, the world is a just place” and “By and large, people deserve what they get” demonstrate Just World Scale’s face validity. The Just World Scale significantly correlates ($r$ = 0.61, $p$ = 0.001) with the six-item Belief in a Just World Scale (Dalbert, Montada, & Schmitt, 1987), which, according to Loo (2002), demonstrates concurrent validity. The Just World subscale had a stronger correlation ($r$ = 0.51-0.80, $p$ < 0.001) to the Dalbert Belief in a Just World Scale than did the Unjust World subscale ($r$ = 0.08-0.27), which suggests that the scales are tapping into two independent constructs. Scores on the Just World Scale and its two subscales, Just World and Unjust World, were found to be independent of social desirability for both males and females: Just World Scale ($r$ = -0.04; r = 0.02); Just World subscale ($r$ = -0.07; $r$ = -0.08); Unjust World subscale ($r$ = -0.09; $r$ = 0.04).

**Rape myth acceptance.** The Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale is a 45-item inventory that measures culturally accepted attitudes and beliefs about rape that are generally false but when endorsed are evidence of denial and justification of male sexual aggression (Payne, Lonsway, & Fitzgerald, 1999). Five of the 45 items are filler items. Participants rate the items on a 7-point scale that ranges from 1 (not at all agree) to 7 (very much agree). An overall rape myth acceptance score can be obtained from the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale as well as separate scores for seven subscales. The seven subscales reflect acceptance of specific rape myths: (a) She Asked for It, (b) It Wasn't Really Rape, (c) He Didn't Mean to, (d) She Wanted It, (e) She Lied, (f) Rape Is a Trivial Event, and (g) Rape Is a Deviant Event. The total score for the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale ranges from 40 to 280 with high scores indicating an overall high acceptance of stereotypic rape myths. Sample statements are: "If a woman goes home with a man she doesn't know, it is her own fault if she is raped" and "When a man is very sexually aroused, he may not even realize that the woman is resisting". A sample filler item is "It is preferable that a female police officer conduct the questioning when a woman reports a rape."

The Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale was developed using 604 university students and was found to be a useful tool to investigate rape myth acceptance among college students (Payne et al., 1999). Payne et al. demonstrated that the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale has good internal consistency for the overall scale with a Cronbach alpha of .93. Subscale Cronbach alphas ranged from .74 to .84. Correlations of each subscale with the total Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale ranged from .54 to .74. Item-to-subscale correlations ranged from .41 to .72 and item to total scale

correlations ranged from .31 to .68. Immediate test-retest reliability was assessed for Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale by repeating 20% of the rape myth items with a subset of participants. Good test-retest reliability was found between the first and second presentation of the items ($r$ = .90, $p$ < .001). For the current study, the Cronbach alpha for the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale was .91 (see Table 7).

The Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale demonstrated good construct validity with high correlations to measures of sex-role stereotyping, adversarial sexual beliefs, hostility toward women, and attitudes toward violence (Payne et al., 1999). Sex role stereotyping was assessed using the 9-item Sex-Role Stereotyping Scale (Burt, 1980), which measures the acceptance of common sexual stereotypes, predominantly those regarding women, and the 20-item Sexism Scale (Rombough & Ventimiglia, 1981), which measures more global stereotypes. Adversarial sexual beliefs were assessed using the 9-item Adversarial Sexual Beliefs Scale (Burt, 1980) and the 15 item Adversarial Heterosexual Beliefs Scale (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1995). Lonsway and Fitzgerald's 10-item Hostility Toward Women Scale was used to assess hostility toward women. Two scales were used to assess attitudes toward violence: the 6-item Acceptance of Interpersonal Violence Scale (Burt, 1980), which suggests that force and coercion are legitimate in intimate relationships and the 20-item Attitudes Toward Violence Scale (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1995), which more broadly measures acceptance of violence. Correlations between Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale and the above mentioned measures range from $r$ = .47, $p$ < .001 to $r$ = .74, $p$ < .001. This suggests that those with higher acceptance of rape myths hold more traditional gender role stereotypes, endorse the belief that sexual relationships are fundamentally

adversarial, hold more hostile attitudes toward women, and are more accepting of interpersonal violence. Overall the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale appears to be a good tool to distinguish between those who endorse rape myths and those who do not endorse rape myths.

**Sex role stereotyping.** The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory is a 22-item scale designed to measure sexist antipathy and a subjectively positive view of women (Glick & Fiske, 1996). The inventory has two subscales, Hostile Sexism and Benevolent Sexism, each with 11 items, which encompasses three subfactors: power (dominative or protective paternalism), gender differentiation (competitive or complementary), and heterosexuality (hostile or intimate heterosexuality). The Hostile Sexism and Benevolent Sexism are positively correlated; however, Hostile Sexism is related to negative stereotype images of women while Benevolent Sexism is related to positive stereotypes about women. All items are rated on a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). Total scores range from 6 to 132 with higher scores indicating greater ambivalent attitudes toward women. A sample Hostile Sexism item is "Many women are actually seeking special favors, such as hiring policies that favor them over men, under the guise of asking for equality." An example of items on the Benevolent Sexism is "In a disaster, women ought not necessarily to be rescued before men."

Six studies, with a total of 2,250 participants, were conducted to develop and validate the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Participants included undergraduate students from three different colleges and a non-student population recruited from public areas such as malls, restaurants, and laundromats. The inventory

consisted of 140 items for the first study but was reduced to 22 items in subsequent studies. For the six studies, Cronbach's alpha ranged from .83 to .92 for Ambivalent Sexism Inventory, from .80 to .92 for Hostile Sexism, and from .73 to .85 for Benevolent Sexism. The Benevolent Sexism yielded lower alpha coefficients due to the multidimensional character of the scale. Significant correlations between Hostile Sexism and Benevolent Sexism range from .31 to .55 for men and from .45 to .61 for women, which suggested that the two scales are not redundant. For the current study, the Cronbach alpha was .83 for the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (see Table 7).

The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory also demonstrated good convergent, discriminant, and predictive validity. Ambivalent Sexism Inventory, Hostile Sexism and Benevolent Sexism significantly correlated with four other sexism scales that tap into hostile aspects of sexism: the Attitudes Toward Women Scale (Spence, Helmreich, & Stapp, 1973), the Modern Sexism scale (Swim, Aikin, Hall, & Hunter, 1995), the Old-Fashioned Sexism scale (Swim et al., 1995), and the Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (Burt, 1980). The correlations for Ambivalent Sexism Inventory and the previously mentioned sexism scales were $r$ = .63, .42, .57, and .54, respectively with $p < .01$. The correlations for Hostile Sexism and the sexism scales were $r$ = .68, .48, .65, and .61 respectively with $p < .01$. The correlations for Benevolent Sexism and the sexism scales were r = .40, .24, .33, and .32 respectively with $p < .01$. The relation between Ambivalent Sexism Inventory and other sexism scales appears to be completely attributable to Hostile Sexism because when controlling for Hostile Sexism, there were no significant correlations between Benevolent Sexism and the other sexism scales ($r$ = .04, -.03, -.06 & -.02 respectively). As suggested by the authors, this indicated that other

sexism scales do not measure benevolent sexism. Thus, the correlation between Benevolent Sexism and other sexism scales is entirely due to its relation to Hostile Sexism.

Glick and Fiske (1996) developed a reliable Recognition of Discrimination Scale ($\alpha$ = .77) to test for discriminant validity. Hostile Sexism and Benevolent Sexism were entered in a regression analysis as predictors of Recognition of Discrimination. Recognition of Discrimination was found to be more strongly and negatively related to Hostile Sexism than to Benevolent Sexism, but once Hostile Sexism was partialed out, Recognition of Discrimination was weakly but positively related to Benevolent Sexism. The importance of distinguishing between these two types of sexism is demonstrated by the different directions of the correlation of Recognition of Discrimination to Hostile Sexism and Benevolent Sexism.

To demonstrate predictive validity of the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory three studies were conducted, one with undergraduate students and two with community samples (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Hostile Sexism and Benevolent Sexism were used to predict overall attitude toward women and positive and negative stereotypes about women. Five pairs of bipolar adjectives (e.g., pleasant/unpleasant, good/bad) were used to assess overall attitudes about women. Thirty-two characteristic traits from four categories (masculine-positive, masculine-negative, feminine-positive, feminine-negative traits) were used to measure positive and negative stereotypes. The four categories formed reliable scales for all three studies (Cronbach alphas ranged from .76 to .91).

In the two community samples, Hostile Sexism was significantly related to negative attitudes and stereotypes of women. Contrary, the Benevolent Sexism was significantly related to positive attitudes and stereotypes of women. However, these results were not duplicated with undergraduate men. The authors suggest that undergraduate men may be more reluctant to stereotype women in general because previous studies have shown that undergraduate men have been found to stereotype subtypes of women such as career woman/homemaker. For women who score high on the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory, both the Hostile Sexism and Benevolent Sexism predict negative attitudes and stereotypes of women.

To test the internal consistency reliability of the Just World Scale, Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale, and Ambivalent Sexism Inventory for this study, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were obtained. Results are presented in Table 7.

Table 7

*Cronbach Alpha Coefficients for Belief in a Just World, Rape Myth Acceptance, and Sex Role Stereotyping*

| Scale | Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients | |
|---|---|---|
| | Authors' Results | Present study |
| Just World Scale | .64 - .83 | .63 |
| Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale | .93 | .91 |
| Ambivalent Sexism Inventory | .83 -.92 | .83 |

To summarize Table 7, the Cronbach alpha coefficients obtained from the data for the present study were similar to the authors' reported alpha coefficients for all three scales.

**Demographic survey.** The demographic survey requested information on age, gender, marital status, race/ethnicity, and major in college. Gender, marital status, race/ethnicity, and major in college were considered nominal variables. Age was a ratio-scaled variable. Age and marital status were dichotomized for use as independent variables in analyses to test the research questions and associated hypotheses. A question regarding participants' familiarity with a rape victim was asked: "Do you know anyone who has been raped? If yes, was it a friend, family member, or yourself?" Previous research has demonstrated that when there is high personal relevance, participants attributed more favorable views of the victim (Johnson, 1995; Workman & Freeburg, 1999). Participants' responses were crosstabulated by gender and presented in Table 8.

Table 8

*Frequency Distributions – Knowledge of Rape Victim (N = 328)*

| Knowledge of Rape Victim | Female | | Male | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *n* | % | *n* | % | *n* | % |
| Know anyone who had been raped | | | | | | |
| Yes | 107 | 55.4 | 66 | 48.9 | 173 | 52.7 |
| No | 86 | 44.6 | 69 | 51.1 | 155 | 47.3 |
| Total | 193 | 100.0 | 135 | 100.0 | 328 | 100.0 |
| Who was raped | | | | | | |
| None | 86 | 45.0 | 69 | 51.1 | 155 | 47.5 |
| Self | 31 | 16.3 | 1 | .7 | 32 | 9.8 |
| Family member | 21 | 11.0 | 21 | 15.6 | 42 | 12.9 |
| Friend | 34 | 17.8 | 32 | 23.7 | 66 | 20.3 |
| Acquaintance | 19 | 9.9 | 12 | 8.9 | 31 | 9.5 |
| Total | 191 | 100.0 | 135 | 100.0 | 326 | 100.0 |
| Missing 2 | | | | | | |

As shown on Table 8, a total of 173 (52.7%) participants reported that they knew a rape victim. Of this number, 107 (55.4%) were female and 66 (48.9%) were male.

When asked who was raped, the largest group (*n* = 66, 20.3%) reported a friend. Thirty-four (17.8%) females and 32 (23.7%) males indicated a friend had been raped. Of the 31 (9.5%) who indicated an acquaintance had been raped, 19 (9.9%) were female and 12 (8.9%) were male. Two female participants did not indicate who had been raped.

The participants were then asked if they knew anyone who had been accused of rape and if they did, who was accused. The responses to this question were crosstabulated by gender. Table 9 presents results of this analysis.

Table 9

*Frequency Distributions – Knowledge of Someone Who had Been Accused of Rape* (*N* = 296)

| Knowledge of someone who had been accused of rape | Female | | Male | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *n* | % | *n* | % | *n* | % |
| Know of someone who had been accused of rape | | | | | | |
| Yes | 32 | 19.8 | 37 | 27.8 | 69 | 23.4 |
| No | 130 | 80.2 | 96 | 72.2 | 226 | 76.6 |
| Total | 162 | 100.0 | 133 | 100.0 | 295 | 100.0 |
| Missing 1 | | | | | | |
| Who was accused of rape | | | | | | |
| None | 130 | 80.2 | 96 | 72.7 | 226 | 76.9 |
| Self | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 0.8 | 1 | 0.3 |
| Family member | 4 | 2.5 | 5 | 3.8 | 9 | 3.1 |
| Friend | 11 | 6.8 | 16 | 12.1 | 27 | 9.2 |
| Acquaintance | 17 | 10.5 | 14 | 10.6 | 31 | 10.5 |
| Total | 162 | 100.0 | 132 | 100.0 | 294 | 100.0 |
| Missing 2 | | | | | | |

To summarize Table 9, the majority of the participants (*n* = 226, 76.6%) did not know anyone who had been accused of rape. This number included 130 (80.2%) females and 96 (72.2%) males. One female participant did not provide a response to this question.

One (0.8%) male indicated he had been accused of rape. Of the 9 (3.1%) who indicated a family member had been accused of rape, 4 (2.5%) were females and 5 (3.8%) were males. Twenty-seven (9.2%) participants indicated a friend had been accused of rape. This number included 11 (6.8%) females and 16 (12.1%) males. Two participants did not provide a response to this question.

**Procedure**

Data was collected using an Internet-based survey. Participants responded to the survey by reading questions on the computer screen and then entered their responses into the computer. Internet-based surveys have become widely used in the past several years and many studies have demonstrated that compared to other modes of data collection they are psychometrically sound and have many practical benefits (Carlbring et al., 2005; Denscombe, 2006; Gati & Saka, 2001; Jones, Fernyhough, de-Wit, & Meins, 2008; Truell, Bartlett II, & Alexander, 2002; Turner et al., 1998). Practical benefits include, but are not limited to, fewer errors when transferring data to statistical programs, greater ability to ensure participants' anonymity, avoidance of interviewer affects, standard administration, and reduced cost. In addition, previous research has demonstrated a greater response rate to sensitive or stigmatized behaviors (Turner et al., 1998).

Carlbring et al. (2005) compared Internet administered questionnaires to traditional paper and pencil administered questionnaires in a study that included 494 participants enrolled in an Internet based treatment program for panic disorder. Participants were randomly assigned to complete the questionnaire either by Internet or paper and pencil. The following day the participants completed the same questionnaire again, but used the other form of administration. Results demonstrated that the Internet based and the pencil and paper format had equivalent psychometric properties. In addition, the results showed a high and significant correlation between the two formats.

Using the Career Decision-making Difficulties Questionnaire, Gati and Saka (2001) compared Internet administered questionnaires to traditional paper and pencil administered questionnaires. The study compared the two versions of data collection in English and Hebrew. The Internet participants were from larger samples of people who completed the questionnaire at an Internet career site and were selected based on age to correspond with participants in the paper and pencil versions. In the English study, 403 college students, age 16 to 33, completed the paper and pencil questionnaire and 182 participants, age 16 to 33, completed the Internet questionnaire. The Hebrew study included 417 soldiers or recently discharged soldiers, age 19 to 27, who completed the pencil and paper questionnaire and 837 participants, age 19 to 27, who completed the Internet questionnaire. Results indicated that the internal consistency of the Internet version ($\alpha$ = .87) highly corresponded with the paper and pencil version ($\alpha$ = .88).

Jones et al. (2008) examined the reliability of Internet administered questionnaires using hallucination-proneness and persecutory ideations surveys. A convenience sample of undergraduates was recruited to complete the surveys either

on-line or by traditional paper and pencil method. A total of 751 participants completed the on-line hallucination-proneness survey and 183 completed the on-line persecutory ideations survey. The paper and pencil version of the surveys was completed by a sample of 188 students. The results demonstrated that the survey's mode of transmission had no affect and the Internet version ($\alpha$ = .88) was as reliable a method of data collection as the traditional paper and pencil method ($\alpha$ = .85).

The findings from these studies suggest that the computer method is at least as effective as traditional paper and pencil method. In addition, participants have reported that they prefer computer mode of data collection to either written surveys or face-to-face interviews (Erdman, Klein, & Greist, 1983; Hallfors, Khatapoush, Kadushin, Watson, & Saxe, 2000; Perlis, Des Jarlais, Friedman, Arasteh, & Turner, 2004). Thus, this method of data collection has been judged to be reliable and valid (Calbring et al., 2005).

Instructors were contacted by e-mail to obtain permission to recruit students in their classes. The researcher visited approved classes to recruit students. Students were informed that participants, 18 years and older, were needed for an on-line research study investigating college students' perception of an uncomfortable sexual experience. They were informed that the survey would take approximately 20 minutes to complete. Students were assured of anonymity due to use of Zoomerang's web deployment. Only one URL uniform resource locator (URL) was used for the entire survey, which prevented tracking of participants' e-mail addresses. Students were also informed that at the conclusion of data collection there would be a drawing in which four participants would be awarded a $50.00 Visa gift card. Students willing to participate in

the study were asked to provide the researcher with their e-mail addresses. Students were assured that their e-mail addresses would only be used to contact them regarding the study and would be destroyed after study information was sent to them. Upon completion of the survey, participants were provided a website link to click on if they wanted to be included in the Visa gift card drawing. After clicking on the Visa gift card drawing website link, participants were asked for their contact information, which was used only in the event that they won the drawing. Contact information included name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address. Two hundred forty-eight participants entered the drawing.

Each participant was contacted by e-mail and provided a URL to access the survey. Duplication of entries was prevented due to an option on Zoomerang that prevented participants from taking the survey more than once. Participants were provided information explaining the purpose of the research, the procedures, risks, benefits, estimated time needed to complete the questionnaire, and the names and contact information of the researcher and faculty sponsor. Participants were also assured that participation was strictly voluntary and they could withdraw at any time. Telephone numbers for the primary investigator and the Chair of the Human Investigation Committee was provided in the event that participants had any questions or concerns regarding the study at that time or in the future. Participants were assured of anonymity due to use of only one URL, which prevented Zoomerang from tracking e-mail addresses. Participants were informed that by completing the questionnaire they were agreeing to participate in the study. The drawing was held at the conclusion of data collection and four students were awarded $50.00 Visa gift cards.

**Statistical Analyses**

Data were analyzed using SPSS-Mac, version 17.0. Frequency distributions and measures of central tendency and dispersion were use to summarize the demographic data. Descriptive statistics were used to provide data on the scaled variables and inferential statistical analyses were used to address the research questions and to test the hypotheses. All decisions on the statistical significance were made using a criterion alpha level of .05. See Figure 1 for a description of the statistical analyses that were use to address the research questions and hypotheses.

| Research Questions & Hypotheses | Variables | Statistical Analysis |
|---|---|---|
| Preliminary analyses for the purpose of identifying potential control variables. | | |
| The purpose of these analyses was to determine if age and/or marital status produced statistically significant differences on belief in a just world, rape myth acceptance, sex role stereotyping, acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police. | <u>Independent Variables:</u><br>Age (Dichotomized to 23 and younger and over 23 years)<br>Marital status (Dichotomized to single and married/cohabitating)<br><br><u>Dependent Variables</u><br>Just World Scale<br>Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale<br>Ambivalent Sexism Inventory<br>Acknowledging the incident as rape<br>Blaming the victim<br>Deeming the incident should be reported to the police | Separate 2 x 2 multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) procedures were used to determine if the two independent variables, age (dichotomized into two groups – 23 and younger and over 23 years) and marital status (dichotomized into single and married/cohabitating), were contributing to differences in the three scales (Just World Scale, Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale, and Ambivalent Sexism Inventory) and to the three constructs (acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police).<br><br>As the purpose of this analysis was to determine if age and marital status, should be used as control variables in subsequent analysis, the interaction effects were examined first. If the interaction effects were not statistically significant, the main effects were examined. If a statistically significant difference was found on the MANOVA, |

| Research Questions & Hypotheses | Variables | Statistical Analysis |
|---|---|---|
| | | the univariate analysis of variance procedures were examined to determine which of the dependent variables were contributing to the statistically significant difference. For subsequent analyses using those variables as either dependent or criterion variables, the independent variable was used as either a covariate (for ANCOVA or MANCOVA) or control variable (stepwise multiple linear regression analysis). |
| 1) Were there differences for rape victims, those who knew a rape victim, and those who did not know a rape victim by their belief in a just world, rape myth acceptance, sex role stereotyping, acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police? | | |
| H1: It was expected that there would be differences between rape victims, those who knew a rape victim, and those who did not know a rape victim by belief in a just world, rape myth acceptance, sex role stereotyping, acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police.<br>$H_{1a}$: It was expected that rape victims would have lower belief in a just world than those who | <u>Independent Variables:</u><br>Knowledge of a rape victim<br><br><u>Dependent Variables:</u><br>Just World Scale<br>Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale<br>Ambivalent Sexism Inventory<br>Acknowledging the incident as rape<br>Blaming the victim<br>Deeming the incident should be reported to the police | Two separate one-way MANOVAs were used to determine if there were statistically significant differences between rape victims, those who knew a rape victim, and those who did not know a rape victim by the three scales (Just World Scale, Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale, and Ambivalent Sexism Inventory) and the three constructs (acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police). |

| Research Questions & Hypotheses | Variables | Statistical Analysis |
|---|---|---|
| knew a rape victim and those who did not know a rape victim.<br>$H_{1b}$: It was predicted that rape victims would be less likely to adhere to rape myths than those who knew a rape victim and those who did not know a rape victim.<br>$H_{1c}$: It was predicted that rape victims would be less accepting of sex role stereotyping than those who knew a rape victim and those who did not know a rape victim.<br>$H_{1d}$: It was predicted that rape victims would be more likely to acknowledge the incident as rape than those who knew a rape victim and those who did not know a rape victim.<br>$H_{1e}$: It was predicted that rape victims would be less likely to blame the victim than those who knew a rape victim and those who did not know a rape victim.<br>$H_{1f}$: It was predicted that rape victims would be more likely to deem the incident should be reported to the police than those who knew a rape victim and those who did not know a rape victim. | | . |

| Research Questions & Hypotheses | Variables | Statistical Analysis |
|---|---|---|
| 2) Were there differences for gender and various dress and setting combinations in predicting acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police? | | |
| $H_2$: It was hypothesized that there would be an interaction effect among dress, setting, and gender in acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police.<br>$H_{2a}$: Dress - acknowledging<br>It was predicted that participants would be more likely to acknowledge the incident as rape when victim wore non-revealing clothing than when she wore revealing clothing.<br>$H_{2b}$: Dress – blame<br>It was predicted that participants would be more likely to blame the victim when she wore revealing clothing than when she wore non-revealing clothing.<br>$H_{2c}$: Dress – reporting<br>It was predicted that participants would be more likely to deem the incident should be reported when victim wore non-revealing clothing than when she wore revealing clothing. | Independent Variables:<br>Dress (nominal)<br>Setting (nominal)<br>Gender (nominal)<br><br>Dependent Variables:<br>Acknowledging the incident as rape<br>Blaming the victim<br>Deeming the incident should be reported to the police<br><br>Covariates<br>Age | A 2 x 2 x 2 MANCOVA was used to determine if there were statistically significant differences for gender, dress, and setting combinations by acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police. Age and marital status were used as covariates where appropriate to remove the effects of these variables from the analysis.<br><br>If the three-way interaction was not statistically significant; the two-way interactions between gender and dress, dress and setting, and gender and setting would be examined. If the two-way interactions were not significant, the main effects of each independent variable would be examined.<br><br>The adjusted mean scores for the main effects would be examined to determine the direction of the statistically significant differences. |

| Research Questions & Hypotheses | Variables | Statistical Analysis |
|---|---|---|
| $H_{2d}$: Setting – acknowledging<br>It was expected that participants would be more likely to acknowledge the incident as rape when victim expected her roommate to be home than when she knew her roommate was not home.<br>$H_{2e}$: Setting – blame<br>It was expected that participants would be more likely to blame the victim when she knew her roommate was not home than when she expected her to be home.<br>$H_{2f}$: Setting – reporting<br>It was expected that participants would be more likely to deem the incident should be reported when victim expected her roommate to be home than when she knew her roommate was not home.<br>$H_{2g}$: Gender – acknowledge<br>It was hypothesized that females would be more likely than males to acknowledge the incident as rape.<br>$H_{2h}$: Gender – blame<br>It was hypothesized that males would be more likely than females to blame the victim. | | If any of the interactions were statistically significant, post hoc tests using simple effects analysis would be used to determine where differences were occurring on the scales for the interaction effects. |

| Research Questions & Hypotheses | Variables | Statistical Analysis |
|---|---|---|
| $H_{2i}$: Gender – reporting<br>It was hypothesized that females would be more likely than males to deem the incident should be reported. | | |
| 3) Were there significant correlations among belief in a just world, rape myth acceptance, sex role stereotyping, and acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police? | | |
| $H_3$: It was predicted that there would be positive correlations between just world beliefs, rape myth acceptance, sex role stereotyping, and blaming the victim, and negative correlations between just world beliefs, rape myth acceptance, sex role stereotyping, and acknowledging the incident as rape and deeming the incident should be reported to the police. | <u>Variables being correlated:</u><br>Just World Scale<br>Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale<br>Ambivalent Sexism Inventory<br>Acknowledging the incident as rape<br>Blaming the victim<br>Deeming the incident should be reported to the police | Pearson product moment correlations were used to determine the strength and direction of the relations between just world beliefs, rape myth acceptance, sex role stereotyping, acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police. |
| 4) Could acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police be predicted from gender, belief in a just world, rape myth acceptance, sex role stereotypes, dress, and setting? | | |
| $H_4$: It was predicted that acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police could be predicted from gender, belief in a just world, rape myth acceptance, sex role stereotypes, dress, and | <u>Criterion Variables:</u><br>Acknowledging the incident as rape<br>Blaming the victim<br>Deeming the incident should be reported to the police | Three separate hierarchical stepwise multiple linear regression were analyzed to determine if acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police could be predicted from |

| Research Questions & Hypotheses | Variables | Statistical Analysis |
|---|---|---|
| setting.<br>$H_{4a}$: It was predicted that the incident would be more likely to be viewed as rape by females, by participants who have lower belief in a just world, lower rape myth acceptance, adhere to fewer stereotypic sex roles, when victim wore non-revealing clothing, and when victim did not know roommate was out.<br>$H_{4b}$: It was predicted that the victim would be blame less by females, by participants who have lower belief in a just world, lower rape myth acceptance, adhere to fewer stereotypic sex roles, when victim wore non-revealing clothing, and when victim did not know roommate was out.<br>$H_{4c}$: It was predicted that deeming the incident should be reported to the police would be supported more by females, by participants who have lower belief in a just world, lower rape myth acceptance, adhere to fewer stereotypic sex roles, when victim wore non-revealing clothing, and when victim did not know roommate was out. | <u>Predictor Variables:</u><br>Gender<br>Just World Scale<br>Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale<br>Ambivalent Sexism Inventory<br>Dress<br>Setting | gender, belief in a just world, rape myth acceptance, sex role stereotypes, dress, and setting.<br><br>The initial step in this analysis was to construct an intercorrelation matrix of the criterion and predictor variables to reduce the total number of predictor variables included in the analyses. If a predictor variable was not significantly correlated to the criterion variable, it was not used in the stepwise multiple linear regression analyses.<br><br>If age and/or marital status were found to be significant in the preliminary analyses, they would be controlled in the stepwise multiple linear regression analysis by entering them first. Predictor variables were added in the following order:<br>Step 1 – age and marital status<br>Step 2 - gender<br>Step 3 - Just World Beliefs, Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale, and Ambivalent Sexism Inventory<br>Step 4 - dress and setting |

| Research Questions & Hypotheses | Variables | Statistical Analysis |
|---|---|---|
| | | If age or marital status were not found to be significant in the preliminary analyses, then the variables were added in the following order:<br>Step 1 - gender<br>Step 2 - Just World Beliefs, Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale, and Ambivalent Sexism Inventory<br>Step 3 - dress and setting |

*Figure 1*: Statistical Analyses

# Chapter IV

## Results of Data Analysis

Chapter four presents the results of the data analyses that were used to address the research questions and hypotheses developed for the present study. The purpose of this study was to examine participants' beliefs regarding victims of rape. The present study investigated whether situational characteristics (e.g., setting), personal characteristics (e.g., victim's attire), belief in a just world, rape myth acceptance, adherence to sex role stereotypes, and participants' gender significantly predicted respondents acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police.

Descriptive analyses for the three scaled variables (Just World Scale, Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale, and Ambivalent Sexism Inventory) are included in Table 10. These variables are used as dependent measures in Research Questions 1 and 2 and predictor variables in Research Question 4.

Table 10

*Descriptive Statistics: Belief in a Just World, Rape Myth Acceptance, and Sex Role Stereotyping (N = 296)*

| Scale | Mean | SD | Median | Actual Range | | Possible Range | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Minimum | Maximum | Minimum | Maximum |
| Just World Scale | 69.97 | 8.68 | 70.00 | 45.00 | 99.00 | 20.00 | 120.00 |
| Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale | 131.99 | 34.98 | 135.00 | 74.00 | 218.00 | 40.00 | 280.00 |
| Ambivalent Sexism Inventory | 73.78 | 15.01 | 74.00 | 36.00 | 117.00 | 22.00 | 132.00 |

To summarize Table 10, the mean total score on the Just World Scale was 69.97 (*SD* = 8.68), with a median score of 70.00. The actual scores ranged from 45 to 99, with possible scores ranging from 20 to 120. The mean total score for the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale was 131.99 (*SD* = 34.98), with a median score of 135. The actual scores ranged from 74 to 218, with possible scores ranging from 40 to 280. The mean total score for Ambivalent Sexism Inventory was 73.78 (*SD* = 15.01), with a median score of 74.00. The range of actual scores on this scale was from 36 to 117, with possible scores ranging from 22 to 132.

Responses to the three constructs addressing acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police were summarized using descriptive statistics. Results of these analyses are presented in Table 11.

Table 11

*Descriptive Statistics: Acknowledging the Incident as Rape, Blaming the Victim, and Deeming the Incident Should be Reported to the Police (N = 296)*

| Scale | Mean | SD | Median | Actual Range | | Possible Range | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Minimum | Maximum | Minimum | Maximum |
| Acknowledging the incident as rape | 3.17 | 1.75 | 3.00 | 1 | 6 | 1 | 6 |
| Blaming the victim | 3.94 | 1.21 | 4.00 | 1 | 6 | 1 | 6 |
| Deeming the incident should be reported to the police | 2.93 | 1.70 | 3.00 | 1 | 6 | 1 | 6 |

As shown in Table 11, the mean score for acknowledging the incident as rape was 3.17 (*SD* = 1.75), with a median of 3.00. The actual range of scores was from 1 to 6, with possible scores ranging from 1 to 6. Higher scores on this question indicated that participants acknowledged the incident as rape.

For the construct, blaming the victim, the mean score was 3.94 (*SD* = 1.21), with a median of 4.00. Actual responses on this question ranged from 1 to 6, with possible scores having the same range. Higher scores on this question indicated that participants blamed the victim.

The mean score for deeming the incident should be reported to the police was 2.93 (*SD* = 1.70), with a median score of 3.00. The actual responses on this question ranged from 1 to 6, with possible responses ranging from 1 to 6. Higher scores on this question indicated that participants deemed the incident should be reported to the police.

Pearson product moment correlations were used to determine the relations among the scaled variables and the three construct variables. Table 12 presents results of this analysis.

Table 12

*Pearson Product Moment Correlations: Belief in a Just World, Rape Myth Acceptance, Sex Role Stereotyping, and Acknowledging the Incident as Rape, Blaming the Victim, and Deeming the Incident Should be Reported to the Police*

| | Belief in a just world | Rape myth acceptance | Sex role stereotyping | Acknowledging the incident as rape | Blaming the victim | Deeming the incident should be reported to police |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Belief in a just world | | | | | | |
| Rape myth acceptance | -.02 | | | | | |
| Sex role stereotyping | .09 | .48*** | | | | |
| Acknowledging the incident as rape | .03 | -.16** | .04 | | | |
| Blaming the victim | -.01 | .25*** | .10 | -.19** | | |
| Deeming the incident should be reported to police | -.02 | -.10 | .04 | .75*** | -.18** | |

*Note.* $^{**}p < .01$, $^{***}p < .001$

As shown in Table 12, rape myth acceptance was significantly related to sex role stereotyping ($r = .48$, $p < .001$), indicating that greater rape myth acceptance was associated with greater sex role stereotyping. Rape myth acceptance was significantly

related to acknowledging the incident as rape ($r$ = -.16, $p$ < .01) and blaming the victim ($r$ = .25, $p$ < .001). Greater rape myth acceptance was associated with lower scores on acknowledging the incident as rape and greater scores for blaming the victim. No statistically significant relationship was found between rape myth acceptance and deeming the incident should be reported to the police. Scores for sex role stereotyping were not significantly related to the three constructs: acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victims, and deeming the incident should be reported to police.

Acknowledging the incident as rape was significantly related to blaming the victim ($r$ = -.19, $p$ < .01) and deeming the incident should be reported to police ($r$ = .75, $p$ < .001). Participants who had higher scores for acknowledging the incident as rape tended to have lower scores for blaming the victim and higher scores for deeming the incident should be reported to police.

The relationship between blaming the victim and deeming the incident should be reported to police was statistically significant ($r$ = -.18, $p$ < .01). Participants who were more likely to blame the victim were less likely to deem the incident should be reported to police.

**Preliminary Analysis**

Prior to answering the research questions, a preliminary analysis was completed in order to identify potential control variables. Previous studies using college students, including present study, have found skewed populations regarding age, marital status, and race/ethnicity (Ben-David & Schneider, 2005; Tiegs et al., 2007; Yamawaki & Tschanz, 2005). It was decided to eliminate race/ethnicity from the preliminary analysis due to the small sample sizes in groups other than Caucasian. The purpose of this

analysis was to determine if age and/or marital status were contributing to statistically significant differences in belief in a just world, rape myth acceptance, sex role stereotyping, acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police. First a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was run for the scaled variables (belief in a just world, rape myth acceptance, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police). Results are presented in Table 13.

Table 13

*2 x 2 MANOVA: Belief in a Just World, Rape Myth Acceptance, and Sex Role Stereotyping by Age and Marital Status*

| Source of Variation | Hotelling's Trace | *F* Ratio | *DF* | Effect Size |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Age | <.01 | .35 | 3, 245 | <.01 |
| Marital status | .01 | 1.10 | 3, 245 | .01 |
| Age x marital status | .01 | 1.08 | 3, 245 | .01 |

As shown in Table 13, findings on the 2-way interactions age x marital status were not statistically significant. The two main effects were not statistically significant, indicating that belief in a just world, rape myth acceptance, and sex role stereotyping did not differ by age or by marital status. Descriptive statistics were obtained for each of the variables. Table 14 presents results of theses analyses.

Table 14

*Descriptive Statistics: Belief in a Just World, Rape Myth Acceptance, and Sex Role Stereotyping by Age and Marital Status*

| Construct | Number | Mean | *SD* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Belief in a just world | | | |
| Age | | | |
| 23 years and younger | 157 | 69.33 | 8.92 |
| Older than 23 years | 137 | 70.34 | 8.39 |
| Marital status | | | |
| Single/all other marital status classifications | 123 | 69.48 | 9.08 |
| Married/cohabitating | 14 | 70.20 | 7.60 |
| Rape myth acceptance | | | |
| Age | | | |
| 23 years and younger | 157 | 129.95 | 34.01 |
| Older than 23 years | 137 | 123.04 | 30.41 |
| Marital Status | | | |
| Single/all other marital status classifications | 211 | 129.87 | 33.71 |
| Married/cohabitating | 83 | 118.73 | 27.86 |
| Sex role stereotyping | | | |
| Age | | | |
| 23 years and younger | 157 | 75.13 | 15.69 |
| Older than 23 years | 137 | 72.10 | 14.03 |
| Marital Status | | | |
| Single/all other marital status classifications | 211 | 75.52 | 14.63 |
| Married/cohabitating | 83 | 69.12 | 15.01 |

A second MANOVA was used to determine if the three constructs (acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police) differed among participants based on age and marital status. The results of the 2 x 2 MANOVA are presented in Table 15.

Table 15

*2 x 2 MANOVA: Acknowledging the Incident as Rape, Blaming the Victim, and Deeming the Incident Should be Reported to Police by Age and Marital Status*

| Source of Variation | Hotelling's Trace | F Ratio | DF | Effect Size |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Age | .04 | 3.32** | 3, 283 | .03 |
| Marital status | .02 | 1.43 | 3, 283 | .02 |
| Age x marital status | .01 | 1.18 | 3, 283 | .01 |

*Note.* $^{**}p < .01$

As shown in Table 15, the 2-way interactions among the independent variables were not statistically significant. The main effect age [$F$ (3, 283) = 3.32, $p < .01$ $d = .03$] differed significantly. The results of the analysis for marital status were not statistically significant. To determine which of the constructs (acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to police) were contributing to the statistically significant results, the univariate ANOVA procedures were examined. Table 16 presents the results of this analysis.

Table 16

*Univariate ANOVA: Acknowledging the Incident as Rape, Blaming the Victim, and Deeming the Incident Should be Reported to Police by Age*

| Construct | Sum of Square | *DF* | Mean Square | *F* Ratio | Effect Size |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Age | | | | | |
| Acknowledging the incident as rape | 25.32 | 1, 285 | 25.32 | 8.45** | .03 |
| Blaming the victim | <.01 | 1, 285 | <.01 | <.01 | <.01 |
| Deeming the incident should be reported to police | 22.97 | 1, 285 | 22.97 | 8.14** | .03 |

*Note.* $^{**}p < .01$

As shown in Table 16, statistically significant differences between younger and older participants were obtained for acknowledging the incident as rape [$F$ (1, 285) = 8.45, $p < .01$, $d = .03$] and deeming the incident should be reported to the police [$F$ (1, 285) = 8.14, $p < .01$, $d = .03$]. The remaining comparisons were not statistically significant. Descriptive statistics were obtained for the two constructs. Table 17 presents results of these analyses.

Table 17

*Descriptive Statistics: Acknowledging the Incident as Rape, Blaming the Victim, and Deeming the Incident Should be Reported to Police by Age and Marital Status*

| Construct | Number | Mean | *SD* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Acknowledging the incident as rape | | | |
| Age | | | |
| 23 years and younger | 156 | 3.42 | 1.71 |
| Older than 23 years | 137 | 2.83 | 1.75 |
| Marital Status | | | |
| Single | 210 | 3.19 | 1.77 |
| Married/cohabitating | 83 | 3.05 | 1.71 |
| Blaming the victim | | | |
| Age | | | |
| 23 years and younger | 156 | 3.88 | 1.20 |
| Older than 23 years | 137 | 4.01 | 1.22 |
| Marital Status | | | |
| Single | 210 | 3.89 | 1.24 |
| Married/cohabitating | 83 | 4.07 | 1.10 |
| Deeming the incident should be reported to the police | | | |
| Age | | | |
| 23 years and younger | 156 | 3.12 | 1.64 |
| Older than 23 years | 137 | 2.69 | 1.73 |
| Marital Status | | | |
| Single | 210 | 3.02 | 1.69 |
| Married/cohabitating | 83 | 2.66 | 1.71 |

To summarize Table 17, younger participants were more likely to acknowledge the incident as rape and deem the incident should be reported to the police than older were participants. Because of the statistically significant findings on the preliminary analysis, age was used as a control variable in analyses involving acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to police as dependent variables.

**Research Questions and Hypotheses**

Four research questions and associated hypotheses were addressed in this study using inferential statistical analyses. All decisions about statistical significance were made using a criterion *p*-value of .05.

*Research question 1*. Were there differences between rape victims, those who knew a rape victim, and those who did not know a rape victim by their belief in a just world, rape myth acceptance, sex role stereotyping, acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police?

First, a one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used to determine if there were statistically significant differences in the first three dependent measures (belief in a just world, rape myth acceptance, sex role stereotyping) between rape victims (self), those who knew a rape victim (other), and those who did not know a rape victim (none). Table 18 presents the results of the MANOVA.

Table 18

*One-way MANOVA: Belief in a Just World, Rape Myth Acceptance, and Sex Role Stereotyping by Knowledge of Rape Victim (Self, Other, or None)*

| Hotelling's Trace | *F* Ratio | *DF* | Effect Size |
|---|---|---|---|
| .06 | 2.99** | 6, 638 | .03 |

*Note*. **$p < .01$

To summarize Table 18, a significant difference was found between those who had been raped, those who knew a rape victim, and those who did not know a rape victim in their belief in a just world, rape myth acceptance, and sex role stereotyping, $F$ (6, 638) = 2.99, $p < .01$, $d = .03$. To determine which of the three scales were contributing to the significant outcome for knowledge of rape victim, univariate analyses of variance (ANOVA) were completed. Table 19 presents the results of these analyses.

Table 19

*Univariate ANOVA: Belief in a Just World, Rape Myth Acceptance, and Sex Role Stereotyping by Knowledge of Rape Victim (Self, Other, or None)*

| Construct | Sum of Squares | *DF* | Mean Square | F Ratio | Effect Size |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Belief in a Just World | .57 | 2, 323 | .29 | 1.41 | .01 |
| Rape Myth Acceptance | 5.94 | 2, 323 | 2.97 | 5.96** | .03 |
| Sex Role Stereotyping | 3.48 | 2, 322 | 1.74 | 3.86* | .02 |

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

As shown in Table 19, statistically significant results were obtained for rape myth acceptance, $F$ (2, 323) = 5.96, $p < .01$, $d = .03$ and sex role stereotyping, $F$ (2, 322) = 3.86, $p < .05$, $d = .02$. While the results on the univariate F tests were statistically

significant, the respective effect sizes were small, indicating the differences had little practical significance. The results for the belief in a just world were not statistically significant. To further determine differences in the three groups, all possible pairwise comparisons were made using Scheffé a posteriori tests. Results of these analyses are presented in Table 20.

Table 20

*Scheffé A Posteriori Tests - Belief in a Just World, Rape Myth Acceptance, and Sex Role Stereotyping by Knowledge of Rape Victim (Self, Other, or None)*

| Scale | Number | Mean | *SE* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Belief in a Just World | | | |
| Self | 32 | 3.57 | .08 |
| Other | 139 | 3.53 | .04 |
| None | 155 | 3.45 | .04 |
| Rape Myth Acceptance | | | |
| Self | 32 | $2.56_{a}$ | .13 |
| Other | 139 | 2.70 | .06 |
| None | 155 | $2.93_{a}$ | .06 |
| Sex Role Stereotyping | | | |
| Self | 32 | $3.05_{a}$ | .12 |
| Other | 139 | $3.31_{b}$ | .06 |
| None | 154 | $3.41_{a,b}$ | .05 |

Note: Means in a cell sharing subscripts are significantly different. For all measures, higher mean scores indicate greater agreement of the construct.

As shown in Table 20, a statistically significant difference was found between self ($M$ = 2.56, $SE$ = .13) and none ($M$ = 2.93, $SE$ = .06) for rape myth acceptance. The comparisons for sex role stereotyping were statistically significant for self ($M$ = 3.05, $SE$ = .12) and none ($M$ = 3.41, $SE$ = .05) and between none and other ($M$ = 3.31, $SE$ = .06). The remaining comparisons were not statistically significant.

Next a one-way MANCOVA was run on the other three dependent measures (acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police) to determine if they differed by knowledge of rape victim (self, other, none). Age was used as a covariate. Table 21 presents results of the MANOVA.

Table 21

*One-way MANOVA: Acknowledging the Incident as Rape, Blaming the Victim, and Deeming the Incident Should be Reported to the Police by Knowledge of Rape Victim (Self, Other, or None)*

| Hotelling's Trace | *F* Ratio | *DF* | Effect Size |
|---|---|---|---|
| .05 | 2.73* | 6, 630 | .03 |

*Note*. *$p < .05$
*Note.* Age was entered as a covariate

To summarize Table 22, the Hotelling's trace of .05 obtained on the MANCOVA was statistically significant, $F$ (6, 630) = 2.73, $p < .05$, $d$ = .03. This result indicated that acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police were statistically significant. However, the effect size of .03 was small, indicating the finding has little practical significance. Nonetheless, to determine which of the three dependent variables were involved in the statistically significant result, univariate ANOVAs were completed. The results are presented in Table 22.

Table 22

*Univariate ANOVA: Acknowledging the Incident as Rape, Blaming the Victim, and Deeming the Incident Should be Reported to the Police by Knowledge of Rape Victim (Self, Other, or None)*

| Construct | Sum of Squares | *DF* | Mean Square | F Ratio | Effect Size |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Acknowledging the Incident as rape | 42.17 | 2, 323 | 21.08 | 6.79** | .04 |
| Blaming the victim | 5.22 | 2, 322 | 2.61 | 1.71 | .01 |
| Deeming the incident should be reported to the police | 25.61 | 2, 322 | 12.80 | 4.35* | .03 |

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

As shown on Table 22, a statistically significant difference was found by knowledge of rape victim (self, other, or none) in acknowledging the incident as rape, $F$ (2, 323) = 6.79, $p < .01$, $d$ = .04. The comparison among the three groups for deeming the incident should be reported to the police also was statistically significant, $F$ (2, 322) = 4.35, $p < .05$, $d$ = .03. For both of these analyses, the respective effect sizes of .04 and .03 were small, indicating that while the findings were statistically significant, they had little practical significance. The comparison among the three groups on blaming the victim was not statistically significant. To determine which of the three groups (self, other, or none) were contributing to the statistically significant results, Scheffé a posteriori tests were used to compare all possible pairwise comparisons. Table 23 presents results of these analyses.

Table 23

*Scheffé A Posteriori Tests - Acknowledging the Incident as Rape, Blaming the Victim, and Deeming the Incident Should be Reported to the Police by Knowledge of Rape Victim (Self, Other, or None)*

| Scale | Number | Mean | SE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Acknowledging the incident as rape | | | |
| Self | 32 | $4.34_{a,b}$ | .33 |
| Other | 139 | $3.08_{b}$ | .15 |
| None | 155 | $3.23_{a}$ | .14 |
| Blaming the victim | | | |
| Self | 31 | 3.58 | .27 |
| Other | 139 | 3.87 | .10 |
| None | 155 | 4.01 | .10 |
| Deeming the incident should be reported to the police | | | |
| Self | 32 | $3.84_{a}$ | .33 |
| Other | 139 | $2.86_{a}$ | .14 |
| None | 154 | 2.99 | .14 |

Note: Means in a cell sharing subscripts are significantly different. For all measures, higher mean scores indicate greater agreement of the construct.

As indicated in Table 23, there was a statistically significant difference in acknowledging the incident as rape between self (*M* = 4.34, *SE* = .33) and none (*M* = 3.23, *SE* = .14) and between self and others (*M* = 3.08, *SE* = .15). For deeming the incident should be reported to the police, a statistically significant difference was found between self (*M* = 3.84, *SE* = .33) and other (*M* = 2.86, *SE* = .14). No statistically significant results were obtained for the remaining comparisons or for blaming the victim.

*Research question 2*. Were there differences for gender and various dress and setting combinations by acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police?

A 2 x 2 x 2 factorial MANCOVA was used to test these hypotheses. The dependent variables were: acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and

deeming the incident should be reported to the police. The independent variables in this analysis were dress, setting, and gender. Age was entered as a covariate. Participant with incorrect responses to the manipulation check questions regarding dress and setting were eliminated from analyses. Table 24 presents the results of the MANCOVA.

Table 24

*2 x 2 x 2 Factorial MANCOVA: Acknowledging the Incident as Rape, Blaming the Victim, and Deeming the Incident Should be Reported to the Police*

| Source of Variance | Hotelling's Trace | *F* Ratio | *DF* | Effect Size |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Dress | .02 | 1.49 | 3, 238 | .02 |
| Setting | .01 | .60 | 3, 238 | .01 |
| Gender | .03 | 2.38 | 3, 238 | .03 |
| Dress x setting | .03 | 2.18 | 3, 238 | .03 |
| Dress x gender | <.01 | .04 | 3, 238 | <.01 |
| Setting x gender | .02 | 1.45 | 3, 238 | .02 |
| Dress x setting x gender | .01 | .61 | 3, 238 | .01 |

As shown in Table 24, there were no significant interactions or main effects for acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police by dress, setting, or gender. Descriptive statistics were obtained for each of the main effects and the interaction effects. Table 25 presents the results of these analyses.

Table 25

*Descriptive Statistics: Acknowledging the Incident as Rape, Blaming the Victim, and Deeming the Incident Should be Reported to the Police by Dress, Location, and Gender*

| Construct | Number | Mean | *SD* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Location | | | |
| Acknowledging the incident as rape | | | |
| Unknowingly | 112 | 3.10 | 1.64 |
| Knowingly | 137 | 3.15 | 1.81 |
| Blaming the victim | | | |
| Unknowingly | 112 | 3.86 | 1.15 |
| Knowingly | 137 | 4.03 | 1.23 |
| Deeming the incident should be reported to the police | | | |
| Unknowingly | 112 | 2.87 | 1.61 |
| Knowingly | 137 | 2.80 | 1.73 |
| Dress | | | |
| Acknowledging the incident as rape | | | |
| Non-revealing | 128 | 3.27 | 1.76 |
| Revealing | 121 | 2.98 | 1.70 |
| Blaming the victim | | | |
| Non-revealing | 128 | 3.95 | 1.21 |
| Revealing | 121 | 3.96 | 1.18 |
| Deeming the incident should be reported to the police | | | |
| Non-revealing | 128 | 3.06 | 1.68 |
| Revealing | 121 | 2.59 | 1.64 |
| Gender | | | |
| Acknowledging the incident as rape | | | |
| Female | 138 | 3.36 | 1.76 |
| Male | 111 | 2.84 | 1.66 |
| Blaming the victim | | | |
| Female | 138 | 4.03 | 1.15 |
| Male | 111 | 3.86 | 1.24 |
| Deeming the incident should be reported to the police | | | |
| Female | 138 | 3.03 | 1.79 |
| Male | 111 | 2.59 | 1.50 |

| Construct | Number | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dress x Location | | | |
| Acknowledging the incident as rape | | | |
| Non-revealing x Unknowingly | 59 | 3.25 | 1.69 |
| Non-revealing x Knowingly | 69 | 3.28 | 1.82 |
| Revealing x Unknowingly | 53 | 2.92 | 1.59 |
| Revealing x Knowingly | 68 | 3.01 | 1.79 |
| Blaming the victim | | | |
| Non-revealing x Unknowingly | 59 | 3.75 | 1.11 |
| Non-revealing x Knowingly | 69 | 4.12 | 1.28 |
| Revealing x Unknowingly | 53 | 3.98 | 1.19 |
| Revealing x Knowingly | 68 | 3.94 | 1.18 |
| Deeming the incident should be reported to the police | | | |
| Non-revealing x Unknowingly | 59 | 2.97 | 1.66 |
| Non-revealing x Knowingly | 69 | 3.14 | 1.71 |
| Revealing x Unknowingly | 53 | 2.77 | 1.57 |
| Revealing x Knowingly | 68 | 2.44 | 1.69 |
| Dress x Gender | | | |
| Acknowledging the incident as rape | | | |
| Non-revealing x Female | 69 | 3.55 | 1.81 |
| Non-revealing x Male | 59 | 2.93 | 1.64 |
| Revealing x Female | 69 | 3.16 | 1.69 |
| Revealing x Male | 52 | 2.73 | 1.69 |
| Blaming the victim | | | |
| Non-revealing x Female | 69 | 4.01 | 1.23 |
| Non-revealing x Male | 59 | 3.86 | 1.20 |
| Revealing x Female | 69 | 4.04 | 1.08 |
| Revealing x Male | 52 | 3.85 | 1.30 |
| Deeming the incident should be reported to the police | | | |
| Non-revealing x Female | 69 | 3.30 | 1.79 |
| Non-revealing x Male | 59 | 2.78 | 1.51 |
| Revealing x Female | 69 | 2.75 | 1.74 |
| Revealing x Male | 52 | 2.37 | 1.50 |

| Construct | Number | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|
| Location x Gender | | | |
| Acknowledging the incident as rape | | | |
| Unknowingly x Female | 60 | 3.30 | 1.68 |
| Unknowingly x Male | 52 | 2.87 | 1.59 |
| Knowingly x Female | 78 | 3.40 | 1.83 |
| Knowingly x Male | 59 | 2.81 | 1.74 |
| Blaming the victim | | | |
| Unknowingly x Female | 60 | 3.88 | 1.20 |
| Unknowingly x Male | 52 | 3.83 | 1.11 |
| Knowingly x Female | 78 | 4.14 | 1.11 |
| Knowingly x Male | 59 | 3.88 | 1.37 |
| Deeming the incident should be reported to the police | | | |
| Unknowingly l x Female | 60 | 3.18 | 1.70 |
| Unknowingly x Male | 52 | 2.52 | 1.44 |
| Knowingly x Female | 78 | 2.91 | 1.85 |
| Knowingly x Male | 59 | 2.64 | 1.56 |
| Dress x Location x Gender | | | |
| Acknowledging the incident as rape | | | |
| Non-revealing x Unknowingly x Female | 30 | 3.60 | 1.77 |
| Non-revealing x Unknowingly x Male | 29 | 2.90 | 1.54 |
| Non-revealing x Knowingly x Female | 39 | 3.51 | 1.86 |
| Non-revealing x Knowingly x Male | 30 | 2.97 | 1.75 |
| Revealing x Unknowingly x Female | 30 | 3.00 | 1.55 |
| Revealing x Unknowingly x Male | 23 | 2.83 | 1.67 |
| Revealing x Knowingly x Female | 39 | 3.28 | 1.81 |
| Revealing x Knowingly x Male | 29 | 2.66 | 1.74 |
| Blaming the victim | | | |
| Non-revealing x Unknowingly x Female | 30 | 3.70 | 1.18 |
| Non-revealing x Unknowingly x Male | 29 | 3.79 | 1.05 |
| Non-revealing x Knowingly x Female | 39 | 4.26 | 1.23 |
| Non-revealing x Knowingly x Male | 30 | 3.93 | 1.34 |
| Revealing x Unknowingly x Female | 30 | 4.07 | 1.20 |
| Revealing x Unknowingly x Male | 23 | 3.87 | 1.18 |
| Revealing x Knowingly x Female | 39 | 4.03 | .99 |
| Revealing x Knowingly x Male | 29 | 3.83 | 1.42 |
| Deeming the incident should be reported to the police | | | |
| Non-revealing x Unknowingly x Female | 30 | 3.47 | 1.72 |
| Non-revealing x Unknowingly x Male | 29 | 2.45 | 1.45 |
| Non-revealing x Knowingly x Female | 39 | 3.18 | 1.86 |
| Non-revealing x Knowingly x Male | 30 | 3.10 | 1.52 |
| Revealing x Unknowingly x Female | 30 | 2.90 | 1.67 |
| Revealing x Unknowingly x Male | 23 | 2.61 | 1.44 |
| Revealing x Knowingly x Female | 39 | 2.64 | 1.81 |
| Revealing x Knowingly x Male | 29 | 2.17 | 1.49 |

*Research question 3*. Were there significant correlations among belief in a just world, rape myth acceptance, sex role stereotyping, and acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police?

Pearson product moment correlations were used to determine the strength and direction of the relations between the scaled variables (belief in a just world, rape myth acceptance, and sex role stereotyping) and the three constructs (acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police). Results of these analyses are presented in Table 26.

Table 26

*Pearson Product Moment Correlations: Belief in a Just World, Rape Myth Acceptance, Sex Role Stereotyping and Acknowledging the Incident as Rape, Blaming the Victim, and Deeming the Incident Should be Reported to the Police (N = 296)*

| Scales | Acknowledging the incident as rape | | Blaming the victim | | Deeming the incident should be reported to the police | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *n* | *r* | *n* | *r* | *n* | *r* |
| Belief in a just world | 296 | .03 | 296 | -.01 | 295 | -.02 |
| Rape myth acceptance | 296 | -.16** | 296 | .25*** | 295 | -.10 |
| Sex role stereotyping | 296 | .04 | 296 | .10 | 295 | .04 |

*Note* $^{**}p < .01$, $^{***}p < .001$

To summarize Table 26, the correlation between acknowledging the incident as rape and rape myth acceptance was statistically significant ($r = -.16$, $p < .01$), and indicated that participants who were more likely to acknowledge that rape had occurred were less likely to endorse rape myths. Blaming the victim was significantly correlated

with rape myth acceptance, $r = .25$, $p < .001$. This result indicated that respondents who blamed the victim were more likely to support rape myths.

*Research question 4*. Could acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police be predicted from gender, belief in a just world, rape myth acceptance, sex role stereotyping, dress, and setting?

First, Pearson product moment correlations were run between the criterion variables (acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police) and the predictor variables (gender, dress, setting, belief in a just world, rape myth acceptance and sex role stereotyping) to determine which of the predictor variables were significantly correlated with the criterion variables. Only those predictor variables that were significantly related to the criterion variables were used in subsequent regression analyses. Table 27 presents the results of this analysis.

Table 27

*Pearson Product Moment Correlations: Gender, Dress, Setting, Just World Beliefs, Rape Myth Acceptance, Sex Role Stereotyping, and Acknowledging the Incident as Rape, Blaming the Victim, and Deeming the Incident Should be Reported to the Police*

| Scales | Acknowledging the incident as rape | | Blaming the Victim | | Deeming the incident should be reported to the police | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *n* | *r* | *n* | *r* | *n* | *r* |
| Gender | 253 | -.14* | 253 | -.11 | 253 | -.11 |
| Dress | 251 | -.09 | 251 | -.01 | 251 | -.15* |
| Setting | 253 | .01 | 253 | .06 | 253 | -.02 |
| Belief in a just world | 253 | .03 | 253 | -.06 | 253 | -.03 |
| Rape myth acceptance | 234 | -.19** | 234 | .30*** | 234 | -.16* |
| Sex role stereotyping | 242 | .01 | 242 | .12 | 242 | .03 |

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

To summarize Table 27, gender was significantly related with acknowledging the incident as rape, $r = -.14$, $p < .05$. A statistically significant relation was found between dress and deeming the incident should be reported to the police, $r = -.15$, $p < .05$. Rape myth acceptance was significantly associated with acknowledging the incident as rape ($r = -.19$, $p < .01$), blaming the victim ($r = .30$, $p < .001$), and deeming the incident should be reported to the police ($r = -.16$, $p < .05$). The remaining correlations were not statistically significant. The number of predictor variables was reduced to include only those that were significantly correlated with the criterion variable.

Next, acknowledging the incident as rape was entered as the criterion variable in a hierarchical multiple linear regression analysis. Age, as a control variable that was significantly related to acknowledging the incident as rape, was entered on the first step.

Gender was entered on the second step, with rape myth acceptance entered on the third step. Table 28 presents results of this analysis.

Table 28

*Hierarchical Multiple Linear Regression Analysis – Acknowledging the Incident as Rape*

| Predictor Variable | Constant | *b*-Weight | *β*-Weight | Δ $R^2$ | *t*-Value | Sig |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Included Variables | | | | | | |
| Step 1 | | | | | | |
| Age | 4.02 | -.60 | -.17 | .03 | -2.95 | .003 |
| Step 2 | | | | | | |
| Age | 4.58 | -.57 | -.16 | .01 | -2.85 | .005 |
| Gender | | -.41 | -.12 | | -2.02 | .045 |
| Step 3 | | | | | | |
| Age | 5.67 | -.64 | -.18 | .03 | -3.21 | .001 |
| Gender | | -.30 | -.08 | | -1.46 | .146 |
| Rape myth acceptance | | -.01 | -.17 | | -2.92 | .004 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Multiple *R* | .26 |
| Multiple $R^2$ | .07 |
| *F* Ratio | 7.23 |
| *DF* | 3, 290 |
| Sig of *F* | <.01 |

As shown in table 28, three predictor variables entered the hierarchical multiple linear regression analysis, explaining a total of 7% of the variance in acknowledging the incident as rape, $F$ (3, 290) = 7.23, $p < .01$. Age entered on the first step of the regression equation, explaining 3% of the variance in acknowledging the incident as rape, $\beta = -.17$, $R^2 = .03$, $t = -2.95$, $p < .01$. Gender was added on the second, accounting for an additional 1% of the variance in acknowledging the incident as rape, $\beta = -.12$, $R^2 = .01$, $t = -2.02$, $p < .05$. On the third step of the analysis, rape myth acceptance entered the hierarchical regression equation, explaining an additional 3% of the variance in the criterion variable, $\beta = -.17$, $R^2 = .03$, $t = -2.92$, $p < .01$. On the third

step, once in the presence of other variables, gender was no longer explaining a statistically significant amount of variance in the criterion variable.

A second linear regression analysis was used to determine if the predictor variable rape myth acceptance, could be used to explain the criterion variable, blaming the victim. Table 29 presents results of this analysis.

Table 29

*Linear Regression Analysis – Blaming the Victim*

| Predictor Variable | Constant | *b*-Weight | *β*-Weight | Δ $R^2$ | *t*-Value | Sig |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Included Variables | | | | | | |
| Step 1 | | | | | | |
| Rape myth acceptance | 2.79 | .01 | .25 | .06 | 4.37 | <.001 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Multiple *R* | .25 |
| Multiple $R^2$ | .06 |
| *F* Ratio | 19.07 |
| *DF* | 1, 294 |
| Sig of *F* | <.001 |

To summarize Table 29, one predictor variable, rape myth acceptance *(β* = .25, $R^2$ = .06, *t* = 4.37, *p* < .001), entered the linear regression analysis. This predictor variable accounted for 6% of the variance in the criterion variable, blaming the victim, *F* (1, 294) = 19.07, *p* < .001.

A hierarchical multiple linear regression analysis was used to determine which of the predictor variables, age and type of dress, could be used to explain the final criterion variable deeming the incident should be reported to the police. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 30.

Table 30

*Hierarchical Multiple Linear Regression Analysis – Deeming the Incident Should be Reported to the Police*

| Predictor Variable | Constant | b-Weight | β-Weight | Δ $R^2$ | t-Value | Sig |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Included Variables | | | | | | |
| Step 1 | | | | | | |
| Age | 3.80 | -.63 | -.19 | .03 | -2.87 | .005 |
| Step 2 | | | | | | |
| Age | 4.97 | -.66 | -.20 | .02 | -3.03 | .003 |
| Rape Myth Acceptance | | -.01 | -.16 | | -2.55 | .012 |
| Step 3 | | | | | | |
| Age | 5.75 | -.60 | -.18 | .02 | -2.77 | .006 |
| Rape Myth Acceptance | | -.01 | -.17 | | -2.72 | .007 |
| Type of dress | | -.53 | -.16 | | -2.45 | .015 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Multiple R | .29 |
| Multiple $R^2$ | .07 |
| F Ratio | 7.08 |
| DF | 3, 226 |
| Sig of F | <.001 |

As shown in Table 30, three predictor variables, age, rape myth acceptance, and type of dress, entered the hierarchical multiple linear regression equation, accounting for 7% of the variance in the criterion variable, $F$ (3, 226) = 7.08, $p < .001$. Age entered on the first step of the hierarchical analysis, explaining 3% of the variance in deeming the incident should be reported to the police, $\beta = -.19$, $R^2 = .03$, $t = -2.87$, $p < .01$. On the second step of the analysis, rape myth acceptance, accounted for an additional 2% of the variance in the criterion variable, $\beta = -.16$, $R^2 = .02$, $t = -2.55$, $p < .05$. Type of dress entered on the third step of the analysis; accounting for an additional 2% of the variance in deeming the incident should be reported to the police, $\beta = -.53$, $R^2 = .02$, $t = -2.45$, $p < .05$.

# Chapter V

## Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine college students' perceptions of an uncomfortable sexual experience that was presented in a scenario. Specifically, this study examined whether college students' personal beliefs (i.e., belief in a just world, rape myth acceptance, and sex role stereotyping) and situational factors (i.e., dress and setting of the incident) in regard to the uncomfortable sexual experience were related to acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police. Previous research found that beliefs associated with acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police were related to victims being revictimized by the people from whom they expected support.

In general, most hypotheses for the current study were not supported. Statistically significant relations were found between rape myth acceptance and acknowledging the incident as rape and blaming the victim. Rape myth acceptance was a statistically significant predictor of acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police, although, the associated effect sizes were small. Type of dress was a significant predictor of deeming the incident should be reported to the police. The details of each set of findings are discussed below.

### Preliminary Analyses

Samples of college students in previous research studies were generally young, unmarried, and Caucasian (Ben-David & Schneider, 2005; Simonson & Subich, 1999;

Yamawaki, 2007; Yamawaki, Darby, & Queiroz, 2007; Yamawaki & Tschanz, 2005). The sample in the current study was similar for age, marital status, and race/ethnicity. Preliminary analyses were conducted to identify if age and marital status, should be used as control variables. It was decided to exclude race/ethnicity in the preliminary analyses because the sample sizes were too small for all groups except Caucasian. Results for the analyses using scaled variables (belief in a just world, rape myth acceptance, and sex role stereotyping) as dependent variables produced no statistically significant differences by age or marital status.

Results of a MANOVA analysis indicated that there were differences by age for acknowledging the incident as rape and deeming the incident should be reported to police. For both of these variables, younger participants had significantly higher scores than older participants. Based on these results, age was used as a control variable for acknowledging the incident as rape and deeming the incident should be reported to police.

**Research Questions and Hypotheses**

*Research question 1: Were there differences between rape victims, those who knew a rape victim and those who did not know a rape victim by their belief in a just world, rape myth acceptance, sex role stereotyping, acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police?*

Originally, the research question was designed to examine the differences between rape victims and those who had never been raped in their belief in a just world, rape myth acceptance, sex role stereotyping, acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police. However,

an unexpected large number of participants knew a rape victim; therefore, a posteriori analyses were conducted. The original group who had never been raped was divided into two groups (those who knew a rape victim and those who did not know a rape victim). It was hypothesized that there would be statistically significant differences between rape victims, those who knew a rape victim, and those who did not know a rape victim in their belief a just world, rape myth acceptance, sex role stereotyping, acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police.

Previous research has demonstrated that people who knew a rape victim were more empathic toward rape victims than those who did not know a rape victim (Barnett et al., 1992). This research finding is important because rape victims who feel supported by others, especially friends, have better post-rape adjustment (Filipas & Ullman, 2001). Research has not addressed the difference between rape victims, those who knew a rape victim, and those who do not know a rape victim in regard to belief in a just world, rape myth acceptance, sex role stereotyping, acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, or deeming the incident should be reported to the police. Thus, the following results are new findings.

Results of the current study indicated that rape victims were less likely to support rape myths and sex role stereotypes than were those who did not know a rape victim. Rape victims were more likely to acknowledge the incident as rape and deem the incident should be reported to the police than were those who knew a rape victim. These findings were as expected. The results are consistent with previous research, which demonstrated that those who adhere to rape myths were less likely to

acknowledge the incident as rape (Jenkins & Dambrot, 1987; Mason et al., 2004; Peterson & Muehlenhard, 2004) and less likely to deem the incident should be reported to the police (Frese et al., 2004; Mason et al., 2004). However, the effect sizes of these findings were very small, indicating little practical application of the results. Therefore, further research is warranted. A larger sample of rape victims could be acquired through oversampling, which is a sampling method that would target rape victims as potential participants. Future research also may want to identify unacknowledged rape victims (those who have experienced a sexual assault that meets the legal definition of rape but do not consider themselves rape victims) to compare their perceptions of an uncomfortable sexual experience to rape victims, those who knew a rape victim, and those who did not know a rape victim.

Identifying personal aspects, such as whether a person had been the victim of rape or if they knew a rape victim may be important in understanding attribution toward rape victims. According to the defensive attribution theory, observers who identify with the victim will have more favorable perceptions of the victim (Shaver, 1970). Therefore, it would be expected that rape victims would have favorable perceptions of the victim. One previous study was found that investigated the difference in attribution of blame between rape victims and those who had never been raped and results indicated no statistically significant difference (Mason, Riger, & Foley, 2004). Given that only one study investigated the difference in attribution of blame between rape victims and those who had never been raped further research appears warranted.

*Research question 2. Were there differences for gender and various dress and setting combinations by acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police?*

It was hypothesized that there would be an interaction effect between dress, setting, and gender in acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police; however, there were no statistically significant findings. The lack of significance for the interaction of dress by setting may suggest that the majority of respondents did not consider clothing when assessing acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police. When respondents explained in narrative their answers to the questions regarding acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police, less than 20% of respondents who read the revealing clothing scenario referred to the victim's attire. This finding may indicate that the victim's dress is becoming a less salient factor when people are making assessments regarding an uncomfortable sexual experience. Future research may need to portray a more drastic difference in a victim's clothing. Perhaps using photographs of the same model wearing different clothing may make the clothing a more prominent factor.

It may also be that distinctions in the setting (expected her roommate to be home or knew her roommate was not home) might not have been sufficient to provide evidence of a real difference. Further research is needed that includes a greater distinction in the setting, such as the victim and her date going into a home where she knew they would be alone verses going into a home where a large number of people

was present. Conversely, it may be that participants are not concerned with whether or not a roommate was present but were more concerned with the fact that Sarah invited Brett into her home.

In participants' explanations of their responses to the questions regarding acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police, 50% of participants, regardless of which scenario they read, stated that their responses were associated with Sarah inviting Brett into her apartment. However, only 0.5% of participants indicated that their responses were related to Sarah's roommate not being home. This difference may indicate that most participants did not use the detail regarding Sarah's roommate not being home as a factor for acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police. Although these scenarios were piloted on a small sample before the primary data collection occurred, and judged to be acceptable based on that pilot, future researchers may want to consider a more intensive pilot with scenarios more clearly highlighting these various setting characteristics.

A possible explanation for the lack of statistically significant differences between genders in acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police may be that the female participants in this study blamed the victim as a self-protective mechanism. Previous just world studies have shown that if women were able to differentiate themselves from the victim, they were more likely to blame the victim (Correia & Vala, 2003; Correia, Vala, & Aguiar, 2007; Lambert & Raichle, 2000; Murray, Spadafore, & McIntosh, 2005). Possibly, the female participants in this study blamed the victim to reduce the dissonance created by

the injustice thereby restoring their belief that the world is just and fair. The female participants may have blamed the victim in the scenario, believing that they would make wiser decisions if they were in the same circumstance. Based on this logic, the victim deserved what happened to her because of her poor choices. Future research should add items that tap into these beliefs such as, how closely the participant identifies with the victim and how likely would the participant make the same choices as the victim in the scenario.

In summary, the results failed to support previous research findings, which showed that male and female participants differed in their perceptions of acknowledging the incident as rape (Ben-David & Schneider, 2005; Jenkins & Dambrot, 1987; Simonson & Subich, 1999; Yamawaki & Tschanz, 2005) and blaming the victim (Simonson & Subich, 1999; White & Kurpius, 1999; Yamawaki & Tschanz, 2005). The results of the present study supported findings from one study that examined gender differences in deeming the incident should be reported to the police, which found no differences by gender (Frese et al., 2004). However, an important distinction exists between previous studies and the present study. Previous research did not use the three construct variables (acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police) in their studies; instead, they focused on one aspect of the rape situation.

*Research question 3. Were there significant correlations among belief in a just world, rape myth acceptance, sex role stereotyping, acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police?*

It was predicted that there would be a positive correlation between just world beliefs and blaming the victim and a negative correlation between just world beliefs and acknowledging the incident as rape and deeming the incident should be reported to the police. However, no statistically significant correlations were found between belief in a just world and acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim and deeming the incident should be reported to the police. Previous research was not found that specifically studied the relations between just world beliefs and acknowledging the incident as rape or deeming the incident should be reported to the police. However, positive relations between just world beliefs and blaming the victim had been found in several prior studies (Correia & Vala, 2003; Haynes & Olson, 2006; Lambert & Raichle, 2000; Murray et al., 2005). The difference in findings may be related to differences in choice of study variables. For example, previous studies investigated the link between just world beliefs and blaming the victim using other variables, including victim's attractiveness (Correia & Vala, 2003) and likability of victim (Haynes & Olson, 2006). Dress and setting of the rape were not examined in these previous just world belief studies, which may explain differences between past and current findings.

An additional explanation may be that for the previously mentioned studies, the researchers directly addressed their study variables whereas in the present study the dress and setting variables were addressed indirectly. Correia and Vala (2003) asked the participants to describe the victim in a scenario using terms from a list of positive and negative characteristics. Haynes and Olson (2006) measured victim's likeability using eight bipolar personality traits (considerate/inconsiderate). The researchers asked the participants to rate the victim according to the variable being studied (attractiveness

and likability of victim) and then asked the participants about the degree they blamed the victim. In the current study, participants were not explicitly asked to blame the victim according to her type of dress or for her decision to allow a man into her home depending on the presence of her roommate. The relation between just world beliefs and blaming the victim appeared to be stronger when the variables were directly presented to the participants.

A positive correlation was expected between rape myth acceptance and blaming the victim and a negative correlation was expected between rape myth acceptance and acknowledging the incident as rape and deeming the incident should be reported to the police. As predicted, a correlation was found between rape myth acceptance and acknowledging the incident as rape and blaming the victim. Participants who were more accepting of rape myths were less likely to acknowledge the incident as rape than those who were less accepting of rape myths. This finding supported previous research, which found that participants who endorsed rape myths were less likely to acknowledge the incident as rape (Jenkins & Dambrot, 1987; Mason, Riger, & Foley, 2004; Peterson & Muehlenhard, 2004). Also as expected, results indicated that participants who were more accepting of rape myths were more likely to blame the victim. This finding was consistent with previous research that also found a positive relation between rape myth acceptance and blaming the victim (Frese et al., 2004; Mason et al, 2004). These findings were not surprising because those who endorsed rape myths generally do not acknowledge the incident as rape (Jenkins & Dambrot, 1987; Mason et al., 2004; Peterson & Muehlenhard, 2004) and/or are more likely to blame the victim (Frese et al., 2004; Mason et al., 2004).

Contrary to prediction, there was no relation between rape myth acceptance and deeming the incident should be reported to the police. This may be explained by the fact that more than one third of participants in the present study knew someone who had been a victim of rape. This knowledge may have influenced their responses in deeming the incident should be reported to the police regardless of their level of rape myth acceptance. Their acquaintance, friend, or family member may have had a negative experience when the incident was reported to the police. To prevent others from being revictimized, the study participants may not encourage victims to report the rape. Previous research has demonstrated that victims often do not report rape to police for fear of being further traumatized and/or humiliated (Campbell, Sefl, Barnes, Ahrens, Wasco, & Zaragoza-Diesfeld, 1999; Ullman, 1996a, 1996b, 1996c; Ullman & Filipas, 2001a; Winkel & Vrij, 1993).

It was predicted that there would be a positive relation between sex role stereotyping and blaming the victim and a negative relation between sex role stereotyping and acknowledging the incident as rape and deeming the incident should be reported to the police. However, no correlations were found between sex role stereotyping and acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, or deeming the incident should be reported to the police. Previous research had not examined the relation between sex role stereotyping and acknowledging the incident as rape or deeming the incident should be reported to the police.

Previous research reported a positive relation between sex role stereotyping and blaming the victim (Anderson & Lyons, 2005; Simonson & Subich, 1999; Yamawaki & Tschanz; 2005). Anderson and Lyons (2005) examined the link between sex role

stereotyping and the degree of blame attributed to rape victims who perceived they were supported by their family, friends, and community compared to victims who perceived they were not supported by their family, friends, and community. Researchers (Simonson & Subich, 1999; Yamawaki & Tschanz, 2005) investigated the relation between sex role stereotyping and blame using different types of relationships (stranger, dating, married) between the victim and the perpetrator. In the aforementioned studies, there were clearly great disparities between types of variables (supported/unsupported and stranger/dating/married). The distinction in the variables (dress and setting) examined in the present study may not have been specific enough to identify a relation between sex role stereotyping and blame. As previously suggested, future research may be stronger if a more prominent, distinction is made between types of dress and settings.

*Research question 4. Can acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police be predicted from gender, belief in a just world, rape myth acceptance, sex role stereotypes, dress, and setting?*

It was expected that acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police could be predicted from gender, belief in a just world, rape myth acceptance, sex role stereotypes, dress, and setting. As expected, results indicated that acknowledging the incident as rape was negatively related to gender and rape myth acceptance. These findings suggest that female participants were more likely than male participants to acknowledge the incident as rape, and participants with greater rape myth acceptance were less likely than those with lower rape myth acceptance to acknowledge the incident as rape. These findings

support previous research, which demonstrated that females were more likely than males to acknowledge the incident as rape (Jenkins & Dambrot, 1987).

The results also supported previous findings, which suggest that those with greater rape myth acceptance were less likely to acknowledge the incident as rape (Jenkins & Dambrot, 1987; Mason et al., 2004; Peterson & Muehlenhard, 2004; Willis, 1992), more likely to blame the victim (Frese et al., 2004; Mason et al., 2004), and less likely to deem that the incident should be reported to the police (Frese et al., 2004; Mason et al., 2004). Given that rape myths are false beliefs that support the idea that women are somehow responsible for the sexual assault, it is not surprising that participants who endorse rape myths did not acknowledge the incident as rape, were more likely to blame the victim, and less likely to deem the incident should be reported to the police.

The type of dress the victim wore was a statistically significant predictor of deeming the incident should be reported to the police. Previous research had not specifically studied dress and reporting to the police together; thus, this is a new finding. However, it has been well establish that victims are often judged by their attire (Feldman-Summers & Palmer, 1980; Furnham & Boston, 1996; Vali & Rizzo, 1991; Whatley, 2005; Workman & Freeburg, 1999). These judgments may then affect decisions related to deeming the incident should be reported to the police.

**Summary**

College students' perceptions of an uncomfortable sexual experience were examined as a first step in finding ways to reduce revictimization of rape victims. The current findings revealed that rape myths, which Lonsway and Fitzgerald (1994, p. 134)

describe as “attitudes and beliefs that are generally false but are widely and persistently held, and that serve to deny and justify male sexual aggression against women”, continue to affect college students’ perceptions of rape victims. Results indicated that participants who were more accepting of rape myths were also less likely to acknowledge the incident as rape, more likely to blame the victim, and less likely to deem the incident should be reported to the police than participants who were less accepting of rape myths. As expected, rape myth acceptance was found to be a significant predictor of acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police.

**Limitations and Directions for Future Research**

Several limitations in this study should be considered when interpreting the results. First, due to the use of a convenience sample, generalizability of the results may be limited. Participants were not only self-selected, but the sample was obtained from students attending a commuter campus university, which may not be representative of students attending a residential campus university. Students who tend to live in dorms or other housing on or close to campus may have provided a different set of responses, as their social experiences connected with campus may be different.

The lack of an item to distinguish between participants who had never experienced a sexual assault and those participants who had experienced a sexual assault that met the legal definition of rape but did not label it as rape (unacknowledged rape victim) may have been another limitation of this study. Previous research has demonstrated that rape victims, unacknowledged rape victims, and those who have never experienced rape have different perceptions of sexual assault (Kahn, Jackson,

Kully, Badger, & Halvorsen, 2003; Peterson & Muehlenhard, 2004). The results may have been confounded due to inclusion of unacknowledged rape victims' data.

Another key limitation of the study was the lack of a clear and distinct differentiating of types of dress and setting in the scenarios. Participants appeared to disregard the differences in dress and setting that were presented in the scenarios, which may have affected their responses. On the other hand, victim's dress and knowing whether or not someone is home may not affect participants perceptions of the incident.

Factors other than the variables studied might influence participants' perceptions of acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police. Age, gender, and rape myth acceptance were associated with only 7% of the explained variance in acknowledging the incident as rape. Rape myth acceptance was associated with 6% of the explain variance in blaming the victim. Seven percent of the explain variance in deeming the incident should be reported to the police was associated with age, rape myth acceptance, and type of dress. Thus, other variables affecting perceptions of acknowledging the incident as rape, blaming the victim, and deeming the incident should be reported to the police need to be identified in future research.

To increase understanding of college students' perceptions of an uncomfortable sexual experience, future research should include an item that asks the participants what additional details they would need in the scenario to make an informed decision on whether or not rape occurred. The responses may shed light on what college students perceive are the salient features of rape. To increase understanding of attributions of

blame, items need to be added that asks participants how closely they identify with the victim and what is the likelihood that they would ever be in the same circumstance. Responses to these questions may help clarify the logic behind participants' attribution of blame.

As previously stated, future research should include a larger sample of rape victims and identify unacknowledged rape victims. Ascertaining perceptions of rape victims and unacknowledged rape victims could help identify false beliefs they may engender for self-protection but might also lead them to revictimize other victims.

Scenarios with a greater distinction of the manipulated variables should be developed for future research. As previously suggested, the use of photographs with a model wearing contrasting dress may help make the clothing more notable for the participants. Greater contrasts in dress may support the idea that people are no longer using dress as an indication of rape.

An important direction for future research concerns attitudes about reporting rape to the police. Only a small percentage of participants (9.2%) responded "extremely" to the question regarding reporting the incident to the police. Do participants refrain from encouraging victims to call the police because they place so much blame on the victim or do they fear the reaction victims may receive from the police?

Even though significant results in this study were limited, the use of scenarios appears to be a useful way to assess perceptions of rape victims. Scenarios provide real life situations where one or more variables can be manipulated while other factors are held constant. Scenarios only provide limited information from which participants must draw conclusions, but this reflects what often happens in real life. People draw

conclusions from the limited information they read in newspapers, hear on television, and are told by others. Scenarios appear to be a realistic experimental design measurement to assess participants' perceptions of rape victims.

**Conclusion**

This study, despite its limitations is nonetheless important to help identify college students' attitudes regarding rape in hopes of finding ways to reduce revictimizing victims. Anderson and Lyons (2005) stated that even after many years of campaigning, debating, and educating to increase awareness about the misconceptions of rape, many individuals continue to blame the victim. Although it is encouraging that many of the college students in the study recognized the incident as rape, to some extent most of the students (*n* = 282, 95.3%) blamed the victim for the outcome of the situation, falling prey of revictimizing the victim.

Filipas and Ullman (2001) reported that positive reactions from friends were important in the recovery process. Thus, the results of this study indicate that college students need to be educated on how to be more supportive and hopefully, less likely to revictimize rape victims. It may be advantageous to start educating young adolescents before they begin to develop inappropriate attitudes regarding rape and rape victims. Education programs for both young adolescents and college students may be more beneficial if they are engaging, relevant, and have multiple modes of delivery. Modes of delivery could include peer group education and media education through means such as television, internet, music, and music videos. These education programs may help college students develop a sensitivity to rape victims and reduce the occurrence of revictimization.

Based on the findings in the present study, educating rape victims and professionals that assist them following an assault may be helpful in the recovery process. Rape victims need to be educated regarding revictimization and given access to information where they can receive constructive support. Professionals need to be made aware of revictimization and the detrimental impact it has on the recovery process. Research has shown that most rape victims are college-aged women; thus, if rape victims and professionals are aware of the perceptions held by college students they may be better prepared to work with the trauma of the rape and the aftermath of the revictimization.

In conclusion, this study demonstrated that rape myth acceptance continues to exist among college students. Hopefully, future research will determine ways to debunk these false beliefs regarding rape and rape victims to prevent future revictimization of rape victims.

# Appendix A

## Scenarios and Instruments

### Scenarios

### Non-revealing/unknowingly alone

Sarah was in her first semester of college and had noticed Brett in her freshman English class. One day a group of students were talking about a party that a classmate was having on Friday night. When Sarah heard that Brett was going to the party she decided to go thinking it would be chance for her to get to know him. Sarah then made plans to go with a friend.

Sarah was excited about going to the party because she would get to spend some time with Brett and get to know him better. As Friday approached she began thinking about what to wear because she wanted to make a good impression on Brett. She finally decided on a mint green t-shirt and hoodie, a pair of khaki capris, and brown flats.

When Sarah arrived at the party, Brett approached her and told her how nice she looked. During the evening Brett and Sarah had a great time talking, dancing, playing pool, and at times kissing. Around midnight Sarah asked her friend if she was ready to leave because Sarah was tired and needed to get up early the next morning for work. Her friend said she wasn't ready to leave yet so Brett offered to drive Sarah home.

As Brett drove Sarah home they made plans to get together on Saturday night to have dinner and go to a movie. Brett parked the car in front of Sarah's apartment complex where they sat and talked for a while. Sarah said it was getting late and she needed to go inside so she leaned over to kiss Brett goodbye. They passionately kissed for a long period of time. Eventually, knowing that her roommate was at home. Sarah asked Brett if he would like to come in for a while. Once they were in the apartment and Sarah realized her roommate was not at home, she turned on some music and she and Brett kissed some more on the couch. After making out on the couch for a while, Brett began pressing Sarah to have sex. Even though Sarah stated that she did not know him well enough to have sex with him, Brett continued to pressure her. Sarah persistently resisted Brett's pressure to have sex, but he continued until sexual intercourse occurred.

**Non-revealing/knowingly alone**

Sarah was in her first semester of college and had noticed Brett in her freshman English class. One day a group of students were talking about a party that a classmate was having on Friday night. When Sarah heard that Brett was going to the party she decided to go thinking it would be chance for her to get to know him. Sarah then made plans to go with a friend.

Sarah was excited about going to the party because she would get to spend some time with Brett and get to know him better. As Friday approached she began thinking about what to wear because she wanted to make a good impression on Brett. She finally decided on a mint green t-shirt and hoodie, a pair of khaki capris, and brown flats.

When Sarah arrived at the party, Brett approached her and told her how nice she looked. During the evening Brett and Sarah had a great time talking, dancing, playing pool, and at times kissing. Around midnight Sarah asked her friend if she was ready to leave because Sarah was tired and needed to get up early the next morning for work. Her friend said she wasn't ready to leave yet so Brett offered to drive Sarah home.

As Brett drove Sarah home they made plans to get together on Saturday night to have dinner and go to a movie. Brett parked the car in front of Sarah's apartment complex where they sat and talked for a while. Sarah said it was getting late and she needed to go inside so she leaned over to kiss Brett goodbye. They passionately kissed for a long period of time. Eventually, knowing her roommate was not at home, Sarah asked Brett if he would like to come in for a while. Once they were in the apartment and Sarah confirmed her roommate was not at home, she turned on some music and she and Brett kissed some more on the couch. After making out on the couch for a while, Brett began pressing Sarah to have sex. Even though Sarah stated that she did not know him well enough to have sex with him, Brett continued to pressure her. Sarah persistently resisted Brett's pressure to have sex, but he continued until sexual intercourse occurred.

**Revealing/unknowingly alone**

Sarah was in her first semester of college and had noticed Brett in her freshman English class. One day a group of students were talking about a party that a classmate was having on Friday night. When Sarah heard that Brett was going to the party she decided to go thinking it would be chance for her to get to know him. Sarah then made plans to go with a friend.

Sarah was excited about going to the party because she would get to spend some time with Brett and get to know him better. As Friday approached she began thinking about what to wear because she wanted to make a good impression on Brett. She finally decided on a low cut, red tank top, a jean mini skirt, and black knee high boots.

When Sarah arrived at the party, Brett approached her and told her how nice she looked. During the evening Brett and Sarah had a great time talking, dancing, playing pool, and at times kissing. Around midnight Sarah asked her friend if she was ready to leave because Sarah was tired and needed to get up early the next morning for work. Her friend said she wasn't ready to leave yet so Brett offered to drive Sarah home.

As Brett drove Sarah home they made plans to get together on Saturday night to have dinner and go to a movie. Brett parked the car in front of Sarah's apartment complex where they sat and talked for a while. Sarah said it was getting late and she needed to go inside so she leaned over to kiss Brett goodbye. They passionately kissed for a long period of time. Eventually, knowing that her roommate was at home Sarah asked Brett if he would like to come in for a while. Once they were in the apartment and Sarah realized her roommate was not at home, she turned on some music and she and Brett kissed some more on the couch. After making out on the couch for a while, Brett began pressing Sarah to have sex. Even though Sarah stated that she did not know him well enough to have sex with him, Brett continued to pressure her. Sarah persistently resisted Brett's pressure to have sex, but he continued until sexual intercourse occurred.

**Revealing/knowingly alone**

Sarah was in her first semester of college and had noticed Brett in her freshman English class. One day a group of students were talking about a party that a classmate was having on Friday night. When Sarah heard that Brett was going to the party she decided to go thinking it would be chance for her to get to know him. Sarah then made plans to go with a friend.

Sarah was excited about going to the party because she would get to spend some time with Brett and get to know him better. As Friday approached she began thinking about what to wear because she wanted to make a good impression on Brett. She finally decided on a low cut, red tank top, a jean mini skirt, and black knee high boots.

When Sarah arrived at the party, Brett approached her and told her how nice she looked. During the evening Brett and Sarah had a great time talking, dancing, playing pool, and at times kissing. Around midnight Sarah asked her friend if she was ready to leave because Sarah was tired and needed to get up early the next morning for work. Her friend said she wasn't ready to leave yet so Brett offered to drive Sarah home.

As Brett drove Sarah home they made plans to get together on Saturday night to have dinner and go to a movie. Brett parked the car in front of Sarah's apartment complex where they sat and talked for a while. Sarah said it was getting late and she needed to go inside so she leaned over to kiss Brett goodbye. They passionately kissed for a long period of time. Eventually, knowing her roommate was not at home, Sarah asked Brett if he would like to come in for a while. Once they were in the apartment and Sarah confirmed her roommate was not at home, she turned on some music and she and Brett kissed some more on the couch. After making out on the couch for a while, Brett began pressing Sarah to have sex. Even though Sarah stated that she did not know him well enough to have sex with him, Brett continued to pressure her. Sarah persistently resisted Brett's pressure to have sex, but he continued until sexual intercourse occurred.

## Scenario Questions

Thinking back to the scenario you just read about Brett and Sarah, please respond to the questions below using the following scale: 1(not at all), 2 (slightly), 3 (somewhat), 4 (moderately), 5 (very much), 6(extremely).

1. To what extent were Sarah's friends responsible for what happened?
2. To what extent do you think Sarah will be psychological affected by this situation?
3. To what extent do you think Sarah should report this incident to the police?
4. To what extent was Brett promiscuous?
5. To what extent was Sarah promiscuous?
6. To what extent do you blame Brett for the outcome of this situation?
7. To what extent do you blame Sarah for the outcome of this situation?
8. To what extent did Brett have the right to expect Sarah to have sex with him?
9. To what extent do you think rape occurred?

What 2 or 3 factors seem most important in reaching the judgments you assigned to the above questions?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

1. What was Sarah wearing?
2. Was Sarah's roommate home?
3. Did she expect her roommate to be home?
4. If you had to decide, do you think rape occurred?

## Just World Scale

The following statements describe different opinions regarding justness. There are no right or wrong answers, only opinions. Please rate each statement by indicating 1 (strongly agree), 2 (agree), 3(slightly agree), 4 (slightly disagree), 5 (disagree), or 6(strongly disagree).

1. I've found that a person rarely deserves the reputation he has.
2. Basically, the world is a just place.
3. People who get "lucky breaks" have usually earned their good fortune.
4. Careful drivers are just as likely to get hurt in traffic accidents as careless ones.
5. It is a common occurrence for a guilty person to get off free in American courts
6. Students almost always deserve the grade they received in school
7. Men who keep in shape have little chance of suffering a heart attack.
8. The political candidate who sticks up for his principles rarely gets elected.
9. It is rare for an innocent man to be wrongly sent to jail.
10. In professional sports, many fouls and infractions never get called by the referee.
11. By and large, people deserve what they get.
12. When parent punish their children, it is almost always for good reasons.
13. Good deeds often go unnoticed and unrewarded.
14. Although evil men may hold political power for a while, in the general course of history good wins out.
15. In almost any business or profession, people who do their job well rise to the top.
16. American parents tend to overlook the things most to be admired in their children.
17. It is often impossible for a person to receive a fair trial in the USA.
18. People who meet with misfortune have often brought it on themselves.
19. Crime doesn't pay.
20. Many people suffer through absolutely no fault of their own.

**The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory**

Below is a series of statements concerning men and women and their relationships in contemporary society. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement using the following scale: 1 (disagree strongly); 2(disagree somewhat); 3 (disagree slightly); 4 (agree slightly); 5 (agree somewhat); 6 (agree strongly).

1. No matter how accomplished he is, a man is not truly complete as a person unless he has the love of a woman.
2. Many women are actually seeking special favors, such as hiring policies that favor them over men, under the guise of asking for “equality”.
3. In a disaster, women ought not necessarily to be rescued before men.
4. Most women interpret innocent remarks or acts as being sexist.
5. Women are too easily offended.
6. People are often truly happy in life without being romantically involved with a member of the other sex.
7. Feminists are not seeking for women to have more power than men.
8. Many women have a quality of purity that few men possess.
9. Women should be cherished and protected by men.
10. Most women fail to appreciate fully all that men do for them.
11. Women seek to gain power by getting control over men.
12. Every man ought to have a woman whom he adores.
13. Men are complete without women.
14. Women exaggerate problems they have at work.
15. Once a woman gets a man to commit to her, she usually tries to put him on a tight leash.
16. When women lose to men in a fair competition, they typically complain about being discriminated against.
17. A good woman should be set on a pedestal by her man.
18. There are actually very few women who get a kick out of teasing men by seeming sexually available and then refusing male advances.
19. Women, compared to men, tend to have a superior moral sensibility.
20. Men should be willing to sacrifice their own well being in order to provide financially for the women in their lives.
21. Feminists are making entirely reasonable demands of men.
22. Women, as compared to men, tend to have a more refined sense of culture and good taste.

**Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale**

Please read the following statements then rate each statement by indicating whether you 1 (do not at all agree), 2(disagree somewhat), 3 (disagree slightly), 4 (neutral), 5 (agree slightly), 6 (agree somewhat), 7 (very much agree)

1. If a woman is raped while she is drunk, she is at least somewhat responsible for letting things get out of control.
2. Although most women wouldn't admit it, they generally find being physically forced into sex a real "turn-on."
3. When men rape, it is because of their strong desire for sex.
4. If a woman is willing to "make out" with a guy, then it's no big deal if he goes a little further and has sex.
5. Women who are caught having an illicit affair sometimes claim that it was rape.
6. Newspapers should not release the name of a rape victim to the public.
7. Many so-called rape victims are actually women who had sex and "changed their minds" afterwards.
8. Many women secretly desire to be raped.
9. Rape mainly occurs on the "bad" side of town.
10. Usually, it is only women who do things like hang out in bars and sleep around that are raped.
11. Most rapists are not caught by the police.
12. If a woman doesn't physically fight back, you can't really say that it was rape.
13. Men from nice middle-class homes almost never rape.
14. Rape isn't as big a problem as some feminists would like people to think.
15. When women go around wearing low-cut tops or short skirts, they're just asking for trouble.
16. Rape accusations are often used as a way of getting back at men.
17. A rape probably didn't happen if the woman has no bruises or marks.
18. Many women find being forced to have sex very arousing.
19. If a woman goes home with a man she doesn't know, it is her own fault if she is raped.
20. Rapists are usually sexually frustrated individuals.
21. All women should have access to self-defense classes.
22. It is usually only women who dress suggestively that are raped.
23. Some women prefer to have sex forced on them so they don't have to feel guilty about it.
24. If the rapist doesn't have a weapon, you really can't call it a rape.
25. When a woman is a sexual tease, eventually she is going to get into trouble.
26. Being raped isn't as bad as being mugged and beaten.
27. Rape is unlikely to happen in the woman's own familiar neighborhood.
28. In reality, women are almost never raped by their boyfriends.
29. Women tend to exaggerate how much rape affects them.
30. When a man is very sexually aroused, he may not even realize that the woman is resisting.
31. A lot of women lead a man on and then they cry rape.

32. It is preferable that a female police officer conducts the questioning when a woman reports a rape.
33. A lot of times, women who claim they were raped just have emotional problems.
34. If a woman doesn't physically resist sex—even when protesting verbally—it really can't be considered rape.
35. Rape almost never happens in the woman's own home.
36. A woman who "teases" men deserves anything that might happen.
37. When women are raped, it's often because the way they said "no" was ambiguous.
38. If a woman isn't a virgin, then it shouldn't be a big deal if her date forces her to have sex.
39. Men don't usually intend to force sex on a woman, but sometimes they get too sexually carried away.
40. This society should devote more effort to preventing rape.
41. A woman who dresses in skimpy clothes should not be surprised if a man tries to force her to have sex.
42. Rape happens when a man's sex drive gets out of control.
43. A woman who goes to the home or apartment of a man on the first date is implying that she wants to have sex.
44. Many women actually enjoy sex after the guy uses a little force.
45. If a woman claims to have been raped but has no bruises or scrapes, she probably shouldn't be taken too seriously.

## Demographic Survey

Please circle/write in your response

1. What is your age?
2. What is your gender?
    a. Female
    b. Male
3. What is your marital status?
    a. Single
    b. Married
    c. Divorced
    d. Widowed
    e. Live with significant other
    f. Other
4. What is your major?
5. Which best describes your race/ethnicity?
    a. African American
    b. Arab American
    c. Asian American
    d. Caucasian
    e. Hispanic American
    f. Other
6. Do you know anyone who has been raped?
    a. No
    b. Yes - If yes, was it
        i. Acquaintance
        ii. Friend
        iii. Family member
        iv. Self
7. Do you know anyone who has been accused of rape?
    a. No
    b. Yes – If yes, was it
        i. Acquaintance
        ii. Friend
        iii. Family member
        iv. Self

## Appendix B

### Recruitment Letter, Script, and Sign-up Sheet

### Letter to Instructors

Dear **Name of Instructor**:

My name is Sandra Parent and I am working on my dissertation in the Educational Psychology Department. I am seeking permission to contact students in your classes to participate in my research. I am investigating college students' perception of an uncomfortable sexual experience. I would greatly appreciate your help with this. I am trying to include a variety of courses in the study in an attempt to secure a diverse sample. The initial contact would be done in person and would be brief, but the actual survey would be completed after class on-line.

If you need more information about my study before making a decision, please contact me or my advisor (Dr. Cheryl Somers, 577-1670).

Thank you for your consideration,

Sandra Parent
slparent@aol.com

Home -
Cell –

**Recruitment Script**

Hi, my name is Sandra Parent and I am working on my dissertation in the Educational Psychology department. I am recruiting students to participate in an on-line survey related to college students' perceptions of an uncomfortable sexual experience. I am seeking only Wayne State University students.

Participation in this study is strictly voluntary and you may withdraw at anytime. Your decision to participate or not to participate will not change any present or future relationship with Wayne State University or its affiliates.

If you take part in the study, you will be asked to read a scenario and respond to a number of questions. You will read a story about a couple on a date. The story includes sexual content and you may stop reading the story and end your participation in the study at any time. After reading the story, you will be asked questions about how you feel about what happened. Additionally, you will be asked some questions about yourself including your beliefs about the world, your beliefs about men's and women's behavior in sexual and work relationships. At the end of the survey you will be asked some basic descriptive questions about yourself such as your age and marital status. You may withdraw from the study at any time. The entire survey should take no longer than 20 minutes to complete.

There are potentially no direct benefits to you for participating in this study, but the information from the study may benefit others in the future.

As a participant in this study, there is the potential risk for emotional distress such as feelings of sadness or anxiety. Contact numbers will be provided in case you need to talk with someone.

There will be no cost to you for participating in this study.

All information collected about you during the course of this study will be kept without any identifiers.

If you decide to participate in this research, I will need you to provide your e-mail address. Your e-mail address will be used to send you a URL to take the survey. Your responses to the survey will be anonymous because only one URL link will be used for all participants, which prevents tracking of e-mail addresses. Your contact information will be destroyed after the study information has been sent to you.

Upon completion of data collection, there will be a drawing for four $50.00 VISA gift cards for those who choose to enter the drawing. At the end of the survey you will be provided the option to click on a link. This link will direct you to another webpage where you will enter your contact information such as name and telephone number. All contact information will be destroyed after the gift cards have been awarded.

**Sign-up Sheet**

If you are interested in participating in this research study please provide your e-mail address.

_____

If you are interested in participating in this research study please provide your e-mail address.

_____

If you are interested in participating in this research study please provide your e-mail address.

_____

If you are interested in participating in this research study please provide your e-mail address.

_____

If you are interested in participating in this research study please provide your e-mail address.

_____

If you are interested in participating in this research study please provide your e-mail address.

_____

## Appendix C

## Research Information Sheet

Title of Study: College students' perceptions of an uncomfortable sexual experience

Principal Investigator (PI): Sandra L. Parent
Educational Psychology

**Purpose:**
You are being asked to be in a research study of attitudes regarding an uncomfortable sexual experience because you are a student at Wayne State University. Approximately 350 students are being recruited for this study.

**Study Procedures**:
If you take part in the study, you will be asked to read a scenario and respond to a number of questions. You will read a story about a couple on a date. The story includes sexual content and you may stop reading the story it and end your participation in the study at any time. After reading the story, you will be asked questions about how you feel about what happened. Additionally, you will be asked some questions about yourself including your beliefs about the world, your beliefs about men's and women's behavior in sexual and work relationships. At the end of the survey you will be asked some basic descriptive questions about yourself such as your age and marital status. You may withdraw from the study at any time. The entire survey should take no longer than 20 minutes to complete.

**Benefits:**
As a participant in this research study, there may be no direct benefit for you; however, information from this study may benefit other people now or in the future.

**Risks:**
By taking part in this study, you may experience the following risk:
Emotional risks: There is the potential risk for emotional distress such as feelings of sadness or anxiety. If reading the scenario or the questions has caused you any discomfort and you need to talk with someone, telephone numbers for counseling and psychological services will be provided at the end of the survey.

**Costs:**
There will be no costs to you for participation in this research study.

**Compensation:**
Upon completion of data collection, there will be a drawing for four $50.00 VISA gift cards for those who choose to enter the drawing.

**Confidentiality:**
All information collected about you during the course of this study will be kept without any identifiers.

**Voluntary Participation /Withdrawal**:
Taking part in this study is voluntary. You are free to not answer any questions or withdraw at any time. Your decision will not change any present or future relationships with Wayne State University or its affiliates.

**Questions:**
If you have any questions about this study now or in the future, you may contact Sandra L. Parent or one of her research team members at the following phone number . If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, the Chair of the Human Investigation Committee can be contacted at (313) 577-1628. If you are unable to contact the research staff, or if you want to talk to someone other than the research staff, you may also call (313) 577-1628 to ask questions or voice concerns or complaints.

**Participation:**
By completing the questionnaire you are agreeing to participate in this study.

## Appendix D

## Correspondence

Hi Sandra,

Please feel free to use the ASI in your current (and subsequent) research.

Best of luck,

Peter

Peter Glick
Henry Merritt Wriston Professor in the Social Sciences

Psychology Department email: glickp@lawrence.edu
Lawrence University phone: (920) 832-6707
P O Box 599 fax: (920) 832-6962
Appleton ,WI 54912-0599

-----Original Message----- **From:**SLPARENT@aol.com [mailto:SLPARENT@aol.com] **Sent:** Thursday, August 16, 2007 2:55 PM **To:**glickp@lawrence.edu **Subject:** dissertation

Dr. Glick,

I am working on my dissertation at Wayne State University and would like permission to use your Ambivalent Sexism Inventory in my research on college students' attitudes regarding rape victims. If you have any questions concerning my research I would be happy to answer them.

Sincerely,
Sandra Parent

# Appendix E

## Human Investigation Committee Approval

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

HUMAN INVESTIGATION COMMITTEE
101 East Alexandrine Building
Detroit, Michigan 48201
Phone: (313) 577-1628
FAX: (313) 993-7122
http://hic.wayne.edu

Full AAHRPP Accreditation

### NOTICE OF FULL BOARD APPROVAL

**To:** Sandra Parent
College of Education
2625 AAB

**From:** Ellen Barton, Ph.D.
Chairperson, Behavioral Institutional Review Board (B3)

**Date:** December 18, 2008

**RE:** HIC #: 115808B3F
Protocol Title: College Students' Perceptions of an Uncomfortable Sexual Experience
Sponsor:
Coeus #: 0811006549

**Expiration Date:** December 17, 2009

The above-referenced protocol and items listed below (if applicable) were **APPROVED** following *Full Board Review* by the Wayne State University Institutional Review Board (B3) for the period of 12/18/2008 through 12/17/2009. This approval does not replace any departmental or other approvals that may be required.

- Recruitment Script
- Internet Information Sheet (dated 12/8/08)

- Federal regulations require that all research be reviewed at least annually. You *may* receive a *"Continuation Renewal Reminder"* approximately two months prior to the expiration date; however, it is the Principal Investigator's responsibility to obtain review and continued approval ***before*** the expiration date. Data collected during a period of lapsed approval is unapproved research and can never be reported or published as research data.
- All changes or amendments to the above-referenced protocol require review and approval by the HIC **BEFORE** implementation.
- Adverse Reactions/Unexpected Events (AR/UE) must be submitted on the appropriate form within the timeframe specified in the HIC Policy (http://www.hic.wayne.edu/hicpol.html).

**NOTE:**

1. Upon notification of an impending regulatory site visit, hold notification, and/or external audit the HIC office must be contacted immediately.
2. Forms should be downloaded from the HIC website at **each** use.

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# ABSTRACT

## COLLEGE STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF AN UNCOMFORTABLE SEXUAL EXPERIENCE

by

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**Degree**: Doctor of Philosophy

The purpose of this study was to investigate college students' perception of an uncomfortable sexual experience and identify factors that may reinforce revictimization of rape victims. An additional purpose was to compare perceptions of rape victims to perceptions of those who knew a rape victim, and those who did not know a rape victim. Data were collected from college students attending a large commuter campus university. Participants were randomly assigned to read one of four scenarios that depicted an uncomfortable sexual experience between two college students. Two variables were manipulated in the scenarios--victim's dress (non-revealing/revealing) and the setting of the incident (unknowingly alone/knowingly alone)--otherwise the content of the scenarios remained consistent. After reading the scenario, participants responded to questions regarding the degree to which they acknowledged the incident as rape, blamed the victim, and deemed the incident should be reported to the police. Participants then responded to a series of items from three instruments regarding belief in a just world, rape myth acceptance, and sex role stereotyping.

Findings indicated that participants who had been a victim of rape were less accepting of rape myths and sex role stereotyping than those who did not know a rape victim. Participants who had personally experienced rape were more likely to acknowledge the incident as rape and deem the incident should be reported to the police than participants who knew a rape victim. Participants who were more accepting of rape myths were less likely to acknowledge the incident as rape, less likely to deem the incident should be reported to the police and more likely to blame the victim than those who were less accepting of rape myths. Gender and rape myth acceptance were significant predictors of acknowledging the incident as rape. Rape myth acceptance was a significant predictor of blaming the victim and rape myth acceptance and type of dress were significant predictors of deeming the incident should be reported to the police. Discussion includes implication of all findings, possible explanations for lack of significant findings, and suggestions for future research.

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