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PREDICTING PERCEPTIONS OF RAPE: RELATIONSHIP STATUS AND
PERPETRATOR MOTIVATION

by
Lisa M. Romano

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Arts Degree
of
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at
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Approved by _____
Dr. DJ Angelone

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ABSTRACT

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PREDICTING PERCEPTIONS OF RAPE: RELATIONSHIP STATUS AND PERPETRATOR MOTIVATION

2009

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MA in Mental Health Counseling and Applied Psychology

The primary purpose of this study was to examine whether perpetrator motivation or relationship status of the victim and perpetrator influence participant perceptions of a sexual assault. Participants were 143 students exposed to a stimulus in which the perpetrator's motivation was varied as having feelings of entitlement, rejection, or sexually motivated. The relationship status of the victim and perpetrator were also varied as either dating for six months or on a first date (acquaintance). Male participants were found to attribute more blame to the victim and less blame to the perpetrator when compared to female participants. Women who read the acquaintance stimulus attributed more guilt to the perpetrator than men. Perpetrator motivation interacted with relationship status, with participants rating the offense less as rape when exposed to the rejection condition and dating six months condition. Gender also interacted with motivation with male participants attributing less victim pleasure in the rejection condition and more victim pleasure in the sex condition than did female participants. Participants receiving the acquaintance stimulus were more likely to view the perpetrator as being guilty than those who read the dating six month stimulus. These results suggest that perpetrator motivation, relationship status, and gender can influence perceptions of sexual assault.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

About 70% of women reported being victimized by someone they knew (NCVS, 2005) with 38% of rapists being a friend or acquaintance, 28% being an intimate, and 7% being a relative (RAINN, 2008). In addition, 22% of women report being physically assaulted by a current or former spouse, cohabitating partner, boyfriend, girlfriend, or date (NCVS, 2005). Further, 61% of rapes were perpetrated by boyfriends, lovers, dates, or husbands while only 9% of rapes were perpetrated by strangers (Gavey, 1991). More than 50% of all sexual assault incidents were reported by victims to have occurred within one mile of their home or in their home. Approximately 40% of rapes take place at the victim's home while 20% occur at the home of a friend, neighbor, or relative (RAINN, 2008). Despite these numbers, many people do not consider acquaintance rape as “real” rape (Check & Malamuth, 1983).

Rape is not an instinctual act, but rather an act motivated by power and domination of strength (Brownmiller, 1975) keeping women in a constant state of fear. Historically, if a married woman was raped, she shared in the blame. Women may have developed a dependence on men as a result of this fear anxiety, feeling as though they are not permitted to make decisions or go places on their own. Women may avoid going out in public alone for fear of being sexually assaulted. The rape of a woman was not a criminal act of violence, but possibly a power struggle of man against man. The violent capture and rape of women developed into a full-blown solidification of power, or what is now considered the patriarchy (Brownmiller, 1975).

Masculinity and patriarchy of power may still be embedded in men today, suggesting that this socialization of male gender roles specifically reflects social pressures to equate masculinity with characteristics, like strength, and power (O'Neil, 1986) resulting in personal restriction, devaluation, or violation of others (O'Neil et al., 1995; Schwartz & Tylka, 2008). Men may have had the tendency to adopt very rigid, sexist, or restrictive traditional masculine roles, for instance, entitlement about what he has the right to expect from others.

As previously stated, the numbers of intimate partner and acquaintance rapes have been found to be larger than those of stranger rapes (61% versus 9%). Not surprisingly, early studies of female rape suggested a stranger rape stereotype. That is, most people describe a typical rape as occurring at night with an innocent woman being violently attacked by a male stranger (Anderson, 2007). Despite the contradictory numbers, a stranger-rape scenario remains the focus of much research. In fact, many agents involved with rape victims, such as doctors, police, lawyers, and counselors have tended to accept this stereotype (Anderson, 2007; DuMont, Miller, & Myhr, 2003). Further, female rape victims also have accepted this stereotype, not labeling an assault rape if it did not follow the stranger rape experience (Anderson, 2007; Wood & Rennie, 1994).

These false beliefs, or misconceptions about rape, may cause conflict for rape victims, or potentially justify male sexual aggression against women. For instance, many of our cultural beliefs about dating are a function of stereotypes. An example would be that "a woman who goes to the home or apartment of a man on the first date implies she is willing to have sex" or "a woman does not really mean it when she says no" (Burt,

1980). This acceptance of stereotypes may influence female victims' perceptions of the rape, not considering acquaintance rape as "real rape".

Over time, new data has suggested that rape does not lie in the stereotypical stranger rape scenario. Fortunately, beliefs about sexual assault being labeled rape using the stereotypical stranger scenario have changed with evidence to support acquaintance rape, or date rape, now perceived as "real" rape (Gavey, 2005), although these perceptions of rape vary across participants due to variables, such as gender and personality characteristics.

As stated, studies have revealed that women are raped by men they know, such as their boyfriends, lovers, dates, or husbands (Anderson, 2007; Koss, 1988). Most domestic violence, which includes forced sexual intercourse, occurs in long-term relationships, which includes long-term dating relationships (Lane & Gwartney Gibbs, 1985). Also, studies have revealed that 24% of female college students were intimidated by male students into having unwanted sexual intercourse with them, referred to as date rape (Knox, 1988). Consistent with prior research, the majority of women who reported sexual victimization were victimized by an intimate partner (Testa, VanZile-Tamsen, Livingston, 2007). Interestingly, more blame is assigned to the victim of an acquaintance rape in comparison to a stranger-rape victim, suggesting that relationship status may have an influence on perceptions of rape (Abrams, Viki, and Masser, 2003).

This research suggests that the stronger the relationship between the victim and perpetrator, the more likely the victim will share in the responsibility of the rape. In addition to relationship status influencing perceptions of rape, previous research has revealed a gender difference regarding perceptions of assault. For instance, men were

shown to misperceive a woman's friendliness as a sign of sexual interest (Abbey, 1982). Men tend to blame the female victims more often than women, arguing that the woman somehow enjoyed the rape (Thronton, Ryckman & Robbins, 1982) or that the woman provoked the assault. Women, on the other hand, were found to be more empathetic and deem the sexual assault a serious crime while being more supportive of prosecuting the perpetrator and suggesting longer prison sentences (Foley, Evancic, Karnik & King, 1995).

Further, women were found to place less blame on the victim than men. Since women were found to be more empathetic towards the victim than men, placing less blame on the victim may be due to women possibly seeing themselves as potential victims (Pollard, 1992). Women may associate certain behaviors, such as dressing provocatively or consuming alcohol, with an increased chance of being victimized. Over time, previous research has found characteristics associated with rape victims. In fact, a woman may increase the likelihood of being a rape victim if she was a victim in the past, has poor adjustment issues, such as depression and/or anxiety, has multiple sexual partners, and insecurity about relationships with the opposite gender (Mac Greene & Navarro, 1998). Other risk factors include dressing provocatively, being intoxicated, and knowing the offender (Bell et al, 1994). These characteristics are associated more with victim blame, corresponding with the belief that the rape victims "bring it upon themselves" (Pollard, 1992) and that in those cases of acquaintance rape, the assault is no longer considered "rape" but simply "sex". Other studies found that perpetrators tend to select "safe victims" (Koss & Dinero, 1989; Mac Greene & Navarro, 1998) or women who are less able to defend themselves or less likely to bring attention to incidents of

victimization, which again associates blame with the victim. Thus, the focus has been primarily on the victims' actions pre-rape, rather than the perpetrator's motives. Given the focus on victim characteristics, this research literature may imply that a victim shares responsibility in an assault.

Research on the factors that contribute to sexually assaultive behaviors is key to building a knowledge base in the conceptualization of rape and why humans rape. Although research has revealed a history of rape, factors attributed to perpetrators and victims, such as gender differences, relationship status (knowing the offender), and characteristics of both victims and perpetrators of sexual assault, there is still no clear explanation as to how and why sexual assault occurs and what drives perpetrators to behave in a sexually aggressive manner.

An interviewed study of 133 convicted rapists found two main motives for rape: anger and power (Groth, 1978), supporting the conclusion that a perpetrator's anger or need to dominate are possible motives for offending (Mann, 2007). Interestingly, studies which examined perpetrator motivation found that if a rape was motivated by violence versus sex, participants were more likely to recognize the act as rape, recommended longer prison sentences for the perpetrator, and assigned less blame to the victim (Mitchell, Angelone, Kohlberger, & Hirschman, in press), suggesting that an offender's motivation for rape can influence perceptions of the perpetrator and victim's responsibility for the assault.

Theories exist as to why men rape women. The first is the social learning theory, which suggests that the motivation to act aggressively towards others may have resulted from learned behaviors (Sellers, Cochran, and Branch, 2005). The second theory follows

a feminist view; the motive for men to sexually assault women is to obtain power and control over their victims (Groth, 1979). A third motive is based on the evolutionary theory, which explains rape as being an extreme response to natural selection pressure with sexual gratification being the predominant motive (Palmer, 1988; Schiff, 1971). Prior research has demonstrated strong support for these theories, describing them as key to understanding why men rape.

According to the social learning theory, rape results from the male acquisition of attitudes and vicarious learning experiences favorable to men behaving aggressively (Sellers, Cochran, and Branch, 2005). This theory suggests that in violent families violence is modeled, predicting that observing violence in the home as a child would lead to modeling of the violence as an adult (Emery, 1989). For instance, in families that uphold traditional sex-role attitudes, boys may learn how to be masculine by watching and helping their fathers engage in stereotypical male activities. Similarly, girls learn to be feminine and participate in female-dominated activities through observation of their mothers. Both boys and girls are positively rewarded for such behaviors (Anderson & Robson, 2006). Thus, studies suggest that males may feel entitled to have women meet their needs.

Entitlement is conceptualized as a logical extension of internalized gender role conflict that impacts men's perceptions of themselves and their self-worth (Hill & Fisher, 2001). For instance, in acquaintance rape situations, men may rape as a result of feelings of entitlement. Men tend to assume, for any number of reasons, that they are entitled to have their sexual desires met, that men are entitled to share sexually with people they are attracted to, and that they are entitled to a "payback" for taking someone out (Parrot,

Cummings, Marchell, & Hofher, 1994). Men believe that it is more acceptable for them to pressure someone into sex and are found to assign responsibility to the victim (Proite, 1993).

At the same time, both men and women who witness prior sexual victimization are seen to be more likely to end up a sexual abuser (Burton, 2003). Through observation of offending, similar to learning masculine- and feminine-dominated activities, one might assume entitlement to rewards following a sexual offense. Like many men in dating and cohabitating relationships, husbands may force sex on their partners. In a sample of 644 married women, 14% reported being forced into having sexual intercourse with their husbands (Russell, 1982). Thus, internalized social definitions and cognitive distortions form that may support sexual offending and as well as other sexual behaviors.

Fortunately, although traditional law allowed husbands to force their wives to have sexual intercourse, potentially making this behavior rewarding for him, many states consider such conduct to be criminal marital rape (Knox, 1988).

Motivations for rape also include an extension of the traditional male sex-role (Yourell & McCabe, 1988), otherwise known as gender role conflict. If a man feels rejected or that his authority is being challenged (ex. his partner refuses him, threatens to end the relationship), he may experience conflict between his own beliefs regarding his role as a man. When men feel threatened by rejection, one theory states that they seek the support from peers, known as the male peer support theory. In accordance to this theory, male peers encourage patriarchal values and norms, which justify and encourage physical aggression against women as a way to redeem power within the relationship (Sellers, Cochran, and Branch, 2005).

Similar to the male peer support theory, the feminist theory states that rape is nothing more than a “pseudo sexual act” used by men to intimidate and dominate women. Feminists claim that rape is caused by patriarchal traditions and sexist socialization patterns existing in American society, strongly opposing views that rape victims are responsible for the attacks against them (Palmer, 1988). The motive for sexual assault was to obtain power and control over the victims (Groth, 1979), supporting the feminist theory that domination of women was the main motive to rape.

A perpetrator may be motivated by many things; entitlement of sex and the desire for sexual aggression, power and domination over women (Palmer, 1988) as well as sexual gratification (Anderson, 2001). Many motivations could be involved in any given rape, and until the 1970’s, it was assumed that sexual gratification was the predominant motive (Palmer, 1988; Schiff, 1971). This desire for sexual gratification may have developed as a result of the natural evolution and history of rape with many arguing that rape has become naturally selected as a mating strategy to allow men to increase the likelihood of their reproductive success (Kahn, 2003). Following Darwin’s theory of evolution, which includes his theory of natural selection and sexual selection (Shields & Bhatia, 2009), the evolutionary theory explains rape as an extreme response to natural selection pressure, which has favored male assertiveness in attempting to engage in sexual intercourse with numerous sex partners (Palmer, 1988).

As previously stated, many theories of rape exist. Prior research has demonstrated strong support for a social learning theory, feminist theory, and evolutionary theory of rape. Each of these theories provides reasoning behind a perpetrator’s motivation to rape. Following these theories, the motivations examined in this study are an entitlement

motivation, rejection motivation, and sex motivation. The research literature on perpetrator motivation is small but appears to be growing. The lack of research in this area limits the ability to support possible hypotheses. Therefore, the purpose of examining perpetrator motivation and using these three motivations is to further examine the possible relationship between a perpetrator's motive to rape and perceptions of rape.

It is evident that rapes occur. Research has demonstrated that victims are more likely to know the perpetrator than not, and with this existing relationship comes numerous effects. Research supports that men and women differ in their perceptions of rape regarding victim and perpetrator blame and responsibility. Also, perpetrator motivations include beliefs in traditional male sex-roles, a demonstration of power and control over the victim, and sexual gratification. The primary goal of the present study was to examine how participants perceive both victims and perpetrators of an alleged sexual assault based on relationship status and perpetrator motivation.

A secondary goal of the present study was to explore interactions between perpetrator motivation, participant gender, and relationship status, which have been found to influence participant's rape perceptions. It was hypothesized that gender differences will exist, with men attributing more blame and responsibility to the victim as well as less severe sentencing of the perpetrator compared to female participants. It was also hypothesized that effects for rape type based on relationship status will exist; the stronger the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator, the less likely participants will rate the assault "rape." This study also examined perpetrator motivation, specifically feelings of entitlement, rejection, and sexual gratification, and the influence on participants' perceptions of rape. Based on the limited amount of research in this area the

purpose of studying perpetrator motivation was to explore possible relationships between perpetrator motivation, relationship status, and participant gender.

CHAPTER II

Methodology

Participants

The participants in this study were Rowan University students enrolled in the *Essentials of Psychology* course. A total of 174 students (86 males and 57 females) completed all questionnaires for this study. Their ages ranged from 18 to 48 ($M=20$, $SD=3.3$). The majority of the participants identified themselves as Caucasian (75%), followed by African American (12%), Latino (5%), Asian (3%), and “other” (3%). Data was included in the statistical analysis if a participant answered all five questions on the memory test correctly (see below). Based on this criterion, data from twenty-nine participants were excluded, leaving a sample size of one hundred forty three participants.

Materials

Stimulus story. The stimulus story developed for this study was presented in the form of a brief crime report describing an alleged sexual assault. The victim was described as a 19-year-old female undergraduate student enrolled in a four-year university who was out on a date with an acquaintance. This relationship status of the victim and perpetrator was randomly varied to be either a boyfriend/girlfriend dating six months or acquaintances on a first date. The assault occurred while the victim and alleged perpetrator were hanging out at the victims’ apartment after their dinner date. The victim verbally resisted the assault but was unable to physically resist. During the assault, the alleged perpetrator made a statement to the victim, describing his motivation for the assault. The motivation was randomly varied to be either a feeling of entitlement,

rejection, or of sexual motivation. In the entitlement motivated condition the alleged perpetrator said, “but I bought you dinner, it’s the least you can do to show some appreciation” as well as “since he paid for dinner, now he gets dessert”. In the rejected motivated condition the alleged perpetrator said, “What do you mean ‘no way’?” as well as “he was going to get back at her for trying to push him away”. In the sexually motivated condition the alleged perpetrator said, “I really need sex, I want you so bad” as well as “he needed sex so bad that he couldn’t stop himself”. The final portion of the report described the offender as a 21-year-old student at the university who acknowledged he had gone out with the victim, but that she had broken off the relationship. He maintained that their sexual contact was consensual.

Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (SDS). This 33-item true/false questionnaire is included to control for participants’ tendencies to respond to the post-stimulus questionnaire in a socially desirable manner (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960). An example of a statement is, “There have been occasions when I have taken advantage of someone” as well as “I’m always willing to admit it when I make a mistake”. Higher scores mean greater socially desirable responding. The SDS has demonstrated good internal consistency (.88) and test-retest reliability (.89) (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960).

Post-stimulus memory scale. A memory scale was used to ensure that only data from participants who had clearly attended to the stimulus will be included in the statistical analysis. The scale consists of five multiple choice questions about specific information provided in the stimulus. Participants will be asked to: (a) describe the female student, (b) recall the males actions after dinner, (c) recall what happened as the

two were leaving the restaurant, (d) state where the incident occurred, and (e) how the male responded when questioned by the police. Participants who are unable to answer all five questions correctly were dropped from further analysis. As stated, data from twenty-nine participants were excluded, leaving a sample size of one hundred forty three participants.

Dependent Measures

Post-Stimulus questionnaire on perceptions of victim and offender. In order to investigate the influence of victim gender and perpetrator motivation on participant's perceptions of victim and offender culpability, a questionnaire used by Angelone, Mitchell and Pilafova (2007) based on the model by George and Martinez (2002) was utilized. In accord with these researchers, a variety of constructs associated with perceptions of the victim and the offender were assessed: Victim culpability, perpetrator culpability, victim credibility, the extent to which the stimulus described a rape, and the sentencing recommendation for the perpetrator, participants' perceptions of their likelihood to convict the perpetrator of rape, degree of victim trauma, and degree of perpetrator guilt. Victim culpability was measured using eight questions assessing the victim's capability to change what happened, victim choice, selfishness, intent, victim blame, and victim responsibility. Perpetrator culpability was measured using eight questions assessing the perpetrators capability to change what happened, perpetrator choice, selfishness, intent, perpetrator blame, and perpetrator responsibility. Victim credibility was assessed using seven questions pertaining to how much the victim wanted to have sex with the perpetrator. The extent to which the stimulus described a rape, the

sentencing recommendation for the perpetrator, the likelihood to convict the perpetrator of rape, degree of victim trauma, victim pleasure, and perpetrator guilt were measured using individual questions, totaling twenty-nine questions. Each question was assessed on a 10 point Likert-type scale.

CHAPTER III

Procedure

Participants were referred to a computer lab to participate in the study. They were randomly assigned to one of six stimulus story conditions: 1) a couple dating six months with an entitlement-motivated offender, 2) a couple on a first date with an entitlement-motivated offender, 3) a couple dating six months with a rejection-motivated offender, 4) a couple on a first date with a rejection-motivated offender, 5) a couple dating six months with a sex-motivated offender, and 6) a couple on a first date with a sex-motivated offender. After signing and returning the informed consent, participants were seated at a computer. The brief crime report stimulus was provided to participants on the computer based on their randomly assigned condition. Participants were asked to read the stimulus before completing the questionnaires. All questionnaires were provided to participants and completed using the computer.

CHAPTER IV

Results

Prior to any analysis, the three multi-item scales from the overall questions were developed. That is, scale scores were developed for victim culpability, perpetrator culpability, and victim credibility, utilizing principal components analyses with varimax rotation, factor eigenvalues greater than one, an item loading cutoff criterion of .65, and acceptable internal consistency. The other dependent measures (e.g. perpetrator guilt, likelihood of rape, victim pleasure) remained as individual items. The data were analyzed with a series of 2 (participant gender) x 3 (perpetrator motivation) x 2 (relationship status) between groups ANOVAs. Scores on the SDS were used as a covariate. Significant main and interaction effects are presented below. Analysis concerning degree of victim credibility, victim trauma and perpetrator sentencing did not yield statistically significant findings and are not presented.

Victim culpability

Victim culpability was measured using eight items. Principal components analysis of the eight items revealed two components accounting for 67.5% of the variance. The rotated solution yielded two interpretable factors. Two items loaded on the first component, victim capability and victim choice, forming a Victim Control subscale ($\alpha=.766$). Six items loaded on a second subscale, victim selfishness, victim causation, victim intent, victim blame, victim causality, and victim responsibility, forming a Victim Blame scale ($\alpha=.871$).

For the Victim Control subscale, an ANOVA revealed a main effect approaching significance for gender, $F(1,74)=3.13$, $p=.08$, with male participants attributing more blame to the victim ($M=12.63$, $SD=4.7$) than female participants ($M=11.11$, $SD=4.3$). The Victim Blame subscale also revealed a main effect for gender, $F(1,74)=11.49$, $p=.001$, with male participants attributing more blame to the victim ($M=24.43$, $SD=11.2$) than female participants ($M=17.25$, $SD=8.3$).

Perpetrator culpability

Perpetrator culpability was measured using eight items. Principal components analysis of the eight items revealed two components accounting for 56.1% of the variance. The rotated solution yielded two interpretable factors. Two items loaded on the first subscale, perpetrator capability and perpetrator choice ($\alpha=.745$). Six items loaded on the second ($\alpha=.761$), perpetrator selfishness, perpetrator causation, perpetrator intent, perpetrator blame, perpetrator causality, and perpetrator responsibility, forming a Perpetrator Blame scale.

Differences in blame attributions between male and female participants using the first subscale were not statistically significant. An ANOVA revealed main effects approaching significance for gender, $F(1,74)=2.83$, $p=.09$, on the Perpetrator Blame subscale, with male participants attributing less blame to the perpetrator ($M=53.3$, $SD=6.36$) than female participants ($M=55.63$, $SD=4.86$).

Was it rape?

This item was measured using a ten point likert scale (1= definitely not rape, 10=definitely rape). There was a motivation by relationship status interaction approaching significance, $F(2,74)=2.71$, $p=.07$. Analysis of the simple effects revealed

that participants exposed to the rejection motivation as well as the dating 6 months relationship status condition rated the offense less as rape ($M=7.15$, $SD=2.85$) than those exposed to the acquaintance status condition with a rejection motivation ($M=8.86$, $SD=1.7$); entitlement motivation ($M=8.0$, $SD=2.4$); and sex motivation ($M=8.21$, $SD=8.21$). There were no other significant main effects or interaction effects.

Victim pleasure

This item was measured using a ten point likert scale (1= none at all, 10= very much). There was a significant participant gender by perpetrator motivation interaction, $F(2,74)=3.82$, $p=.026$. Analysis of the simple effects revealed that male participants exposed to the rejection motivation condition rated less victim pleasure ($M=2.06$, $SD=2.01$) than did female participants ($M=3.36$, $SD=2.4$). Also, male participants exposed to the sex motivated condition rated more victim pleasure ($M=3.76$, $SD=2.4$) than did female participants ($M=1.91$, $SD=1.58$). There were no other significant main effects or interaction effects for victim pleasure.

Perpetrator guilt

This item was measured using a ten point likert scale (1= not at all guilty, 10= very guilty). An ANOVA revealed a main effect for relationship status approaching significance, $F(1,74)=2.82$, $p=.097$. Participants exposed to the acquaintance condition were more likely to view the perpetrator as guilty ($M=8.24$, $SD=2.09$) than those exposed to the dating 6 months condition ($M=7.63$, $SD=2.55$). Also, an ANOVA revealed a gender by relationship status interaction that approached significance, $F(1,74)=2.8$, $p=.099$. Female participants exposed to the acquaintance condition attributed more guilt

to the perpetrator ($M=8.81$, $SD=1.11$) than did male participants ($M=7.88$, $SD=7.92$). No other significant main effects or interaction effects were found.

CHAPTER V

Discussion

The aim of the present study was to examine how participants perceive both victims and perpetrators of an alleged sexual assault based on relationship status and perpetrator motivation. The individual and interaction effects between perpetrator motivation and participant gender, as well as relationship status and participant gender were also of interest. The first hypothesis examined gender differences. It was hypothesized that gender effects will exist with female participants being more severe in their sentencing of the perpetrator than males and attribute less blame and responsibility to the victim. This hypothesis was found to be consistent with the findings in previous research and was supported, with female participants assigning less blame to the victim and more blame to the perpetrator than male participants. As previously stated, women tend to be more empathetic towards rape victims, possibly due to a belief that they have the potential to be a victim of rape. Interestingly, inconsistent with prior findings, female participants were not found to be more severe in their sentencing of the perpetrator than male participants.

The second hypothesis was found to be consistent with the findings in previous research that relationship status influences perceptions of rape (Abrams, Viki, and Masser, 2003). An interaction between participant gender and relationship status approached significance with female participants exposed to the acquaintance condition attributing more guilt to the perpetrator than did male participants. In terms of perpetrator guilt, participants exposed to the acquaintance condition were more likely to view the

perpetrator as guilty than those exposed to the dating 6 month condition. This finding may potentially support the stranger-rape stereotype. Examining this relationship may assist in a better understanding of the potential risk factors associated with a victim's reluctance to seek help, for instance, beliefs that forced, non-consensual sex from a boyfriend, lover, or husband is just sex.

Perpetrator motivation interacted with relationship status with participants exposed to the rejection motivation as well as the dating 6 months relationship status condition rating the offense less as rape than those exposed to the acquaintance status condition. This interaction suggests a belief in a stereotypical stranger rape, but surprisingly no significant gender differences. Both male and female participants in this condition viewed the incident less as rape, suggesting that when the perpetrator is motivated to rape due to feelings of rejection and he and the victim are dating, the victim may be viewed as possibly getting what she deserves or having brought the situation upon herself. Considering that the analyses approached significance as well as several limitations, caution should be used when forming conclusions.

A three-way interaction between perpetrator motivation, relationship status, and participant gender was not found to be significant, although participant gender did interact with perpetrator motivation in terms of victim pleasure, with male participants exposed to the sex motivated condition rating more victim pleasure than female participants. In the sex motivated condition, male participants may have viewed the victim as provoking the assault or possibly enjoying it. Understanding how such motivations end up influencing perceptions of rape remains unclear, suggesting the importance of continued research in this area.

In summary, participant gender revealed significance, with male participants assigning more blame to the victim and less blame to the perpetrator than female participants. Men exposed to the sex motivated condition rated more victim pleasure than women. Also, analysis of the simple effects revealed a gender by relationship status interaction approaching significance. Female participants exposed to the acquaintance condition attributed more guilt to the perpetrator than did male participants.

One limitation of the present study was the small sample size. Data from one hundred forty three participants were used. When the sample was categorized into ten conditions, comparisons were made among a very small sample with 13-19 participants per group. Therefore, unequal samples sizes could impact the statistical power of our tests. Also, the male to female ratio was also a limitation. The number of male participants in each condition was significantly larger than the number of female participants. Thus, a larger sample size and equal groups may potentially increase the power of the findings as well as the generalizability of the findings.

There is limited research on the relationship between the motivation of a perpetrator and perceptions of rape. Although theories of rape exist, these approaches do not explain why some husbands continue to rape or abuse their wives after she has stopped fighting and may even be begging for mercy. Some domestic violence may be in response to emotional needs, with aggression being a response to frustration and pain (Emery, 1989). It is through gaining accurate knowledge into causes of rape that prevention can be examined.

Public awareness of rape has been crucial in facilitating social change (Palmer, 1988). Therefore, rape prevention programs promoting awareness of sexual assault and

rape myths may be important. For example, prevention programs have been successful in changing men's attitudes. Participation in rape-prevention programs affects one's ability to empathize with rape victims. Studies investigating the effects of acquaintance rape prevention programs on college students and their results indicated that both men and women who received interventions became more empathetic towards the victim than the control group (Pinzone-Glover, 1998). Further, men in intervention groups were more likely to demonstrate change, attributing more responsibility toward the perpetrator and expressing more positive feelings toward the victim as well as recommending longer prison sentences for offenders (Deitz & Brynes, 1981). Men in the rape prevention group became less traditional in their attitudes (increased acceptance for forcible date rape, acceptance of violence towards women, victim blaming) compared to the control group.

Although research on rape prevention has demonstrated interesting findings, it is just as important to study the effects of rape on victims. Experiencing a sexual assault can be traumatic for any victim. There are many common responses to assault, all of which affect a victim's mental and physical well-being and are likely to persist if not assessed and treated. How a victim conceptualizes the rape is also important. For example, a woman who was raped repeatedly by her husband may feel shame, guilt, resentment, or even anger. She may assume that forced sexual intercourse by one's husband is merely "sex", and that what he was doing did not constitute "rape." It would be important to reassure the victim that she made a positive choice in seeking help, pointing out to her that many women in her situation are reluctant to begin treatment. How rape victims conceptualize the trauma may be different across populations (acquaintance rape versus

stranger rape victims), although both have the potential to experience similar symptomology.

Of the estimated twelve million women in the United States who have experienced rape, 12.4% develop chronic posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Resnick et al, 1993). Victims may experience flashbacks, nightmares, or sleep disturbance for a significant time postrape (APA, 1987). These feelings of anxiety, or intense fears of rape-related situations may cause general anxiety following rape. In one study, only twenty-three percent of rape victims were asymptomatic at one year postrape (Veronen & Kilpatrick, 1980). Depression is another common reaction to rape, although research shows it appears to be less persistent than anxiety with symptoms declining considerably by 3 months postassault (Kilpatrick et al, 1979). Related to depression, suicidal thoughts and behaviors must be assessed in assault victims. In a study of sexual assault victims seeking treatment, forty-three percent has considered suicide and seventeen percent had made an attempt (Resick, 1988). Suicidal ideation is present in a large proportion of assault victims and should be assessed for and discussed.

Anger is another reaction found to be associated with victims of sexual assault. It was also found that elevated anger predicted the development of PTSD, inhibiting fear responses that would lead to habituation, and to allow the victim to avoid feelings of anxiety (Foa & Rothbaum, 1998). Victims who experience anger versus anxiety have greater difficulty confronting fearful situations, thus do not have the opportunity to decrease the fear and their response to anxiety-provoking cues remain unchanged. Mental health professionals should be conscious of possible implications to treatment in order to effectively treat trauma victims, specifically sexual assault victims. It is also important to

educate women about the risks associated with victimization as well as educate society as to possible reasons why rape goes unreported.

Given the high prevalence of rape, specifically acquaintance rape, it is important to examine these relationships and preventative options so that the effects, misconceptions, and the development and acceptance of rape myths can be better known and understood. Understanding the relationship between a perpetrator's motivation to commit rape and how others evaluate the victims and perpetrators of sexual assault may provide insight into how jury members are influenced by a perpetrator's particular motivation to rape. The outcome of a trial may be based on how jury members evaluate both the perpetrator as well as the victim. Future research could examine the effects of perpetrator motivation on participant's perceptions of victim and perpetrator culpability, credibility, perpetrator guilt, and sentencing recommendations as well as whether the act was rape using a mock trial scenario.

Previous research has revealed that men's attitudes have the potential to change in a positive manner while becoming more accurate in their definitions of rape post-intervention, but from such research come questions regarding where attitudes towards rape and women stemmed from initially. Future research can further evaluate rape-prevention research by examining potentially where perceptions of rape come from, what makes males and females differ in their perceptions of rape, of rape victims, and of the act of rape.

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Not at all Very much

11. How much did Mike intend to cause Jessica to continue sexual activity with him?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Not at all Very much

12. How much was it Mike's fault that he engaged in sexual activity with Jessica?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Not at all Very much

In your opinion, to what extent did each person cause what happened sexually in the story you read?

13. Jessica

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Not at all Very much

14. Mike

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Not at all Very much

How responsible was each person for what happened sexually in the story you read?

15. Jessica

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Not at all responsible Very responsible

16. Mike

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Not at all responsible Very responsible

17. How much did Jessica mean to have sexual intercourse with Mike?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Not at all Very much

18. How much did Jessica really want Mike to stop his behavior?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Not at all Very much

19. How much did Jessica really want to have sex with Mike?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Not at all Very much

20. How definite was Jessica in her refusal?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Not at all definite Very definite

21. How likely is it that Jessica only called the police so that Mike would not think she was too "loose" or "easy"?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Not likely Very likely

APPENDIX C

Social Desirability Scale

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 1. Before voting, I thoroughly investigate the qualities of all the candidates | T | F |
| 2. I never hesitate to go out of my way to help someone in trouble. | T | F |
| 3. It is sometimes hard for me to go on with my work if I am not encouraged. | T | F |
| 4. I have never intensely disliked anyone. | T | F |
| 5. On occasion I have had doubts about my ability to succeed in life. | T | F |
| 6. I sometimes feel resentful when I don't get my way. | T | F |
| 7. I am always careful about my manner of dress. | T | F |
| 8. My table manners at home are as good as when I eat out in a restaurant. | T | F |
| 9. If I could get into a movie without paying and be sure I was not seen I would probably do it. | T | F |
| 10. On a few occasions, I have given up doing something because I thought too little of my ability. | T | F |
| 11. I like to gossip at times. | T | F |
| 12. There have been times when I felt like rebelling against people in authority even though I knew they were right. | T | F |
| 13. No matter who I'm talking to, I'm always a good listener. | T | F |
| 14. I can remember "playing sick" to get out of something. | T | F |
| 15. There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone. | T | F |
| 16. I am always willing to admit it when I make a mistake. | T | F |
| 17. I always try to practice what I preach. | T | F |
| 18. I don't find it particularly difficult to get along with loud mouthed, obnoxious people. | T | F |
| 19. I sometimes try to get even, rather than forgive and forget. | T | F |
| 20. When I don't know something, I don't at all mind admitting it. | T | F |
| 21. I am always courteous, even to people who are disagreeable. | T | F |

22. At times I have really insisted on having things my own way. T F
23. There have been occasions when I felt like smashing things. T F
24. I would never think of letting someone else be punished for my wrongdoings. T F
25. I never resent being asked to return a favor. T F
26. I have never been irked when people expressed ideas very different from my own. T F
27. I never make a long trip without checking the safety of my car. T F
28. There have been times when I was quite jealous of the good fortune of others. T F
29. I have almost never felt the urge to tell someone off. T F
30. I am sometimes irritated by people who ask favors of me. T F
31. I have never felt that I was punished without cause. T F
32. I sometimes think when people have a misfortune, they only got what they deserved. T F
33. I have never deliberately said something that hurt someone's feelings. T F

APPENDIX D

Memory Scale Questions

1. Jessica was described as:
 - a. 21-year-old Hispanic student.
 - b. 19-year-old undergraduate student enrolled in a four-year university.
 - c. A single, unemployed mother with 2 children.
 - d. A young professor in an urban university.

2. After dinner, Mike:
 - a. Paid the bill, insisting that dinner be on him that evening.
 - b. Suggested him and Jessica split the bill.
 - c. Kindly let Jessica pay for dinner.
 - d. Refused to pay for dinner.

3. As they were leaving the restaurant:
 - a. Jessica asked Mike if he would like to hang out and he accepted her invitation.
 - b. Mike and Jessica decided to go see a movie.
 - c. Mike asked Jessica to go back to his place and watch a movie.
 - d. Both Mike and Jessica exchanged good-byes and went their separate ways.

4. The incident occurred:
 - a. At a college-owned bar.
 - b. In a high-class restaurant.
 - c. At a party.
 - d. At Jessica's apartment.

5. When questioned by the police, Mike:
 - a. Denied ever having met Jessica.
 - b. Claimed that the sex was consensual.
 - c. Denied ever going to Jessica's apartment.
 - d. Refused to comment.

APPENDIX E

Demographic Information

Age: _____

Gender (circle one):

Male Female

Relationship status (circle one):

Single Dating Have a boyfriend/girlfriend Married

Ethnic background (circle one):

Caucasian African American Asian Latino/a Native American Other

Current Major: _____