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WHY DO WE BLAME VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT?

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by

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Abstract

Sexual assault is a formidable concern in American society with alarming rates of victimization among women and men. Based on the high prevalence of rape, some researchers have argued that America has a rape supportive culture (Burt, 1980; Wakelin & Long, 2003). The culture is particularly supported by the high incidence of victim blame that is commonly reported upon in research evaluating perceptions of rape victims. The purpose of the current study was to determine what types of variables are associated with victim blame and the theories which best explain why victim blame occurs. In particular, the current study evaluated various respondent and victim variables to determine if they correlated with victim blame. The theories of the just world belief and defensive attribution were also assessed to determine their impact on victim blame. Finally, the impact of knowledge of the rape law on victim blame was evaluated. Results revealed no significant association between belief in a just world and victim blame. The findings indicated that respondents endorsing more egalitarian attitudes tended to blame the victim less than those endorsing more traditional gender norms. Also, respondents who reported a history of sexual assault were found to be less blaming of the victim than other respondents. Rape myth acceptance was also noted to be associated with victim blame, with individuals endorsing high levels of rape myths also tended to blame the victim more than other participants. Lastly, results suggested that individuals with a better knowledge of the current rape law were less likely to blame the victim than those who provided an incorrect definition. Overall, the results provide more support for the defensive attribution theory than for the just world hypothesis. Also, the results highlight the types of variables that are particularly associated with victim blame. These results shed some light on how sexual assault education and awareness can be improved; in addition, they provide some insight into how clinical care of rape victims can be enhanced.

Dedication and Acknowledgements

This dissertation is dedicated to my family and friends, who were there for me throughout this process. I want to thank you for your knowledge, wisdom, friendship, and unwavering support, all of which have guided me through this rollercoaster journey. I also want to thank my uncle, whose memory will forever stay with me and help me to remember what is most important in life. Last, but not least, I want to thank my love, Ankit, who spent countless hours and days encouraging and guiding me during the hardest times of this project. I cannot begin to thank you for everything you have done for me and feel privileged to have the opportunity to spend the rest of my life with you.

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Why Do We Blame Victims of Sexual Assault?

Every two and a half minutes someone is sexually assaulted in the United States (Catalano, 2005). Using national data, Catalano (2005) found that one in six American women has been the victim of an attempted or completed rape. In addition, about 10% of sexual assault victims are men. These figures indicate that sexual assault is a formidable concern in American society. Though the reported numbers are alarming, it is well documented that sexual assault is one of the most underreported crimes in the United States, with more than half still being left unreported. The high prevalence of rape in this society has led some researchers to claim that the United States is a rape supportive culture (Burt, 1980; Wakelin & Long, 2003). The culture is supported by numerous factors including the high incidence of victim blame that is commonly reported upon in research evaluating rape scenarios (Wakelin & Long, 2003). Over the years, there has been a large body of research conducted evaluating victim blame. Specifically, researchers have studied a myriad of variables that impact victim blame, including respondent and victim characteristics. Furthermore, researchers have attempted to explain the occurrence of victim blame using theories borrowed from social psychology. More recently, there has been an increased focus on the impact of the tendency to engage in victim blaming in the legal arena.

Despite the extensive research conducted on victim blame, there remain significant gaps in the literature. Specifically, though a number of respondent and victim characteristics have been found to be correlated with victim blame, there are some variables that have received little attention, such as male rape victims and female perpetrators. There is also little understanding of why these characteristics are correlated with victim blame. Specifically, the theories that have been used in the past to help explain the occurrence of victim blame appear to only provide a partial understanding, as is apparent given the conflicting findings in the research. The purpose

of this study was to help fill in these gaps. Specifically, the aims of the current study were to evaluate the occurrence of victim blame in scenarios involving both male and female victims and perpetrators. In particular, the researcher was interested in evaluating the effects of demographic similarity (e.g., gender and perceived sexual orientation similarity) between the respondent and the victim on victim blame. In addition, the current study aimed to develop a better understanding of how the theories of the just world belief (Lerner, 1965) and Shaver's defensive attribution theory (1970) help to explain victim blame. The current study expanded on the extant literature by considering how endorsement of traditional gender norms and rape myth acceptance impact victim blame, and how such attitudes fit into the theories of the just world belief and defensive attribution theory. A final goal of the current study was to consider how knowledgeable the sample was about the legal definition of rape, especially considering the significant legal reforms that have taken place in laws pertaining to sexual assault in the past several decades. The following introduction provides the background research pertaining to the types of variables that have been studied in the area of victim blame. This section is followed by a discussion of the theories that have been used to explain the phenomenon of victim blame. Lastly, a brief discussion is provided about the legal reform laws pertaining to sexual assault that have been enacted in the past several decades.

Respondent Characteristics Impacting General Perceptions of Rape Victims

There have been a number of respondent characteristics that have been studied to evaluate their influence on an individual's perception of rape victims. An extensively evaluated variable that has been shown to have an impact on an individual's view of rape victims is the extent to which they accept rape myths. Several researchers have attempted to define rape myths over the years. Burt (1980) defined rape myths as "prejudicial, stereotyped, or false beliefs about

rape, rape victims, and rapists," (Burt, 1980, p. 217). Lonsway and Fitzgerald (1994) expanded on the definition by stating that 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). In general, rape myths are commonly conceptualized as stereotypes. Rape myths can include evaluations such as men cannot be raped or it is not rape if the victim did not resist. Over the years, researchers have found that rape myth acceptance is widespread, with various factors, including characteristics specific to the respondent, victim, and the situation, predicting the degree to which individuals will accept any given rape myth (Buddie & Miller, 2002). A variety of rape myths have been identified in the literature. The impact of these rape myths is evaluated in the following sections as they pertain to specific respondent or victim characteristics.

Gender. A widely studied variable that has been shown to have an impact on how respondents perceive rape victims is the gender of the respondent. Particularly, researchers have found gender differences in the degree of acceptance of rape myths, how respondents view aggressive sexual behavior in general, the level of blame that they assign to the victim for the rape, the general view that they have of the victim, and the view that they have of the rapist. Specifically, research studies have consistently found that males are more accepting of rape myths than are females (Buddie & Miller, 2002; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994; Ellis, O'Sullivan & Sowards, 1992). Furthermore, studies have noted that respondents who endorse high levels of rape myth acceptance tend to attribute more responsibility to the victim than do participants who are less accepting of rape myths (Coller & Resick, 1987; Kopper, 1996). In addition to gender differences in the level of rape myth acceptance, researchers have found differences in how respondents view aggressive sexual behavior. In general, women are less likely than men to

condone aggressive sexual behavior (Langley et al., 1991; Thornton, Robbins, & Johnson, 1981). Furthermore, some research studies have found that when participants are asked to make judgments about aggressive sexual behavior, female participants are more likely than males to perceive the incident as being rape (Langley et al., 1991; Thornton, Robbins, & Johnson, 1981). Gender differences have also been noted in how seriously rape is viewed by respondents. Specifically, several studies have found that women consider rape as being more serious than men consider it to be (Barnett, Quackenbush, Sinisi, Wegman, & Otney, 1992; Bell, Kuriloff, & Lottes, 1994; Bridges, 1991; Monson, Byrd, & Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 1996; Syzmanski, Devlin, Chrisler, & Vyse, 1993). In particular, Barnett and colleagues (1992) evaluated college students' (264 women, 230 men) reactions to and perceptions of a rape victim. They found that female respondents were more supportive of the rape victim in addition to rating the rape as more traumatic than male respondents.

Another pattern of results that have been noted among respondents is a gender difference in the level of blame that respondents tend to assign to the victim for the rape. Specifically, several studies have found that male respondents generally attribute more blame to rape victims than female respondents (Gerber, Cronin, & Steigman, 2004; Wakelin & Long, 2003; George & Martinez, 2002; Calhoun, Selby, & Warring, 1976; Krulewitz & Nash, 1979; Krulewitz & Payne, 1978; Thornton & Ryckman, 1983). Furthermore, results obtained from empirical studies suggest that there are significant gender differences in how respondents view the victim of a rape. Females tend to identify more with rape victims and have more sympathy and empathy for the victim than do males (Caron & Carter, 1997; Stormo, Lang, & Strizke, 1997; Workman & Freeburg, 1999). Female respondents have also been found to consider the psychological impact on the victim to be greater than do men (Calhoun, Selby, & Warring, 1976; Coates, Wortman, &

Abbey, 1979; Deitz, Littman, & Bentley, 1984; Krulewitz, 1982; Krulewitz & Nash, 1979; L'Armand & Pepitone, 1982). Male respondents, on the other hand, have commonly been found to have more negative attitudes towards rape victims than females, endorsing such generalizations as victims are likely to find a rape sexually pleasurable (Giacopassi & Dull, 1986; Mitchell, Hirschman, & Hall, 1999; White & Kurpius, 2002). Overall, female respondents tend to view rape more seriously, empathize more with the victim, and place less blame on the victim than do male respondents.

In terms of the gender differences noted in how respondents view rapists, researchers have found that male respondents often have less negative views of rapists in comparison to female respondents and are typically more lenient toward perpetrators than are women (Bell, Kuriloff, & Lottes, 1994; Calhoun, Selby, & Warring, 1976; Deitz, Littman, & Bentley, 1984; Kanedar, Pinto, & Mazumdar, 1985; Wiener & Rinehart, 1986). Specifically, Bell and colleagues' (1994) findings revealed that college males (n = 135) were significantly more likely to blame the victim and not the perpetrator in a date rape scenario than were females (n = 168). Furthermore, female respondents tend to recommend longer sentences for perpetrators of sexual assault than do male participants (George & Martinez, 2002; Caron & Carter, 1997; Stormo et al., 1997; Workman & Freeburg, 1999). These findings suggest that male respondents, especially male college students, tend to attribute less blame to the perpetrator than do females. Overall, males appear to be more sympathetic towards perpetrators.

Race. Another demographic variable that has commonly been studied in the literature assessing victim blame is the race of the respondent. Results from several studies indicate that there are racial differences in the acceptance of rape myths. Specifically, studies have reported that Black respondents are more accepting of rape myths than are Whites (Dull & Giacopassi,

1987; Giacopassi & Dull, 1986), while Latino respondents are generally more accepting of rape myths than are Whites (Jimenez & Abreu, 2003). In fact, Giacopassi and Dull (1986) found that Black college students (n = 129) were more likely to accept rape myths as valid, compared to White participants (n = 306). As for Asians, Lee and colleagues (2005) conducted a study assessing differences in attitudes towards rape between Asian and White respondents within a college population (N = 169) and found that Asians are more accepting of rape myths than are Whites. More specifically, findings obtained from this study indicate that Asian college students are more likely than White students to believe that victims should be held responsible for preventing rape and tend to blame the victim for the rape more than other respondents. In general, these findings suggest that respondents who are from minority backgrounds are more likely to ascribe blame to the victim than are White respondents. In addition, results from some studies suggest that respondents are more likely to assign blame to the victim if he/she is of a different race than the victim (Willis, 1992; Foley, Evancic, Karnik, King, & Parks, 1995). Clearly, the race of the respondent plays a role when trying to predict the level of blame the respondent will assign to a rape victim.

Age. An additional demographic variable that has been studied to determine its relationship with victim blame and rape myth acceptance is age. Some researchers have found that age is a significant factor in rape myth acceptance, showing that older individuals tend to endorse more rape myths than younger individuals. This finding was obtained in several studies, including one conducted by Hall, Howard, and Boezio (1986). In this study, the researchers found that college-aged men (n = 119) were significantly more supportive of rape myths than were university women (n = 174) or girls (n = 513) and boys (n = 460) ages 14-17 years (Hall, Howard, & Boezio, 1986). In another study, however, adolescents were found to be more

blaming of rape victims than university students. This particular study found that adolescents (n = 291) were blaming of rape victims and held more conservative attitudes toward women than university students (n = 317) (Xenos & Smith, 2001). These conflicting findings have been noted in other studies as well (Dull & Giacopassi, 1987; Hamilton & Yee, 1990; Mynatt & Allgeier, 1990). A limited number of studies have been conducted assessing individuals' attitudes towards victims of rape across the age span. One particular study assessed 104 males and 101 females, ranging in age from 18 to 80 (Nagel, Matsuo, McIntyre, & Morrison, 2005). The results from this study indicated that younger participants expressed more favorable attitudes toward victims of rape than older participants (Nagel et al., 2005). There is some indication that older participants tend to be more blaming of rape victims than younger participants; however, more research is needed to confirm this finding with individuals across the age span.

Attitudes. Aside from the various demographic variables that have been found to play a role in predicting a respondent's tendencies to assign blame to the victim, a variety of attitudes held by the respondent have also been found to play a predictive role in victim blame. One of the most important variables that have been found to be associated with victim blame is gender role traditionality. It should be noted that within this body of research gender roles are also conceptualized as sex roles.[1] Throughout this paper, however, the term gender role is used as a way to be consistent and accurate. It should be noted, however, that one of the limitations of the current study was that it did not challenge the concept of gender role traditionality, which may be an aim of a future study.

Gender role traditionality assesses to what extent the respondent ascribes to traditional gender roles. A large body of research has been conducted to evaluate various characteristics that are commonly associated with male and female identities. The most common characteristics that

are traditionally associated with the male identity include assertiveness and dominance (Gerber, Cronin, & Steigman, 2004). Empirical studies have shown that these personality traits are a product of powerful roles that can be enacted by individuals (Gerber, 1988, 1991, 1995). In other words, these personality characteristics are commonly associated with power, which is a core masculine trait that identifies the traditional male identity. In positive roles, these traits are associated with leadership; whereas, in their negative form, they are commonly associated with perpetration (Gerber, Cronin, & Steigman, 2004). On the other hand, characteristics that are commonly associated with the female identity include warmth and accommodation towards others (Gerber, Cronin, & Steigman, 2004). These characteristics often represent feminine roles that are absent of power. When these characteristics are identified in positive roles, they tend to be in the role of follower; whereas, in their negative form, they can be associated with the role of victim (Gerber, Cronin, & Steigman, 2004). It is speculated that respondents are affected by these predominant gender-identifying characteristics when evaluating victim blame. In fact, research has found that when male respondents are given a choice between identifying with the role of perpetrator of sexual assault or with the role of victim, they are more likely to identity with the perpetrator, irrespective of the gender of the perpetrator (Gerber, 1991, 1995). These findings are in line with traditional gender roles because males conventionally identify with the more powerful role. Therefore, it is not surprising that male respondents are more likely than females to assign blame to the victim rather than the perpetrator. On the other hand, regardless of the gender of the victim, female respondents are more likely to identify with the victim, who represents a powerless individual, which is characteristic of femininity (Gerber, Cronin, & Steigman, 2004). Overall, the more traditionally masculine respondents are, the more likely they are to identify with the powerful perpetrator role rather than the powerless victim role.

In addition to inherent traditional characteristics that guide respondents' tendencies to assign blame to the victim, respondents' endorsement of traditional gender roles also plays a role in victim blame. Specifically, Mason and colleagues (2004) have argued that sex-role stereotyping theory helps to explain why and how respondents make negative attributions to sexual assault victims. According to this theory, which was originally proposed by Weis and Borges (1973), men and women are socialized to assume specific roles that are in line with traditional male-female sexual interactions. In concordance with this theory, it is assumed that men should initiate sexual relations and women are to control how much sexual activity occurs (Weis & Borges, 1973). This theory has also been expanded upon to explain why victims are likely to receive more blame in certain rape scenarios versus others. Specifically, researchers argue that the sex-role stereotyping theory is more relevant in acquaintance rape scenarios than stranger rapes because respondents have a preexisting schema for the behavior of men and women who are on a date or are involved in an intimate relationship (Check & Malamuth, 1983; Bridges, 1991). In other words, acquaintance rape is thought to be understood by respondents with traditional gender role expectations as the extreme result of the traditional gender role interactions that are prescribed by society (Bridges, 1991). Furthermore, it is speculated that the extent to which a rape victim's behaviors are consistent with the gender role ascribed by society will determine the level of blame that the victim will receive for the rape. As would be expected by the sex-role stereotyping theory, research findings have shown that increasingly traditional gender role beliefs held by respondents are related to a variety of outcomes, including increased likelihood of minimizing the victim's rape experiences, attributing blame to the victim, and a greater reluctance to define acquaintance or marital rape scenarios as rape (Check & Malamuth, 1983; Coller & Resick, 1987; Proite, Dannells, & Benton, 1993; Quackenbush, 1989; Ryckman,

Kaczor, & Thornton, 1992; Snell & Godwin, 1993; Willis, 1992; Monson, Langhinrichsen-Rohling, & Binderup, 2000). Furthermore, as would be speculated using the sex-role stereotyping theory, researchers have found that the extent to which a rape victim adheres to ascribed stereotypical roles is negatively correlated with the level of blame that respondents assign to the victim (Best & Demmin, 1982; Krahe, 1988; Monson, Langhinrichsen-Rohling, & Binderup, 2000).

Rape-tolerant attitudes. Similar to differences in gender role attitudes, another feature that has been found to be predictive of victim blame is the extent to which respondents endorse rape-tolerant attitudes. Rape-tolerant attitudes are commonly assessed by asking respondents if they endorse a variety of statements, such as "Some woman ask to be raped and may enjoy it" and "If a woman says 'no' to having sex, she means 'maybe' or even 'yes'" (Holcomb, Holcomb, Sondag, & Williams, 1991). Several studies have found that male respondents are significantly more likely than females to endorse rape-tolerant statements and assign blame to the victim (Holcomb et al., 1991, Abbey & Harnish, 1995; Varelas & Foley, 1998). In particular, Holcomb and colleagues (1991) assessed attitudes about date rape among college students (N = 829) and found that one in four male respondents agreed that the victim often provoked rape; any woman could prevent rape if she really wanted to; and women frequently cried rape falsely. In one study, not only have males been found to be more likely to endorse rape-tolerant attitudes than females, but also when presented with a hypothetical situation in which they could date-rape a woman without getting caught, 53% of men (n = 53) reported that they would do so (Malamuth, Haber, & Feshbach, 1980). These research findings help to explain why respondent gender differences are commonly noted in assigned victim blame. A review of the respondent variables found to be correlated with victim blame is provided in Table 1.

Victim Characteristics Impacting General Perceptions of Rape Victims

Gender. As with respondent characteristics, a multitude of victim characteristics have also been found to be related to victim blame. Inherent characteristics of the victim that have been found to be related to victim blame, include the gender, sexual orientation, race, attractiveness, occupational status, social economic status, and education level of the victim. The characteristics of particular interest in the current study were the gender and the sexual orientation of the victim. There is a large body of literature supporting that many respondents endorse the rape myth that women are the only ones who can be rape victims. In other words, respondents commonly endorse the rape myth that men cannot be victims of rape (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994). Over the years, researchers have fed into this rape myth by focusing solely on female rape victims and only addressing male rape within the context of institutionalized settings. With the lack of societal attention to male rape victims, it is not surprising that males who do report being victims of a rape tend to be confronted with hostility and disbelief from officials and peers (King & Woollett, 1997). Gerber and colleagues (2004) found that when the victim is female, the perpetrator is blamed more and the victim is blamed less than when the victim is male. Such findings have remained consistent irrespective of the context of the rape. Specifically, researchers have found that male victims tend to be blamed more than female victims in both stranger and acquaintance rape scenarios (Perrott & Webber, 1996). As noted in the previous section, gender of the respondent has been shown to be a significant factor in whether or not a victim will be blamed for a rape. This gender difference is especially pronounced when male rape victims are considered. In particular, research findings reveal that male respondents tend to be more negative towards male victims than females are (Davies & McCartney, 2003). Predictably, male respondents have also been shown to be more likely to

endorse rape myths pertaining to male rape than are females (Stuckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 1992). In addition, to these gender differences, research has also found that there are significant differences in the level of victim blame depending on the gender of the perpetrator. Specifically, it has been found that when a male victim is raped by a female stranger, he is more likely to be blamed for the rape than when a male victim is raped by a male stranger (Smith, Pine, & Hawley, 1998). This research finding relates to another rape myth that is commonly endorsed by respondents: women cannot rape men (Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 1992). Considering the past research on gender role traditionality, it is not surprising that male victims are blamed more than female victims. In rape scenarios, the male victim is thought to have deterred away from the masculine role and stepped into the victim role, which is uncharacteristic of the traditional male role in American society. This bias is heightened when a female perpetrator rapes a male because in such cases the male is thought to have lost his power and control, which are characteristics that are fundamental to the masculine identity. Furthermore, many respondents may endorse the rape myth that men cannot be raped because they have the physical strength to prevent it (Mitchell, Hirschman, & Hall, 1999).

Sexual Orientation. An issue that has a similar impact on respondents' tendency to blame the victim is the sexual orientation of the victim. Wakelin and Long (2003) have found that respondents are less likely to blame the victim when he/she is heterosexual as compared to homosexual. This finding has been explained by research conducted on group membership that compares in-group members with out-group members. According to this research, people tend to have positive perceptions of and display positive behavior toward in-group members, while exhibiting negative behavior toward out-group members (Diehl, 1990; Tajfel, Billig, Bundy, & Flament, 1971). When applied to sexual orientation, gay men and lesbians are considered to be

out-group members or have minority status. Furthermore, some researchers have posited that such individuals' out-group status may be compounded by the fact that some level of homophobia exists in America, especially toward men (Herek, 1984; Kite & Whitley, 1996). Based on these postulates, it would be assumed that both gay men and lesbians would be blamed more for a rape than would heterosexual victims. McCreary (1994), however, reveals that lesbians are often perceived as fitting into the feminine gender role, and therefore their out-group membership does not seem to play as a significant role in the level of blame that is assigned to females for a rape. The finding that gay male victims receive more blame than lesbian victims relates to another stereotype that is commonly assigned to homosexual males: gay males have exceptionally high sex drives (Levitt & Klausen, 1974; Kite & Whitley, 1996). In fact, gay male rape victims are perceived as experiencing more pleasure and less stress during the rape than are heterosexual male victims (Mitchell et al., 1999). Overall, the literature suggests that respondents are more likely to assign blame to the victim when victims are raped in line with their sexuality. Specifically, heterosexual females and gay males are blamed more than lesbians or heterosexual males when the perpetrator is a male (Wakelin & Long, 2003). Moreover, researchers have found that gay male rape victims report similar experiences as female victims. In particular, research had revealed that gay male rape victims report that they are made to feel that they encouraged the rape by their indiscreet or risky behavior, similar to the experiences that heterosexual female victims often describe (Krueger, 1985; Wakelin & Long, 2003). It is hypothesized that such findings are obtained because gay males and heterosexual female victims are seen as having more unconscious desire based on commonly held stereotypes that heterosexual women want to be raped and homosexual men are asking for rape by their highly sexual behaviors (Koss & Harvey, 19991; Mezey & King, 1992). Therefore, homosexual males

tend to be assigned more blame than other victims. A review of the victim variables that are associated with victim blame is detailed in Table 1.

Myth versus Reality

As is become increasingly clear, the prominence of rape myths is widespread in American society. When considered together, the rape myths discussed in the sections above paint a picture of how a typical rape transpires. Divergences from this picture typically result in increased blame placed on the victim. Specifically, respondents are often biased in believing that a 'real rape' is a rape that involves a white, heterosexual female victim. This victim is thought to exhibit traditional gender roles, enhancing the female's victim status. Clearly, these rape myths create a very narrow definition of a 'real rape.' Statistics reveal that less than one-third of reported rapes fit the picture of a stereotypical rape (United States Department of Justice, 2005).

In reality, statistics reveal that rapes do not look like the mythical, prototypical rape. The rape myths perpetuate the belief that rape is a rare event impacting only a small number of individuals. Rape statistics, however, demonstrate that rape is a pervasive crime in the United States. As noted before, somewhere in the U.S., someone is sexually assaulted every two and a half minutes (United States Department of Justice, 2005). In 2005, there were 191,670 victims of rape, attempted rape or sexual assaults, with 10% of these victims being male (United States Department of Justice, 2005). Though it remains true that females are significantly more likely to be victims of a rape, statistics show that rape remains one of the most underreported crimes in the U.S. Considering the negative stereotypes associated with male rape victims, these individuals are likely not to report the rape, which suggests that the rape statistics for men especially are significantly lower than reality.

Rape myths can also play a significant role in initiating and maintaining victim psychopathology. In general, rape is considered to have a significant negative mental and emotional impact on victims. Specifically, the World Report on Violence and Health (World Health Organization, 2002) reported that rape victims are three times more likely to suffer from depression, six times more likely to suffer from posttraumatic stress disorder, and four times more likely to contemplate suicide than healthy adults. Furthermore, this report revealed that rape victims are thirteen times more likely to abuse alcohol and twenty-six times more likely to abuse drugs than the mainstream public (World Health Organization, 2002). In addition to the psychological effects, rape victims can often suffer from physical symptoms and health-related consequences subsequent to the trauma. In particular, Koss (1992) found that sexual victimization is commonly associated with chronic pelvic pain, premenstrual syndrome, gastrointestinal disorders, and a variety of chronic pain disorders, including headache, back pain, and facial pain. In addition, between 4% and 10% of rape victims contract sexually transmitted diseases as a result of the assault (Acierno, Resnick, & Kilpatrick, 1997). These figures suggest that rape can have an immense psychological and physical toll upon the victim. Studying the phenomenon of victim blame and how it impacts a rape victim's psychological and physical symptoms may have an important bearing on treatment success. Specifically, helping practitioners obtain a better understanding of victim blame and its potential impact can help to mold treatments to help diminish the possible negative effects of ascribed blame upon rape victims.

Beyond rape's direct effects on psychological and physical health, blaming a victim for the rape may further complicate several outcomes. Particularly, findings show that blaming a victim for the rape may adversely affect the victim's psychological response to the assault, over

and above the immediate sequelae of the assault itself (Davis, Brickman, & Baker, 1991; Ullman, 1996). Victim blame has also been associated with negatively impacting a victim's self-reported rate of recovery following a rape (Ullman, 1996). Not surprisingly, victim blame has also been found to be predictive of whether or not victims blame themselves for their assaults (Wyatt, 1992). In some reports, such perceptions of blame have been considered secondary victimization particularly when victims receive negative attributions of blame from social support groups or authorities (Frese, Moya, & Megias, 2004). In summary, victim blame can have a strong adverse impact on the victim.

The comparison of rape myths with the realities of rape highlights how disparate the two are. Despite all the statistics that show evidence to the contrary, it is clear that rape myths and the phenomenon of victim blame remain prominent in society. Though research findings have shown that a variety of variables associated with respondent and victim characteristics influence the likelihood that a respondent will blame the victim for a rape, these variables do not really explain why these characteristics play such a significant role in predicting victim blame. To develop a better understanding for the phenomenon of victim blame, one must turn to theories that were adapted from social psychology.

Theories Explaining Victim Blame

The two predominate theories that are used to conceptualize victim blame include the just world hypothesis and the defensive attribution theory. The notion of the just world hypothesis was first introduced by Lerner (1965). According to this theory, people have a need to believe that the world that they live in is just and orderly. Based on this belief, people are rewarded for good behavior and punished for bad. In cases where individuals are presented with an injustice, they will generally be motivated to try to restore justice in order to continue to uphold their belief

in a just world. The two common ways in which individuals restore justice when confronted with a victim of a crime is either to compensate the victim or by persuading themselves that the victim deserved his/her fate as a consequence of being a bad person or partaking in bad behavior (Furnham & Boston, 1996). The basic premise of the theory is that good things happen to good people and bad things happen to bad people (Furnham, 2003). The just world hypothesis serves as a protective feature for individuals. It is adaptive to believe that the world works in an organized fashion and that events are predictable according to one's actions, in order to better predict the actions needed to achieve specific goals and avoid danger in the environment (Lerner & Miller, 1978). Without the just world belief, individuals would have a difficult time committing themselves to the pursuit of long-term goals or even regulating their behavior in everyday social situations because the world would not be predictable (Lerner & Miller, 1978). Therefore, acting in prescribed ways would be beneficial for individuals. Furnham (2003) suggests that individuals are often very reluctant to give up the just world belief because it serves an adaptive function in their lives. Individuals who believe in a just world become distressed when they encounter evidence running contrary to the just world hypothesis (Furnham, 2003).

The just world hypothesis has been applied to a number of different areas, including its application to victim blaming within a diverse population, such as poor people in the third world, the handicapped, AIDS patients, accident cases, cancer patients, etc. (Montada, 1998). In addition, a growing body of research on the just world hypothesis has been conducted on victim blame pertaining to rape victims. In general, researchers have found that individuals who have a strong just world belief are more likely to assign blame to the victim than to the perpetrator (De Judicibus & McCabe, 2001; Foley & Pigott, 2000; Kleinke & Meyer, 1990). It is speculated that individuals who endorse more items related to the just world belief are more likely to blame the

victim because such an explanation helps to restore some justice and control in the world, such that the incident is interpreted as something that occurred because of the victim's character or behavior (Furnham, 2003). In addition to revealing that there appears to be significant differences in level of endorsement of the just world hypothesis and victim blame, researchers have also found demographic differences in this area. In particular, findings from one study conducted by Kleinke and Meyer (1990) revealed that males scoring high on the just world belief were more likely to be negative in their attitudes toward rape victims than those scoring low on the just world belief. Such a differentiation in victim blame based on the just world belief was not found among the female respondents. Similar findings were obtained in another study where participants were asked to listen to a taped civil rape case to evaluate awarded monetary damages (Foley & Pigott, 2000). Findings revealed that the gender of the participants did make a significant difference. Men with high belief in a just world awarded much less in damages and attributed more blame to the victim than did men scoring low in the belief in the just world. Women, on the other hand, did not differ on the level of responsibility attributed to the perpetrator, but those scoring high on belief in a just world awarded more in damages to the victim. The investigators speculated that female respondents who believe in a just world are confronted with a conflict of reconciling the rape with their belief that people get what they deserve. These women are especially reluctant to derogate a rape victim for an incident that could also happen to them. There is, however, a paucity in research evaluating how the just world belief impacts victim blame when the gender of the victim is altered in order to evaluate whether female respondents high on the just world belief are reluctant to blame the victim because they are the same gender as the victim or if they identify with the role of the victim.

A number of demographic variables have been found to be related to a belief in a just world. A meta-analytic review of 33 studies that examined gender differences in belief of a just world scores found a weighted average effect size (d) of .12, suggesting that males are slightly more likely than females to believe in a just world, though the magnitude of this effect is not considered to be significant (O'Conner, Morrison, McLeod, & Anderson, 1996). As for location, researchers have found that participants from non-urban areas tend to hold stronger just world views than their urban counterparts (Witt, 1989). Racial differences have also been noted in the just world belief. Calhoun and Cann (1994) found that Whites are more likely to endorse just world beliefs than are Blacks. Specifically, the world looked safer, more predictable, and more controllable to White participants than to Black participants. Similarly, research findings indicate that Latinos are less likely than Whites, though more likely than Blacks, to endorse just world beliefs (Hunt, 2000). Finally, religion has also been found to be a significant predictor of just world beliefs, such that religious people tend to hold stronger just world beliefs than do non-religious individuals (Kurst, Bjorck, & Tan, 2000).

Though there is a large body of research supporting the hypothesis that the just world belief is a significant predictor of victim blame, there are studies that have been unable to replicate such a conclusion (Brems & Wagner, 1994; Perrot, Miller, & Delaney, 1997). Researchers have provided several explanations for this discrepancy. Many of the studies have admitted psychometric problems with measures evaluating the belief in a just world. The most commonly used measure for the belief in a just world was developed by Rubin and Peplau (1975). Factor analyses of this measure have revealed that the scale is multi-dimensional rather than uni-dimensional (Ambrosio & Sheehan, 1990). Furthermore, factor analyses have demonstrated that just and unjust items on the scale load on different factors (Couch, 1998).

These findings suggest two different orthogonal, as opposed to opposite, world views, casting doubt about the ability of the scale to effectively evaluate the just world belief (Dalbert, Lipkus, Sallay, & Goch, 2001). Researchers also question the internal reliability of the scale, which has been found to be low in some studies ($\alpha = 0.38$) (O'Quinn & Vogler, 1990). Despite the numerous psychometric concerns, the measure created by Rubin and Peplau (1975) remains the most commonly used scale to evaluate belief in a just world. More recently, however, researchers have created more reliable measures evaluating the just world belief. The most commonly used of these measures is Lipkus' (1991) Global Belief in a Just World Scale. This scale has been found to have good internal reliability ($\alpha = 0.827$) and is thus considered to be a good alternative to the measure created by Rubin and Peplau (1975). The second explanation that researchers have provided for the discrepancy in the findings of how the just world belief impacts victim blame is the type of event that is used in the study, whether it be a rape, car accident, etc. (Furnham, 2003). Thirdly, various studies have shown that other belief systems related to the just world belief, such as attitudes about traditional gender norms, may act as moderating or mediating variables explaining how the just world belief influences victim blame. These variables will be discussed in a subsequent section of this paper. Overall, research findings indicate that the just world belief may play an important role in explaining victim blame, though there may be additional variables that should be considered to help create a better understanding of how the just world belief drives individuals to participate in victim blame.

Another prominent theory that is used to conceptualize victim blame is the defensive attribution theory (Shaver, 1970). This theory is based on how similarity to the victim impacts an individual's perception of an incident. Shaver (1970) posited that individuals are directly impacted by both the similarity of the person described in a given incident and the similarity of

the situation itself. In the literature, these concepts are labeled as personal relevance and situational relevance, respectively (Shaver, 1970). In terms of victim blame, individuals are thought to be more likely to blame victims whose personal characteristics are dissimilar to their own. In addition, individuals are thought to be more likely to blame victims who are involved in situations that they cannot imagine themselves in at any given time. Overall, if respondents can distance themselves from the victim by assuring themselves that they are nothing like the victim and would never involve themselves in the type of circumstance that the victim was involved in, then they can reassure themselves that such a negative experience will never happen to them. Essentially, researchers argue that feelings of similarity to the victim moderate the effects of perceived vulnerability on negative reactions to victims (Anderson & Lyon, 2005).

The defensive attribution theory has been tested using a variety of simulations. In the original study, Shaver (1970) investigated whether respondents' feelings of similarity to a potential perpetrator of a car accident influenced their assignment of responsibility. The results of this study indicated that respondents who shared similar characteristics to the potential perpetrator were likely to attribute the accident to chance, whereas respondents who were dissimilar from the perpetrator were more likely to blame the perpetrator for the accident (Shaver, 1970). A similar pattern of results has been found in research assessing victim blame in rape scenarios. In general, researchers have found that when respondents share demographic characteristics with the victim, they are less likely to blame the victim for the rape than when they share few or no characteristics with the victim (Chaikin & Darley, 1973; Krulewitz, 1982; Langley et al., 1991). According to social identity theory, individuals identify themselves based on social and demographic categories, such as ethnicity or gender (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). One of the variables that have been found to impact the influence of similarity on victim blame is

whether or not respondents have been victims themselves. Findings reveal that participants who have previously been raped perceive significantly greater similarity to the described victim than nonvictimized participants (Barnett, Tetreault, & Masbad, 1987). In addition, previously victimized participants are less likely to blame the victim than nonvictimized participants (Mason, Riger, & Foley, 2004). Such findings suggest that victimized participants perceive greater personal and situational relevance to the stimulus victim and are therefore reluctant to blame the victim for a scenario that they can imagine themselves in. An additional demographic variable that has been found to play a role in how perceived similarity influences victim blame is the gender of the respondent. Studies with female participants reveal that females tend to decrease assignment of blame as levels of personal relevance to a rape victim increases (Bell, Kuriloff, & Lottes, 1994; Dexter, Penrod, Linz, & Saunders, 1997; Workman & Freeburg, 1999). As noted in previous sections, male respondents are more likely to blame a rape victim than are females. When considered within the framework of the defensive attribution theory, males are less likely to perceive themselves as similar to a rape victim because most rape victims tend to be female. Therefore, male respondents do not feel the need to protect themselves from being blamed in the future for a similar occurrence because they do not believe that such an incident would ever occur. On the other hand, women are hesitant to stigmatize themselves by holding the victim responsible for a rape.

Though the explanation provided by the defensive attribution theory helps to better understand gender differences in the assignment of blame in rape scenarios, there are contradictory findings within the literature that cannot be explained solely by gender similarity. Specifically, researchers have found that males are more likely to blame the victim irrespective of the gender of the victim, whereas females are likely to blame the perpetrator regardless of the

gender of perpetrator (Gerber et al., 2004; Wakelin & Long, 2003; George & Martinez, 2002; Caron & Carter, 1997; Stormo et al., 1997; Workman & Freeburg, 1999). Such findings suggest that gender is not the sole variable that influences perceived similarity. Some researchers have posited that a more predictive variable influencing perceived similarity to the victim is social role (Gerber et al., 2004). In other words, a respondent perceives him/herself as more similar to the victim when the victim is exhibiting social behaviors that are in line with social roles that the respondent adheres to. As noted in previous sections, the role of victim often highlights more feminine characteristics, such as powerlessness, whereas the role of the perpetrator emphasizes masculine characteristics, such as sexual aggressor, power, and dominance. Therefore, when male respondents are faced with a rape scenario, they are more likely to identify with the perpetrator than with the victim because perceiving similarity with the victim would violate masculine cultural norms. Though there appears to be empirical support for the defensive attribution theory, some studies have not found support for the theory (LaDoux, Fish, & Mosatche, 1989; Schiavo, 1973). Such contradictory findings suggest that other variables may need to be considered to provide a better understanding for the phenomenon of victim blame.

Overall, both the just world hypothesis and the defensive attribution theory create an elementary understanding for victim blame. There is, however, limited research conceptualizing the link between these two theories. Though the defensive attribution theory stands separate from the just world belief, it can be conceptualized as a stepping-stone to the just world belief. In particular, it can be argued that one way respondents can maintain their belief that the world is a just place is to distance themselves from those they perceive to be dissimilar from themselves. The just world belief becomes hard to maintain, however, when respondents see victims similar to themselves in situations they too could see themselves in. In such scenarios, the defensive

attribution theory is likely to take effect such that these victims would be blamed less than those thought to be dissimilar to the respondents. One of the goals of the current study was to build on previous literature evaluating both theories at the same time.

Furthermore, the contradictory research findings for both theories suggest that other variables may need to be considered to provide a better understanding of the phenomenon. Variables that have not been studied extensively in this area include social roles and traditional gender norms. Research assessing the impact of the just world hypothesis and the defensive attribution theory and how they are influenced by these variables is needed to help understand the potential moderation relationships that may exist between these variables. In addition, these prominent theories have been pulled from the social psychology literature and have been applied to the research on rape victims. What has not been considered, however, are the myriad of variables that are critical when considering rape scenarios, such as rape myth acceptance and adherence to gender norms. As discussed in previous sections, these variables play a significant role in attribution of blame to rape victims.

Influence of Legal Forces on Victim Blame

As discussed above, the theories put forth to conceptualize victim blame provide a preliminary understanding for victim blame, but the contradictory results suggest that there are more variables at play that should be considered. In addition to the variables listed above, a factor that has not been comprehensively considered in the conceptualization of victim blame is how legal forces influence attribution of blame. Considering the pervasiveness of rape myths, it can be argued that American society is a "rape supportive" culture (Burt, 1980; Wakelin & Long, 2003). Over the years, there has been a large body of research conducted evaluating victim blame behavior in rape scenarios. Alongside, there have been significant strides made in the legal

arena in terms of how rape is understood. More specifically, there have been significant rape reform laws that have been passed in recent decades, coupled with changes in the definition of a rape.

The most significant changes made in the past couple of decades that may be highly influential in understanding the conflicting empirical results obtained in victim blame research are the rape reform laws. Traditional rape laws generally defined forcible rape as "an act of sexual intercourse undertaken by a man with a woman, not his wife, by force and against her will," (Bohmer, 1991, p. 318). In addition, many of the rape laws stated that rape was classified as penile-vaginal penetration. Overall, the traditional rape laws required the following elements: (1) evidence of force used during the attack, (2) victim specifically refusing consent, and (3) evidence of penile-vaginal penetration (Spohn & Horney, 1992). These laws made it increasingly difficult to prosecute rape cases. Critics of the traditional rape laws argued that the laws made it very difficult for victims to report the crime to authorities because the case was unlikely going to be taken seriously, and they feared derogatory treatment by criminal justice officials (Robin, 1977). In fact, critics argued even if every rape reported resulted in a formal case, more than 90% of rapists would never see the inside of a courtroom because authorities were reluctant to take anything but air-tight cases to trial (McCahill, Meyer, Fischman, 1979). One of the key goals of the reforms was to increase rates of rape reporting and conviction. Michigan was the first state to enact rape reform legislation, with many states following suit (Clay-Warner & Burt, 2005). Overall, there are four major areas in which significant reform was made in rape laws. One of the areas in which reform was made was in redefining rape. Specifically, state laws now encompass sexual acts other than penile-vaginal penetration, including forced oral or anal sex, as an act of sexual assault, which is a term that has replaced rape to include various sexual offenses under the

law (Clay-Warner & Burt, 2005). In addition, the definition of a rape has been changed to include marital rape (Clay-Warner & Burt, 2005). The second area of reform focused on changing the requirement of resistance during an attack. According to traditional rape laws, there was no rape unless the victim explicitly did not provide consent (Estrich, 1987). Today, states have eliminated this requirement. The third area of significant change pertains to the corroboration requirement present in traditional rape laws. Legal corroboration encompassed the following elements: "(a) the event occurred and is thus not a complete fabrication, (b) the defendant has been identified as the rapist, (c) there was actual 'penetration' of the woman, and (d) force was present and 'consent' was absent" (Robin, 1977, p. 138). Presently, every state, except for Nebraska has removed the corroboration requirement from their rape laws (Clay-Warner & Burt, 2005). The final area of major reform has been the creation of the rape shield laws. Traditional rape laws allowed defense attorneys to present evidence that indicated a propensity on behalf of the victim to consent to sexual intercourse (Clay-Warner & Burt, 2005). Under such a broad umbrella, lawyers were allowed to present information concerning the victim's character, reputation, past sexual history, etc. With the rape shield laws, however, information pertaining to the victim's past sexual conduct and similar pieces of information are not admissible in court (Clay-Warner & Burt, 2005).

Overall, the rape reform laws indicate a shift in how American society views rape. Specifically, American society is starting to take a more inclusive approach to rape and is acknowledging that rape can occur in a variety of different contexts. Particularly, changes in rape laws have helped to expand the public's perception of the reality of rape. In other words, a rape no longer has to include a male perpetrator attacking a female victim. In addition, the victim is no longer under the burden of proof of having to show that he/she actively resisted. It is

conceivable that with such strides in legal reform, mainstream perceptions of rape are also beginning to change, with more positive perceptions geared toward rape victims. Such an effect could result in decreased victim blame, which may help to explain the contradictory findings many researchers have obtained when evaluating victim blame. This study aimed to evaluate how knowledge of the current legal definition of rape impacted victim blame.

Statement of the Problem

Evaluating the research to date, there is data suggesting that a host of demographic variables, including respondent and victim characteristics, are significantly related to victim blame. There isn't, however, a firm understanding of why certain characteristics are highly correlated with victim blame. In addition, there is limited understanding of why rape myths for female and male victims are so widely held when the most commonly occurring rapes are very different from the rape scenarios that are detailed in rape myths. Some understanding has been gained from looking at the theories of the just world belief and the defensive attribution theory. The conflicting findings in this literature, however, suggest that other variables need to be considered when trying to develop a comprehensive picture of why respondents sometimes engage in victim blame. Of particular interest is how attitudes about traditional gender norms enhance our understanding of why victim blame occurs. As noted previously, there is research evaluating the impact of endorsement of traditional gender norms on victim blame. There is also research evaluating the relationship between the just world belief and victim blame. An area of research that needs further development is how endorsement of traditional gender norms fits in with the just world belief and how these variables interact to predict victim blame. Similarly, though research has been conducted evaluating the potential effects of demographic similarity on victim blame, an area of further study is how perceived similarity and the just world belief

influence victim blaming behavior. Also, though a large amount of research has been conducted suggesting that rape myth acceptance is positively correlated with victim blame, there is little research evaluating how the just world belief moderates this relationship. Furthermore, alongside the growth of research in victim blame over the past several decades, there have been significant legal reforms made in rape laws. To date, however, there has been little research evaluating the general public's knowledge about the current legal definition of rape and how their knowledge correlates with their tendency to engage in victim blame. The current study proposed to address these gaps in the extant literature.

Hypotheses

1. It was hypothesized that participants' endorsement of traditional gender norms was expected to moderate the relationship between the just world belief and victim blame such that endorsement of traditional gender norms would increase the likelihood that those who believe in a just world would engage in victim blame.
2. Based on Shaver's Defensive Attribution Theory, which suggests that respondents are more likely to blame victims that are dissimilar to them than those that are perceived to be similar to them, it was hypothesized that the increased levels of perceived similarity between the respondent and the victim, the less likely the respondent would be to engage in victim blame.
3. It was hypothesized that endorsement of the just world belief would moderate the relationship between rape myth acceptance and victim blame, such that endorsement of the just world belief would strengthen the positive relationship between rape myth acceptance and victim blame.

4. It was hypothesized that the more knowledge respondents had about the current legal definition of rape, the less likely the respondent was to engage in victim blame.

Methods

Participants

Approval for this study was granted from the University of Missouri-St. Louis' Institutional Review Board. Undergraduate students enrolled in introductory and advanced undergraduate psychology courses in the Fall 2007 and Spring 2007 semesters were offered an opportunity to participate in this study for extra credit. In addition, the researcher approached various professors in the Criminology Department, who provided extra credit to their students for participating in this study. From the Psychology and Criminology departments combined, 74 participants were recruited. An additional 180 participants were recruited from the community using flyers and personal contacts. The flyers were placed at various community settings, such as gyms, recreational facilities, grocery stores, etc. Research assistants also had personal contacts complete the survey packets. The contacts included friends, family members, acquaintances, co-workers, etc. Participants recruited from the community volunteered their time and were not provided any reimbursement. The overall sample consisted of 254 participants, with 78 males and 176 females. Details of the specific demographics of the overall sample are provided in Table 2. Tables 3, 4, and 5 detail the specific demographics of the subject pool sample and the samples recruited using flyers and personal contacts.

Measures

Demographic Questionnaire. Participants were asked to complete a brief demographic questionnaire to provide descriptive information, such as age, ethnicity, gender, level of education, socioeconomic status, race, religion, and sexual orientation (see Appendix A).

Additional questions were included on the demographic questionnaire provided to the community sample, including years of education completed and highest level of education (see Appendix B).

Rape Myth Scale. Participants' endorsement of rape myths was evaluated using the Rape Myth Scale (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1995). This scale consists of 19 items describing various attitudes and beliefs about rape that are widely and persistently held. Participants are asked to rate their level of agreement to each statement using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly* disagree) to 7 (*strongly* agree). Higher scores on this scale indicate greater acceptance of rape myths. Cronbach's alpha for this scale is .89 (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1995).

Male Rape Myth Scale. Participants' endorsement of rape myths pertaining specifically to male rape victims was assessed using the Male Rape Myth Scale, which was developed by Struckman-Johnson and Struckman-Johnson (1992). This scale is compromised of 12 items and participants are asked to rate their level of agreement to the provided statement using a 6-point Likert point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*).

Global Belief in a Just World Scale. The Global Belief in a Just World Scale was developed by Lipkus (1991). This scale is comprised of 7 items that measures participants' belief of a just world. Each items is evaluated using a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*). The internal reliability of this scale has been assessed at .83 (Lipkus, 1991).

Just World for Self. Participants' endorsement of the just world belief for themselves was assessed using Lipkus' Just World for Self measure (Lipkus, Dalbert, & Siegler, 1996). The measure has 8 items, and participants are asked to rate their level of agreement using a 6-point

Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*). The internal reliability of this scale has been measured at .84 (Lipkus, Dalbert, & Siegler, 1996).

Sex-Role Egalitarianism Scale, Form BB (SRES-BB). Endorsement of traditional gender norms was assessed using the Sex-Role Egalitarianism Scale, Form BB (SRES-BB; King & King, 1990). This scale is composed of 25 items measuring educational roles, employment roles, marital roles, parental roles, and social-interpersonal-heterosexual roles. Participants respond to items on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 5 (*strongly disagree*). Higher scores represent greater endorsement of egalitarian gender-role beliefs and attitudes. This scale has good internal reliability ($\alpha = .94$). As noted in the SRES manual, there are no set cut-off scores to serve to categorize individuals' egalitarian attitudes. Therefore, a total summed score is used.

Burt's Scale. Burt developed a comprehensive scale addressing numerous variables often studied in victim blaming literature. This scale was used to evaluate participants' gender role beliefs. This scale is broken down into four major subsections with varying number of items in each subsection. For each item, participants are asked to rank with level of agreement to the statement using a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to (*strongly agree*). The first section evaluates participant's own sex role satisfaction. The measure consists of 10 statements and participants are asked to rate how satisfied they are with each trait described in the 10 items. The Cronbach's alpha for this section was assessed at .781 (Burt, 1980). The second subsection consists of 9 items that assess participants' attitudes about sex role stereotyping. The Cronbach's alpha for these items was evaluated at .80 (Burt, 1980). The third section is composed of 9 items that measure participants' endorsement of adversarial sexual beliefs. The Cronbach's alpha for these items was evaluated at .802 (Burt, 1980). The fourth

subsection is made up of 10 items that evaluate participants' beliefs about sexual conservatism. The Cronbach's alpha for this subsection is .811 (Burt, 1980).

Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale. Social desirability is predicted to be an important variable that was evaluated in this research and was measured using the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960). The primary reason for using this scale was to assess how participants' social desirability impacts their likelihood to engage in victim blame. Having a measure evaluating social desirability helped the researcher control for the possible confounding effect of social desirability on victim blame. This scale is composed of 33 true/false items that describe culturally approved behaviors that have a low probability of occurrence and was developed to assess socially desirable responding. The internal reliability of this scale has been assessed at .88 (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960).

Rape Scenarios. The rape scenarios that were used in the current study were adapted from those used by Bridges (1991). Participants received all four scenarios depicting a date rape with the following characteristics: female victim/male perpetrator (FV/MP), female victim/female perpetrator (FV/FP), male victim/male perpetrator (MV/MP), and male victim/female perpetrator (MV/FP). In each scenario, the victim was described as having experienced forced sexual activity. In order to protect for potential order effects, the order of the scenarios presented was randomized across participants.

Rape Scenario Questions. The list of questions that was provided after each rape scenario was compiled from several sources. Specifically, the researcher obtained questions used by Bell and colleagues (1994), Bridges (1991), and Langhinrichsen-Rohling & Monson (1998). The questions used by Bell and colleagues (1994) in their study assessed the participants' perceived similarity to the victim and the perpetrator, perceived responsibility placed on the victim for the

rape, extent to which the victim acted carelessly, the extent to which the victim lead the perpetrator on, and evaluation of the victim's character. The Cronbach's alpha for these items has been assessed at .76 (Bell et al., 1994). The second set of questions that were used to evaluate participants' perceptions of the victim and the perpetrator were those compiled by Bridges (1991). These 11 items can be grouped into three categories: items measuring sex role aspects of the interaction presented in the scenario, assessing the degree to which participants attribute victims and/or perpetrators with traits which they believe to be stereotypical for women and men, and evaluating rape-supportive beliefs. Questions were also obtained from the Rape-Supportive Attributions Scale, which was developed by Langhinrichsen-Rohling and Monson (1998), and measures the degree to which respondents minimize the seriousness of sexual assault. Minimization of the seriousness of the rape described was evaluated by having respondents rate how violent they felt the situation was, how psychologically damaged they believe the victim will be from the experience, and to what degree the perpetrator's actions were seen as a violation of the victim's rights. In addition, respondents are asked to rate how certain they are that the described incident would be considered rape. Participants respond to these items using an 11-point Likert scale ranging from 0 to 11. The internal reliability of this scale is estimated at .82 (Langhinrichsen-Rohling & Monson, 1998). The remainder of the questions were obtained using the Sex-Role Stereotypical Victim Blame Attribution Scale was developed by Langhinrichsen-Rohling and Monson (1998). This scale assesses participants' perceptions of victim blame by having participants evaluate the victim's control of and responsibility for the rape, desire for intercourse, enjoyment of sexual assault, and the victim's provocation of the incident. Participants endorse the items on an 11-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (*not at all*) to 10 (*a great extent*). Higher scores reflect the endorsement of greater gender role stereotypical

attributions about the victim's blame in the rape. The researcher combined the questions from these four sources and deleted any identical items. The measure compromised of 22 items using an 11-point Likert scale. In addition, the researcher added two items to evaluate the respondent's perception of the victim's and perpetrator's sexual orientation. These two items are in multiple-choice format. The final measure consisted of 24 questions (see Appendix C). Furthermore, the psychometric properties for the final measure was evaluated for the four scenarios. The internal reliabilities for the measure for scenario A ($\alpha = .72$), B ($\alpha = .73$), C ($\alpha = .74$), and D ($\alpha = .75$) were within the acceptable range.

Personal Attribute Inventory. Participants' evaluations of the rape victim were assessed using the Personal Attribute Inventory (PAI, Parish, Bryant, & Shirazi, 1976). This measure consists of 50 positive (e.g., kind, conscientious, strong) and 50 negative (e.g., foolish, irresponsible, self-centered) adjectives. Respondents were asked to choose 30 adjectives that best describe the person being evaluated. Scores are based on the number of negative adjectives chosen, such that higher scores indicate a negative evaluation of the victim. The internal reliability of this measure has been evaluated at .90 (Parish et al., 1976).

Legal Definition. To evaluate participants' knowledge of the current legal definition of rape, participants were asked to describe what they believe is the legal definition of rape, see Appendix D. As detailed by Missouri's legal definition of forcible rape is "a person commits the crime of forcible rape if such person has sexual intercourse with another person by the use of forcible compulsion," (Missouri Law, Section 566.030). It was originally proposed that the open-ended question would be coded and scored on a scale of 0-10, with 0 representing the lowest score for accuracy and 10 the highest. There was, however, not enough variation in the responses received. Therefore, a broader scoring criterion was implemented. In particular, responses were

scored using a scale of 1 to 3. A score of one was given to responses that provided the correct definition of rape, noting both the use of force and penetration. A score of two was given to responses that were incorrect and did not mention either force or penetration. A score of three was given to responses that were too broad and included either some mention of force or penetration. In an effort to eliminate rater bias, the researcher and a fellow psychology pre-doctoral intern scored each of the responses. The researcher and intern conversed on any responses for which differing scores were given. A collective decision was then made as to what the final score would be for that response. An example of a response that was given a score of one, mentions force and penetration, includes, "Rape is forceful sexual penetration by a male or female to another male or female." The following response was given a score of two, which means it didn't include any mention of force or penetration: "Rape is when the person does not want to have any type of contact with the other person." The following is an example of a response that was given a score of three: "A sexual encounter resulting in penetration which is unwanted by a member of the act." This response makes penetration, but does not mention force. Based on the scoring criteria described, 153 (43 males, 110 females) individuals provided the right definition (15 males, 25 females), 40 (19 males, 39 females) gave an incorrect definition, and 58 supplied a broad definition. The internal reliability for the scoring on this measure was assessed at .95.

Sexual Experiences Questionnaire. To help evaluate perceived similarity, information about participants' sexual assault history was gathered. Questions were be adapted from the Sexual Experiences Survey (Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski, 1981) and were used to gather information pertaining to varying degrees of sexual assault that participants had experienced in the past. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the original measure was determined to be .74 for

the 305 women in the original study and .89 for the 143 men assessed in the study. In the current study, analyses were conducted categorizing the items on this measure in two categories – items describing experiences that were nonviolent and/or threatening in nature and experiences that used some degree of violence. Items one through three and five were classified as nonphysical/threatening, and items four, six, and seven were categorized as physical. The number of participants that endorsed each item is detailed in Table 6.

Procedure

Students from several undergraduate psychology and criminology courses were given the option of participating in the study for extra credit. Participants were run in small groups of ten to fifteen participants. During the verbal and written review of the consent form, participants were informed that they were being asked to participate in a study assessing undergraduates' views on sexual assault. To protect confidentiality, participants were told that informed consents would be separated from the raw data such that the raw data would not be able to be matched up with the participant's identity. Raw data was classified using an id number. Similar procedures were used with participants recruited from the community. It should be noted, however, that community participants were given the packet of measures in a yellow envelope that they could seal when they were completed to help protect confidentiality. In addition, community participants were not run in groups and were asked to fill out the measures on their own time. Research assistants collected the packets from the participants one week after the participant received the packet. There were six research assistants on this project, all of whom were female.

Participants were first asked to read the four rape scenarios. To protect for potential order effects, the order of the scenarios was randomized across participants. Subsequent to each scenario, participants were asked to fill out the Rape Scenario Questions that corresponded to

that scenario as well as the Personal Attribute Inventory. Once participants completed this task, the packet was collected and an additional packet of questionnaires was handed out. This packet contained the following measures: the Rape Myth Scale, the Global Belief in a Just World Scale, the Male Rape Myth Scale, the Sex-Role Egalitarianism Scale, the Marlow-Crowne Social Desirability Scale, Burt's scales, the legal definition measure, and the modified Sexual Experiences Survey. Upon completion, the researcher collected all of the measures and each participant was provided with a debriefing statement (see Appendix E) and asked if they had any questions or concerns about their participation in the current study. The debriefing statement provided a brief rationale for the study and listed several resources both on- and off-campus if participants felt that they wanted to seek counseling services. On average, the study took participants about an hour and a half of their time.

Originally Proposed Analyses

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics would be computed for demographic variables, and frequencies would be reported for gender, race, religion, and sexual orientation. In addition, frequencies would be reported pertaining to the occurrence of sexual assault within the sample. Furthermore, the psychometric properties of the Rape Scenario Questions would be assessed and the Cronbach's alpha value for this scale would be reported.

Hypothesis 1

A hierarchical regression was proposed to be used to evaluate the hypothesis that participants' endorsement of traditional gender norms was expected to moderate the relationship between the just world belief and victim blame. It was expected that endorsement of traditional gender norms would increase the likelihood that those who believe in a just world would engage

in victim blame. The first regression was proposed to be conducted to ensure that there was a significant relationship between the just world belief and victim blame. Scores from the Global Belief in a Just World Scale and scores from the items on the Rape Scenario Questions that evaluate victim blame were to be used to determine if there was a significant relationship between these variables. Block 1 of the regression was to contain participants' endorsement of the just world. After controlling for this variable, Block 2 would include participants' endorsement of traditional gender norms. Post-hoc analyses were to be conducted to determine the potential effect of rape myth acceptance as an additional moderating variable.

Hypothesis 2

A correlational analysis was to be conducted to test the hypothesis that the increased level of perceived similarity between the respondent and the victim, the less likely the victim would be to engage in victim blame. Additional analyses were to be conducted to determine if there are specific demographic variables that account for more of the variance in victim blame than others. In particular, t-tests would be conducted to determine if any of the following demographic variable(s) were significantly related to victim blame: gender and personal sexual assault history. In addition, univariate analyses of variance would be conducted to determine if race and perceived sexual orientation similarity were related to victim blame.

Hypothesis 3

A hierarchical regression was proposed to be used to evaluate the hypothesis that participants' endorsement of the just world belief was expected to moderate the relationship between rape myth acceptance and victim blame. The first regression was to be conducted to ensure that there is a significant relationship between rape myth acceptance and victim blame. Scores from the Rape Myth Scale and the Male Rape Myth Scale and scores from the items on

the Rape Scenario Questions that evaluate victim blame were to be used to determine if there is a significant relationship between these variables. Block 1 of the regression would contain participants' acceptance of rape myths. After controlling for this variable, Block 2 would include participants' endorsement of the just world belief.

Hypothesis 4

A linear regression was to be used to test the hypothesis that the more knowledge participants had about the current legal definition of rape, the less likely they would be to engage in victim blame.

Power Analyses

Due to the fact that few studies have been conducted addressing how the combination of endorsement of traditional gender norms and the just world belief impact victim blame, the researcher identified two separate studies to help determine the sample size needed to appropriately evaluate Hypothesis 1. In the first study, researchers found that participants who endorsed traditional gender norms were more likely to minimize the perceptions of the depicted rape scenario and the effects on the victim (Simonson & Subich, 1999). The researchers of this study reported an effect size of 1.1. Using this effect size, the current study would require a minimum sample of 46 to detect differences at .80 power. The second study found that participants with high belief in a just world blamed the rape victim more than those who did not strongly believe in a just world (Kleinke & Meyer, 1990). The researchers of this study reported an effect size of .41. Using this reported effect size, the current study would require a minimum of 331 participants. It should be noted, however, that these studies did not evaluate the hypothesis as is stated in this study, which is written as trying to evaluate the moderation effects of endorsement of traditional gender norms on the relationship between the just world belief and

victim blame. As a result, the researcher used Cohen's (1988) table to help determine the sample size that would be needed. From this table, it was determined that a sample size of at least 200 would be needed.

To date, there has been very little research conducted that evaluates how demographic and perceived similarity between the respondent and the victim impacts victim blame. For this reason, to estimate the sample size needed to achieve .80 power for Hypothesis 2, the researcher identified a study that looked at how gender similarity between the victim and the respondent impacted victim blame (George & Martinez, 2002). The effect size in this study was calculated to be .19. Setting alpha at .05, the current study would require a minimum sample of 266 to detect differences at .80 power.

Several studies have found a correlation between rape myth acceptance and victim blame. In one particular study, Krahe (1988) evaluated the impact of rape myth acceptance on victim blame among male and female respondents. Krahe (1988) found a main effect of rape myth acceptance on rating of victim blame. The researcher noted a small to medium effect size of about 0.3. For the current study, in order to detect differences at .80 power, a minimum sample of 115 participants would be needed. From the above power analyses conducted, it was determined that a minimum of 250 participants would be needed to appropriately evaluate the four stated hypotheses.

To the researcher's knowledge, there have been no studies to date evaluating participants' knowledge of the legal definition of rape and how this knowledge may impact the likelihood that participants would engage in victim blame. As a result, the researcher conducted power analyses to evaluate the sample size that would be needed to obtain a small effect size as well as a medium effect size. For a small effect size, a minimum of 1077 participants would be needed in

the current study. For a medium effect size, a minimum of 115 participants would be needed to detect differences at .80 power.

Results

Demographics

Approval for this study was granted from the University of Missouri – St. Louis' Institutional Review Board. Seventy-four participants were recruited from the University of Missouri – St. Louis' subject pool and all provided informed consent. In addition, 180 participants were recruited from the community, all of whom were also provided informed consent. The final sample was composed of 176 females and 78 males from various ethnic backgrounds (see Table 2). Participants ranged in age from 18 to 78 (M = 29.3, SD = 11.2). Tables 3, 4, and 5 provide a demographic breakdown of the sample, as differentiated by recruitment strategy. In addition, data was also compiled assessing the sexual assault histories of the participants. Of the total sample, 15.7% of participants reported a history of sexual assault (see Table 3). Specifically, 37 females and 3 males endorsed a history of sexual assault. To address the possibility that there may group differences on the major measures depending on recruitment strategy, univariate analyses were conducted for all of the major measures used in the study. The major measures considered included measures assessing the independent and dependent variables listed in the stated hypotheses. Results revealed no significant group differences. Demographic statistics for these analyses are provided in Table 7. It should be noted that there was no significant amount of missing data. For analyses which included missing data points, a conservative approach of excluding cases pairwise such that a participant was excluded if the data pertinent to the analyses was missing for that individual. The participant's data was,

however, included in other analyses where the researcher had the relevant data from the participant.

Rape Scenario Questions

As noted in the measures' section of this paper, the questions used following each of the rape scenarios were compiled from questions used in several studies in the past. As a result, the psychometric properties of this measure were evaluated for each of the scenarios. For scenario A, the Cronbach alpha value for the presented questions was .72, which suggests a moderate level of internal reliability for the scale. Similar findings were obtained for the questions used after scenario B ($\alpha = .73$), scenario C ($\alpha = .74$), and scenario D ($\alpha = .75$). For ease of readability, the scenarios are described by the gender of the victim and the perpetrator in the following sections. For scenario A, there was a female victim and a male perpetrator; therefore this scenario is detailed as scenario A (FV/MP) in the subsequent sections. Scenario B (FV/FP) describes the scenario with a female victim and a female perpetrator. Scenario C (MV/MP) is used to classify the scenario with a male victim and a male perpetrator. Finally, scenario D (MV/FP) is used to describe the scenario with a male victim and a female perpetrator. Below is a table that details this information.

Scenario Description	Scenario Abbreviation
A – female victim & male perpetrator	Scenario A (FV/MP)
B – female victim & female perpetrator	Scenario B (FV/FP)
C – male victim & male perpetrator	Scenario C (MV/MP)
D – male victim & female perpetrator	Scenario D (MV/FP)

Hypothesis 1

The first hypothesis predicted that participants' endorsement of traditional gender norms would moderate the relationship between the just world belief and victim blame. There was, however, no significant relationship found between belief in a just world and victim blame in Scenario A (FV/MP) (r = .06, p = .35), Scenario B (FV/FP) (r = .06, p = .32), Scenario C (MV/MP) (r = .06, p = .31), or Scenario D (MV/FP) (r = .11, p = .09). There were also no significant relationship found between just world belief and selecting negative words to portray the victim, which is another measure of victim blame, in Scenario A (FV/MP) (r = .05, p = .41), Scenario B (FV/FP) (r = .04, p = .55), Scenario C (MV/MP) (r = .12, p = .06), or Scenario D (MV/FP) (r = .09, p = .17). Similarly, no relationship was noted between the just world belief and the number of positive words selected. These results are provided in Table 8. It should be noted that though there was diversity in participants' endorsement of the just world belief, there were little differences in participants' tendency to blame the victim. Further, because no significant relationship was found between the just world belief and victim blame, no hierarchical regressions were conducted to determine the moderating effect of endorsement of traditional gender norms on this relationship. Specifically, Baron and Kenny (1986) argued that a moderating effect is one which affects the direction and/or strength of the relation between an independent and dependent variable; however, if there is no significant relationship between the independent and dependent variable, then a moderating effect cannot exist. As was expected, however, there was a significant correlation between victim blame and the number of negative words selected to describe the victim, such that higher scores of victim blame significantly correlated with increased number of negative words selected in Scenario A (FV/MP) (r = .37, p = .000), Scenario B (FV/FP) (r = .44, p = .000), Scenario C (MV/MP) (r = .37, p = .000), and

Scenario D (MV/FP) (r = .35, p = .000). A similar trend of results was also obtained when evaluating the correlation between the number of positive words selected on the PAI and victim blame, such that a higher number of positive words was significantly correlated with decreased victim blame in all four scenarios. A comprehensive breakdown of these results is detailed in Table 9. No gender differences were noted in belief of a just world. Overall, no significant relationship was noted between the just world hypothesis and victim blame, as measured by the rape scenario questions or the PAI.

Exploratory Analyses for Hypothesis 1

Social Desirability. Further analyses were conducted to evaluate the possible effects of social desirability upon victim blame. Results obtained from correlational analyses indicated that higher scores on the social desirability measure did not correlate with victim blame or the number of positive or negative words selected on the PAI. The results from these analyses are detailed in Table 10. Though no official cut-offs were found within the literature for Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960), researchers in the past have divided the scores on this measure into high, medium, and low scores, corresponding to the upper, middle, and lower third of the distribution of possible scores (Esterling, Antoni, Kumar, & Schneiderman, 1993). Using this criterion, similar results were obtained such that social desirability was not found to be related to victim blame, as measured by the Rape Scenario Questions or the PAI. In addition, social desirability was not found to be related to the number of positive words selected from the PAI. Results from these analyses are detailed in Table 10. In addition, the effect of gender on social desirability was assessed. The results suggested that there were no gender differences in terms of social desirability within this sample (t(252) = -1.26, p =

.21). Therefore, social desirability was not considered to a confounding variable in this study, as it was not found to be related to victim blaming behavior.

Traditional Gender Norms. Additional analyses were conducted to determine the potential effect of endorsement of traditional gender norms on victim blame. Results indicated significant correlations between victim blame, as assessed by the rape scenario questions, and endorsement of traditional gender norms in scenarios B (FV/FP) (r = -.18, p = .01), C (MV/MP) (r = -.16, p = .02), and D (MV/FP) (r = -.20, p = .01), such that increased egalitarian attitudes were associated with decreased victim blame. No significant findings were noted for scenario A (FV/MP). When evaluating the correlation between endorsement of traditional gender norms and the number of negative words used to describe the victim, a significant correlation was obtained in all four scenarios, such that more egalitarian attitudes were correlated with decreased number of negative words selected. Interestingly, however, no significant results were obtained when assessing the correlation between egalitarian attitudes and the number of positive words selected to describe the victim. The results from all of these analyses are provided in Table 11. In general, increased endorsement of traditional gender norms was found to be associated with increased victim blame.

Overall, the current sample had less egalitarian attitudes than the sample used to assess the psychometric properties of the SRES form BB (King & King, 1990). In the original study, the researchers found the mean score on the measure to be 105.61 (SD = 13.42). In the current study, the mean score was 79.15 (SD = 9.84), indicating that the participants in the current study were less egalitarian than those in the original study conducted by King and King (1990). A similar trend of results was found when comparing the scores of males and females in the two studies. In the original study (King & King, 1990), the mean for males was determined to be

100.15 (*SD* = 12.73); for females, the mean was 109.53 (*SD* = 9.63). The values obtained for males (*M* = 75.71, *SD* = 9.40) and females (*M* = 80.68, *SD* = 9.67) in the current study were lower than those obtained in the original study. In addition, the potential impact of participants' age on endorsement of egalitarian attitudes was assessed. Both correlational analyses (r = -.02, p = .70) and univariate analyses ($F(4)$ = .34, p = .85) revealed no relationship between age of participant and level of endorsement of traditional gender norms in the current study.

Further, the potential effects of gender and social desirability upon endorsement of traditional gender norms were evaluated. A significant relationship between gender and traditional gender norms was found, indicating that females endorsed more egalitarian attitudes than males in this sample ($t(251)$ = -3.82, p = .01). No significant results, however, were obtained when assessing the impact of social desirability upon endorsement of traditional gender norms. Both a correlational analysis (r = .03, p = .64) and a univariate analysis ($F(2)$ = .305, p = .74) indicated that social desirability was not related to participants' endorsement of traditional gender norms.

Hypothesis 2

Perceived Similarity. It was originally hypothesized that the increased levels of perceived similarity between the respondent and the victim, the less likely the respondent would be to engage in victim blame. Correlational analyses were conducted to test this hypothesis. It was found that, in scenario A (FV/MP), perceived similarity to the victim was not correlated with victim blame, as assessed by either the rape scenario questions (r = -.04, p = .28) or the PAI (r = -.12, p = .30). Similar findings were obtained in scenario B (FV/FP) (rape scenario questions: (r = .07, p = .14); PAI: (r = -.08, p = .09)) and scenario D (MV/FP) (rape scenario questions: (r = -.03, p = .33); PAI: (r = -.07, p = .13)). Interestingly, in scenario C (MV/MP), it was found that

the more similar to the victim the participants perceived themselves to be, the less negative words they used to describe the victim (r = -.17, p = .00). This relationship was not found when evaluating perceived similarity and victim blame, as assessed by the rape scenario questions (r = -.08, p = .10). Analyses were also conducted to evaluate the relationship between perceived similarity to the victim and number of positive words selected on the PAI. No significant findings were obtained for scenario B (FV/FP) or scenario C (MV/MP); however, for scenarios A (FV/MP) and D (MV/FP), results indicated that increased perceived similarity to the victim was associated with increased number of positive words. The results for these analyses are provided in Table 12. For the large part, results revealed that perceived similarity to the victim was not associated with victim blame, with some conflicting results obtained for the scenarios.

Exploratory Analyses for Hypothesis 2

Gender. Additional analyses were conducted separately to determine if gender, sexual assault history, race, sexual orientation, and age were related to victim blame. In scenario A (FV/MP), it was noted that though there were no significant gender differences in victim blame (t(252) = .82, p = .41), as assessed by the rape scenario questions, males were more likely to select negative words to describe the victim than females (t(249) = 2.45, p = .02). In scenario B (FV/FP), no gender differences were noted in either the rape scenario victim blame questions (t(251) =1.28, p = .20) or in selection of negative words to describe the victim (t(251) = 1.86, p = .06). In scenario C (MV/MP), no gender differences were noted in the rape scenario questions (t(250) = 1.61, p = .11), but males selected more negative words to describe the victim than did females (t(248) = 3.44, p = .00). Lastly, in scenario D (MV/FP), no gender differences were noted in either the rape scenario questions (t(250) = 1.31, p = .19) or the number of negative words selected to describe the victim(t(249) = 1.15, p = .25). In addition, no significant gender

differences were noted when evaluating the number of positive words selected to describe the victim in each scenario. Analyses were also conducted to determine if gender differences were present in the number of positive words selected to describe the victims. No significant results were obtained for any of the scenarios. Results are provided in Table 13 and Figures 1 and 2. Overall, there appear to be limited gender differences in terms of victim blame throughout the four scenarios.

Sexual Assault History. Analyses evaluating the impact of a history of sexual assault, as assessed by item number seven on the Sexual Experiences Survey (see Appendix N), upon victim blame indicated that participants with no history of sexual assault blamed the victim more than those with a history of sexual assault in both the rape scenario questions ($t(251) = 2.28$, $p = .02$) and on the PAI ($t(248) = 2.12$, $p = .04$) for scenario A (FV/MP). For scenario B (FV/FP), those with a sexual assault history blamed the victim more than those without a history, as assessed by the rape scenario questions ($t(250) = 2.20$, $p = .03$), but not as assessed by the PAI ($t(250) = 1.73$, $p = .09$). In scenario C (MV/MP), participants who have been sexually assaulted blamed the victim less than those who have not, as evaluated both by the rape scenario questions ($t(249) = 2.65$, $p = .01$) and the PAI ($t(247) = 1.98$, $p = .05$). Similarly, in scenario D (MV/FP), participants who have been sexually assaulted blamed the victim less than those who have not, as measured by the rape scenario questions ($t(249) = 3.22$, $p = .00$) and the PAI ($t(248) = 2.46$, $p = .02$). On the other hand, participants who have been sexually assaulted did not select significantly more or less positive words than those without a sexual assault history in any of the scenarios. Results of these analyses are provided in Table 14 and Figures 3 and 4. For the most part, participants with a sexual assault history tended to blame the victim less than those without such a history in all four scenarios.

Additional analyses were conducted to determine if nonphysical or physical experiences of sexual assault impacted victim blame. These experiences were categorized using the Sexual Experiences Survey, as detailed in the Measures' section of this paper. Results indicated that individuals having experienced nonphysical experiences of sexual assault selected significantly fewer negative words to describe the victim in Scenario A (FV/MP) than those who did not endorse such experiences. These findings, however, were not noted for the other scenarios or when evaluating the number of positive words selected or victim blame, as measured by the rape scenario questions. These results are detailed in Table 15. Further analyses revealed that individuals who had experienced physical forms of sexual assault blamed the victim less in Scenario A (FV/MP) when compared to individuals who did not endorse such experiences. Also for this scenario, individuals with experiences of physical forms of sexual assault selected fewer negative words to describe the victim than those who had not endorsed such experiences. These results, however, were not noted for any of the other three scenarios or when evaluating the number of positive words selected. The results of these analyses are detailed in Table 15. Generally, the results indicated that there was no relationship between experiencing nonphysical or physical events and its impact on victim blaming behavior in most of the presented scenarios.

Race. Univariate analyses of variance were used to evaluate the potential relationship between race and victim blame. Table 2 details the racial breakdown among the participants. No significant relationship was noted between race and victim blame, as measured by the rape scenario questions or the number of positive or negative words selected on the PAI. These results indicate that the race of a participant did not significantly impact the level of blame the individual assigned to the victim.

Age. Another relationship that was evaluated was to determine if the age of the participant affected how much they blamed the victim. Correlational analyses revealed that age was not significantly correlated with victim blame, as measured by the rape scenario questions or the number of negative or positive words selected on the PAI. These findings were obtained for all four scenarios. To further assess this relationship, the researcher decided to categorize the participants into various categories depending on age. As there are no specific cut-offs noted in this literature for age, the researcher used the following categories: ages 18-22, 23-29, 30's, 40's, and age 50 and above. The researcher then conducted univariate analyses to determine if the category of age impacted victim blame. Results are provided in Table 16. No significant results were noted for in scenario A (FV/MP) when looking at victim blame assessed by the rape scenario questions or the number of negative words selected. When looking at positive words selected in this scenario, however, it was found that participants in the older age categories tended to select more positive words to describe the victim than those falling in the younger categories ($F(4) = 2.99$, $p = .02$). The specific group differences are noted in Table 17. As for scenario B (FV/FP), a significant main effect was found when evaluating victim blame, as measured by the rape scenario questions ($F(4) = 4.69$, $p = .001$) and by the number of positive words selected ($F(4) = 2.49$, $p = .04$). Post hoc analyses indicated that participants college-aged tended to blame the victim more than those in their 20s and 40s. Interestingly, participants ages 50 and above blamed the victim more than those in their 20s or 40s. Results are provided in Table 18. Post hoc analyses also revealed that participants in their 40s tended to select more positive words to describe the victim than those who were college-aged or in their 20s. These results are detailed in Table 19. For scenario C (MV/MP), significant results were obtained when evaluating victim blame as measured by the rape scenario questions ($F(4) = 5.15$, $p = .001$). Post

hoc analyses revealed that college aged participants blamed the victim more than participants in their 20s or 40s. In addition, participants ages 50 and above blamed the victim more than did those in their 20s and 40s. The results are provided in Table 20. Finally, in scenario D (MV/FP), no significant effects of age on victim blame, as measured by the rape scenario questions or the number of positive and negative words selected, were noted. Overall, there appear to be some differences related to age and victim blaming behavior, with some support suggesting that college-aged participants and those ages 50 and above were more blaming of the victim than participants in their 20's and 40's.

Sexual Orientation. Univariate analyses of variance were also conducted to see if the sexual orientation of the participant and the perceived sexual orientation of the victim impacted victim blame. Table 2 details the sexual orientation breakdown of the participants. Table 21 details the perceived sexual orientation of the victims in the four presented scenarios. No significant results were obtained when evaluating the potential impact of the reported sexual orientation of the respondent and the level of blame individuals ascribed to the victim. For scenario A (FV/MP), no main effect was found when evaluating the relationship between perceived sexual orientation of the victim and victim blame, as assessed by both the rape scenario questions ($F(2) = 1.94$, $p = .15$) and the PAI ($F(2) = 1.86$, $p = .16$). Similar results were noted in scenario B (FV/FP) rape scenario questions ($F(2) = .44$, $p = .65$) and PAI ($F(2) = 1.57$, $p = .21$) and scenario C (MV/MP) rape scenario questions ($F(2) = 1.44$, $p = .24$) and PAI ($F(2) = .86$, $p = .43$). Interestingly, however, significant results were obtained when assessing perceived sexual orientation of the victim and victim blame in scenario D (MV/FP). A main effect was found between perceived sexual orientation of the victim and the rape scenario questions ($F(2) = 4.28$, $p = .02$). The effect size for this relationship is small, as only 3.3% of the variance in victim

blame, as assessed by the rape scenario questions, can be explained by perceived sexual orientation of the victim. Post hoc analyses indicated that participants who perceived that the victim was heterosexual blamed the victim less than those who believed he was bisexual. No other group differences were indicated. A main effect was also found between perceived sexual orientation of the victim and the PAI ($F(2) = 4.16$, $p = .02$). The effect size of this relationship is also small, as only 3.3% of the variance in the PAI was explained by perceived sexual orientation of the victim. Post-hoc analyses also revealed that participants who believed that the victim was heterosexual blamed the victim less than those who believed he was bisexual. No other group differences were noted. Results are detailed in Table 22. By and large, it was noted that the sexual orientation of the respondent and the perceived sexual orientation of the victim did not influence victim blaming behavior in most of the scenarios.

A similar trend of results was obtained when evaluating differences between perceived sexual orientation of the victim and the number of positive words selected to describe the victim. In particular, no main effect was found in scenarios A (FV/MP), B (FV/FP), and C (MV/MP). A significant main effect was noted in scenario D (MV/FP) ($F(2) = 5.23$, $p = .01$). Post hoc analyses indicated that participants who believed that the victim was heterosexual selected more positive words to describe the victim than those who believed that the victim was homosexual or bisexual. These results are also noted in Table 22.

Hypothesis 3

The third hypothesis stated that participants' endorsement of the just world belief would moderate the relationship between rape myth acceptance and victim blame. It should be noted that no significant diversity was found on the social desirability scale, which is why this variable was not used as a covariate in any of the subsequent analyses. A significant association was

found between rape myth acceptance and victim blame, such that increased rape myth acceptance related to increased victim blame in Scenario A (FV/MP) (r = .60, p = .000), Scenario B (FV/FP) (r = .59, p = .000), Scenario C (MV/MP) (r = .57, p = .000), and Scenario D (MV/FP) (r = .50, p = .000). No relationship was noted between gender and rape myth acceptance ($t(252)$ = .800, p = .65) As noted in the results for hypothesis 1, no significant correlation was found between the just world belief and victim blame. There was, however, a significant correlation found between the just world belief and rape myth acceptance (r = .15, p = .02). Because the assumptions of moderation dictate that a significant relationship cannot exist between the moderating variable and the independent variable (Baron & Kenny, 1986), the test of moderation could not be conducted for this hypothesis. As noted before, a moderating effect is one which affects the direction and/or strength of the relation between an independent and dependent variable. However, a significant relationship between the moderating variable and the independent variable confounds the equation, such that one is unable to determine the independent effects of the moderating variable on the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. In general, results revealed that rape myth acceptance was associated with increased victim blame; likewise, a significant relationship was noted between the just world belief and rape myth acceptance.

Similar results were obtained when evaluating the association between rape myth acceptance and victim blame, as measured by the number of negative words selected to describe the victim. Specifically, an increase in rape myth acceptance was significantly associated with an increase in the number of negative words used to describe the victim in Scenario A (FV/MP) (r = .31, p = .000), Scenario B (FV/FP) (r = .32, p = .000), Scenario C (MV/MP) (r = .34, p = .000), and Scenario D (MV/FP) (r = .29, p = .000). A similar trend of results was obtained when

evaluating the correlation between rape myth acceptance and the number of positive words selected to describe the victims. Results revealed that higher scores on the Rape Myth Scale were associated with a decrease in the number of positive words selected for all four scenarios. These results are provided in Table 23. As noted above, because there was a significant relationship noted between the just world belief and rape myth acceptance, no test was conducted to test the moderating effect of the just world belief. Overall, these findings indicate that rape myth acceptance is associated with victim blaming behavior.

Male Rape Myth Acceptance. A similar pattern of results were obtained when evaluating the association between male rape myth acceptance and victim blame. Specifically, it was determined that an increase in male rape myth acceptance was significantly correlated with an increase in victim blame in Scenario A (FV/MP) (r = .32, p = .000), Scenario B (FV/FP) (r = .38, p = .000), Scenario C (MV/MP) (r = .41, p = .000), and Scenario D (MV/FP) (r = .49, p = .000). No gender differences were noted in acceptance of male rape myths (t(252) = .78, p = .67). As noted under the results for hypothesis 1, there was no relationship found between the just world belief and victim blame. There was, however, a significant correlation found between the just world belief and male rape myth acceptance, such that an increased endorsement in the just world was associated with increased acceptance of male rape myths (r = .14, p = .03). Because of this existing relationship, a test of moderation could not be conducted to determine the possible moderating effect of the just world belief on the relationship between male rape myth acceptance and victim blame. Comparable findings were found when evaluating the relationship between male rape myth acceptance and victim blame, as measured by the number of negative words selected to describe the victim. In particular, an increase in male rape myth acceptance was significantly correlated with an increase in the number of negative words in Scenarios A

(FV/MP) (r = .25, p = .000), B (FV/FP) (r = .30, p = .000), C (MV/MP) (r = .35, p = .000), and D (MV/FP) (r = .32, p = .000). Similar findings were obtained when evaluating the number of positive words selected to describe the victim, such that increased scores on the Male Rape Myth Scale were correlated with a decrease in positive words selected for all four scenarios. Results are detailed in Table 23. Because of the above noted relationship between the just world belief and male rape myth acceptance, no test of moderation was conducted to evaluate the moderating effect of the just world belief on the relationship between male rape myth acceptance and victim blame. On the whole, the findings revealed that increased endorsement of male rape myths was associated with increased victim blame and a significant relationship was noted between the just world belief and male rape myth acceptance.

Hypothesis 4

The fourth hypothesis predicted that the more knowledge participants have about the current legal definition of rape, the less likely they would be to engage in victim blame. As stated in the procedures section of this paper, the scoring for the rape law definition provided was altered. Due to the change in scoring, the analysis for this hypothesis was also changed. An independent samples t-test was conducted to determine if there were gender differences in how participants scored on the rape law definition. Results obtained indicated no significant gender differences in knowledge of the rape law (t(249) = .84, p = .40). Univariate analyses were conducted to determine if the knowledge of the current rape law predicted victim blame. For scenario A (FV/MP), a main effect was found for knowledge of the rape law and victim blame (F(2) = 8.46, p = .00). This effect has a moderate effect size, as 6.4% of the variance in victim blame, as assessed by the rape scenario questions, can be explained by participants' knowledge of the rape law. Post-hoc analyses indicated that individuals who provided the wrong definition

were more likely to blame the victim than those who provided the correct definition. No other group differences were noted. These findings were not found when evaluating the relationship between knowledge of the rape law and the number of negative words selected to describe the victim, as assessed by the PAI ($F(2) = .59$, $p = .56$). Similarly, no significant results were obtained when considering the number of positive words selected ($F(2) = .81$, $p = .45$).

For scenario B (FV/FP), a main effect was found for knowledge of the rape law and victim blame, as measured by the rape scenario questions ($F(2) = 7.52$, $p = .00$). This effect has a small to moderate effect size. Specifically, it was found that 5.7% of the variance in victim blame can be explained by participants' knowledge of the current definition of rape. In terms of group differences, results indicated that those who provided the correct definition blamed the victim less than those who provided the incorrect definition of rape. No other group differences were noted. As with scenario A, no main effect was found when evaluating the relationship between knowledge of the rape law and the number of negative words ($F(2) = .21$, $p = .81$) and positive words ($F(2) = .57$, $p = .57$) selected to describe the victim.

For scenario C (MV/MP), a significant relationship was found between knowledge of the current legal definition of rape and victim blame, as evaluated by the rape scenario questions ($F(2) = 6.68$, $p = .00$). A small effect size was found for this relationship, as only 5.2% of the variance in victim blame can be explained by participants' knowledge of the rape law. Post-hoc analyses indicated that individuals who provided the wrong definition of rape blamed the victim more than those who provided the correct definition. No other group differences were noted. As with the preceding scenarios, a main effect was not found between knowledge of the rape law and number of negative ($F(2) = 1.95$, $p = .14$) or positive ($F(2) = .89$, $p = .41$) words selected.

Lastly, in scenario D (MV/FP), a significant relationship was found between rape law knowledge and victim blame, as evaluated by the rape scenario questions ($F(2) = 10.67$, $p = .00$). The strength of this relationship is moderate, as 8% of the variance in victim blame could be explained by participants' knowledge of the legal definition of rape. Tukey's post-hoc test indicated that participants who provided an incorrect definition of rape blamed the victim more than those who provided a correct or a broad definition. No other group differences were noted. As with all of the other scenarios, no main effect was noted when considering the number of negative ($F(2) = 1.38$, $p = 25$) and positive ($F(2) = .42$, $p = .66$) words selected. The mean scores of victim blame, as measured by the rape scenario questions, are provided in Table 24 and Figure 5. Overall, the results obtained testing this hypothesis revealed that knowledge of the rape law did impact victim blaming behavior, as measured by the rape scenario questions, but not as measured by the PAI. In general, participants who provided the wrong definition of the rape law were more likely to blame the victim than those who gave the right definition.

Discussion

Hypothesis 1

It was originally proposed that participants' endorsement of traditional gender norms would moderate the relationship between the just world belief and victim blame such that endorsement of traditional gender norms would increase the likelihood that those who believed in a just world would engage in victim blame. Results indicated that there was no significant association between belief in a just world and victim blaming behavior in any of the four presented scenarios. The finding seems to contradict the just world belief theory as it postulates that good things happen to good people and bad things happen to bad people (Furnham, 2003). Based on this theory, it was predicted that in order to maintain the just world belief, individuals

scoring high on a measure assessing just world belief would be more likely to blame the victim than those scoring lower on the measure. By placing the blame on the victim, individuals believing in a just world can assume that the victim somehow deserved what happened to him/her, instead of believing that bad things, such as rape, can happen to people that did not do anything to provoke the attack. The finding diverges from some of the past research in this field. In particular, in a study conducted by Kleinke and Meyer (1990), the researchers found that participants with high belief in a just world evaluated the rape victim more negatively than those with a low belief in a just world. In that study, however, the researchers used a video-taped interview of the rape victim, rather than employing a written scenario, as was done in the current study. Similarly, in another study, researchers (Foley & Pigott, 2000) found that men and women scoring high on the just world belief awarded less damages in a civil rape trial than those scoring lower on the just world belief. In both of these noted studies, the researchers utilized a video or audio tape to present the rape scenario. This difference in methodology may explain why a significant relationship between the just world belief and victim blame was not noted in the current study. Using a video or audio taped scenario may have created a more believable scenario to which the participants may have responded more naturally, rather than merely reading the details in a written scenario.

Although results from the current study were inconsistent with some of the previous research, there was some consistency with other researchers who also found no association between the just world belief and victim blaming behavior. In particular, results from two studies (Perrot, Miller, & Delaney, 1997); Brems and Wagner, 1994) supported no association between the just world belief and attribution of blame of a rape victim. It should be noted, however, in both of these studies, as in the current study, the researchers utilized a written scenario that the

participants read before completing questionnaires pertaining to victim blame. It is possible that this methodological issue is the reason why the researchers were unsuccessful at observing a relationship between the two variables. Future research should evaluate these two methodologies to determine if a relationship between belief in a just world and victim blame exists and, if so, under what circumstances.

A unique aspect of the current study that previous studies did not examine was how the gender of the victim may have influenced the relationship between the just world belief and victim blame. The findings from the current study suggest that the gender of the victim did not influence this relationship. This is a surprising finding considering the just world theory and past research findings pertaining to the gender of a rape victim. As mentioned previously, the theory of the just world postulates that individuals who believe in a just world are more likely to blame the victim than those who don't endorse such a belief because it helps to protect their belief in a just world (Furnham, 2003). Further, past research has found that male rape victims are blamed more than their female counterparts (Gerber, Cronin, & Steigman, 2004). Combining the theoretical underpinnings of the just world belief with past research findings pertaining to the gender of the victim, one would speculate that those with a strong belief in a just world would blame male rape victims more than female rape victims. The fact that this hypothesis was not supported by the findings of the current study indicates that individuals with a strong belief in a just world do not differ on the amount of blame they ascribe to a rape victim irrespective of the gender of the victim. Future research is needed, however, to determine if this finding holds true in other studies. It may be that gender of the rape victim would have affected the relationship between the just world belief and victim blame if a strong link between just world belief and victim blame had been observed.

As was predicted, a positive association was noted between higher scores on victim blame and the number of negative words selected to describe the victim. In addition, a negative association was observed between higher scores of victim blame and the number of positive words selected to describe the victim. The two measures were unique in that the rape scenario questions consisted of face valid questions assessing victim blame, whereas the Personal Attribute Inventory provided a more obscure way of measuring victim blame. It should be noted, however, there was a limited range of responses with regard to the level of blame respondents ascribed to the rape victim. This limitation made it difficult to assess specific variables associated with victim blame and may help to explain why a relationship was not found between the just world belief and victim blame.

Another factor that was thought to possibly influence the findings in the current study was social desirability. However, results revealed that social desirability was not associated with how much participants blamed the victim in any of the presented scenarios. More specifically, individuals who scored high on the social desirability measure did not differ significantly in the amount of blame they ascribed to the victim than those scoring lower on the measure. These findings suggest that the participants in the current study were not impacted by the desire to do the socially acceptable thing when they considered how much blame to assign to the rape victim. In addition, no gender differences were noted in social desirability, such that male and female participants portrayed themselves in a similar manner.

The examination of traditional gender norms provided some interesting results when evaluating the relationship between traditional gender norms and victim blame. In particular, findings revealed that increased egalitarian attitudes were associated with decreased victim blame in all of the scenarios, except for the scenario depicting a more traditional rape scenario

involving a female victim and male perpetrator. For the large part, these findings support sex-role stereotyping theory (Weis & Borges, 1973), which postulates that men and women are socialized to assume specific roles that are congruent with traditional male-female sexual interactions. Based on this theory, it is assumed that men are the ones who should initiate sexual relations and women should control how much sexual activity occurs. Further, it is theorized that the extent to which a rape victim's behaviors are consistent with the gender role ascribed by society will determine the level of blame that the victim will receive for the rape. The findings from the current study support these predictions. In particular, the three scenarios where increased endorsement of traditional gender norms was found to be associated with increased victim blame were scenarios in which the male and female were not following traditional gender norms. It is noteworthy that these findings support a theory that was initially proposed in 1973, suggesting that the impact of traditional gender norms on victim blaming behavior remains an important concern in this day and age. Therefore, future research assessing victim blaming behavior should also take into consideration how participants' endorsement of traditional gender norms affects their responses.

The sample's egalitarian attitudes were also compared with those observed in the study conducted to evaluate the psychometric properties of the SRES form BB (King & King, 1990). The results indicated that the current sample endorsed less egalitarian attitudes than did those in the original study. One possible explanation for this difference may be that the original study evaluated the opinions of 608 undergraduate students (King & King, 1990). In comparison, the current study assessed the opinions of those in college as well as others not falling within the college-age span. Research has shown that older participants tend to endorse less egalitarian attitudes than younger individuals (Thornton & Young-DeMarco, 2001). Results from the

current study, however, did not support this trend. In fact, the results indicated no relationship between age and endorsement of egalitarian attitudes. Therefore, additional research is needed to determine if this finding can be replicated. The results of the current study were, however, in line with past research when evaluating the gender differences in egalitarian attitudes. As noted in the study conducted by King and King (1990), females were observed to have more egalitarian attitudes than males. This is not a surprising finding considering the fact that many of the items on the SRES pertain to women's rights' issues.

Hypothesis 2

It was originally hypothesized that increased levels of perceived similarity between the respondent and the victim, the less likely the respondent would be to engage in victim blame. Overall this hypothesis was not supported by the results. In particular, perceived similarity was not found to be correlated with victim blame in three of the four presented scenarios. The only scenario for which a correlation between perceived similarity and victim blame was noted involved a male victim and a male perpetrator. More specifically, it was found that for this scenario, the more similar to the victim the participants perceived themselves to be, the less negative words participants selected to describe the victim. It should be noted that this association was not found when evaluating victim blame as assessed by the rape scenario questions. From the obtained results, it suggests that the PAI may be more sensitive at assessing victim blame than asking face valid questions which were used in the rape scenario questions.

It was originally proposed that perceived similarity would impact victim blaming behavior based on the defensive attribution theory (Shaver, 1970). In respect to victim blaming behavior, it is thought that individuals are more likely to blame victims who are different from themselves. It is thought that individuals are likely to do this because this is a way to assure

themselves that they are nothing like the victim and therefore what bad thing happened to the victim could not possibly happen to them. Overall, the trend of results obtained in terms of the association between perceived similarity and victim blame do not fit past research findings. In particular, past researchers have found that participants who perceive themselves as similar to the victim tend to blame the victim less than those who do not perceive themselves as similar to the victim (Workman & Freeburg, 1999; Bell et al., 1994.) One possible explanation for the discrepancy between the results obtained in the current study and those obtained by Workman and Freeburg (1999) is the difference in wording of the items used to evaluate perceived similarity. In particular, in the current study, a single item was used that asked participants to rate how similar they perceived themselves to the victim on a Likert scale of 1 to 10. In the Workman and Freeburg (1999) study, the researchers used a 101-point scale with the question asking the probability that the individual might be involved in a similar situation while on the date. There are two major differences between the methods implemented by the two studies. One, the question asked by Workman and Freeburg (1999) used situational relevance such that the individuals were made to consider how likely it would be that they might find themselves in a similar situation; whereas the current study only evaluated the individuals' perceptions of how similar they thought they were to the victim. It is possible that asking a question that forced participants to consider the probability of finding themselves in a similar situation may have been a better strategy for assessing the impact of perceived similarity on victim blame. Second, the question used by Workman and Freeburg (1999) allowed for more variability in response range, which may have been more adept at detecting a potential influence of perceived similarity on victim blame.

The pattern of results obtained in the current study does, however, suggest that perceived similarity may be an important factor in more atypical rape scenarios. In particular, perceived similarity was found to be correlated to victim blame in a scenario involving a male victim and a male perpetrator, which is not the stereotypical traditional rape scenario. In addition, a similar trend of results was noted in scenarios B (FV/FP) and D (MV/FP), though the correlations between perceived similarity and victim blame were not noted to be significant in these scenarios. More research, however, is needed to see if these findings can be replicated and under what specific circumstances perceived similarity to the victim is an important factor in victim blaming behavior.

Support for the hypothesis examining perceived similarity and victim blame was obtained when evaluating the impact of respondents' past history of sexual assault on victim blame. Overall, the results revealed that respondents with a past history of sexual assault were less likely to blame the victim than those who did not report such a history. This finding is consistent with past research, which has shown that previously victimized participants are less likely to blame the victim than nonvictimized participants (Mason, Riger, & Foley, 2004). In addition, the results obtained in the current study support the defensive attribution theory (Shaver, 1970). Generally, the theory is based on how similarity to the victim impacts an individual's perception of an incident. In this specific case, it is speculated that victimized participants perceive themselves as similar to the victim and therefore are reluctant to blame the victim for a scenario that they can imagine themselves in and may have even been in at one time. It is particularly interesting that when participants were asked how similar they perceived themselves to the victim, the variable was not associated with victim blame. However, when analyses were conducted to determine if a sexual assault history impacted victim blaming behavior, the association was significant. This

difference suggests that though individuals may not outwardly perceive themselves as similar to the victim, a victimization history appears to have an impact in overall victim blame. Additional analyses were conducted to determine if nonphysical or physical experiences of sexual assault impact victim blame. Overall, the results revealed that differences in the type of sexual assault experienced by respondents did not impact the level of blame ascribed to the victim. These findings reveal that any past history of sexual assault, irrespective of the seriousness of the assault, can have an impact on victim blaming behavior.

There were also several exploratory analyses that were conducted in conjunction with assessing hypothesis 2. Specifically, additional analyses were conducted to determine if gender, race, age, and sexual orientation were related to victim blame. Overall, there were limited gender differences noted in victim blame throughout the four scenarios. In particular, the only gender differences found were for scenarios A (FV/MP) and C (MV/MP) in terms of the number of negative words selected to describe the victim. No gender differences were noted for these scenarios when assessing victim blame using more face valid questions or by the number of positive words selected to describe the victim. In general, the results obtained do not fit with past research, as most researchers have noted that males are more blaming of rape victims than female respondents (Gerber, Cronin, & Steigman, 2004; Wakelin & Long, 2003; George & Martinez, 2002; Calhoun, Selby, & Warring, 1976; Krulewitz & Nash, 1979; Krulewitz & Payne, 1978; Thornton & Ryckman, 1983). There are some possible explanations for why the results in the current study do not match with those obtained by researchers in the past. First, as mentioned previously, the rape scenarios were presented in a written form to the participants of the current study. It is possible that such a presentation was not strong enough to evoke strong reactions from the respondents, such that gender differences would become easily apparent.

Second, the research assistants used in the current study were six female college students. It is possible that having female research assistants impacted how respondents, particularly male respondents, answered the rape scenario questions. Future research should address these limitations.

Though a majority of the results obtained in the current study do not support past research in terms of gender differences in victim blame, there were limited findings that revealed gender differences in two scenarios. It should be noted that these findings are in line with past research. It is of particular interest that in the two scenarios, male participants were observed to select more negative words to describe the victim than female participants. Because there were no gender differences found in the more blatant measure of victim blame, the results suggest that the Personal Attribute Inventory was a better measure at assessing for more subtle forms of victim blame. Perhaps the male participants felt better about selecting negative words to describe the victim rather than outwardly assigning a high level of blame to the victim. Also noteworthy is the fact that the two scenarios for which gender differences were noted involved male perpetrators. The other two scenarios described female perpetrators. Future research is needed to determine if these results can be replicated and also to assess the possible theoretical underpinnings of why such a trend of results may be obtained.

Analyses evaluating race of the respondent and victim blame indicated that race was not found to be associated with victim blaming behavior. This finding is not consistent with past research as previous studies have reported that Black respondents tend to be more blaming of rape victims than Whites (Dull & Giacopassi, 1987; Giacopassi & Dull, 1986). In addition, Asian students have been found to be more blaming of rape victims than White students (Lee et al., 2005). A limitation in the current study is that there was limited racial and ethnic diversity

among the participants. There were 129 White respondents and 47 respondents falling in other racial categories. The small number of participants from various racial backgrounds limited the power of the data to evaluate potential racial differences in victim blaming behavior.

In addition, analyses were conducted to determine the possible impact of age of the respondents on victim blame. Results obtained were mixed. In particular, a correlational analysis revealed that age of the respondent was not significantly associated with victim blame. Some age related differences were noted, however, when the sample was categorized using various age ranges. These findings revealed that significant results were obtained for scenarios A (FV/FP), B (FV/FP), and C (MV/MP). It should be noted, however, that the results varied in terms of which measure of victim blame, either the rape scenario questions or the Personal Attribute Inventory, was found to be significantly associated with age of the respondent. Therefore, the results are to be interpreted cautiously. For the large part, the results obtained suggested that college-aged participants and those ages 50 and above were more blaming of the victim than participants ages 23 through 29 and in their 40's. The results obtained in the current study are congruent with some of the past research and divergent from some findings from other studies. In particular, the results in the current study are consistent with past studies that suggest that older participants are more blaming of rape victims than younger respondents (Nagel et al., 2005). However, data from the current study indicates that college-aged participants are more blaming of rape victims than respondents ages 23 through 29 and in their 40's. This finding is somewhat surprising considering the fact that past researchers have found that college students tend to be less blaming of rape victims and hold less conservative attitudes towards women (Xenos & Smith, 2001). This noted study, however, compared views of university students to those of adolescent respondents. Therefore, it may be that university aged participants are less blaming of rape victims than

adolescents, but are more blaming than respondents ages 23 through 29 and in their 40's. The generational differences noted are also interesting. It is particularly noteworthy that participants in their 50's and above were more blaming of victims than those in their 20's and 40's. This may be a function of the generational changes in traditional gender norms and the increased awareness of rape and its potential impact that has taken place over the past several decades. However, the aim of the current study was not to specifically evaluate the impact of age on victim blame. Therefore, more research is needed in this area. Particular attention needs to be focused on assessing views of rape victims with respondents across the age span.

A further analysis was conducted to determine if the sexual orientation of the participant and the perceived sexual orientation of the victim impacted victim blame. Results indicated that sexual orientation of the respondent and the perceived sexual orientation of the victim did not influence victim blaming behavior in most of the scenarios. However, significant findings were obtained for scenario D (MV/FP). For this scenario, participants who perceived that the victim was heterosexual blamed the victim less than those who believed he was bisexual. It should be noted, however, that the effect size for this relationship was small and therefore interpretations of the findings are made with caution. The finding, however, does appear to fit with past literature. In particular, Wakelin and Long (2003) found that respondents were less likely to blame the victim when he/she was determined to be heterosexual as compared to homosexual. In addition, research conducted on group membership suggests that people tend to have positive perceptions of and display more positive behavior towards individuals that they perceive to be part of the in-group rather than those who fall in the out-group (Diehl, 1990; Tajfel et al., 1971). When evaluating sexual orientation, heterosexual individuals are considered to be in-group members, whereas everyone else is categorized as an out-group member. In such a case, the out-group

member is blamed more than the in-group member. The finding obtained in the current study fits with this theory. In particular, when the victim was perceived as heterosexual he was blamed less than when he was perceived as bisexual. In addition, the current finding fits with past research findings, which have revealed that gay male rape victims are blamed more than heterosexual male victims (Mitchell et al., 1999 & Wakelin & Long, 2003).

Hypothesis 3

The third hypothesis proposed that participants' endorsement of the just world belief would moderate the relationship between rape myth acceptance and victim blame, such that endorsement of the just world belief would strengthen the positive relationship between rape myth acceptance and victim blame. Results did not support this hypothesis. Though a significant association was found between rape myth acceptance and victim blame, there was also a significant positive correlation noted between the just world belief and rape myth acceptance, such that respondents with a strong belief in a just world also endorsed a high level of rape myth acceptance. It was determined that, in the current study, belief in a just world did not moderate the relationship between rape myth acceptance and victim because just world belief was found to be associated with rape myth acceptance independently. The relationship between the just world belief and rape myth acceptance is an interesting finding because there has been little past research evaluating this relationship. Researchers have found that increased rape myth acceptance is related to increased victim blame (Holcomb et al., 1991; Abbey & Harnish, 1995; Varelas & Foley, 1998) and increased belief in a just world is associated with increased victim blame (Kleinke & Meyer, 1990; Foley & Pigott, 2000), but these relationships have been evaluated separately in studies. A unique aspect of the current study was evaluating rape myth acceptance and belief in a just world together. Data from the current study suggests that there is a

unique relationship between the just world belief and endorsement of rape myths. This relationship may exist because individuals who believe in a just world also ascertain control in the world by believing that there are specific reasons why individuals are raped, which accounts for the majority of largely held rape myths. For example, if a person believes that a rape victim was asking for what happened because of his/her behavior preceding the attack, this may be a way to maintain the belief in a just world, where good things happen to good people and bad things to bad people. More research, however, is needed in this area to try to replicate the findings from the current study and determine the theoretical links between the just world belief and rape myth acceptance.

In addition to the association between a belief in a just world and rape myth acceptance, a positive correlation was noted between rape myth acceptance and victim blame, such that respondents endorsing more rape myths were also likely to engage in higher levels of victim blame than those with lower endorsements of rape myths. A similar trend of results was obtained when evaluating the relationship between acceptance of male rape myths and victim blame, such that participants who accepted more male rape myths also blamed the victim more than other respondents. These findings were obtained for all of the four presented scenarios. The results obtained in the current study are commensurate with past research, which has found that respondents who present with more rape-tolerant attitudes are more likely to blame a rape victim than other participants (Holcomb et al., 1991; Abbey & Harnish, 1995; Varelas & Foley, 1998). Interestingly, however, no gender differences were obtained in the current study. Specifically, male and female respondents did not differ in the number of general or male specific rape myths they endorsed. This finding is divergent to results obtained by other researchers. In particular, several studies have found that male respondents are more likely than females to endorse rape-

tolerant attitudes (Holcomb et al., 1991; Abbey & Harnish, 1995; Varelas & Foley, 1998; Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 1992). There are two possible explanations for the divergence of the results from the current study from past findings. First, as noted above, there were six female research assistants used in the current study. Respondents, particularly males, may have felt uncomfortable endorsing rape myths in such a context. The second possibility is that as rape awareness and education becomes more of a focus on college campuses throughout the country, there may be a decrease in rape myth acceptance in general, which may also explain why no gender differences were noted in the current study. Future research is needed to closely determine if gender differences still exist in rape myth acceptance and if so with what particular populations.

Hypothesis 4

The final hypothesis predicted that the more knowledge participants had about the current legal definition of rape, the less likely they would be to engage in victim blame. This hypothesis was supported by the findings obtained in the current study. In particular, it was noted that participants who provided the correct definition of the rape law, as it pertains to forcible rape, were less likely to blame the victim, as assessed by the rape scenario questions, than those who provided an incorrect definition. The effect size for the relationship between knowledge of the rape law and victim blame was found to be in the small to moderate range, depending on the scenario. This means that a small to moderate amount of the variance in victim blame can be explained by respondents' knowledge of the rape law. The scenarios for which the effect size was determined to be moderate were scenarios A (FV/MP) and D (MV/FP), and a small effect size was noted for scenarios B (FV/FP) and C (MV/MP). There was no gender difference noted in knowledge of the definition of rape, such that men and women did not significantly differ in

their knowledge of the legal definition of rape. Overall, the obtained results suggest that knowledge of the legal definition of rape impacts the level of blame ascribed to a rape victim. Specifically, when respondents have a good understanding of the rape law, they are less likely to blame the victim than when they lack an accurate understanding of the law. This relationship may be explained by the fact that when respondents know what constitutes a rape, they are more likely to be able to identify a rape scenario as a rape and are therefore less likely to blame the victim in such a circumstance. The findings suggest that laws have a significant impact on rape victim perception. This supports the idea that was presented earlier in this paper detailing that strides in rape law reform may have also altered perceptions of rape, resulting in more positive perceptions towards rape victims.

The results obtained when evaluating individuals' knowledge of the rape law also brought to light an important finding as to the increasing number of individuals who know the correct legal definition of rape. In particular, in the current study, 153 participants were able to provide the right definition of rape; whereas, only 58 participants supplied an incorrect definition. An additional 40 participants were able to offer a broad definition of the rape law. The current results reveal that a majority of the participants were knowledgeable of the rape law, or at least could provide a broad definition of the law. The finding suggests that there is a large awareness of the legal definition of rape, at least among participants in the current sample.

Implications

The results from the current study bring to light some interesting points. Specifically, the results suggest respondent variables such as past sexual assault history, age, endorsement of traditional gender norms, and rape myth acceptance have an impact on victim blame. The only victim-related variable that was found to be associated with victim blame was perceived sexual

orientation of the victim. The findings also shed some light on the theoretical understanding for why individuals engage in victim blaming behavior. Particularly, the results provide more support for Shaver's (1970) defensive attribution theory than for the just world belief theory (Lerner, 1965). These findings emphasize the importance of considering these variables when educators create and implement sexual assault education and awareness across college campuses. Specifically, providing education about the types of variables that are associated with victim blame and a theoretical reasoning for why people engage in victim blame can help bring light to this important issue. Highlighting this information would hopefully prompt individuals to consider their own biases and decrease the likelihood that these individuals will engage in victim blame in the future. These findings are also important for clinicians to bear in mind when treating a rape victim in individual therapy. Mainly, having this information may help a rape victim better understand why certain individuals are blaming of him/her, while others are more supportive. Having this information would hopefully make it easier for victims to better manage their thoughts and feelings pertaining to victim blame, which may impact the quality and rate of mental health recovery.

Overall, the results reveal that perceptions of rape victims may have changed when compared to results from past studies. Specifically, respondents were generally not very blaming of the rape victims in the presented scenarios. Victim blaming scores, however, tended to be higher in more atypical scenarios, which did not consist of the traditional female victim and male perpetrator. This finding suggests that rape victims who had a more atypical rape scenario may be impacted more by victim blaming those who had a more typical rape scenario. Clinicians should be aware of this when treating rape victims and assess the specific circumstances

pertaining to the rape and the impact of victim blame upon the individual. The finding also highlights a need for more research in this area, which is discussed below.

A final implication that is important to consider is based on the results obtained about how knowledge of the rape law impacted victim blaming behavior. Specifically, it was noted that participants who were more knowledgeable of the rape law were less blaming of the rape victim than those who did not provide the correct definition. This finding has an important implication in terms of rape awareness and education. Educators need to emphasize what constitutes a rape so that individuals are better adept at recognizing it when a sexual assault does occur. Increased awareness would not only result in more positive perceptions of rape victims and likely reduce occurrences of victim blame, but it may also help individuals identify when such an experience happens to them.

Limitations

A majority of the limitations in the current study have been discussed throughout the discussion section of this paper. Therefore, most of them are only briefly mentioned in this section. First, the sample itself is not a very representative sample in terms of age, gender, sexual orientation, and race and ethnicity. For the most part, participants in the current study were in their 20's, limiting the possibility to evaluate the potential impact of age on various key variables. The sample was collected in a Midwestern city, which has a diverse African-American population, but lacks in other significant racial and ethnic diversity. Overall, the findings obtained may be representative of the Midwest, but are likely to differ significantly from other areas of the United States. As a result, the generalizability of the results is limited by region. Second, the research assistants used in the study were all females, which may have impacted participants' reports of sensitive issues such as rape myth acceptance, endorsement of traditional

gender norms, and victim blaming behavior. Also, there may have been a selection bias as to which individuals within the community chose to fill out the survey.

Further, the rape scenarios presented in the current study were provided in written format to the respondents. Such a presentation may have been lacking in its ability to evoke strong reactions from the participants. In particular, respondents may have reacted more to a video or audio-taped presentation of the scenarios. Another limitation is that there may have been a practice or fatigue effect. Specifically, all of the participants read four scenarios and filled out the same questionnaires subsequent to each scenario. The practice or fatigue effect may have confounded the results, making it difficult to detect significant relationships between the proposed variables. In addition, there were some issues in terms of measurement. In particular, the rape scenario questions were determined to have moderate internal validity, suggesting that the measure had a moderate ability to be able to detect and assess victim blaming behavior. Future studies in this area should use other measures evaluating victim blame to determine if a similar trend of findings is obtained. A final limitation pertaining to measurement has to do with the wording of the measure that requested participants to provide the legal definition of rape. Specifically, the measure simply asked respondents to provide the current legal definition of rape. It did not specify if individuals should provide the legal definition for forcible rape or nonconsensual rape. For the scoring of this measure, however, the researcher used the legal definition for forcible rape. Therefore, the results pertaining to the knowledge of the legal definition should be interpreted cautiously.

Areas of Future Study

There are several areas of future study that can help build on the existing literature in the field of victim blame. In particular, though the results from the current study provided more

support for the defensive attribution theory rather than belief in a just world, more research is needed to determine if the results can be replicated. In addition, future researchers should use several measures to assess the just world belief, especially considering the psychometric problems noted by past researchers in measures assessing belief in a just world. Researchers should also use additional measures of perceived similarity to determine if the defensive attribution theory better explains for respondent variance in victim blame. Future researchers should also be sure to assess respondents' past sexual assault histories, as this variable was found to be significant in the current study and gave support to the defensive attribution theory.

Another focus for future study should be on evaluating how respondents view victims and perpetrators in various rape scenarios. One of the unique findings in this study was that respondents were more blaming of the victim in atypical rape scenarios, which did not involve a female victim and a male perpetrator. Though the findings from the current study suggest a shift in perceptions of rape victims, it seems that victim blame has not entirely been removed, but may have merely shifted to a different population. More research is needed to determine if this finding can be replicated. It would be particularly interesting to determine under what circumstances respondents blame victims and why victims in atypical rape scenarios are blamed more than those in more typical rape scenarios.

Conclusion

The current study has added some interesting points to the extant literature on why individuals blame rape victims. In particular, the findings have provided a better understanding of the theoretical foundation of why individuals engage in victim blaming behavior, with more support gained for the defensive attribution theory rather than for the belief in a just world. The current study also highlighted some of the key respondent and victim related variables that

appear to be associated with victim blame. The most distinctive contribution of the current study, however, pertained to the evaluation of how knowledge of the current rape law impacted victim blame. Overall, the findings from the current study indicate that victim blame continues to be a pervasive issue, though the circumstances under which victim blame is observed may differ from those noted in past research. The current findings are also important when considering the implications. Specifically, they provide critical information about how sexual assault education and awareness can be improved, with particular attention being made to the type of information that needs to be highlighted during these sessions. In addition, the interpretation of the results can be used to enhance clinical care. Though the current study creates some strides in this area of research, further research is needed to not only better understand under what circumstances victim blaming occurs and why it occurs, but also what can be done to help reduce and potentially prevent victim blame.

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Appendix A

Demographics Measure for Subject Pool Participants

Please take a few moments to answer the following questions:

1. Age: _____

2. Gender (circle one): Male Female

3. Ethnic Category (please check one that best applies):

Hispanic or Latino _____
Not Hispanic or Latino _____

4. Racial Category (please check one that best applies):

American Indian/Alaska Native _____
Asian _____
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander _____
Black or African American _____
White _____
Multi-racial _____

5. Relationship Status (please check one that most applies):

Married _____
Divorced/Widowed _____
Committed Dating Relationship/Engaged _____
Single _____

6. Socioeconomic Status (annual household income)

$0 – 20,000 _____
$21,000 – 40,000 _____
$41,000 – 60,000 _____
$61,000 – 80,000 _____
>$80,000 _____

7. Sexual Orientation

Heterosexual _____
Homosexual _____
Bi-sexual _____

8. Please state your religious affiliation: _____

* On a scale of 1 to 10, how strongly do you identify with your personal religious beliefs?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not At All					Somewhat					Very Strongly

Appendix B

Demographics Measure for Community Sample Participants

Please take a few moments to answer the following questions:

1. Age: _____

2. Gender (circle one): Male Female

3. Ethnic Category (please check one that best applies):

Hispanic or Latino _____
Not Hispanic or Latino _____

4. Racial Category (please check one that best applies):

American Indian/Alaska Native _____
Asian _____
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander _____
Black or African American _____
White _____
Multi-racial _____

5. Relationship Status (please check one that most applies):

Married _____
Divorced/Widowed _____
Committed Dating Relationship/Engaged _____
Single _____

6. Socioeconomic Status (annual household income)

$0 – 20,000 _____
$21,000 – 40,000 _____
$41,000 – 60,000 _____
$61,000 – 80,000 _____
>$80,000 _____

7. How many years of education have you completed? _____

For example:

Completion of:	**# of Years**
Grade school	8
High school	12
College	16

2 years of high school	10

8. Choose the level of education that is most applicable to you.

a) Graduate of professional training (degree obtained)
b) Partial graduate or professional training
c) College graduate (degree obtained)
d) Partial college training (including technical schooling beyond high school)
e) High school graduate (graduate of technical or trade school)
f) Partial high school (10th grade through partial 12th grade)
g) Elementary school (6th grade or less)

9. Sexual Orientation

Heterosexual _____
Homosexual _____
Bi-sexual _____

10. Please state your religious affiliation: _____

* On a scale of 1 to 10, how strongly do you identify with your personal religious beliefs?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Not At All Somewhat Very Strongly

Appendix C

Rape Scenario Questions

**X – Victim; Y - Perpetrator*

1) Rate the extent to which the incident was influenced by X's failure to control the situation

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Not at All Great Extent

2) Rate the extent to which the incident was influenced by Y's misunderstanding of X's behavior or desires

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Not at All Great Extent

3) How interested was X in having sexual relations?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Not at All Great Extent

4) Rate X's femininity from not all feminine to very feminine

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Feminine Feminine

5) Rate Y's masculinity from not all masculine to very masculine

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Masculine Masculine

6) How much did X enjoy the sexual activity?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Not at All Great Extent

7) To what degree were Y's actions a violation of X's rights?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Not at All Great Extent

8) How psychologically damaged do you feel X will be from this experience?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Not at All Great Extent

9) How certain are you that this incident would be considered rape?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Definitely not Rape Definitely Rape

10) To what extent do you think that Y had psychological problems?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Not at All Great Extent

11) How similar do you feel to X?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Not at All Great Extent

12) How similar do you feel to Y?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Not at all Completely

13) To what extent was X responsible for going out on a date with Y?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Not at all Completely

14) To what extent did X act carelessly?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Not at all Completely

15) To what extent did X lead Y on?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Not at all Completely

16) To what extent was X's behavior responsible for her sexual encounter with Y?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Not at all Completely

17) Even though you don't know much about X in this scenario, to what extent do you feel X's character was responsible for her being forced to have sex with Y?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Not at all Completely

18) Taking into account both X's behavior and character, how responsible was X for the sexual encounter with Y?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Not at all Completely

19) Overall, to what extent was Y responsible for what happened with X?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Not at all Completely

20) How much control did X have in this situation?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Not at All Great Extent

21) How obligated was X to engage in sexual relations in this case?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Not at All Great Extent

22) How violent do you feel this situation was?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Not at All Great Extent

23) What sexual orientation do you believe X is?

a) heterosexual

b) homosexual

c) bisexual

24) What sexual orientation do you believe Y is?

a) heterosexual

b) homosexual

c) bisexual

Appendix D

Legal Definition

In the space below, please describe what you believe is the legal definition of rape.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix E

Debriefing Statement

There is a large body of research evaluating the phenomenon of victim blame. The purpose of the current study is to evaluate the circumstances under which individuals engage in victim blame and the types of variables that best predict victim blame. If you feel any discomfort or concern after your participation, you are encouraged to contact the following resources:

1. Community Psychological Service: (314) 516-5824
2. Counseling Services: (314) 516-5711
3. Center for Trauma Recovery: (314) 516-6738

Footnotes

[1] One of the most prominent critiques of using the terminology sex roles is that sex is a biological term. Therefore, when one discusses sex roles the assumption that one can draw from it is that the role differentiation between individuals is based on biology, which isn't usually what the researcher is trying to convey. As a result, theorists have argued that when the term sex role is used it is often used incorrectly because in such cases the researcher is often discussing role differences that have been molded by culture, which then suggests the term gender role should be used (Tresemer, 1975). Though the focus of this paper is not a debate on the theories of gender/sex role, the researcher used the term gender role throughout this paper as a way to be consistent and accurate. Furthermore, there is a large debate within the world of sociology focused on the restrictive nature of role theory. The argument focuses on the idea that applying role theory to research is a biased way of conceptualizing cultural norms. The implication is that there are only set ways that individuals can act in society, which does not take into account variations in behavior that individuals may demonstrate depending on the context of the situation (Edwards, 1983). Though this researcher agrees that role theory is often a restrictive method by which to study differences in behavior, the majority of the psychological research on victim blame uses the concept of gender role traditionality as a way to understand why respondents may engage in victim blame. Therefore, this paper used the term gender role traditionality throughout to remain consistent with past research in the field, except when discussing sex-role theory, as the name of the theory cannot be changed.

Table 1

Review of Key Empirical Findings

	Variable	Authors	Conclusions
Respondent Characteristics	Gender	Buddie & Miller, 2002 Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994 Ellis et al., 1992	Males are more accepting of rape myths than are females.
		Barnett et al.	Females more support of rape victims than males.
		Gerber et al., 2004 Wakelin & Long, 2003 George & Martinez, 2002 Calhoun et al., 1976 Krulewitz & Nash, 1979 Krulewitz & Payne, 1978 Thornton & Ryckman, 1983	Males generally attribute more blame to rape victims than females.
		Gerber et al., 2004	Males more likely to identify with perpetrator and females more likely to identify with victim.
	Race	Dull & Giacopassi, 1987 Giacopassi & Dull, 1986	Blacks more accepting of rape myths than Whites.
		Jimenez & Abreu, 2003	Latinos more accepting of rape myths than Blacks, and Blacks more accepting of rape myths than Whites.
		Lee et al., 2005	Asians are more accepting of rape myths than are Whites.
		Willis, 1992 Foley et al., 1995	Minorities are more likely to blame rape victims than Whites.
	Age	Hall, Howard, & Boezio, 1996	College-aged men more supportive of rape myths than university women or girls and boys, ages 14-17.

		Xenos & Smith, 2001	Adolescents more blaming towards rape victims and have more conservative attitudes toward women than university students.
		Nagel et al., 2005	Younger participants have more favorable attitudes towards rape victims than older participants.
	Attitudes	Gerber et al., 2004	Traits of warmth and accommodation, typically generalized as feminine traits, are more likely to be associated with role of victim.
		Check & Malamuth, 1983 Coller & Resick, 1987 Proite et al., 1993 Quackenbush, 1989 Ryckman et al., 1992 Snell & Godwin, 1993 Willis, 1992 Monson et al., 2000	Respondents with traditional gender role beliefs tend to minimize victim's experiences, attribute blame to the victim, and display a greater reluctance to define acquaintance/date rape as rape than those with less traditional attitudes.
		Best & Demmin, 1982 Krahe, 1988 Monson et al., 2000	Extent to which rape victim adheres to traditional gender roles is negatively correlated with level of blame ascribed to victim.
		Holcomb et al., 1991 Abbey & Harnish, 1995 Varelas & Foley, 1998	Males are more likely to endorse rape-tolerant attitudes than females, and males are also more likely to assign blame to the victim than females.
Victim Characteristics	Gender	Gerber et al., 2004	Female victims more likely to be blamed than male victims.

		Davies & McCartney, 2003 Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 1992	Males more negative towards male victims and also endorse more rape myths pertaining to male rape than females.
		Smith et al., 1998	Male victims blamed more when raped by female than when raped by male.
		Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 1992	A rape myth that is commonly endorsed is that females cannot rape males.
		Wakelin & Long, 2003	Respondents less likely to blame victim when victim is perceived to be heterosexual rather than homosexual.
	Sexual Orientation	Levitt & Klausen, 1974 Kite & Whitley, 1996 Wakelin & Long, 2003	Gay male rape victims more likely to be blamed than lesbian victims.

Table 2

Demographics for Overall Sample

Variable	Female (N = 176)	Male (N = 78)
Age	M = 29.0 (SD = 11.7)	M = 29.8 (SD = 10.3)
Ethnicity		
Hispanic or Latino	3	2
Not Hispanic or Latino	173	76
Race		
American Indian/Alaska Native	2	0
Asian	5	1
Black	28	3
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Island	4	0
White	129	70
Multi-racial	8	4
Level of Education		
Graduate of Professional Training	9	5
Partial Graduate or Professional Training	9	1
College Graduate	40	19
Partial College Training	94	35
High School Graduate	22	18
Partial High School	2	0
Elementary School	0	0
Relationship Status		
Married	50	28
Divorced/Widowed	10	2
Committed Dating Relationship Or Engaged	47	22
Single	69	26
Socioeconomic Status		
$0-20,000	55	20
$21,000-40,000	49	22
$41,000-60,000	26	18
$61,000-80,000	21	5
>$80,000	24	12
Sexual Orientation		
Heterosexual	167	75
Homosexual	6	0
Bi-sexual	3	3
Strength of Religious Affiliation	M = 6.4 (SD = 2.0)	M = 5.8 (SD = 3.3)

Table 3

Demographics for Subject Pool Sample

Variable	Female (N = 56)	Male (N = 18)
Age	M = 23.9 (SD = 7.7)	M = 23.1 (SD = 5.4)
Ethnicity		
Hispanic or Latino	1	0
Not Hispanic or Latino	54	18
Race		
American Indian/Alaska Native	0	0
Asian	2	1
Black	17	2
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Island	4	0
White	31	15
Multi-racial	2	0
Relationship Status		
Married	3	2
Divorced/Widowed	1	0
Committed Dating Relationship Or Engaged	23	8
Single	29	8
Socioeconomic Status		
$0-20,000	31	11
$21,000-40,000	9	4
$41,000-60,000	7	2
$61,000-80,000	6	0
>$80,000	3	1
Sexual Orientation		
Heterosexual	52	17
Homosexual	3	0
Bi-sexual	1	1
Strength of Religious Affiliation	M = 6.9 (SD = 3.1)	M = 7.4 (2.6)

Table 4

Demographics for Community Sample – Recruited by Flyers

Variable	Female (N = 38)	Male (N = 15)
Age	M = 32.1 (SD = 13.9)	M = 29.7 (SD = 10.9)
Ethnicity		
Hispanic or Latino	37	1
Not Hispanic or Latino	1	14
Race		
American Indian/Alaska Native	1	0
Asian	1	0
Black	5	0
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Island	0	0
White	28	14
Multi-racial	3	1
Level of Education		
Graduate of Professional Training	1	1
Partial Graduate or Professional Training	4	1
College Graduate	14	2
Partial College Training	11	7
High School Graduate	8	4
Partial High School	0	0
Elementary School	0	0
Relationship Status		
Married	13	7
Divorced/Widowed	2	3
Committed Dating Relationship Or Engaged	9	5
Single	14	15
Socioeconomic Status		
$0-20,000	9	3
$21,000-40,000	11	6
$41,000-60,000	6	1
$61,000-80,000	4	2
>$80,000	7	3
Sexual Orientation		
Heterosexual	36	14
Homosexual	2	0
Bi-sexual	0	1
Strength of Religious Affiliation	M = 6.9 (SD = 2.6)	M = 5.2 (SD = 3.3)

Table 5

Demographics for Community Sample – Recruited by Personal Contacts

Variable	Female (N = 82)	Male (N = 45)
Age	M = 31.1 (SD = 11.8)	M = 32.6 (SD = 10.5)
Ethnicity		
Hispanic or Latino	2	1
Not Hispanic or Latino	79	43
Race		
American Indian/Alaska Native	1	0
Asian	2	0
Black	6	1
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Island	0	0
White	70	41
Multi-racial	3	3
Level of Education		
Graduate of Professional Training	8	4
Partial Graduate or Professional Training	5	0
College Graduate	26	17
Partial College Training	27	10
High School Graduate	14	14
Partial High School	2	0
Elementary School	0	0
Relationship Status		
Married	34	19
Divorced/Widowed	7	2
Committed Dating Relationship Or Engaged	15	11
Single	26	13
Socioeconomic Status		
$0-20,000	15	6
$21,000-40,000	29	12
$41,000-60,000	13	15
$61,000-80,000	11	3
>$80,000	14	8
Sexual Orientation		
Heterosexual	79	44
Homosexual	1	0
Bi-sexual	2	1
Strength of Religious Affiliation	M = 6.4 (SD = 3.2)	M = 5.4 (SD = 3.4)

Table 6

Endorsement of Items on the Sexual Experiences Survey

Items	Number of Participants (#Males & #Females)
#1 – been in a situation where someone else became so sexually aroused that you felt it was useless to stop him/her even though you did not want to have sexual intercourse	83 (20M &63F)
#2 –had sexual intercourse with someone even though you didn't really want to because he/she threatened to end your relationship otherwise	20 (4M & 16F)
#3 – had sexual intercourse with someone when you didn't really want to because you felt pressured by his/her continual arguments	59 (11M & 48F)
#4 – been in a situation where someone used some degree of physical force (twisting your arm, holding you down, etc.) to try to make you engage in kissing or petting when you didn't want to	52 (4M & 48F)
#5 – been in a situation where someone tried to get sexual intercourse with you when you didn't want to by threatening to use physical force (twisting your arm, holding you down, etc.) to try to make you engage in kissing or petting when you didn't want to	23 (3M & 20F)
#6 – been in a situation where someone used some degree of physical force (twisting your arm, holding you down, etc.) to try to get you to have sexual intercourse with him/her when you didn't want to, but for various reasons sexual intercourse did not occur	30 (1M & 29F)
#7 – been sexually assaulted	40 (3M & 37F)

Table 7

Descriptive Scores on Major Measures Differentiated by Recruitment Strategy

Measure	Subject Pool (N = 73) Mean (SD)	Flyers (N = 53) Mean (SD)	Personal Contact (N = 126) Mean (SD)
Rape Myth Scale	37.39 (15.70)	38.87 (19.01)	36.37 (17.31)
Male Rape Myth Scale	27.19 (10.61)	28.73 (14.35)	27.90 (11.66)
GBJWS	53.86 (14.05)	51.58 (13.10)	53.13 (13.58)
Sex-Role Egalitarianism Scale	79.64 (8.72)	79.27 (8.80)	78.81 (10.86)
Social Desirability Scale	48.51 (5.13)	47.55 (6.22)	47.87 (5.52)
Sexual Experiences Scale	1.38 (1.74)	1.45 (1.69)	1.02 (1.63)
Scenario A (FV/MP)			
Victim Blame	19.27 (12.71)	20.58 (14.88)	19.13 (13.80)
# of Negative Words	7.04 (6.33)	7.04 (5.66)	7.80 (7.51)
# of Positive Words	17.27 (9.75)	19.77 (8.52)	18.83 (9.43)
Scenario B (FV/FP)			
Victim Blame	21.58 (13.86)	19.87 (13.32)	20.66 (15.13)
# of Negative Words	8.54 (7.58)	8.00 (6.03)	9.00 (8.16)
# of Positive Words	15.97 (9.67)	18.00 (8.39)	18.01 (9.67)
Scenario C (MV/MP)			
Victim Blame	22.07 (14.60)	21.13 (14.17)	20.69 (14.97)
# of Negative Words	9.82 (8.01)	9.53 (6.91)	9.69 (8.16)
# of Positive Words	15.12 (9.77)	18.00 (9.01)	17.76 (9.78)
Scenario D (MV/FP)			
Victim Blame	24.55 (13.43)	23.81 (15.74)	23.68 (14.88)
# of Negative Words	10.25 (7.70)	9.77 (8.89)	10.65 (9.08)
# of Positive Words	14.40 (9.85)	17.04 (7.82)	16.92 (10.03)

Table 8

Hypothesis 1 Results – Relationship Between Just World Belief & Victim Blame

Scenario	Rape Scenario Questions		PAI (negative words)		PAI (positive words)	
	r	p	r	p	r	p
Scenario A (FV/MP)	.06	.35	.05	.41	-.20	.77
Scenario B (FV/FP)	.06	.32	.04	.55	.01	.99
Scenario C (MV/MP)	.06	.31	.12	.06	-.06	.33
Scenario D (MV/FP)	.11	.09	.09	.17	-.05	.47

Table 9

Hypothesis 1 Results – Relationship Between Victim Blame Measure and PAI

Scenario	Positive Words Selected		Negative Words Selected	
	Correlation (r)	P-value	Correlation (r)	P-value
Scenario A (FV/MP)	-.24	.000	.37	.000
Scenario B (FV/FP)	-.31	.000	.44	.000
Scenario C (MV/MP)	-.28	.000	.37	.000
Scenario D (MV/FP)	-.25	.000	.35	.000

Table 10

Hypothesis 1 Results – Social Desirability & Victim Blame

Scenario	Rape Scenario Questions		Positive Words Selected		Negative Words Selected	
	Correlation (r)	P-value	Correlation (r)	P-value	Correlation (r)	P-value
Scenario A (FV/MP)	-.12	.06	-.08	.19	-.03	.63
Scenario B (FV/FP)	.05	.41	.05	.47	.03	.63
Scenario C (MV/MP)	.01	.99	.05	.45	-.02	.71
Scenario D (MV/FP)	-.10	.12	.11	.08	-.07	.30

Hypothesis 1 Results – Social Desirability (high, medium, & low) & Victim Blame

Scenario	Rape Scenario Questions		Positive Words Selected		Negative Words Selected	
	F-value	P-value	F-value	P-value	F-value	P-value
Scenario A (FV/MP)	1.83	.16	.85	.43	1.13	.33
Scenario B (FV/FP)	.14	.87	.67	.51	.46	.63
Scenario C (MV/MP)	.03	.97	.34	.71	.64	.53
Scenario D (MV/FP)	1.63	.20	1.11	.33	2.44	.09

Table 11

Hypothesis 1 Results – Traditional Gender Norms & Victim Blame

Scenario	Rape Scenario Questions		Negative Words Selected		Positive Words Selected	
	Correlation (r)	P-value	Correlation (r)	P-value	Correlation (r)	P-value
Scenario A (FV/MP)	-.12	.06	-.18**	.01**	.03	.62
Scenario B (FV/FP)	-.18**	.01**	-.16*	.02*	.01	.95
Scenario C (MV/MP)	-.15*	.02*	-.28**	.000**	.07	.25
Scenario D (MV/FP)	-.20**	.01**	-.15*	.02*	.07	.31

Table 12

Hypothesis 2 Results – Perceived Similarity & Victim Blame

Scenario	Rape Scenario Questions		Negative Words Selected		Positive Words Selected	
	r	p	r	p	r	p
Scenario A (FV/MP)	-.04	.28	-.12	.30	.18**	.01**
Scenario B (FV/FP)	.07	.14	-.08	.09	.08	.21
Scenario C (MV/MP)	-.08	.10	.17**	.01**	.08	.23
Scenario D (MV/FP)	-.03	.33	-.07	.13	.13*	.04*

Table 13

Hypothesis 2 Results – Gender Differences in Victim Blame

	Rape Scenario Questions		Negative Words Selected		Positive Words Selected	
FEMALES	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Scenario A (FV/MP)	18.65	13.49	6.73*	6.59*	19.25	9.39
Scenario B (FV/FP)	19.99	14.36	8.07	7.44	17.82	9.72
Scenario C (MV/MP)	20.18	13.97	8.57**	7.01**	17.76	9.80
Scenario D (MV/FP)	23.16	14.10	9.94	8.60	16.57	9.46
**********	*******	*******	*******	*******	*******	*******
MALES						
Scenario A (FV/MP)	20.19	14.50	9.00*	7.07*	17.03	9.14
Scenario B (FV/FP)	22.50	14.33	9.97	7.47	16.50	9.03
Scenario C (MV/MP)	23.40	15.94	12.17**	8.96**	15.45	9.22
Scenario D (MV/FP)	25.76	15.61	11.30	8.71	15.42	9.89

Table 14

Hypothesis 2 Results – Evaluating the Relationship between History of Sexual Assault and Victim Blame

NO Sexual Assault History	Rape Scenario Questions		Negative Words Selected		Positive Words Selected	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Scenario A (FV/MP)	20.00*	14.08*	7.84*	6.91*	18.41	9.03
Scenario B (FV/FP)	21.67*	14.75*	9.05	7.72	17.41	9.23
Scenario C (MV/MP)	22.27*	14.86*	10.16*	7.82*	17.27	9.44
Scenario D (MV/FP)	25.23**	14.81**	10.95*	8.82*	16.25	9.41

Sexual Assault History	Rape Scenario Questions		Negative Words Selected		Positive Words Selected	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Scenario A (FV/MP)	14.63*	11.45*	5.38*	5.87*	19.25	10.96
Scenario B (FV/FP)	16.25*	11.33*	6.8	6.49	17.93	10.83
Scenario C (MV/MP)	15.65*	12.39*	7.50*	7.60*	16.23	10.62
Scenario D (MV/FP)	17.25**	11.65**	7.28*	6.98*	16.43	10.38

Table 15

Hypothesis 2 Results – Evaluating the Relationship between Nonphysical Forms of Sexual Assault and Victim Blame

	Rape Scenario Questions		Negative Words Selected		Positive Words Selected	
	t statistic	p-value	t statistic	p-value	t statistic	p-value
Scenario A (FV/MP)	-.53	.60	2.01*	.04*	-.10	.92
Scenario B (FV/FP)	.62	.54	1.26	.21	.46	.65
Scenario C (MV/MP)	.55	.59	1.86	.07	1.51	.13
Scenario D (MV/FP)	.66	.51	1.12	.26	1.82	.07

Hypothesis 2 Results – Evaluating the Relationship between Physical Forms of Sexual Assault and Victim Blame

	Rape Scenario Questions		Negative Words Selected		Positive Words Selected	
	t statistic	p-value	t statistic	p-value	t statistic	p-value
Scenario A (FV/MP)	2.04*	.04*	2.18*	.03*	-.07	.95
Scenario B (FV/FP)	1.66	.10	1.03	.31	.71	.48
Scenario C (MV/MP)	1.84	.07	1.41	.16	.80	.43
Scenario D (MV/FP)	1.61	.11	1.91	.06	1.10	.27

Table 16

Hypothesis 2 Results – Age & Victim Blame

	Rape Scenario Questions		Negative Words Selected		Positive Words Selected	
	F-value	P-value	F-value	P-value	F-value	P-value
Scenario A (FV/MP)	1.49	.21	.27	.90	2.99*	.02*
Scenario B (FV/FP)	4.69**	.001**	1.55	.19	2.49*	.04*
Scenario C (MV/MP)	5.15**	.001**	.87	.48	2.02	.09
Scenario D (MV/FP)	2.07	.09	1.45	.22	2.27	.06

Table 17

Hypothesis 2 Results – Group Differences between Age & Victim Blame in Scenario A (FV/MP)

Age	Rape Scenario Questions		Negative Words Selected		Positive Words Selected	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
18-22 (n = 87)	21.34	13.22	7.77	6.14	17.24	8.67
23-29 (n = 91)	17.60	13.56	6.84	6.46	17.51	9.90
30-39 (n = 29)	18.79	16.40	8.00	7.31	19.48	9.25
40-49 (n = 23)	15.04	12.09	7.57	9.35	22.91	9.48
50+ (n = 24)	21.17	14.34	7.46	7.31	22.13	7.90

Hypothesis 2 Results – Specific Group Differences between Age & Victim Blame in Scenario A (FV/MP)

Age	Age	Mean Difference in Number of Positive Words Selected
18-22 (n = 87)	23-29	-.26
	30-39	-2.24
	40-49	-5.67*
	50+	-4.88*
23-29 (n = 91)	18-22	.26
	30-29	-1.98
	40-49	-5.41*
	50+	-4.62*
30-39 (n = 29)	18-22	2.24
	23-29	1.98
	40-49	-3.43
	50+	-2.64
40-49 (n = 23)	18-22	5.67*
	23-29	5.41*
	30-39	3.43
	50+	.79
50+ (n = 24)	18-22	4.88*
	23-29	4.62*
	30-39	2.64
	40-49	-.79

Table 18

Hypothesis 2 Results – Group Differences between Age & Victim Blame in Scenario B (FV/FP)

Age	Rape Scenario Questions		Negative Words Selected		Positive Words Selected	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
18-22 (n = 87)	24.43	13.78	9.46	7.03	15.70	8.61
23-29 (n = 91)	17.34	13.12	7.47	7.35	17.14	10.58
30-39 (n = 29)	19.90	14.82	8.03	7.71	19.17	9.49
40-49 (n = 23)	15.48	11.38	8.41	8.97	22.27	7.49
50+ (n = 24)	26.46	18.33	11.21	8.45	18.08	8.83

Hypothesis 2 Results – Specific Group Differences between Age & Victim Blame in Scenario B (FV/FP) (Rape Scenario Questions)

Age	Age	Mean Difference in Rape Scenario Questions' Score
18-22 (n = 87)	23-29	7.08*
	30-39	4.25
	40-49	8.95*
	50+	-2.03
23-29 (n = 91)	18-22	-7.08*
	30-29	-2.55
	40-49	1.87
	50+	-9.11*
30-39 (n = 29)	18-22	-4.53
	23-29	2.55
	40-49	4.42
	50+	-6.56
40-49 (n = 23)	18-22	-8.95*
	23-29	-1.87
	30-39	-4.42
	50+	-10.98*
50+ (n = 24)	18-22	2.03
	23-29	9.11*
	30-39	6.56
	40-49	10.98*

Table 19

Hypothesis 2 Results – Specific Group Differences between Age & Victim Blame in Scenario B (FV/FP) (Positive Words Selected)

Age	Age	Mean Difference in Positive Words Selected
18-22 (n = 87)	23-29	-1.44
	30-39	-3.47
	40-49	-6.57*
	50+	-2.38
23-29 (n = 91)	18-22	1.44
	30-29	-2.03
	40-49	-5.13*
	50+	-.94
30-39 (n = 29)	18-22	3.47
	23-29	2.03
	40-49	-3.10
	50+	1.09
40-49 (n = 23)	18-22	6.57*
	23-29	5.13*
	30-39	3.10
	50+	4.19
50+ (n = 24)	18-22	2.38
	23-29	.94
	30-39	-1.09
	40-49	-4.19

Table 20

Hypothesis 2 Results – Group Differences between Age & Victim Blame in Scenario C (MV/MP)

Age	Rape Scenario Questions		Negative Words Selected		Positive Words Selected	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
18-22 (n = 87)	25.07	13.96	10.42	7.65	15.78	8.49
23-29 (n = 91)	16.91	13.22	8.65	8.39	16.79	11.18
30-39 (n = 29)	21.79	16.58	10.48	6.92	18.03	9.48
40-49 (n = 23)	16.74	14.45	8.81	7.87	22.24	7.86
50+ (n = 24)	26.75	15.23	10.92	7.34	16.74	7.94

Hypothesis 2 Results – Specific Group Differences between Age & Victim Blame in Scenario C (MV/MP) (Rape Scenario Questions)

Age	Age	Mean Difference in Rape Scenario Questions' Scores
18-22 (n = 87)	23-29	8.16*
	30-39	3.28
	40-49	8.33*
	50+	-1.68
23-29 (n = 91)	18-22	-8.16*
	30-29	-4.88
	40-49	.17
	50+	-9.84*
30-39 (n = 29)	18-22	-3.28
	23-29	4.88
	40-49	5.05
	50+	-4.96
40-49 (n = 23)	18-22	-8.33*
	23-29	-.17
	30-39	-5.05
	50+	-10.01*
50+ (n = 24)	18-22	1.68
	23-29	9.84*
	30-39	4.96
	40-49	10.01*

Table 21

Perceived Sexual Orientation of the Victims

Sexual Orientation	Number of Participants
Scenario A (Molly)	
Heterosexual	249
Homosexual	1
Bisexual	3
Scenario B (Angela)	
Heterosexual	49
Homosexual	155
Bisexual	48
Scenario C (Jason)	
Heterosexual	35
Homosexual	184
Bisexual	33
Scenario D (Andrew)	
Heterosexual	223
Homosexual	20
Bisexual	9

Table 22

Hypothesis 2 Results – Group Differences Noted in Scenario D when evaluating Relationship between Perceived Sexual Orientation and Victim Blame

	Rape Scenario Questions		Negative Words Selected		Positive Words Selected	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Heterosexual	23.02*	14.62*	9.87*	8.28*	17.02*	9.55*
Homosexual	30.25	13.26	12.65	10.84	11.95*	8.31*
Bisexual	33.33*	10.70*	14.89*	8.63*	9.40*	5.43*

Table 23

Hypothesis 3 Results – Correlations between Rape Myth Acceptance and Victim Blame

Scenario	Rape Scenario Questions		Negative Words Selected		Positive Words Selected	
	r	p	r	p	r	p
Scenario A (FV/MP)	.60	.000**	.31	.000**	-.20	.005**
Scenario B (FV/FP)	.59	.000**	.32	.000**	-.21	.001**
Scenario C (MV/MP)	.57	.000**	.34	.000**	-.23	.000**
Scenario D (MV/FP)	.50	.000**	.29	.000**	-.18	.004**

Hypothesis 3 Results – Correlations between Male Rape Myth Acceptance and Victim Blame

Scenario	Rape Scenario Questions		Negative Words Selected		Positive Words Selected	
	r	p	r	p	r	p
Scenario A (FV/MP)	.32	.000**	.25	.000**	-.19	.002**
Scenario B (FV/FP)	.38	.000**	.30	.000**	-.20	.001**
Scenario C (MV/MP)	.41	.000**	.35	.000**	-.24	.000**
Scenario D (MV/FP)	.49	.000**	.32	.000**	-.29	.000**

Table 24

Hypothesis 4 Results – Victim Blame Scores while considering Knowledge of Rape Law

Scenario	Right Definition		Wrong Definition		Broad Definition	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Scenario A (FV/MP)	16.87*	12.97*	26.55*	15.18*	20.55	13.10
Scenario B (FV/FP)	18.47*	13.63*	27.70*	16.88*	22.72	12.64
Scenario C (MV/MP)	18.95*	13.35*	27.70*	14.93*	23.40	16.12
Scenario D (MV/FP)	21.48*	13.71*	32.80*	15.15*	25.46	13.86

Figure Captions

Figure 1. Gender differences in victim blame scores as measured by Rape Scenario Questions.

Figure 2. Gender differences in victim blame scores as measured by the PAI; graphs provided for number of negative words selected and number of positive words selected.

Figure 3. Differences in victim blame as measured by Rape Scenario Questions when considering sexual assault history.

Figure 4. Differences in victim blame as measured by the PAI when considering sexual assault history.

Figure 5. Differences in victim blame as measured by Rape Scenario Questions when considering knowledge of the rape law.

Figure 1. Gender differences in victim blame scores as measured by Rape Scenario Questions.

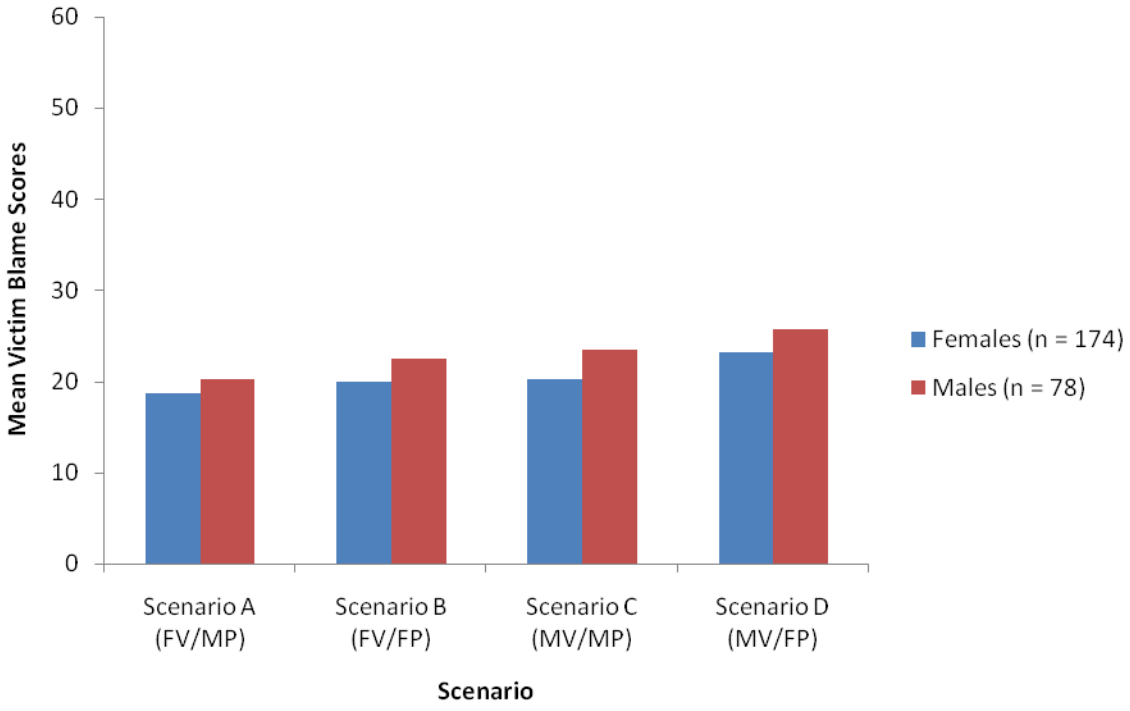
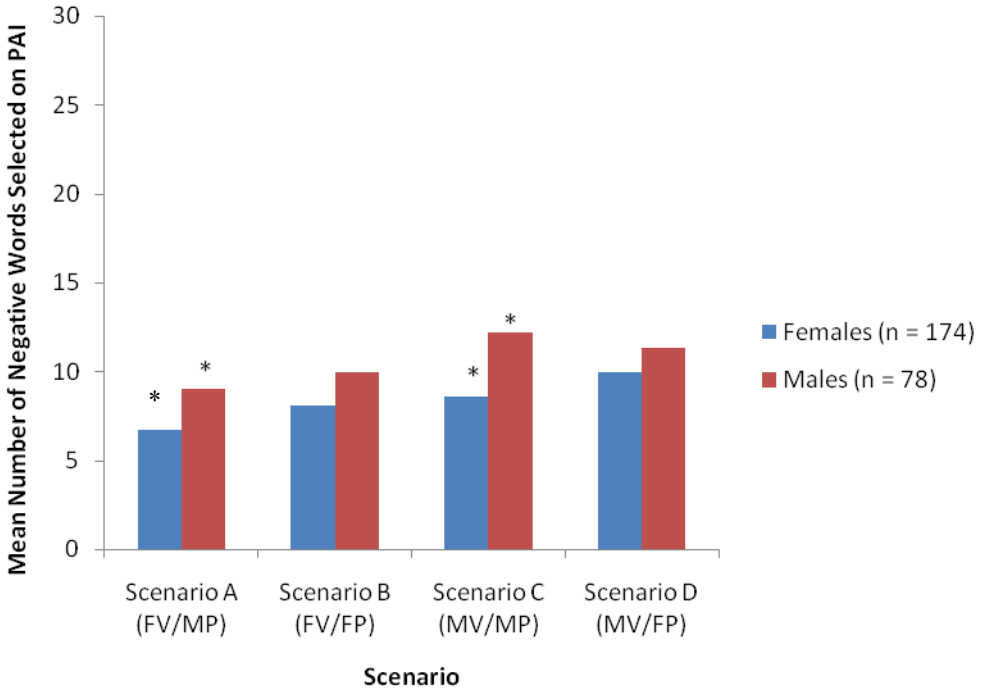


Figure 2. Gender differences in victim blame scores as measured by the PAI; graphs provided for number of negative words selected and number of positive words selected.



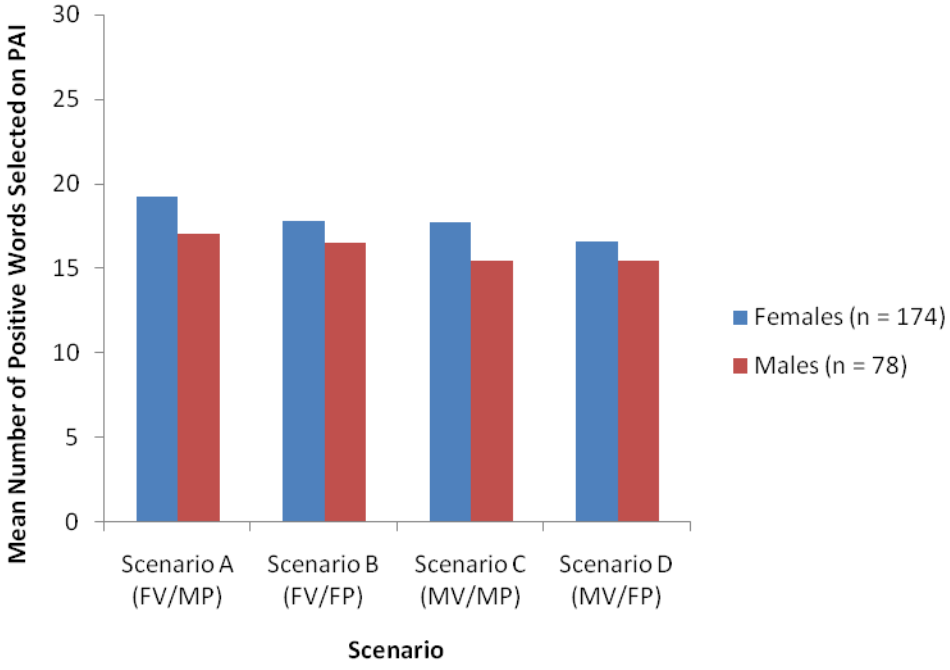


Figure 3. Differences in victim blame as measured by Rape Scenario Questions when considering sexual assault history.

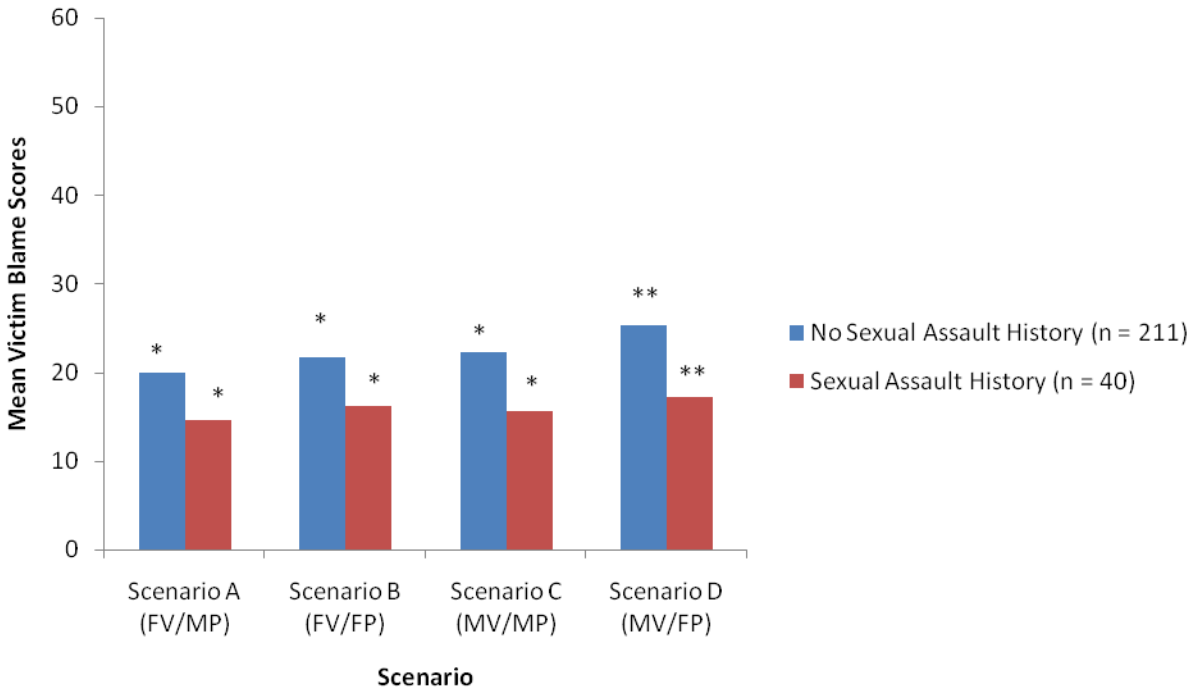


Figure 4. Differences in victim blame as measured by the PAI when considering sexual assault history.

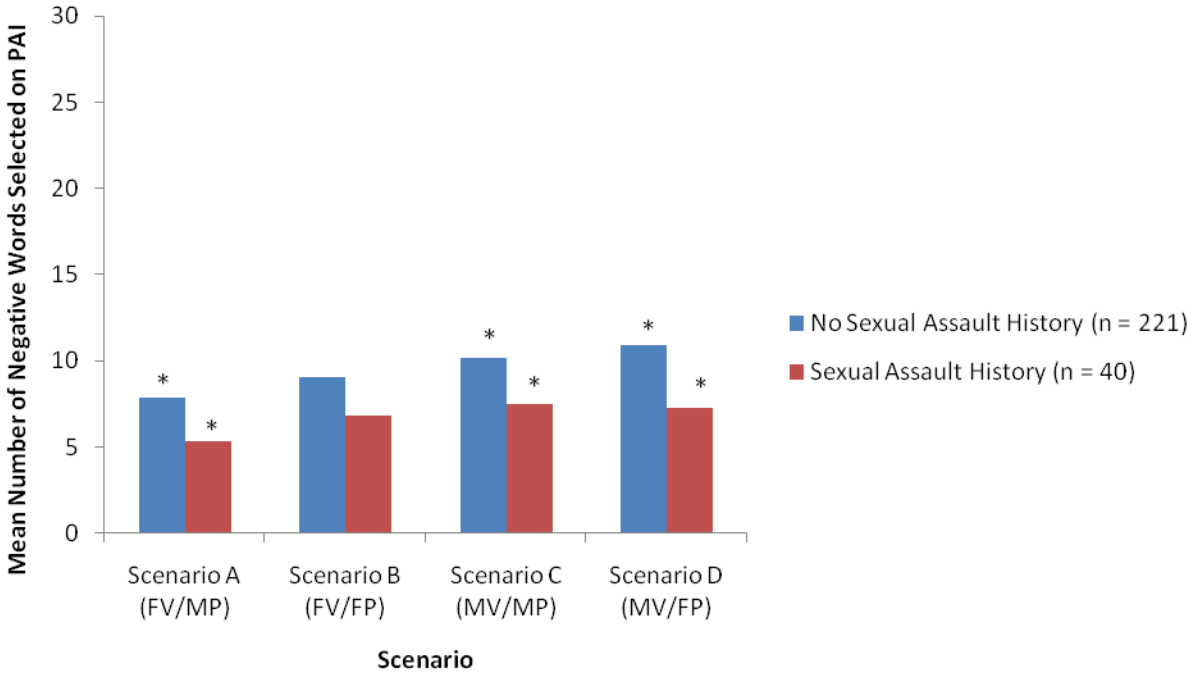


Figure 5. Differences in victim blame as measured by Rape Scenario Questions when considering knowledge of the rape law.