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Individual Difference Predictors of Undergraduate Men's Perceptions of Consent in College Campus Acquaintance Rape

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INTRODUCTION

- 1 in 5 women are affected by sexual violence at some point during their college career (Bureau of Justice Statistics 2015), and nearly 99% of sex offenders in single-victim incidents were male (Greenfeld, 1997)
- One factor that may be related to men's perpetration of acquaintance rape is a lack of awareness of the nature of consent in such sexual encounters. An understanding of the relationships between individual difference variables and perceptions of acquaintance rape scenarios may enable social scientists to identify college men "at risk" of perpetrating acquaintance rape for additional intervention and education programs.
- The present study examine participants' endorsement of male gender norms, their acceptance of rape myths, their self-reported sexual history, and their evaluations of a hypothetical acquaintance rape scenario

METHOD

Participants and Design

- $N = 71$ (out of a target final sample size of 150) male undergrads

Male Role Norms Inventory (MRNI) (Levant et al., 2010)

- Men who endorse stereotypical male gender norms are likely to believe that men should always be ready for sex and the president of the US should always be a man.
- 53 items, scored on a 7-point scale.

Acceptance of Modern Myths about Sexual Aggression (AMMSA) (Watson, 2016)

- Men who endorse modern rape myths are likely to believe that victims are at fault for being raped, that women ask for rape and that men have an excuse to rape
- 30 items, scored on a 7-point scale

Sexual Experiences Survey (SES) (Koss and Oros, 1985)

- Men who endorse modern rape myths are likely to believe that victims are at fault for being raped, that women ask for rape and that men have an excuse to rape
- 12 yes-no items.

Acquaintance Rape Scenario

- The scenario depicts an acquaintance rape scenario, and participants respond to questions attributing blame to either the victim or the perpetrator (e.g., consent, blame)

PRELIMINARY RESULTS

Self-Reported Acquaintance Rape

- 4% of respondents reported that they had sexually assaulted a woman in the past.

Factor Analysis

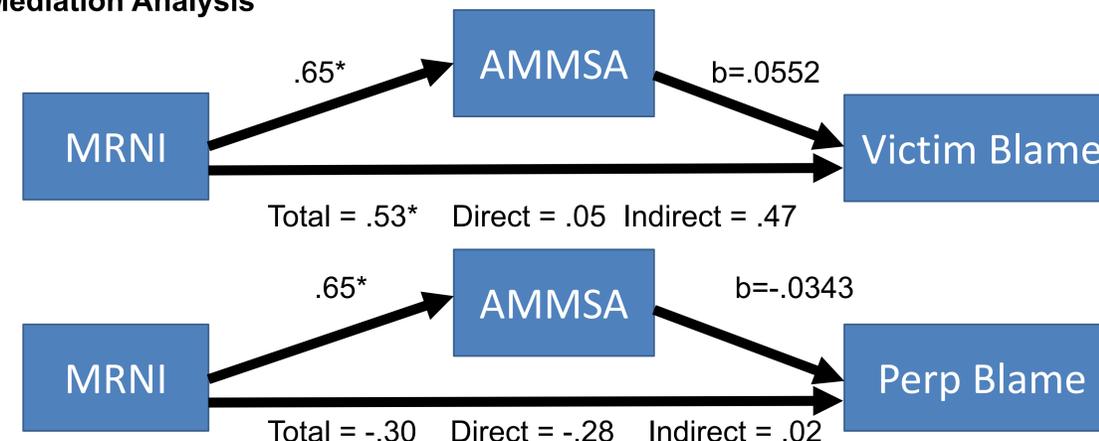
- A principle components factor analysis with Varimax rotation revealed two factors accounting for 58% of the variance on the 8 dependent measures. We averaged these items to create the Perpetrator Blame and Victim Blame scales, which were significantly negatively correlated, $r(69) = -.24, p = .046$.

Item	Perpetrator Blame	Victim Blame
It was clear that Sarah did not want to engage in sexual intercourse.	.738	.
Sarah stopped struggling because she changed her mind.	.735	.
Sarah should not have changed in front of Thomas.	.	.840
If Sarah didn't really want to engage in sexual intercourse, Thomas just misread the situation.	.	.730
Sarah granted consent for the sexual encounter.	.740	.
Thomas raped Sarah.	.894	.
Sarah's overall responsibility for the events in question.	.	.598
Thomas's overall responsibility for the events in question.	.552	.

Perceptions of Consent

- Approximately 8% of men reported that the victim in the scenario **granted consent** for the sexual encounter, and approximately 10% of men reported believing the encounter **did not constitute rape**.

Mediation Analysis



DISCUSSION

- Lisak and Miller (2002) found that 6.4% of men self-reported perpetrating sexual violence on college campuses. Our data are consistent with that estimate.
- Despite the small numbers of participants so far reporting they engaged in acquaintance rape (preventing formal statistical analysis at this stage), it is noteworthy that two-thirds of them believed the man reported that the victim in the scenario granted consent, and two-thirds believed the encounter did not constitute rape.
- As predicted, participants' who endorsed stereotypical male gender norms tended to place greater blame on the victim than those who did not endorse such norms; further, this relationship was mediated by endorsement of modern rape myths. Interestingly, endorsement of stereotypical male norms did not predict perpetrator blame.
- These data support the notion that victim and perpetrator blame are separate, but related constructs with different causal structure (e.g., Hammond et al., 2011).
- These differential patterns may reflect dissonance processes or social desirability effects.

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