Individual and Social Factors Related to Perceptions of Rape
by
Caitlin O’Brien-Masonis

A Doctoral Research Project
Submitted to the College of Psychology and Liberal Arts at
Florida Institute of Technology
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

Doctor of Psychology
In
Clinical psychology

Melbourne, Florida
March, 2018
We the undersigned committee hereby approve the attached Doctoral Research Project

Individual and Social Factors Related to Perceptions of Rape

By

Caitlin O’Brien-Masonis, M. A., M. S.

Victoria Follette, Ph.D.
Professor
School of Psychology
Committee Chair

Katrina Ellis, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
School of Psychology
Committee Member

Maria Lavooy, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
School of Psychology
Committee Member

John Frongillo, Ph.D
Assistant Professor
CoPLA Online Learning
Committee Member

Marybeth Kenkel, Ph.D
Professor and Dean
School of Psychology
Abstract

TITLE: Individual and Social Factors Related to Perceptions of Rape

AUTHOR: Caitlin O’Brien-Masonis, M.A., M.S.

MAJOR ADVISOR: Victoria Follette, Ph.D.

Ninety-two men, including twenty pairs of male friends, completed a series of self-report measures that sought to measure their levels of rape myth acceptance and asked men to estimate their friend’s level of rape myth acceptance. Further self-report measures assessed participants’ likelihood to intervene as bystanders, social and ethical risk taking behaviors, and definitions of rape as demonstrated through responses to questions about a hypothetical sexual assault. Analyses indicated that participants were moderately accurate in assessing their friend’s level of rape myth acceptance. Additionally, friends showed similar levels of rape myth acceptance. Level of rape myth acceptance was found to increase as likelihood for bystander intervention decreased. The accuracy of men in estimating their friend’s acceptance of rape myths and the similarity of their friend’s beliefs to their own suggests that men are aware of a socially normal level of rape myth acceptance. The relationship
of rape myth acceptance to bystander intervention behavior supports the need for sexual assault prevention education focused on reducing levels of rape myth acceptance.
Table of Contents

Abstract .........................................................................................................................................iii
List of Tables .................................................................................................................................vii
Acknowledgements .......................................................................................................................viii
Introduction ....................................................................................................................................1
Literature Review ............................................................................................................................4
  Rape Culture ...............................................................................................................................4
  Rape Myth Acceptance ...............................................................................................................6
  Rape Myth Acceptance in College Students .............................................................................10
  Social Norming Theory ..............................................................................................................12
  Social Risk .................................................................................................................................18
  Bystander Intervention ..............................................................................................................19
Hypotheses ....................................................................................................................................22
Methods .......................................................................................................................................24
  Recruitment ...............................................................................................................................24
  Procedures .................................................................................................................................25
  Measures ....................................................................................................................................26
  Participants .................................................................................................................................29
Results .........................................................................................................................................31
  Analysis ......................................................................................................................................31
  Findings ......................................................................................................................................31
Discussion ....................................................................................................................................40
Limitations .....................................................................................................................................45
Conclusions ...................................................................................................................................47
References ........................................................................................................49
Appendix A IRB approval ..................................................................................57
Appendix B Informed Consent ...........................................................................59
Appendix C Demographic Screening Questions ..............................................62
Appendix D Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale ...........................................64
Appendix E Social Risk Questionnaire ............................................................67
Appendix F Bystander Attitudes Scale- Revised ..............................................68
Appendix G Vignette ..........................................................................................70
## List of Tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Sample Demographic Characteristics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Descriptive Statistics on Major Variables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Descriptive Statistics for Vignette Responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Correlation Matrix for Vignette Responses and IRMA Scores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Correlation Matrix for Other Major Measures and Vignette Responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Correlation Among Vignette Variables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Assault and Rape Labels</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Acknowledgments

I would like to begin by thanking the victims and survivors of sexual violence, especially those who have bravely shared their stories through the media. I was particularly inspired by Emma Sulkowicz, Erica Kinsman, Emily Doe (Stanford), and all of the women involved in the documentary “The hunting ground”. Thank you to all the survivors I have had the pleasure of knowing, your strength gives me purpose.

I would also like thank my amazing classmates who supported and guided in this project. I would like to specifically thank: Damla Til for your encouragement, support, and for calming me down when I was freaking out; Jared Barrow for all of your technical help and wisdom; Alicia Kissinger-Knox for your research wisdom; and Emily Burch for going above and beyond to help me recruit! Thank you to the Freudian Sips for helping me cope one trivia night at a time. Thank you to Dr. Elmore for allowing me to begin this project of my own creation and to my committee for making this possible.

Thank you to my husband Alex who supported me every step of the way and gave me a shoulder to cry on. Thank you to my parents for all of the support, love, guidance, help recruiting, and last minute copy editing. Thank you to my mom for being an amazing role model and teaching me how to be a good psychologist. Thank you to my sister Sarah for teaching me the grammar things I never learned and for taking time away from her dissertation to encourage me and fix my improper commas! Thank you to all of my other wonderful family members for your love and support. Thank you to my family back at D.J.S. in Maryland for teaching me so much and sending me to graduate school a better professional. Special thanks to the lunch bunch, Katherine Hidish, Doug Powell, and all my fellow north county coworkers. Thank you to Dr. Weiner and the whole Clinical and Forensic Associates team for teaching me grace and compassion when working with even the most difficult clients.

Thank you to the many practicum supervisors who remained patient and helpful throughout this process especially: Alexandra Cedeno, Dr. Karle, Dr. Granda, and all of the amazing people I have had the privilege of working with in so many different settings. I would especially like to thank the staff of the mental health division of the Brevard County Detention Center who have become like family to
me. Thank you to Tricia Mattson for being a mentor and a friend as well as for welcoming me into your family.

Finally, thank you to everyone who has touched my life and supported me in this journey.

Love always,

Caitlin
Individual and Social Factors Related to Perceptions of Rape

Introduction

The issue of sexual assault on college campuses is a long standing public health problem (Carroll, Rosenstein, Foubert, Clark & Korenman, 2016; Locke & Mahalik, 2005; McDermott, Kilmartin, McKelvey & Kridle, 2015; McMahon, 2010; Saucier, Strain, Hockett & McManus, 2015). In the last 10 years, sexual assault on campus has become a focus of public awareness as the result of high profile cases and increased media attention. Currently, prevention efforts, especially in the form of educational programs for students, are the subject of increased research and institutional efforts. Researchers and educational programing have focused on specific factors to protect against assault such as educating women about the risk of being assaulted when intoxicated (Lindquist, 1999). Similarly, much attention has been given to identifying characteristics such as sexist attitudes, general attitudes, problem drinking, and personality characteristics that increase a man’s risk of perpetrating sexual assault (Chapleau, Oswald & Russel, 2007; Locke & Mahalik, 2005; Loh, Gidycz, Lobo & Luthra, 2005; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1995). Research has generally focused on characteristics of the perpetrators of assault, without giving sufficient attention to additional contextual factors. There is an increased agreement among researchers that individual and social/ cultural variables should be considered together in
developing prevention programs for institutional settings (Dardis, Murphy, Bill & Gidycz, 2015).

Researchers and activists have theorized that assaultive behavior is impacted by a range of societal attitudes. The concept of rape culture has been a particular area of focus in this literature. Rape culture is defined as the various attitudes, values, and messages that pervade society to minimize the impact of sexual aggression, sexualize women, and support excuses for sexual aggression (Fabiano, Perkins, Berkowitz, Linkenbach & Stark, 2003; McMahon, 2015). Rape culture also includes promoting sexual aggression through support for the objectification of women and minimization of the seriousness of sexually coercive behavior (Fabiano et al., 2003; McMahon, 2015).

Among college students it has been hypothesized that rape culture is reinforced by perceptions of rape myth acceptance (Dardis et al., 2015). Rape myths are inaccurate beliefs which minimize the seriousness of sexual assault and misdirect blame for sexual assault (Payne, Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1999). A student’s level of rape myth acceptance is theorized to be communicated differently depending upon the level of support the student perceives for rape myths among their peers (Boerin, Shehan & Akers, 1991; Fabiano et al., 2003). Dardis and colleagues (2015) suggest that students inaccurately assume that other students
hold a higher level of rape myth acceptance and, therefore, are more likely to adopt or communicate support for such beliefs.

The impact of rape myth acceptance on all members of the campus community can be understood through an examination of a cultural developmental model. Bronfenbrenner’s (1977) ecological systems theory lays out a framework for a developmental model of understanding individuals. Bronfenbrenner (1977) describes the different levels from which a person receives cultural messages as: the microsystem (family, peers, school, etc.), the mesosystem (interactions between members of the microsystem), the exosystem (mass media, neighbors, local politics, industry, etc.), and the macrosystem (attitudes of the culture). Beginning in adolescence and continuing into early adulthood, cultural norms are learned mostly from peers (Bronfenbrenner, 1977).

The transmission of cultural messages described by Bronfenbrenner (1977) can be related to the theory of social norming. Social norming theory suggests that people develop rules or guidelines for interacting with others based on the frequency of behaviors they observe (Berkowitz, 2003). Social norming goes beyond the social learning theory of Bandura (1977) to suggest that a range of beliefs about common behavior is used as the basis for all social behavior. Thus, if rape myth acceptance is seen as socially normal, it is more likely that an individual will express thoughts and belief that accept myths about rape. Research has
suggested that correcting students’ inaccurate perceptions of rape myth acceptance among peers/schoolmates can allow adjustment of a student’s socially normed views of sexual assault (Kilmartin et al., 2008).

**Literature Review**

**Rape Culture**

The exact origin of the term rape culture is debatable. Feminist author Susan Brownmiller’s (1975) groundbreaking book *Against our will: Men, women, and rape*, speaks of a rape supportive culture. Brownmiller’s description fits with the continuing conceptualization of rape culture as referring to numerous ways messages supporting or excusing sexual violence are expressed (Fabiano et al., 2003). Rape culture does not promote rape per se, but rather is a more subtle set of messages that over-sexualize women, minimize the significance of sexual assault, and supports excuses for sexual aggression (Fabiano et al., 2003). Rape culture also encompasses faulty generalizations about both perpetrators and victims (McMahon, 2010). These messages frequently depict women as being unwilling or unable to communicate their actual desire for sexual relations. Additionally, it suggested that women report sexual assault as a means of vengeance or to protect their reputations (Fabiano et al., 2003). Further, rape culture perpetuates the myth that men are unable to control their sexual urges (Fabiano et al., 2003).
Feminist and sociological scholars have described how gender dynamics formed the foundation of rape culture. Brownmiller (1975) focused heavily on the impact of sexism and perceived threats to power in motivating sexual assault. Further, Brownmiller (1975) examined a historical trend of males responding to threats to patriarchal power or efforts to assert patriarchal power over enemies as being based in sexual violence. Rape culture has persisted and Brownmiller (1975) suggests it is a way of supporting the large scale subjugation of women. Researchers have found that in cultures/societies with greater equality between the sexes and less dominance of one sex over the other, sexual assault is less common (Kalra & Bhugra, 2013). Some believe that as gender equality has increased, an adjustment period occurs during which rape culture, and increased frequency of sexual assault, serve as an expression of men’s anger. While Brownmiller’s (1975) ideas are considered controversial by some, her theory about patriarchal power is supported by many sociological, psychological, and feminist researchers such as Sanday (2007). Sexual assault on campus may be linked with male insecurities that are heightened by the increasingly equal role of women in higher education (Brownmiller, 1975; Sanday, 2007).

McMahon (2010) asserts that attacking the causes of sexual assault requires more than just intervening with likely or actual offenders; it also requires cultural
changes that transform the atmosphere in which assault occurs. Thus, in this view, preventing rape and sexual assault is a responsibility shared by all members of society. McMahon (2010) suggests that prevention efforts should focus on education as well as reducing risk related to individual factors and correcting faulty social norms about rape. Fabiano and colleagues (2003) argue that changing men’s perceptions about the acceptability of rape culture is vital to prevention. Challenging and changing thoughts tied to rape culture not only reduces an individual’s risk of committing assault but also engages that individual in being a proactive part of social change (Fabiano et al., 2003).

**Rape Myth Acceptance**

Rape myths can be seen as an indicator of rape culture (Fabiano et al., 2003). Building on Brownmiller’s (1975) work, researcher Martha Burt (1980) coined the term rape myth acceptance and was the first to develop a measure designed to assess it. Burt’s (1980) book defined rape myths as “prejudicial, stereotyped, or false beliefs about rape, rape victims, and rapists (p. 217).” Burt (1980) suggests that such beliefs create a climate that is “hostile to rape victims” (p. 217). Rape myth acceptance refers to beliefs about rape, beliefs about victims, and beliefs about perpetrators (McMahon, 2010). These erroneous beliefs focus on ideas about a victim’s responsibility for a sexual assault occurring or excusing,
justifying, or minimizing the actions of someone who sexually assaults another person (Payne et al., 1999). In addition to being an important component of rape culture, rape myth acceptance is a measurable construct which is commonly used in research and has been suggested as a predictive measure for sexually assaultive behavior. Loh and colleagues (2005) emphasize that the strongest predictor of sexually assaultive behavior is past assaultive behavior; however, levels of rape myth acceptance can help identify those who are at a greater risk of assaultive behavior.

As mentioned above, Burt’s (1980) introduction of the term rape myth acceptance was accompanied by her development of the Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (RMAS) which measures a subject’s level of rape myth acceptance. Payne and colleagues (1999) expanded upon the RMAS by developing the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance scale (IRMA) which includes seven subscales to measure empirically validated categories of rape myth acceptance. The IRMA scale, in particular, has become a mainstay of modern sexual assault research, especially with college students (Dardis et al., 2015). The utility of the IRMA scale is its ability to identify both a subjects’ overall acceptance of rape myths but also to identify which categories of rape myths are the most important for that individual. Specific subtypes of rape myth acceptance, as measured on the Illinois Rape Myth
Acceptance scale, are categorized as: “she asked for it (SA),” “she wanted it (WI),” “he didn’t mean to (MT),” “she lied (LI),” “rape is a trivial event (TE),” “rape is a deviant event (DE),” and “it wasn’t really rape (NR)” (Payne et. al., 1999).

Studies have consistently sought to determine if rape myth acceptance does predict perpetration of sexual assault. A strong correlation between perpetration of sexual assault and rape myth acceptance has been validated by longitudinal research (Dardis et al., 2015; Payne et al., 1999). Further studies (Dardis, et al., 2015; Eyssel, Bohner & Siebler, 2006) have supported high levels of rape myth acceptance as a predictor for sexually assaultive behavior and a measurable proclivity for rape behaviors. Rape myth acceptance is not the only important factor in a perpetrator’s behavior. For example, risk for assaultive behavior is amplified by several factors, most notably alcohol abuse and a large number of prior sexual partners (Thompson, Swartout & Koss, 2012).

Reducing rape myth acceptance is often a component of treatment protocols for sexual offenders. A substantial body of literature exists on sexual offenders, including classic works such as those by Groth (1989) and Salter (2003). Both Groth (1989) and Salter (2003) identify faulty beliefs, which represent rape myth acceptance, as important to the process of engaging in sexual assault. Groth (1989) notes the acceptance of various rape myths as aiding in the sexual objectification of
others that makes sexual assault psychologically easier for the offender. Salter (2003) has expanded knowledge of offenders by highlighting the role of rape myth acceptance in not only an offender’s development, but also in the assessment of risk for re-offending behaviors. Bumby (1996) developed measures to quantify the extent to which perpetrators of rape continue to endorse rape myths that can be used as an indicator of treatment progress.

In addition to identifying students at risk of assaultive behaviors, an individual’s level of rape myth acceptance can provide insight into contextual beliefs that support rape culture (Loh et al., 2005). Programs aimed at preventing sexual assault on campus have begun to recognize the value in reducing rape myth acceptance in all students (Fabiano et al., 2003). Changes to the overall level of rape myth acceptance among students create the sort of environmental change which erodes rape culture while increasing support for victims (Paul, Gray, Elhaj & Davis, 2009). With an increase in Title IX lawsuits, colleges are facing changes to their rape prevention/rape myth awareness education (Paludi, 2016; Sneed, 2015; US Department of Justice & US Department of Education, 2014). Also, many Title IX lawsuits argue that a rape myth accepting of toxic environment on campuses impairs the ability of students who have been victimized to gain equal access to education (Sneed, 2015).
Rape Myth Acceptance in College Students

College students’ overestimation of their peers’ support of rape myths appears consistent across universities (Paul et al., 2009). Hostile attitudes, as measured by the Hostile Sexism Scale, and similar measures towards women, were significantly related to perceptions of peers as holding rape supportive attitudes (Kilmartin et al., 2008; Swartout, 2013). Men, in general, have a higher level of rape myth acceptance than women (Paul et al., 2009). Holding traditional sex role stereotypes, having adversarial sexual beliefs, and being accepting of interpersonal violence are also found to be strongly linked with high levels of rape myth acceptance (Payne et al., 1999). These risk factors combine with alcohol use to heighten the risk of sexually assaultive behavior (Thompson et al., 2012).

Researchers suggest that sexism is an especially important belief system that helps to create rape myth acceptance in men (Chapleau et al., 2007). Hostile sexism and protective paternalism have both been found to be associated with rape myth acceptance; in both men and women (Chapleau et al., 2007). Protective paternalism is the idea that men, by virtue of having greater societal power, have the responsibility to protect women (Chapleau et al., 2007).

The impact of perceived attitudes has been found to be strengthened by the density of peer interactions, suggesting that peer groups with greater cohesion exert
more influence on the views of members (Swartout, 2013). Such findings support long held hypotheses about the importance of peer attitudes regarding aggression, especially in groups that are oriented around a traditional definition of masculinity (Carroll, Rosenstein, Foubert, Clark & Korenman, 2016; Swartout, 2013). For example, men who live in dormitories with only men, or who are part of social groups that include sexually aggressive men, are more likely to adopt both hyper masculine attitudes and attitudes that are supportive of rape myths, especially those linked with sexual aggression (Swartout, 2013). McMahon (2015) studied rape myth acceptance in high school athletes and non-athlete students finding an increased rate of rape myth acceptance among student athletes. McMahon (2015) suggests that the group dynamics of a sports team and personality traits of collegiate level athletes may be explanatory factors for her findings. The idea that male centered subcultures such as athletics, fraternities, and military groups are more prone to promote the acceptability of sexualized violence has been debated in the literature with findings both supporting and casting doubt on this association (Carroll et al., 2016; McMahon, 2015).

A person may not actually engage in behaviors such as sexual assault, but what they say to other people on the topic can perpetuate the norm that those behaviors are acceptable or that they are a part of the perceived majority who
subscribe to rape myths (Berkowitz, 2003). Further, appearing to accept rape myths reinforces inaccurate social norming that is damaging to the image of any community’s support for victims. The psychological wellbeing of victims of sexual assault has, for example, been found to be influenced by the victim’s perception of peers’ support for rape myths (Paul et al., 2009). Victims are more likely to report assaults when they perceive support from the campus community (Paul et al., 2009). Therefore, prevention and education efforts need to address the harm caused by statements and behaviors which imply acceptance of rape myths. Because of this, attention is increasingly being given not only to groups identified as high risk for social norms supporting sexual assault, but also student leaders whose expressed values are highly visible to peers.

Social Norming Theory

Social norms theory was first explored by social psychologist Sherif (1936) who experimentally demonstrated the use of implicit and explicit rules of individuals when interacting with others (Neighbors et al., 2010). Definitions of social norms were expanded further into two major categories: descriptive and injunctive (Neighbors et al., 2010). Descriptive social norms focus on the prevalence of a behavior as perceived by an individual. Thus it is theorized that people are impacted by how common they believe actions or beliefs are among
others (Neighbors et al., 2010). Social psychology research has shown people will change their vocalized opinions to align with another’s views, even clearly incorrect views, in a social setting (Asch, 1965). Asch (1965) asked research subjects to rate which of several lines was the longest of the group, sharing their answers out loud in front of a group of strangers. The strangers in Asch’s study were research confederates who consistently agreed upon wrong answers in order to pressure subjects to change their answers. The tendency of normal people to change their expressed views to fit with those of their peers means talk about rape myth acceptance is likely to affect perceptions of social normality.

Researchers have suggested a person’s level of rape myth acceptance is formed, in large part, based on social norming (Dardis et al., 2015). One theory holds that the origin of a person’s rape myth acceptance is personal beliefs that the person believes others share (Eyssel et al., 2006). The assumption that others think as the subject does is described as social norming anchored to the subject. Conversely, a person’s level of rape myth acceptance may be altered by learning of what others believe through social interactions (Eyssel et al., 2006). The beliefs of others changing a person’s own beliefs suggest the anchoring of that person’s beliefs in social norms. Using the principle of social norming, interventions have been designed to correct people’s perceptions of the universality of certain
behaviors. For example, social norming intervention techniques have been widely
documented as successful for addressing drinking behaviors (Henry, Kobus &
Schoeny, 2011; Neighbors et al., 2010). Research consistently finds that
adolescents and young adults over estimate the prevalence of problematic behaviors
such as alcohol use or rape myth acceptance (Neighbors et al., 2010). For example,
the inaccurate belief that alcohol use/abuse is widespread among adolescents can
predict the likelihood of adolescents engaging in drinking behaviors. Neighbors
and colleagues (2010) reference the efficacy of correcting erroneous beliefs about
teen drinking achieved by educating adolescents about the true prevalence of
alcohol use in their peer group. In their assessment of social norming theory with
intimate partner violence, Neighbors and colleagues (2010) also found that men
who overestimate the prevalence of intimate partner violence were more likely to
participate in such behaviors. In addition, measures of the degree to which
participants believed various violent intimate partner behaviors were common were
correlated with follow up measures of ongoing intimate partner violence
perpetrated by participants. Neighbors and colleagues’ (2010) findings suggests
that not only is inaccurate beliefs about the social normality of a behavior related to
the possible perpetration of such behavior, but that the level of over estimation can
influence the level of engagement in such behaviors. The strength of the social
norms’ influence held true for sexually assaultive behaviors among participants separate from other elements of intimate partner violence (Neighbors et al., 2010).

Meta-analyses suggest that peer risk factors influence risk for teenage dating violence (Garthe, Sullivan & McDaniel, 2017). The importance given to peer risk factors support the hypothesis that interpersonal violence, such as dating violence, can be increased by peer support for violent behavior. Garthe and colleagues (2017) found that across studies it appears dating violence, peer aggression, and peer antisocial behaviors transfer not only between one’s individual relationships, but may also transfer between peers. These findings (Garthe et al., 2017) suggest that all members of a social group are at higher risk for relationship violence if one member of the group engages in dating violence or other forms of relationship violence. This builds on the transfer of aggressive behaviors through social learning in the notable work on role modeling by Bandura (Bandura, 1977; Bartol & Bartol, 2005). These principles may also hold true for transfer of sexually aggressive behaviors.

To better examine the specifics of social norming related to rape myth acceptance Dardis and colleagues (2015) and Payne and colleagues (1999) have attempted to measure the degree to which college students believe that other students endorse rape myths. Typically researchers have asked students to rate
their agreement with statements that are indicative of rape myth acceptance and then rate their perception of how much other students would agree with those statements (Payne et al., 1999). A major limitation to this line of inquiry is that such inquiries rely on students’ conceptions of a typical student, which is not clearly defined to them. Students may rely on a stereotype that they do not commonly see in their own interactions. Grounding estimates in a real person increases the information available to students in formulating their response to survey items (Dardis et al., 2015). Further, students’ perceptions of social norms may be more salient relative to a friend than to a hypothetical person (Dardis et al., 2015).

In order to overcome methodological limitations, Dardis and colleagues (2015) asked participants to enroll in the study with a friend so that they could report on their own rape myth acceptance and estimate their friend’s level of rape myth acceptance. Findings indicated a moderate to low level of accuracy in men’s predictions of their friend’s rape myth acceptance (Dardis et al., 2015). The question then returns to: what anchoring point are subjects using? Essentially, is the erroneous anchoring point connected to overgeneralization of one's beliefs or, as described above, a skewed perception of the behaviors of others? Prinstein and Dodge (2008) argue that individuals tend to affiliate with likeminded peers. As
such, Prinsten and Dodge (2008) find that individuals with high levels of rape myth acceptance, and even rapists, are prone to socialize with others who endorse rape myths and are theoretically at higher risk of committing a sexual assault. Dardis and colleagues (2015) considered the anchoring variable and found in an additional data set that rapists do not typically associate with other rapists, nor are those who endorse several rape myths more likely to socialize with others who have similar rape myth acceptance.

Researchers have found that fear of rejection from peers prevents some men from correcting the sexist or rape myth endorsing attitudes expressed by peers (Kilmartin et al., 2008). Thus, the inaccurate social norm of rape myth acceptance proliferates. Kilmartin and colleagues (2008) describe sexist and rape supportive beliefs as creating “toxic masculinity” and assert that this “toxic masculinity” is partly created by the common over estimation of rape myth acceptance in peers (Kilmartin et al., 2008). The general belief that peers subscribe to rape myth acceptance combines with the negative influence of inaccurate perceptions of others to create social norming (Kilmartin et al., 2008). Social norming theory explains why the faulty beliefs are preserved. Many college men endorse some rape myths (Kilmartin et al., 2008).
Social Risk

Behaviors, whether prosocial or antisocial, are impacted by a person’s concern, or lack of concern, about how others will evaluate their behavior, presentation, and other public expressions (Leary, 1983). The extent to which a person fears negative evaluation by others affects the likelihood that person will engage in only commonly accepted social behaviors (Leary, 1983). In order to better understand how people make decisions about what behavior will be socially appropriate, and how much they are concerned about this appropriateness, studies have used different measures to examine a factor known as social risk (Weber, Blais & Betz, 2002). Social risk instruments measure the risk associated with actions in the community (Weber et al., 2002). College students have been found to be inconsistent in their risk-taking across different categories of risk such as financial, social, ethical, and health risks (Weber et al., 2002). Social risk is unique because it is not impacted by gender (Weber et al., 2002). Typically, social risk measures are part of extensive risk attitudes measures that aim to predict decisions a person might make across domains such as a tendency towards rule abiding behavior, aversion to financial risks like investing, or aversion to health risks like smoking (Weber et al., 2002).
Social risk measures could offer utility in trying to determine if patterns of social risk propensity correlate with bystander behavior. If forms of bystander intervention are considered socially risky, then risk averse students will be less likely to intervene. Perceptions of a social consensus around rape myth acceptance might impact the frequency of bystander intervention due to its social risk. Because social norming and expressions of a person’s adherence to rape myths are considered to be part of rape culture, establishing how those concepts link with general patterns of social risk perception would allow a better understanding of the social dynamics of rape culture.

**Bystander Intervention**

A large body of literature exists about bystander intervention. The failure of numerous people to intervene in the murder of Kitty Genovese in 1964 provided a catalyst for the study of why bystanders do or do not intervene (Zimbardo, 2007). This line of research expanded to examine related questions such as what increases or decreases the likelihood of a bystander to intervene. Bystander intervention is the concept that others who are a witness to, or in some way aware of, another person being in danger, especially of being the victim of some sort of violence, will take some action to intervene to protect the victim (McMahon, 2015; Zimbardo, 2007). This can take many forms from stepping in to fight off an attacker, to
calling authorities about a situation occurring in the moment, or reporting knowledge of an assault that has already taken place (McMahon, 2015). A comprehensive review of this literature is outside the scope of the current study; however, in studying how to prevent sexual assault, researchers have focused on possible bystander intervention (Gidycz, Orchowski & Berkowitz, 2011; McMahon, 2015). In addition to using general knowledge about bystander intervention, such as the decreased likelihood of witnesses to intervene if several other bystanders are present, many studies have sought to determine if training or education can increase the rate at which people intervene to stop sexual assault (Kilmartin et al., 2008). Kilmartin and colleagues (2008) pursued a line of research that aims to provide bystander intervention education to students who are most likely to be in high risk situations. Similar studies have aimed at empowering students with leadership qualities to become more aware of risky situations and how to intervene before, during, or after an assault (Gidycz et al., 2011; McMahon, 2015).

Measures of bystander intervention have become a mainstay of the sexual assault literature because they capture an important prevention/intervention point (Gidycz et al., 2011). Beyond direct intervention in sexual assault, scholars such as
McMahon (2010) have examined the value of students intervening in conversation to dispute sexist or rape myth accepting ideas.

Literature about bystander intervention has a long and emotional history; however, here the conversation about bystander intervention is circumscribed to its direct relationship with perceived social risk in reporting sexually assaultive behavior (Zimbardo, 2007). Researchers have suggested that higher rates of rape myth acceptance could contribute to the reduced likelihood of students to intervene (McMahon, 2015). For example, student athletes have been found to be less willing to intervene than students who are not athletes, especially after assaults (McMahon, 2015). A study on exposure to sports media by Hust and colleagues (2013) found that exposure to sports media results in less endorsement of bystander intervention supportive attitudes in sexual assault situations. If something as simple as watching sports and sports related programing is enough to impact bystander behaviors, the cultural messages prevalent on college campuses pose a potentially significant impact on student’s willingness to intervene as a bystander (Hust et al., 2013). Bystander intervention includes assessment of the willingness of an individual to support the victims of sexual assault.

Students with higher levels of rape myth acceptance were also found to be less likely to intervene as a bystander, with likelihood to intervene decreased
further if the student didn’t know the person being victimized (McMahon, 2010). Of all the categories of rape myth acceptance, those who endorsed items representing the “it wasn’t really rape (NR)” category appeared to be least likely to intervene as a bystander, resulting from their failure to label actions by others as rape (McMahon, 2010). Similar categories of rape myth acceptance such as “she asked for it (SA)” and “he didn’t mean to (MT)” also represented beliefs correlated with lower endorsement of willingness to intervene as a bystander (McMahon, 2010). Men were found to underestimate the willingness of other men to intervene (Fabiano et al., 2003). These underestimations may represent a social norm for non-intervention and as such a reinforcement of the need for men to remain distant from discussions or actions relating to sexual assault.

**Hypotheses**

The aims of this research are to examine rape myth acceptance and how social norming may factor in understanding campus attitudes on rape. In addition, issues related to social risk and attitudes about bystander supportive behavior were examined. Further, how well responses to questions based on a hypothetical rape scenario were associated with scores on previously validated measures were examined. Specifically, the current study assessed the social norming of rape myth acceptance in friendship dyads as a way to provide an increased understanding of
the social dynamics of rape culture. The use of friend dyads allowed for assessing the accuracy of a peer’s level of rape myth acceptance.

Participants’ level of rape myth acceptance was also assessed in relation to the participant’s own general views about social risk, attitudes about bystander intervention, and the participant’s reported assessment of variables related to defining rape. Both validated assessment measures and a hypothetical rape vignette were used to explore the relationship of vignette responses in measuring rape myth acceptance and bystander attitudes. The following hypotheses were examined:

1. Individuals will rate their friend as having higher levels of rape myth acceptance than themselves. Individuals will be inaccurate in estimating their friend’s true level of rape myth acceptance.

2. High levels of rape myth acceptance (IRMA scores) will be negatively correlated with attitudes linked to bystander intervention.

3. Social risk taking will be correlated with attitudes linked to bystander intervention; such that, individuals with higher levels of social risk taking will be more likely to endorse willingness to intervene as a bystander.

4. Each participant’s level of rape myth acceptance (IRMA score) overall, and in specific categories (IRMA subscales), will be consistent with their
response to questions relating to a hypothetical rape scenario. Specifically, a correlation will be found among IRMA scores and the hypothetical rape vignette ratings for items such as labeling the situation rape, willingness to assist in reporting a sexual assault, and the importance of victim behaviors, including alcohol consumption, in estimating consent.

Methods

Recruitment

Approval was obtained from the Florida Institute of Technology Institutional Review Board prior to the commencement of recruitment (see Appendix A). Male students attending the Florida Institute of Technology (FIT), a medium size private university in the southeastern United States, were recruited from undergraduate psychology classes, through on campus recruitment flyer distribution, via online/ email list serve recruitment, and through the FIT forum email system. Additional participants were either recruited to the study by emails to Psi Chi advisors who solicited participants, Facebook posts, via friends attending FIT, or by friends associated with the researcher.

Recruitment materials specified the requirement that each participant had to be at least 18 years of age, male, and willing to sign a consent form (see Appendix B) prior to participation. Participants enrolled in the study were asked to recruit a
close male friend who would be willing complete the study with them. Participants who did not have another participant complete the study with them were included in some analyses, but excluded from portions of the analysis requiring comparison between members of a pair. Participants were given either extra credit or entered to win one of four $25 Visa gift cards as compensation for their involvement in the study. Assessment measures were completed via an online survey program, Qualtrics, which used codes provided by email to link the responses of both members of the friendship dyad, while de-identifying the participants.

**Procedures**

Recruitment materials directed participants to the study website where they completed the informed consent (Appendix B). Participants completed demographic information and one self-report measure. Then participants provided information to link their responses with those of a friend. Participants completed other self-report measures and responded to follow up questions about a vignette that were designed to assess the participant’s definition of rape, consideration of key areas of rape myth acceptance in responding to a rape situation, and their anticipated willingness to encourage a rape victim to report a rape to law enforcement. Following the participant’s completion of the study measures, an email was sent to the identified friend requesting that he participate in the study.
Measures

Demographic questionnaire. Each participant completed a demographic questionnaire developed for this study. Participants were asked to give their age, racial or ethnic background, and confirm their ability to complete the study in English. In addition, participants were assessed for educational level, whether they were an international student, whether they were a member of a school organization, whether they were a member of a sanctioned athletics team, and whether they were a member of a fraternity. Finally, they reported what sexual assault awareness education they remembered receiving from their university.

Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance scale. This measure assesses level of rape myth acceptance. The Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance (IRMA) Scale is one of the most widely used measures in the rape myth research literature. The IRMA employs a Likert scale to measure agreement with rape myths (Dardis et al., 2015; Payne et al., 1999). The IRMA in its full version is short, simple to administer, psychometrically sound, and is used with enough regularity to be considered a standard in the measurement of rape myth acceptance. The IRMA does not allow for neutral responses. It consists of 45 statements which the respondent rates from 1 (strongly disagree with the statement) to 7 (strongly agree with the statement) (Payne et al., 1999). Items include statements such as “When girls go to parties
wearing slutty clothes, they are asking for trouble” and “If both people are drunk, it can’t be rape” (Payne et. al., 1999, p. 49). With an alpha coefficient of .93 and test retest reliability of .90; the IRMA has good psychometric reliability (Payne et. al., 1999). The IRMA also includes seven subscales which reflect specific subcategories of rape myth acceptance which are: she asked for it (SA), it wasn’t really rape (NR), he didn’t mean to (MT), she wanted it (WI), she lied (LI), rape is a trivial event (TE) and rape is a deviant event (DE) (Payne et. al., 1999). With subscale alpha coefficients ranging from .74 (he didn’t mean to) to .84 (she asked for it, she wanted it, she lied), each subscale and the overall measure are psychometrically reliable with good content validity (Payne et. al., 1999).

**Social risk questionnaire.** In order to determine a respondent’s estimated likelihood of engaging in behaviors which entail social risk, the social decisions and ethical decisions subscales of the Risk-Attitude Scale were used (Weber et al., 2002). The Cronbach’s alpha for the risk perceptions ethical subscale is .84 and .71 for the social subscale, showing reasonable reliability (Weber et. al., 2002). Participants’ likelihood to engage in different behaviors was measured on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (not at all risky) to 5 (extremely risky) to rate behaviors such as “Arguing with a friend about an issue on which he or she has a very different
opinion” and “Having an affair with a married man or woman” (Weber et. al., 2002, p. 288-289).

**Bystander Attitude Scale- Revised.** The Bystander Attitude Scale, Revised (BAS-R) was used to assess the likelihood of a student intervening in a situation involving a potential sexual assault (McMahon, 2010). The 16 statements cover possible interventions before, during, or after a sexual assault (McMahon, 2010). Additionally, items examined the willingness of a participant to challenge a peer who was using language which is degrading or derogatory of women (McMahon, 2010). The participants’ answers on a Likert scale of 1 (not likely) to 5 (extremely likely) measured willingness to engage in described behaviors, for example “Challenge a friend who made a sexist joke” (McMahon, 2010, p. 6). The language for this scale was specifically developed to assess attitudes in college students (McMahon, 2010). The focus in this study was on behaviors after the assault and support for the victim.

**Sexual assault vignette.** A hypothetical vignette describing a somewhat ambiguous sexual encounter was developed for this study. It was adapted from an instrument developed by Engle and Follette (unpublished work, 2017). The vignette was written to describe an incident that legally constitutes sexual assault; however, there were several variables from the literature that could impact how
participants might rate the event. Specifically, the vignette introduced elements including the victim being intoxicated at the time of the offense and telling the perpetrator “no” that she did not want to have sex. Follow up questions assessed how the participant would respond to vignette items, including if he believed an assault occurred, if he would advise the friend to report the assault to campus security or law enforcement, and his level of concern for social backlash stemming from supporting the victim.

**Participants**

Table 1 presents sample characteristics on all participant demographics. Participants who did not complete a full IRMA and demographic measures were excluded from analysis. A small percentage of participants were excluded from some analyses due to the participants having not completed all measures. Participants were 92 men including 20 pairs of friends. The mean age was 27.17 years old (range of 18-67) with 64.1% being between ages 18 and 25. These men were mostly white (75.3%) and 8.6% identified as international students. Approximately one third were graduate students. The majority of participants attended the Florida Institute of Technology with other students reporting attending Johns Hopkins University (n=8), University of Central Florida (n=4), University of
Maryland \((n=3)\), Towson University \((n=2)\), other colleges (nursing schools, \(n=2\)), and some who declined to specify which school they attend.

Table 1

*Sample Demographic Characteristics*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>(n) (%)</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>(n) (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>English as a first language</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>59 (64.1%)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>84 (90.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25+</td>
<td>33 (35.9%)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>8 (8.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Education about sexual assault</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>70 (75.3%)</td>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>64 (68.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>2 (2.2%)</td>
<td>Prevention</td>
<td>55 (59.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino/a</td>
<td>7 (7.6%)</td>
<td>Title IX</td>
<td>60 (64.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>3 (3.3%)</td>
<td>School policies</td>
<td>55 (59.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander</td>
<td>2 (2.2%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biracial</td>
<td>7 (7.6%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>School activities/status</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>17 (18.3%)</td>
<td>International student</td>
<td>8 (8.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>14 (15.1%)</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>31 (33.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>14 (15.1%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>7 (7.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>14 (15.1%)</td>
<td>organization</td>
<td>16 (17.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Student</td>
<td>33 (35.5%)</td>
<td>Athletics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fraternity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: All percentages do not add up to 100% because some items allowed endorsement of more than one answer.
Results

Analysis

Data were downloaded from Qualtrics, examined for missing variables, coded and then analyzed using SPSS 24th edition. Participants who were part of a complete pair of friends were sorted and analyzed separately from the full response set on specific analyses. Each member of these pairs had their actual IRMA score correlated with their predicted score to determine the accuracy of participants in predicting their friend’s score. A non-parametric Spearman’s correlation was calculated between all major variables and key demographic variables.

Findings

Due to the presence of nontraditional age students in the sample (35.9% of sample between ages 26 and 67), correlational analyses were conducted to determine if age was significantly related to scores on any of the measures used. Older age was related to lower levels of rape myth acceptance, ($r = -.206$, $n = 92$, $p = .049$). Age did not significantly relate to participants’ estimate of their friend’s rape myth acceptance. Additionally, age was not significantly correlated with any other measure used in the study.
As shown in Table 2, participants in this study were determined to have a level of rape myth acceptance consistent with group norms established by Payne and colleges (1999). The relationship between friends’ responses to the rape myth acceptance scale were moderately similar to one another ($r= .416$, $n=37$, $p=.05$) suggesting a common level of rape myth acceptance between members of the friend pair. Participants’ estimates of their friends’ level of rape myth acceptance were moderately correlated to the friends’ actual scores ($r=.432$, $n=37$, $p=.008$), implying reasonable accuracy in estimating the friends’ beliefs about rape myths. Participants estimates of their friends scores were strongly correlated with their own scores ($r=.866$, $n=37$, $p<.001$) suggesting estimates were based on participant’s own beliefs more so than knowledge of their friends actual beliefs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>% complete</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
<th>Mean of previously recorded sample (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rape myth acceptance</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1.05-4.02</td>
<td>2.05 (.81)</td>
<td>2.70 (.08)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated friend score</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>76.1</td>
<td>1.00-4.00</td>
<td>2.03 (.94)</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical risk taking</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>76.1</td>
<td>2.50-5.00</td>
<td>3.73 (.64)</td>
<td>2.32 (.81)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social risk taking</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>76.1</td>
<td>1.25-4.25</td>
<td>2.68 (.57)</td>
<td>3.49 (.58)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bystander intervention</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>2.25-5.50</td>
<td>3.91 (.60)</td>
<td>3.27 (.69)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

72.8% ($n=67$) completed the vignette items
The participants in this study reported a level of willingness to intervene in situations involving sexism or sexual assault at a rate consistent with established group norms (see Table 2). As predicted, increasing levels of rape myth acceptance were accompanied by decreasing reported willingness to intervene in sexist or potential sexual assault situations ($r = -0.379, p = 0.001$).

Participants demonstrated a level of self-reported ethical and social risk taking consistent with previously recorded samples (see Table 2). The participants’ self-reported willingness to intervene in a sexist or sexual assault situation increased along with reported willingness to take a risk in social situations ($r = 0.306, n = 69, p = 0.002$). Willingness to take ethical risks was not found to be correlated with participants’ willingness to intervene in sexist or sexually assaultive situations.

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics for Vignette Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
<th>High score means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Victim desire the encounter</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>1.39 (0.83)</td>
<td>Desired encounter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of consent</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>1.36 (0.77)</td>
<td>Definitely consented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of alcohol consumption</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>1-7</td>
<td>3.31 (1.95)</td>
<td>Very important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of not “fighting back”</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>1-7</td>
<td>2.51 (1.91)</td>
<td>Very important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was this rape</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>1-7</td>
<td>6.18 (1.37)</td>
<td>Definitely rape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness to encourage reporting</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>2-7</td>
<td>6.03 (1.26)</td>
<td>Would encourage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victim was unclear about consent</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>1-7</td>
<td>6.33 (1.33)</td>
<td>Was clear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting victim</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>1-7</td>
<td>6.09 (1.60)</td>
<td>Would support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victim responsibility for event</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>1.54 (1.11)</td>
<td>Victim responsible</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All items had a possible response range from 1 to 7.
An exploratory analysis evaluated the relationship of vignette items and standardized measures; the findings are shown in Table 5. Responses to several questions about the rape vignette were found to be related to measures of rape myth acceptance. The consistency of vignette responses with responses on standardized measures implies the vignette questions were assessing concepts similar to those assessed by the standardized measures (see Table 4 and 5). Average responses to each vignette question can be found in Table 3 along with explanations of scores. Examination of means and standard deviation on each question suggests that participants responded in a manner that was consistent with legal standards. Specifically, participants’ indicated that the victim did not want to engage in the sexual encounter, did not consent, and the encounter was rape. Participants reported that they would encourage reporting of the assault, the victim was clear in her refusal to engage in sex, they would support the victim, and that the male was responsible for the assault.

Higher rates of accepting rape myths were correlated with the following: increasing estimates of the victim having consented to the sexual encounter, assigning greater importance to the victim’s alcohol consumption as a factor when judging the nature of the sexual encounter as rape or not, rating greater importance to the victim not physically fighting back as a factor in judging the encounter as rape or not, and attributing blame for the sexual encounter to the victim. As
predicted, participants’ ratings of the hypothetical situation as rape increased as their overall level of rape myth acceptance decreased. Increasing willingness to encourage the victim to report the assault, estimates of the victim’s clarity in refusing the sexual encounter, and ratings of willingness to support the victim regardless of social consequences were all correlated with decreasing acceptance of rape myths. Details of each correlation can be found in Table 4 as well as correlations between vignette responses and sub-categories of rape myth acceptance. Analyses of subscales of the IRMA should be reviewed with caution, as the psychometrics of each subscale has not been fully investigated. However, it is interesting to note some trends. For example, believing the victim wanted the sexual encounter was associated with viewing rape as a trivial event. Participants were more likely to incorrectly label the situation as not rape if they also indicated considering the victim not physically fighting the assailant to be an important factor in their judgment of the sexual encounter. As ratings of the vignette scenario as clearly rape increased, likelihood to believe victims instigated being assaulted decrease. Rating the victim as clear in her refusal to engage in sex increased as endorsements of rape as a deviant event decreased. Seeing the victim as more responsible for the sexual encounter was related to increases in overall level of rape myth acceptance, to believing women are likely to lie about rape, to seeing rape as
a deviant event, and to incorrectly judging situations as not rape. These findings are consistent with the conceptual basis for set of ideas described.

Table 4

*Correlation Matrix for Vignette Responses and IRMA Scores*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>IRMA</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>WI</th>
<th>MT</th>
<th>TE</th>
<th>LI</th>
<th>DE</th>
<th>NR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>V1</td>
<td>.215</td>
<td>.202</td>
<td>.258*</td>
<td>.019</td>
<td>.433**</td>
<td>.211</td>
<td>.204</td>
<td>.336**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V2</td>
<td>.313*</td>
<td>.249*</td>
<td>.278*</td>
<td>.155</td>
<td>.322**</td>
<td>.347**</td>
<td>.297*</td>
<td>.248*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V3</td>
<td>.285*</td>
<td>.258*</td>
<td>.167</td>
<td>.174</td>
<td>.308*</td>
<td>.193</td>
<td>.245*</td>
<td>.188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V4</td>
<td>.371**</td>
<td>.350**</td>
<td>.260*</td>
<td>.279*</td>
<td>.294*</td>
<td>.324**</td>
<td>.214</td>
<td>.443**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V5</td>
<td>-.387**</td>
<td>-.457**</td>
<td>-.211</td>
<td>-.355**</td>
<td>-.278*</td>
<td>-.250*</td>
<td>-.285*</td>
<td>-.260*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V6</td>
<td>-.257*</td>
<td>-.258*</td>
<td>-.159</td>
<td>-.153</td>
<td>-.313*</td>
<td>-.234</td>
<td>-.236</td>
<td>-.192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V7</td>
<td>-.391**</td>
<td>-.348**</td>
<td>-.256*</td>
<td>-.233</td>
<td>-.306*</td>
<td>-.380**</td>
<td>-.406**</td>
<td>-.221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V8</td>
<td>-.364**</td>
<td>-.242*</td>
<td>-.324**</td>
<td>-.317**</td>
<td>-.336**</td>
<td>-.371**</td>
<td>-.224</td>
<td>-.394**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V9</td>
<td>.412**</td>
<td>.360**</td>
<td>.252*</td>
<td>.191</td>
<td>.361**</td>
<td>.430**</td>
<td>.423**</td>
<td>.422**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p = .05, **p = .001

*a = Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance (IRMA) scale total score, b = IRMA subscale “she asked for it”, c = IRMA subscale “she wanted it”, d = IRMA subscale “he didn’t mean to”, e = IRMA subscale “rape is a trivial event”, f = IRMA subscale “she lied”, g = IRMA subscale “rape is a deviant event, h = IRMA subscale “it wasn’t really rape”

1 = Vignette item “to what degree do you think Jane wanted the sex”, 2 = Vignette item “to what degree did she consent”, 3 = Vignette item “how important was her alcohol consumption”, 4 = Vignette item “how important was her lack of physical resistance”, 5 = Vignette item “to what degree would you call this rape”, 6 = Vignette item “would you advise Jane to report the event”, 7 = Vignette item “do you think Jane was unclear in saying ‘no’”, 8 = Vignette item “would you worry about social consequences for supporting Jane”, 9 = Vignette item “who was most at fault for this event”
A participant’s self-reported likelihood to intervene in sexist or sexually assaultive situations (bystander intervention) was significantly correlated with several responses to questions about the rape vignette. Increasing ratings of willingness to engage in bystander intervention was correlated with the following: increasing ratings of the scenario as rape (scale: 1- “definitely not rape” to 7- “definitely rape”), increasing ratings of the victims’ clarity when refusing the sexual encounter, and increasing willingness to support the victim despite potential social consequences. Correlations examining responses to vignette items can be found in Table 5.

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlation Matrix for Other Major Measures and Vignette Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethical risk taking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V1 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V2 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V3 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V4 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V5 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V6 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V7 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V8 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V9 9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p = .05, **p = .001

1 = Vignette item “to what degree do you think Jane wanted the sex”, 2 = Vignette item “to what degree did she consent”, 3 = Vignette item “how important was her alcohol consumption”, 4 = Vignette item “how important was her lack of physical resistance”, 5 = Vignette item “to what degree would you call this rape”, 6 = Vignette item “would you advise Jane to report the event”, 7 = Vignette item “do you think Jane was unclear in saying ‘no’”, 8 = Vignette item “would you worry about social consequences for supporting Jane”, 9 = Vignette item “who was most at fault for this event”
Assigning greater importance to the victim’s alcohol consumption increased along with participants’ ratings of their own social risk taking. The importance of the victim’s lack of physical resistance was correlated to participants’ ratings of themselves as being more willing to take ethical risks with both ratings increasing. Because of the exploratory nature of these findings they were limited and should be interpreted cautiously.

A correlation matrix was constructed to examine the relationship between vignette items; findings can be found in Table 6. Conceptually similar questions showed moderate to high concordance. Ratings of the hypothetical victim’s level of consent was linked to most other items which were focused on elements of the victim’s behavior such as her clarity in saying “no” or her alcohol consumption. The majority of participants (87.7%) rated the rape scenario as rape (see Table 7). Ninety one percent of participants anticipated a potential lack of proof as being a reason the victim may not want to report the assault.
Table 6

*Correlation Among Vignette Variables*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>V1</th>
<th>V2</th>
<th>V3</th>
<th>V4</th>
<th>V5</th>
<th>V6</th>
<th>V7</th>
<th>V8</th>
<th>V9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>V1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.593**</td>
<td>.130</td>
<td>.411**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.519**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.277*</td>
<td>.497**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.519**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.373**</td>
<td>-1.171</td>
<td>.219</td>
<td>.206</td>
<td>-2.61*</td>
<td>.253*</td>
<td>.421**</td>
<td>.559**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.453**</td>
<td>.374**</td>
<td>.463**</td>
<td>.562**</td>
<td>.405**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.577**</td>
<td>.698**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.669**</td>
<td>.411**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.336*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.475**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p = .05, **p = .001

V1 = Vignette item “to what degree do you think Jane wanted the sex”, V2 = Vignette item “to what degree did she consent”, V3 = Vignette item “how important was her alcohol consumption”, V4 = Vignette item “how important was her lack of physical resistance”, V5 = Vignette item “to what degree would you call this rape”, V6 = Vignette item “would you advise Jane to report the event”, V7 = Vignette item “do you think Jane was unclear in saying ‘no’”, V8 = Vignette item “would you worry about social consequences for supporting Jane”, V9 = Vignette item “who was most at fault for this event”
Table 7

Assault and Rape Labels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>n (%)</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>n (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>V10 Potential reasons for not reporting</td>
<td></td>
<td>V11 label of the event</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assault</td>
<td></td>
<td>Casual sex</td>
<td>2 (2.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not being believed</td>
<td>43 (64.2%)</td>
<td>Date rape</td>
<td>13 (17.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being labeled a slut</td>
<td>61 (91%)</td>
<td>Rape</td>
<td>51 (69.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not enough proof</td>
<td>53 (79.1%)</td>
<td>Misunderstanding</td>
<td>7 (9.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being labeled a liar</td>
<td>8 (11.9%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoying the sex</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: All percentages do not add up to 100% because some items allowed endorsement of more than one answer.

Discussion

Rape on college campuses continues to be a serious problem (Carroll et al., 2016; McMahon, 2010). One facet of interest is rape culture and rape myth acceptance. The impact of rape culture and ongoing rape myth acceptance is possible, in part, due to the suggested commonality of rape myth acceptance. Social norming literature has suggested that continued acceptance of harmful beliefs is partially supported by the idea that such harmful beliefs, such as acceptance of rape myths, are acceptable because they are commonly held (Dardis et al., 2015). The level of rape myth acceptance reported by participants in this study was similar to levels found in other studies. The current study found that, consistent with other
research findings, participants were moderately accurate in their ability to predict their friend’s level of rape myth acceptance. Further, both members of the friend pair demonstrated similar levels of rape myth acceptance. Taken together, the similarity of rape myth acceptance in friend pairs and the ability of friends to predict one another’s levels of rape myth acceptance suggest a correspondence of rape myth accepting beliefs between friends.

Dissimilar to other studies, the current study examined real pairs of friends instead of asking about hypothetical peers. By using friends whose beliefs could be verified, the accuracy of participants’ estimates of the beliefs of others could be empirically confirmed. Additionally, the similarity of beliefs about rape between friends found in the current study raises questions about the meaning of such concordance. It is possible that people are more likely to associate with likeminded peers; however, further research is needed to test such a hypothesis. The commonality of a general level of rape myth acceptance both between friends and between samples from different studies such as Payne and colleagues (1999) raises larger questions about the prevalence of rape myth acceptance.

On an individual level, participants in the current study with higher levels of rape myth acceptance were less likely to report willingness to object to sexist statements or to intervene in situations which involve sexual assault. The relationship between rape myth acceptance and willingness to take actions to
reduce sexism and assault is consistent with the findings of other researchers (McMahon, 2010). Levels of rape myth acceptance may then have a potential impact on bystander intervention behaviors. Those who accept rape myths may be less likely to identify the inappropriateness of a sexual encounter. Failing to identify a situation as inappropriate or potentially involving sexual assault may factor into an individual’s decision not to intervene.

Individuals who indicate that they are more likely to take social risks report they are more willing to intervene as a bystander. Willingness to intervene as a bystander is related to willingness to be seen as challenging restrictive social norms and being willing to express a difference of opinions or stating a potentially unpopular truth. Part of improving the campus climate requires people taking a stand against the promoting and endorsing of myths about rape and against sexist language.

As hypothesized, reported willingness to take social risks was associated with increased willingness to intervene in sexist or sexually assaultive scenarios. Taken together, willingness to take social risks and level of rape myth acceptance appear to be factors in reported inclination to challenge sexist or sexual exploitive situations. It is hoped that changing people’s faulty ideas about rape would make them more likely to intervene.
The main findings of this study regarding willingness to intervene as a bystander and levels of rape myth acceptance between friends relate to efforts to understand how rape culture is maintained. Friends with similar beliefs are less likely to challenge one another as they share the same belief. A common level of rape myth acceptance impairs possible bystander intervention. The intervention of members of the campus community to challenge rape myths is a goal of many prevention programs.

The majority of participants in the current study were able to judge the minimally ambiguous scenario as rape. Because the rape scenario conformed to legal definitions of rape, it was hoped that participants would correctly label it as rape. Despite the clear identification of the scenario as rape, participants still showed variation in response to other questions about the scenario. The value of using a scenario or vignette is illustrated by the ability to assess responses specific to the scenario and/or subtleties not well measured with structured measures. For example, participants rated their willingness to support the victim of a minimally ambiguous scenario in the current study. Reported willingness to support the victim was lower in participants with higher levels of rape myth acceptance, even though the majority of participants correctly labeled the situation as rape. Further research using multiple scenarios could further assess situational variables that may impact participants’ willingness to support the victim.
The practical value in identifying students’ acceptance of rape myths is to help develop prevention programing that addresses and decreases rape myth acceptance. Prevention and education efforts aimed at correcting social norms are most effective when there is an inaccurate social norm to address (Kilmartin et al., 2008). Instead of educating students about their peers not having high levels of rape myth acceptance, education should focus on correcting commonly held rape myths such as those that support labeling a sexual act as consensual when it is not. Efforts should continue to focus on providing students with facts about sexual assault with a potential additional part of the education addressing beliefs held by classmates.

While it remains valuable to identify men and groups where rates of rape myth acceptance are higher than average, all students need to be educated and empowered to intervene in situations which have the potential to result in sexual assault. Educating students about the importance of correcting rape myths expressed by others allows for reinforcement of concepts introduced in educational programing in every day scenarios. There are different levels of intervention from speaking up to acting to prevent an assault. All levels of possible intervention are needed and provide important topics for education and prevention efforts.

Research has found some effectiveness in increasing rates of bystander intervention to prevent or stop sexual assault (Gidycz et al., 2011; McMahon, 2015). Colleges increasingly strive to meet suggested standards for both
administrative protocols for alleged sexual assaults and prevention/education about sexual assault for all students (Paludi, 2016; U.S. Department of Justice & U.S. Department of Education, 2014). Such large scale, on campus educational campaigns are becoming more oriented towards increasing bystander intervention and educating college students about rape myths.

The timing of this study should also be considered in relation to findings of peer agreement about rape myths. Recent social, media, and political events, such as widespread reporting on sexual assault in the entertainment industry, were an unexpected occurrence. Presently, men are facing less tolerance of sexual assault and more information about its prevalence and the damage it causes victims. As the public’s norms about the rates of rape, characteristics of offenders, characteristics of victims, and likelihood of perpetrators being held accountable are being challenged it remains unclear what impact this new information will have on rape myth acceptance. It is not yet known how the new information will impact the culture.

Limitations

As with all research, this study has limitations that should be considered. Students who were willing to participate in this study and who completed enough items for their data to be used may differ from other students. Further, the need to recruit a friend to also participate in the study likely dissuaded some participants,
especially those whose social risk aversion could make asking a friend to complete the study uncomfortable. Even so, this discomfort was needed to further explore an area that has not been adequately addressed in research.

The difficulty in recruiting participants for the study may have posed a limit to the findings of this study. Recruiting friend pairs proved more difficult than anticipated. Both the timing and method of recruitment factored into this difficulty. Additionally, the amount of time for data collection was limited by the late initiation of participant recruitment. The use of an online survey format for this study was intended to make participation in the study more convenient, but also may have made it harder to ensure that both members of the friend dyad would complete the survey. The online format was also intended to minimize the impact of the researcher’s gender on participant responses.

Participant attrition, combined with technical difficulties with the online survey, led to the researcher’s inability to address these issues and prevent subject loss. Some participants did contact the researcher with questions and issues, while others made errors that showed their lack of attention to instructions. Many participants failed to follow directions which increased the rate of problems encountered completing the study or linking results between friend pairs.

Difficulty in recruiting participants prevented the analysis of data by demographic factors. Specifically, the lack of representation of international
students, student athletes, fraternity members, and student members of on campus organizations prevented the analysis of group membership on responses. While the university from which participants were recruited has an ethnically diverse student population, that diversity was not represented in this sample.

Conclusions

Rape culture, as demonstrated through rape myth acceptance, is an important element of life on college campuses. The findings of this study suggest that male college students are accurate in estimating their friend’s level of rape myth acceptance. Moreover, there appears to be a common level of rape myth acceptance shared by friends. The appearance of a common level of rape myth acceptance strengthens the argument that a social norm of rape myth acceptance exists and is known to members of the student body. This study adds support to the negative relationship, which has previously been established, between willingness to intervene as a bystander and overall level of rape myth acceptance. As levels of rape myth acceptance increase, reported willingness to intervene as a bystander decreases. The relationship between rape myth acceptance and bystander intervention reinforces the key role rape myth acceptance plays in students’ willingness to challenge elements of rape culture. Ongoing research remains a necessary part of creating and improving sexual assault prevention education for
college students. Prevention and education programing can support an on campus culture that is supportive of intervention to reduce sexual assault and supportive of victims of sexual assault.
References


U.S. Department of Justice & U.S. Department of Education. (2014). Dear

Colleagues letter.

https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201401-title-vi.html


APPENDIX A

IRB approval

Notice of Exempt Review Status

Certificate of Clearance for Human Participants Research

Principal Investigator: Caitlin O'Brien-Masonis

Date: November 20, 2017

IRB Number: 17-178

Study Title: Individual and Social Factors Related to Perceptions of Rape

Your research protocol was reviewed and approved by the IRB Chairperson. Per federal regulations, 45 CFR 46.101, your study has been determined to be minimal risk for human subjects and exempt from 45 CFR46 federal regulations. The Exempt determination is valid indefinitely. Substantive changes to the approved exempt research must be requested and approved prior to their initiation. Investigators may request proposed changes by submitting a Revision Request form found on the IRB website.

Acceptance of this study is based on your agreement to abide by the policies and procedures of Florida Institute of Technology’s Human Research Protection Program (http://web2.fit.edu/crm/irb/) and does not replace any other approvals that may be required.

All data, which may include signed consent form documents, must be retained in a secure location for a minimum of three years (six if HIPAA applies) past the completion of this research. Any links to the identification of participants should be maintained on a password-protected computer if electronic information is used. Access to data is limited to authorized individuals listed as key study personnel.

The category for which exempt status has been determined for this protocol is as follows:
2. Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior so long as confidentiality is maintained.

a. Information is recorded in such a manner that the subject cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the participant and/or

b. Subject’s responses, if know outside the research would not reasonably place the subject at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subject’s financial standing, employability, or reputation.
Appendix B

Informed Consent

Please read this consent document carefully before you decide to participate in this study. The researcher will answer any questions before you sign this form.

Study Title: Social factors and sexual relationships on college campuses

Purpose of the Study:
You are being asked to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to investigate beliefs about sexual behavior.

Procedures:
If you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked to spend 30 to 60 minutes reading and responding to several questions. You will be asked to complete a questionnaire about your beliefs about sexual behaviors and then complete a separate complete questionnaire based on how you believe your friend, who is also participating in this study, will answer each question. Next, you will be asked to complete several questionnaires about how you would respond to different situations. Finally, you will read a story about a sexual event and answer follow up questions about your thoughts about the scenario described.

Potential Risks of Participating:
Although we do not anticipate any problems, it is possible that you may feel mildly upset for a brief period of time during and after your participation in this study. After you have completed the questionnaires (or decide to withdraw) you will be given a Title IX hand out. You may discontinue participation at any point during the study.

Potential Benefits of Participating:
It is possible that there may be no direct benefits to you during or following the completion of this study. However, the results of this study may provide useful information about undergraduate attitudes and experiences related to sexual activity.

Compensation:
The compensation we can offer you is two points of extra credit (through SONA) in your designated undergraduate course. Or if you are not eligible for extra credit you will be entered into a drawing for one of four $25 Amazon.com gift cards. There will be no cost to you for participating in this study.

**Confidentiality:**
No identifying information will be stored with your responses to questions. Responses will be given an anonymous participant identification number that will not be recorded on your consent form. No identifying information will be recorded with your responses. Responses will be recorded in electronic files and will be kept in a password secured file on a password-protected computer. Again, there will be no identifying information stored with responses. Data will be destroyed after 10 years.

**Voluntary participation:**
Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. There is no penalty for not participating. You may also refuse to answer any of the questions we ask you.

**Right to withdraw from the study:**
You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence.

**Whom to contact if you have questions about the study:**
- Dr. Victoria M. Follette
  150 West University Blvd.
  Melbourne, FL 32901
  Email: vfollette@fit.edu
  Phone: 321.674.8105

- Caitlin O’Brien-Masonis,
  150 West University Blvd.
  Melbourne, FL 32901
  Email: cobrienmason2014@my.fit.edu
  Phone: 301-742-2910

**Whom to contact about your rights as a research participant in the study:**
- Dr. Lisa Steelman, IRB Chairperson
  150 West University Blvd.
  Melbourne, FL 32901
  Email: lsteelma@fit.edu
  Phone: 321.674.8104

**Agreement:**
Pressing the accept button below indicates that you agree to participate in this research
and that: 1) You have read and understand the information provided above; 2) You are over 18 years old; 3) You understand that participation is voluntary and that refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled; and, 4) You understand that you are free to discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

I have read the preceding information and understand its meaning. By choosing "YES": I am agreeing to proceed with the survey and participate in the study. However, by choosing "NO": I am signifying that I do not want to proceed with the survey nor participate in the study. * Thank you again for your participation in this survey and we hope that you will consider participating in future surveys. O Yes  O No
APPENDIX C
Demographic Screening Questions

Please fill out the following questions about yourself:

1. Please indicate your age in years. _________

2. What is your race/ethnicity?
   a) White/Caucasian White
   b) Black/African American Black
   c) Hispanic
   d) Latino
   e) Asian
   f) Pacific Islander
   g) Native American
   h) Biracial
   i) Other Specify ( _____________)

3. Please identify your education level?
   a) College freshman
   b) College sophomore
   c) College junior
   d) College Senior
   e) Graduate student

4. Please list your primary language ___________. If not English please mark Yes _____ or No____ to indicate if you feel you are proficient in reading English.

5. Are you an international student? Yes_____ or No_____

6. Do you remember receiving any of the following:
   a) Sexual assault awareness education at college orientation
   b) Sexual assault prevention
   c) Education about Title IX
d) Education about the schools sexual harassment policies

7. Are you a member of an athletic team or organization through the school? Yes (team)_____ , yes (organization) ______ or No _____

8. Are you a member of a fraternity? Yes ____ or No______
APPENDIX D

Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale

Rate each of the following statements with a number from 1 (strongly disagree with the statement) to 7 (strongly agree with the statement)

1. If a woman is raped while she is drunk, she is at least somewhat responsible for letting things get out of control. _____

2. Although most women wouldn’t admit it, they generally find being physically forced into sex a real “turn-on.” _____

3. When men rape, it is because of their strong desire for sex. _____

4. If a woman is willing to “make out” with a guy, then it’s no big deal if he goes a little further and has sex. _____

5. Women who are caught having an illicit affair sometimes claim that it was rape. _____

6. Newspapers should not release the name of a rape victim to the public. _____

7. Many so-called rape victims are actually women who had sex and “changed their minds” afterwards. _____

8. Many women secretly desire to be raped. _____

9. Rape mainly occurs on the “bad” side of town. _____

10. Usually, it is only women who do things like hang out in bars and sleep around that are raped. _____

11. Most rapists are not caught by the police. _____

12. If a woman doesn’t physically fight back, you can’t really say that it was rape. _____

13. Men from nice middle-class homes almost never rape. _____

14. Rape isn’t as big a problem as some feminists would like people to think. _____
15. When women go around wearing low-cut tops or short skirts, they’re just asking for trouble. 

16. Rape accusations are often used as a way of getting back at men. 

17. A rape probably didn’t happen if the woman has no bruises or marks. 

18. Many women find being forced to have sex very arousing. 

19. If a woman goes home with a man she doesn’t know, it is her own fault if she is raped. 

20. Rapists are usually sexually frustrated individuals. 

21. All women should have access to self-defense classes. 

22. It is usually only women who dress suggestively that are raped. 

23. Some women prefer to have sex forced on them so they don’t have to feel guilty about it. 

24. If the rapist doesn’t have a weapon, you really can’t call it a rape. 

25. When a woman is a sexual tease, eventually she is going to get into trouble. 

26. Being raped isn’t as bad as being mugged and beaten. 

27. Rape is unlikely to happen in the woman’s own familiar neighborhood. 

28. In reality, women are almost never raped by their boyfriends. 

29. Women tend to exaggerate how much rape affects them. 

30. When a man is very sexually aroused, he may not even realize that the woman is resisting. 

31. Many women lead a man on and then they cry rape. 

32. It is preferable that a female police officer conduct the questioning when a woman reports a rape. 

33. A lot of times, women who claim they were raped just have emotional problems.
34. If a woman doesn’t physically resist sex—even when protesting verbally—it really can’t be considered rape. _____

35. Rape almost never happens in the woman’s own home. _____

36. A woman who ‘‘teases’’ men deserves anything that might happen. _____

37. When women are raped, it’s often because the way they said ‘‘no’’ was ambiguous. _____

38. If a woman isn’t a virgin, then it shouldn’t be a big deal if her date forces her to have sex. _____

39. Men don’t usually intend to force sex on a woman, but sometimes they get too sexually carried away. _____

40. This society should devote more effort to preventing rape. _____

41. A woman who dresses in skimpy clothes should not be surprised if a man tries to force her to have sex. _____

42. Rape happens when a man’s sex drive gets out of control. _____

43. A woman who goes to the home or apartment of a man on the first date is implying that she wants to have sex. _____

44. Many women actually enjoy sex after the guy uses a little force. _____

45. If a woman claims to have been raped but has no bruises or scrapes, she probably shouldn’t be taken too seriously. _____
APPENDIX E

Social Risk questionnaire

For each of the following statements, please indicate how risky you perceive each situation. Provide a rating from 1 to 5, using the following scale:

1  Not at all risky
2  Moderately risky
3  Extremely risky

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Admitting that your tastes are different from those of your friends.</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arguing with a friend who has a very different opinion on an issue.</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking your boss for a raise.</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buying an illegal drug for your own use.</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheating a fair amount on your income tax.</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheating on an exam.</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dating someone that you are working with.</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deciding to share an apartment with someone you don’t know well.</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagreeing with your father on a major issue.</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driving home after you had three drinks in the last two hours.</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forging somebody’s signature.</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illegally copying a piece of software.</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plagiarizing a term paper.</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving to a new city.</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openly disagreeing with your boss in front of your coworkers.</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoplifting a small item (e.g. a lipstick or a pen).</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking your mind about an unpopular issue at a social occasion.</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stealing an additional TV cable connection.</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using office supplies for your personal business.</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wearing provocative or unconventional clothes on occasion.</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having an affair with a married man or woman.</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passing off somebody else’s work as your own.</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telling a friend if his or her significant other has made a pass at you.</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking a job that you enjoy over one that is prestigious but less enjoyable.</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### APPENDIX F

Bystander Attitudes Scale- Revised

**Bystander Attitude Items**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Likelihood</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ask for verbal consent when I am intimate with my partner, even if we are in a long-term relationship.</td>
<td>1-----2-----3-----4-----5</td>
<td>Not likely Extremely likely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stop sexual activity when asked to, even if I am already sexually aroused.</td>
<td>1-----2-----3-----4-----5</td>
<td>Not likely Extremely likely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check in with my friend who looks drunk when s/he goes to a room with someone else at a party.</td>
<td>1-----2-----3-----4-----5</td>
<td>Not likely Extremely likely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Say something to my friend who is taking a drunk person back to his/her room at a party.</td>
<td>1-----2-----3-----4-----5</td>
<td>Not likely Extremely likely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge a friend who made a sexist joke.</td>
<td>1-----2-----3-----4-----5</td>
<td>Not likely Extremely likely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Express my concern if a family member makes a sexist joke.</td>
<td>1-----2-----3-----4-----5</td>
<td>Not likely Extremely likely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use the word “ho,” “bitch,” or “slut” to describe girls.</td>
<td>1-----2-----3-----4-----5</td>
<td>Not likely Extremely likely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge a friend who uses “ho,” “bitch,” or “slut” to describe girls.</td>
<td>1-----2-----3-----4-----5</td>
<td>Not likely Extremely likely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confront a friend who plans to give someone alcohol to get sex.</td>
<td>1-----2-----3-----4-----5</td>
<td>Not likely Extremely likely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refuse to participate in activities where girls’ appearances are ranked/rated.</td>
<td>1-----2-----3-----4-----5</td>
<td>Not likely Extremely likely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior</td>
<td>Scale</td>
<td>Likely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen to music that includes “ho,” bitch,” or “slut.”</td>
<td>1-----2------3------4------5</td>
<td>Not likely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confront a friend who is hooking up with someone who was passed out.</td>
<td>1-----2------3------4------5</td>
<td>Not likely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confront a friend if I hear rumors that s/he forced sex on someone.</td>
<td>1-----2------3------4------5</td>
<td>Not likely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report a friend that committed a rape.</td>
<td>1-----2------3------4------5</td>
<td>Not likely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stop having sex with a partner if s/he says to stop, even if it started consensually.</td>
<td>1-----2------3------4------5</td>
<td>Not likely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decide not to have sex with a partner if s/he is drunk.</td>
<td>1-----2------3------4------5</td>
<td>Not likely</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX G

Vignette

Instructions: Please read the following scenario and answer the questions which follow

Your friend Jane tells you that she went to a party last night. She is upset saying that she had sex with a guy when she didn’t really want to. She isn’t sure if she could report it as an assault. Jane tells you that she had a couple of drinks at the party. She went into a room to get her purse and was followed into the room by a guy she just met at the party. He tried to kiss and fondle her. He said she was hot and he really wanted to have sex with her. Jane didn’t kiss him back and said several times “I really don’t want to do this”. She felt helpless and let him push her onto the bed and he had sex with her. She does not want to see him again and feels ashamed about what happened. She went home after the incident and went to bed.

1. To what degree do you think Jane might have wanted the sex? (Please circle a number)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definitely Did Not Want</th>
<th>Somewhat Wanted</th>
<th>Definitely Wanted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. To what degree do you think Jane consented to the sex? (Please circle a number)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definitely Did Not Consent</th>
<th>Somewhat Consented</th>
<th>Definitely Consented</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

70
3. Do you think it is important that Jane had been drinking when this happened? *(Please circle a number)*  
Unimportant  Somewhat  Very  
important  Important  

1------------2--------------3--------------4--------------5------------6-----------7

4. How important do you believe her lack of physical resistance was even though she said “no” *(Please circle a number)*  
Unimportant  Somewhat  Very  
important  Important  

1------------2--------------3--------------4--------------5------------6-----------7

5. To what degree would you call this situation a ‘rape’? *(Please circle a number)*  
Definitely  It is Something  Definitely  
Not Rape  In Between  Rape  

1------------2--------------3--------------4--------------5------------6-----------7

6. Would you advise Jane to report what happened to either campus security or law enforcement and help her make the report if she asked? *(Please circle a number)*  
Would Not  Might Suggest  Would  
Strongly Encourage  Help  And Help  
Report  

1------------2--------------3--------------4--------------5------------6-----------7

7. Do you think Jane sent mixed messages and was not clear when she said “No”?  
Yes  No  

1------------2--------------3--------------4--------------5------------6-----------7
8. Would you worry that supporting Jane would have negative social consequences for you?

Yes
No
1-------------------2-------------------3-------------------4-------------------5-------------------6-------------------7

9. Who was most at fault for this event? *(Please circle a number)*

The guy
Jane
1-------------------2-------------------3-------------------4-------------------5-------------------6-------------------7

10. Why do you think Jane might not want to report this incident:
    A. Others might not believe her
    B. She might be labeled a slut
    C. She might not have enough proof of what happened
    D. She might be labeled a liar
    E. She secretly enjoyed the sex

11. How would you label this event?
    A. Casual sex
    B. Date rape
    C. Rape
    D. A misunderstanding