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Are College Students' Attitudes Related to Their Application of Sanctions for Campus Sexual Assault Cases?

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Abstract

Purpose: With growing attention to adjudication of campus sexual assault cases, more is known regarding students' views of sexual assault, but little literature focuses on how students perceive "justice" in terms of assigning sanctions or guilt/responsibility for such cases. The present study focused on understanding whether college students' preformed attitudes and beliefs were associated with the severity of sanctions they applied across a range of sexual assault cases as well as their assignments of guilt and responsibility to the parties involved. **Method**: To determine students' attitudes and beliefs mediating effects on sanction choices, five scales (i.e. rape myth acceptance, downplaying the severity of rape, sexism, just world beliefs, and right-wing authoritarianism) were adapted and used for this project. College students (n=846) responded to one of four versions of a randomly distributed survey each containing eight vignettes varied to represent levels of 14 factors employed because of their relevance to campus sexual assault cases. **Results**: Across all versions, sexism was associated with increased responsibility given to the victim. In addition, stronger endorsement of both downplaying significance of rape and rape myth acceptance scales were associated with giving a milder sanction to the perpetrator and increased responsibility and guilt assigned to the victim. Just world beliefs and right-wing authoritarianism associations were inconsistent across the four versions, suggesting these beliefs were situation-specific. **Conclusion**: Preformed attitudes that are more directly related to the context of sexual assault influenced the designation of sanctions applied to perpetrators and perceptions of guilt and responsibility. Findings are discussed in terms of implications for research and prevention programming.

Keywords: Sexual assault; Campus sexual violence; Students' attitudes related to sanctions for campus sexual assault; Attitudes regarding sexual assault; Violence against women

Are College Students' Attitudes Related to their Application of Sanctions for Campus Sexual Assault Cases?

Due to the recent national spotlight on campus sexual assault, many university administrations across the country have revised their procedures for adjudicating cases of campus sexual assault, encouraged reporting of sexual assault, and developed prevention efforts (Cantilupo, 2013). Student-led efforts have often been important catalysts for furthering these on-campus endeavors. However, institutions of higher education (IHEs) have often appeared perplexed by students' reactions to changes in policies or to decisions made regarding specific campus sexual misconduct cases. A dearth of information regarding students' perceptions of these cases may be partially responsible for this. Because prior research involving judgments about sexual assault cases most typically utilized community participants' judgments that typically only considered criminal outcomes (e.g., Bolt & Caswell, 1981; Bridges & McGrail, 1981; Deitz, Littman, & Bentley, 1984), it is likely that those research findings may not be as helpful in aiding IHEs' attempts to translate their efforts into policies and practices as research based on responses of college students to cases of campus sexual assaults. This appears to be an especially important distinction in light of prior determinations that campus sexual assaults more typically exhibit characteristics (e.g., victim drinking; perpetrator is an acquaintance) that observers believe cast doubt on whether a rape truly occurred than cases in the criminal system or cases presented to observers in past research studies. A university's ability to communicate effectively with students regarding their policies, processes, and sanctioning decisions would be enhanced if there were updated and significant empirical evidence regarding students' perceptions of justice toward prototypical cases and whether prior-held beliefs/attitudes predominate in their judgments.

Prior research assessing reactions to sexual assault cases typically assessed only one or two main factors, thus making it difficult to determine whether any attitudinal relationships found regarding the factors would be consistently applied across a wide range of victim, perpetrator, or sexual assault characteristics beyond a particular study's focus. Thus, this project investigated whether, despite varying person- and case-specific characteristics of campus sexual assaults, college students are influenced in their assignment of sanctions, as well as their view of the victim's and perpetrator's guilt and responsibility, due to relevant attitude and belief systems they bring to their decision-making.

Theoretical Framework

Assessment of Victims as Matching Stereotypes of "Real Rapes"

Historically, research assessing responses and reactions to sexual assault cases has been structured to determine the degree to which the observer judges a case of sexual violence as fitting or not fitting myths about rapists and sexual assault victims, i.e., rape myth acceptance (e.g., Pollard, 1992; Whatley, 1996). Rape myths are misguided standards and stereotypes about sexual assault, often accepted by the general public, that act as filters when a person hears about a rape which influence their interpretation of a sexual assault as not being a "real rape." For example, if a woman is sexually assaulted after she went to the apartment of a man with whom she went on a date, an observer who believes rape myths that "it is not likely rape if an acquaintance is the accused perpetrator" and "going to a man's apartment is a statement of sexual consent," would likely conclude that the woman had not been raped or that she was at least partially responsible for the rape that ensued (Hockett, Smith, Klausing, & Saucier, 2016). These judgments then lower the likelihood that the perpetrator will be found guilty, but even more so, increase the likelihood that a perpetrator who is found guilty will receive lowered sanctions.

Campus sexual assault cases may be more easily stereotyped by observers as not "real rapes" because documented elements of campus assaults more easily evoke the application of rape myths. For example, more sexual assault cases in the legal system involve a perpetrator who is a stranger than university adjudications where most cases involve people with at least a passing acquaintance (Fisher, Karjane, Cullen, Santana, Blevins, & Daigle, 2013). This fact, in and of itself, has significant complications because it is relatively common for women assaulted by an acquaintance to *not* report sexual assaults because they do not expect to be believed (e.g., Bachman, 1998; Koss, Dinero, Seibel, & Cox, 1988). A second difference for campus sexual assaults from criminal cases, is that campus cases more likely involve substance use by *both* the perpetrator and the victim (Abbey, 2002; Melkonian & Ham, 2018). If a victim were known to be drinking, doubts fueled by rape myths may alter the picture of a blameless victim, thus potentially leading to attributions of responsibility based on the victim's substance use rather than on the perpetrator's behavior (Hayes, Abbott, & Cook, 2016).

Criminal versus Campus Context for Research

It is uncertain whether much of the pioneering research on sexual assault that required observers to make outcome judgments on cases situated within a *criminal context* (i.e., probation vs. jail; length of sentence) can be generalized to campus cases where outcomes are decided in terms of sanctions with varying impact on the perpetrator's college career. IHEs do not make criminal determinations for student violations of codes of conduct because historically, IHEs have viewed such violations as actions around which students should be educated and rehabilitated into the campus community rather than just punished (Rennison, 2019; Stoner, 2000; Stoner, 2004). In this framework, student violators of campus codes of conduct were typically found to be "responsible" rather than "guilty." The severity of violent behavior found to

occur on campuses has led to a reconsideration of this concept in recent years.

What we know about early studies situated within a *criminal context* is that investigations assessing whether victim or case characteristics influenced potential jurors' views of the defendant's guilt and severity of the punishment (e.g., van der Bruggen & Grubb, 2014) confirmed that people's judgments – about guilt and severity of punishment as well as their views of whether victims shoulder any guilt or responsibility – take into account situational factors connected to sexual assaults. The very different outcomes, (i.e., possible sanctions) for the *non-criminal adjudication* of a college disciplinary system for sexual assault cases compared with outcomes in criminal cases likely prevent the strict application of this earlier research to campus cases, although prior research may suggest relevant case factors or attitudes.

Research Design Issues

Much of the research assessing observers' reactions to rape victims focused on experimentally manipulating factors believed to be most salient for influencing judgments. Typically, only one or two factors were manipulated (e.g., Bolt & Caswell, 1981; Bridges & McGrail, 1981; Deitz, Littman, & Bentley, 1984) to better understand whether main effects and/or interactions of factors produced explicable results. Therefore, it is difficult to know when researchers assess attitudes (e.g., rape myths, sexism) in their experimental studies investigating factors, whether those attitudes would demonstrate similar directional findings when other factors are manipulated or whether any significant findings related to attitudes are unique to the factors investigated in the original research.

Assessing research participants' attitudes to a range of sexual assault cases varying in characteristics that are consistent or inconsistent with rape myths is expected to better determine whether participants make judgments consistently in line with their assessed attitudes. If college

students determined severity of sanctions applied to perpetrators of campus sexual assault consistent with their assessed attitudes, whether the case characteristics were consistent or inconsistent with rape myths, this would supply stronger evidence that preformed attitudes reliably influence decision-making about sexual assault cases. This information, in return, would provide a meaningful framework for IHEs to promote policies, intervention practices, and prevention programs.

Prior Research Findings

Pertinent to determining whether relevant attitudes remain predictive of college students' judgments across a range of sexual assault situations, research over the last several decades has clearly demonstrated that "justice" for sexual assault cases often varies by observers' perceptions of personal characteristics of the *victim* (e.g., attractiveness, the victim's apparel) or the *perpetrator* (e.g., social status, gender) (Hockett, et al., 2016), not just the fact that a sexual assault occurred (e.g., Davies, Pollard, & Archer, 2001; van der Bruggen & Grubb, 2014). In addition, *characteristics of the sexual assault* influence whether people perceive incidents as crimes and what they believe to be "just" outcomes, such as whether the parties knew each other prior to the incident, if drugs or alcohol were involved, or the degree of physical force known to have occurred (e.g., Castello, Coomer, Stillwell, & Cate, 2006; Grubb & Harrower, 2008).

Role of Attitudes and Beliefs in Deciding Just Sanctions

Investigating whether pre-existing belief systems impact determinations of guilt and responsibility of sexual assault perpetrators is not new. Specifically, researchers have investigated Just World Theory (e.g., Grubb & Harrower, 2008), the Defensive Attribution Hypothesis (e.g., Donovan, 2007), and Sexual Assault Myth Acceptance (e.g., Mason, Riger, & Foley, 2004). If particular attitudes are consistently related to designated severity of punishments or for assigning

guilt and/or responsibility, this may help explain which outcomes are placed on individuals violating sexual misconduct codes. Whether beliefs appear to influence students' designation of sanctions/punishments for sexual assault perpetrators, irrespective of potentially unique situational factors for college cases, also needs to be explored to provide an entry point for educational interventions designed to prevent sexual assault. For this study, attitudes that appear more proximally related to the topic investigated (i.e., sexual assault) were expected to show the greatest associations with the participants' ratings as well as with other proximally related attitudes (e.g., sexism, rape myth acceptance). Conversely, attitudes that appear more distally related (e.g., just world beliefs, right-wing authoritarianism) were expected to show lesser or no associations to participants' ratings and other attitudes.

Rape Myth Acceptance. Most proximally related to research in the area of sexual assault is the concept of acceptance of rape myths influencing observers' reports of whether a rape likely occurred as well as whether any guilt should be assigned to the victim. A meta-analysis conducted by Suarez and Gadalla (2010) reviewed 37 studies associating rape myth acceptance measures with demographic, behavioral, and attitudinal factors, finding that strong endorsements of rape myth acceptance measures were significantly associated with all three of these factors. Researchers have developed scales comprised of myths regarding sexual assault that have existed in American culture that place at least a significant share of responsibility for a sexual assault on the victim (e.g., McMahon & Farmer, 2011; Payne, Lonsway, & Fitzgerald, 1999). These scales would, of course, be expected to be most significantly related to observers' judgments about sexual assault situation. Past research indicates that when college students are presented with an ambiguous vignette of sexual assault, students who reported greater acceptance of common sexual assault myths (e.g., "Women often provoke sexual assault by their appearance or

behavior") attributed more responsibility for the assault to the victim and less guilt to the perpetrator than students who reject those myths (e.g., Eyssel & Bohner, 2011).

Sexism. Attitudes that devalue women and assign them inferior roles and status based simply on their gender are expected to influence a person to place more responsibility on sexual assault victims and assign less severe punishments to perpetrators (Stoll, Lilley, & Pinter, 2017). Hostile sexism views women as possessing negative traits because of their gender and individuals with this attitude would view women as temptresses who use sexual allure that men cannot resist and then later falsely claim rape. In addition, individuals with attitudes of hostile sexism would believe that women deny their culpability of luring men but rather condemn men at the time men proceed with sexual activity. (Sakalli-Ugurlu, Yalcm, & Glick, 2007). In contrast, benevolent sexism views women as possessing positive traits because of their gender, but still views these stereotypical traits as rationales for why women victims should be held at least partially responsible for rape (Glick and Fiske, 1997; 2001; 2018). Benevolent sexism may focus on women's passivity, which may be considered positive evidence of modesty and being demure, but which may be used to blame women's lack of aggressive resistance as giving mixed cues to men regarding their wishes not to have sex (Viki, Abrams, and Hutchinson, 2003). Sakalli-Ugurlu and colleagues (2007) found that both forms of sexism were associated with students' negative views toward a female victim.

Just World Beliefs. More distant as a belief system, but one associated with various attitudes toward the legal system and criminals, is the perception a person holds whether the world is just. The Just World Theory (Lerner & Miller, 1978) determined that people range in their beliefs as to whether they view the world as a fair and just place, and whether people get what they deserve and deserve what they get. If a person believes in a just world and that belief is

violated (typically by a negative event happening to a seemingly "good" person), that person is forced to abandon the belief in a just world or to restore the belief by reframing their view of the person as warranting such a negative experience. Consequently, the Just World Theory would predict that individuals with strong just world beliefs would assign greater blame/responsibility to sexual assault victims (Rubin & Peplau, 1975; Kleinke & Meyer, 1990). This relationship was found in a previous study (Hammond, Berry, & Rodriguez, 2011).

Authoritarianism. Political and ideological beliefs, along the continuum of right-wing authoritarianism (RWA), was investigated as a potential influence on sexual assault judgments because RWA is characterized by submission to authority, support for traditional values, and hostility toward people who do not appear to follow traditional rules (Altemeyer, 1981). Individuals high in RWA are more likely to convict and recommend harsher punishments for defendants in a wide variety of crimes (Narby, Cutler, & Moran, 1993; Wasieleski, 1995). Complicating the picture, however, are research findings regarding more general conservatism (a political attitude correlating highly with RWA (Butler, 2000)) that suggest conservatives tend to generally blame victims more and perpetrators less.

Guilt versus Responsibility

Prior research investigating judgments in sexual assault cases initially assessed determinations of guilt/blame (guilty vs. not guilty), but researchers soon came to realize that observers might still consider the victim as bearing some responsibility for the fact that the sexual assault occurred. This "responsibility" could be viewed on a continuum from mild accountability (e.g., believing the victim should not have taken a short cut through the woods) to strong accountability (e.g., believing the woman led the man to think she would have sex before changing her mind). Because many campus assaults do not fit characteristics of stereotypical

rape cases (e.g., Hockett et al., 2016; Whatley, 1996; Williams, 1984), students with particular preformed attitudes may be more likely to view victims whose rapes are inconsistent with the stereotypes as at least partially *responsible* for its occurrence while still placing more *blame* on the perpetrator. The general distinction between attributions of "blame" and "responsibility" was investigated conceptually in the 1980s (e.g., Hamilton, 1980; Shaver & Drown, 1986) and remains relevant for determinations by observers for sexual assault cases. For example, Hockett and colleagues' (2016) found that individuals use *different* case information to assign guilt vs. responsibility. Blame more clearly involves judging an individual as liable for sanctioning, while responsibility involves judging an individual's role or accountability for an event happening.

Purpose of the Study and Research Hypotheses

This study explores the relationship of college students' preformed beliefs with their perspectives of just sanctions for campus sexual assault cases and assignments of guilt and responsibility to the victim and perpetrator. The specific intent was to increase understanding of students' reactions to cases more reflective of those happening to college students, and, using a range of case descriptions, determine whether students' attitudes were stable and consistently associated with their application of sanctions, ratings of guilt, and ratings of responsibility. For the purposes of this study, the authors utilized fourteen factors of victim, perpetrator, or sexual assault characteristics deemed potentially relevant for influencing students' judgments of sexual assault sanctions that had been previously investigated with general populations and/or considered pertinent due to campus characteristics (Authors citation, xxxx). This understanding is expected to ultimately influence educational efforts for students regarding sexual assault but may also be important for educators' awareness of student views. Having a better understanding of students' perceptions of justice in college sexual assault cases could also have implications for

the training of students by IHEs for those institutions which appoint students on disciplinary panels that hear cases of sexual misconduct.

Hypothesis 1: Adherence to rape myths, sexist attitudes, belief in a just world, and right-wing authoritarian attitudes was expected to demonstrate a negative association with *the severity of college students' sanctions* applied to campus sexual assault perpetrators.

Hypothesis 2: Adherence to rape myths, sexist attitudes, belief in a just world, and right-wing authoritarian attitudes was expected to be associated with *college students' greater assignment of guilt and responsibility* to sexual assault victims and *lesser assignment of guilt and responsibility* to perpetrators.

Hypothesis 3: Proposed attitudes and belief systems of college students more closely aligned with the studied topic (i.e., sexual assault) were expected to demonstrate larger effects/stronger relationships with the application of sanctions and assignment of guilt and responsibility for sexual assault cases than more distally-related belief systems.

Method

Participants

Students attending a large Southern university volunteered through the Psychology participant pool to complete a survey as partial fulfillment of a course assignment. Students chose to participate in this study from a range of research projects available to them; students who do not want to participate in research projects are given other opportunities to complete their course requirement. Students in the participant pool are typically first and second year students because the courses with this requirement are lower level Psychology courses; however, because they are introductory type courses, students from a wide range of majors participate in the research projects. Students who were under 18 (n = 5) and students who did not respond to

any or most of the questions (n = 5) were excluded from the final dataset. The total of completed surveys was 846 with 29% men (n = 248) and 71% women (n = 597). For all attitudinal items, the missing data rates ranged from 0% to 0.9%. For the items measuring the dependent variables, the missing data rates ranged from 0% to 1.9 for Versions 1 and 2, 0% to 3.9% for Version 3, and 0-1.4% for Version 4. The age range of participants was 18-46, with a median age of 19. The sample of students was primarily Caucasian (80%). The racial ethnic breakdown of non-Caucasian participants was: African American, 10%; Hispanic, 5%; Asian, 2%; and Other, 3%. Only 1% of the sample were international students and approximately two-thirds of the sample reported living most of their lives in the southern United States. Most student participants reported living in suburban areas or small cities/towns with smaller proportions reporting living in metropolitan or large city environments (20%) or rural areas (8%). While almost two-thirds of the participants were first year students, 21% were sophomores, and 14% were either juniors or seniors. The demographics of this sample generally parallel the university student body (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016), with a slightly larger portion of female, first year students, and African American students due to convenience sampling. Hispanic and Asian participants were comparably represented with the university demographics for those racial/ethnic groups.

Procedures

University students who volunteered were given a link to the survey on the Qualtrics platform within the university's firewall-protected computer system. Upon logging in, volunteers read the Informed Consent document and decided whether to participate. Consenting participants were randomly assigned to one of four versions of the survey. Upon completion, participant information was separately relayed to the subject pool system to ensure volunteers received credit for participation, but IP addresses were removed to ensure anonymous data prior to analyses.

Experimental Design

Hypothesized attitudes, expected to be associated with college students' assignments of disciplinary sanctions as well as guilt and responsibility in sexual assault cases on campus, were assessed through an online survey. Because one prototypical case cannot be identified for use in a study to generally understand students' attitudes relating to judgments of campus sexual assault, the experimental design involved a range of sexual assault scenarios to which students assigned sanctions to the perpetrators, and guilt and responsibility to the victims and perpetrators (Authors citation, xxxx). Factors chosen for scenarios to assess associations or ratings withassessed attitudes were based on prior sexual assault literature that appeared relevant to campus cases as well as media accounts of infamous cases and other writings regarding campus sexual assault issues (e.g., Bennett & Jones, 2018; Krause, 2016; Lavigne, 2018). (See Table 1 for the specific factors, levels of each factor, and sources for them.) The 14 identified factors, with 2-4 levels each, were used to determine whether participants' attitudes remain predictive of judgments across a range of sexual assault cases varying in victim, perpetrator, and sexual assault characteristics. (Author citation, xxxx) found ten of the 14 factors demonstrated significant differences across levels of the factors in ratings of sanctions or guilt/responsibility ratings. Vignettes devised for each factor only varied by the description of levels of that factor. [*Note.* The full list of vignettes can be obtained by contacting the first author.]

To prevent confounds, study vignettes were designed to keep as many extraneous elements consistent as possible within each factor and across all factors. First, except for the factor in which the perpetrator's claim was varied as to whether he acknowledged a sexual assault had occurred, vignette language clearly indicated a sexual assault occurred, i.e., "[Perpetrator name] became very aggressive, pushed her onto the bed where he held her down and

proceeded to have intercourse with her. Second, all vignettes used neutral Americanized names such that no racial influence could be inferred except for the Race factor, which intentionally used permutations of stereotypical Caucasian and African American names for the male perpetrator and the female victim. Third, the victim was described in all scenarios as attending a party to which she/he had been invited by friends to eliminate any perception that attending such a party would be a risky action to be avoided. Fourth, all cases described the victim as reporting the assault the next morning to a resident advisor to avoid any interpretation that the victim delayed reporting. And last, all cases constituted a variant of acquaintance sexual assault, such that the victim and perpetrator spent some time together at the party (with initial contact relatively benign), such that none of the vignettes involved a stranger-perpetrated sexual assault.

The number of vignettes required to represent the levels of the 14 factors resulted in 32 scenarios. To ensure that no participant received more than one level of any factor and to prevent survey fatigue, four versions of the 32 vignettes (eight per version) were developed. The order of the vignettes presented to the participants remained the same within each version. Because the 14 factors varied as to the severity of the incidents, vignettes assigned to the four versions represented relatively equal numbers of more or less severe scenarios.

Measures

Dependent variables. To determine perceptions of justice, students were required to assign specific sanctions after reading descriptions of cases. Thus, "justice" in this case was represented by the severity of the sanction applied. Even though cases were described as sexual assaults, requiring participants to assign proportional guilt and responsibility to the perpetrator and victim was included to better understand ratings that may not appear consistent with the general concept of a sexual assault having been committed. Seven devised dependent variables

constituted two categories: *sanctioning variables* and *assignment of guilt and responsibility.*

Sanctioning Variables

Attitude about punishment. After reading each vignette, participants initially determined (on a 4-point Likert scale; 4=Strongly Agree to 1=Strongly Disagree) whether the perpetrator should be punished to assess the participants' sense of whether the perpetrator in each vignette deserved *any* sanction using the question: "How much do you agree or disagree that [perpetrator's name] should be punished?" Mean scores across the eight vignettes were used in analyses. Higher scores indicate stronger attitudes that the perpetrator should be punished.

Choice of sanction. For each vignette, participants next chose which sanction they considered most appropriate to apply from those available at most universities for student misconduct, ranging from no punishment to permanent expulsion. Pilot testing conducted prior to the study determined the hierarchical severity of 13 possible sanctions. College students (N=60) in an introductory sociology course rated the severity of each sanction on a 10-point scale (1=very mild sanction to 10=very severe sanction). No misconduct was referenced in the instructions so that participants only considered how serious they perceived the sanction in general.

A hierarchy of sanctions was established based on students' mean scores in the pilot study. The mean score for the least severe sanction, verbal warning, was 1.7. Mean scores for sanctions considered "mild" ranged from 3.0 to 3.7 (i.e. written assignment about the violation, community service related to violation, written disciplinary reprimand in student's record, educational program about the violation, and mandatory psychological counseling). "Moderate" sanctions included fines/restitution for damages with a mean score of 4.3, mediation sessions for all parties (mean score of 4.7), and social suspension from campus (mean score of 5.6). "Severe" sanctions included withholding the degree (6.5), admission or degree revoked (7.9), and permanent

expulsion as the harshest (mean score of 8.8). Study participants used this hierarchical list to select the sanction they believed was most appropriate to apply to the perpetrator in each vignette.

Because the sanctions contained 13 ordinal categories and every student responded to eight vignettes, two scores could be derived: a mode score and a mean score. The mode score was not used because most students selected the most severe sanction of permanent expulsion for the perpetrator, suggesting limited variability and statistical potential. Mean scores were used because, with 13 ordered response categories, the sanction scores could be treated as continuous.

Student assessment of severity of the sanction they chose. Even though students chose a sanction from the hierarchical list, which implied a level of seriousness for the sanctions, their perceptions of the severity of the sanctions that they applied was assessed. Students designated their choice of sanction for each vignette as mild (=1), moderate (=2), or severe (=3). The mean score for the severity designations across the eight cases was used for analyses. Higher scores indicated students considered their choices of sanctions more severe.

Assignment of guilt and responsibility variables

Assignment of guilt. For each vignette, participants assigned a level of guilt to the victim and to the perpetrator "for what happened" on sliding scales programmed to require the assignment of guilt to both parties to sum up to 100%. The mean percentage of guilt assigned separately to the victim and to the perpetrator across the eight vignettes was used in analyses.

Assignment of responsibility for the sexual assault. Participants were instructed to decide how "responsible" the victim and the perpetrator were for the incident: "To what extent overall do you think [victim name] could have influenced or changed the likelihood of the situation happening as it did?" The item was repeated, substituting the perpetrator's name. Response options constituted a 5-point Likert scale (Total responsibility=5; No responsibility at

all=1). Independent mean assignments of responsibility to both parties across the eight vignettes were used in the analyses. Higher scores meant greater responsibility was assigned.

Attitudes/Beliefs/Traits Variables

Scales for assessing attitudes were first subjected to a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to identify the internal structure of each; the internal reliability was also determined.

Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (Rape Myths). McMahon and Farmer (2011) updated the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance (IRMA) scale (Payne, Lonsway, & Fitzgerald, 1999) to use "language to reflect the subtleties involved with sexual assault myths" (p. 71). The IRMA consisted of seven subscales (45 items) with an overall scale reliability of .93. The resulting revision resulted in 22 items (α=.87) with four subscales still relevant – She Asked for It, It Wasn't Really Sexual Assault, He Didn't Mean To, and She Lied (alphas ranging from .64 to .80; intercorrelated .39-.67).

Response options for the 22-item revision of IRMA were Likert responses ranging from Strongly Disagree=1 to Strongly Agree=4. CFA showed that the four-factor structure fit the data well; therefore, mean scores of the four subscale scores were used in analyses with higher scores representing more acceptance of rape myths. The subscales demonstrated good internal consistency – alphas ranged from .76 to .86 and coefficient omegas ranged from .84 to .91.

***Sexual Assault Myths Downplaying the Severity of Rape* (*Downplaying Rape*).** Stoll, Lilley, and Pinter (2016) devised a rape myth acceptance scale with items appearing distinct as a thematic group from Rape Myths. Four items (e.g., "Being raped is not as bad as being mugged and beaten.") reflected the theme that sexual assault is not really a problem in our culture, but rather the significance of it has been exaggerated by victims and feminists. Adding another facet of rape myths beyond individual motivations in the Rape Myths scale, mean scores for these items

were used for analyses (using item response options of Strongly Disagree=1 to Strongly Agree=4). The scale was unidimensional and maintained good reliability, $\alpha = \omega = .90$.

Gender-Blind Sexism Inventory (Sexism). Stoll, Lilley, and Pinter (2017) devised a "gender-blind" sexism inventory based on concepts from several prior sexism scales that included 11 items (e.g., "Men are naturally more aggressive than women.") with a 4-point response format ranging from (Strongly Disagree=1; Strongly Agree=4). Although this Sexism scale covered abstract liberalism, naturalization, cultural sexism, and the minimization of sexism, Stoll et al. reported an alpha of .80 for the overall scale which they suggested using to represent post-gender ideology. Mean scores were used with higher scores suggesting greater sexism. Our sample indicated an alpha of .83.

Just World Scale (Just World). The concept of belief in a just world was measured using the 6-item scale by Dalbert, Montada, and Schmitt (1987). Research on this scale has, at times, indicated lower internal consistency, e.g., Loo (2002) presented an alpha of .69 among a Canadian student sample. However, Loo (2002) also reported items having positive inter-item and inter-scale correlations, and a factor analysis producing one factor with strong item loadings. Consistent with lower reliability found in past studies, this sample's alpha was .62 after removing the worst performing item ("I think basically the world is a just place."). Mean scores for the scale were used for analyses. A higher score indicated a stronger belief in a just world.

Right-Wing Authoritarianism Scale (Authoritarianism). RWAS was adapted from Zakrisson's (2005) 15-item short version of the Right-Wing Authoritarianism Scale using a 4-point Likert response format (Strongly Disagree=1; Strongly Agree=4). Although items covered conventionalism, authoritarian aggression, and authoritarian submission, Zakrisson (2005) suggested the scale was unidimensional (α=.78). For the present study, six items (two from each

content area) were included in the survey (e.g., "There are many radical, immoral people trying to ruin things who should be stopped by society."). Our CFA results indicated a two-factor structure fit the data better than the unidimensional model – one representing aggression against immorality (α=.65) and one representing the importance of traditions and values (α=.60). Given that Cronbach's alpha might under-/over-estimate reliability (Dunn, Baguley, & Brunsden, 2014; McDonald, 1981), the McDonald Omega was also used to examine the reliability (Factor 1=.74; Factor 2=.66). The first factor (with item factor loadings of .56-.79) was retained and mean scores used for further analyses. Higher scores suggest greater right-wing authoritarianism.

Demographics. Demographics were assessed and included age, gender, race/ethnicity, whether participants were domestic or international students, the area of the U.S. and the size of the community in which they grew up, and their year in college.

Data Analysis Plan

Although participants were randomly assigned to one of the four survey versions to obtain equivalence on nuisance variables, X^2 dependence tests and ANOVA were conducted to explore if individual differences (i.e., demographics) were equally distributed across the versions. Results indicated students' demographics were equally distributed across surveys (see Appendix A). ANOVA tests were also conducted to explore if the ratings of outcome variables differed across the versions. Bonferroni correction (.05/6 = .0083) was used to control for Type I error inflation. To explore the three research hypotheses, Pearson's correlations were conducted.

Intercorrelations among the attitude variables were first investigated, and then their relationships with the dependent variables were examined. Please note that percentages of guilt assigned to the perpetrator and the victim were constrained to equal 100%, such that a bivariate correlation involving assignment of guilt to the victim had the same magnitude as the one

involving assignment of guilt to the perpetrator, with the signs of the coefficients reversed.

Results

Effect of four survey versions

ANOVA test results showed a survey effect on the outcome variables (see Table 2). In Version 1, students rated whether to punish, the amount of guilt, and the responsibility to the perpetrator more severely and rated the amount of guilt and responsibility to the victim less severely compared to their counterparts receiving Version 3 (Cohen's *d* ranging from 0.31 to 0.57). Version 1 participants also assigned more severe sanctions and higher levels of responsibility to the perpetrator, while assigning lower ratings of responsibility to the victim, compared to participants in Version 4 (Cohen's *d* ranging from 0.34 to 0.37).

Participants in Version 2 had higher ratings for believing the perpetrator should be punished, the type of punishment, the level of the punishment, and the responsibility of the perpetrator than participants in Version 3 (Cohen's *d* ranging from 0.31 to 0.49). Participants in Versions 3 and 4 produced similar ratings across all outcome variables except for type of punishment. Participants in Version 4 assigned a higher level of sanction compared to participants in Version 3 with a Cohen's d of 0.34. Thus, it is likely that the cases in the four survey versions did not have similar valences for the participants. In order to assess whether a systematic pattern exists among the variables regardless of the survey version, bivariate correlations are first presented for each version where the left-diagonal in Table 3 presents Version 1 results, the right-diagonal of Table 3 presents Version 2 results, the left-diagonal of Table 4 presents Version 3 results, and the right-diagonal of Table 4 presents Version 4 results. Table 5 presents the results within the whole sample.

Intercorrelations among the attitude variables

As expected, attitudes and belief systems of college students more closely aligned with the issue of sexual assault (i.e., sexism, downplaying rape, rape myths) demonstrated moderate to strong internal relationships, whereas variables that were more distally related belief systems to sexual assault (i.e., authoritarianism, just world beliefs) demonstrated negligible or weak correlations with the other attitudes (see correlations among attitudes variables in Tables 3-5). In particular, students' Sexism scores were moderately correlated with Downplaying Rape ($.46 \leq r \leq .54$) and Rape Myths ($.41 \leq r \leq .62$), but weakly correlated with Authoritarianism ($.17 \leq r \leq .38$) and Just World beliefs ($.19 \leq r \leq .30$). Downplaying Rape moderately correlated with Rape Myths ($.58 \leq r \leq .73$) but was weakly or uncorrelated with Authoritarianism ($.06 \leq r \leq .26$) and Just World beliefs ($.07 \leq r \leq .18$). The four subscales of Rape Myths were moderately intercorrelated ($.56 \leq r \leq .77$), weakly and sometimes uncorrelated with Authoritarianism ($.07 \leq r \leq .32$), and weakly correlated with Just World beliefs ($.12 \leq r \leq .25$ except for Version 1). Authoritarianism had a weak association with Just World beliefs ($.16 \leq r \leq .29$).

Correlational relationships of attitude variables with dependent variables.

Hypothesis 1. Our first hypothesis was confirmed in that participants' scores on Rape Myths, Downplaying Rape, Sexism, Just World beliefs, and Authoritarianism indicated associations with the severity of sanction applied to each perpetrator (see correlations among the attitudes variables and dependent variables measuring the severity of sanction applied to perpetrators in Tables 3-5). Sexism was negatively correlated with students' determinations of whether the perpetrator should be punished ($-.23 \leq r \leq -.22$) as well as the severity of the punishment imposed ($-.35 \leq r \leq -.17$) in Versions 2, 3, and 4. Greater endorsement of Downplaying Rape was associated with less agreement that the perpetrator should be punished ($-38 \leq r \leq -.19$) and less severe sanctions ($-.48 \leq r \leq -.18$). Higher scores on the four subscales of

Rape Myths moderately or weakly correlated with determinations of whether the perpetrator should be punished (-.40 ≤ *r* ≤ -.08) and the severity of the chosen punishment (-.52≤ *r* ≤ -.18), both in a negative direction. Authoritarianism only weakly correlated with assigning a sanction of lesser severity for the perpetrator (*r* = -.15). There did not appear to be a consistent relationship between Just World beliefs and sanctioning, e.g., participants in Version 1 with higher Just World beliefs assigned more severe punishments (*r* = .17, Table 3 left-diagonal), but participants in Version 4 with stronger beliefs assigned less severe sanctions (*r* = -.18, Table 4 right-diagonal) to the perpetrator.

Although the relationship of the severity of sanctions applied by students with their assignments of guilt and responsibility to victims and perpetrators was explored in a prior article (Authors Citation, xxxx), it is interesting to note that correlations reached significance for these outcome variables. Designation of more severe sanctions was related to lower guilt ratings for victims (and conversely higher guilt ratings for perpetrators) as well as lower responsibility ratings for victims and higher responsibility ratings for perpetrators.

Hypothesis 2. Our second hypothesis was also confirmed. Adherence to the attitudes measured by the major concepts in this study demonstrated an association with college students' assignments of guilt and responsibility to campus sexual assault victims and perpetrators (see correlations among the attitudes variables and assignment of guilt and responsibilities in Tables 3-5). Sexism was correlated with assigning guilt to victims in Versions 3 and 4 (*r* = .19, Table 4), in that participants with stronger sexist attitudes assigned higher levels of *guilt* to victims. In all versions, stronger Sexism was associated with assigning more *responsibility* to victims (.23 ≤ *r* ≤ .43) and assigning less responsibility to the perpetrator (-.25 ≤ *r* ≤ -.31). Higher scores on Downplaying Rape were associated with less guilt and responsibility assigned to the perpetrator

(-.23≤ r ≤ -.17 and -.44 ≤ r ≤ -.35, respectively). Students who downplay the significance of rape were less punishing toward the perpetrators, so it was not surprising that students with these beliefs assigned greater percentages of guilt (.17 ≤ r ≤ .23) as well as responsibility (.34 ≤ r ≤ .46) to the victim. Higher scores on Rape Myths positively correlated with assignments of greater guilt and responsibility to the victim across vignettes. In particular, we found that greater endorsement of the four subscales of Rape Myths moderately or weakly correlated in a negative direction with responsibility assigned to the perpetrator (-.62≤ r ≤ -.31) across the four versions of the survey. Not surprisingly, endorsement of the Rape Myths subscales was moderately correlated with assigning more responsibility to the victim for the occurrence of the sexual assault (.34≤ r ≤ .66). Endorsement of the subscales, "She Asked For It" and "It's Not Sexual Assault," were weakly correlated with assigning more guilt to the victims in all four versions (.15≤ r ≤ .27). Endorsement of the other two subscales did not correlate consistently with assigning more guilt to the victims; "He Didn't Mean To" correlated with greater assignment of guilt in Versions 2, 3, and 4 (.14≤ r ≤ .23; Table 3 right-diagonal and Table 4), and "She Lied" correlated with more guilt assigned to victims in Versions 3 and 4 (r =.31 and r =.25, respectively). Results showed that Authoritarianism only weakly correlated with greater assignment of responsibility to the victim (r_{victim} = .20, $r_{perpetrator}$ = -.15) in Version 4 (Table 4 right-diagonal). When we examined the relationship across the entire sample, Authoritarianism was negligibly associated with greater assignment of guilt to the victim (r = .09) and greater assignment of responsibility to the victim but less to the perpetrator, r = .11 and r = -.11, respectively. Finally, in Version 2 (Table 3 right-diagonal), stronger Just World beliefs correlated with assigning more guilt to the perpetrator and less guilt to the victim (r = |.17|). And in Version 3 (Table 4 left-diagonal), assignment of responsibility for the sexual assault was

lower for the victim but higher for the perpetrator (r_{victim} = .15, $r_{perpetrator}$ = -.21) if the participant believed strongly that the world is fair.

Hypothesis 3. The final hypothesis proposed that attitudes and beliefs aligning more with the topic of sexual assault would have larger effects regarding the outcome variables, and this was also confirmed (see the correlations between attitude variables and all dependent variables in Tables 3-5). As stated above, in all versions, stronger Sexism was associated with higher assignment of *responsibility* to victims but negatively associated with assignment of responsibility to the perpetrator. Higher scores on Downplaying Rape were associated with assigning less severe sanctions (and less guilt and responsibility) to the perpetrator, but with assigning more guilt and responsibility to the victim. Higher scores on Rape Myths significantly and negatively correlated with assignment of sanction to the perpetrator and positively correlated with assignments of greater guilt and responsibility to the victim across vignettes. If a student was higher in Sexism or Downplaying Rape, that student selected less punitive sanctions for perpetrators and assigned more guilt/responsibility to victims.

Because both Just World and Authoritarianism concepts are more distally related to predicting judgments regarding sexual assault cases, it was not surprising that stronger endorsement of these attitudes was inconsistently associated with dependent variables across the four versions. Because more tenuous inferences may be required to link these concepts with how individuals might perceive justice for campus cases of sexual assault, these frameworks may not be useful for prediction. It is possible that these beliefs may be situation specific which resulted in the inconsistent or nonexistent relationships. Across the entire sample, Authoritarianism was negligibly associated with greater assignment of guilt and responsibility to the victim or less assignment of guilt and responsibility to the perpetrator. Reviewing the entire sample's results

suggested a negligible relationship of Just World beliefs with outcome variables as well. Of the five attitude variables, Sexism, Downplaying Rape, and Rape Myths were most frequently and strongly related to students' assignments of justice.

Discussion

This study sought to understand the influence of preformed attitudes and beliefs on college students' perceptions of appropriate sanctions in campus sexual assault cases, their assignment of guilt to victims and perpetrators, and their assignment of responsibility to both parties. Early analyses to identify potential confounds indicated that demographic characteristics of the student participants did not influence outcome variables. However, some differences regarding outcomes across the versions of the survey resulted in an expansion of relevant analyses to determine whether the relationships between attitudes and outcome variables existed between survey versions as well as overall.

Intercorrelations between some of the attitude scales were identified; specifically, sexism, the tendency to downplay the significance of rape, and rape myth acceptance demonstrated mild and positive relationships, supporting our hypotheses. These constructs all measure preconceived notions related to incidents of sexual assault and/or general negative attitudes toward women. The intercorrelations found between these three scales reflect the results of a meta-analysis conducted on rape myth studies identifying a positive correlation between rape myth acceptance and measurements of sexism, adverse attitudes regarding women, and victim blaming attitudes (Suarez and Gadalla, 2010). Other intercorrelations among the attitude variables were only marginally and inconsistently related.

Overall, students' designation of sanctions, guilt, and responsibility showed significant associations with students' preformed attitudes, suggesting that attitudes held consistent across a

range of scenarios depicting campus sexual assaults. Specifically, the three attitude scales (i.e., Sexism, Downplaying Rape, Rape Myths) that reflect negative views toward women generally and regarding sexual assault were most predictive of students' applications of justice. If a student indicated stronger beliefs discriminating against women and/or rationalizing reasons for a sexual assault occurring, that student was more likely to be lenient toward the perpetrator by being less certain the perpetrator should be punished and selecting less severe sanctions, as well as placing more liability on the victim by assigning higher proportions of guilt and responsibility. Because the scenarios were written to depict sexual assault, it is unlikely that students would have varied in their judgments based on not understanding what was depicted – rather, these associations of attitudes across assignments of sanctions, guilt and responsibility suggest general styles of viewing these cases along the lines of entertaining rape myths and holding sexist attitudes.

Our hypothesis that constructs most closely related to the topic in question, in this case sexual assault, would demonstrate the highest influence on responses was supported. As the constructs became broader, requiring greater inferences relating the construct to the topic, the impact of those attitudes was weaker and inconsistently showed significant influence on the students' responses. Even among the three attitudinal constructs that demonstrated significant associations with students' assignments of justice, the stronger endorsement of Rape Myths (i.e., the concept most closely related to the issue in question) produced the strongest associations with reduced sanctions applied to perpetrators, but increased blame and guilt assigned to victims. Not surprisingly, a stronger endorsement of rape myth acceptance has been found to also indicate strong victim blaming attitudes (Suarez and Gadalla, 2010; Hammond et. al., 2011), therefore explaining the less punitive sanctions and decreased blame on the perpetrator in the current study. Next most predictive of students' ratings was the concept of downplaying the significance of rape, wherein

the importance of this concept was evident for higher endorsement of this type of rape myth associated with leniency toward the perpetrator, not only in relation to severity of punishment, but also through less certainty the perpetrator deserved any punishment. Consequently, these students also attributed more guilt and blame to the victim. While previous studies have found that participants who viewed themselves as similar to the victims assigned more blame to the perpetrator of the rape (e.g., Grubb and Harrower, 2008), it is possible that those who find similarities with themselves and the perpetrator might be more lenient in assigning sanctions. Students who support sexist views showed a little more variation in their assignment of justice regarding sanctions, guilt, and responsibility across the versions than the two rape myth scales. Overall, however, sexist views appeared related to assigning increased responsibility to the victim and less responsibility to the perpetrator. As predicted, these three scales were the most influential in students' judgments because they specifically relate to the context of various vignettes (e.g., certainty of the rape, victim drinking).

Although more removed from predicting judgments for scenarios of forced sex, right-wing authoritarianism was still hypothesized to be potentially related to students' perceptions of justice due to the concept's ideal surrounding procedural justice. The hypothesis was based on prior research indicating that conservative political beliefs are predicative of rape acceptance (Anderson, Cooper, and Okamura, 1997). Likewise, ideological beliefs espousing that the world is just were expected to demonstrate a relationship to students' assignments of justice. However, these findings showed only weak effects regarding assignment of guilt and responsibility, wherein highly authoritarian students assigned more guilt and responsibility to the victim and less guilt and responsibility to the perpetrator.

Just world beliefs were the least predictive for influencing perceptions of justice. Given

that this scale is an indicator of a personal social contract between the individual and their surrounding world (Dalbert, 1999), a possible explanation for the insignificance might be due to the lack of the participant's personal involvement in the unjust scenarios presented. These beliefs demonstrated an insignificant relationship for all outcomes in the overall sample, but there were some inconsistent and weak effects evident among the versions, which may be a function of the lower internal consistency this scale has at times demonstrated (Hayes, Lorenz, and Bell, 2013). In this study, coefficients alpha and omega of the scale were not very strong, and additional research exploring the usefulness of this scale for assessing judgments in this area of research is warranted.

Limitations. Although this study produced interesting relationships of preformed attitudes with students' assignment of justice across a range of campus sexual assault scenarios, it is not without limitations. First, some scales used to measure attitudes were adapted or reduced from the original scales to minimize survey burden. Using full scales in future research might allow for the development of stronger predictive measures. Second, this is an exploratory study looking at correlations between attitudes and perceptions of justice which were measured at the same time. Future models will want to take sequencing into account, designing a model measuring attitudes prior to perceptions and ideally at two separate times to increase the strength of predictability of outcomes. Modeling a study to assess which of the scales discussed have a moderating effect on the outcomes could be researched as well. Third, due to sample size, our analyses were restricted to looking at variance across versions. Collecting a larger sample would allow for analyses to be done at the factor level. And fourth, data were not collected on students' socioeconomic background, although this variable could potentially influence students' preformed beliefs about sexual assault.

Because our sample of college students was identified using a participant pool where students in lower level psychology courses are required to participate in research, our results are based on responses by a greater portion of younger students rather than a better representation of students across years in college. It is possible that younger students may have less exposure to information discrediting stereotypes of sexual assault and victims, but they are also the students for whom educational interventions are most likely to be targeted. Although additional demographics of this sample that were collected are basically in line with the university's student demographics, and student demographics did not vary significantly across different versions of the survey, further research could investigate whether racial/ethnic, gender, or other relevant demographic differences produce other results.

Implications. Because the findings from this study bolster prior concerns that rape myth acceptance and sexist attitudes are basic to how individuals assess cases of sexual assault, these findings support the importance of informing and educating students regarding the fallacies of these concepts in general and regarding sexual assault specifically. These data support the case for inclusion of education regarding attitudes for prevention efforts regarding sexual assault on campuses. The importance of this study in suggesting that these preformed attitudes are linked to students' perceptions as to whether a perpetrator should be sanctioned and what that sanction might be, also suggests that any students who might be part of hearing panels for university sexual misconduct cases be required to have training to potentially counteract biasing stereotypes regarding sexual assault.

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Table 1
Factor Descriptions and Levels

Name of Factor		Levels	Description of each level and version of survey on which it appeared
Victim Characteristics	1. Reason for Victim's Incapacitation leading to Sexual Assault *Angelone, Mitchell, & Pilafova, 2007; Girard & Senn, 2008; Hammock & Richardson, 1997*	3	1. Victim slipped a drug without her knowledge (V3)
			2. Victim slipped extra liquor without her knowledge (V2)
			3. Victim was voluntarily drinking a lot (V4)
	6. Sexual Orientation of Male Victim *Sleath & Bull, 2010; Wakelin & Long, 2003; White & Kurpius, 2002*	3	1. Straight man sexually assaulted by gay man (V1)
			2. Gay virgin man sexually assaulted by gay man (V3)
			3. Gay man sexually assaulted by gay man (V4)
	11. Level of Attractiveness of Victim *Calhoun, Selby, Cann, & Keller, 1978; Ryckman, Graham et al., 1998*	2	1. Small and cute victim (V1)
			2. Larger and less attractive victim (V2)
	14. Initial Level of Sexual Interest indicated by the Victim *Kowalski, 1992; Schult & Schneider, 1991*	2	1. Woman very interested in sexual activity initially but then decides she does not want to have intercourse (V2)
			2. Woman only mildly responsive to man and states at the onset she does not want to have intercourse (V4)
Perpetrator Characteristics	5. Accused's Reaction Varied as to Discrepancy with the Victim's Account	3	1. Accused admits to sexual assault (V1)
			2. Accused reported surprise and said he must have misunderstood victim's reactions (V4)
			3. Accused had a very discrepant story from victim claiming her consent (V3)
	9. Perpetrator as High Status Student on Campus	2	1. Intercourse forced on woman by star basketball player (V4)
			2. Intercourse forced on woman by student with no status (V1)
	10. Sexual Assault Perpetrator was Fraternity Member *Jozkowski & Wiersma-Mosley, 2017*	2	1. Forced intercourse by a member of a fraternity (V2)
			2. Forced intercourse by an individual with no fraternity membership (V4)
	12. Gender of the Assaulting Perpetrator in Heterosexual Sexual Assault	2	1. Female forces oral sex on male (V3)
			2. Male forces oral sex on woman (V1)

	Ballman, Leheney, Miller, Simmons & Wilson, 2016		

	Name of Factor	Levels	Description of each level and number of survey on which it appeared
Sexual Assault Characteristics	2. Physical Injury Resulting from Sexual Assault *Cohn, Dupuis, & Brown, 2009*	2	1. Physical injuries resulted from the sexual assault. (V4) 2. Victim did not incur any physical injuries from the sexual assault (V1)
	3. Medical Consequences from the Sexual Assault	3	1. Victim contracted a STI from the sexual assault (V1) 2. Victim became pregnant from the sexual assault(V4) 3. No STI or pregnancy occurred (V2)
	4. Psychological Sequelae Resulting from the Sexual Assault *Pickel & Gentry, 2017; Omata, 2013*	2	1. Victim had serious psychological sequelae from the sexual assault (V2) 2. Victim did not have psychological sequelae from the sexual assault (V4)
	7. Type of Forced Sex	4	1. Man forces oral sex (cunnilingus) on woman (V1) 2. Man forces woman to perform oral sex (fellatio) on him (V2) 3. Man forces anal sex on woman (V3) 4. Man forces vaginal intercourse on woman (V4)
	8. Individual versus Multiple Perpetrator Sexual Assault *Shackelford, 2002*	2	1. Forced intercourse by man on a woman (V3) 2. Three men force intercourse on a woman (V4)
	13. Race of Victim and Perpetrator *George & Martinez, 2002*	4	1. Both victim and perpetrator are African American (V1) 2. Victim is African American and perpetrator is Caucasian (V2) 3. Victim is Caucasian and perpetrator is African American (V3) 4. Both victim and perpetrator are Caucasian (V4)

Table 2

Effect Sizes (Cohen's d) for Mean Differences for all Outcome Variables Across Versions

	Variable		*M*				Cohen's *d*			
		Range	V1 (n = 219)	V2 (n = 215)	V3 (n = 206)	V4 (n = 206)	V1 vs. V3	V1 vs. V4	V2 vs. V3	V3 vs. V4
1	Attitude about punishment	1-4	3.84	3.82	3.68	3.74	0.57	0.37	0.49	0.22, ns
2	Type of punishment	1-13	11.04	11.19	10.45	11.14	0.28, ns	0.05, ns	0.34	0.34
3	Level of punishment	0-3	2.52	2.59	2.40	2.49	0.23, ns	0.06, ns	0.37	0.18, ns
4	Percent guilt assigned to the victim	0-100	9.30	11.38	14.59	12.47	0.31	0.20, ns	0.19, ns	0.13, ns
5	Percent guilt assigned to the perpetrator	0-100	90.70	88.62	85.41	87.50	0.31	0.20, ns	0.19, ns	0.13, ns
6	Victim's responsibility	1-5	1.41	1.48	1.59	1.56	0.41	0.34	0.23, ns	0.06, ns
7	Perpetrator's responsibility	1-5	4.70	4.64	4.50	4.55	0.47	0.36	0.31	0.13, ns

Note. All differences between V1 and V2, and between V2 and V4 were not significant and thus were not displayed. V = version. ns = non-significant.

Table 3

Bivariate Correlations Among Study Variables for Version 1 (n = 219; Left-diagonal) and Version 2 (n = 215; Right-diagonal)

	Attitude variables								Dependent variables						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Attitude variables															
1. Sexism		.50**	.58**	.54**	.44**	.54**	.38**	.30**	-.22**	-.28**	.01	.10	-.10	.25**	-.25**
2. Downplaying the Severity of Rape	.49**		.62**	.56**	.69**	.65**	.26**	.14*	-.35**	-.35**	-.17*	.17*	-.17*	.37**	-.36**
3. Rape Myth Acceptance: She asked for it	.53**	.66**		.70**	.71**	.74**	.29**	.20**	-.26**	-.36**	-.16**	.26**	-.26**	.53**	-.49**
4. Rape Myth Acceptance: He didn't mean to	.48**	.58**	.68**		.64**	.74**	.32**	.21**	-.26**	-.33**	-.09	.14*	-.14*	.35**	-.31**
5. Rape Myth Acceptance: It's not rape	.41**	.69**	.65**	.57**		.66**	.26**	.16 *	-.30**	-.30**	-.11	.15*	-.15*	.37**	-.35**
6. Rape Myth Acceptance: She lied	.54**	.65**	.69**	.63**	.62**		.33**	.21**	-.25**	-.29**	-.11	.13	-.13	.37**	-.37**
7. Right Wing Authoritarianism	.22**	.06	.15	.18**	.17*	.17*		.29**	-.05	-.09	.04	.13	-.13	.08	-.09
8. Just World Beliefs	.24**	.07	.12	.13	.07	.13	.19**		-.04	-.09	-.02	-.17*	.17*	.06	-.09
Dependent variables															
9. Attitude about punishment	-.09	-.19**	-.08	-.17*	-.18**	-.15*	-.05	-.06		.52**	.25**	-.34**	.34**	-.56**	.47**
10. Type of punishment	-.05	-.18**	-.21**	-.18**	-.23**	-.20**	.03	-.01	.33**		.50**	-.29**	.29**	-.48**	.49**
11. Level of punishment	.03	-.05	-.01	-.03	-.03	-.06	-.03	.17*	.12	.32**		-.18**	.18**	-.20**	.27 **
12. Guilt assigned to the victim	.09	.19**	.18**	.11	.22**	.11	-.05	-.08	-.16*	-.23**	-.09		-1.00**	.46**	-.47**
13. Guilt assigned to the perpetrator	-.09	-.19**	-.18**	-.11	-.22**	-.11	.05	.08	.16*	.23**	.09	-1.00**		-.46**	.47**
14. Victim's responsibility	.23**	.34**	.56**	.34**	.43**	.37**	.07	.08	-.29**	-.40**	-.14*	.35**	-.35**		-.83**
15. Perpetrator's responsibility	-.25**	-.41**	-.50**	-.35**	-.48**	-.36**	-.11	-.08	.33**	.39**	.10	-.40**	.40**	-.83**	

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

Table 4

Bivariate Correlations Among all Study Variables for Version 3 (n = 206; Left-diagonal) and Version 4 (n = 206; Right-diagonal) Data

	Attitude variables								Dependent variables						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Attitude variables															
1. Sexism		.46**	.54**	.48**	.46**	.57**	.26**	.25**	-.22**	-.35**	-.02	.19**	-.18**	.42**	-.36**
2. Downplaying the Severity of Rape	.54**		.73**	.64**	.70**	.73**	.14*	.17*	-.38**	-.48**	-.10	.24**	-.23**	.46**	-.44**
3. Rape Myth Acceptance: She asked for it	.62**	.68**		.67**	.70**	.74**	.27**	.18*	-.40**	-.52**	-.08	.32**	-.32**	.67**	-.62**
4. Rape Myth Acceptance: He didn't mean to	.49**	.56**	.70**		.65**	.63**	.14*	.24**	-.31**	-.41**	.02	.23**	-.23**	.44**	-.43**
5. Rape Myth Acceptance: It's not rape	.49**	.65**	.68**	.57**		.61**	.08	.16*	-.37**	-.49**	-.08	.26**	-.25**	.43**	-.43**
6. Rape Myth Acceptance: She lied	.51**	.62**	.77**	.62**	.56**		.22**	.15*	-.35**	-.44**	-.07	.25**	-.25**	.50**	-.46**
7. Right Wing Authoritarianism	.17*	.13	.18*	.17*	.07	.22**		.17*	-.08	-.15*	.04	.11	-.11	.20**	-.15*
8. Just World Beliefs	.19**	.18**	.20**	.25**	.15*	.17*	.16*		-.09	-.18**	.06	.01	-.01	.13	-.12
Dependent variables															
9. Attitude about punishment	-.23**	-.28**	-.31**	-.22**	-.24**	-.32**	.04	-.06		.55**	.19**	-.39**	.37**	-.55**	.60**
10. Type of punishment	-.17*	-.32**	-.29**	-.24**	-.22**	-.26**	.08	-.09	.25**		.32**	.38**	.37**	-.51**	.57**
11. Level of punishment	-.03	-.02	-.03	.08	-.04	-.02	.11	.11	.03	.22**		-.21**	.20**	-.12	.15*
12. Guilt assigned to the victim	.19**	.21**	.27**	.28**	.15*	.31**	.18**	.06	-.24**	-.10	.05		-1.00**	.47**	-.49**
13. Guilt assigned to the perpetrator	-.19**	-.21**	-.27**	-.28**	-.15*	-.31**	-.18**	-.06	.24**	.10	-.05	-1.00**		-.45**	.48**
14. Victim's responsibility	.43**	.41**	.57**	.42**	.35**	.48**	.13	.15*	-.38**	-.30**	-.08	.35**	-.35**		-.85**
15. Perpetrator's responsibility	-.34**	-.35**	-.45**	-.40**	-.36**	-.40**	-.08	-.21**	.40**	.32**	.14*	-.33**	.33**	-.71**	

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

Table 5

Bivariate Correlations Among Study Variables for all Participants (N = 846)

	Attitude variables								Dependent variables					
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Attitude variables														
1. Sexism														
2. Downplaying the Severity of Rape	.50**													
3. Rape Myth Acceptance: She asked for it	.57**	.67**												
4. Rape Myth Acceptance: He didn't mean to	.50**	.58**	.69**											
5. Rape Myth Acceptance: It's not rape	.45**	.68**	.68**	.61**										
6. Rape Myth Acceptance: She lied	.55**	.66**	.73**	.66**	.61**									
7. Right Wing Authoritarianism	.26**	.15**	.21**	.21**	.15**	.24**								
8. Just World Beliefs	.24**	.14**	.17**	.21**	.13**	.16**	.20**							
Dependent variables														
9. Attitude about punishment	-.20**	-.30**	-.26**	-.24**	-.27**	-.28**	-.03	-0.05						
10. Type of punishment	-.21**	-.33**	-.33**	-.28**	-.31**	-.29**	-.03	-.11**	.41**					
11. Level of punishment	-.01	-.08*	-.07*	-.00	-.06	-.07*	.04	.09*	.16**	.35**				
12. Guilt assigned to the victim	.15**	.20**	.26**	.19**	.20**	.21**	.09*	-.05	-.29**	-.25**	-.11**			
13. Guilt assigned to the perpetrator	-.15**	-.20**	-.26**	-.19**	-.19**	-.21**	-.09*	.05	.29**	.25**	.11**	-1.00**		
14. Victim's responsibility	.33**	.40**	.58**	.39**	.39**	.43**	.11**	.10**	-.46**	-.42**	-.15**	.42**	-.41**	
15. Perpetrator's responsibility	-.31**	-.39**	-.51**	-.37**	-.40**	-.40**	-.11**	-.11**	.47**	.44**	.18**	-.43**	.43**	-.81**

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

Appendix A

Table A1

Chi-Square Dependence Test Results of Categorical Demographic Variables Difference Across Version

Types of Variables	df	χ^2	*p*
Gender	3	1.764	.623
Race	12	9.949	.620
Nationality	3	4.235	.237
City	15	13.699	.548
Year Level	9	11.502	.243

Table A2

Analysis of Variance Test Result of Age Difference Across Version

	n	*M*	*SD*
Version 1	219	19.19	2.69
Version 2	215	18.85	1.34
Version 3	206	19.00	1.92
Version 4	206	18.99	2.39

Note. F (3,842) = .895, p = .443.

Table A3

Chi-square Dependency Test Results on the Invariance of Students' Demographics Across Four Versions of the Survey

Types of Variables	df	χ^2	*p*
Gender	3	1.764	.623
Race	12	9.949	.620
Nationality	3	4.235	.237
City	15	13.699	.548
Year Level	9	11.502	.243