

In the Eye of the Beholder: Do Behavior and Character Affect Victim and Perpetrator Responsibility for Acquaintance Rape?¹

ELLEN S. COHN² AND

ERIN C. DUPUIS

University of New Hampshire

TIFFANY M. BROWN

Bowling Green State University

Acquaintance rape attributions of responsibility were investigated. In Study 1, participants viewed videotapes that varied the female victim's resistance (verbal, physical, verbal/physical) and the reaction of the perpetrator (anger, no reaction) or a control videotape. The victim was held less responsible and the perpetrator was held more responsible when the victim resisted. In Study 2, participants viewed videotapes that manipulated victim and perpetrator reputation. Victims were held more responsible when they had a bad reputation; perpetrators were held more responsible when the victim had a good reputation or the perpetrator had a bad reputation. Hostile sexism predicted victim responsibility in both studies; rape myth predicted victim and perpetrator responsibility in Study 2. Implications for the legal system are discussed.

Acquaintance rape is a serious social problem. White and Humphrey (1997) found that 69.8% of college women had experienced sexual violence at least once from the age of 14 through the fourth year of college. An estimated 15% of U.S. women have been raped or will be raped in their lifetimes (Koss, 2000).

Acquaintance rape has been defined as forced sexual intercourse that occurs between individuals who are acquainted or romantically involved (Meyer, 1984). The fact that a victim is often acquainted with her attacker creates a more ambiguous situation for observers; judgments concerning who is responsible for the incident become less clear (e.g., Brownmiller, 1975). Various researchers (e.g., Estrich, 1987; Klemmack & Klemmack, 1976) have reported evidence that acquaintance rape is not thought of as "real" rape, even by the victims. Attributions of responsibility to victims are often higher

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²Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Ellen S. Cohn, Department of Psychology, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH 03824. E-mail: ellen.cohn@unh.edu

for acquaintance rape, when compared to stranger rape (Bridges & McGrail, 1989).

Victims of acquaintance rape may not consider the incident to be a serious crime and, consequently, choose not to report it. If the victims do not perceive these incidents as crimes, it is not surprising that observers also have difficulty assigning responsibility for the rape. This trend leads to a need to understand the factors that may influence people's attributions of responsibility to the victim and perpetrator in a case of acquaintance rape.

What types of factors affect the perception of rape and the attribution of victim and perpetrator responsibility in acquaintance rape scenarios? Researchers looking at consent and the attribution of responsibility in acquaintance rape have found significant gender differences (Cohn et al., 2001; Hickman & Muehlenhard, 1999). Other important factors are the coercive actions of the perpetrator in initiating sexual activity (Emmers-Sommer & Allen, 1999; Langley, Beatty, Yost, & O'Neal, 1991); the victim's resistance to it (Brady, Chrisler, Hosdale, Osowiecki, & Veal, 1991; Bridges & McGrail, 1989; Kowalski, 1992; Langley et al., 1991; Shotland & Goodstein, 1983; Sugarman & Babbitt, 1995); and individual differences, such as rape myth (Brady et al., 1991; Kopper, 1996; Krahe, 1988; Parkinson & Cohn, 1990; Viki, Abrams, & Masser, 2004). Ryckman, Graham, Thornton, Gold, and Lindner (1998) found that large victims and perpetrators were held more responsible than were small victims and perpetrators in a case of stranger rape.

Although researchers have examined the aforementioned variables in attribution of responsibility for rape, reputation has been ignored. The one exception is Jones and Aronson's (1973) classic study in which respectability or reputation was operationalized as marital status (a married woman was more respectable than a single or divorced woman). The purpose of the present paper is to investigate the factors that influence attribution of responsibility in an acquaintance rape based on differences in victim resistance and reputation, and perpetrator reaction and reputation using a video vignette methodology.

While there has been some consistency in the research between acquaintance and stranger rape, Shotland and Goodstein (1983) suggested that perhaps acquaintance rape is viewed in a different context than is stranger rape. Bridges (1991) found that participants who read about a case of acquaintance rape were more influenced by rape-supportive beliefs and sex-role expectations than were participants who read about a case of stranger rape. Although the present study focuses on acquaintance rape, we reviewed the resistance literature on stranger rape and acquaintance rape because so few researchers have studied the effects of women's resistance on attribution of responsibility.

Resistance

Stranger Rape

In an analysis of situational factors, McCaul, Veltum, Boyechko, and Crawford (1990) found that victim blame was influenced by the use of resistance; that is, victims were blamed less often if they resisted in some manner. On the other hand, Deitz (1980) found that participants blamed victims less when they did not actively resist their attackers. One explanation comes from Ryckman, Kaczor, and Thornton's (1992) study of participants who held traditional conservative and nontraditional views. They found that traditional conservatives perceived the rape victim who resisted more responsible, while nontraditional feminists perceived the rape victim who did not resist more responsible for the victimization.

Acquaintance Rape

In contrast to stranger rape, acquaintance rape is more ambiguous, and attribution of responsibility becomes more complex as people must tease apart who is to blame when those involved know each other. Prior acquaintance with a perpetrator diminishes the seriousness of the situation for those attributing responsibility (Pollard, 1992). Perpetrators in an acquaintance-rape situation are held to be less responsible than perpetrators of stranger-rape situations (Viki et al., 2004). Brady et al. (1991) stated that, overall, victims were blamed less if they responded by kicking and were blamed most if they used only verbal protests. If the woman does not resist physically, observers might perceive that no force was used, even if she did not verbally consent to the sexual intercourse. This belief suggests that victims will be held less responsible if they resist physically than if they resist verbally.

Although acquaintance rape has been studied, few researchers have manipulated victim resistance in cases of acquaintance rape (Bridges & McGrail, 1989; Kowalski, 1992; Shotland & Goodstein, 1983; Sugarman & Babbitt, 1995). Perpetrators were blamed more when the victim used verbal resistance (the request to stop is ignored) than when no request was made (Kowalski, 1992; Sugarman & Babbitt, 1995). Furthermore, Kowalski found that the victim was held less responsible when she resisted verbally (i.e., said "No").

Shotland and Goodstein (1983) found contrasting results when they manipulated the type of resistance (verbal alone vs. verbal and physical) used by the victim who was raped while on a date. Interestingly, the victim was blamed for the situation, regardless of the kind of resistance she used.

However, participants viewed the situation as more violent and more likely to be a case of rape when only verbal resistance was used.

Reputation

As previously mentioned, little research has been conducted using reputation as a variable in attribution of responsibility in cases of acquaintance rape. The original study of reputation was that of Jones and Aronson (1973), who operationalized reputation as respectability in terms of marital status. They found that a more respectable person (a virgin or a married rape victim) was held more responsible for her behavior than was a less respectable person (a divorcée). The present paper further investigates reputation, but reputation is operationalized as good or bad social character.

In a British study of over 1,000 adults, 30% of the participants believed that the victim of a rape was to blame in some way (Heaven, Connors, & Pretorius, 1998). On the other hand, Kassin, Williams, and Saunders (1990) found that although an expert witness was harmed by an examination that damaged his reputation, a rape victim's credibility was not damaged by questions that attempted to undermine her reputation (i.e., that she had previously accused men of rape). It is possible that participants did not believe that such questions were fair when directed at a rape victim (Kassin et al., 1990).

Researchers have largely ignored perpetrator reputation. One study that examined evaluative and descriptive components of an offender's personality found that participants were more confident in a guilty verdict when the offender was described as dislikable and aggressive, as opposed to likable and not aggressive (Alicke & Yurak, 1995). We believe that varying the reputation of the victim and the perpetrator will greatly affect how participants attribute responsibility. This research is important because we are manipulating both victim and perpetrator reputation, whereas past research has tended to manipulate only the victim's reputation or only the perpetrator's reputation.

Individual Differences

It should be noted that inconsistencies in the findings within the acquaintance rape literature also suggest that there are other factors that could affect participants' attributions of responsibility. Ambivalent sexism (Glick & Fiske, 1996) and rape myth acceptance (Payne, Lonsway, & Fitzgerald, 1999) are two such factors.

Ambivalent Sexism

Glick and Fiske (1996) postulated that hostile attitudes toward women might coexist with positive, benevolent attitudes, thus resulting in ambivalent sexism. Ambivalent sexism is composed of two complementary components of sexist attitudes. *Benevolent sexism* is a positive outlook of the female sex based on a man's belief that women need to be protected and adored (Glick & Fiske, 2001). *Hostile sexism* is an oppositional view of women in which women are perceived as attempting to control men (Glick & Fiske, 2001).

Studies have suggested that both men and women have a more favorable view of women than of men (Carpenter, 2001; Eagly & Mladinic, 1993). However, the characteristics ascribed to women as favorable or positive tend to place them in domestic roles (i.e., warm, nurturing; Eagly & Mladinic, 1993). The traits ascribed to women may further reinforce a lower status for the female sex (Glick & Fiske, 2001). In a study that examined perpetrator responsibility in an acquaintance rape scenario, participants who scored higher on the benevolent sexism scale were more likely to attribute less blame to the perpetrator and also to recommend shorter prison sentences (Viki et al., 2004).

Rape Myth Acceptance and Resistance

In addition to holding sexist beliefs, rape myth acceptance might also play a role in the attribution of responsibility. Burt (1980) suggested that the crime of rape is often justified or ignored by people who endorse rape myths. She defined *rape myths* as "prejudicial, stereotyped, or false beliefs about rape, rape victims, and rapists" (p. 217). Lonsway and Fitzgerald (1994) defined rape myths more extensively as "attitudes and beliefs that are generally false but are widely and persistently held, and that serve to deny and justify male sexual aggression against women" (p. 134).

Rape myths serve as a defense mechanism to protect the individual from realizing the extent of sexual aggression against women (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994). Examples of prevailing myths include the belief that victims who wear seductive clothes, drink alcohol, or engage in suggestive behaviors are more responsible for being raped. Additional myths that underlie justifications for rape include the idea that it is acceptable for a man to force a woman to have sex if the woman initiates the date; if the man pays the dating expenses; or if the couple goes to his apartment or a movie, rather than to a religious event (Muehlenhard, Friedman, & Thomas, 1985).

An alternative perspective is provided by Warshaw and Parrot (1991), who suggested that many men are socialized to ignore women's objections,

even when they resist physically. Many men and women believe in a sexual script in which the woman puts forth an insincere display of resistance, and the man must be sexually aggressive and overcome the woman's token resistance (Muehlenhard & Hollabaugh, 1988). This script seems especially likely in cases of acquaintance rape, but few researchers have focused on the role of resistance in such cases. In a study by Mills and Granoff (1992), men who scored higher in believing that the woman used token resistance were less likely to believe that sexual intercourse was rape when the woman said "No."

Investigating the link between the belief in rape myths and attribution of responsibility, Kopper (1996), Krahe (1988), and Parkinson and Cohn (1990) found that people who believe in rape myths were more likely to hold the victim responsible and less likely to hold the perpetrator responsible than were people who do not believe in rape myths. Furthermore, a great deal of research (Brady et al., 1991; Kopper, 1996; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994; Szymanski, Devlin, Chrisler, & Vyse, 1993) has provided evidence that men typically believe in more rape myths than do women. Such findings suggest that men and women have different perceptions of rape, which could be reflected in their attributions of responsibility.

The Present Research

All of these findings lead us to several important questions. How much resistance and what kind of resistance are necessary for a particular scenario to be seen as nonconsensual? How might men and women attribute responsibility differently, based on the victim's resistance? Is a perpetrator's acknowledgment of the victim's resistance a significant factor in the assessment of rape? How does the perpetrator's reaction affect attribution of responsibility? How does reputation affect attribution of responsibility for a victim and perpetrator who have had no prior dating history?

The first study was conducted to investigate attribution of responsibility based on victim resistance. Furthermore, this first study expands on past research by including perpetrator reaction as a predictor of attribution of responsibility. To our knowledge, there has been no previous research examining perpetrator reaction in attribution of responsibility. Therefore, the hypothesis that a perpetrator who reacts angrily will be held more responsible than a perpetrator who does not react is entirely exploratory. The victim's testimony in the courtroom usually includes a description of events and a description of how the perpetrator reacted to any form of resistance. We believe perpetrator reaction is an important piece of information in attribution of responsibility.

This research is valuable, as it utilizes a video vignette method. This methodology may be a marked improvement over having participants read a

written scenario. The video vignette may make the situation more realistic and provide participants with more context for the situation so that they are prevented from filling in the blanks with their own ideas of behavior that might have occurred (Sleed, Durrheim, Kriel, Solomon, & Baxter, 2002).

As previously stated, the video methodology is an improvement over the written vignette. When given a written vignette, participants were more likely to attribute blame to the victim (Sleed et al., 2002). Participants were likely to “fill in the details” when given a written vignette, possibly inventing information that was never given (Sleed et al., 2002, p. 25). Therefore, we believe that the video method used in this study is an improvement over much of the rape literature examining attribution of responsibility.

Study 1

In the first study, participants viewed a videotape with a victim (Laura) resisting a perpetrator's (Tim's) unwanted sexual advances verbally, physically, or both verbally and physically, and a perpetrator reacting angrily or not reacting. We hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 1. Men will hold the victim more responsible than will women.

Hypothesis 2. A victim who does not resist her attacker will be held more responsible than a victim who resists physically, verbally, or both.

Hypothesis 3. The perpetrator will be held more responsible when he reacts angrily and the victim resists.

It is predicted that perpetrator reaction will play a role in attribution of responsibility. It may appear to participants that a perpetrator who does not react does not understand that his actions are wrong, whereas an angry perpetrator may appear to be trying to hurt the victim. Finally, we hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 4. Participants who score higher in rape myth acceptance and hostile sexism and lower in benevolent sexism will be more likely to hold the victim responsible.

Method

Participants

Study participants included 250 students (136 women, 114 men) from introductory psychology classes at the University of New Hampshire.

Roughly 80% of the participants were in their first year of college, with a mean sample age of 18.3 years ($SD = 0.8$).

Procedure

Students were asked to watch one of the seven videos and to answer a questionnaire composed of demographic and open-ended questions, as well as a series of responsibility and attitude scales. The six manipulation videos varied the kind of resistance shown by the female victim (verbal, physical, or both) and the reaction of the male perpetrator (anger vs. no reaction). Participants who did not view a manipulation video watched a control video in which neither the victim nor the perpetrator reacted.

Materials

Videos. We created six videos for each of the combinations of victim resistance and perpetrator reaction. All of the videos began with the perpetrator and the victim amicably entering a living-room area, which was decorated so as to appear gender-neutral. After a brief dialogue, both individuals sat down on a couch. The perpetrator and victim engaged in a dialogue in which each informed the other that they had a good time with the other, and that they felt that the other was “different.” The perpetrator then kissed the victim. This was staged as a consensual physical encounter. The perpetrator then started to remove the victim’s outer layer of clothing. At this point, the victim either responded with verbal resistance (“I only wanted to kiss you . . .”), physical resistance (pushing the perpetrator away), or verbal and physical resistance (a combination of the two kinds of resistance). If the victim resisted verbally, physically, or verbally and physically, the perpetrator either reacted angrily (in a loud voice, “You’ve been all over me all night!”) or not at all. After both victim resistance and perpetrator reaction had occurred, the clip ended. (In addition to the six manipulation videos, a control video was created in which if the victim did not resist, the perpetrator did not react.)

Questionnaire packet. Participants were given a packet containing questions about demographics (i.e., sex, age, religion), victim and perpetrator responsibility scales, and attitudinal scales. The first page of the packet read “After the video ended, TIM AND LAURA HAD SEXUAL INTERCOURSE.”

Responsibility scales. The victim and perpetrator responsibility scales included a set of 30 statements about the victim’s and the perpetrator’s

responsibility for what happened. The victim responsibility statements included "Laura pressured Tim" and "Laura is responsible." The perpetrator responsibility statements included "Tim planned it" and "Tim should have listened to Laura."

Attitude scales. The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI; Glick & Fiske, 1996; $\alpha = .83$) is a 22-item measure that assesses two different components (hostile sexism and benevolent sexism) of sexist attitudes toward women. The Hostile Sexism subscale categorizes sexist opposition of the female sex; while the Benevolent Sexism subscale represents a more positive outlook of the female sex (Glick & Fiske, 1996). The Illinois Rape Myth Scale (IRMS; Payne et al., 1999) was also included. The IRMS ($\alpha = .94$) is a 20-item scale that measures acceptance of rape myths.

Results

Factor Analysis

A principal components factor analysis of the victim responsibility scale and the perpetrator responsibility scale was conducted. We used two different methods for the factor analysis. First, all of the responsibility items were entered into one analysis, but the results of this analysis were not interpretable. No communalities could be found among items.

The second method separated victim and perpetrator items. Factor analysis for the victim responsibility items reveals one reliable factor ($\alpha = .83$), which was labeled *victim responsibility*. Factor analysis for the perpetrator responsibility reveals one reliable factor ($\alpha = .71$), which was labeled *perpetrator responsibility*.³ The factor scores were standardized to a scale ranging from 0 to 100.

Victim and Perpetrator Responsibility

A MANCOVA was conducted with resistance (verbal, physical, both, or neither) as the independent variables, the IRMS (Payne et al., 1999) and the Ambivalent Sexism scale (both Hostile and Benevolent Sexism factors) as the covariates, and victim and perpetrator responsibility as the dependent variables. The correlation matrix is presented in Table 1. At the multivariate level, there were significant effects of hostile sexism, $F(2, 211) = 5.01$,

³For complete factor analysis loadings of the victim and perpetrator responsibility scales, please contact the first author.

Table 1

Correlations of Study Variables: Study 1

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Victim responsibility	—						
2. Perpetrator responsibility	-.56**	—					
3. Sex	.11	-.04	—				
4. Hostile sexism	.24**	-.03	-.36**	—			
5. Benevolent sexism	.08	.07	-.19**	.30**	—		
6. IRMA	-.06	.01	.15*	-.21**	-.12	—	
7. Victim reputation	.07	-.16*	.01	.03	.02	.09	—
8. Perpetrator reputation	-.25**	.22**	-.09	.01	-.03	-.11	-.17*

Note. IRMA = interpersonal rape myth acceptance.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

$p = .008$, Wilks's $\Lambda = .955$, partial $\eta^2 = .045$; and resistance, $F(6, 422) = 4.00$, $p < .001$, Wilks's $\Lambda = .895$, partial $\eta^2 = .054$.

Victim Responsibility

At the univariate level, there were significant effects of hostile sexism, $F(1, 212) = 8.44$, $p = .004$, partial $\eta^2 = .038$; and resistance, $F(3, 212) = 3.79$, $p = .011$, partial $\eta^2 = .051$. Hostile sexism was positively related to victim responsibility. The Scheffé post hoc test for significance ($p < .05$) indicates that the victim was held significantly less responsible when she resisted verbally ($M = 26.29$) or both verbally and physically ($M = 27.98$) than when she did nothing to resist ($M = 35.99$).

Perpetrator Responsibility

At the univariate level, resistance had a significant effect on perpetrator responsibility, $F(3, 212) = 7.94$, $p = .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .101$. The Scheffé post

hoc criterion for significance indicated that the perpetrator was held significantly less responsible when the victim did not resist in any way ($M = 71.08$) than when the victim resisted verbally ($M = 85.76$), physically ($M = 81.35$), or both verbally and physically ($M = 83.86$).

Discussion

It should be noted that the victim was held less responsible ($M = 28.98$) than the perpetrator ($M = 82.25$). Hypothesis 1, which predicted that men would hold the victim more responsible than women was not supported, despite past research (Calhoun, Selby, & Warring, 1976; Calhoun & Townsley, 1991; Langley, Yost et al., 1991; Thornton, Robbins, & Johnson, 1981). Hostile sexism and resistance were the significant variables in the formation of victim responsibility attributions.

Hypothesis 2, which predicted that a victim who did not resist her attacker would be held more responsible than a victim who resisted verbally, physically, or both verbally and physically was supported. The victim was held less responsible when she reacted verbally or verbally/physically compared to no resistance at all. It is possible that the lack of resistance by the victim is seen as a form of silent consent.

Hypothesis 3, which predicted that the perpetrator would be held more responsible when he reacted angrily was not supported. Neither victim nor perpetrator responsibility was affected by the perpetrator's reaction. Finally, Hypothesis 4 predicting that participants who scored higher on the IRMS (Payne et al., 1999) and the ambivalent sexism scale would hold the victim as more responsible was only partially supported. The IRMS and benevolent sexism were not significant predictors of attribution of victim responsibility. However, hostile sexism was a significant predictor of victim responsibility. Participants who held an oppositional view of women may have been more likely to believe that women would lie about rape in order to control or undermine the position of men in society.

Study 2

Researching attitudes toward acquaintance rape becomes important in the context of a trial. In a rape trial, there is the possibility that jurors will use evidentiary temptations to make their decision (Alicke, 1994; Kaplan & Kemmerick, 1974). It has become common in rape cases for the victim to have to defend her decisions or actions. Personal characteristics of the victim are considered and weighed because her testimony is needed to establish

whether unwanted sexual intercourse took place (Olsen-Fulero & Fulero, 1997). To judge whether intercourse really was unwanted, the jury must decide whether the testimony of the victim or the offender is more truthful or complete; when a victim is acquainted with her attacker, a more ambiguous situation is created for observers (Brownmiller, 1975). In cases of acquaintance rape, the facts usually do not provide overwhelming evidence, and jurors must draw conclusions about events, intentions, and personal characteristics of the victim and the offender (Olsen-Fulero & Fulero, 1997).

The purpose of Study 2 is to investigate the factors that influence attribution of responsibility based on differences in victim and perpetrator reputation. This is the first study that required participants to attribute responsibility based on the reputation of both the victim and the perpetrator. Participants in Study 1 may have believed that a lack of resistance on the part of the victim was a form of silent consent. We wanted to avoid making the scenario more ambiguous than necessary. Therefore, we used the video that depicted the victim resisting verbally and physically.

Past research has led us to several hypotheses. Therefore, we propose the following:

Hypothesis 5. Participants will attribute more responsibility to a victim with a bad reputation than to a victim with a good reputation. In addition, more blame will be attributed to a perpetrator with a bad reputation when compared to a perpetrator with a good reputation.

Hypothesis 6. Men will hold the victim as more responsible than will women.

Hypothesis 7. Participants who score higher in rape myth acceptance, hostile sexism, and benevolent sexism will hold the victim as more responsible and the perpetrator as less responsible than those scoring lower on these individual difference measures.

Method

Participants

Study participants included 274 students (167 women, 107 men) from introductory psychology classes at the University of New Hampshire. About 56% of the participants were in their first year of college, with a mean sample age of 19.4 years ($SD = 1.4$).

Procedure

Prior to viewing the videotape, the participants were given a sheet describing the reputations of the victim and the perpetrator. The information that participants were given varied the reputations of the victim and the perpetrator (good victim/good perpetrator, good victim/bad perpetrator, bad victim/good perpetrator, and bad victim/bad perpetrator). Each participant was only given one reputation manipulation.

Participants were then given a packet containing demographics, open-ended questions, victim and perpetrator responsibility scales, and attitudinal scales. After completing the packet, participants were given a debriefing form.

Materials

Video and reputation information. Participants watched the video used in Study 1 that depicted the victim reacting verbally and physically and the perpetrator reacting angrily. Using these videos, four manipulations were created for each of the combinations of victim and perpetrator reputation.

Before they watched the video, participants were given information about the reputations of the victim and the perpetrator. The victim had either a good reputation ("Laura dates occasionally and only goes out with guys she thinks would make great boyfriends. She doesn't 'hook up' and rarely goes to parties. Most of the guys that she's dated think that she's a sweet girl.") or a bad reputation ("Laura is always going to parties and leaving with a different guy every time. She usually spends the night with them at their places. Laura loves to compare her latest conquest with her previous partners."). The perpetrator also had either a good reputation ("Tim dates once or twice a month and usually takes his dates to the movies. He doesn't 'hook up' with random girls and rarely goes to parties. Most of the girls that he's dated think that he's a real gentleman.") or a bad reputation ("Tim is always trying to pick up girls. He's brought quite a few back to his place after parties. Many of them spend the night. Tim is always telling stories about the girls he's slept with, but it seems like it's never the same girl twice.").

Questionnaire packet. Participants were then asked to answer a questionnaire composed of demographic (i.e., age, sex, religion) and open-ended questions (e.g., "Did Tim rape Laura?"). The victim and perpetrator responsibility scales from Study 1 were also used. Additionally, the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI; Glick & Fiske, 1996; $\alpha = .95$), and the IRMS (Payne et al., 1999; $\alpha = .85$) were also used in Study 2 and are described in the Study 1 section.

Results

Manipulation Check

A manipulation check was administered to ascertain that participants understood the sheet that they had been given that described victim and perpetrator reputation. Participants were asked to indicate whether “Laura had a bad reputation.” When the victim had a good reputation, participants scored this item lower ($M = 1.57$) than when she actually did have a bad reputation ($M = 4.71$). The difference between the means was significant, $t(117) = 7.78, p < .001$.

An additional item asked whether “Tim had a bad reputation.” When the perpetrator actually had a good reputation, participants scored this item lower ($M = 2.05$) than when the perpetrator actually had a bad reputation ($M = 5.43$). The difference between the means was significant, $t(115) = 4.72, p = .03$. Based on these results, we believe that participants understood the scenario and reputation descriptions.

Factor Analysis

As in Study 1, the factor analysis was conducted using two different methods. First, to examine whether the factors that emerged in Study 1 would also emerge in Study 2, the victim and perpetrator items were analyzed separately. The same factors used in Study 1 did emerge in Study 2. However, the reliabilities of the factors were higher when the victim and perpetrator items were analyzed together.

A principal axis factor analysis was conducted on the responsibility to the victim and the perpetrator items and revealed a victim responsibility subscale (i.e., “Laura knew what she was getting into.”) and a perpetrator responsibility subscale (i.e., “Tim pressured Laura.”). The victim responsibility scale consists of 12 items (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .81$), and the perpetrator responsibility scale consists of 5 items ($\alpha = .76$). Items that had item overlap or low reliabilities were excluded.

Victim and Perpetrator Responsibility

A MANCOVA was conducted with victim reputation (good vs. bad) and perpetrator reputation (good vs. bad) as the independent variables, the IRMS and the Ambivalent Sexism Scale (both Hostile Sexism and Benevolent Sexism factors) as the covariates, and victim and perpetrator responsibility as the dependent variables. The correlation matrix is presented in

Table 2

Correlations of Study Variables: Study 2

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Victim responsibility	—						
2. Perpetrator responsibility	-.37**	—					
3. Sex	-.19**	.09	—				
4. Hostile sexism	.29**	-.11	-.35**	—			
5. Benevolent sexism	.12	.03	-.17**	.47**	—		
6. IRMA	-.39**	.39**	.12	-.09	.03	—	
7. Victim reputation	-.33**	.21**	.05	.03	.06	.06	—
8. Perpetrator reputation	-.06	-.21**	-.01	-.10	-.12	-.02	.04

Note. IRMA = interpersonal rape myth acceptance.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 2. At the multivariate level, there were significant effects of IRMS, $F(2, 226) = 38.35$, $p < .001$, Wilks's $\Lambda = .747$, partial $\eta^2 = .253$; hostile sexism, $F(2, 226) = 4.15$, $p = .02$, Wilks's $\Lambda = .965$, partial $\eta^2 = .035$; victim's reputation, $F(2, 226) = 17.46$, $p < .001$, Wilks's $\Lambda = .866$, partial $\eta^2 = .134$; and perpetrator's reputation, $F(2, 226) = 6.17$, $p = .002$, Wilks's $\Lambda = .948$, partial $\eta^2 = .052$.

Victim responsibility. At the univariate level, there were significant effects of hostile sexism, $F(1, 227) = 7.84$, $p = .006$, partial $\eta^2 = .033$; IRMS, $F(1, 227) = 45.34$, $p = .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .166$; and victim's reputation, $F(3, 212) = 28.70$, $p = .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .112$. Both hostile sexism and IRMS were positively related to victim responsibility. The victim with a bad reputation ($M = 39.95$) was held more responsible than was the victim with a good reputation ($M = 31.06$).

Perpetrator responsibility. At the univariate level, there were significant effects of IRMS, $F(1, 227) = 50.89$, $p = .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .183$; victim's reputation, $F(3, 212) = 14.31$, $p = .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .059$; and perpetrator's reputation, $F(3, 212) = 11.09$, $p = .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .047$. IRMS was negatively related to perpetrator responsibility. The perpetrator was held more responsible when the victim had a good reputation ($M = 79.73$) than when she had a bad reputation ($M = 72.82$). In addition, the perpetrator was held significantly more responsible when he had a bad reputation ($M = 79.35$) than when he had a good reputation ($M = 73.20$).

Discussion

Hypothesis 5 indicated that participants would attribute more responsibility to a victim with a bad reputation than to a victim with a good reputation and to a perpetrator with a bad reputation when compared to a perpetrator with a good reputation. This hypothesis was supported by the data. Hypothesis 6, which predicted that men would hold the victim more responsible than would women, was not supported. This is consistent with Study 1, but is not consistent with past research (Calhoun et al., 1976; Calhoun & Townsley, 1991; Langley, Yost et al., 1991; Thornton et al., 1981).

Hypothesis 7 predicted that participants who score higher in rape myth acceptance (IRMS), hostile sexism, and benevolent sexism would hold the victim more responsible and hold the perpetrator less responsible than those low on these individual difference measures. The findings provide partial support for this hypothesis. Participants scoring higher on the IRMS held victims more responsible and perpetrators more responsible than those with lower scores. Participants scoring higher on the hostile sexism scale held victims more responsible than those with lower scores. This is consistent with the work of various researchers (see Kopper, 1996; Krahe, 1988; Parkinson & Cohn, 1990) regarding rape myths.

General Discussion

Attribution of Responsibility

Participants must weigh factors concerning both the victim and the perpetrator when attributing responsibility in a rape situation. According to the presupposition model of attributions, an attribution of blame presupposes an attribution of responsibility (Bradbury & Fincham, 1990). In an ambiguous situation (e.g., acquaintance rape), participants might be more likely to make fundamental attribution errors when attributing blame and responsibility.

Fundamental attribution error refers to the tendency to overestimate personal influences and to underestimate situational or environmental influences (Ross, 1977). It is clear that the actions of the victim can have an impact on participants' attributions of responsibility (Lamb, 1996). Defensive attributions occur when the observer believes that he or she shares some similarity to the victim (Shaver, 1970, 1985).

One explanation for this comes from Shaver's (1970, 1985) defensive attribution theory, which argues that people are more likely to blame individuals who are dissimilar to them. Because men are not typically the victims

of rape, they are more likely to blame the victim than are women. Our research did not support Shaver's theory. Men and women did not differ in their attributions of victim responsibility.

The victim's resistance is an important factor in observers' attributions of responsibility. The perpetrator was held less responsible and the victim was held more responsible when the victim did not resist, compared to when she resisted verbally or both verbally and physically. Perhaps educational efforts that focus on the message "'No' means 'No'" have been successful in conveying the idea that verbal and physical resistance do not represent a woman playing hard to get. Participants may hold the view that it is the responsibility of the female to set limits (Bridges & McGrail, 1989). Therefore, it is possible that the no-resistance situation could have been viewed as consensual sex and not rape.

The reputations of the victim and the perpetrator are also important factors when attributing responsibility for an acquaintance rape. A person may consider a woman's sexual history to be an important factor in deciding whether or not she consented to sexual intercourse (Schuller & Klippenstine, 2004). In this research, reputation was a significant predictor of both perpetrator and victim responsibility. A woman with a bad reputation is most likely seen as being more likely to consent to sexual intercourse. The perpetrator's reputation was only significant when participants had to make attributions of responsibility to the perpetrator, not to the victim. When the perpetrator had a bad reputation and the victim had a good reputation, the perpetrator was held more responsible. Typically, the burden of permission is placed entirely on the female; it is her job to draw the line for acceptable sexual interaction. Participants might have believed that the victim with a bad reputation was "teasing," and the man with the good reputation simply thought she was "playing hard to get."

Individual-difference factors are also influential when observers are required to attribute responsibility in an acquaintance rape situation. Hostile sexism was a significant predictor of whether participants were more likely to hold the victim responsible. Hostile sexism is an oppositional view of women in which women are perceived as attempting to control men (Glick & Fiske, 2001). Individuals who score high in hostile sexism are more likely to believe that women are seductresses who would lie about rape in order to control men. Rape myth acceptance was also a significant predictor of more attributed responsibility to the victim and less attributed responsibility to the perpetrator. Past research has also supported this finding (Krahe, 1988; Parkinson & Cohn, 1990).

These findings lead us to a possible future research direction. The resistance of the victim and the reputation of both the victim and the perpetrator should all be varied to determine whether hostile sexism or rape myth

acceptance would be significant predictors when both behavior and character are made salient.

There are several limitations in the present studies that could be addressed in future research. First, these experiments examined people's reactions to a video showing one of several acquaintance rape scenarios. This methodology is a marked improvement over having participants read a written scenario (Sleed et al., 2002). However, it would also be informative to have testimony from both the victim and the perpetrator (in random order). It would be interesting in future studies to study the reactions of both the victim and the perpetrator in order to assess the impact of this information on attributions of responsibility.

The findings from the present studies have important implications for our society. It has already been noted that many women are reluctant to report incidents of acquaintance rape because of the tendency to derogate the victim. Consequently, our legal system may be negatively influenced by people's difficulty in judging these cases.

One factor that affects both the victim's likelihood of reporting the incident and the rate of perpetrator convictions is victim derogation (Calhoun & Townsley, 1991). Observers who derogate victims are more likely to hold the victims responsible and less likely to hold the perpetrator responsible than observers who do not derogate victims. Therefore, it is important to educate people about the facts surrounding acquaintance rape, so that observers are less likely to blame the victim in these situations.

Women are usually held as morally responsible in a sexual encounter. As a result, in cases of rape, blame tends to be placed on the victim. However, if responsibility were placed on the male to request permission for sexual interaction, the blame for rape would then be directed at the appropriate target. If men were encouraged to request permission explicitly, it might lead to less miscommunication and fewer incidents of acquaintance rape.

Although Kassin et al. (1990) found that the victim's reputation was not damaging to her case when compared to that of an expert witness, it is possible that reputation may be an evidentiary temptation for jurors in the courtroom when both the reputation of the victim and perpetrator are made salient. The integration of the victim's reputation into courtroom dialogue may heavily influence jurors. This research has shown that if the victim is described as a sexually promiscuous woman, she is held more responsible for a rape incident than a woman who is described as a sweet person who rarely goes out and never "sleeps around." Attributions of responsibility to the victim were made more complex when the perpetrator had a good reputation or a bad reputation. For this reason, the reputation and past history of the victim and the perpetrator in a rape case should never be made common knowledge to the jury.

Although progress has been made on college campuses to promote greater awareness of the conditions surrounding acquaintance rape, more steps must still be taken. In order to accurately assess if men are making global judgments about rape cases, several additions could be made to this research. First, the levels of resistance could be further broken down to see if women are still making finer distinctions than are men about the details of the case. Also, this hypothesis could be applied to other variables or factors involved in acquaintance rape instances, such as the nature of the relationship between the perpetrator and victim and the circumstances surrounding the incident.

Finally, if participants could be instructed to empathize with the victim to a great extent, they might be less likely to derogate the victim. It would be interesting to administer an empathy scale to participants to determine if people with higher empathy scores have a greater understanding of the victim's position and are able to generate a more detailed assessment of the incident. In a study of reactions to stranger-rape victims, Deitz, Littman, and Bentley (1984) found that people with higher rape empathy scores were uniformly sensitive to the victim's plight, regardless of resistance style. People with low rape empathy scores made subtler distinctions based on resistance and physical attractiveness. More research is needed to determine if these findings will hold in a case of acquaintance rape.

In conclusion, these two studies show support for differences in perceptions of acquaintance rape. Victim resistance is the key factor in attribution of responsibility. A victim who resists verbally or both verbally and physically will be held less responsible than will a victim who does not resist at all. Additionally, the reputations of the victim and of the perpetrator are highly salient in the attribution of responsibility. Consequently, this research has implications for the legal system regarding the presentation of evidence involving acquaintance rape cases.

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