

rape myths (Brownmiller, 1975; Burt, 1980, Kilpatrick, Edmunds, & Seymour, 1992; Tjaden & Thoenes, 2000; Ward, 1995). This study also addresses emotional response to acceptance of rape myths.

3. Psychometric adequacy: Burt Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (BRMAS) was chosen as the starting point for the scale used in this study because it is the most used and most reliable of any rape myth acceptance scale (Buhi, 2005). Prior studies have revealed a two-factor solution underlying the rape myths: victim blame and frequency insofar as there is utter denial of the frequency of rape. Little is known, however, about the association between victim blame and frequency denial. We tested this in a path analysis as well as using confirmatory factor analysis of the underlying factors.
4. Theoretical power: As an expansion of existing research, this study provides an addition to the communicative understanding of rape myth acceptance by factoring in emotional reactions to rape myth acceptance. While acceptance of rape myths is important to understand on its own, the emotions that persons associate with rape myths seem to be unexplored and could easily add to the theoretical understanding of and applicability of this area of research.

Emotional Responses

According to these studies, it follows that the following hypothesis was posed and tested:

H2: More men than women will report accepting rape myths as true.

Emotions provide an important outlet for communicating. Guerrero, Anderson, and Trost (1998) provided the distinction that emotions are "internal rather than external" and "affective states" (p. 6). This is to say that emotions come from within a person and are expressed through affect displays. This study considered six possible emotional reactions to rape myths. Ekman (1992) argued that the six basic emotions are: joy, fear, sadness, disgust, surprise, and anger. Planalp (2003) concluded that, "theorists differ on precise definitions, but most agree that emotions are evaluative and move people to action (or inaction . . .)" (p. 80). The aforementioned seem to be the six most agreed upon basic emotions.

Shields (1987) argued that common social sense determines what a person perceives to be an appropriate emotional display or reaction. Perceptions of what is appropriate indicate to an individual when he or she ought to repress certain emotions. Richards, Butler, and Gross (2003) found that regulation and suppression of emotions can have unintended consequences on memory. Negative emotions are generally unacceptable. Stanford and Rowatt (2004) provided a distinction between hard, soft, and fear-based negative emotions. According to

the authors, negative emotions include (variations of) anger, sadness, and fear. Anger is a hard emotion, sadness is a soft emotion, and fear is a combination of both. Guerrero, Trost, and Yoshimira (2005) stated that anger correlates with verbally and physically aggressive behavior, fear causes individuals to want to remove themselves from threat, and sadness usually lingers.

"Because emotions have a reality within ourselves, we tend to believe them to be natural . . . Seeing human emotions as natural permits us to see them as causes for certain types of behavior" (Porter & Samovar, 1998, p. 453). This suggests that participants may have had a higher level of self-report bias due to the factors of ownership of emotions and possible issues of blame. Those participants who have been raped, for example, may, in fact, blame themselves more readily than the perpetrator. Blame is a vital part of emotional experiences, especially those involving rape. Hupka, Lenton, and Hutchison (1999) found that variations of the basic emotion of anger are present in the emotional vocabularies of most cultures and anger is usually related to issues of blame.

Anger may be a common negative emotion to suppress in social situations. Canary, Spitzberg, and Semic, (1998) claimed "it appears that other people's aggression prompts anger in oneself" (p. 194). There is not complete agreement on the nature of anger, but "almost all causes of anger indicate it as a primary emotional response to a personally relevant provocation" (Canary, et al., 1998, p. 197). In addition, Honeycutt (2003) reviews research on rumination and imagined interactions in which he discussed how individuals relive conflicts, fights, and traumatic events, sometimes even years after the episode has occurred. Individuals have retroactive imagined interactions where they relive the encounter. One of the functions of imagined interactions is catharsis in which individuals recall episodes to relieve tensions as well as how they could have better managed the episode. Indeed, interviews with rape victims in Swift, et al.'s (2005) study revealed that many of them imagine alternative scenarios (e. g. *What would have happened if I had fought back, had a weapon, or screamed?*). On the basis of rumination and retrospective imagined interactions, it may follow that individuals surveyed who have experience with rape (through experience or second-hand knowledge) will report higher levels of anger than those without experience of any sort with the matter. Hence, the following hypotheses are posed:

H3: Most participants will have negative emotional reactions (fear, anger, sadness, surprise, disgust) to the rape myth acceptance than positive emotional reactions (joy).

H4: Women will report more negative emotional reactions (fear, anger, sadness, surprise, disgust) to rape myth acceptance compared to men.

Rationale and Justification

Buhi (2005) criticized existing rape myth research for not consistently reporting reliability of the scales used. He stated that this makes applying the research nearly impossible for there is an obvious need for assured accuracy before application. In his work, Buhi reported the 19-item BRMAS to be most used and most reliable $\alpha=.75-.95$, depending on the study. Due to the information available in the research on rape and communicative strategies surrounding rape experiences, as well as the inherent gap of known emotional reactions to rape myths, the following methods were enacted.

Method

Because of the frequency of use and reliability of the Burt (1980) BRMAS, it seems worthy of replication in this study; however, there does seem to be a degree of need for modification of this scale. Using the suggestions provided by Lonsway and Fitzgerald (1994), this scale was modified. Additionally adaptations were made to the scale due to the current study's concern with emotional response. The researchers began with Burt's (1980) original rape myth acceptance scale and adapted it accordingly for this study. We then tested this in a confirmatory factor analysis. Only items that were directly related to myths of victim blame and frequency were used. These were then slightly reworded to have equal linguistic weight to the reader. The survey was balanced by including 5 frequency and 5 victim blame items. Next, 5 items were created to test emotional reactions to the acceptance of frequency rape myths, and 5 were created to test emotional reactions to victim blame myths. Burt's (1980) rape myth acceptance scale was chosen as the starting point for the scale used in this study because it is the most used and most reliable of any rape myth acceptance scale (Buhi, 2005).

Participants

Participants consisted of a convenience sample of members of one of six sections of the introductory public speaking course. The instructor read the informed consent form aloud, in order to explain the research, and then students completed the survey. The sample consisted of 124 undergraduate students attending a large university. There were 65 males and 59 females. Participants ranged in age from 18-51 with a mean age of 20.17, 19 of which were freshmen, 48 of which were sophomores, 33 of which were juniors, and 24 of which were seniors. Eleven of the participants reported being victims of sexual violence (all of them were females), while 113 of the participants reported not being victims of sexual violence. Half (62) of the participants reported knowing a victim of sexual violence while the other half did not.

Transforming Scales and Scale Reliability

The mean of the 10 rape myth acceptance items was determined to

create the rape myth acceptance scale for this study. The aforementioned method was repeated for each the 10 items testing emotional reaction (sadness, fear, joy, disgust, anger, and surprise) to rape myth acceptance to create those respective scales. The scales demonstrated excellent reliability: Rape myth acceptance $\alpha = .73$, Rape myth acceptance Sadness Reaction Scale $\alpha = .89$, Rape myth acceptance Fear reaction Scale $\alpha = .94$, Rape myth acceptance Joy Reaction Scale $\alpha = .80$, Rape myth acceptance Disgust Reaction Scale $\alpha = .87$, Rape myth acceptance Anger Reaction Scale $\alpha = .89$, and Rape myth acceptance Surprise Reaction Scale $\alpha = .90$.

Results

Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Underlying Rape Myths

Figure 1 contains a path diagram representing the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of the BRMAS. Two factors were confirmed: victim blame and denial of frequency. Figure 1 shows the factor loadings between the hypothetical factors and the items and the correlation (.65) between the factors. As revealed in Figure 1, some of the items from the BRMAS had low factor loadings while others had high loadings. Furthermore, the CFA provided good measures of fit: comparative fit index (.92), root mean square error of approximation (.06), comparative fit index (.97).

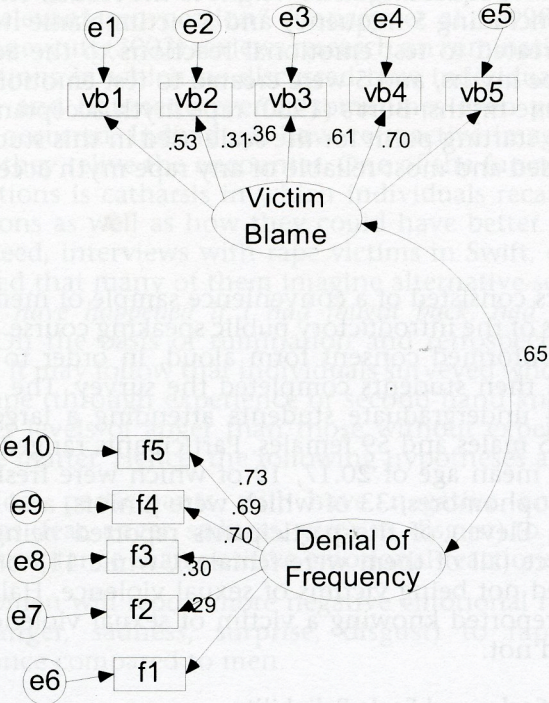


Figure 1. Confirmatory factor analysis and correlation of victim blame and denial of frequency.

Test of Hypotheses

In answer to the first hypothesis, that participants who have survived being a victim of sexual violence will be more likely to respond negatively to rape myth acceptance, an independent samples t-test was run. The result was that for victims of sexual violence, the mean of rape myth acceptance was 1.74 ($SD = .95$) and for non-victims, the mean of rape myth acceptance was 2.82 ($SD = .75$, $t(122) = -4.46$, $p < .001$). Additionally, a multiple discriminant analysis was run in order to test a linear combination of the emotional reactions because of the moderate correlation among the emotional reactions (overall absolute mean $r = .41$, range: .03 - .91). The discriminant analysis allows us to classify individuals as being victims or non-victims based on knowledge of their scores on the emotional reaction items. A significant discriminant function was found, $\chi^2(6) = 46.42$, $p < .001$. The canonical correlation of .57 revealed a good association between the function and victim/non-victim distinctions. Positive loadings on the function revealed negative emotional reactions in the following order: sadness (.50), fear (.47), anger (.45), and disgust (.45). Negative loadings were found for surprise (-.69) and joy (-.20). An examination of the group centroids revealed that victims more than non-victims reported feeling more sadness, fear, anger, and disgust as well as less joy and surprise. More importantly, these emotional reactions accurately classified 64% of the victims and 97% of the non-victims.

In answer to the second hypothesis, a t-test revealed differences between men and women in the endorsement of rape myths. The mean of rape myth acceptance for men was 3.06 ($SD = .82$) and for females, the mean of rape myth acceptance was 2.35 ($SD = .68$, $t(122) = -5.31$, $p < .001$). This supports the hypothesis.

The third hypothesis posited that participants would have more negative emotional reactions (fear, anger, sadness, surprise, disgust) than joy. A series of pairwise t-tests supported the hypothesis. Indeed, joy ($M = 1.73$, $SD = .84$) was felt less than fear ($M = 4.36$, $SD = 1.60$, $t(123) = 15.20$, $p < .001$), anger ($M = 5.23$, $SD = 1.23$, $t(123) = 23.05$, $p = .001$), sadness ($M = 5.04$, $SD = 1.29$, $t(123) = 21.21$, $p < .001$), surprise ($M = 4.23$, $SD = 1.52$, $t(123) = 17.50$, $p < .001$), and disgust ($M = 5.13$, $SD = 1.22$, $t(123) = 22.30$, $p < .001$).

In reference to the fourth hypothesis about females endorsing negative emotions relative to the rape myths, a multiple discriminant analysis was used to test a linear combination of the emotional reactions. A significant discriminant function emerged, $\chi^2(6) = 40.51$, $p < .001$. The canonical correlation of .65 revealed a good association between the function and gender distinctions. Positive loadings on the function revealed negative emotional reactions in the following order: anger (.87), sadness (.83), disgust (.75), and fear (.74). Negative loadings reflected positive emotional reactions reflecting joy (-.44) with surprise having a negligible loading (-.17). An examination of the group centroids revealed that women more than men reported feeling more anger, sadness, disgust, and fear than men.

More importantly, these emotional reactions accurately classified 80% of the male and 73% of the female participants.

Discussion

Communicatively, it seems that efficiency and accuracy of communication with victims of sexual violence would increase with an understanding of rape myths and the fact that they are, in fact, inaccurate. When persons accept rape myths, the results lead us to conclude that their opinions would be in conflict with the knowledge that victims of sexual violence have. Hence, communication within relationships between those who accept and those who reject rape myths would logically be hindered.

Women in this study who have lived through sexual violence have probably also experienced people around them believing these myths. The data suggest that being a victim of sexual violence may increase the likelihood of recognizing rape myths as not being "fact." Victims of sexual violence reported significantly higher levels of reacting with sadness to the acceptance of rape myths than those who were not victims or did not know a victim. Because those who have not survived sexual violence are less likely to identify rape myths as myths, they have no reason to be sad when they are informed that others believe these (what they perceive as) facts.

The results indicate that victims of sexual violence react with significantly higher levels of fear to rape myth acceptance than non-victims. As Guerrero et al., (2005) argued, fear causes individuals to want to remove themselves from threat. This data indicate that those who have experience being raped may have been called a liar or promiscuous, and therefore they view rape myth acceptance as a threat and need to remove themselves from this threat. It follows that those without lived experience in this area would perceive less threat, and subsequently have less need to remove themselves from the acceptance of rape myths.

Victims of sexual violence reported more than non-victims to be disgusted by rape myths. When one has lived experienced in this case, it seems that they find it disgusting that people accept rape myths. Perhaps this means that those with experience are more apt to hold those who perpetuate these myths responsible rather than holding victims responsible. Victims seem more likely than others to be able to recognize perpetrators of rape as responsible for the rape than non-victims.

The level of rape myth acceptance anger reaction was higher for victims of sexual violence than for non-victims. This finding supports Canary, et al.'s (1998) argument that anger is derived in reaction to something very personal. Ignorance to the personal implications rape myth acceptance may have on an individual may contribute to a lack of anger. Being able to associate a face, especially one's own, with a victim of sexual violence makes it more likely for an individual to

react with anger to rape myth acceptance according to this sample.

Victims of sexual violence reported significantly lower levels than non-victims in rape myth acceptance surprise reaction. This is likely due to the fact that these females in our study have personally experienced these rape myths. People may call them promiscuous, liars, or simply dismiss issues of rape because they do not think it happens that often. Knowing someone who has gone through an experience of sexual violence does not necessarily mean that one has experienced rape myth acceptance in the same way that victims have.

Male Female Disparity

In this study, males reported significantly higher rape myth acceptance than females. This finding supports existing literature which states that males are more likely than females to accept rape myths (e.g. Anderson, 1999; Heppner, et.al.,1995; Simpson & Senn, 2003). According to this data, males reported significantly lower levels of reactions of sadness to rape myth acceptance than females. This links to studies that propose males are less likely than females to recognize unwelcome sexual behavior (e.g. Dunn & Cody, 2000), because if males do not recognize behaviors as unwelcome, they are unlikely to be sad about the behavior, much less recognize that people believe lies about the behavior.

Stanford and Rowatt (2004) argued that fear reveals some level of vulnerability about an individual. Suppression of emotions is natural when the individual has been taught that his or her emotion is not acceptable (Richards, et al., 2003; Shields, 1987). It is likely that males have been taught that vulnerability is unacceptable in social situations, and will therefore suppress fear. Males also reported significantly higher levels of reactions of joy to rape myth acceptance than females. This finding may connect with Bohner et al.'s (1993) finding that males who accept rape myths have higher levels of self esteem than those who do not. This higher self-esteem may be indicative of high levels of joy. According to these results, males reported significantly lower levels of reactions of disgust to rape myth acceptance than females according to this data. Males are likely to take on anti-victim attitudes because of their acceptance of rape myths (Davies & McCartney, 2003). Anti-victim attitudes easily lead to no feelings of disgust when people accept rape myths. Finally, males reported significantly lower levels of reactions of anger to rape myth acceptance than females in this study. Anger relates to blame and aggression (Canary, et al., 1998; Hupka, et al., 1999). If males do not perceive a problem, there is no reason to be angry.

According to this sample, higher levels of rape myth acceptance indicate lower levels of rape myth acceptance sadness reaction. It seems that people who accept rape myths are not likely to be sad that rape myths are accepted. This data also postulates higher levels of rape myth acceptance indicate lower levels of rape myth acceptance fear reaction. It follows that those who accept rape myths are less likely to

react with fear when they learn that rape myths are accepted. Reports in this study suggest that higher levels of rape myth acceptance indicate higher levels of rape myth acceptance joy reaction. Hence, persons who accept rape myths as fact are likely to be joyful that others agree with them. According to these results, higher levels of rape myth acceptance indicate lower levels of rape myth acceptance disgust reaction. Those who accept rape myths as fact are not likely to find acceptance of rape myths disgusting. The data indicates that higher levels of rape myth acceptance indicate lower levels of rape myth acceptance anger reaction. People who accept rape myths are not likely to be angry that others agree with them. Finally, the data reports that higher levels of rape myth acceptance indicate higher levels of rape myth acceptance surprise reaction. Those who accept rape myths are likely to be surprised that others agree with them.

Overall, maybe people who accept rape myths think of these myths as fact. Because they think that these are facts, it is natural for them to reject the reactions of sadness, fear, disgust, and anger as reactions to others accepting these myths/"facts." Those who have high rates of accepting rape myths tend to be non-victims, not know a victim, and are often male. Hence, these people may not have much occasion to think about or discuss the issue of rape at all. Naturally, they may react with surprise at the rate of acceptance of rape myths, not necessarily because people believe that rape myths are true, but because people believe anything at all about rape. These things probably have simply never occurred to these people. Those who reject rape myths realize that these beliefs are untrue; therefore, the reactions of sadness, fear, anger, and disgust that other people believe these myths/"lies" seem reasonable.

There seems to be a disconnect between rape myth acceptance and emotions surrounding this matter. In addition, the discriminant analysis accurately classified over 80% of the males in which they reported less anger, sadness, disgust, and fear than women. By connecting emotion and rape myths, perhaps one day these myths would be more often rejected than accepted. Future studies could further investigate the emotional reactions of victims of sexual violence. The purpose and usefulness of emotions and emotional reactions could be more completely addressed if in-depth interviews were conducted in a future qualitative study.

This study has examined the rate of acceptance of rape myths within college students and their subsequent emotional reactions to them. There were significant differences found in acceptance rates and emotional reactions based on differences in sex, victim/non-victim, and acquaintance of/not an acquaintance of a victim. Also, there were significant correlations between the scales. The findings have built on existing literature and given further insight into this area of study. Hopefully, future studies will continue to investigate this area.

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