Mock Juror Perceptions of Rape Victims: Impact of Case Characteristics and Individual Differences

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Abstract

The purpose of the present study was to examine mock juror perceptions of rape victims based on the sex of the offender and victim (male offender/female victim vs. female offender/male victim), relationship to the offender (stranger vs. acquaintance vs. intimate partner), revictimization (no revictimization vs. revictimization), and individual differences in rape myth acceptance (RMA) and life history strategy (LHS). Participants ($N = 332$) read a vignette describing a forcible rape scenario and completed victim and perpetrator blame scales, the Mini-K, and a gender-neutral Rape Myth Acceptance Scale. Results indicated increased victim blame in revictimization conditions, as well as female offender/male victim conditions. A significant mediation effect of LHS on victim blame through the indirect effect of RMA was found, which is predicted from life history theory. Implications of these findings are discussed.

Keywords

sexual assault, perceptions of rape victims, life history strategy

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Rape is a serious act of violence that has been prevalent across the globe since ancient times (MacFarlane, 1993). Under ancient Hebrew law, a man who raped a woman had committed a "theft of sexual property" from the dominant man in her life (e.g., the father or husband; MacFarlane, 1993). Today, laws define rape as a sexual assault, eliminate the resistance standard, and recognize spousal rape (Martin, Taft, & Resick, 2007). Recently, the U.S. Department of Justice reworded the definition of rape to be more inclusive. Forcible rape is now defined as "the penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim" (U.S. Department of Justice, 2012). The recent, more inclusive definition of rape exhibits the law's recognition of different types of forcible rape and that anyone, including both men and women, can be a victim, an idea that is a change to past definitions, but more importantly, contradicts some individuals' stereotypical beliefs about rape and rape victims (Hannon, Hall, Nash, Formati, & Hopson, 2000).

According to the National Violence Against Women Survey, 17.6% of the 8,000 surveyed women and 3% of the 8,005 surveyed men reported having experienced a completed or attempted rape in their lifetime (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). It is estimated that approximately 18 million women and 3 million men in the United States have been raped at some point in their lives (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2006). Furthermore, only 19% of women and 13% of men who were raped after age 18 actually reported those rapes to the police, making it difficult to know the actual numbers of rapes that occur (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2006). Furthermore, of the sexual assaults reported to police, only a fraction lead to prosecution, much less a guilty verdict for the assailant (Planty, Berzofsky, Krebs, Langton, & Smiley-McDonald, 2013). This demonstrates the need to understand jurors' perceptions of rape victims and perpetrators, particularly what case characteristics will influence the verdict, sentence, and blame attribution.

It is possible that the low conviction rates could be, in part, due to jurors blaming the victim for his or her role in the rape. Past literature has shown that variables, such as sex of, and relationship between, the offender and victim, influence victim blame. In addition to these known variables, our study seeks to examine the effects of revictimization on mock jurors' blaming of the victim and explore its interaction with the aforementioned case characteristics because, for example, revictimization may be more likely to occur in certain relationship settings compared with others (e.g., intimate partner vs. stranger). When characteristics of a sexual assault case are presented to jurors, the information must be filtered through the jurors' own set of beliefs, which may include the acceptance of rape myths. The degree of rape myth acceptance (RMA) by each individual juror may be influenced by his or her

own sexual behavior (e.g., the way in which the juror obtains sexual partners), which may require the juror to rationalize sexual coercion, and, by extension, discount a victim's experience in a sexual assault scenario. Unfortunately, no theory currently exists that ties these variables together.

Based on the potentially significant impact of one's mating strategy (e.g., life history strategy [LHS]) on the acceptance of rape myths and subsequent guilt ratings, sentencing, and blame attribution in cases of sexual assault, the current study focuses on examining the influence of these individual difference variables on mock juror perceptions in the context of known influential case characteristics (e.g., sex of, and relationship between, the offender and victim), as well as exploring their interaction with revictimization—a combination of case characteristics that covers a majority of sexual assault scenarios (other than same-sex assaults and incest, for example). We begin by reviewing the relevant statistics and past findings involving the above-mentioned variables' influence on juror perceptions of rape cases to illustrate what types of rapes are most common and how prevalence rates impact mock jurors' beliefs about rape cases. We then turn to an examination of individual differences in RMA and its role in victim blaming. Finally, we argue that an individual's LHS can aid in understanding his or her perceptions of rape victims.

Male and Female Rape Victims

Sexual violence against both men and women is perpetrated predominantly by male offenders, with more than 99% of adult female rape victims and 70.1% of adult male rape victims being raped by a male offender; however, 35.8% of adult male rape victims were raped by a female offender (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). With the new definition of rape encompassing both male and female victims, female on male rape may be more likely to be tried in a court of law than it has in the past. However, past research has not fully delineated the boundary conditions influencing how male victims of female perpetrators are perceived or treated fairly in a court of law beyond perceptions of severity and typicality of the assault.

Participants presented with rape scenarios depicting a male perpetrator and a male or female victim perceived the assault as more severe for the heterosexual man than for the woman or gay man (Doherty & Anderson, 2004; Ford, Liwag-McLamb, & Foley, 1998). However, when participants were given a sexual assault scenario with a male victim and female offender, they attributed less stress and increased pleasure to the victim (Smith, Pine, & Hawley, 1988). In addition, the female assailants were given lesser sentences than the male assailants in similar rape scenarios (Smith et al., 1988), and

female on male rape was less likely to be perceived as rape compared with stereotypical rape scenarios (Hannon et al., 2000). These findings represent a disconnect to the recently updated definition of rape by the U.S. Department of Justice (2012), as well as suggest potential stigmatization of male rape victims and apparent perceived permissibility of the behavior of female assailants, demonstrating the need to examine mock juror perceptions of heterosexual pairings in sexual assault scenarios.

Relationship to Offender

Although rapes are stereotypically thought to be committed by a stranger (Anderson, 2007), the National Violence Against Women Survey found of women who reported being raped as an adult, 61.9% were raped by an intimate partner, 21.3% by an acquaintance, 16.7% by a stranger, and 6.5% by a relative (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). Experimental work suggests that male participants rated an offender's behavior as more excusable and a victim's behavior as less excusable in a date rape scenario among a dating couple compared with a rape among friends (Sheldon-Keller, Lloyd-McGarvey, West, & Canterbury, 1994). In addition, victims were blamed most often in a seduction rape scenario (i.e., rape after initial consensual intimacy), followed by the date rape scenario, and lastly by the stranger rape scenario (Grubb & Harrower, 2009). Police officers also tended to blame the victim more when she was raped by her husband compared with other offender and victim relationships (Areh, Mesko, & Umek, 2009). Overall, findings suggest the more intimately a victim knows his or her offender, the more he or she will be blamed in a sexual assault situation (Bieneck & Krahé, 2011).

Revictimization

According to the National Violence Against Women Survey, rape victims are frequently raped on multiple occasions (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). Specifically, the interviewed women who had been raped in the previous 12 months experienced an average of 2.9 rapes, and the revictimized men experienced an average of 1.2 rapes (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000), whereas another study suggests that two in three individuals who had been raped reported sexual revictimization (Sorenson, Siegel, Golding, & Stein, 1991), placing past victims at an increased risk for revictimization (Classen, Gronskaya Palesh, & Aggarwal, 2005; Gidycz, Coble, Latham, & Layman, 1993). Although previous studies have examined risk factors leading to rape revictimization (Aosved, Long, & Voller, 2011; Messman-Moore & Brown, 2006; Messman-Moore & Ward, 2009; Miller, Markman, & Handley, 2007),

research regarding mock juror perceptions of revictimized rape victims is lacking, which is problematic given the high rate of its occurrence and potential relevance in a case presented to actual jurors.

RMA and Victim Blame

Burt (1980) examined the concept of RMA and described it to occur when individuals foster attitudes that endorse sex role stereotyping, acceptance of interpersonal violence, and adversarial sexual beliefs. A subset of rape myths typically associated with female victims of a male perpetrator includes the victim was dressed provocatively, promiscuous, had a bad reputation, and could resist a rapist if she really wanted (Burt, 1980). Recently, researchers completed literature reviews examining various rape myths related to male rape victims, including a man cannot be raped, a "real" man can defend himself against rape, men are not affected by rape as much as women, and consent is implied if the man gets an erection or ejaculates during the rape (Coxell & King, 2010; Turchik & Edwards, 2012).

Past findings suggest males tend to accept more rape myths and blame the victim more than females (Barnett, Quackenbush, Sinisi, & Wegman, 1992; Blumberg & Lester, 1991; Davies & McCartney, 2003; Davies, Rogers, & Bates, 2008; Mitchell, Hirschman, & Hall, 1999; Sinclair & Bourne, 1998; Smith et al., 1988). A meta-analysis found women are more likely than men to vote for conviction in rape cases, suggesting endorsing rape myths as a factor when rendering judgments of guilt in rape cases (Schutte & Hosch, 1997). Although studies, such as Feild (1978), demonstrated the importance of attitudes toward rape in mock jurors' decisions in rape cases, there has been far less research on the distal causes of attitudes toward rape in mock jurors' decisions. Specifically, a distal framework delineating the factors influencing one's acceptance of rape myths is lacking in the rape victim literature. We examined the influence of an individual's LHS, a distal causal variable, in mock jurors' perceptions and judgments of rape victims.

Life History Theory (LHT)

LHT is a mid-level evolutionary theory that conceptualizes the allocation of bioenergetic and material resources toward understanding fitness-relevant characteristics, such as first reproduction and number and size of offspring (Figueredo, Vásquez, Brumbach, & Schneider, 2004; Rushton, 1985; Stearns, 1992). The two points on this continuum of resource allocation are somatic and reproductive effort. Somatic effort represents the allocation of resources for the continued survival of the existing organism, whereas reproductive

effort represents an allocation toward the production of new organisms. Organisms exhibiting an allocation toward somatic effort are referred to as K selected species, whereas organisms exhibiting an allocation toward reproductive effort are referred to as r selected species. However, this distinction occurs not only between species but within species as well.

Humans are a K selected species, but the individual differences in life history result in a variety of psychosocial traits that are non-randomly assorted to function as components that facilitate a particular LHS (Figueredo et al., 2004; Figueredo, Vásquez, Brumbach, & Schneider, 2007; Figueredo et al., 2006). Those who allocate more resources toward somatic effort are referred to as having a slow LHS whereas those who allocate more resources toward reproductive effort are referred to as having a fast LHS. An important point is that although each strategy is distinct, neither is inherently superior. Whether or not a strategy on this continuum is advantageous or disadvantageous depends on a variety of factors including the specific environmental context (Ellis, Figueredo, Brumbach, & Schlomer, 2009). Meaning, in some cases, a slow LHS is more advantageous whereas in other cases a fast LHS is more advantageous.

A variety of evidence exists for LHT. For example, research indicates slow life history strategists are more likely to exhibit long-term mating, high parental investment, high group altruism, law abidingness, and low risk taking (Figueredo et al., 2004; Figueredo et al., 2007; Figueredo et al., 2006). A slow life history strategist exhibits these characteristics because these traits help to solve particular problems and are necessary to pursue this survival and reproductive strategy. Alternatively, these traits would not be as essential for a fast LHS. For a fast LHS, characteristics such as higher aggression and an increased willingness to take risks would be more advantageous. Evidence in support of this includes findings that fast life history strategists exhibit more sexually coercive behaviors, higher criminality, and less self-regulation (L. Ellis, 1988; Gladden, Sisco, & Figueredo, 2008; Rushton, 1985; Salmon, Figueredo, & Woodburn, 2009). Thus LHT offers a distal perspective to understand and predict a variety of relationships. For the current study, LHT can be utilized in understanding the distal causes of rape myths and victim blame for which previous literature has failed to account. Specifically, a fast life history strategist would assort on characteristics such as greater RMA and greater victim blame, which would indicate a more coercive attitude toward sex. This is more advantageous for a fast life history strategist compared with a slow life history strategist. This, of course, does not justify the endorsement of rape myths or rape itself. Just as cancer research does not justify cancer, the causal framework of LHT only purposes to explain these individual differences, not justify them. The specific hypothesis regarding LHT is detailed below.

Present Study

The present study investigated perceptions of rape victims, specifically the influence of the sex of the offender and victim, the relationship of the victim to the offender, revictimization status, and the role of LHS and RMA. The link between LHS, RMA, and victim blame is both a test of LHT as well as indicative of the utility of a distal framework, which has not been addressed in the RMA literature. Varying the sex of the offender and victim using heterosexual pairings extends the literature by examining how a woman forcibly raping a man is perceived by mock jurors. Although few previous studies, including Smith et al. (1988), had examined rape scenarios with a male victim and female offender, this study was unique in that it examined this situation and its interaction with revictimization and a victim's relationship to the offender. Also, because revictimization is common among those who have been raped in the past (Classen et al., 2005; Sorenson et al., 1991), it is of value to determine the influence revictimization status has on sentencing and blame attributions. Lastly, the relationship between the victim and offender can vary (e.g., stranger, acquaintance, intimate partner), so there was utility in examining how the type of relationship interacted with the presence or lack of revictimization and the sex of the offender and victim.

The variables in this study were chosen in tandem because heterosexual pairings of victims and perpetrators cover the majority of sexual assault cases, many victims are revictimized, and the relationship between the offender and victim can vary across situations. By combining these three variables, we are accounting for the large majority of the different types of sexual assault scenarios (other than same-sex assaults and incest, for example) seen in a court of law. When these case characteristics are presented to jurors, the information is filtered through each individual juror's own set of beliefs (e.g., RMA), which could be influenced by their own sexual behaviors (e.g., the juror may support beliefs that allow him or her to rationalize sexual coercion). Therefore, mock juror perceptions of rape scenarios and blame attributions can differ based on a combination of personal, psychological, and situational factors (Grubb & Harrower, 2009). We examined the following hypotheses:

> **Hypothesis 1:** We predicted that revictimization, sex of offender and victim, and relationship to the offender would influence victim blame. Specifically, revictimization would predict increased victim blame, male victims would be blamed more than female victims when raped by the opposite sex (Smith et al., 1988), and victim blame would increase the closer the relationship between the offender and victim (Areh et al., 2009;

Bieneck & Krahé, 2011; Grubb & Harrower, 2009; Sheldon-Keller et al., 1994).

Hypothesis 2: We predicted that sex of offender and victim and relationship to the offender would influence perpetrator blame. Specifically, male perpetrators would be blamed more than female perpetrators, and the perpetrator would be blamed less the closer the relationship between the offender and victim.

Hypothesis 3: We predicted that RMA would partially mediate the relationship between LHS and victim blame. In other words, a fast LHS would predict increased victim blame, and this effect would occur directly as well as indirectly through the intervening effect of higher RMA.

Hypothesis 4: We predicted that sex of the offender and victim would influence verdict. Specifically, male defendants would be found guilty more often than female defendants (Smith et al., 1988).

Hypothesis 5: We predicted that sex of the offender and victim would influence length of sentencing recommendations. Specifically, male defendants would receive longer sentences than female defendants.

Method

Participants and Design

Three hundred sixty participants completed the study. Participants incorrectly responding to more than one of the four manipulation check questions were eliminated, resulting in a sample of 332 (199 female, 133 male; M_{age} = 34.2, SD = 12.6) participants. The sample was predominantly Caucasian (75%) and consisted of 294 individuals who identified themselves as heterosexual (88.6%), 5 who identified themselves as gay men (1.5%), 2 who identified themselves as lesbians (0.6%), 26 who identified themselves as bisexual (7.8%), and 5 individuals who preferred not to disclose their sexual orientation (1.5%). Participants read 1 of 12 vignettes based on a 2 (sex of offender/victim: male offender/female victim vs. female offender/male victim) × 3 (relationship to offender: stranger vs. acquaintance vs. intimate partner) × 2 (revictimization: present vs. absent) between-participants factorial design describing allegations of a forcible rape between a man and woman.

Questionnaires

Verdict and sentencing. Participants provided dichotomous guilt ratings (guilty/not guilty). Participants chose guilty (77.1%) more frequently than not guilty (22.9%) across all conditions. Participants who chose guilty were

asked to provide sentencing recommendations from the following options: "0 to 6 months," "6 to 12 months," "1 to 3 years," "3 to 6 years," "6 to 12 years," "12 to 25 years," and "more than 25 years."

Victim and perpetrator blame. Participants completed the perceptions of victim and perpetrator blame scales (Rayburn, Mendoza, & Davison, 2003), which consist of 14 paired adjective ratings (e.g., gentle to forceful) sum totaled to a score indicating the degree of blame worthiness ascribed to the victim and perpetrator. The scales display high levels of internal consistency (Cramer et al., 2013; Rayburn et al., 2003). The scales displayed high reliability in the current study (α = .95) for the victim blame scale and (α = .95) for the perpetrator blame scale. The range for both the victim and perpetrator blame scales was 14.00 to 98.00. The mean for victim blame was 38.90 (*SD* = 18.67), and the mean for perpetrator blame was 77.95 (*SD* = 17.08).

Mini-K. This scale consists of 20 items and is part of the more extensive Arizona Life History Battery (199 items; Figueredo, 2007). These instruments measured whether participants had a fast or slow LHS. The Mini-K was used to reduce participant response burden. Possible responses ranged from −3 (*disagree strongly*) to +3 (*agree strongly*). This scale includes items, such as "I can often tell how things will turn out," "I often find the bright side to a bad situation," and "I avoid taking risks" (α = .81). This scale was reverse coded and averaged, so higher scores indicate a fast rather than slow LHS. Scores ranged from −2.07 to 2.07. The mean score in the current study was −1.02 (*SD* = 0.73).

RMA scale. This scale, adapted from Burt (1980), was an 11-item gender-neutral RMA scale. This scale assessed the degree to which participants endorsed rape myths. Possible responses ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). This scale includes items, such as, "Any person can get raped," "Any healthy person can successfully resist a rapist if he or she really wants to," and "In the majority of rapes, the person who was raped is promiscuous or has a bad reputation" (α = .84). Scores ranged from 12 to 77. The mean score in the current study was 28.00 (*SD* = 9.35).

Demographics. The demographic questionnaire asked participants to indicate their age, sex, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, religion, political orientation, relationship status, and if they had ever been the victim of a crime.

Manipulation check. Participants were asked to identify the sex of the victim and perpetrator, the relationship to the offender, and whether or not the victim had been raped previously.

Procedure

Participants were recruited through Amazon's Mechanical Turk (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011). This allowed potential participants to click on a link, which then provided them with an invitation to participate, sending them to the online survey. After clicking on the link, participants were taken to a web page that gave a description of the study, and if they decided to participate, they were randomly given 1 of 12 hypothetical rape scenarios. Participants then completed various measures, including victim blame, defendant blame, the Mini-K, a gender-neutral RMA scale, and a demographic questionnaire. Finally, they were asked to complete a brief manipulation check. Upon completion, participants were given the principal investigator's contact information and instructed to e-mail if they had any questions. Participants were paid US$0.25 for their participation in the study.

Results

No missing values were identified and continuous variables were adequately normally distributed (skew < 2.0, kurtosis < 3.0). The vignettes showed even splits. Finally, there were sex differences in both LHS and RMA. Specifically, being a male was associated with having a faster LHS ($p < .001$) and having greater endorsement of rape myths ($p < .001$).

Hypothesis 1

Factorial ANOVA was used to test main effects and interactions of revictimization, sex of offender and victim, and relationship to the offender, when predicting victim blaming. A summary of the means, estimates, and parameter estimates for the main effects can be found in Tables 1 and 2. Specifically, for revictimization, $F(1, 320) = 5.165$, $p = .024$, $\omega_p^2 = .012$, participants in the revictimization group ($M = 41.24$) blamed the victim more than participants in the no revictimization group ($M = 36.66$). For sex of offender and victim, $F(1, 320) = 15.842$, $p < .001$, $\omega_p^2 = .043$, participants blamed the male victim of the female offender ($M = 42.96$) more than the female victim of the male offender ($M = 34.94$). For relationship to the offender, $F(1, 320) = 0.536$, $p = .586$, there was no significant difference between stranger rape ($M = 38.90$), intimate partner rape ($M = 40.26$), or acquaintance rape ($M = 37.68$). In addition, there were no significant two-way or three-way interactions, $p > .05$.

Table 1. Means and Estimates for Victim Blame.

| | | | 95% CI | |
	M	SE	LL	UL
Sex of the offender/victim				
Male victim, female offender	42.96	1.42	40.17	45.75
Female victim, male offender	34.94	1.43	32.12	37.75
Revictimization				
No past rape victimization	36.66	1.46	38.36	44.11
Has been raped in the past	41.24	1.39	33.93	39.39
Relationship to offender				
Stranger	38.90	1.70	35.57	42.24
Intimate partner	40.26	1.70	36.92	43.60
Acquaintance	37.68	1.84	34.06	41.30

Note. CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit.

Hypothesis 2

Factorial ANOVA was used to test main effects and interaction of sex of offender and victim and relationship to the offender when predicting perpetrator blame. Specifically, for sex of offender and victim, $F(1, 326) = 15.740$, $p < .001$, $\omega_p^2 = .043$, participants blamed the male offender ($M = 81.56$) more than the female offender ($M = 74.24$). For relationship to the offender, $F(2, 326) = .531$, $p = .589$, there was no significant difference between stranger rape ($M = 77.65$), intimate partner rape ($M = 79.17$), or acquaintance rape ($M = 76.87$). In addition, there was no significant two-way interaction, $p > .05$.

Hypothesis 3

To test Hypothesis 3 that RMA partially mediates the relationship between LHS and victim blame, causal steps approach (Baron & Kenny, 1986) and testing the indirect effect through bootstrapping procedures, as recommended by Preacher and Hayes (2004), were utilized. This procedure allows more powerful testing of the indirect path compared with the Sobel test (Shrout & Bolger, 2002). Using bootstrapping with 5,000 re-samples, all paths were significant including c'; the point estimate of the ab path was 1.22, 95% confidence interval (CI) = [0.53, 2.17]. Because the confidence interval does not include zero, there is evidence of a significant intervening effect between LHS and RMA, where the true effect in the population is between 0.53 and 2.17. Thus, the results indicate partial mediation and are illustrated in the path

Table 2. Summary of Victim Blame Model.

				95% CI	
Variable	SE	B	p	LL	UL
Sex of the offender/victim (male def)	4.84	−11.7	<.001	−20.65	−1.61
Revictimization (no revictimization)	4.72	−11.1	.024	−20.99	−2.42
Relationship to offender (stranger)	4.98	−3.77	.449	−13.58	6.03

Note. CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit.
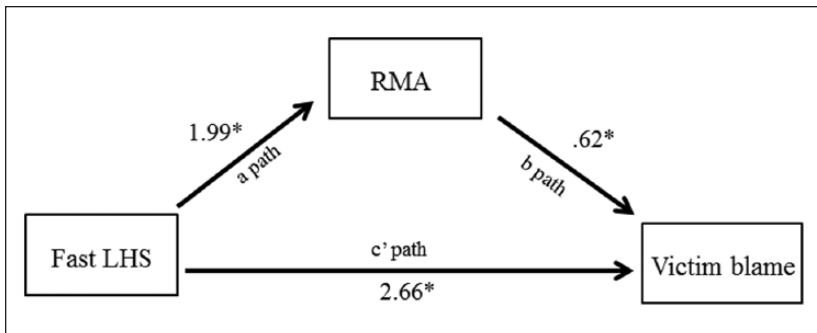
Figure 1. Mediation analysis.
Note. Numbers indicate unstandardized regression coefficients. RMA = rape myth acceptance; LHS = life history strategy.
*$p < .05$.

diagram in Figure 1. As can be seen in the path diagram, individuals with a fast LHS were more likely to blame the victim both directly as well as indirectly through RMA such that these fast life history strategists also held more RMA beliefs, which, in turn, predicted increased victim blame. In addition, concerning the magnitude of the mediation, 31.75% of the relation between LHS and victim blame is accounted by the indirect effect of RMA.

Hypothesis 4

Logistic regression tested Hypothesis 4 that sex of offender and victim, specifically a male compared with a female defendant, would predict more guilty compared with not guilty verdicts. In addition, relationship to the offender, LHS, and RMA were evaluated. Participants chose guilty ($n = 256$) as their verdict more frequently than not guilty ($n = 46$). The only significant effect

was sex of the offender. The coefficient on sex of the offender and victim had a Wald statistic of 9.344, *p* = .002. Specifically, the odds of voting guilty (versus not guilty) were increased by 132.7% for male offenders with female victims compared with female offenders with male victims. Relationship to the offender, LHS, and RMA were not significant, *p* > .05.

Hypothesis 5

ANOVA was used to test Hypothesis 5 that male compared with female defendants, would receive longer sentences. The mean sentence was 3.80 years (*SD* = 1.87). Results indicated that the sex of the offender predicted length of sentence given to the defendant, $F(1, 328) = 63.824$, $p < .001$, $\omega_p^2 = .16$, Specifically, male defendants (*M* = 4.55) were given longer sentences than female defendants (*M* = 3.05). Relationship to offender was not significant, *p* > .05.

Discussion

Results regarding verdict, sentencing, and perpetrator blame suggest that participants were less willing to accept that a woman is capable of raping a man as evidenced by a smaller proportion of guilty verdicts and shorter sentences for female defendants, which is consistent with previous research, including Hannon et al. (2000), who found only 18.7% of participants viewed a female on male sexual assault as rape. In addition, the current findings replicate past findings of a sex-based disparity for sentencing with rape cases (e.g., Smith et al., 1988), as well as support the finding that in general, males are given lengthier sentences (Steffensmeier & Demuth, 2006). Results also support previous findings that men are blamed more than women for raping a member of the opposite sex (Hannon et al., 2000; Smith et al., 1988).

Also noteworthy is the finding regarding victim blame for males and females who were described as having been raped on more than one occasion. Results indicated victims who had been raped in the past were blamed at a higher rate for their current victimization. This could suggest that certain rape myths, such as believing the victim was somehow "asking for it" or provoking the perpetrator (Burt, 1980), may be leading to this increased victim blame. Future research may wish to test for this mediation effect. An implication for increased blame for revictimized victims is that victims may face even more ridicule and a less sympathetic jury if he or she decides to report their revictimization. Past findings indicate revictimization is very common, with one study reporting that two in three rape victims reported sexual revictimization (Sorenson et al., 1991). With the low report rates of

rape and the high rates of revictimization, increased victim blame with revictimization suggests that a victim coming forward and reporting subsequent rapes may be greeted with disbelief, questions about the veracity of his or her claims, and accusations about his or her role in what led to the sexual assault.

Surprisingly, given the past findings regarding relationship to the offender and victim blame (e.g., Areh et al., 2009; Bieneck & Krahé, 2011; Grubb & Harrower, 2009; Sheldon-Keller et al., 1994), results did not show increased victim blame the closer the relationship between the offender and victim. However, our vignettes may have led to this non-significant finding. In prioritizing internal validity, ecological validity may have been sacrificed because the vignettes were not tailored to suit the typical setting of each type of rape. Although our vignettes accurately described the setting of a typical stranger rape, an acquaintance rape can occur on college campuses or at a party, for example. Also, intimate partner rape would likely occur in the privacy of one's home.

Results also support that an individual's LHS directly influences victim blame, and LHS also indirectly influences victim blame through the intervening effect of higher RMA. Specifically, fast life history strategists tended to blame the victims more, and they also tended to accept more rape myths, which also led to increased victim blame. Predicted from LHT, individuals with a faster LHS (who allocate more resources toward mating and reproductive effort), endorse more rape myths because it facilitates this strategy based on, for example, shorter term mating and decreased parental investment. Our results are consistent with LHT because fast life history strategists assort on characteristics such as greater RMA and have increased victim blame, which indicates more coercive attitudes toward sex. This finding complements past work on life history and sexual coercion; for example, Gladden et al. (2008) found using factor analytic structural equation modeling that the life history factor decreased sexual coercion and fully mediated the relationship between sex and sexual coercion, demonstrating a protective or buffering effect of LHS. Similarly, in this study, a slower LHS may have protected against the acceptance of rape myths.

Implications

The results of our study have several implications. First, our study offers an explanation as to why previous studies on rape have consistently found that males tend to accept more rape myths and blame the victims more than females (Blumberg & Lester, 1991; Davies & McCartney, 2003; Edwards, Turchik, Dardis, Reynolds, & Gidycz, 2011; Sinclair & Bourne, 1998). Our results suggest that an individual's LHS may play an important role in

shaping mock juror attitudes toward rape and perceptions of the offenders and victims involved in sexual assault cases. Consistent with past findings (e.g., Figueredo et al., 2007), there were sex differences in LHS, whereby males tended to have a faster LHS compared with females. As females tended to endorse less rape myths compared with males, sex may simply be a proxy for LHS in relation to the endorsement of rape myths. At the very least, these findings demonstrate evidence for the distal causes of rape myths, complementing past work on RMA, which has tended to neglect such an account.

Second, the current study may be useful in a courtroom setting to aid in jury selection. When a defendant has been charged with sexual assault, our study may be useful in helping to predict potential jurors' views of certain defendants, victims, and rape situations, which could suggest to both prosecutors and defense attorneys which jurors may be more likely to support their side of the case. Results suggest that if the Mini-K and RMA scales were included in pre-trial questionnaires, prosecuting attorneys would want to select slow life history strategists due to their decreased acceptance of rape myths, decreased victim blame, and increased perpetrator blame, and defense attorneys would want to select fast life history strategists due to their increased endorsement of rape myths, increased victim blame, and decreased perpetrator blame.

Limitations

Limitations include weaker ecological validity both in terms of the vignettes as well as the use of non-deliberating jurors. First, as noted earlier, in our attempt to make the vignettes as similar as possible by only altering the minimum amount of information required, we sacrificed a certain amount of ecological validity. This is particularly relevant for relationship to the offender because although changing the revictimization status of the victim in the scenario is relatively uncomplicated, for relationship between a victim and the offender, there is a different context for the rape to occur in different types of relationships (Logan, Cole, & Capillo, 2007), which requires altering more about the scenario. Future studies may benefit by tailoring the vignettes to describe the typical setting of rape that would occur with each type of offender–victim relationship to examine the effects of the relationship to the offender in a similar situation described in the current study. Second, the effects found with non-deliberating mock jurors do not necessarily extend to deliberating jurors in an actual courtroom setting. In a typical juror setting, jurors would be able to hear more information, interact with other jurors, and deliberate instead of just reading a short vignette. Nuñez, McCrea, and Culhane (2011) argued one of the greatest threats to jury decision-making research is the ecological

validity problems associated with using non-deliberating jurors. Although the current study may have benefited some from the use of a non-college sample, the problems associated with using non-deliberating jurors are present and represent a substantial problem in all jury decision-making research. Finally, although we addressed several case characteristics and individual differences and incorporated diverse theoretical perspectives, no integrative framework exists in the present work. This is a limitation to much of the research in rape victim blame. It would be highly beneficial in this area to develop a framework for understanding the many case characteristics and individual differences that play a role. This was beyond the scope of current work, but is an area that deserves more attention.

Conclusion

Limitations notwithstanding, the current results demonstrate evidence for LHT, suggesting LHS as part of the distal causes of individual differences in RMA and victim blame. Results also describe the potentially hazardous problem of revictimization in rape cases given the extent to which victims are revictimized and the increased victim blame that follows. The results also demonstrate a discrepancy between factors associated with blaming the victim and perpetrator and factors associated with a guilty/not guilty verdict. In applying research concerning rape in actual cases, future studies may benefit by addressing factors that specifically are significant in victim blaming and that extend to the actual verdict.

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