Evaluating Rape:
Do Self-Report Measures of Rape Related Cognition Reflect Evaluations of Rape?

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JUNE, 2011

IN K. L. NUNES (CHAIR) *A CLOSER LOOK AT CRIMINAL ATTITUDES*. SYMPOSIUM CONDUCTED AT THE 2ND NORTH AMERICAN CORRECTIONAL AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE PSYCHOLOGY CONFERENCE, TORONTO, ONTARIO.

Acknowledgements
(2)

- We would like to thank Cairina Frank and Cathrine Pettersen for their help with this study

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Rape Related Cognition
(3)

- National surveys estimate 1,977 of every 100,000 Canadian women over the age of 15 have been victims of sexual assault (Brennan & Taylor-Butts, 2008)

- Focus on meaningful psychological risk factors (Mann, Hanson, & Thornton, 2010)

Rape-Related Cognition
(4)

- Theoretically cognitions influence criminal behaviour

  - **Sexual aggression** (e.g., hierarchical-mediational confluence model; Malamuth, 2003)
  - **Non-sexual aggression** (e.g., general aggression model; Anderson & Bushman, 2002)
  - **General crime** (e.g., personal, interpersonal, and community-reinforcement model; Andrews & Bonta, 2006)

- Empirically rape-related cognitions predict sexual recidivism
  - Meta-analysis: $d = 0.22$, $k = 9$ (Hanson & Morton-Bourgon, 2004)

Rape-Related Cognition
(5)

- **Attitudes**: Summary evaluations of psychological objects
  - (e.g., rape is good or bad; Fazio, 2007)

- **Excuses**: minimize responsibility for the act without denying the wrongfulness of the act
  - (e.g., If a woman does not resist strongly to sexual advances, she is probably willing to have sex)

- **Justifications**: minimize the wrongfulness of the act while not denying responsibility
  - (e.g., As long as a man does not slap or punch a woman in the process, forcing her to have sex is not as bad)

Rape-Related Cognition
(6)

- Other rape-related cognition terms:

  - Cognitive Distortions
  - Rape Myths

- Defined inconsistently (e.g., Maruna & Mann, 2006)

- Include a mix of attitudes, justifications, excuses, and beliefs about rape, victims of rape, and women

Rape-Related Cognition
(7)

- Lack of precision and clarity in the conceptualization, terminology, and measurement of rape related cognitions (Mann et al., 2010; Maruna & Mann, 2006; Miller, 2010)

  o Cognition terms and measures are used interchangeably

    × Mann et al. (2010) define offence-supportive attitudes as "beliefs that justify or excuse sexual offending in general" (p. 200)

    × Miller (2010) defines attitudes as "the sum of one's evaluative feelings toward the object" (p.119)

Rape-Related Cognition
(8)

- o Self-report measures tend to encompass several types of rape-related cognition, but no distinction is made between the different types of rape-related cognition

    × Bumby RAPE scale contains justifications, excuses, and other beliefs about rape (Hermann, Babchishin, Nunes, Leth-Steensen, & Cortoni, 2011)

Rape-Related Cognition
(9)

- The psychological object of self-report items used to assess rape-related cognition is often unclear

  o Items assessing cognitions toward rape often focus on women or rape victims instead of rape

  o (e.g., women who go to bars a lot are mainly looking to have sex)

Attitudes towards Rape
(10)

- Recent focus on types of rape-related cognition and sexual aggression

  o Attitudes towards rape

- Empirically, attitudes are related to rape

  o Attitudes towards rape were associated with likelihood to rape even after accounting for past nonsexual violence and past sexual coercion (Nunes, Hermann, & Ratcliffe, 2011)

Research Question
(11)

- Attitudes towards rape are often assessed using self-report rape-related cognition measures (e.g., Anderson et al. , 1997)

- Most self-report measures of rape-related cognition encompass attitudes, justifications, and excuses about rape, victims of rape, and women

- **To what extent do common self-report measures of rape-related cognition measure attitudes towards rape?**
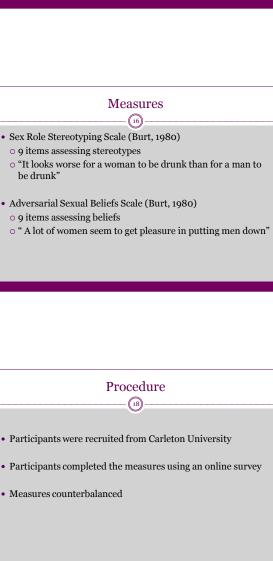
Participants
(12)

- 114 male university students

- Median age: 18-19 years old

- 100% understood English

Measures
13

- Semantic Differentials (SD)
  - Attitudes towards rape: mean of the rape SDs
  - More positive scores reflect more positive evaluations of rape

Rape is...

1	4	7
Negative	Neutral	Positive
Not fun	Neutral	Fun
Bad	Neutral	Good
Wrong	Neutral	Right
Immoral	Neutral	Moral
Not enjoyable	Neutral	Enjoyable

Measures
14

- Semantic Differentials (SD)
  - Attitudes towards women: mean of the women SDs
  - More positive scores reflect more negative evaluations of women

Women are...

1	4	7
Positive	Neutral	Negative
Fun	Neutral	Not Fun
Good	Neutral	Bad
Pleasant	Neutral	Unpleasant
Nice	Neutral	Not Nice
Kind	Neutral	Mean

Measures
15

- Bumby Rape Scale (Bumby, 1996)
  - 36 items assessing rape-related cognitive distortions
  - "Women who get raped probably deserved it"

- Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (Payne, Lonsway, & Fitzgerald, 1999)
  - 40 items assessing rape myths – 5 filler items
  - "If a woman is raped while she is drunk, she is at least somewhat responsible for letting things get out of control"

Measures
16

- Sex Role Stereotyping Scale (Burt, 1980)
  - 9 items assessing stereotypes
  - "It looks worse for a woman to be drunk than for a man to be drunk"

- Adversarial Sexual Beliefs Scale (Burt, 1980)
  - 9 items assessing beliefs
  - " A lot of women seem to get pleasure in putting men down"

Measures
17

- Sexual Conservatism Scale (Burt, 1980)
  - 10 items
  - "A woman who initiates a sexual encounter will probably have sex with anybody"

- Acceptance of Interpersonal Violence Scale (Burt, 1980)
  - 6 items
  - "Being roughed up is sexually stimulating to many women"

Procedure
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- Participants were recruited from Carleton University

- Participants completed the measures using an online survey

- Measures counterbalanced

Results

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- Analyses Overview:

  - Items from each measure were correlated with the semantic differential total scores assessing attitudes towards rape and women

  - Spearman rho correlations
    - Small = .10
    - Medium = .30
    - Large = .50

Results: Bumby RAPE Scale

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- 61.1% (22) of the items were significantly correlated with evaluations of rape (RapeSD)

r_s	# Items	%
-.09 to .09	4	11.1
.10 to .29	25	69.4
.30 to .49	7	19.4

- r_s = .37: Generally, rape is not planned – a lot of times it just happens

- r_s = .03: I believe that any woman can prevent herself from being raped if she really wants to

Results: Bumby RAPE Scale

21

- 41.7% (15) of the items were significantly correlated with evaluations of women (WomenSD)

r_s	# Items	%
-.09 to .09	10	27.8
.10 to .29	25	69.4
.30 to .49	1	2.8

- r_s = .40: If a women goes to the home of a man on the first date, she probably wants to have sex with him

- r_s = .01: When women act like they are too good for men, most men probably think about raping the women to put them in their place

Results: Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale

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- 70.0%(28) of the items were significantly correlated with evaluations of rape (RapeSD)

r_s	# Items	%
-.09 to .09	3	7.5
.10 to .29	28	70.0
.30 to .49	9	22.5

- r_s = .40: Many women find being forced to have sex very arousing

- r_s = .08: Women tend to exaggerate how much rape affects them

Results: Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale

23

- 30.0% (12) of the items were significantly correlated with evaluations of women (WomenSD)

r_s	# Items	%
-.09 to .09	10	25.0
.10 to .29	27	67.5
.30 to .49	3	7.5

- r_s = .34: Although most women wouldn't admit it, they generally find being physically forced into sex a real "turn-on"

- r_s = .00: Rape mainly occurs on the "bad" side of town

Results: Sex Role Stereotyping Scale

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- 11.1% (1) of the items were significantly correlated with evaluations of rape (RapeSD)

r_s	# of Items	%
-.09 to .09	5	55.6
.10 to .29	4	44.4

- r_s = .22: A man should fight when the woman he's with is insulted by another man

- r_s = .02: A man's got to show the woman who's boss right from the start or he'll end up henpecked

Results: Sex Role Stereotyping Scale

(25)

- None of these items were significantly correlated with evaluations of women (WomenSD)

r_s	# of Items	%
-.09 to .09	7	77.8
.10 to .29	2	22.2

- r_s = .01: It is acceptable for the woman to pay for the date

Results: Adversarial Sexual Beliefs Scale

(26)

- 55.6% (5) of these items were significantly correlated with evaluations of rape (RapeSD)

r_s	# of Items	%
-.09 to .09	2	22.2
.10 to .29	7	77.8

- r_s = .29: A lot of women seem to get pleasure in putting men down

- r_s = .07: Men are only out for one thing

Results: Adversarial Sexual Beliefs Scale

(27)

- 66.7% (6) of these items were significantly correlated with evaluations of women (WomenSD)

r_s	# of Items	%
-.09 to .09	3	33.3
.10 to .29	5	55.6
.30 to .49	1	11.1

- r_s = .31: Women are usually sweet until they've caught a man, but then they let their true self show

- r_s = .03: Men are only out for one thing

Results: Sexual Conservatism Scale

(28)

- 10% (1) of these items were significantly correlated with evaluations of rape (RapeSD)

r_s	# of Items	%
-.10 to -.29	2	20.0
-.09 to .09	5	50.0
.10 to .29	3	30.0

- r_s = .22: Having sex during the menstrual period is unpleasant

- r_s = -.02: Masturbation is a normal sexual activity

Results: Sexual Conservatism Scale

(29)

- None of these items were significantly correlated with evaluations of women (WomenSD)

r_s	# of Items	%
-.09 to .09	4	40.0
.10 to .29	6	60.0

- r_s = .00: A nice woman will be offended or embarrassed by dirty jokes

Results: Acceptance of Interpersonal Violence Scale

(30)

- 50% (3) of these items were significantly correlated with evaluations of rape (RapeSD)

r_s	# of Items	%
-.09 to .09	1	16.7
.10 to .29	5	83.3

- r_s = .29: Being roughed up is sexually stimulating to many women

- r_s = .09: People today should not use "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" as a rule for living

Results: Acceptance of Interpersonal Violence Scale

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- 83.3% (5) of these items were significantly correlated with evaluations of women (WomenSD)

r_s	# of Items	%
.10 to .29	6	100.0

- r_s = .22: Being roughed up is sexually stimulating to many women

Results: Total Score Correlations

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Spearman rho Correlations (r_s):

	Bumby Total	IRMA Total	SRS Total	ASB Total	SC Total	AIV Total
RapeSD	.35**	.33**	.12	.26**	.07	.12
WomenSD	.28**	.24*	.13	.31**	.14	.06

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

Shared Variance (r^2):

	Bumby Total	IRMA Total	ASB Total
RapeSD	12.2%	10.9%	6.8%
WomenSD	7.8%	5.8%	9.6%

Discussion

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- On average 43% (range 10% to 70%) of the items correlated with attitudes towards rape

- On average 37% (range 0% to 83%) of the items correlated with attitudes towards women

- Approximately 20% of the Bumby Rape scale and IRMA scale items had moderate correlations with attitudes towards rape

  o Other scales did not have any items moderately correlated with attitudes towards rape

Discussion

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- Suggests that at best only 1/5th of the items typically used to assess attitudes towards rape are moderately related to attitudes towards rape

- Highlights the need for more precise measures of attitudes towards rape

- More precision in assessing attitudes towards rape could lead to a better understanding of the relationship between attitudes towards rape and sexual aggression

Limitations and Future Directions

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- Semantic differentials are only one measure of attitudes

- Attenuated correlations
  o Rape SD α = .72
  o WomenSD α = .92

- Correlations: could indicate both measures are assessing a related construct

- Generalizability of sample

- Factor analysis

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Thank you

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Handouts available at:

http://carleton.ca/acbrlab/

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