

Nunes, K. L. (2018, May). *Evaluative attitudes toward sexual aggression*. Invited workshop presented at the 17th biennial Violence and Aggression Symposium, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon.

Evaluative Attitudes Toward Sexual Aggression

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Kevin L. Nunes
Carleton University

Attitudes in Forensic Theory, Research, and Practice

- “A raped woman is a less desirable woman”
- “Generally, rape is not planned . . . It just happens”
- “One reason that women falsely report a rape is that they frequently have a need to call attention to themselves”
- “Rape is unlikely to happen in the woman’s own familiar neighborhood”

at-ti-tude
/ˈədə,t(y)ōd/
noun

a settled way of thinking or feeling about someone or something, typically one that is reflected in a person's behavior.
"she took a tough attitude toward other people's indulgences"

synonyms: view, viewpoint, outlook, perspective, stance, standpoint, position, inclination, temper, orientation, approach, reaction

Attitudes in Social Psychology

- “Degree to which a person has a favorable or unfavorable evaluation or appraisal of the behavior” (Ajzen, 1991)
- Attitudes = evaluations

KILLING TIM
Rape - cons.
MURDER - UNPLANNED

Sexual aggression is bad

“A raped woman is a less desirable woman”

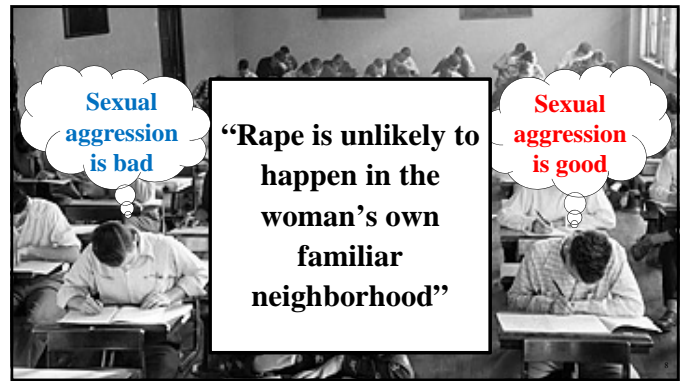
Sexual aggression is good

Sexual aggression is bad

“Generally, rape is not planned . . . It just happens”

Sexual aggression is good

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Questions

- Do measures of cognitive distortions assess evaluative attitudes towards sexual aggression?
- Are evaluative attitudes independently associated with sexually aggressive behaviour?

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Attitude May Be Everything, But Is Everything an Attitude? Cognitive Distortions May Not Be Evaluations of Rape

Kevin L. Nunes¹, Chantal A. Hermann¹, Kristen White¹, Cathrine Pettersen¹, and Kurt Bumby²

Abstract
Cognitive distortions are often referred to as attitudes toward rape in theory, research, and clinical practice pertaining to sexual aggression. In the social-psychological literature, however, attitudes are typically defined as evaluations: thus, in this context, attitudes

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Evaluation of Rape Scale

Rape is ...

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very negative						Very positive

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RAPE Scale (Bumby, 1996)

Victims of rape are usually a little bit to blame for what happens

1	2	3	4
Strongly disagree			Strongly agree


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Modified Coercive Sexuality Scale
(Rapaport & Burkhart, 1984)

Since age 16, how many times have you touched a female's genital area against her will?

Never	3 times	6 times
Once	4 times	7 times
Twice	5 times	8 times
	9 times or more	




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Likelihood to Rape
(Malamuth, 1981)

What is the likelihood that you would rape someone if you could be assured of not being caught and punished?

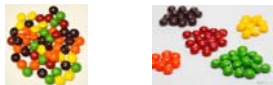

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all likely				Very likely



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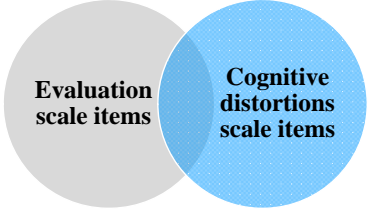

Measuring the Same Thing or Different Things?

- Exploratory factor analysis (EFA)

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Measuring Different Things: Two Factors





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Correlation with Sexually Aggressive Behaviour

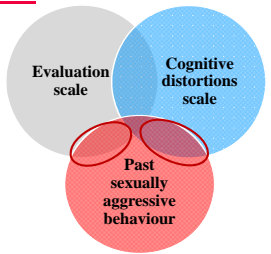

	Past sexual aggression	Likelihood to rape
Evaluation of Rape Scale	.25*	.32*
RAPE Scale (cognitive distortions)	.26*	.35*

* $p < .05$



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Association With Past Sexual Aggression: Independent

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Association With Likelihood to Rape : Independent

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Pedneault, C., Hermann, C. A., & Nunes, K. L. (2016, November). Disentangling cognitions about rape: Evaluations may be distinct from cognitive distortions. In K. L. Nunes (Chair), Cognitive distortions, evaluation, and empathy. Symposium conducted at the 35th Annual Research and Treatment Conference of the Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers, Orlando, Florida.

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Evaluations Sexual Experience Survey

How **POSITIVE** or **NEGATIVE** do you think the behaviour below is?

You having sexual intercourse with a woman when she is passed out or too drunk to give permission or stop what is happening

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very negative Very positive

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RAPE Scale (Bumby, 1996)

Victims of rape are usually a little bit to blame for what happens

1 2 3 4
Strongly disagree Strongly agree

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Sexual Experience Survey-Tactics First Revised

How many times **SINCE YOU WERE 16 years old** have you had sexual intercourse with a woman when she was passed out or too drunk to give permission or stop what was happening?

Never 3 times 6 times
Once 4 times 7 times
Twice 5 times 8 times
9 times or more

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Proclivity Sexual Experience Survey

How **LIKELY** would you be to do the following?

Have sexual intercourse with a woman when she is passed out or too drunk to give permission or stop what is happening

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very unlikely Very likely

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Likelihood to Rape
(Malamuth, 1981)

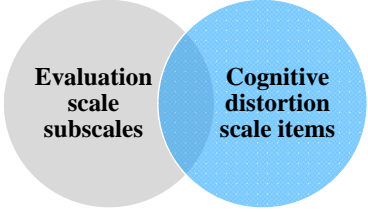

What is the likelihood that you would rape someone if you could be assured of not being caught and punished?

1 2 3 4 5
Not at all Very
likely likely



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**Measuring Different Things:
Two Factors**





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Correlation with Sexually Aggressive Behaviour

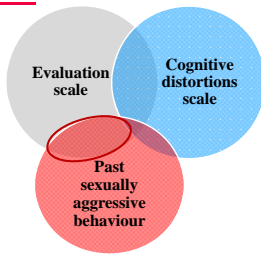

	Sexually Aggressive Behaviour		
	Past	Proclivity	Likelihood
Evaluations	.43*	.94*	.55*
Cognitive distortions	.25*	.53*	.53*

* $p < .05$



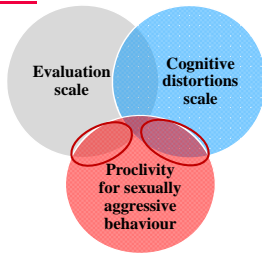

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**Association With Past Sexual Aggression:
Independent**

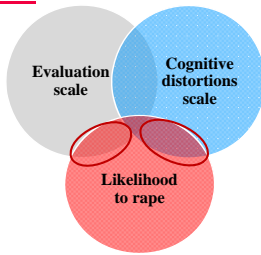

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**Association With Proclivity:
Independent**

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**Association With Likelihood to Rape :
Independent**






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Summary: Evaluative Attitudes were Distinct


- Measures of evaluative attitudes towards sexual aggression formed a distinct factor from other measures

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Summary: Evaluative Attitudes were Relevant

- Measures of evaluative attitudes towards sexual aggression and the other measures were independently associated with sexually aggressive behaviour
- Together, evaluative attitude scales and the other measures were more strongly associated with sexually aggressive behaviour than either one alone



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OTHER APPROACHES TO MEASURING EVALUATIVE ATTITUDES TOWARDS SEXUAL AGGRESSION




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Article

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Implicit and Explicit Attitudes Toward Rape are Associated With Sexual Aggression




Kevin L. Nunes, PhD,¹ Chantal A. Hermann, MA,¹ and Katie Ratcliffe, MSW¹

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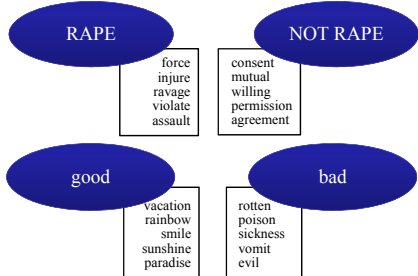
Implicit vs. Explicit Evaluative Attitudes

- Immediate vs. deliberative
- Response latency or other indirect approaches vs. self-report



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Rape Evaluation Implicit Association Test (RE-IAT)



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Example of RE-IAT Trials

RAPE or good NOT RAPE or bad

FORCE

d k

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RAPE or good NOT RAPE or bad

paradise

d k

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NOT RAPE or good RAPE or bad

CONSENT

d k

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39

NOT RAPE or good RAPE or bad

paradise

d k

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RE-IAT D Score

Response latency	}	RAPE	NOT RAPE
		good	bad
versus			
Response latency	}	NOT RAPE	RAPE
		good	bad

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Rape Outcome (RO) Evaluation Scale

What could happen if you were to force a woman to have sex with you?

How positive or negative would this outcome be for you if it did happen?

-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
Very negative			Neutral			Very positive

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Sexual Experiences Survey - Male Version (SES-MV; Koss & Oros, 1982)

From when you were 16-years old to today, have you ever been in a situation where you used some degree of physical force (twisting her arm, holding her down, etc.) to try to make a girl or woman engage in kissing or petting when she didn't want to?

Never Once Twice or more

Likelihood to Rape (Malamuth, 1981)

What is the likelihood that you would rape someone if you could be assured of not being caught and punished?

1 2 3 4 5
Not at all Very likely
likely

Correlation with Sexually Aggressive Behaviour

	Past sexual aggression	Likelihood to rape
RE-IAT	.22*	.31*
RO Evaluation	.26*	.41*

* $p < .05$

Independently Associated with Sexually Aggressive Behaviour?

- Past sexual aggression
 - ✓ RE-IAT
 - ✓ RO Evaluation Scale
- Likelihood to rape
 - ✓ RE-IAT $p = .051$
 - ✓ RO Evaluation Scale


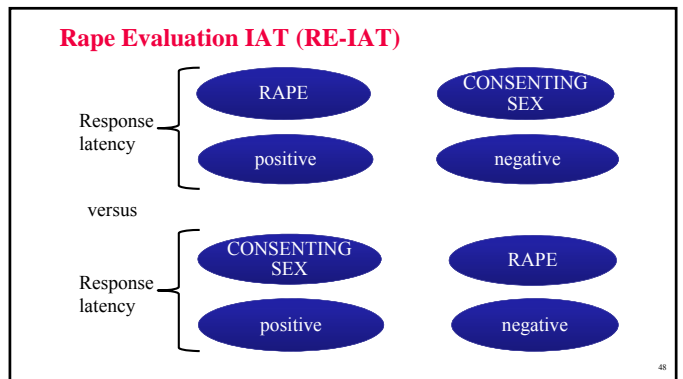
Article

Examining Implicit and Explicit Evaluations of Sexual Aggression and Sexually Aggressive Behavior in Men Recruited Online

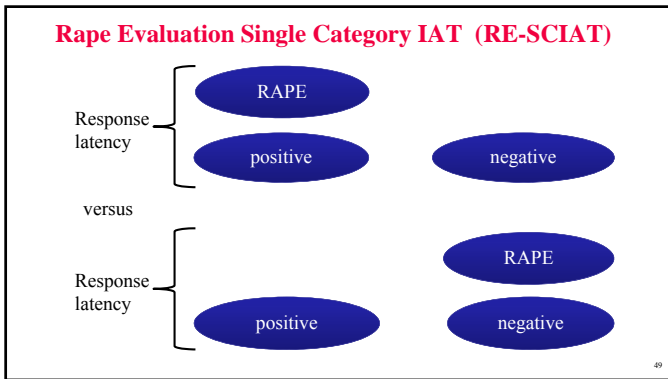
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Chantal A. Hermann¹, Kevin L. Nunes², and Sacha Maimone²

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Evaluations Sexual Experience Survey

How POSITIVE or NEGATIVE do you think the behaviour below is?

You having sexual intercourse with a woman when she is passed out or too drunk to give permission or stop what is happening

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very negative Very positive

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Evaluation of Rape Scale

Rape is ...

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very negative Very positive

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Rape Outcome (RO) Evaluation Scale

What could happen if you were to force a woman to have sex with you?

How positive or negative would this outcome be for you if it did happen?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very negative Neutral Very positive

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Sexual Experience Survey-Tactics First Revised

How many times SINCE YOU WERE 16 years old have you had sexual intercourse with a woman when she was passed out or too drunk to give permission or stop what was happening?

Never 3 times 6 times
Once 4 times 7 times
Twice 5 times 8 times
9 times or more

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Proclivity Sexual Experience Survey

How LIKELY would you be to do the following?

Have sexual intercourse with a woman when she is passed out or too drunk to give permission or stop what is happening

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very unlikely Very likely

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Correlation with Sexually Aggressive Behaviour

	Sexually Aggressive Behaviour		
	Past	Proclivity	Likelihood
Students			
RE-IAT	.03	-.03	-.16
RE-SCIAT	-.10	.03	.12
Community			
RE-IAT	-.01	.03	.13
RE-SCIAT	-.03	.01	.05


* $p < .05$

Correlation with Sexually Aggressive Behaviour

	Sexually Aggressive Behaviour		
	Past	Proclivity	Likelihood
Students			
Evaluations SES	.57*	.84*	.31*
Evaluation Scale	.48*	.63*	.56*
ROE-Evaluation	.03	.10	.14
Community			
Evaluations SES	.43*	.81*	.40*
Evaluation Scale	.41*	.56*	.63*
ROE-Evaluation	.23*	.46*	.34*

* $p < .05$

DO EVALUATIVE ATTITUDES PREDICT SEXUALLY AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR?



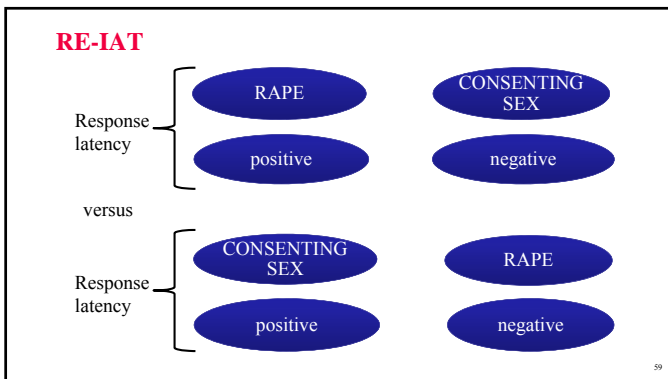
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Article

Implicit and Explicit Evaluations of Sexual Aggression Predict Subsequent Sexually Aggressive Behavior in a Sample of Community Men

Chantal A. Hermann¹ and Kevin L. Nunes²

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Evaluations Sexual Experience Survey

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1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very negative Very positive



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Evaluation of Rape Scale

Rape is ...

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Very negative Very positive

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Rape Outcome (RO) Evaluation Scale

What could happen if you were to force a woman to have sex with you?

How positive or negative would this outcome be for you if it did happen?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Very negative Neutral Very positive

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Time 1: Sexual Experience Survey-Tactics First Revised

How many times SINCE YOU WERE 16 years old have you had sexual intercourse with a woman when she was passed out or too drunk to give permission or stop what was happening?

Never	3 times	6 times
Once	4 times	7 times
Twice	5 times	8 times
	9 times or more	

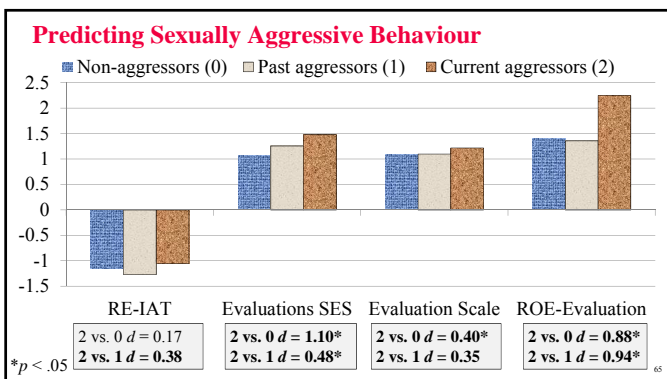
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Time 2: Sexual Experience Survey-Tactics First Revised

How many times **in the last 4 months** have you had sexual intercourse with a woman when she was passed out or too drunk to give permission or stop what was happening?

Never	3 times	6 times
Once	4 times	7 times
Twice	5 times	8 times
	9 times or more	

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Independent Prediction of Sexually Aggressive Behaviour?

- ✓ RE-IAT
- ✓ Evaluation SES-TFR

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Recap: Relationship with Sexually Aggressive Behaviour

Measure	Associated	Predicted
Evaluation of Rape Scale	Yes	Yes
Evaluation SES	Yes	Yes
Rape Outcome Evaluation	Yes	Yes
Implicit Association Test (IAT)	Inconsistent	Somewhat

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Next Steps

- Tests of construct validity
- Further tests of distinctiveness
- Causal effect on sexually aggressive behaviour?
- Alternative approaches; e.g., interview, other implicit
- Other types of sexual violence and populations; e.g., sexual offending against children, men



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Conclusion

- Evaluative attitudes towards sexual aggression may have been overlooked, but may be relevant
- Precision and clarity of conceptualization and measurement → better understanding of causes → better assessment and intervention → reduce sexual violence



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Aggressive Cognitions and Behaviour Research Lab



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