Rape Culture and Victim Blaming on the UNCP Campus

Honors Project
In fulfillment of the Requirements for
The Esther G. Maynor Honors College
University of North Carolina at Pembroke
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November 30, 2015

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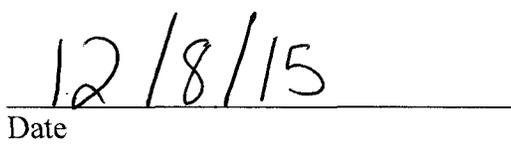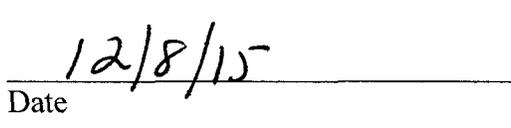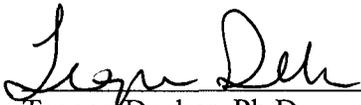
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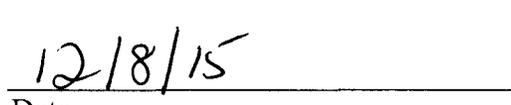
Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my mentor, Dr. Summer Stanley, for all of her help and support throughout this project. I had a few complications throughout the process, and she was always there if I needed any assistance or just wanted to talk about the project. Also, I would like to thank the Assistant Dean of the Honors College and Project Coordinator, Dr. Teagan Decker, for all of her support. She has also been integral to this project through answering questions and being available if I needed her.

Additionally, I would like to thank all of the participants of my survey. I could not have done the research without these people, and although I had limited time to conduct research, 300 people agreed to take the survey. Again, thank you.

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ABSTRACT

RAPE CULTURE AND VICTIM BLAMING ON THE UNCP CAMPUS:

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May 7, 2016

The project aimed to first explore the concepts of rape culture and victim blaming through their history, as well as their current representation in society. Also, the literature review featured sections on the scope of the problem, interventions attempted, and other information pertinent to understand rape culture. The research for this project was conducted at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke in various locations, and involved a single researcher surveying students. The results of the research were broken into different sections depending on which part of the survey was being discussed. The most important section was the participants' responses to eight scenarios that depicted a person who was raped, and then participants had to rate whether or not the victim had no influence, mild influence, moderate influence, or strong influence on their rape. Although when participants were assigned a victim blaming score the results were positive and indicated low levels of victim blaming, when each individual scenario was analyzed participants tended to blame certain victims more than others based off of stereotypes and common misconceptions associated with rape.

Rape Culture and Victim Blaming on the UNCP Campus

Rape Culture is a term that has developed over the last few decades to describe a phenomenon plaguing society. It is used as an umbrella term to cover the way rape is viewed and talked about throughout not only the media and popular culture, but also the way rape is framed and discussed by the people in a particular culture (Buchwald, Fletcher, & Roth, 2005). Rape culture can be seen in a society when men are taught they should be sexually aggressive and violence towards women becomes normalized (as cited in Maxwell, 2014). In the United States, there has been increasing awareness of rape culture, but the process has been slow. According to Kitzinger (2009), in the 1970s second-wave feminists identified rape as part of a bigger, cultural problem in which violence and contempt for women was the accepted norm. Over forty years later, society still harbors this view, but with many more outlets to express it. Another problem that comes with rape culture is blaming the victim. In cases of rape, people look for a reason as to why it happened, which leads to people assuming that the victim did something that provoked or attracted their attacker. Rape culture and victim blaming go hand in hand, and through present research it can be seen in context as it applies to the overall culture and more specifically college campuses.

Literature Review

Origins of Current Rape Culture

Rape is a crime that has been around for a long time, and, although the views surrounding it have changed throughout the years, it is important to understand its past in order to understand how it is viewed today. Until the suffragist movements in the late 19th and early 18th centuries, women were often viewed as less than men or as property (Freedman, 2013). Under this rule, women were not the owner of their own bodies, which made it harder for them to report rape. In colonial times, there were initially harsh punishments towards men who committed rape;

however, rape was often defined as carnal knowledge, or sexual intercourse, and had to involve force (Freedman, 2013). With such a thin definition, whether or not a person was raped would be dependent on the level of force, and the woman would have to prove she did everything in her power to resist. Freedman (2013) also stated that the rape of a man committed by another man was considered sodomy, and often was discredited. Through the culture of the time, most people framed rape as one man violating the property of another man, and thus women were subjected to abuse and their claims of rape were validated or dismissed by the men in their families and communities.

The more women were allowed to join society, the more pressure was placed on them to avoid rape (Freedman, 2013). Due to the industrial revolution, people were transitioning from small towns to cities, thus allowing for a heightened sense of danger as women were now faced with the responsibility of protecting themselves (Freedman, 2013). It was highly publicized that if women wanted to be good wives and mothers, then they needed to be pure upon entering into marriage. Freedman (2013) continued to say that with the emphasis on purity, women were expected to hold higher moral standards and protect their chastity. Towards the end of the 1800s, laws were passed that created high penalties for men who committed rape, but men against the laws stated "the criminalization of seduction would limit the sexual privileges enjoyed by white men" (Freedman, 2013, p.44). Regardless of the backlash, there were great strides made with the new laws, but by the mid-twentieth century they were becoming obsolete and in desperate need of updating.

Rape Culture Today

In the News. Although more recent history has seen a rise in awareness of rape culture, there are also many more outlets where rape culture can be found. In the 1960s and 70s, journalists were not talking about rape; however, after feminists began pushing for more

protection through law, the media coverage of rape cases rose greatly (Kitzinger, 2009).

Kitzinger (2009) stated journalists usually covered cases of stranger rape in high-risk scenarios, because these cases may appear to be more interesting and feature a heightened sense of danger.

The practice is still around today. Clark (2013), an advocate for victims of rape, stated in a letter to journalists that when approaching victims of rape and sexual assault, journalists should use sensitive language and not push for intimate details to make the story sound more interesting.

She felt the need to publish the letter because many journalists were not being considerate to victims therefore causing them more distress and feelings of blame. Kitzinger (2009) also discussed the desensitization of the journalists and news broadcasters when it comes to the seriousness of rape. The issue the article mentions is that news reports often do not feature stories of rape where the victim knows their attacker. Since 80% of rape victims know their attackers, news sources should be using their platform to raise awareness of this area of rape (U.S. Department of Justice, 2014). However, people have become tired of stories that feature the same details, and reporters are continuously searching for something to put viewers on the edge of their seats (Kitzinger, 2009).

In Popular Culture. Rape culture is not only seen in news reporting, but it is also a large part of popular culture. In the last few years, there have been numerous songs released that reflect rape culture. One example is "Blurred Lines" by Robin Thicke. The lyrics feature phrases such as "I know you want it" and "the way you grab me/must wanna get nasty" (RobinThickeVevo, 2013). The lyrics reflect a common misconception among men that women do not know what they want, and that when they say no they actually mean yes. Also, some men assume that if a woman is being friendly or flirting, then she is also interested in sex. Fletcher (2005) gives an example of these behaviors when she describes a man who, on repeatedly being told no, picked her up and carried her to the dance floor. Another issue of popular culture is the

desensitization of the public to rape through TV and video games (Kingston, 2013). On television today there are numerous shows that feature rape as key plot elements, such as *Game of Thrones* and *CSI.* The problem is that viewers are shown cases of rape so often that they become desensitized to it, and often times female characters are given backstories that involve rape (Kingston, 2007). Kingston (2013) mentions how in *Family Guy* characters make jokes about rape, and the game Grand Theft Auto V features a woman being raped. Although both the show and the game are meant to be viewed and played by older audiences, there is still a high risk that kids will come into contact with these images and not understand the severity of the issue and learn to associate rape with comedy instead of as a social problem. With society continuously being facing representations of rape, the idea that rape is normal or cannot be prevented may become a common thought.

In Dress Codes. An outlet of rape culture that has more direct contact with younger generations is the sexist nature schools often take toward female students. There are numerous ways sexism can be seen, but one that has been under debate in recent years is school dress codes. Dockterman (2014a) and Dockterman (2014b) discussed the matter by stating that schools are labeling dress code violations as distracting to a female's male classmates and teachers. In some situations, girls cannot wear leggings because they fit too tightly (Dockterman, 2014b). Recently, at a school in Kentucky, a female student was sent home because her collar bones were showing (Tribune Media Wire & Ott, 2015). When schools are too strict in their dress codes and tell female students it is because their bodies are distractions, it promotes the idea that women must prevent unwanted attention. Women were told in the 19th century to cover up to avert the male gaze, and the same thing is happening in schools all across the country (Freeman, 2013; Dockterman, 2014b). Although schools may think they are teaching girls to be modest, they are actually teaching male students to objectify their female classmates. When a person is reduced to

an outfit, they are seen as something to look at and judge. It is possible these girls will be ridiculed after teachers recognize the violation (Dockterman, 2014a; Dockterman 2014b; Valenti, 2013). The rules are different in college, allowing students to dress how they please, but strict dress codes have already ingrained the idea that certain clothing choices are considered deviant.

In Prevention Tips. In an effort to provide advice to the public, colleges and organizations will post tips on how to avoid and prevent rape. These ads are usually targeted to women (Kitzinger, 2009; Friendman, 2013; Bedera & Mordmeyer, 2015). They have been around for over a hundred years, but they have not changed much since they were first introduced (Friendman, 2013). Bedera and Mordmeyer (2015) conducted a survey of college campuses to see what kinds of tips are given to women in modern times. The authors reviewed 40 different college websites, and found that at 15 of the schools a total of 494 different tips were given. Most of them included tips directed solely towards women, such as communicate limits, beware of surroundings, never go out at night alone, don't meet first dates alone, and say no. For the men, one of the only reoccurring tips was that no means no. The tips continuously served to remind women that they are never safe and are always vulnerable. In the 1970s, a list entitled "How to Avoid Rape" was released to highlight how ridiculous the tips are and how they do more to create fear and shame than to prevent rape (as cited in Kitzinger, 2009). The list included sayings like don't go out with or without clothes, don't go out alone or with a friend, avoiding childhood and old age, and avoid male family members and friends. The list concluded by telling women it is easier to not exist (as cited in Kitzinger, 2009). It is apparent that the tips that are given to students now are not different from the ones given 40 and 50 years ago, showing that not much progress has been made.

In Child Socialization. On another note, the emphasis on men to be dominant and sexually aggressive is another contributing factor to rape culture. Burnett et al. (2009) cited how

college men's involvement in more physically aggressive sports can lead to a tendency to believe rape myths. The rationale behind the information is that the students playing the sports are continuously in situations where they are praised for asserting dominance over the other team and behaving in more hostile manners. Also, Page (2008) discussed how men are taught that in order to be truly masculine, men are socialized to be more aggressive and to hold patriarchal and sometimes misogynistic views of society and women. Although men are being taught one set of characteristics, women are being taught the opposite. Roth (2005) discussed her own internal rape culture. She stated that throughout her life she had been confronted with the idea that she should find men's aggressive and violent nature as being romantic and often found herself fantasizing about the behavior. The idea to romanticize these acts is taught at an early age. One belief that has circulated for many years throughout elementary and middle school is that if a boy is mean to a girl, then he actually likes her (Qua, 2013; Tryhane, 2014; Blimey Cow, 2014). By teaching boys to bully and girls to view it as a sign of affection, society is teaching the fundamentals of rape culture at a young age.

Magnitude of the Problem

Although rape is a problem affecting men and women of all ages, college students are one group that is especially affected. Whether it is walking back from a night class or spending time with new people, college students are continuously faced with potential risky situations. The U.S. Department of Justice (2014) found that females between the ages of 18 and 24 have the highest rate of rape and sexual assault out of any other age group. Also, they discovered that between the years 1995 and 2013 33% of female students who were victimized experienced completed rape, while others experienced attempted rape (25%), sexual assault (31%), and threats (11%). Within the 18-24 age group, 80% of female students and nonstudents knew their attacker and 67% stated that the rape occurred either at their own home or at a friend or relative's

home (U.S. Department of Justice, 2014). The U.S. Department of Justice (2014) found that 17% of rape and sexual assault victims on college campuses were men, which is significantly higher than the average rate reported by the Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN) (n.d.) that 3% of all men experience rape in their lifetime. However, RAINN does state that male college students are 78% more likely to be raped than other male groups. These statistics are important, because they showcase the severity of rape on college campuses.

When discussing rape, it is also very important to discuss diversity and reporting. The victims of rape have many different ethnic origins. RAINN reported that 17.6% of all women will experience rape in their lifetime, with 17.7% of White women, 18.8% of Black women, and 24.4% of mixed race women facing rape. The group with the most significant percentage was American Indian/Alaskan Native, which had a percent rate of 34.1%. When totaled, it was found that one in every six women will experience rape in their lifetime, as compared to one in every thirty-three of men (RAINN, n.d.). When it comes to reporting, 20% of college females went to the police after being raped (RAINN, n.d.; U.S. Department of Justice, 2014). Although 82% of rapes committed against females on a college campus did not involve a weapon, 57% of the total rapes committed involved an injury (U.S. Department of Justice, 2014). Finally, even though there is diversity among rape victims, there is not much diversity among perpetrators of rape. The U.S. Department of Justice Statistics (n.d.) found that 97% of rapists were men, and 63% of these men were White. Although these demographics are significant, they only make up a portion of rape victims, because we can never fully understand the scope of the problem (Kingston, 2013).

Rape culture is an issue that affects how police view victims and how victims view themselves. Page (2008) discussed the way that police officers perceive victims of rape. In the case study, the views of police officers living in the southeast were assessed through a series of

questions and surveys. The researcher found that initially, a majority of police officers were more likely to reject typical rape myths and victim blaming, with 93% believing any woman could be a victim of rape and 66% believing that any man could be a victim of rape. However, these attitudes started to change when compared to specific circumstances (Page, 2008). In one case, 89% of officers said they were likely or very likely to believe a virgin who claimed rape, but only 42.5% of police officers surveyed were likely or very likely to believe a prostitute. The shift in opinion continues as different types of women are presented; however, in most of the cases upwards of 20% of the officers stated they were neither likely nor unlikely to believe each of the different women victimized (Page, 2008).

Legal Provisions

There are three different federal laws that can be applied to rape cases. The first is through Title IX protection against sexual discrimination and harassment ("Title IX," n.d Through this law, any public institution that has had a case of or dismissed cases of rape and sexual assault can be taken to court for the incident if the victim believes they were discriminated against based on gender ("Title IX," n.d.). Also under Title IX, victims can file suit against college campuses that do not punish rapists by claiming the university is contributing to a hostile environment. Another provision against rape and sexual assault can be found in Title II of The Americans with Disabilities Act ("Title II," n.d.). Through the act, institutions cannot discriminate or discredit students based on physical and mental disabilities ("Title II," n.d.). The final act that is currently available to file under is The Clery Act, which requires universities to report when and where a crime has occurred in a timely manner ("The Clery Act," n.d.). Although each state has its own definition of rape and how to prosecute and categorize it, all states must follow and adhere to the three laws discussed above.

Interventions Attempted

Throughout the country there have been many different attempts at rape culture intervention. For example, poster campaigns, blue phone police safety systems, and encouragement for bystander involvement have been used in attempts to shift rape culture (Kingston, 2013). Although these methods have had some success, the author states that for the most part psychologists often note that there is little improvement in behavior achieved through these efforts. Katz, Olin, and DuBois (2013) discussed bystander interventions through poster campaigns. In these posters, students were urged to step in and help whenever they thought someone may be in a risky situation. Also, the same article discussed freshmen students receiving bystander training on how to recognize warning signs of rape and what to do if danger and possible rape is suspected. Overall, the authors could not determine whether or not the posters or class had changed the behavior and opinions of the students. Kingston (2013) mentioned how often times students will turn poster campaigns into parody versions of the originals. The article cited cases where fraternities handed out flyers asking members who they would rape, and sports teams encouraging players to spike the drinks of girls at a party. Poster and class campaigns are nice in theory, but it is hard to ensure the message is coming across positively and accurately.

Another approach people have taken is raising awareness of rape and rape culture through Slut Walks. The ideas was initially developed after a Canadian police officer told female students they should not dress like sluts if they did not want to get raped (Kingston, 2013; Dow &Wood, 2014; Penny, 2011Additional Slut Walks have started to occur all across the United States and the world since the first Slut Walks in 2011 (Dow &Wood, 2014). Many women have found the walks to be empowering, and often the walks are described as women taking back their

own sexuality and reclaiming the word slut (Dow &Wood, 2014; Tuerkheimer, 2015; Penny, 2011). Tuerkheimer (2015) discussed how there are diverse groups of women who show up, and the events usually include a speaker and awareness information about rape before the walk ever begins. Although the walks have good intentions, some people feel that they are not beneficial to preventing rape or representing feminism (Dow &Wood, 2014; Tuerkheimer, 2015). Tuerkheimer (2015) discussed the topic in detail, stating that although some women find the experience to be empowering, others do not. One group mentioned was African American women, who are often oversexualized and sometimes believed to be unrapeable because of their over sexualization. Due to this issue, these women may not find the walks as empowering because they may feel the walks are not focusing on the issue of rape and more on expressing sexuality. Also, the article mentioned that some believe the walks further the objectification of women, stating that women are simply furthering stereotypes and ideas, while not seriously affecting the issue. Even given the controversial nature of Slut Walks, they have become a recent trend to raise awareness of rape culture.

A final intervention and support system that has developed are rape crisis centers. At these centers, workers and volunteers work in direct services, by visiting the ER when a victim is admitted, providing follow-up care, and visiting locations to conduct trainings on rape (Danielle Pernell, personal communication, Nov. 20, 2015). Pernell stated that her clients usually are looking for someone to listen to them, believe them, and remain neutral on the situation. When working with the police, she informs the clients the purpose of the police and what they are looking for when interviewing them. A rape crisis center's main goal is to build a relationship with the client and help them through this rough time. She confirmed the findings of the U.S. Department of Justice (2014), stating most of her clients are females in the 18-24 age range. When asked about victim blaming, Pernell said that most of the clients blame themselves for

what happened and that when working with victims it is always important to remember the circumstances of the rape are not what is most important (Danielle Pernell, personal communication, Nov. 20, 2015). The U.S. Department of Justice (2014) found that only 16% of victims received some form of assistance after their attack. Perpetrators are often excused of their behavior, and Pernell says that until the attitude is changed then progress cannot really be made.

Why is it still a Problem?

Although there have been great strides towards ending rape culture and preventing rape, there is still a long way to go before society develops a new outlook and perspective on the issue. One is the most striking statistics regarding rape is that 97% of rapists go unpunished for their crime (RAINN, n.d.). With the lack of punishment, the assumption develops among attackers that their behavior is acceptable because there are no consequences. Valenti (2013) provides a good example of this problem by discussing a case where a young girl was gang raped by members of her high school's football team. When she spoke out against the boys, she was ridiculed, and the community mourned the loss of the boys' football career. The author continued her discussion by stating rapists may start to target victims who have been drinking or are in compromising situations, so the blame is transferred onto the victim and what they could have done to prevent the rape. Finally, there is a problem with people rejecting consent classes. One college student in England was in the media recently holding a picture that said "I don't look like a rapist" in response to his school requiring a class on sex and consent (Warren, 2015). In situations like this, it becomes harder for advocates to provide successful intervention because students are not being receptive and accepting the information presented.

In other areas, there are still many problems revolving around rape culture. A main area that needs changing is the way rape is presented in the law, specifically North Carolina law. In

North Carolina, first degree rape of an adult is defined as vaginal rape through the use of a weapon or serious injury (Rape and Other Sex Offenses, n.d.). Also, the law states that second degree rape is vaginal intercourse of someone by force. Included here as well is the rape of a person with a serious mental or physical disability (Rape and Other Sex Offenses, n.d.). Finally, any other sexual act is only considered sexual assault either in the first or second degree (Rape and Other Sex Offenses, n.d.). Each degree of sexual assault is categorized just as rape is, with the exception being that rape only includes vaginal intercourse. Under these laws, men are automatically granted less provisions because if a man is raped it is only considered sexual assault. Although there is a distinction between whether or not a weapon was present or an injury occurred, this does not include the emotional trauma a victim might face. The laws have become outdated, and they do not take into account all of the realities of rape.

Research Conducted on the UNCP Campus

Description of Research

This paper examines rape culture and victim blaming specifically to what extent each are evident on the researcher's college campus. The study was designed in the spring of 2015 and conducted in the fall of 2015. The goal of the research was to measure victim blaming based on numerous victim characteristics. After the surveys were completed, the researcher compiled them, analyzed the data, and determined the significance of the data.

Research Questions

This research examines the following questions: (1) Will people judge the victims of rape differently depending on the characteristics of the situation, such as clothing choice, being alone, being out at night, etc.? (2) Are there differences based on gender, academic standing, race, and age? (3) And, what do the comments reveal about students' perceptions of rape victims and victim blaming?

Methodology

In order to complete the research, there were many factors to take into consideration. One of the main concerns was finding an objective method of collecting data. Page (2008) conducted a survey among police officers that required them to rate how likely they would believe different types of women, such as a virgin, wife, or a prostitute. However, the author did not survey the officers on other factors that are important to understanding victim blaming. Some of the things the researcher also wanted to know was if participants would have higher rates of victim blaming if the victim was alone, wore revealing clothing, new their attacker, or was associated with other factors that are often used to blame victims. The researcher began developing the survey while in a class on social research, and consulted with her professor about the survey. Also, the researcher met with a tutor in the University Writing Center to make sure everything was objective and did not include leading questions or scenarios that would affect the data. Finally, after the researcher had developed the full completed survey, she consulted with her research mentor to ensure that the survey was complete and ready to be sent for IRB approval. In the end, the researcher and mentor agreed on a survey that would include different types of victims and would include the other factors of victim blaming discussed above.

Sample and Setting

The research was conducted at The University of North Carolina at Pembroke (UNCP). The researcher spent between two and three weeks going to various locations on campus and collecting data. The majority of the surveys were given to students eating in the university's cafeteria. Here, the researcher was able to get the most diverse participants and randomly chose who participated in the research. Also, the researcher surveyed students who visited the

University Writing Center and Starbucks. Finally, there were many social work students surveyed. This occurred because the researcher surveyed students in her Human Behavior class, as well as her mentor's Intro to Social Work and Writing for the Social Sciences classes. When the surveys were given, the researcher initially told participants she was working on a project for the honors college and asked if the student would be interested in participating in a survey. Instead of the researcher describing the study, there was an attached cover letter to the participant stating the purpose of the research and how it would be used (Appendix A). Other information was only given when the participant asked questions, in an effort to ensure that the researcher did not affect the participants' responses.

Study Design

The survey (Appendix B) included a variety of questions. The first section of information was to gather the demographics of the participants. Each participant was asked his or her gender, age, race, and academic standing. In this case, demographics such as sexual orientation and socioeconomic status were not considered to be notable in analyzing the data. If the study were done on a larger scale, then other demographic characteristics could be included. The second portion of the survey consisted of eight different scenarios. In each scenario, the participant was given a different victim they were to assume had been raped. Each scenario included characteristics that are common in rape myths and stereotypes that are used to blame victims of rape. Some examples that have not already been given are taking the same path every day and alcohol consumption. With each scenario, the participant was instructed to rate whether the characteristics of the victim had no influence, mild influence, moderate influence, or strong influence on his or her attack. The final portion of the survey asked whether the participant had ever pressured someone into having sex and if rape was ever okay. These two questions were given to determine if there were any inconsistencies between the scenario responses and the

person's overall view of rape (Appendix B).

Data Analysis

There were 300 students surveyed by the researcher. The participants varied in gender, with 110 males surveyed and 177 females. Also, three of the participants chose other as their gender, and ten chose not to answer the question. Although 268 of the participants were between the ages of 17 and 22, there were 18 participants 23-28 and 18 participants 29 or older. Most of the students surveyed were either Caucasian (31%) or African American (43%). Although other races such as Native Americans (22), Hispanics (25), and Asians (4) were surveyed, their percentages were all less than 10%. The same was true for people who stated their race as other (27), which included either races not present or biracial participants. Most of the participants were freshmen (40%), followed by juniors (22%), seniors (19%), sophomores (17%), and graduate students (1%). All of these statistics and numbers can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographics			
Variable	**Category**	**N**	**%**
Gender	Total	300	100%
	Male	110	37%
	Female	177	59%
	Other	3	1%
	N/A	10	3%
Age	17-22	263	88%
	23-28	18	6%
	29 and up	18	6%
Race	European American	93	31%
	African American	128	43%
	Native American	22	7%
	Asian	4	1%
	Hispanic	25	8%
	Other	27	9%
	N/A	1	0%
Academic Stand	Freshman	119	40%
	Sophomore	52	17%
	Junior	66	22%
	Senior	57	19%
	Graduate	2	1%
	N/A	3	1%
Case Scores	8 to 13	115	38%
	14 to 19	105	35%
	20 to 25	66	22%
	26 to 32	14	5%

In order to determine how many people showed a greater tendency to victim blame, each participant was given a numerical score by adding the numbers that corresponded to the level of influence. To begin, if people showed no tendency, they received a score between eight and thirteen, which included 115 participants. The next set was between fourteen and nineteen, which showed mild influence and included 105 participants. These scores are good, because it means that a little over two-thirds of the participants were either not likely or only mildly likely to victim blame. However, the other participants showed moderate (66) to severe (14) victim blaming. Although the researcher thought that aspects such as age, race, and academic standing would produce significant data, these demographics did not appear to greatly influence the type of responses people gave (Appendices C &D). Gender did have some effect on the scores. Of the women, 44% had scores that fell in the no victim blaming set of scores, while only 29% of men scored here. When it came to mild victim blaming men scored 38% while women scored 32%, 29% of men and 19% of women scored moderate, and 4% of men and 5% of women scored severe (Table 2).

Table 2: Gender and Case Scores

| Gender and Case Scores				
	8 to 13	14 to 19	20 to 25	26 to 32
Male	32	42	32	4
Female	78	56	34	9
Other	0	3	0	0
N/A	5	4	0	1

The next section of to be analyzed is where participants were asked if they had ever pressured someone into sex and if rape is ever okay (Table 3). For the first question, nine participants reported they had pressured someone into having sex after the other person initially

said no. Most people (286) reported no for this question, but 23 participants chose not to answer. When asked if rape was ever okay, 281 participants responded with no and 4 said yes. The other 15 participants chose not to answer. Overall, these numbers indicated that almost all of the participants should have scored in the no victim blaming category, since they appeared to be highly against rape.

Table 3: Overall View of Rape			
Pressured into Sex	Yes	9	3%
	No	268	89%
	N/A	23	8%
Rape Okay?	Yes	4	1%
	No	281	94%
	N/A	15	5%

The data collected regarding each response to the victims provides insight into how participants viewed and stereotyped each situation (Figure 1). For the first two cases, the numbers were virtually the same, with 143 and 145 saying no influence, 84 and 81 saying mildly influenced, 39 and 40 saying moderately influenced, and 34 and 33 saying strongly influenced. Both of these cases featured similar characteristics, with both of the girls assumed to be conservative—through either visiting church or through her clothing —and walking alone at night (Appendix B). In comparison to other cases, these two cases can be found as the median value for each case under all response categories. Some of the participants left comments on the survey stating that they chose their answer because the victim was alone, and word "alone" was underlined on a couple of the surveys, indicating the participants deliberated their response before choosing. The responses given may have received the responses they did because the girls exhibited both positive and negative behaviors of preventing rape. Although a little over a fifth of the participants chose one of the two higher influence options, the majority of the participants did not attribute blame to these two victims.

Response Rate
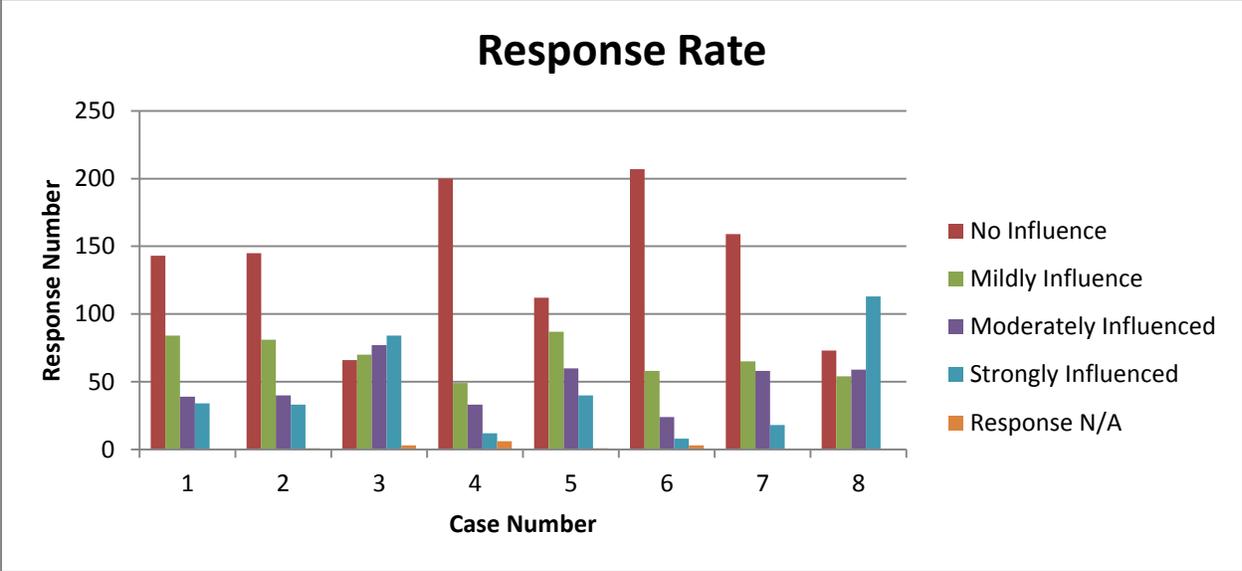
There were a few cases that had even higher reports of no influence. The case that had the highest level of no influence was case six, the one involving a man (Appendix B). Out of all of the participants, 69% responded saying he had no influence, with another 19% reporting only mild influence. This finding is surprising, because there is often a stigma around men who are raped, and, as was reflected in North Carolina law, some do not hold the belief that men can be raped. Since there is such disbelief around male rape, the findings may indicate that the participants marked the levels of influence lower because they did not believe he was raped. The next victim with the most no influence responses is in case four, the woman who was married (Appendix B). Of participants, 67% stated the woman did not influence her attack, and 16% felt there was only mild influence. These results may signify that participants also did not believe she was raped. Marital rape was not recognized until recent decades, so the stigma and belief that spouses cannot be raped and that marriage automatically guarantees consent could have contributed to how some participants responded to the question. The final case to discuss here is

the seventh one, where two friends were working on a project (Appendix B). Although only 53% of participants felt there was no influence and 22% felt there was only mild influence, the numbers still reflect a positive direction, with lesser percentages of participants blaming the victim as compared to the other cases. The lower scores may be because the victim already had a friendship with the attacker leading to the presumption she could not have predicted or prevented her attack.

The final group to be discussed is the victims that participants showed lower rates of no influence. The first case was the one of the girl who takes the same path every day (Appendix B). Only 37% of students said she did not influence her situation, while 29% reported mild influence, 20% reported moderate influence, and 13% reported strong influence. In this case, a few students commented that the reason they marked higher levels of influence was because the girl took the same path. Along with taking the same path the girl also was wearing revealing clothing. Both of these characteristics are often portrayed as controllable factors that girls should consider when out in order to prevent rape. The next case involved alcohol (Appendix B). . This group had the lowest percentage of no influence with only 22% of participants believing there was no influence on the rape. Continuing on, 23% felt that there was mild influence, 26% felt there was moderate influence, and 28% felt there was strong influence. The level of influence increasingly elevated. Possible reasons why responses varied may be because the case features alcohol, which is often considered a means of raping women, and women are told to avoid alcohol in order to avoid rape. Also, consent was initially given, so respondents may have the belief that once consent is given then it cannot be taken away, which could have influenced their choice. The final case presented is the one of the stripper who wears revealing clothes (Appendix B). As stated in the literature review, women who are assumed to have more sexual knowledge are scrutinized more in cases of rape, and are less likely to be believed. The statistics for this case

were 24% said no influence, 18% said mild influence, 20% said moderate influence, and finally 38% said strongly influenced. The results heavily reflected the findings in the literature, with one participant even checking the strongly influenced box three times.

Discussion

Overall, the data provided mixed results. When looking at overall victim blaming scores, the outlook was positive. More people rated as not likely or only mildly likely to blame victims of rape, which was the desired response. Also, most of the additional comments provided from survey takers were that rape is never okay, and that women should not be judged on any characteristics when it comes to rape. However, the results are not as positive when looking at the findings for each individual situation. Respondents rated acquaintance rape with higher levels of no influence, but tended to blame the victim more if they were raped by a stranger. Also, when the victim was associated with deviant behavior such as alcohol or stripping, the responses shifted towards strongly blaming the victim, which even became the highest response. The negative views of victims are congruent with rape culture that expects women to be vigilant and avoid high risk scenarios. In the tips to avoid rape, women were told that they should avoid alcohol, never go out alone, and given many other ideas to prevent rape that were represented in the cases given to participants. The researcher found that when victims deviated from these typical ideas of what is considered responsible and safe, they were more likely to be blamed for their attack. Out of all the students surveyed, only 42 participants said all of the victims had no influence on their attack. This finding is significant because it means that 86% of participants attributed some blame to at least one victim. It furthers the idea that stereotypes and myths about rape do influence the way people react to cases of rape.

Advantages and Limitations

Although the survey provided many benefits, it also had some drawbacks. One benefit was that the survey was simple and easy to complete. Several students asked how long the survey was and upon seeing the one page agreed to participate. Also, the survey provided a way to scale victim blaming that was not invasive to participants. One drawback though was that the researcher could not follow-up and ask participants why they chose the answers they did. There were some students though who left comments on the back of the surveys, but most students did not explain their thought process for choosing higher levels of influence. Also, some of the students initially were confused by the directions for rating the scenarios, but most people seemed comfortable asking the researcher questions. A final benefit of the research was that it started a conversation about rape culture. There were a few participants who talked about the survey with the researcher afterwards, and groups of people who took the survey together would discuss at their table or would talk about the survey after completion. Overall, the survey was more beneficial and elicited more responses than a longer formed research method would have.

Threats to Validity

When it comes to validity, there were not many factors that posed threats. One concern of the researcher was that the number of social work students would affect the data. However, when inputting the data these students did not differ much from other participants. This assumption cannot be guaranteed, but through observing the survey answers, it is likely. Also, there were some students who were confused with the instructions. This could have affected the way participants took the survey, especially if they did not ask the researcher for a more in-depth explanation.

Conclusion

Rape culture is a serious problem in society that has been around for many years. The literature points out several examples where rape culture has taken over, including the news, television, dress codes, and more. Although there have been several attempts at intervention, there is still a long way to go before rape culture will be removed from our society. Through the research conducted, the research found a variety of information that both went against and confirmed aspects of rape culture. The information collected provides insight into where more societal change needs to occur. Overall, more research needs to be conducted and publicized in order to bring more attention to the problem.

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Information to Guarantee Informed Consent

Description of Research

The research being conducted is for a student led project, and will be used to write a paper and presentation for the Honors College. You are being asked to participate in this research because I would like to understand more about how students on campus react to rape. Completing the survey is voluntary and anonymous. While completing the survey, you will be presented with fictitious rape scenarios, and then presented with a scaling question to record your reaction.

You may choose to decline participation, which will not negatively affect you or the surveyor. There are no anticipated risks associated with participating in this research, and if you feel uncomfortable or wish to stop at any time, you may withdraw your consent.

The data collected will be protected to ensure there will not be a breach in confidentiality. The data will be destroyed sometime after the project is over.

Thank you for your time!

Survey Questions

What is your gender?   1-Male 2- Female   3-Other

What is your age? _____

What is your race?

1-European American/White   2-African American/Black   3-Native American   4-Asian   5-Latino/Latina   6-Other

What is your academic standing?

1-Freshman   2-Sophomore   3-Junior   4-Senior   5-Graduate Student

Below is a list of individuals who were raped. Based on their brief description, scale how much you think their characteristics contributed to their attack.

Potential Situations	No influence	Mildly Influenced	Moderately Influenced	Strongly Influenced
A teenage girl walking back from her church youth group. She lives in a suburban area. She is alone and walking alongside a park.				
A female tutor is walking back from a session at night. Tonight she is walking alone. She is wearing a sweater and scarf.				
Two college students, one male and one female, have consumed a large amount of alcohol. They decided to go home together from a party.				
A married couple has been going through a lot of changes with the wife's new pregnancy. The wife has not been in the mood for sex, and often sleeps on the couch.				
A girl has taken the same path every morning to the grocery store since she was as a child. Today, the girl is wearing cut-off shorts and a tank top.				
A gay man reconnected with an old friend at a local restaurant. They had had good conversation and agreed to meet again.				
She thought they were just friends working on a project. They often met together at one of their apartments.				
She had been stripping for years. She usually wore short, flashy outfits, even off stage.				

Have you personally ever pressured someone who initially said no into having sex?   1-Yes   2-No

Is rape ever okay?   1-Yes   2-No

Please feel free to write any additional comments on the back of this form

Appendix C

Other Information Pertaining to Gender

Gender and Academic Standing						
	Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior	Graduate	N/A
Male	49	23	20	14	1	2
Female	66	25	44	40	1	1
Other	1	1	0	1	0	0
N/A	3	3	2	2	0	0

Gender and Age			
	17-22	23-28	29 and Up
Male	101	3	5
Female	153	13	11
Other	2	1	0
N/A	7	1	2

Appendix D

Other Information Pertaining to Case Scores

Case Scores and Race							
	European/White	African American	Native American	Asian	Hispanic/Latino/Latina	Other	N/A
8 to 13	41	46	8	1	14	5	0
14 to 19	**37**	41	7	1	7	12	0
20 to 25	15	31	7	1	4	8	0
26 to 32	0	10	0	1	0	2	1

Case Scores and Academic Standing						
	Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior	Graduate	N/A
8 to 13	35	23	26	28	1	1
14 to 19	45	**17**	**25**	**16**	**1**	**1**
20 to 25	32	11	11	12	0	0
26 to 32	7	1	4	1	0	1

Case Scores and Age			
	17-22	23-28	29 and Up
8 to 13	99	7	9
14 to 19	93	6	6
20 to 25	60	4	2
26 to 32	11	1	1