

ASSESSING COLLEGE RAPE MYTH ACCEPTANCE AMONG CRIMINAL
JUSTICE MAJORS

A Thesis

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by

Tina Huang

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Division of Criminal Justice

Abstract
of
ASSESSING COLLEGE RAPE MYTH ACCEPTANCE AMONG CRIMINAL
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Sexual assault is a significant public health issue that impacts many people, particularly college students. Recent national attention to college campus sexual assault has exposed necessary changes for schools to ensure the safety of students. Colleges and universities nationwide are taking extensive measures to prevent incidents of sexual assault on campus, such as initiating bystander intervention programs, educating students on the meaning of consent, and increasing the presence of campus law enforcement officers.

The purpose of this study is to examine rape myth acceptance among male and female criminal justice majors at California State University, Sacramento during the Fall 2019 semester. An online survey was distributed to a sample of 201 ($N = 201$) students enrolled in required upper division criminal justice courses via e-mail and/or course dashboard by their professors. The online survey utilized the updated Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance (uIRMA) Scale and collected demographic information. Results indicated

that male criminal justice majors had a significantly higher adherence to rape myths (overall and between each of the four rape myth subscales) than female criminal justice majors. The findings suggest targeted and gendered prevention efforts may be necessary to effectively reduce the endorsement of rape myths on college campuses, which, in turn, could decrease incidents of sexual violence on college campuses.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Global estimates indicate 1 in 3 women worldwide have experienced sexual violence¹ in their lifetime (World Health Organization, 2017). In the United States, women are more than six times as likely as men to be victims of sexual assault (Snyder, 2000, p. 4). Less than 40% of female victims of sexual violence seek assistance despite it being a major public health problem and a violation of women's human rights (United Nations Statistics Division, 2015). The social problem of sexual assault, particularly rape, is hidden because it is the most underreported violent crime (Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network, n.d.b). This is because rates of rape are based on the number of officially reported rapes (Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network, n.d.b). The most frequently cited reasons a victim may be reluctant to report their assault are the victim fears they will not be believed or they will be blamed, and they do not want the perpetrator to get in trouble, particularly in cases where the victim has a relationship with the perpetrator (Streng & Kamimura, 2015).

Sexual assault is defined as a sexual act committed without consent or under circumstances in which a victim is unable to consent (Stephens et al., 2016, p. 1). Sexual assault impacts society. This is particularly true when rape-supportive attitudes² are present because it influences how individuals socialize among peers, and how women

¹ For the purpose of this paper it will mainly focus on sexual assault and rape in the context of male offenders and female victims.

² In this paper, the terms rape-supportive attitudes and rape myth acceptance are used interchangeably.

and men see and understand the world. Rape-supportive attitudes contribute to low reporting rates, which is key for on-campus and off-campus reporting. The portrayal of criminals and victims in the mass media greatly shapes the public's perception of these individuals, as well as other components of the criminal justice system, like law enforcement (Dowler, 2003, p. 109). Sexual assault also has economic and social impacts for certain members of society, such as the victims, policymakers, and advocacy groups (Easteal, Holland, & Judd, 2015, p. 104). In 2017, the estimated lifetime cost of rape was \$122,461 per victim, for an annual cost of \$3.1 trillion when the per-victim cost is multiplied by the 25 million reported adult victims of rape in the United States (Peterson, DeGue, Florence, & Lokey, 2017, p. 697). In the United States, the annual cost of rape is more than assault, murder, and drunk driving (Miller, Cohen, & Wiersema, 1996).

Sexual Assault on College Campuses

Young women, specifically those who are college-aged, ages 18 to 24, are at an even higher risk of sexual victimization than women who are not college-aged (Sinozich & Langton, 2014). Sexual violence on college campuses is pervasive. Twenty-three-point one percent of female undergraduate students compared to 8.8% of female graduate and doctoral students experience rape³ or sexual assault⁴ through force⁵ or incapacitation⁶ (Cantor et al., 2015). Sexual violence on college campuses have been so pervasive and

³ The Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) definition of rape will be referenced throughout the paper.

⁴ The National Institute of Justice's definition of sexual assault will be referenced throughout the paper.

⁵ Force is the use of physical violence to gain sexual access.

⁶ Incapacitation is self-induced and may result from alcohol or drug use.

problematic there is a name to describe this high-risk time on college campuses. Referred to as the “Red Zone,” freshmen have a higher risk of sexual victimization during the first several months of their first and second semester than sophomores, juniors, and seniors (Warshaw, Steinem, Tillet, & Koss, 2019, p. 417). Warshaw et al. (2019) were the first to use the term when they described it as the period that begins with a student’s first arrival on campus (e.g., move-in day) and ends with their first holiday break, typically in the fall season (p. 417). More than half of campus sexual assaults occur in August, September, October, or November (Kimble, Neacsiu, Flack, & Horner, 2008) and more than 90% of campus sexual assault victims do not report the crime (Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000).

Impact of Sexual Violence

One common explanation of underreporting is victims are fearful of being blamed for their assault (Brownmiller, 1975; Grubb & Turner, 2012; Morgan & Oudekerk, 2019, p. 8). This often occurs in the media spotlight. The news media are tasked with reporting sexual assault in their daily coverage; therefore, they play a major role in society’s response to sexual assault (Easteal et al., 2015; Franiuk, Seefeldt, Cephress, & Vandello, 2008; Hildebrand & Najdowski, 2015). Mass media have an impact on the knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors of the public regarding sex crimes. Much of the public debate about sex offenses and the endorsement of rape-supportive attitudes stem from how mass media narrates and constructs sex crimes (Franiuk et al., 2008, pp. 290-291).

Rape-supportive attitudes are a set of complex cultural beliefs designed to sustain and perpetuate male sexual violence against women (Brownmiller, 1975; Hildebrand &

Najdowski, 2015, p. 1060). The media often propagates and strengthens rape-supportive attitudes and stereotypes about victims and offenders, thus partially explaining the issue of underreporting (Easteal et al., 2015, p. 104). Underreporting among citizens is overlooked as a concern when intense media coverage follows a high-profile case and prominent case details are released to the public (Franiuk et al., 2008). Public discussion of sex crimes is frequently seen following high-profile sexual assault cases involving celebrities, athletes, or minors, such as the 2015 case against Brock Turner.⁷ In most instances of campus sexual assault, however, victims are reluctant to report the crime because they are uncertain where to report sexual assault to campus officials or the perpetrator is usually someone they know, making it harder for women to report the assault (Streng & Kamimura, 2015).

Rape frequently has devastating long-term consequences for victims, including problems with physical and mental health, academic performance, and interpersonal relationships (S. McMahon, 2010, p. 3). In response, many colleges offer various services to help rape victims, such as crisis intervention and counseling (S. McMahon, 2010, p. 3). Additionally, the prevalence of rape in the United States, as demonstrated by the 1 in 5 statistic, has prompted the federal government to introduce guidelines universities must adhere to once an instance of sexual violence is reported to officials (Education Amendments Act of 1972, 2018).

⁷ Brock Turner, a 19-year-old Caucasian swim athlete at Stanford University, sexually assaulted unconscious 22-year-old Chanel Miller on January 18, 2015. Trial judge, Aaron Persky leniently imposed a six-month sentence for three charges of felony sexual assault; however, Turner only served three months in jail because of good conduct (Fleishman, 2018).

Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 (2018) is a federal civil rights law that protects all students from sexual discrimination, including sexual harassment, sexual battery, sexual assault, and rape (Stephens et al., 2016, p. 2). Title IX (2018) applies to all programs, events, and activities that receive federal funding, from local school districts to post-secondary institutions. This law is actively enforced to guarantee institutions receiving federal financing comply with the law (Title IX, 2018).

Another law that protects students from campus crime is the Crime Awareness and Campus Security Act of 1990, which requires public access to information on campus crime (Nobles, Fox, Khey, & Lizotte, 2013, p. 1132). The Crime Awareness and Campus Security Act of 1990 was superseded by the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act of 1990 (Clery, 2018). The Clery Act (2018) mandates that all federally funded universities must gather and publish current campus crime data for the preceding 3 years (Nobles et al., 2013, p. 1132). The Clery Act (2018) also requires universities to provide equal justice⁸ in cases of sexual misconduct. However, only 3% of colleges report they provide legal assistance to victims, such as access to a lawyer (E. McMahon, 2008; Karjane, Fisher, & Cullen, 2002).

⁸ Equal justice is a fundamental American legal value in which all who appear in court to advocate for themselves must be treated as equals, regardless of characteristics, such as gender (Yue, 2019).

Statement of the Problem

Beginning in the late 1960s to early 1970s, Second Wave Feminism (1960s-1980s) inspired anti-rape movements as the period's motto was "The personal is political" (Hammer & Kellner, 2009). The feminism movement consisted of four waves, the political, social, individual, and digital. After first-wave feminism (1848-1920) when women fought to have voting and property rights, second-wave feminism focused on femininity and sexual liberation (Hammer & Kellner, 2009). As second-wave feminism ended, third-wave feminism was intersectional as it accepted women of color and queer women as part of the movement (Hammer & Kellner, 2009). During fourth-wave feminism (2008-present), campus sexual assault and workplace discrimination are discussed in call-out culture⁹ era (Iannello, 2010). The social movement of second-wave feminism to present day has focused considerable public attention on the issue of rape and gender inequality that perpetuates rape culture. However, rape continues to be a significant social problem as it requires an evaluation and redistribution of power that society and those currently in power are not ready to do.

The history of sexual violence perpetrated by men against women is cultivated by predominant cultural attitudes, such as rape myths (Iconis, 2008, p. 47). Rape myths are false views about rape, its victims, and perpetrators that deny or justify injury to the victim and blame victims for their victimization (Burt, 1980). Adherence to rape myths

⁹ A call-out culture is an environment where online activism can take place by providing a forum for public discussion.

have enabled the prolonged tolerance of male sexual aggression against women (Burt, 1980). A popular rape myth is the way a woman dresses or behaves means “she asked for it” (S. McMahon, 2010, p. 4). Research suggests rape myth acceptance is strongly correlated with several attitudinal variables, such as gender role stereotyping, misinformation, distrust of the other gender, and the acceptance of interpersonal violence (Burt, 1980). Rape myths protect men from being held liable for rape because it helps them deny injury to the victim (Burt, 1980). Over the past 50 years with guidance from the feminist movement, efforts to address rape myths and decrease sexual violence by increasing awareness and education on sexism and sexual assault have significantly increased (Reling, Barton, Becker, & Valasik 2018, p. 501).

Rape myth acceptance adds to a culture of rape (Canan, Jozkowski, & Crawford, 2018, p. 3504; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994). Burnett et al. (2009) describe rape culture in the context of colleges as a social environment that accepts or tolerates sexual assault as part of the campus lifestyle. Rape culture is not only established at the individual level, but also at the organizational and societal levels with the influence of supportive peer groups distinctive to the college experience (Armstrong, Hamilton, & Sweeney, 2006). For example, fraternity and sorority membership plays a crucial role in one’s belief and attitudes about rape (Canan et al., 2018). Gender and economic oppression occur in patriarchies and universities, but in Greek subculture they are magnified, reaffirming the subordinate role of women (Jozkowski & Wiersma-Mosley, 2017, pp. 90-91).

Rape-Supportive Attitudes among College Males

Previous research has consistently shown males are overwhelmingly more likely than females to hold rape-supportive attitudes (Aosved & Long, 2006; Burt, 1980). Researchers assert accepting rape myths not only reflects negative attitudes but is also a significant predictor of sexual violence perpetration (Aosved & Long, 2006; Burt, 1980). The perpetration of sexual violence can be seen on college campuses because they have high-risk social environments that provide opportunities for crime to occur.

Fraternity members and student athletes are more likely to commit sexual assault than males in the general student population (Humphrey & Kahn, 2000; Murnen & Kohlman, 2007). College men in social fraternities are more likely than other college male students to adopt a hypermasculine personality because they promote male dominance and brotherhood (Murnen & Kohlman, 2007). Hypermasculinity emphasizes the sexual conquest of women as an important element of male ideology (Murnen & Kohlman, 2007). Due to excessive alcohol use and gender role stereotyping, fraternity and sorority parties are high-risk venues for sexual assault (Armstrong et al., 2006). Gender role stereotyping occurs when fraternities and sororities perpetuate abusive attitudes towards women; for example, hazing rituals and the male conquests of women. Gender role stereotyping is pervasive in cultures where rape is intertwined with traditional gender scripts, particularly in situations where males are dominant and females are submissive, such as in competitive sports (Boswell & Spade, 1996, p. 134).

Male intercollegiate athletes from nationally recognized sports teams, such as football and basketball players at large universities, are also at an increased risk of sexual violence perpetration (Wiersma-Mosley, Jozkowski, & Martinez, 2017, p. 482). Knowledge of intercollegiate athletes as a group is hindered because often research samples do not differentiate between the two populations. This makes it difficult to disentangle the individual risk attributable to each group (Moynihan, Banyard, Arnold, Eckstein, & Stapleton, 2010, p. 198). However, research suggests schools with National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I¹⁰ athletic programs have higher numbers of reported sexual assaults compared to Division II, III, and non-athletic campuses (Minton, 2012; Stotzer & MacCartney, 2016). This may be due to the competitive nature of sports, larger budgets, and higher student enrollment (Minton, 2012; Stotzer & MacCartney, 2016).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is to explore the hypothesis female criminal justice majors are less likely to hold rape-supportive attitudes than male criminal justice majors. This study attempts to determine how the demographics and education of criminal justice students influence rape myth acceptance. Examples of the education criminal justice undergraduates receive include knowledge of the criminal justice system, which may include the experience of sexual violence survivors and the recidivism rates of violent

¹⁰ Division I is the highest level of intercollegiate athletics overseen by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA).

offenders. The current study is motivated by the desire to see who adheres to rape myths and understand how they are ingrained in everyday discourse to effectively diminish the hold of such beliefs.

This research also seeks to fill a gap in the campus sexual assault literature by examining a subgroup of the college population that have not been closely examined before (i.e., criminal justice majors). Furthermore, this study expands the present understanding of the prevalence of rape myths by examining factors other than gender (i.e., race, ethnicity, and year in school) and may contribute to more effective policy suggestions regarding sexual assault prevention education and programming. In doing so, the goal of the study is to explore the relationship between criminal justice students' gender, race/ethnicity, and year in school¹¹ to their level of rape myth acceptance. In the following sections, a list of definitions for terms used throughout the paper will be provided with a background of the study.

Definition of Terms

In this study, it is essential to define and recognize the most significant terms used throughout the paper. The provided definitions should help one grasp the narrative of the conducted research.

¹¹ At California State University, Sacramento, an individual must be at least a sophomore in order to declare their major.

- *Ethnicity*: Refers to human sociological categorization used to describe an individual's cultural identification, factors include nationality, ancestry, religion, and language (Dictionary.com, n.d.).
- *Mass media*: Refers to various forms of communication, such as television, radio, newspaper, and social media (Merriam-Webster, n.d.).
- *Race*: Refers to human biological categorization used to describe an individual's physical attributes, such as hair color, eye color, and skin color (Wade, Takezawa, & Smedley, 2020).
- *Rape*: "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" (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2018).
- *Rape culture*: A term used to describe a culture in which sexual violence is treated as the norm and in which prevalent attitudes and practices condone male sexual aggression and encourage violence against women. Examples of behaviors commonly associated with rape culture include victim-blaming and sharing sexually explicit jokes (Buchwald, Fletcher, & Roth, 2005).
- *Rape myths*: Persistently held false beliefs about rape, rapists, and their victims based on prejudice and stereotypes that tolerate male sexual aggression against women (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994, p. 134).
- *Rape survivor*: Used as a term of empowerment to describe an individual who is experiencing or has experienced the healing process after being subjected to sexual assault (Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network, n.d.a).

- *Rape victim*: Describes an individual who has been subjected to sexual assault; this term is often used to discuss the short- and long-term consequences of sexual violence, particularly in the context of the criminal justice system (Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network, n.d.a).
- *Sexual assault*: A categorical term that refers to non-consensual sexual contact and behavior in which an individual is threatened or coerced; examples include attempted rape and unwanted sexual touching (National Institute of Justice, 2010).
- *Sexual violence*: A broad categorical term that describes offenses without an individual's consent, such as sexual harassment, sexual assault, and rape (National Institute of Justice, 2010).

Chapter 2

Background of the Study

Sexual violence encompasses a variety of criminal acts perpetrated against someone without their consent ranging in severity from sexual harassment to rape (National Institute of Justice, 2010). Since the 1970s, the issue of sexual violence and the location in which it takes place has attracted considerable attention across the United States, as it is pervasive and often traumatizing to victims (Ståhl, Eek, & Kazemi, 2010, p. 240). Every 73 seconds in the United States, someone is sexually assaulted, with an average of 433,648 reported sexual assaults and rape each year (Morgan & Oudekerk, 2019, p. 4). One in five women and one in seventy-one men in the United States will be raped during their lifetime (Black et al., 2011). As previously mentioned, sexual violence is deemed a global epidemic because it is more prevalent globally (1 in 3) than nationally (1 in 5) (World Health Organization, 2017).

Rape is also pervasive on college campuses. Three percent of college women are raped during the school year and nearly 25% of college women experience a completed or attempted rape during their college careers (Karjane, Fisher, & Cullen, 2005). It is important to acknowledge the majority of rapes are committed by intimate partners and acquaintances, rather than strangers. According to the Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network (RAINN), 80% rapes are committed by someone known to the victim (RAINN, n.d.d). The prevalence rates of acquaintance rape are important to this study because acquaintance rape often occurs on college campuses.

Rape culture is an environment in which a set of prejudicial and stereotypical beliefs proliferate that tolerate and advocate sexual violence, creating environments that accept and justify sexual violence, such as on college campuses and in mass media (Herman, 1988). In the United States, researchers and activists have attempted to change attitudes toward rape victims as the media and society continue to discredit victims, fostering rape culture in American society (Brownmiller, 1975). Regarding the areas that have been impacted by the occurrence of sexual assault, specifically college campuses, there have been misconceptions about sexual offenses, its victims, and the perpetrators of sexual violence (Burt, 1980). The following sections will explore the prevalence of sexual violence on college campuses, examine legislation, analyze theories used to explain sexual assault, determine risk factors for sexual victimization and perpetration, and define rape myths.

Prevalence of Sexual Assault and Rape

Administered by the U.S. Department of Justice, the Uniform Crime Report (UCR) and National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) are the two statistical instruments used to measure the magnitude of crime in America. The UCR and NCVS programs have distinct purposes and are conducted using different methods. Therefore, the valuable data from these programs offer an extensive overview of national crime. It is essential to remember, however, that sexual offenses are the least likely of all violent crimes to be reported to the police (Easteal et al., 2015; RAINN, n.d.b; White House Task Force, 2014).

Uniform Crime Report

In 1929, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) began to administer the Uniform Crime Report (UCR) program, a compilation of national crime statistics based on offenses reported to law enforcement, such as forcible rape and aggravated assault (FBI, 2018). For 2018, the UCR stated 127,945 completed or attempted rapes were reported to law enforcement in the United States, or 44.4 reports for every 100,000 adult women (FBI, 2018). In 2018, the FBI found 139,380 rapes were reported to law enforcement based on the revised definition of rape.¹² This estimate was 2.7% higher than the 2017 estimate and 18.1% higher than the 2014 estimate (FBI, 2018).

There are several reasons to interpret UCR data with caution. Most importantly, rape is an underreported crime; therefore, official statistics do not accurately represent the true prevalence of sexual violence (RAINN, n.d.b). In addition, the UCR applies a hierarchy rule (Barkan & Bryjack, 2011, p. 34). Although the hierarchy rule does not impact rape statistics as much as underreporting, a hierarchy rule is when two or more crimes are committed at once, but only the highest or most severe offense is counted while the other offenses are disregarded (Barkan & Bryjack, 2011, p. 34). For example, if an incident involves murder, rape, and robbery, the highest offense recorded would be

¹² The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has changed its definition of rape used in national crime statistics. The definition was “the carnal knowledge of a female forcibly and against her will” (FBI, 2018). The FBI changed the definition of rape because the original definition was too broad for law enforcement agencies who misinterpreted this definition to exclude male victims, sex offenses involving penetration with objects, and oral/anal penetration. However, the new rape definition “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” went into effect on January 1, 2013 (FBI, 2018).

murder. Another weakness of the UCR is its exclusion of sexual assault, statutory rape, and incest (FBI, 2018). The constraints of the UCR led to the development of an improved measurement of crime, the National Crime Victimization Survey.

National Crime Victimization Survey

In 1973, the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) administered the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), a comprehensive nationwide survey conducted annually by the U.S. Census Bureau (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2018). The NCVS is different from the UCR as it is self-reported data. In addition, the NCVS violent crime rates are per 1,000 households, so NCVS rates are generally higher than UCR violent crime rates, which are calculated per 100,000 inhabitants (Morgan & Oudekerk, 2019, p. 7). For 2018, the NCVS stated that 734,630 completed or attempted rapes were reported to law enforcement in the United States, or 2.7 reports for every 1,000 adult women (Morgan & Oudekerk, 2019, p. 4). Based on the 2018 NCVS results, the percentage of police recorded rapes and sexual assaults declined from 40.4% in 2017 to 24.9% in 2018 (Morgan & Oudekerk, 2019, p. 8).

There are several weaknesses associated with NCVS data. The NCVS relies on self-reported data and does not include victims younger than 12 years old (Barkan & Bryjack, 2011, p. 39). NCVS participants may also overlook and omit details of their victimization or decide not to share personal information with NCVS interviewers, particularly in sexual assault or domestic violence cases (Barkan & Bryjack, 2011, p. 39). Recognizing the limitations of the UCR and NCVS are important because they impact the

way America measures sexual violence, which could influence the development of stronger statistical instruments used to measure crime in America.

Underreporting

The occurrence of rape is far more prevalent than official statistics may reflect mostly due to underreporting. The majority of rapists are never apprehended as FBI annual clearance rates are approximately 50% (Carretta, Burgess, & DeMarco, 2016, p. 1501). The UCR does not publicly release arrest or conviction data, but offenses are cleared either by arrest or by exceptional means, meaning the agency cannot arrest or formally charge the offender (FBI, 2017).

In 2018, 43% of sex offenses were not reported for various reasons, such as victims not having confidence in the police, considering the sexual assault a private matter, and fear of embarrassment or offender retribution (Morgan & Oudekerk, 2019, p. 8). Other commonly reported reasons to explain underreporting are victims fear they will be blamed (e.g., their behavior will be used against them) and victims do not fit the role of the “real rape” victim because they did not verbally or physically resist or did not immediately call 911. When instances of rape are not reported, the likelihood of future sexual assault victimization increases as the tolerance of male sexual violence against women is accepted (Franiuk et al., 2008; Grubb & Turner, 2012). For victims that do come forth, very few cases are prosecuted. Only 3% of rapists will spend at least a single day in prison (RAINN, n.d.b).

In rape cases, prison sentences are more probable if the case was “clearly interpretable as violent” and not misconstrued as an intimate relationship; examples include: the perpetrators were strangers, weapons were involved, verbal and or physical resistance was present, there were multiple and minor victims, and injuries were sustained (Larcombe, 2012, p. 482). It is important to keep in mind that victims of rape often know the perpetrator. According to RAINN (n.d.d), 39% of reported rapes are committed by an acquaintance, 33% by an intimate partner (e.g., current or former spouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend), 6% by multiple people or the victim cannot remember, and 2.5% by a non-spouse relative. The problem of underreporting and the denial of rape when it does not look like a “real rape” has important implications for campus sexual assault.

Sexual Assault on College Campuses

In the past 20 years, research has documented the alarming rate of sexual assaults on college campuses (Loh, Gidycz, Lobo, & Luthra, 2005, p. 1325). Although prevalence estimates differ, most self-report surveys found between 3% to 20% of female college students have experienced some form of sexual victimization mostly involving unwanted touching (Fisher et al., 2000; Krebs, Lindquist, Warner, Fisher, & Martin, 2009). Studies examining sexual violence on college campuses often focus on sexual harassment and rape compared to other crimes, such as stalking and dating/domestic violence.

Sexual abuse on college campuses has only recently been acknowledged as a national priority (White House Task Force, 2017). In September 2014, the White House

Administration collaborated with other organizations and businesses to successfully launch the national public awareness campaigns, “It’s on Us” and “Not Alone,” to describe the extent of sex crimes on college campuses and address issues of underreporting, particularly with acquaintance rape (White House Task Force, 2014). The main objective of these campaigns is to proactively respond to sexual assault on U.S. college campuses. However, the estimates of campus sexual assault vary widely, despite increased attention to this problem because of the different definitions and methodologies used to measure the prevalence of sexual assault (Catalano, Harmon, Beck, & Cantor, n.d.). Public concern of campus sexual assault has led to the development of federal laws to hold universities responsible for campus sexual assault prevention (Mancini, Pickett, Call, & Roche, 2016, p. 221).

Legislation Addressing Sexual Victimization on College Campuses

Title IX

Enforced by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights (OCR), Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 is a federal civil rights law that protects individuals from sex-based discrimination in educational institutions that receive federal financial assistance. Any public or private institution that receives federal funding in the form of student Pell grants or other federal money must comply with the law (Title IX, 2018). Sexual harassment or sexual assault is not explicitly stated in Title IX; however, schools are legally required under Title IX to remedy hostile educational environments (Title IX, 2018). Since the implementation of Title IX, colleges have discouraged victims

from reporting and have, in many cases, protected high-profile intercollegiate male athletes when they are involved, postponing adjudication, and hiding claims of sexual assault (Karjane et al., 2002).

Title IX Penalties. The consequences for Title IX violations are high for colleges and universities because money is at stake. A school's failure to conduct an independent investigation can result in the suspension of state and federal funding and the potential for the victim to bring a civil case against the school if the complainant does not consider the school's response to be a prompt and effective solution to prevent sexual assault from reoccurring (Duffy Law, 2019). Under Title IX, the school may pay the victim damages. Whereas, Title IX penalties for students may include: a verbal or written warning, disciplinary probation, expulsion from school, loss of employment, a requirement to seek counseling and/or a formal letter of apology, revocation or withholding of a degree, and restitution, among others (Duffy Law, 2019).

Title IX Changes. Several notable changes in legislation have been implemented to address campus sexual assault in the United States. In November 2018, United States Secretary of Education, Betsy D. DeVos released a new proposal of Title IX, which has sparked controversy and confusion (Chu & Lewis, 2019). Under the new rules, five significant changes were made. Although the Obama administration discouraged cross-examination because of its retraumatizing nature for sexual assault victims (Chu & Lewis, 2019), the most controversial change is a person accused of sexual misconduct

would be guaranteed the right to cross-examine their accuser by a third party at a live hearing (Brown & Mangan, 2018).

The second change stated colleges' responsibilities to investigate would be limited to cases where formal complaints were made and the alleged incidents happened on campus grounds or within an educational program or activity (Brown & Mangan, 2018). This can be problematic as sexual assault is already an underreported crime, so the requirement of formal complaints for investigations to occur may not make a difference because it does not help encourage sexual assault victims to report their assault. In addition, sexual assault can occur at off-campus residences and other locations.

The third change replaced the previous definition of sexual harassment to a narrower one. The new mandate would define sexual harassment as "unwelcome conduct on the basis of sex that is so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the recipient's education program or activity," whereas the Obama administration defined harassment as "unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature" (Fenwick, 2018). The challenge with the introduction of a narrower definition of sexual harassment is it is open to interpretation with keywords such as "severe," and disregards instances of sexual harassment that do not fall under the new definition. The narrower definition inevitably ranks various types of sexual harassment, classifying some as more important than others.

The fourth change is colleges have the discretion of using a higher standard of proof. The former standard was "preponderance of the evidence" defined as a 50%

likelihood that misconduct occurred; however, the new standard would be the “clear and convincing evidence” threshold defined as a 75% likelihood that misconduct occurred (Fenwick, 2018). Lastly, colleges may opt for an informal solution, such as counseling rather than pursue a formal investigation (Brown & Mangan, 2018). Many complaints have been filed with the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights because individuals have condemned the proposal because it undermines support for sexual assault victims as the process would not be quick and fair (Brown & Mangan, 2018).

Clery Act

Nearly two decades after implementation of Title IX, in 1990, the federal government passed the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act of 1990, commonly known as the Clery Act¹³ (Clery Act, 2018; Gardella et al., 2015, p. 642). The Clery Act (2018) requires all federally funded institutions of higher education to annually collect, monitor, and publish the reporting of campus security policies and crime statistics to current and prospective students and employees. The statute aimed to increase public awareness of campus sexual assault and help students safeguard themselves from victimization (Gardella et al., 2015, p. 642).

¹³ The Clery Act was named in honor of Jeanne Clery, a woman who was raped and murdered by Joseph M. Henry in her residential hall at Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania on April 5, 1986 (Gardella et al., 2015, p. 642). Prior to her murder, several violent crimes had occurred on campus without the public’s knowledge (Gardella et al., 2015, p. 642).

Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act

The Campus Sexual Violence Elimination (SaVE) Act of 2013 is another U.S. federal policy that addressed sexual violence on college campuses (Salazar et al., 2018, p. 52). The Campus SaVE Act amended the Clery Act by requiring additional preventative resources, such as providing campus-wide primary prevention programming to effectively protect students from sexual violence (Marshall, 2014). As federal policies changed, state policies did as well, soon adopting policies and laws that guaranteed greater accountability in the handling of campus sexual assault cases (Mancini et al., 2016, p. 221).

Mandatory reporting

Mandatory reporting is a politically contentious and socially divisive policy because it has good intentions, but is known to be controversial (Mancini et al., 2016, p. 220). Mandatory laws require university staff to report sexual assault allegations to the university and law enforcement. The problem with mandatory reporting is it is difficult for university staff to be obligated to report what they do not know. Mandatory reporters include teachers, doctors, social workers, and police officers, among others. Mandatory reporting laws were designed to protect vulnerable victims who may be unable to disclose their abuse to the authorities (Mancini et al., 2016, p. 220). Victims may consider mandatory reporting laws to be helpful but have mixed feelings about reporting because the decision to report should ultimately be the victim's.

Rape Myths

Since the 1970s, social psychologists have examined the propensity to blame female victims of rape, which has been correlated to rape myths (Ståhl, Eek, & Kazemi, 2010, p. 240). Rape myths are defined as prejudicial and false beliefs about rape, its victims, and the offenders that are predominantly accepted by men (Ståhl et al., 2010, p. 240). Rape victims are vulnerable to secondary victimization by the criminal justice system when they are perceived by law enforcement and court actors as at fault or somewhat partially responsible for what happened to them (Strömwall, Alfredsson, & Landström, 2013, p. 207). The fear and possibility of being blamed for being raped or of being met with disbelief contribute to the reluctance of many rape victims to report the crime to the police promptly or at all (Ståhl et al., 2010, p. 240). Therefore, it is crucial to identify the conditions and circumstances under which people are most likely to blame victims of rape and to increase knowledge of the psychological reasoning and procedures for these behavioral reactions (Ståhl et al., 2010, p. 240).

During second-wave feminism, Brownmiller (1975) was the first to document and examine the history and misconceptions of sexual assault, known as rape myths. Shortly afterward, Burt (1980) recognized rape myths and created the Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (RMAS), a popularly referenced instrument to measure the endorsement of generalized beliefs about the nature of sexual assault, the victim, and the offender. These myths also perpetuate occurrences of victim-blaming by following a pattern by blaming the victim for the rape claiming “she asked for it” because of her dress or flirty behavior,

believing in false allegations, and arguing only certain types of women are raped (Grubb & Turner, 2012, p. 445). Instead of holding the perpetrators accountable for their actions, responsibility for the crime is placed on the victim, specifically in cases where the victim knows or has a relationship with the offender (World Health Organization, 2018). In addition, victims of sexual violence are not believed because rape myths imply they are lying and have various motives, such as the need for attention due to several highly publicized trials that had evidence the victim lied, most notorious is the Duke Lacrosse case in 2006¹⁴ (Edwards, Turchik, Dardis, Reynolds, & Gidycz, 2011, p. 768).

Situational and Attitudinal Rape Myths

There are two different types of rape myths: situational and attitudinal. Situational rape myths are misconceptions of rape, victims, offenders, and when and where it happens (Vandiver, Braithwaite, & Stafford, 2017, p. 52). Most of these are due to biased media coverage and inaccurate reporting and recording of rape statistics. An example of a situational rape myth is rape only happens to “bad” women (Vandiver et al., 2017, p. 53). This is inaccurate, as rape is not an exclusive crime because people of all ages, genders, races, sexualities, classes, and cultures can be a victim.

¹⁴ Three Caucasian student athletes, David Evans, Collin Finnerty, and Reade Seligmann, of the Duke University men’s lacrosse team were falsely accused of rape by Crystal Mangum. Mangum was an African American student who attended North Carolina Central University and worked as a stripper (Wilson & Barstow, 2007). On March 13, 2006, the alleged rape occurred at an off-campus residence party hosted by two of the team captains (Wilson & Barstow, 2007).

Whereas situational rape myths focus on the who, what, when, and where of rape, attitudinal rape myths provide incorrect explanations for rape (Vandiver et al., 2017, p. 56). They are stereotypical, false beliefs about rape, its victims, and the offenders that generate a hostile social climate for rape victims that is sympathetic to sex offenders and is somewhat forgiving of rape (Vandiver et al., 2017, p. 56). An example of an attitudinal rape myth is women who are raped probably deserved it (Vandiver et al., 2017, p. 57). Attitudinal rape myths are commonly measured in rape myth acceptance scales, such as the updated Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance (uIRMA) Scale.

The general public may believe rape victims are exclusively young, attractive, single women; however, both men and women are vulnerable to assault regardless of age, race/ethnicity, physical appearance, sexual orientation, marital status, and socio-economic status (Burt, 1980). The stigma sexual assault victims face makes it difficult for them to seek the resources and help they need to properly heal from their experience (World Health Organization, 2018). Aosved and Long (2006) found individuals who endorsed or supported broader cultural beliefs, such as racism, sexism, homophobia, and religious intolerance were more likely to believe rape myths (p. 481). Often, it is easier for society to accept rape myths than to challenge the culturally accepted views of patriarchy, because men are viewed as dominant in many cultures, whereas women are considered submissive (Franiuk et al., 2008, p. 289). This belief about women is seen in another common rape myth: husbands cannot rape their wives (Franiuk et al., 2008, p. 289). According to Bumby (1996), the “husbands cannot rape their wives” myth was used as a justification mechanism, making allegations it is the wife’s duty to sexually

fulfill her husband whenever he wishes it. Rape myths comfort females and males because it dissociates themselves from the possibility of seeing themselves as either a victim or perpetrator of rape, which offers both genders a semblance of control in their lives (Ryan, 2011, p. 775).

Rape myth acceptance ideologies, like victim-blaming, are pervasive and may also influence police and prosecutors' discretionary decisions, heavily impacting conviction rates and the criminal justice system's prosecution of sexual violence (Grubb & Turner, 2012, p. 445). For example, Frohmann (1991) found prosecutors were less willing to accept rape cases when a victim's credibility could be easily deemed weak in court. As examples, credibility could be questioned if the victim admitted flirting with an offender, consenting to some sexual acts, giving permission to take her home, or being intoxicated during the assault (p. 216). These discretionary decisions are a victim-blaming practice influenced by rape culture because they focus on the victim's behavior rather than the offender's (Grubb & Turner, 2012, p. 445).

Rape myths indirectly perpetuate sexual violence by establishing false attitudes that distort and manipulate one's understanding of sexual assault, its victims, and perpetrators, which may contribute to an increased risk in sexual violence perpetration (Franiuk et al., 2008, p. 290). Research supports the assertion that rape myths are a primary social force in the abuse of female rape victims (Grubb & Turner, 2012, p. 446). Blumberg and Lester (1991) found the belief in rape myths affects not only the labeling and reporting of the crime, but also the perceptions of the victim and offender (p. 729).

Prevailing myths affect the way society responds to rape and its victims, so when these prevailing myths go unchallenged, the development of rape culture begins (World Health Organization, 2018).

Theoretical Framework of Sexual Assault

Theories that provide explanations of sexual offending are based on disciplines of biology, sociology, and psychology. Sex offenders have been centered on the assessment of risk factors, detection of sex crimes, implementation of effective prevention and treatment strategies, and the influence of policy development focusing on areas such as sentencing, oversight in the community, and civil commitment (Faupel & Przybylski, n.d.). There is no single theory that explains crime; however, the most well-received theories applied to sexual offending on college campuses include: Cohen and Felson's Routine Activities Theory (1979), Aker's Social Learning Theory (1985), and MacKinnon's feminist political theory (1989).

Cohen and Felson's (1979) Routine Activities Theory

Cohen and Felson's routine activities theory (1979) propose crimes occur when there is a convergence of a motivated offender, a suitable target, and the absence of a capable guardian. Routine activities theory is traditionally applied to property crimes, such as robbery; however, the literature suggests routine activities theory can also be used to explain sexual victimization in settings like college campuses (Clodfelter, Turner,

Hartman, & Kuhns, 2010, p. 460; Henson & Stone, 1999). Routine activities theory examines offender and victim behavior, so this theory can be applied to both groups.

The first element of the routine activities theory is a motivated offender (Cohen & Felson, 1979). In terms of sexual assaults, motivated offenders are men who hold adversarial views about women, condone violence against women, accept rape myths, or adhere to traditional gender roles (Burt, 1980). Men who share these negative attitudes are more likely to perpetrate sexual aggression than those who do not (Burt, 1980). Frequently referenced by researchers, specific subgroups within the campus community who are more likely to perpetrate sexual violence are fraternity members and student athletes who play aggressive team-based sports (Krebs, Lindquist, Warner, Fisher, & Martin, 2007; S. McMahon, 2010; Wiersma-Mosley et al., 2017). These subgroups tend to promote masculine ideologies, such as drinking, partying, and objectifying women (Murnen & Kohlman, 2007).

The second element of the routine activities theory is a suitable target, an available victim of opportunity (Cohen & Felson, 1979). College campuses have many suitable targets because of the physical proximity between the victim and offender, particularly the shared spaces between males and females, such as residence halls (Clodfelter et al., 2010, p. 460). Suitable targets for campus sexual assault are predominantly women because they are more likely to participate in risky behavior and be in environments where they are also more likely to be victims of sexual violence, such as fraternity parties (Stotzer & MacCartney, 2016, p. 2689). Also, students who stay on

campus later increase their exposure to potential offenders and thus become a suitable target (Cass, 2007, p. 352), including students that take night classes and walk alone to their cars and dorms (Clodfelter et al., 2010, p. 460).

The final element of the routine activities theory is the absence of a capable guardian (Cohen & Felson, 1979). Guardianship can be provided by an internal and/or external guardian that discourages an offender from attacking a potential victim (Cohen & Felson, 1979). Students lack an internal guardian when engaging in risky college behaviors, such as recreational drug use and alcohol consumption during parties (Mustaine & Tewksbury, 2002; Rothman & Silverman, 2007). This is because alcohol and drugs can increase an individual's vulnerability to sexual assault by decreasing their awareness and motor skills (e.g., blackouts) (Mustaine & Tewksbury, 2002; Rothman & Silverman, 2007). Students may also lack capable guardianship in everyday campus activities, such as walking alone or studying in private areas (Clodfelter et al., 2010, p. 460). Lastly, no presence of campus security or law enforcement is also a lack of external guardianship (Cass, 2007). Overall, the routine activities theory suggests many sexual assaults will occur in environments with a high number of motivated offenders, suitable targets, and a significant absence of capable guardians (Stotzer & MacCartney, 2016, p. 2690).

Aker's (1985) Social Learning Theory

Introduced by Akers (1985), social learning theory claims behavior is learned through processes of direct behavioral conditioning, differential reinforcement, and the imitation of an individual or groups' behavior. Social learning theory combines concepts of Edwin Sutherland's (1939) differential association theory and Albert Bandura's (1977) social learning theory (Akers & Sellers, 2008). Differential association is the process by which one may interact with other individuals and is exposed to positive or negative norms in various social contexts (Sutherland, 1947). As individuals define a specific behavior as positive or justified, the more they are likely to engage in it while interacting with significant groups in their lives (Sutherland, 1947). Primary groups such as family and friends tend to have the most influence on an individual's behavioral learning process of normative attitudes toward certain behavior (Sutherland, 1947). However, secondary groups like mass media (e.g., popular culture and pornography), schools, and work groups can be as equally important to the normative definitions in the learning process (Chan, Heide, & Beauregard, 2011, p. 230). The application of the social learning theory to sexual offending is demonstrated when young males experience child abuse. As a defense mechanism, male adolescents often internalize their sexual victimization, which heightens the risk of learning and reinforcing negative behavior like sexual aggression as an imitation of their childhood experience (Faupel & Przybylski, n.d.).

Catherine MacKinnon's (1989) Toward a Feminist Theory of the State

Legal theorist Catherine MacKinnon shares her radical feminist viewpoint in her 1989 book, *Toward a Feminist Theory of the State*. She argues rape is motivated by power and control rather than sex. MacKinnon also states gender determines one's position in society, as men dominate and are the possessors, whereas women are subordinate and are the possessed (MacKinnon, 1989). She acknowledges the presence of the patriarchy, the driving force that establishes male dominance because of the continued acceptance of traditional gender roles and stereotypes (MacKinnon, 1989). MacKinnon (1989) claims, "Rape is not an isolated event or moral transgression, or individual interchange gone wrong but an act of terrorism and torture within a systemic context of group subjugation, like lynching" (p. 172). She uses pornography and abortion as examples of how the public frames controversial social issues associated with women in a negative or positive light. Concerning pornography, it could be perceived as too obscene for the public view or exercised as sexual liberation (Waltman, 2017, p. 357). Similarly, abortion was either deemed a women's private choice of her body or an act of murder (Waltman, 2017, p. 357). MacKinnon believes sexual and gender-based violence, such as sexual harassment, domestic violence, child sexual abuse, and rape, occurs against those considered weak because of male entitlement (McPhail, 2015, p. 318). Therefore, the fight against rape is not only a challenge against sexual violations, but the hope for women to define and be in charge of their sexuality (McPhail, 2015, p. 318).

Altogether, these three theories help explain the origin of sexual perpetration and provide a framework for the present study. Individual and relational factors were the most emphasized in the criminological theories popularly applied campus sexual assault. Therefore, there will be an examination of individual factors, such as gender, race/ethnicity, and year in school to measure the presence of rape myth acceptance among criminal justice majors.

Risk Factors for Sexual Assault Victimization on College Campuses

Identifying key risk factors that may contribute to sexual victimization is essential to develop prevention strategies. As more is known about female victims than male victims, these following risk factors are those that have been determined to be risk factors for female victims of male perpetrators.¹⁵

Prior Sexual Victimization

Repeated sexual victimization is not exclusive to the college population; it has also been documented in the general population (Fisher et al., 2001). Research has found the majority of college students have experienced sexual assault before entering college (Fisher et al., 2001). Women experiencing sexual assault during the present academic

¹⁵ It is important to note that acknowledging these risk factors should not be misinterpreted as placing responsibility on the victim but should rather be interpreted as a way to be informed of the factors that place certain individuals at a greater risk for sexual victimization.

year and those sexually assaulted before entering college have a higher risk for further victimization during their college careers (Fisher et al., 2000).

It is important to understand that due to the age of college students, they begin university with many prior experiences that put them at risk for sexual victimization. Krebs et al. (2007) found students who were victims of forced sexual assault before entering college, were seven times more likely to experience forced campus sexual assault than those who have never been sexually victimized. Likewise, women who experienced one or more incidents of incapacitated sexual assault before entering college, were three times more likely to experience another incapacitated campus sexual assault (Krebs et al., 2007). These findings can be explained with the re-victimization hypothesis. The re-victimization hypothesis claims women with a history of sexual victimization, experience difficulties recognizing risk in social situations and as a result continue to put themselves in compromising situations, which increases their risk of revictimization.

Alcohol and Drug Use

Alcohol consumption is the most studied risk factor in campus sexual assault studies because of the widespread use of alcohol by college students, particularly in campus social settings (Abbey, 2002; Cantor et al., 2015; Lawyer, Resnick, Bakanic, Burkett, & Kilpatrick, 2010). Most sexual assaults of female college students involve alcohol consumption by either the victim, perpetrator, or both (Abbey, 2002). One campus study found those who drank enough to get drunk were at a greater risk of sexual

victimization than those who did not (Fisher et al., 2000). Mohler-Kuo, Dowdall, Koss, and Wechsler (2004) found binge drinking¹⁶ was the strongest predictor of rape. This is because alcohol can decrease an offender's inhibitions and increase a victim's vulnerability.

Also associated with an increased risk of sexual assault victimization is a victim's drug use (Mohler-Kuo et al., 2004). There is a link between alcohol consumption and drug use because it increases one's risk of experiencing incapacitated rape. Studies examining drug-facilitated sexual assaults would benefit from closely inquiring the extent to which the victim is involuntarily (e.g., slipped a date rape drug) or voluntarily (e.g., intentionally taking drugs) engaging in risky behavior (Lawyer et al., 2010, p. 454). Lawyer et al. (2010) found 84% of drug-facilitated sexual assaults¹⁷ were preceded by the victim's voluntary alcohol intake. Recently, researchers began to study the recreational use of club drugs due to increased reports of their popularity among youth in the media (Angelone, Mitchell, & Pilafova, 2007, p. 284). Club drugs like gamma hydroxybutyrate (GHB) and methamphetamine (MDMA/ecstasy) among others, encompass a range of diverse classes of chemical substances, such as stimulants and hallucinogens (Simons, Gaher, Correia, & Bush, 2005). These drugs are often used in social settings, such as

¹⁶ Binge drinking is a pattern of excessive alcohol consumption that brings blood alcohol concentration (BAC) to 0.08g% or above. For the average adult, this pattern is consuming 5 or more drinks as a male or 4 or more drinks as a female in 2 hours (National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism).

¹⁷ Drug-facilitated sexual assault occurs when alcohol or drugs are deliberately used to compromise an individual's ability to give sexual consent. These substances make it easier for a perpetrator to commit sexual assault because they cause diminished capacity of an individual to resist an attack and prevent victims from remembering the assault (RAINN, n.d.c).

parties, bars, and raves. One study found 18% of college students have tried a club drug at least once during their lifetime (Simons et al., 2005).

Age and Year in School

Female victims of campus sexual assaults are heavily concentrated between the ages of 16 and 24, the age groups men find most appealing for consensual sex; victimization gradually decreases in older age groups after the age of 50 (Bryden & Grier, 2011, p. 208). During the first weeks of school, referred to as the “Red Zone,” college students are presumed to be at a higher risk of experiencing sexual victimization (Warshaw et al., 2019). Freshmen and sophomore women appear to be at a greater risk of being victims of sexual assault than juniors and seniors (Krebs et al., 2007).

According to Gross, Winslett, Roberts, and Gohm (2006), during the first two years of college, 84% of women experienced sexually coercive experiences. Cantor et al. (2015) found the risk of sexual victimization involving physical force or incapacitation declined from freshman to senior year. This may be because younger students are more naïve and are not as knowledgeable about the risks associated with college drinking (Wechesler & Nelson, 2008). Another explanation is alcohol and where college students choose to drink. Freshmen and sophomores, for instance, are typically underage and unable to legally drink at bars and clubs; therefore, their only choice is to attend parties where the environment is less regulated, such as fraternity and sorority parties (Wechesler & Nelson, 2008).

Race and Ethnicity

The role of race and ethnicity as risk factors for campus sexual assaults has not been thoroughly researched mainly due to the limited number of previous studies including minorities. According to available research, White women and American Indian/Alaskan Native women have the highest risk for rape on college campuses, while Asian-Americans have the lowest risk (Tjaden & Theonnes, 2006). This finding might not be accurate as Caucasians are more likely to be in higher education. In addition, depending on the type of assault, the role of race and ethnicity as risk factors for campus sexual assaults may vary (Gross et al., 2006; Krebs et al., 2007; Mohler-Kuo et al., 2004).

White women are less likely to encounter campus assaults of physically forced rapes or physically forced rapes with verbal threats than women of color, particularly African American and Latina women (Abreu, Goodyear, Campos, & Newcomb, 2000; Gross et al., 2006; Mohler-Kuo et al., 2004). There are different underlying cultural complexities for each of these racial groups. This finding may be because of the stereotypical portrayal of male African Americans being misogynistic to ethnic women in popular culture (e.g., music videos), which can influence intimate partner violence (IPV) in these populations (Gross et al., 2006, p. 295). In addition, Latinas are often depicted in media as women who are passionate seductresses (Abreu et al., 2000). Also, at higher risk of not only physically forced but also incapacitated campus sexual assaults were Asians, Native Hawaiians/other Pacific Islanders, American Indians/Alaska Natives, and mixed races (Krebs et al., 2007).

Female African American college students who are victims of sexual assault have a lower reporting rate (17%) than their White counterparts (44.3%) (Krebs, Lindquist, & Barrick, 2011). When examining the difference between racial reporting rates, a frequently cited response was their assault would not be taken seriously enough by campus officials to investigate because of their race (Krebs et al., 2011). Published peer-reviewed literature that accurately explores how women of color experience sexual assault is lacking because women of color often attend predominantly white colleges and universities. Furthermore, educating the community on risk factors and protective factors for sexual assault perpetration on college campuses is equally important to learning the factors for sexual assault victimization on college campuses because society can help mitigate the presence of these risk factors.

Risk and Protective Factors for Sexual Assault Perpetration on College Campuses

The identification of multilevel factors that increase the risk for sexual assault perpetration is essential for prevention strategies. Research has addressed two main areas of risk factors for sexual assault perpetration, such as victim and offender characteristics (CDC, 2019; Mohler-Kuo et al., 2004). Most research studies on sexual assault have concentrated on victim features that increase the likelihood of an assault (Gross et al., 2006; Krebs et al., 2007; Lawyer et al., 2010); however, newer research has discovered dangerous attitudes and behaviors sexual perpetrators may have to identify prevention opportunities (Loh et al., 2005, p. 1326). As a result, risk factors like alcohol use were

commonly examined to distinguish between sexually and non-sexually aggressive men (Loh et al., 2005, p. 1326).

Risk Factors for Sexual Assault Perpetration

Researchers have identified certain risk factors associated with an increased probability of sexual violence perpetration. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), risk factors are contributing factors that correlate to one another but have no causality (CDC, 2019). Knowing more about individual, relational, community, and societal risk factors for sexual violence perpetration is critical for allocating resources, developing effective programs, and implementing targeted gendered prevention policies to effectively reduce rape myth endorsement on college campuses.

Several individual risk factors include alcohol and drug use, lack of empathy, exposure to pornography, suicidal behavior, and prior sexual victimization and perpetration (CDC, 2019). However, in sexual assault literature, results were not supported by studies that examined only individual risk factors to explain sexual violence. Most campus sexual assault studies focused on the effect of relationships, particularly peer influence on sexual violence perpetration (Canan et al., 2018; Jozkowski & Wiersma-Mosley, 2017). Relationship factors include a history of childhood physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, association with hypermasculine and delinquent peers, and involvement in an abusive intimate relationship (CDC, 2019).

Membership in all-male peer organizations with masculine ideologies, such as fraternities and athletic teams, have been linked to an increased endorsement of rape-supportive attitudes and an enhanced risk of sexual violence perpetration (Murnen & Kohlman, 2007). This type of peer influence heavily impacts sexual violence perpetration by normalizing negative behaviors, such as hostile attitudes towards women, use of violence, objectification of women, hypermasculinity, or excessive alcohol use (Murnen & Kohlman, 2007). Community and societal factors include low-income communities, lack of institutional support from the criminal justice system, and social norms that support sexual violence (CDC, 2019). In comparison with other variables, individual and relationship factors have the greatest impact on sexual perpetration (Canan et al., 2018; Jozkowski & Wiersma-Mosley, 2017). Although addressing the risk factors for sexual violence perpetration is important, so is examining the protective factors.

Protective Factors for Sexual Assault Perpetration

Protective factors are behaviors and conditions that may reduce the probability of sexual violence perpetration. Protective factors are similar to risk factors and may occur at the individual, relational, community, and societal levels. Several individual and relational protective factors include emotional health and social connectedness, school connectedness, and empathy (CDC, 2019). Emotional health and social connectedness refer to social support from friends and family that helps an individual believe he or she is loved and appreciated (Casey & Masters, 2017, p. 25). School connectedness is an individual's level of attachment to his or her school and the quality of their educational

experience (Casey & Masters, 2017, p. 26). Similar in concept, academic achievement is commonly defined with good grades and is measured by Grade Point Average (GPA) (Casey & Masters, 2017, p. 26). Empathy is the ability to sense and understand people's emotions by placing oneself in another individual's position of thought and feeling. Community protective factors include community support and access to mental health and substance abuse services (Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy, Zwi, & Lozano, 2002). Lastly, societal protective factors include norms that do not support strong economic, gender, and social policies, and low crime (e.g., sexual violence) (Krug et al., 2002). Altogether, protective factors have the potential to decrease the prevalence of sexual assault and rape.

Measuring Rape Myths

Rape myth acceptance is frequently evaluated in cross-sectional research using survey instruments. Surveys widely employ a Likert scale, a five- or seven-point scale used to measure a respondent's attitude in which they agree or disagree with a statement. These questions are a set of statements reflecting cultural beliefs and attitudes regarding rape, its victims, the offenders, and sexual consent. In 1980, the first instrument for measuring individual rates of rape endorsement, the Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (RMAS) was developed (Burt, 1980). The RMAS is a 20-statement survey on a seven-point Likert scale from 1 (not at all agree) to 7 (very much agree), 4 being neutral. The RMAS has seven subscales: "She asked for it," "It wasn't really rape," "He didn't mean to," "She wanted it," "She lied," "Rape is a trivial event," and "Rape is a deviant event" (Burt, 1980). The RMAS focuses on the victim's role by examining her characteristics

(Burt, 1980). Various studies have used the RMAS, but other measures of rape myth acceptance quickly arose to address the concerns of the RMAS (McMahon & Farmer, 2011; Payne, Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1999). In addition, rape myths were reconceptualized throughout time because of shifts in gender roles, popular culture, and historical events.

Lonsway and Fitzgerald (1994) were one of the first critics of Burt's classic work. They argued Burt's 1980 definition of rape myths was not able to sufficiently operationalize complex concepts (e.g., prejudice), which resulted in the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance (IRMA) Scale (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994; Payne et al., 1999). The IRMA scale is a 45-statement survey adopting the same seven subscales as the RMAS on a seven-point Likert scale. The original IRMA was the most reliable and psychometrically referenced rape myth scale to date as it is one of the most widely used measures of rape myth acceptance (Payne et al., 1999). The IRMA also demonstrated construct validity by its high correlation to traditional gender role stereotypes, sexual adversarial views, and attitudes toward violence (Payne et al., 1999). Despite these improvements, McMahon and Farmer (2011) introduced the updated Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance (uIRMA) Scale to address the limitation of using colloquialisms.

The uIRMA scale contains 22 statements, whereas the short-form version contains 18 statements. The uIRMA uses a reverse coded five-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). The uIRMA reduced the original seven subscales to four culturally relevant subscales: "She asked for it," "He didn't mean to,"

“It wasn’t really rape,” and “She lied” (McMahon & Farmer, 2011). These subscales were designed to provide a framework for studying subtle rape myths. The belief in blatant and overtly sexist rape myths have generally declined; however, the underlying beliefs of victim-blaming are still covertly present.

Changes were made to the original IRMA scale because colloquialisms vary by geographic location and culture as they are a distinct form of communication. For example, instead of using the phrase, “When women go around wearing low-cut tops or short skirts, they are just asking for trouble” (IRMA item #15, Appendix A), the statement was reworded to say, “When girls go to parties wearing slutty clothes, they are asking for trouble” (uIRMA item #2, Appendix B). In addition, wording of the original IRMA was outdated. Students may disagree with a statement simply because of the wording. In the original IRMA, the terms “woman” and “man” were replaced by McMahon and Farmer (2011) with “girl” and “guy” to associate the sentences with college-aged individuals rather than older adults. McMahon and Farmer (2011) argued rape myths and the acceptance of them have become more subtle and less explicit because of the increased awareness of campus sexual assault; however, rape-supportive attitudes are still present. McMahon and Farmer (2011) modified 18 statements from the original IRMA and added four statements to measure subtle rape myth acceptance, such as rape can happen on accident because men lose control and act on their sexual desires (Appendix B). Rape myths tend to focus on the victim’s behavior and not the offender’s behavior, taking away full accountability of the offender for his crimes.

Empirical Research on Rape Myth Acceptance (RMA)

Empirical research on rape myths has mostly focused on the differences in male and female rape myth acceptance and have identified personality traits, belief systems, demographic variables, and societal factors linked to rape myth acceptance or rejection (Aosved & Long, 2006; Canan et al., 2018; Carmody & Washington, 2001; Lefley, Scott, Llabre, & Hicks, 1993; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994; Sleath & Bull, 2015; Worthen, 2017). Research has illustrated many men and women from varied backgrounds adhere to rape myths (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994). Most research on rape myths have focused on gender differences in the endorsement of rape myths (Carmody & Washington, 2001, p. 425; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994; Suarez & Gadalla, 2010).

Research on College Students' RMA

Hayes, Abbott, and Cook (2016) examined the factors associated with an individual's acceptance of rape myths at two colleges located in the same town. The specific variables studied were participants' gender, race, and drinking behavior. Participants were 263 undergraduate students from two Midwestern colleges, a university and a community college in the same town during Spring 2010 and Fall 2010. Using a non-probability sampling method, surveys were administered at both colleges to Introduction to Sociology and Introductory English classes. The study utilized the Rape Attitudes and Beliefs Scale (RABS), which contains 50 rape-supportive statements and was recorded on a seven-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Findings indicated males and heavy drinkers are more likely than females and

non/low drinkers to believe in rape myths (Hayes et al., 2016). The researchers did not find race to be a significant predictor of rape myth acceptance. The small sample of non-White participants representing the area could explain the absence of correlation between race and rape myth acceptance.

Canan et al., (2018) examined rape-supportive attitudes among college students involved in Greek-life. Participants were 981 undergraduate students enrolled in introductory health courses at a large Midwestern and Southern university. Participants were recruited from introductory health courses because students at both universities take such classes as electives. A diverse range of students tend to enroll in introductory health courses in terms of age, class standing, and college major. Participants completed a survey including the Token Resistance to Sex Scale,¹⁸ Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale-Short Form, and answered questions about past rape victimization (Canan et al., 2018).

Findings demonstrated there was an increase in rape myth acceptance among college students with Greek membership or affiliation compared to those who are not Greek affiliated (Canan et al., 2018). Although students with Greek membership exhibited higher endorsement of rape myth acceptance than those with no Greek

¹⁸ The Token Resistance to Sex Scale was created to evaluate the pre-dispositional belief that women use token resistance to sexual advancement; saying 'no' to sexual advancement, but mean 'yes' (Osman, 1998). This traditional sexual script is the refusal of sexual activity while intending to participate in that activity (Muehlenhard & Rodgers, 1998, p. 443). The Token Resistance to Sex Scale was the first scale to examine potential situational factors connected with token resistance (Osman, 1998). This script perpetuates the conviction that women are often insincere in refusing sexual advances and do not need to be taken seriously (Muehlenhard & Rodgers, 1998, p. 444)

membership, fraternity members exhibited an even higher approval than sorority members. Gender was found to moderate the relationship between Greek membership and rape myth endorsement (Canan et al., 2018). The majority of the sample was White, so race and ethnicity were operationalized into White and non-White groups. Therefore, an informed conclusion could not be made as to why non-White participants exhibited higher rates of rape myth acceptance. Most research on rape myth acceptance focuses closely on group affiliation, such as Greek members, college student athletes, or law enforcement; however, newer research has concentrated on individualistic attributes, such as sexual identity as a key factor in college rape myth acceptance.

Worthen (2017) conducted a survey examining factors, such as gender, personal experiences with rape, and sexual identity related to lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) college students' level of rape myth acceptance. Participants were 389 LGB college students enrolled at a university in Southern United States. Rape myth acceptance was measured using the short-form Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale. The responses to the 20-items were recorded on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Findings stated being a woman, being LGB, identifying as a feminist, and knowing or being a sexual assault survivor were all negatively associated with rape myth acceptance (Worthen, 2017). Similar to previous studies, Worthen did not find race to be a significant predictor of rape myth acceptance. The majority of the sample was White, which could explain the weak relationship between race and rape myth acceptance.

Although there is a lack of comparisons between distinct groups of people, a recent study in the United Kingdom has compared rape myth acceptance among multiple groups, such as police officers, undergraduate psychology students, and law students (Sleath & Bull, 2015). Based on the literature, males and minorities are more likely to endorse rape myths. However, rape myth acceptance is not limited to these specific groups as it is pervasive across the United States, supporting the assertion that rape culture exists anywhere (Brownmiller, 1975; Burt, 1980).

Research on Criminal Justice Professionals' RMA

Extending beyond the college population, a 2008 study indicated criminal justice practitioners may adhere to rape myths based on their highest level of education (Page, 2008). Eleven police departments and sheriff's offices were chosen as the sample population to participate in a census. These agencies were located in two states in Southeastern United States. Participants were asked to complete a survey about their perspectives on interpersonal violence. The survey included demographic questions and utilized four attitudinal scales: Swim, Aikin, Hall and Hunter's Old- Fashioned Sexism Scale (OFSS), Modern Sexism Scale (MSS), Rape Myth Acceptance Scale-Revised (RMA-R), and the Victim Credibility Scale (VCS).

Page (2008) discovered for several rape myths, police officers had low acceptance rates. For example, only 4% of officers believed "many women secretly desired being raped;" however, other rape myths (i.e., "women falsely report rape to call attention to themselves" and "any victim can resist a rapist if she really wants to") were

accepted by 20% of the officers. Findings suggested an officer's educational background contributed to their rape myth acceptance. Officers with only a high school diploma or general education development (GED) had considerably higher rape myth acceptance than officers with an associate's, bachelor's, or master's degree (Page, 2008).

A 2015 study demonstrated campus police officers' endorsement of rape myths was strongly related to their perceptions of campus sexual assault and attitudes towards victims (Smith, Wilkes, & Bouffard, 2015). A two-part survey was distributed to 118 campus police officers in Texas, with a sample ranging in age from 26 to 70 years old. The survey was distributed in two forms, a paper survey given to officers before attending a sexual response training that same day, and an online survey, given to chiefs of all campus police agencies in Texas. In addition, the officer's career, the campus they worked at, and their department's procedure of processing sexual assault cases were also recorded. Additionally, the survey included a series of questions related to perceptions of sexual assault and specialized training (Smith et al., 2015).

Smith et al. (2015) reported officers who participated in specialized training had a lower rape myth acceptance in specific rape myth subscales based on the content of their previous training. Officers who received training concerning victim sensitivity, the impact of trauma, and the role of alcohol in sexual assault scored lower on the "She lied," "It wasn't really rape," and "Rape is a trivial event" subscales, making up the overall rape myth acceptance, referred to as the Full Scale. Both training on sexual assault investigations and training on the federal mandates for sexual assault (e.g., Title IX,

Clery Act, and Campus SaVE Act), however, did not have a significant impact on an officer's adherence of rape myths (Smith et al., 2015). This may be because of the focus on evidence collection and procedural processing rather than interview techniques with victims. The Blameworthiness Scale was also used to identify the factors that may influence police officers' perceptions of victim credibility and blame in sexual assault cases, such as victim intoxication. Scores on the Blameworthiness Scale were positively correlated with rape myth acceptance. Campus law enforcement officers who attributed more blame to victims scored higher on the Full Scale and on the "She lied," "It wasn't really rape," and "Rape is a trivial event" subscales. The degree of victim blameworthiness, criminal history, and their relationship with the offender influenced a higher rape myth acceptance (Smith et al., 2015).

A 2018 study demonstrated professors' belief in rape myths are strongly correlated to the training they receive (Nadler, 2018). The study's sample consisted of 117 professors from several Association of American Universities¹⁹ (AAU) institutions across the United States. In this study, the relationship between time invested in campus sexual assault training, gender, knowledge of mandated policies and procedure after student disclosure of sexual assault, and the concept of rape myth acceptance was explored. Rape-supportive attitudes were measured with the updated IRMA scale (uIRMA) (Nadler, 2018).

¹⁹ Founded in 1900, AAU was composed of America's top researching universities. Membership is exclusive because it is by invitation only. The AAU has 63 public and private universities in the United States and two in Canada.

The uIRMA scale was designed to measure rape myth acceptance in a reverse coded five-point Likert scale format, 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). The uIRMA has four subscales, “She asked for it,” “He didn’t mean to,” “It wasn’t really rape,” and “She lied.” Among the sample, training investment ranged from zero hours to 600 hours over the past five years. Nadler (2018) discovered training investment was associated with a lower victim-blaming and dismissal of rape, but only for male professors. This may be because female professors have an overall low rape myth acceptance regardless of training and the time being invested. However, the time invested in campus sexual assault training was positively associated with a lower rape myth acceptance and a higher self-reported knowledge about mandated policies and procedures following a student disclosure of sexual victimization (Nadler, 2018).

Research on Racial/Ethnic Groups’ RMA

In addition to individual factors, such as sexual identity, Greek affiliation, and the highest level of education, research findings on rape myth acceptance have also examined other demographic characteristics, such as gender, race, and ethnicity. Gender, race, and ethnicity were associated with the prevalence of rape culture on college campuses (Canan et al., 2018; Hayes et al., 2016; Worthen, 2017). Although there are gender differences in rape myth acceptance, conflicting findings have emerged in rape myth acceptance among racial and ethnic groups. Carmody and Washington (2001) discovered while White women are slightly more supportive of some rape myths than Black women, there were no significant differences between the two groups on particular rape myth scale items.

The findings of Carmody and Washington's (2001) study are contrary to Burt's (1980) study, which found Blacks, regardless of gender, accept rape myths more than Whites. A possible explanation for this could be their history, as African American women were disadvantaged as sex slaves to other slaves and white men (Kennedy, n.d., p. 4). Their racial history and stereotype influence rape prosecutions as demonstrated by the sentencing disparities of sex offenders based on the rape victim's race (Kennedy, n.d., p. 8). This is because oftentimes the victimization of black women is considered less severe than that of white women (Kennedy, n.d., pp. 28-29). The prolonged disparate treatment of African Americans has made African Americans accept certain rape myths, such as the belief victims are partially responsible for their assault (Kennedy, n.d., p. 33). Previous research heavily focused on the comparison of Blacks and Whites, but did not examine other minorities (Burt, 1980); however, more inclusive research emerged.

Lefley et al. (1993) reported African Americans and Hispanics were more likely to have negative perceptions of rape victims than Whites. Similar findings are demonstrated in studies using Asian American samples. When examining gender differences in public attitudes towards rape, it is common for cultural influences to be present among minorities (Lefley et al., 1993, p. 629). Williams (1985) found Hispanic males have a historically greater risk for rape accusations than White males, and African American males are more likely to assess the validity of rape cases compared to Whites because of the historical persecution of black men who were falsely accused of rape (Giacopassi & Dull, 1986). Lee, Pomeroy, Yoo, and Rheinboldt (2005) found Asian American students were more punitive towards rape victims compared to White students.

Asian students believed women should be held accountable for sexual assault prevention and that violent crime is linked to sex (Lee et al., 2005). Therefore, in Asian culture, the potential consequences of the offense (e.g., bringing dishonor to the family) are more important than the crime itself (Lee et al., 2005).

Research on Age and Level of Education in RMA

Research has also asserted age and level of education concerning rape myth acceptance has produced mixed results. Suarez and Gadalla's (2010) meta-analysis revealed age was not a significant predictor of rape myth acceptance. Other researchers have suggested otherwise. Burt (1980) found younger and better-educated people revealed fewer stereotypical, adversarial, and violent attitudes and had a lower tolerance of rape myths than older and less-educated individuals. However, newer studies have not supported Burt's old findings. In the college population, when assessing factors of gender and age together with rape myth acceptance, younger (freshmen) males endorsed higher rape myth acceptance compared to older (upperclassmen) males (Gorbett, 2006). Rape myth acceptance declined in male participants who were surveyed during their freshman year and again in their senior year. In another study, Blumberg and Lester (1991) found high school males had higher victim-blaming scores compared to college-aged male participants. It is hypothesized life experiences and increased sexual assault education in college may influence changes in attitudes and beliefs (Blumberg & Lester, 1991).

Significance of the Study

The present study explores the factors associated with an individual's acceptance of rape myths and the current state of rape myth acceptance among declared criminal justice majors attending California State University, Sacramento. To explore this topic, the study's hypothesis is female criminal justice majors are less likely to hold rape-supportive attitudes than their male counterparts. The current study utilizes a survey design to collect quantitative data to assess the potential relationships between the studied factors and rape myth acceptance. This study expands the current understanding of an individual's educational background in rape myth acceptance among undergraduate criminal justice students by including college major as a control variable, whereas other studies use one's highest level of education.

The study aims to fill the literature gap by examining rape myth acceptance among groups other than Greek affiliated college students, law enforcement professionals, and other actors of the criminal justice system. This study examines the education received by male and female criminal justice majors and whether it plays a critical role in their belief of rape-supportive attitudes. By identifying additional factors which may increase an individual's adherence to rape myths, there is an attempt to discover the current expected role of college men and women in sexual assault prevention and risk reduction. It is also important to know if male criminal justice majors endorse rape myths because they are most likely pursuing a career in law enforcement.

The present study also sought to shed further light on rape culture by measuring the prevalence of rape-supportive attitudes among undergraduate criminal justice students. Rape-supportive attitudes are deeply embedded in society and help foster a climate that continues to tolerate sexual violence; therefore, understanding these attitudes among this specific population will be beneficial for the community and policymakers to understand how rape culture originated. Studies like this can guide and inform prevention efforts that may need to be targeted at certain segments of the college population rather than a one size fits all approach (i.e., Greek members and criminal justice majors may each need different programs).

Where to attend college is one of the most critical life decisions many young Americans are pressured to make (Jozkowski & Wiersma-Mosley, 2017, p. 100). Therefore, students should start selecting their university not solely on the programs offered or by college location, but also by the environmental climate, the way certain subgroups of the college population (e.g., sexual assault victims) are treated on campus, and the accessible student resources. With this new approach, universities will be forced to shift their culture, climate, policies, and responses to sexual offenses (Jozkowski & Wiersma-Mosley, 2017, p. 100).

Chapter 3

Methodology

Study Objectives

Many studies have examined rape myth acceptance among specific subgroups of college students but have not directly compared female criminal justice majors to male criminal justice majors. The goal of this study is to examine the endorsement of rape myths among criminal justice majors and to determine if gender plays a role in rape myth acceptance and if other attributes, such as race, ethnicity, and year in school, are also significant. This study is important because the findings could demonstrate that despite being educated about crimes and the criminal justice system, criminal justice majors can still hold problematic beliefs regarding rape victims and the crime of rape. Results can influence criminal justice-specific policy and curriculum changes, such as culturally effective educational programs and workshops. This study explores the following hypothesis:

(H1) Female criminal justice majors are less likely to hold rape-supportive attitudes²⁰ than male criminal justice majors.

²⁰ In this study, the terms rape-supportive attitudes and rape myth acceptance are used interchangeably.

Data Collection

On September 3, 2019, the Sacramento State Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved all study procedures before the initiation of data collection (Appendix C). Using the California State University, Sacramento (CSUS) course catalog website (<https://catalog.csus.edu/colleges/health-human-services/criminal-justice/bs-in-criminal-justice/>) information was found on required upper division courses for declared criminal justice majors (Appendix D). The contact information of instructors was obtained on the Sacramento State's Division of Criminal Justice webpage (<https://www.csus.edu/college/health-human-services/criminal-justice/meet-us/>).

An online survey was created and administered to participants via the online survey system, Qualtrics. The study included 26 questions used to measure college students' beliefs about sexual assault (Appendix E). The courses were selected based on required upper division courses for declared criminal justice majors in the Division of Criminal Justice at Sacramento State University. The recruitment period lasted 2 months, from the beginning of October 2019 to the beginning of December 2019. In total, 21 instructors were contacted via e-mail and asked if they were willing to distribute an online survey link to their classes during the Fall 2019 semester (Appendix F).

Of the 21 instructors who were contacted, 11 instructors agreed to provide their students with the survey link. There were opportunities to be present in class to formally explain the study's objectives and inform potential student participants of their rights per the instructor's request. Otherwise, instructors shared the survey link to their students so

they could access the online survey. Upon an informed consent form attached to the survey, each student was given the option to consent to or decline the survey (Appendix G). No incentive was given for participants' voluntary participation. At the beginning and end of the survey, participants were also provided with a list of local mental health services to contact should they feel any psychological distress due to the survey content.

Sample

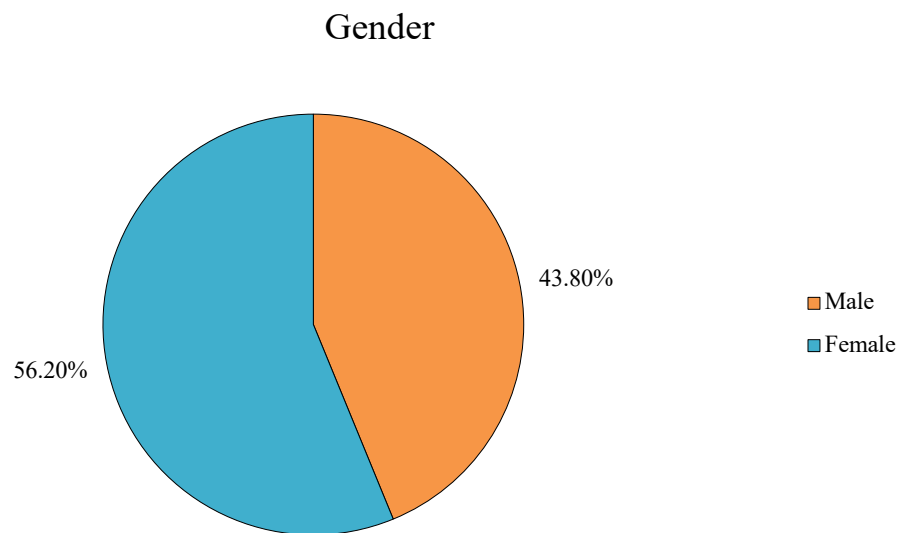
This exploratory study was conducted during the Fall 2019 semester with a convenience sample of 201 ($N = 201$) Sacramento State University undergraduate criminal justice students²¹ enrolled in 15 upper division criminal justice courses (Appendix H). The 11 instructors of the 15 upper division criminal justice courses allowed the distribution of the online survey to their students. Multiple sections of seven upper division courses for declared criminal justice majors were chosen to avoid obtaining non-criminal justice students, such as those who may be interested in criminal justice, but who are not formally declared criminal justice majors due to impaction. Upper division courses were chosen because of the high mandatory enrollment rate of declared majors in upper division classes. Responses of 218 were initially gathered, but some were disregarded because the responses were incomplete, declined to state, or the gender of the participant could not be determined due to the lack of gender identification (i.e. transgender male, transgender female, gender fluid, or other) among respondents to

²¹ There were two cases of double majors in the total population studied. These were kept in the sample because criminal justice was listed as one of the majors.

be considered a testable independent group like males and females. Therefore, only males and females were included in the statistical analyses for a total of 201 ($N = 201$) responses (Figure 1).

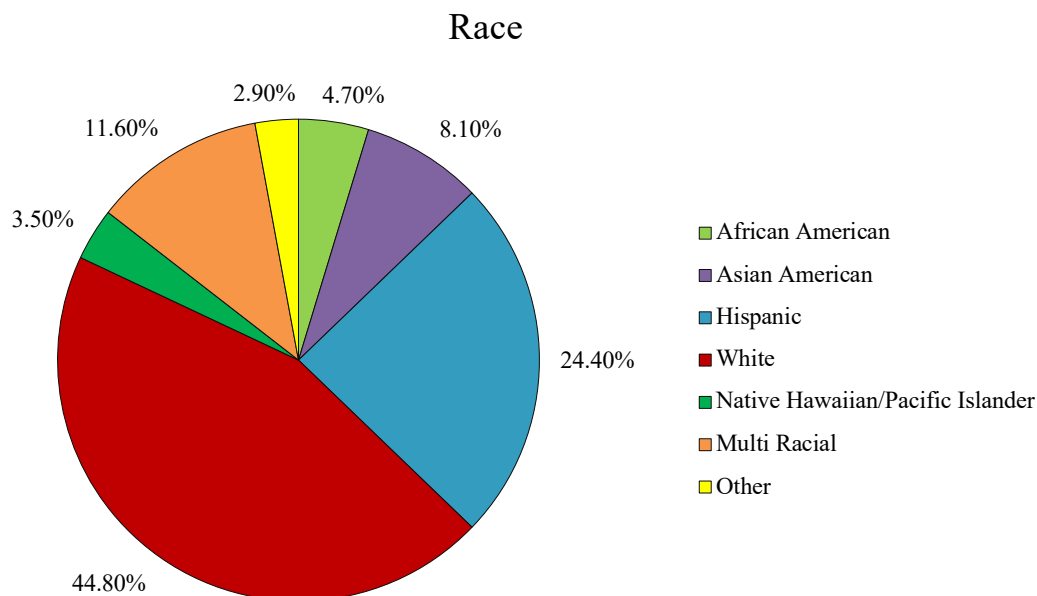
Figure 1

Sample of Gender Collected from Survey



Note. $N = 201$.

Out of the 201 criminal justice majors, 56% ($n = 113$) identified as female and 44% ($n = 88$) identified as male. However, the total sample for racial groups consisted of 172 responses because there were 29 missing responses (Figure 2).

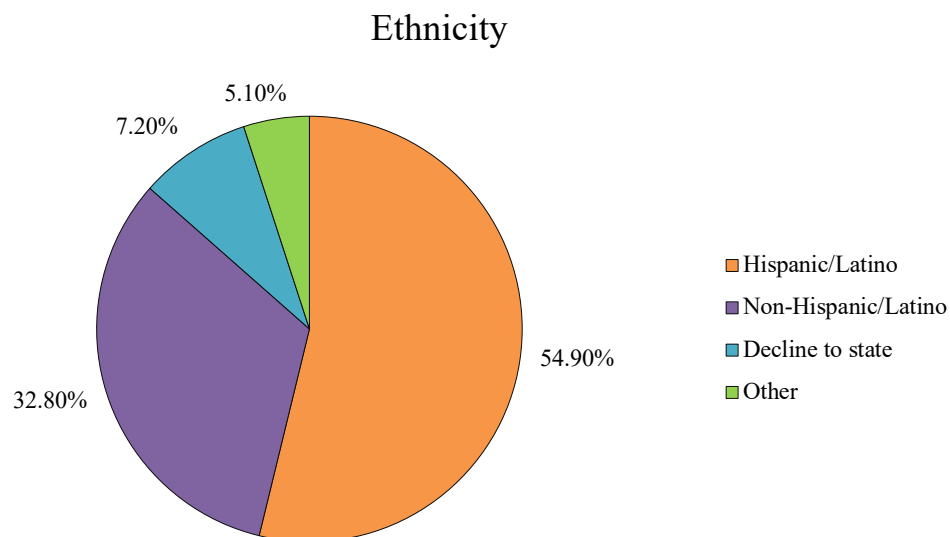
Figure 2*Sample of Race Collected from Survey*

Note. $n = 172$. There were 29 missing responses.

Out of the 172 criminal justice majors surveyed, 44.80% ($n = 77$) identified as White, 24.40% ($n = 42$) identified as Hispanic, 11.60% ($n = 20$) identified as multi-racial, 8.10% ($n = 14$) identified as Asian American, 4.70% ($n = 8$) identified as African American, 3.50% ($n = 6$) identified as Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and 2.90% ($n = 5$) identified as other. However, the total sample for ethnic groups consisted of 195 responses because there were 6 missing responses (Figure 3).

Figure 3

Sample of Ethnicity Collected from Survey

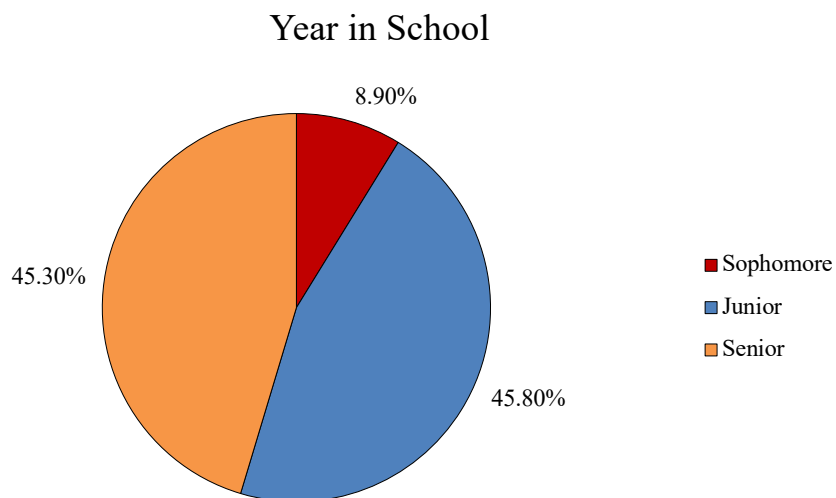


Note. $n = 195$. There were 6 missing responses.

Out of the 195 respondents, 54.90% ($n = 107$) identified as Hispanic/Latino, 32.80% ($n = 64$) identified as Non-Hispanic/Latino, 7.20% ($n = 14$) declined to state, and 5.10% ($n = 10$) identified as other. However, the total sample for year in school consisted of 201 responses (Figure 4).

Figure 4

Sample of Year in School Collected from Survey



Note. $N = 201$.

Out of the 201 respondents surveyed, the sample comprised of 45.30% ($n = 91$) Seniors, 45.80% ($n = 92$) Juniors, and 8.90% ($n = 18$) Sophomores.

Survey Instrument

The online survey, “Examining Beliefs about Sexual Violence amongst College Undergraduates” was employed to address the hypothesis by utilizing items from the updated Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance (uIRMA) Scale, in addition to collecting demographic information. The first part of the study utilized the uIRMA, a popularly referenced self-report instrument (Canan et al., 2018; Payne et al., 1999; Sleath & Bull,

2015; Worthen, 2017) for its ability to determine an individual's level of rape myth acceptance (McMahon & Farmer, 2011).

For this study, McMahon and Farmer's (2011) uIRMA was administered to participants to measure the independent and dependent variables in the present study. The uIRMA consists of 22 statements, whereas the original scale contains 45 statements (Payne et al., 1999). The original IRMA scale was not used because it is outdated and lacks validity. Some of the most common rape myths included as survey items were women enjoy rape, women ask to be raped, and women lie about being raped. The uIRMA is scored on a reverse coded five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). The uIRMA provides a mean score and higher uIRMA scores indicate a lower rape myth acceptance.

McMahon and Farmer (2011) also modified the original seven subscales outlined by Payne et al., (1999) to four culturally relevant subscales in the updated version of the IRMA. These subscales are: "She asked for it," "He didn't mean to," "It wasn't really rape," and "She lied." These subscales are aimed at understanding attitudes and beliefs about sexual assault. Relevant to the present study, participants were then asked to provide demographic data (i.e., gender, race/ethnicity, and year in school) at the end of the survey.

Variables

Five variables were identified in this study, four independent variables and one dependent variable. Based on previous research, several independent demographic variables were expected to influence participants' acceptance of rape-supportive attitudes.

Independent variables (IV)

Gender. Gender is often an independent variable and several rape myth acceptance studies suggest men endorse rape myths significantly more than women (Aosved & Long, 2006; Hayes et al., 2016; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994; Suarez & Gadalla, 2010). Suarez and Gadalla (2010) also found gender was the most significant predictor in rape myth acceptance compared to other demographic variables.

Respondents were asked to indicate their gender, choosing between male, female, transgender male, transgender female, gender fluid, decline to state, or other.

Race. Race has also been shown to affect rape myth acceptance. Previous research has revealed minorities have a higher rape myth acceptance rate than Whites (Burt, 1980; Lee et al., 2005; Lefley et al., 1993). Respondents were asked to indicate their race, choosing between African American, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, White, decline to state, or other.

Ethnicity. Respondents were asked to indicate their ethnicity, choosing between Hispanic/Latino, Non-Hispanic/Latino, decline to state, or other.

Year in school. It was also important for respondents to identify their year in college. Year in college was used as a substitute for age and respondents could choose between freshman, sophomore, junior, or senior.

Control variable (CV)

Participants' academic major was utilized as a control variable and kept constant to control for the effect of confounding variables. Participants' major may influence the respondents' acceptance of rape myths because most criminal justice majors have learned about sexual offenses and their impact on victims in a unit or an entire course. Declared criminal justice majors at Sacramento State University are not required to take "Sex Offenses and Offenders" (CRJ 114) or "Women in the Criminal Justice System" (CRJ 111) because they are offered as electives. However, it is presumed criminal justice majors have been exposed to introductory information about the criminal justice system in lower division courses completed during freshman and sophomore year. Awareness of rape culture and the dispelling of rape myths with credible resources in such courses can result in an overall lower rape myth acceptance.

Dependent variables (DV)

The dependent variable in this study was the respondents' scores on the updated Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance (uIRMA) Scale. The uIRMA was designed to measure rape myth acceptance in a reverse coded five-point Likert scale: 1 (strongly agree), 2 (agree), 3 (neutral), 4 (disagree), and 5 (strongly disagree). Included in the uIRMA are

four subscales: “She asked for it,” “He didn’t mean to,” “It wasn’t really rape,” and “She lied.”

She asked for it. The “She asked for it” variable (six statements) is defined as blaming the victim for their behavior that invited sexual assault, which helps justify the crime. The victim’s clothing and alcohol consumption are common themes.

He didn’t mean to. The “He didn’t mean to” variable (six statements) is defined as excusing sexual assault by believing the perpetrator did not intend to rape. The perpetrator’s uncontrollable sex drive is a common example.

It wasn’t really rape. The “It wasn’t really rape” variable (five statements) is defined as denying sexual assault occurred because it does not fit the standard definition of a “real rape.” For example, the victim’s actions during the assault determine if it is rape, such as if there was physical resistance and/ or verbal protests.

She lied. The “She lied” variable (five statements) is defined as accusing the victim of fabricating the occurrence of sexual assault. For example, the victim is lying about rape to get revenge on an individual.

Data Analysis

IBM SPSS Version 26 was used to analyze the data gathered from Qualtrics. All of the analyses were one-way between-subjects analyses of variance (ANOVAs). In this case, “one-way” indicates there is only one categorical variable (i.e., gender, race,

ethnicity, or year in school) and “between-subjects” means each participant was only included in one of the gender groups (as opposed to a within-subjects test which allows participants to belong to multiple groups).

ANOVAs are used to examine group differences. This is done by splitting the sample based on the independent variable (e.g., gender) and gathering the difference between each individual’s score on an item and the overall sample mean for the item (Meyers, Gamst, Guarino, 2013, p. 477). The final result of each ANOVA is a Fisher’s ratio (F ratio). The underlying hypothesis of an ANOVA is the F ratio will be close to 1, indicating the groups (male versus female) are not at all different (Meyers et al., 2013, p. 477). A large F ratio indicates a bigger difference between groups. Since the study uses a between-subjects design, the statistical tests used to analyze the survey data consisted of the Levene’s test and Bonferroni post hoc test. The Levene’s test measures the null hypothesis that the error variances of the dependent variable are equal across groups (Meyers et al., 2013, p. 463). Whereas, the Bonferroni post hoc analysis controls alpha inflation and makes a slight adjustment to the alpha (significance level) to account for false positives (Meyers et al., 2013, p. 502).

Limitations

Several limitations merit consideration and can be used to guide future research. One of the main limitations of a convenience sample is bias, which can affect the quality of gathered data (Heckman, 1979). Convenience sampling is a non-random sampling technique where a researcher collects samples of data from a group of easily accessible

people. Some groups may be overrepresented or underrepresented. In this sample, Caucasians (44.80%) and females (56.20%) are overrepresented.

Because college students enrolled in required upper division criminal justice courses were sampled, the findings presented here are not representative of the general college population. Analyzing young college adults limits its generalizability of the results to general populations of individuals who are older and less educated. Previous studies found the adherence of rape myths often vary between generations (Devdas & Rubin, 2007). The current study is limited by the use of a single public university campus located in California, a liberal Western state, which may not be representative of colleges in other regions, particularly in more conservative and diverse states. The data is cross-sectional; therefore, results drawn about causality and directionality of results are limited.

Another limitation that has been extensively discussed in the literature is the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance (IRMA) Scale being restricted by culture and time. When presented cross-culturally, colloquial terms and phrases may be unclear or outdated. For example, women in some cultures do not wear “slutty clothes,” particularly “low-cut tops or short skirts.” Therefore, the presented items in rape myth acceptance scales need to be culturally relevant to the survey audience. This is a difficult problem to avoid as slang terminology is the core of sexual communication (Payne et al., 1999, p. 61). The IRMA has also been critiqued for its use of gendered language because rape is an ever-changing term (Maxwell & Scott, 2014, p. 45). Many survey measures of sexual assault have been inherently biased, portraying men as the sexual aggressor and women as the victim. This

is problematic as gendered language ignores male victims (Maxwell & Scott, 2014, p. 45). Although the IRMA has flaws, the scale has been used extensively over the past 20 years for its high reliability and has dominated sexual assault literature.

Social desirability in surveys is when participants feel compelled to answer questions in a manner they believe are socially favorable and acceptable, essentially over-reporting good behavior. Social desirability bias ultimately helps conceal participants' true personal attitudes that may be socially unfavorable, such as sexist beliefs. This study collected self-reported data on the participants' beliefs about a sensitive subject, so it is important to recognize the possibility of social desirability bias in responses. This may be especially true among criminal justice majors as they are most likely pursuing law enforcement careers and are required to have a clean background and positive attitude. In an attempt to mitigate social desirability bias in the results, it was emphasized and assured to participants their survey responses would be completely anonymous, but the concern remains. Despite these limitations, the present findings have many implications for policy, future research, and practice.

Chapter 4

Results

Multiple statistical analyses were done to test the hypothesis and understand the data collected. Only participants who identified as male or female were included in the statistical analyses because the other gender identity options (i.e., transgender male, transgender female, gender fluid, and other) were too small to run as a testable independent group. Therefore, out of the 218 cases, only 201 ($N = 201$) were included in the final statistical analyses.

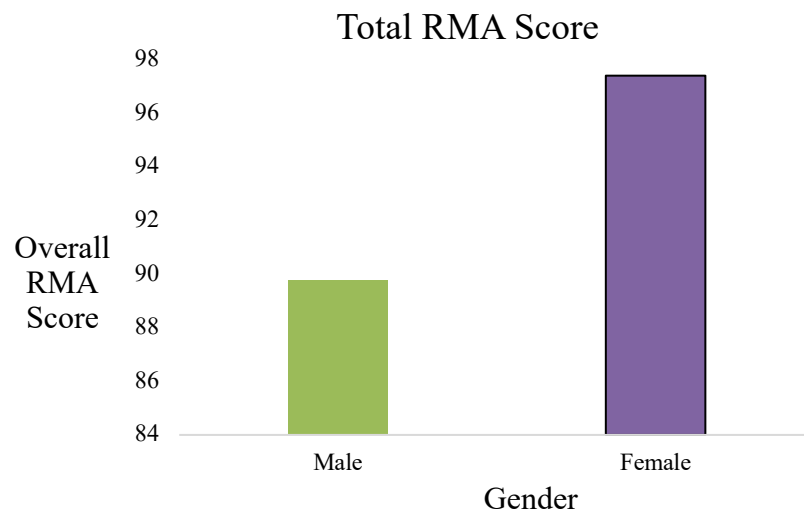
The lowest possible score on the uIRMA is 22 and the highest possible score is 110. It is important to remember the scores are reverse coded in a five-point Likert scale. Responses from the uIRMA were combined to create a total score variable to assess gender differences across male and female participants. Higher scores indicate a lower rape myth acceptance. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used with gender as the independent variable and the total score of the uIRMA as the dependent variable. A Levene's test²² was used to assess the assumption of homogeneity of variance and the results showed no violation of the assumption, $p = .19$. The results of the Levene's test showed differences across gender, $F(1,199) = 19.97$, $p < .001$, with females showing

²² The Levene's test is used to test if samples have equal variances. Equal variances across samples is called homogeneity of variance. Its assumption of equal variances must be checked before interpreting the ANOVA results (Meyers et al., 2013, p. 463).

higher rejection of rape myths ($M = 97.42$, $SD = 11.21$) compared to males ($M = 89.77$, $SD = 13$) (Figure 5).

Figure 5

Comparison Between Gender on the Total RMA Score



Note. $N = 201$. There were 88 males and 113 females.

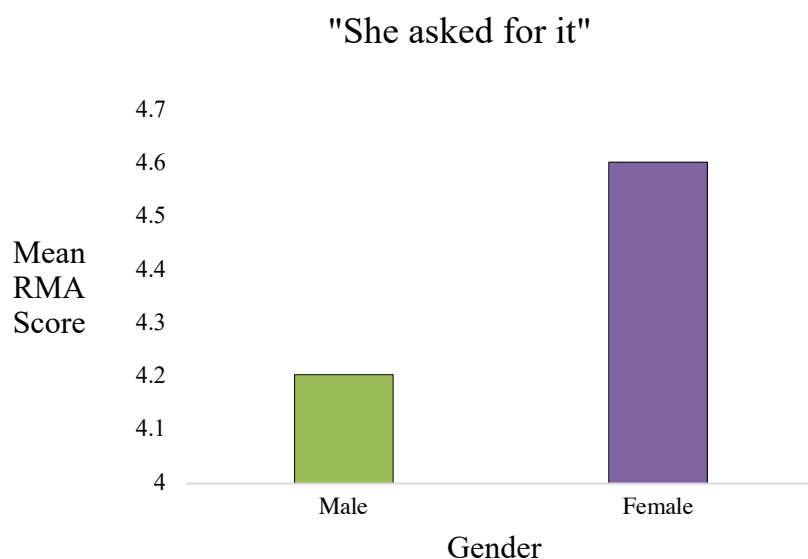
To further investigate this difference, responses from the rape myth acceptance scale were computed into four subscales representing different rape myths by using the mean score of the specified items with higher scores indicating higher rejection of rape myths. Several one-way analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were used to assess potential gender differences across the four rape myth subscales.

The first ANOVA used gender as the independent variable with the subscale "She asked for it" as the dependent variable. A Levene's test was used to assess the assumption

of homogeneity of variance and the results showed a violation of the assumption, $p = .01$. Therefore, the results should be interpreted with caution. However, the results showed statistically significant differences across gender, $F(1,199) = 21.66, p < 0$, with females showing higher rates of rejection of the rape myth "She asked for it" ($M = 4.60, SD = .52$) compared to males ($M = 4.21, SD = .70$) (Figure 6).

Figure 6

Mean Comparison Between Gender in Rape Myth "She asked for it"



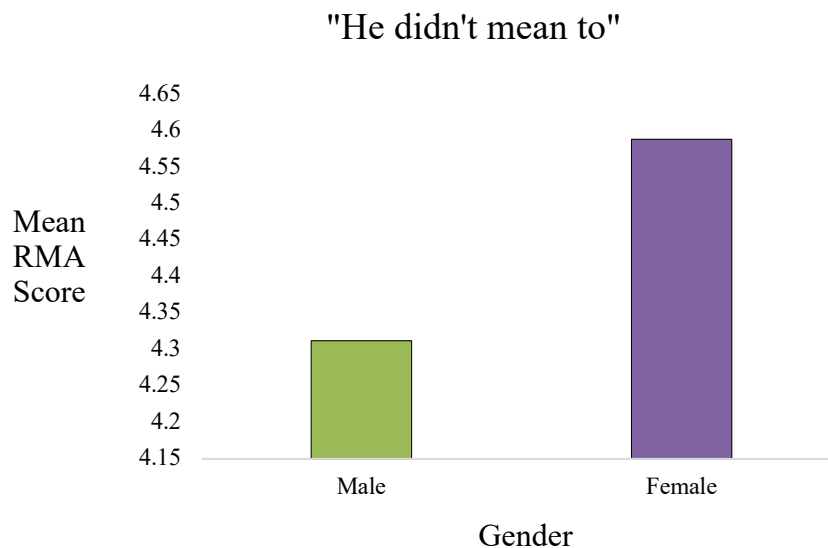
Note. $N = 201$. There were 88 males and 113 females.

The second ANOVA used gender as the independent variable with the subscale "He didn't mean to" as the dependent variable. A Levene's test showed no violation of the assumption, $p = .58$. The results showed statistically significant differences across gender, $F(1,199) = 6.91, p < .01$, with females showing higher rates of rejection of the

rape myth "He didn't mean to" ($M = 4.59, SD = .74$) compared to males ($M = 4.31, SD = .75$) (Figure 7).

Figure 7

Mean Comparison Between Gender in Rape Myth "He didn't mean to"

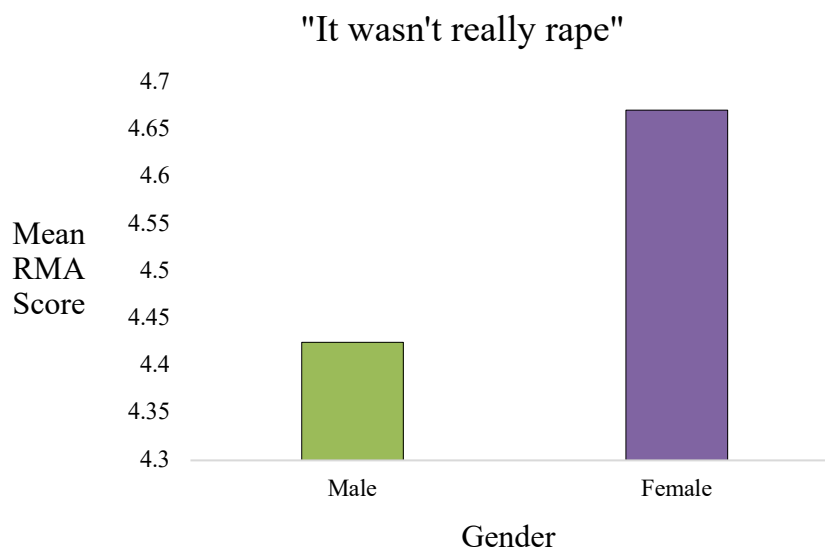


Note. $N = 201$. There were 88 males and 113 females.

The third ANOVA used gender as the independent variable with the subscales "It wasn't really rape" as the dependent variable. A Levene's test showed a violation of the assumption, $p = .01$. Therefore, the results should be interpreted with caution. The results showed statistically significant differences across gender $F(1,199) = 9.72, p < .01$, with females showing higher rates of rejection of the rape myth "It wasn't really rape" ($M = 4.67, SD = .52$) compared to males ($M = 4.43, SD = .60$) (Figure 8).

Figure 8

Mean Comparison Between Gender in Rape Myth "It wasn't really rape"

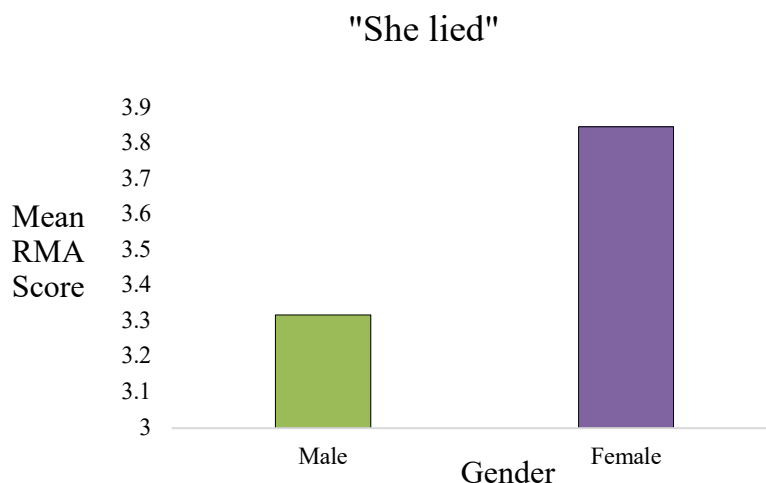


Note. $N = 201$. There were 88 males and 113 females.

The fourth ANOVA used gender as the independent variable with the subscale "She lied" as the dependent variable. A Levene's test showed no violation of the assumption, $p = .79$. The results showed statistically significant differences across gender, $F(1,198) = 18.61, p < 0$, with females showing higher rejection of the rape myth "She lied" ($M = 3.85, SD = .84$) compared to males ($M = 3.32, SD = .90$) (Figure 9).

Figure 9

Mean Comparison Between Gender in Rape Myth “She lied”



Note. $N = 201$. There were 88 males and 113 females.

Several one-way analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were conducted to assess potential racial group differences across the four rape myth subscales. The first ANOVA used racial group as the independent variable with the subscale "She asked for it" as the dependent variable. A Levene's test indicated no violation of the assumption, $p = .06$. The results showed significant differences across racial groups, $F(6,165) = 3.89, p < 0$. A Bonferroni post hoc analysis²³ was conducted and found Asian Americans have a lower rejection of the rape myth "She asked for it" than the Hispanic ($p = .03$) and multi-racial group ($p = .01$) (Table 1).

²³ The Bonferroni post hoc analysis controls alpha inflation and makes a slight adjustment to the alpha (significance level) to account for false positives (Meyers et al., 2013, p. 502).

Table 1*Statistics Across Racial Groups in Subscale "She asked for it"*

Race	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
African American	8	3.98	0.78
Asian American	14	3.99	0.99
Hispanic	42	4.58	0.50
White	77	4.49	0.57
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	6	4.03	0.41
Multi-Racial	20	4.73	0.46
Other	5	4.30	0.73
Total	172	4.45	0.63

The second ANOVA used racial group as the independent variable with the subscale "He didn't mean to" as the dependent variable. A Levene's test was conducted to assess the assumption of homogeneity of variance and the results indicated no violation, $p = .22$. The results showed no significant differences between racial groups $F(6,165) = 1.51, p = .18$ (Table 2).

Table 2*Statistics Across Racial Groups in Subscale "He didn't mean to"*

Race	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
African American	8	4.58	0.54
Asian American	14	4.17	0.77
Hispanic	42	4.67	0.88
White	77	4.48	0.69
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	6	4.06	0.55
Multi-Racial	20	4.69	0.62
Other	5	4.63	0.52
Total	172	4.52	0.74

The third ANOVA used racial group as the independent variable with the subscale "It wasn't really rape" as the dependent variable. A Levene's test was conducted to assess the assumption of homogeneity of variance and the results indicated no violation, $p = .14$. The results showed significant differences across racial groups, $F(6,165) = 2.69$, $p < .05$. A Bonferroni post hoc analysis was conducted and found Asian Americans had a statistically significant lower rejection of the rape myth "It wasn't really rape" than the multi-racial group ($p = .03$) (Table 3).

Table 3*Statistics Across Racial Groups in Subscale "It wasn't really rape"*

Race	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
African American	8	4.25	0.45
Asian American	14	4.24	0.69
Hispanic	42	4.69	0.53
White	77	4.61	0.51
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	6	4.50	0.47
Multi-Racial	20	4.82	0.33
Other	5	4.72	0.42
Total	172	4.61	0.52

The fourth ANOVA used racial group as the independent variable with the subscale "She lied" as the dependent variable. A Levene's test was conducted to assess the assumption of homogeneity of variance and the results indicated no violation, $p = .28$. The results showed no significant differences across racial groups, $F(6,164) = 1.85$, $p = .09$ (Table 4).

Table 4*Statistics Across Racial Groups in Subscale "She lied"*

Race	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
African American	8	3.00	0.99
Asian American	14	3.56	1.00
Hispanic	41	3.77	0.91
White	77	3.71	0.82
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	6	3.33	1.12
Multi-Racial	20	4.09	0.65
Other	5	3.60	1.05
Total	172	3.71	0.88

Additional one-way analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were conducted to assess potential ethnic group differences across the four rape myth subscales. The ethnic group variable was broken up into "Hispanic," "Non-Hispanic," "Decline to state," and "Other" groups. Four one-way ANOVAs were conducted with ethnic group as the independent variable and the four rape myth subscales as the dependent variables, separately. The results showed no significant differences across any of the rape myth subscales, $F_s(3,194) < 1.57, ps > .20$ (Table 5).

Table 5
Statistics Across Ethnic Groups on Rape Myth Subscales

Subscales	Hispanic/Latino	Non-Hispanic/Latino	Decline to state	Other	Total
"She asked for it"	4.48 (.55)	4.43 (.65)	4.23 (.98)	4.13 (.85)	4.43 (.64)
"He didn't mean to"	4.50 (.84)	4.52 (.60)	4.08 (.64)	4.30 (.70)	4.47 (.75)
"It wasn't really rape"	4.59 (.61)	4.57 (.51)	4.34 (.62)	4.36 (.47)	4.56 (.57)
"She lied"	3.61 (.88)	3.68 (.94)	3.24 (.86)	3.68 (.96)	3.61 (.90)

Note. Means are displayed in the table with standard deviations in parentheses. $n = 195$.

Lastly, several one-way analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were conducted to assess potential class level differences across the four rape myth subscales. Across all four ANOVAs, there were no significant differences found $F_s(2, 198) < 1.84, p_s > .16$ (Table 6).

Table 6

Statistics Across Year in School on Rape Myth Subscales

Subscales	Sophomore	Junior	Senior	Total
"She asked for it"	4.50 (.54)	4.40 (.56)	4.43 (.72)	4.43 (.63)
"He didn't mean to"	4.32 (.58)	4.39 (.76)	4.61 (.71)	4.47 (.75)
"It wasn't really rape"	4.39 (.68)	4.58 (.50)	4.58 (.61)	4.56 (.57)
"She lied"	3.34 (.84)	3.59 (.84)	3.70 (.96)	3.62 (.90)

Note. Means are displayed in the table with standard deviations in parentheses. $N = 201$.

Chapter 5

Discussion

The present study sought to examine rape myth acceptance among undergraduate criminal justice students enrolled in upper division criminal justice courses, inquiring whether attributes, such as gender, race/ethnicity, and year in school played a significant factor in the acceptance versus nonacceptance of rape myths. The hypothesis tested in this study was female criminal justice majors are less likely to hold rape-supportive attitudes than male criminal justice majors. As evidenced by the multiple ANOVA test results, this research supports this hypothesis. This chapter will provide an overview of key findings, policy implications, and future research suggestions.

Several studies with college student samples and non-college student samples have demonstrated negative stereotypical attitudes toward and beliefs about women are associated with higher rape myth acceptance (Burt, 1980; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994). The present study of 201 ($N = 201$) college undergraduates at a West Coast public university found female criminal justice majors are less likely to hold rape-supportive attitudes than male criminal justice majors. Consistent with prior research, gender, race, ethnicity, and year in school also impacted rape myth acceptance (Aosved & Long, 2006; Burt, 1980; Hayes et al., 2016; Lee et al., 2005; Lefley et al., 1993; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994; Suarez & Gadalla, 2010).

Because criminal justice majors have prior knowledge of victimization, offenders, and the criminal justice system, it was believed the gender differences of rape myth

acceptance among criminal justice majors would not be as pronounced compared to other groups and/or majors. Such findings are significant because the majority of criminal justice majors aspire to become professionals in the criminal justice system (i.e., police officers). When a rape occurs, criminal justice graduates—now in the field—could be the first to respond to such a call. If police officers have rape-supportive attitudes, they may be less inclined to believe reported acts of sexual violence and to take on sexual assault cases because sex crimes are not taken seriously. If officers wish to investigate sex crimes while holding rape-supportive attitudes, it makes it more difficult for victims to feel comfortable to come forward and share details of their attack to law enforcement.

A study by Clarke and Lawson (2009) found those who believe victim-blaming rape myths experience a decreased empathy and willingness to help a sexual assault victim. Higher blame attributions toward the victim were associated with greater negative reactions of anger, disgust, decreased sympathy, and a diminished urge to assist the victim (Clarke & Lawson, 2009). Such correlation extends to an officer's perceived seriousness of a sexual assault report affecting their use of discretion and/or appropriate responses (Venema, 2016). Higher levels of blaming the suspect for the sexual assault influence higher perceptions of a "good case." To elaborate, a "good case" often follows the "real rape" stereotype, components include a stranger, the use of physical force, and the occurrence of physical injury. In addition, a "good case" to prosecutors and police officers involves a credible victim, a legitimate sexual assault, and a strong case. Therefore, this study's results are vital to creating new targeted and gendered prevention

efforts and policy changes, such as in curriculum and specialized training among university staff and students.

Overall, the results demonstrate significant differences across gender with females showing a higher rejection of rape myths compared to males (Figure 5). This is consistent with other studies that have found men are more likely to endorse rape myths than women (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994; Suarez & Gadella, 2010), likely because men have the most to lose when they do not adhere to rape myths because it holds men accountable for their behavior and actions, and questions fragile masculinity.²⁴ This means criminal justice majors would have to accept such violent offenses are committed by people they know and/or who look like them.

Across all four subscales, “She asked for it,” “He didn’t mean to,” “It wasn’t really rape,” and “She lied,” there were noticeable differences among gender; however, differences between the subscales were less prominent than the overall results of rape myth acceptance. Females demonstrated a lower rate of rape myth acceptance than males. The subscale with the largest difference between gender is “She lied,” with an average 0.53 difference (Figure 9). This may be due to mass media’s perpetuation of situational rape myths, such as the victim lied about sexual assault (Easteal et al., 2015; Franiuk et al., 2008; Hildebrand & Najdowski, 2015). In addition, college students use mass media for information and entertainment, such as crime dramas (Dowler, 2003, p. 109).

²⁴ In society, masculinity is fragile because it can be easily taken away at any sign of perceived weakness.

The gender differences between the scale “It wasn’t really rape” and the first scale “She lied” is significant because it demonstrates male college students compared to female criminal justice majors believe in victim-blaming at higher rates than other rape myths. The prominent score gap between females ($M = 3.85$) and males ($M = 3.32$) for the subscale “She lied” can be explained by it being the most popular rape myth among the other three rape myth subscales (Sleath & Bull, 2015).

Regarding the identification with racial group, the sample had 172 criminal justice majors. There were 29 missing responses. There were very few racial group differences across the four rape myth subscales. For the first subscale, “She asked for it” and the third subscale, “It wasn’t really rape” there were significant differences across racial groups (Tables 1 and 3). For the second subscale, “He didn’t mean to” and the fourth subscale, “She lied” there were no significant differences across racial groups (Tables 2 and 4). There is no previous literature that examines the breakdown of college rape myth acceptance among racial groups across the four subscales in the uIRMA because most literature examines overall rape myth acceptance. However, possible reasons for these findings may be racial groups have different cultural norms that may or may not support sexual violence and male entitlement (e.g., African American culture v. Asian American culture). The first subscale, “She asked for it” and the third subscale, “It wasn’t really rape,” are centered on the notion of victim-blaming.

The key finding of the first subscale, “She asked for it,” was Asian Americans had the second highest acceptance of the rape myth “She asked for it” than the Hispanic and

multi-racial group (Table 1). There is no existing literature that compare college rape myth acceptance of minorities to other minorities across all four subscales, as empirical studies involving race and rape myth acceptance have commonly compared minorities to Whites (Burt, 1980; Lee et al., 2005; Lefley et al., 1993). The key finding of the third subscale, “It wasn’t really rape,” was Asian Americans had a significantly higher acceptance of the rape myth "It wasn't really rape" than the multi-racial group, with an average 0.58 difference (Table 3). This is consistent with previous literature that has demonstrated minorities are more likely to hold rape-supportive attitudes (Burt, 1980; Lee et al., 2005; Lefley et al., 1993). This may be because multi-racial groups, such as a Caucasian and Asian mixed individual may sometimes identify more as one race (i.e., White) rather than considering oneself as mixed (i.e., minority).

In the third subscale, “It wasn’t really rape,” there are differences between Asian Americans and Whites. This finding is consistent with previous research which states Asian students adhered more to victim-blaming rape myths compared to White students (Lee et al., 2005). This may be because in Asian societies, virginity and chastity are important features to have and when one becomes a rape victim, they are blamed for their rape because they did not keep their innocence (Lee et al., 2005). Conservative cultural ideologies may contribute to Asian students believing rape victims are blameworthy. In this study, Asian Americans had the highest rape myth acceptance in the subscale, “It wasn’t really rape.”

The remaining two subscales, subscales two (“He didn’t mean to”) and four (“She Lied”) had no significant racial differences regarding rape-supportive attitudes. This may be because of the research sample that identified their race ($n = 172$) which consisted of 44.80% Whites, 24.40% Hispanics, 11.60% multi-racial, 8.10% Asian Americans, 4.70% African Americans, 3.50% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and 2.90% other (Figure 2). Asian Americans may have the lowest rape myth acceptance score in the subscale, “It wasn’t really rape” because only 14 Asian Americans were accounted for in the study versus 77 Whites (Table 3).

In addition to the gender and racial group differences found across the four rape myth subscales, ethnic group and year in school differences were also explored. For the ethnicity variable, there were no significant differences across the four rape myth subscales (Table 5). There is no existing literature of college rape myth acceptance among ethnic groups across the rape myth subscales because most studies focus on participants’ race rather than their ethnicity or use race and ethnicity interchangeably in their research. However, this finding is consistent with the limited research available (Hayes et al., 2016). This may be explained by the research sample that identified their ethnicity ($n = 195$) which consisted of 54.90% Hispanic/Latino, 32.80% Non-Hispanic/Latino, 7.20% decline to state, and 5.10% other.

Lastly, for the year in school variable, there were also no significant differences across the four rape myth subscales (Table 6). This poses a problem for educators who care about eliminating sexual violence because current criminal justice measures

implemented in institutions are ineffective. Criminal justice majors' endorsement of rape myths has important implications for current and future prevention efforts on college campuses, such as the programs offered at Sacramento State University, which can be improved upon.

These results of the year in school variable are inconsistent with previous research which stated younger individuals may be more likely to endorse rape myths (Blumberg & Lester, 1991; Gorbett, 2006). This may be explained by the research sample that identified their year in school ($N = 201$) which consisted of 45.30% seniors, 45.80% juniors, and 8.90% sophomores. Since the sample is only comprised of declared criminal justice majors, it was expected the majority of the sample were upper classmen and all class ranks were included except freshmen. However, the class ranks measured in the study were too limited to permit adequate comparison. In this study, age groups were not used as a variable since the sample is a limited college population; however, year in school was a substitute variable for age. Future research should explore differences in rape myth acceptance among various age groups of college students and among specific college majors.

Policy Implications

Measurement and definitional variations of sexual assault significantly contribute to the differences in campus sexual assault findings across the United States. College students face various types of sexual victimization. Therefore, prospective policy implications such as treatment and campus responses to victims should focus on the types

of sexual victimization encountered by college students (Powers, Leili, Hagman, & Cohn, 2015, p. 970). Understanding the factors and variables of rape myth acceptance can provide a framework for future directions for effective education, awareness, and prevention programs that may challenge the societal attitudes that promote rape myth acceptance (Newcombe, Eynde, Hafner, & Jolly, 2008, p. 1749).

Sexual assault prevention and awareness programs vary based on whether the primary objective is to provide information, impact attitudes, modify behaviors, or a combination of all (Iconis, 2008, p. 49). Therefore, many universities, promote and offer sexual assault education programs aimed at providing knowledge of violence across various victim-offender relationships (Newcombe et al., 2008, p. 1749). The university where this study took place offers various programs to assist sexual assault victims, such as Women Escaping a Violent Environment (WEAVE), on-campus victim advocates, and a women's resource center (Sacramento State, n.d.b).

Sacramento State University has a partnership with WEAVE, a nonprofit organization that provides 24/7 crisis support for survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence, and/or sex trafficking in Sacramento County. WEAVE also provides a confidential campus advocate who is available to review survivor rights and options for sexual assault victims, similar to victim advocates on Sacramento State campus who confidentially handle sexual assault cases and offer counseling/advice on the next step for survivors. The women's resource center (WRC) is a safe space intended to make students feel empowered. The WRC aims to offer opportunities, such as programs and workshops

to challenge sexism, socialized gender roles, and the patriarchy. One internship program the WRC provides is Students Promoting Education Awareness and Knowledge (SPEAK). SPEAK seeks to engage the larger campus community in conversations around sexual violence prevention and bystander intervention and to shift sexual violence as an issue that involves all genders. Collective responsibility is essential to ending sexual violence against women and other marginalized groups (Sacramento State, n.d.c).

Sacramento State also has prevention and awareness training, such as requiring incoming students to complete and pass online safety tutorials; before taking the safety test, a one-time fee (\$5 for graduate students and \$10 for undergraduates) is included in the regular tuition fee to make the campus safer (Sacramento State, n.d.a). These safety tutorials cover topics related to alcohol abuse and sexual assault prevention. There are deadlines to complete the safety tutorials and students must score 75% or higher or a hold will be placed on their student account (Sacramento State, n.d.a).

Programs and services currently offered by Sacramento State could be improved upon by creating safe environments with proactive policies in place that accommodate sexual assault victims and survivors. For example, in addition to requiring incoming students to complete and pass online safety tutorials, prevention messages should be included in new and transfer student orientations, so discussions about sexual assault prevention can be engaging for students during campus tours and continuous with campus events throughout the school year. This is important because mandatory online safety tutorials are often disconnected since they are video modules with questions in

each section that most students do not take seriously and forget once the school year starts. Trainings could focus on changing rape-supportive attitudes aimed directly at male student athletes and fraternity members as they are the subgroup of college students most likely to endorse rape myths, covering topics such as bullying and sexual misconduct. Separate courses should be offered for student athletes and fraternity members with content tailored to each audience. Ideally, trainings should be customizable with scenarios, videos, and institution-specific policies. It would also be beneficial for athletic staff to receive such training. Although educational training among college students and athletic staff are important, sexual assault prevention dialogue in school could start at an early age.

All schools (grades 1-12) should have sexual assault and abuse prevention in school curriculum. There is evidence youth adhere to rape-supportive rules, similar to rape myths (Anderson, Simpson-Taylor, & Herrmann, 2004). Rape-supportive rules determine guidelines on the contexts in which it is acceptable for men to force sex on women (Anderson et al., 2004). An example is the belief when a man pays the entire bill, such as on a date, he deserves sex in return (Anderson et al., 2004). Rape-supportive social rules are significantly more common among middle school students than high school and college students which demonstrates the great need for prevention efforts in middle schools as gender cognitions are forming and the influence of peer groups is strong (Anderson et al., 2004). Therefore, starting education as early as possible is vital because it may increase students' knowledge and awareness about sexual harassment and dispel rape myths. Teachers could meet with parents to reduce parental concern about

students learning about sexual violence. Portions of the curriculum could be presented to parents at conference meetings.

One study found prevention program participation may reduce some of the risk associated with sexual perpetration and females tended to show greater pre-post improvements than boys because they perceived the information as more personally relevant to them by knowing the prevalence of female survivors of sexual violence and having a higher risk of sexual assault victimization (Cornelis, 2017). Consequently, males were less inclined to identify the material as applicable to their lives and failed to fully process the information, leading to small pre-post changes for them (Cornelis, 2017). In addition to schools teaching students about sexual assault, teachers and professors should be required to take semi-annual trainings specialized to educate students about sexual assault since rape myth acceptance is present in any discipline (Nadler, 2018). This is significant because it appears impossible for teachers who hold rape-supportive attitudes to be able to educate students about sexual assault without bias. Therefore, students and teachers alike should be educated about sexual assault, its victims, and offenders. Several recommendations for best practices for training and education is the format of these programs, such as relevant and interactive program content, the use of single-gender groups, multi-session programs, and small groups.

Lastly, reducing alcohol access on college campuses and in surrounding environments may reduce the likelihood of sexual assaults. Law enforcement can be more present to reduce instances of underage drinking. A more direct and severe

approach of this could be implementing dry campus policies²⁵ at Sacramento State and/or taking alcohol privileges away from students, such as tailgating events and removing alcohol from on-campus eateries (e.g., Round Table).

This study offers beneficial suggestions to the Sacramento State University curriculum. First, instead of making the “Sex Offenders and Offenses” (CRJ 114) and other subjects-related courses, such as “Women in the Criminal Justice System (CRJ 111), an elective, such courses should be required for all undergraduate students. A shift in the focus of mandatory courses on college campuses may help create a safe and healthy campus climate that does not tolerate sexual violence. Courses related to sexual violence could cover material concerning consent, prevalence of sexual assault, bystander intervention, and risk and protective factors of sexual victimization. The educational content for these topics should be engaging with the use of realistic interactive case studies and videos. Lastly, sexual assault courses need to educate students when they witness or suspect sexual violence, experience one, or have a friend who was sexually victimized. This may teach valuable life skills to students in identifying, reporting, and preventing campus sexual assault, as well as help sexual assault victims. The presence of sexual assault and gender studies courses on campus promote awareness of social constructs like social justice, gender, race, economic status, sexual orientation, and women’s health.

²⁵ Dry campus policies are hard alcohol bans mostly found on college campuses (e.g., Stanford University).

Rather than implementing sexual assault prevention programs predominantly focused on stranger rape, programs should also work to prevent acquaintance rape, the most prevalent type of campus rape. Outdated and ineffective sexual assault prevention programs instill constant fear and anxiety among women by educating them on what to do to avoid being raped. Therefore, police and other trained professionals should conduct newer sexual assault prevention programs that target high-risk groups and provide education on rape legislation and the adverse consequences of committing rape (Vonderhaar & Carmody, 2015, p. 1628). Attendance of sexual assault prevention programs should be mandatory for college students, at the initial program during freshman year and at follow-up programs at the beginning of sophomore year.

Proactive sexual assault prevention can take on many forms, from changing the environment (e.g., increased security), to changing reactive behaviors and actions (e.g., self-defense classes), to changing men's attitudes and behavior (Newcombe et al., p. 1749). Program evaluations must be done to determine if the program material is effective. An immediate action college campuses should adopt to reduce the incidences of sexual assault and improve its response to its victims is to rely on evidence-based research to understand campus sexual assault. This may entail using existing data of sexual violence (e.g., student focus groups), to guide the selection of prevention strategies that best address student needs and risk factors for rape myth acceptance. The University of New Hampshire's Prevention Innovations Research Center has introduced three innovative evidence-based initiatives, they are Bringing in the Bystander In-Person

Prevention Program, Know Your Power Bystander Social Marketing Campaign, and the uSafeUS Mobile App (University of Hampshire, 2020).

These evidence-based initiatives highlight the importance of reducing campus sexual assault by utilizing a community of responsibility approach, connecting college students to sexual assault resources by social media, and teaching bystanders how to safely intervene in instances of sexual assault or where there is a risk (University of Hampshire, 2020). Most importantly, creating a campus climate that supports safety and respect is vital in reducing sexual assault and rape myth endorsement. Surveys can evaluate campus climate and monitor improvements and modifications over time, assisting future research.

Future Research

Rape culture is an international problem, with rape myth acceptance as one component in a multifaceted and detrimental rape culture (Hayes et al., 2016, p. 1551). Future research should expand on this study by utilizing a fully intersectional analysis approach. The present study analyzed a predominantly White female sample of criminal justice majors because of the limited number of males and minorities that participated in the survey. Future research should also compare various groups, such as criminal justice majors and non-criminal majors, which may increase the possibility of more targeted and gendered prevention efforts.

In an attempt to obtain a complete understanding of the development and interplay of relevant factors associated with rape myth acceptance, future studies should also longitudinally measure these constructs. To do so, however, the variety of victimization experiences should have clear and uniform definitions and be separately measured rather than falling under an umbrella term and defined under sexual harassment (e.g., unwanted flirting and physical touch). This may also be applied to rape, as there are forcible and incapacitated rape under circumstances, such as drug- or alcohol- facilitated rape. The prevalence of the distinct types of sexual victimization may differ based on the campus, so initiatives for prevention, intervention, and victim resources begin with a detailed knowledge of the unique characteristics and specific needs of a college campus' student population (e.g., diverse student body) (Fedina et al., 2018, p. 90).

Future research should also create rape myth acceptance scales that represent a wider range of experiences the general population may encounter (e.g., workplace harassment). Examining pre-college and college sexual victimization, for example, is needed to assess the magnitude of campus sexual assault and the developmental experiences from infancy throughout life. Once validated with existing measures, these surveys may contribute to a more detailed understanding of how these attitudes manifest in the community. This study used the uIRMA to measure rape myth acceptance and therefore only focused on gender-biased rape myths associated with male perpetrators and female victims, which inherently disregards male victims of rape. Although student populations are important to examine in terms of rape myth acceptance, future studies would also benefit from assessing sexual victimization among other populations who are

at a higher risk of sexual assault victimization (e.g., LGBTQ community) to provide additional insight on rape, rape myth acceptance, and ultimately sexual assault prevention programs and their efficacy (Worthen, 2017, p. 25).

Conclusion

Society-wide individual rape myth endorsement remains problematic and warrants continuous inquiry (Bowie, 2018, p. 81). The results of this study have provided mostly consistent data on the factors of rape myth acceptance and the evidence for these correlational relationships (Bowie, 2018, p. 81). Educating society on rape culture, as well as on sex and gender equality, will aid in the development of more effective and longer-lasting sexual assault prevention programs, potentially reducing rape and the stigma experienced by its victims and survivors. Campus sexual assault experiences vary among college students, so the different findings in campus sexual assault prevalence have prospective policy implications for victim assistance, such as suitable treatment and legal aid (Fedina, Holmes, & Backes, 2018, p. 90). This study's findings suggest targeted and gendered prevention policies and programs may be necessary to effectively reduce rape myth acceptance on college campuses, which in turn, could decrease occurrences of sexual violence on college campuses. While these findings offer some significance, the prevalence of campus sexual assault and the lack of assessing intervention programs to minimize rape-supportive attitudes contribute to the importance of continued research and evaluation.

APPENDIX A

**Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (IRMA)
(Payne et al., 1999)**

1. If a woman is raped while she is drunk, she is at least somewhat responsible for letting things get out of control.
2. Although most women wouldn't admit it, they generally find being physically forced into sex a real "turn-on."
3. When men rape, it is because of their strong desire for sex.
4. If a woman is willing to "make out" with a guy, then it's no big deal if he goes a little further and has sex.
5. Women who are caught having an illicit affair sometimes claim it was rape.
6. Newspapers should not release the name of rape victim to the public.
7. Many so-called rape victims are actually women who had sex and "changed their minds" afterward.
8. Many women secretly desire to be raped.
9. Rape mainly occurs on the "bad" side of town.
10. Usually, it is only women who do things like hang out in bars and sleep around that are raped.
11. Most rapists are not caught by the police.
12. If a woman doesn't physically fight back, you can't really say that it was rape.
13. Men from nice middle-class homes almost never rape.
14. Rape isn't as big a problem as some feminists would like people to think.
15. When women go around wearing low-cut tops or short skirts, they're just asking for trouble.
16. Rape accusations are often used as a way of getting back at men.
17. A rape probably didn't happen if the woman has no bruises or marks.
18. Many women find being forced to have sex very arousing.
19. If a woman goes home with a man she doesn't know, it is her own fault if she is raped.
20. Rapists are usually sexually frustrated individuals.
21. All women should have access to self-defense classes.
22. It is usually only women who dress suggestively that are raped.
23. Some women prefer to have sex forced on them so they don't have to feel guilty about it.
24. If the rapist doesn't have a weapon you really can't call it rape.
25. When a woman is a sexual tease, eventually she is going to get into trouble.
26. Being raped isn't as bad as being mugged and beaten.
27. Rape is unlikely to happen in the woman's own familiar neighborhood.
28. In reality, women are almost never raped by their boyfriends.
29. Women tend to exaggerate how much rape affects them.
30. When a man is very sexually aroused, he may not even realize that the woman is resisting.

31. A lot of women lead a man on and then they cry rape.
32. It is preferable that a female police officer conduct the questioning when a woman reports a rape.
33. A lot of times, women who claim they were raped just have emotional problems.
34. If a woman doesn't physically resist sex—even when protesting verbally—it really can't be considered rape.
35. Rape almost never happens in the woman's own home.
36. A woman who "teases" men deserves anything that might happen.
37. When women are raped, it's often because the way they said "no" was ambiguous.
38. If a woman isn't a virgin, then it shouldn't be a big deal if her date forces her to have sex.
39. Men don't usually intend to force sex on a woman, but sometimes they get too sexually carried away.
40. This society should devote more effort to preventing rape.
41. A woman who dresses in skimpy clothes should not be surprised if a man tries to force her to have sex.
42. Rape happens when a man's sex drive gets out of control.
43. A woman who goes to the home or apartment of a man on the first date is implying that she wants to have sex.
44. Many women actually enjoy sex after the guy uses a little force.
45. If a woman claims to have been raped but has no bruises or scrapes, she probably shouldn't be taken too seriously.

APPENDIX B

**Updated Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale Items (uIRMA)
(McMahon & Farmer, 2011)**

1. If a girl is raped while she is drunk, she is at least somewhat responsible for letting things get out of hand.
2. When girls go to parties wearing slutty clothes, they are asking for trouble.
3. If a girl goes to a room alone with a guy at party, it is her own fault if she is raped.
4. If a girl acts like a slut, eventually she is going to get into trouble.
5. When girls get raped, it's often because the way they said "no" was unclear.
6. If a girl initiates kissing or hooking up, she should not be surprised if a guy assumes she wants to have sex.
7. When guys rape, it is usually because of their strong desire for sex.
8. Guys don't usually intend to force sex on a girl, but sometimes they get too sexually carried away.
9. Rape happens when a guy's sex drive goes out of control.
10. If a guy is drunk, he might rape someone unintentionally.
11. It shouldn't be considered rape if a guy is drunk and didn't realize what he was doing.
12. If both people are drunk, it can't be rape.
13. If a girl doesn't physically resist sex—even if protesting verbally—it can't be considered rape.
14. If a girl doesn't physically fight back, you can't really say it was rape.
15. A rape probably doesn't happen if a girl doesn't have any bruises or marks.
16. If the accused "rapist" doesn't have a weapon, you really can't call it rape.
17. If a girl doesn't say "no" she can't claim rape.
18. A lot of times, girls who say they were raped agreed to have sex and then regret it.
19. Rape accusations are often used as a way of getting back at guys.
20. A lot of times, girls who say they were raped often led the guy on and then had regrets.
21. A lot of times, girls who claim they were raped have emotional problems.
22. Girls who are caught cheating on their boyfriends sometimes claim it was rape.

APPENDIX C

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval Form

Date: 2-22-2020

IRB #: IRB-19-20-2

Title: Assessing College Rape Myth Acceptance among Criminal Justice Majors

Creation Date: 7-10-2019

End Date:

Status: **Approved**

Principal Investigator: Tina Huang

Review Board: CSU, Sacramento IRB

Sponsor:

Study History

Submission Type	Initial	Review Type	Expedited	Decision	Approved
Submission Type	Modification	Review Type	Exempt	Decision	Exempt
Submission Type	Modification	Review Type	Exempt	Decision	Exempt

Key Study Contacts

Member	Alexa Sardina	Role	Co-Principal Investigator	Contact	alexa.sardina@csus.edu
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APPENDIX D

Eligible Classes to Survey

Criminal Justice 101: Introduction to Criminal Justice Research Methods
Criminal Justice 102: Crime and Punishment
Criminal Justice 121: The Structure and Function of the American Courts
Criminal Justice 123: Law of Arrest, Search, and Seizure
Criminal Justice 130: Fundamentals of Corrections
Criminal Justice 141: Police and Society
Criminal Justice 160: Justice and Public Safety Administration
Criminal Justice 190: Contemporary Issues in Criminal Justice

APPENDIX E

Survey: Examining Beliefs about Sexual Violence amongst College Undergraduates

1. If a girl is raped while she is drunk, she is at least somewhat responsible for letting things get out of hand.
2. When girls go to parties wearing slutty clothes, they are asking for trouble.
3. If a girl goes to a room alone with a guy at a party, it is her own fault if she is raped.
4. If a girl acts like a slut, eventually she is going to get into trouble.
5. When girls get raped, it's often because the way they said "no" was unclear.
6. If a girl initiates kissing or hooking up, she should not be surprised if a guy assumes she wants to have sex.
7. When guys rape, it is usually because of their strong desire for sex.
8. Guys don't usually intend to force sex on a girl, but sometimes they get too sexually carried away.
9. Rape happens when a guy's sex drive goes out of control.
10. If a guy is drunk, he might rape someone unintentionally.
11. It shouldn't be considered rape if a guy is drunk and didn't realize what he was doing.
12. If both people are drunk, it can't be rape.
13. If a girl doesn't physically resist sex—even if protesting verbally—it can't be considered rape.
14. If a girl doesn't physically fight back, you can't really say it was rape.
15. A rape probably doesn't happen if a girl doesn't have any bruises or marks.
16. If the accused "rapist" doesn't have a weapon, you really can't call it rape.
17. If a girl doesn't say "no" she can't claim rape.
18. A lot of times, girls who say they were raped agreed to have sex and then regret it.
19. Rape accusations are often used as a way of getting back at guys.
20. A lot of times, girls who say they were raped often led the guy on and then had regrets.
21. A lot of times, girls who claim they were raped have emotional problems.
22. Girls who are caught cheating on their boyfriends sometimes claim it was rape.

Source: (Payne et al., 1999).

Answer choices for statements #1-22 were: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree.

23. What gender do you identify with?

- Male
- Female
- Transgender male
- Transgender female
- Gender fluid
- Decline to state
- Other _____

24. Please check the racial group you identify with (check all that apply).

- African American
- American Indian/Alaskan Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- White
- Decline to state
- Other _____

25. Please check the ethnic group you identify with.

- Hispanic/Latino
- Non-Hispanic/Latino
- Decline to state
- Other _____

26. What is your year in school?

- Freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior

If the topic of sexual assault, rape, or any of the contents in this survey make you feel uncomfortable, we strongly suggest that you make an appointment with Sacramento State Counseling and Psychological Services located at 6000 J St, Sacramento, CA 95819 or by phone at 916-278-6461. They are available: Monday-Thursday from 8 a.m.-6 p.m. and Fridays from 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. You can also contact the National Sexual Assault 24-Hour Hotline at 800.656.HOPE (4673) or chat online with a trained staff member who can provide you confidential crisis support at <https://hotline.rainn.org>. Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. We truly value the information you have provided.

APPENDIX F

Recruitment E-mail Script

Dear Professor _____,

My name is Tina Huang and I am a graduate student in the Division of Criminal Justice at Sacramento State University. I have created a survey I am hoping to distribute amongst Sac State students. I am emailing you to see if you would be willing to provide your students with information on my survey and how they can access and complete it.

The primary goal of my thesis is to examine college students' beliefs and attitudes around sexual assault. Specifically, I would like to compare the level of rape myth acceptance among female and male criminal justice majors at Sacramento State. The survey is low risk but may pose a psychological risk to participants (e.g., anxiety or embarrassment) because of the subject matter; therefore, participants will be provided contact information for the Sacramento State Mental health services. I have completed the IRB process and have been approved to distribute this survey.

The online survey is voluntary and the results will be anonymous. I am not collecting any identifying information. I have attached a copy of the survey and it can also be accessed via the following link: XXXXXX. I can also provide you with a QR code, which students could scan on their phone to take the survey. The survey (26 questions) will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete.

I would be happy to meet with you in person to answer any questions you may have. I am also available to come into your class to give your students a brief overview of the research as well. If you would prefer not to take up classroom time or if the course is online, I am able to provide a 3-slide PowerPoint that you can present to your students -- with a short summary of my research, along with the survey link and QR code. If you have any further questions, you can contact me at XXXXXX or my advisor Dr. Alexa Sardina at alexa.sardina@csus.edu. Thank you very much for your time and consideration and I hope to hear back from you soon.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Tina Huang
XXXXXX
Alexa Sardina, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Division of Criminal Justice
alexa.sardina@csus.edu

APPENDIX G

Online Informed Consent Form

My name is Tina Huang and I am a graduate student in the Division of Criminal Justice at California State University, Sacramento. I am conducting this research study to examine college students' attitudes and beliefs around sexual assault. Please note that this survey is optional and you do not have to answer all or any of the questions if you choose not to. This is a short survey (26 questions) and should take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. Your name/identity is not attached to your survey. Please be assured that your responses will be kept completely confidential. Your participation in this research is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any point during the study, for any reason, and without any prejudice. By completing this survey, you are giving informed (implied) consent to participate in this research study. Your answers are completely confidential. No individual identifying information will be collected. All numbers will be aggregated into a data set. Only myself and my advisor, Dr. Alexa Sardina, will have access to the data. If you would like to contact the Principal Investigator in the study to discuss this research, please e-mail Tina Huang at XXXXXX or Dr. Alexa Sardina at alexa.sardina@csus.edu.

By clicking the button below, you acknowledge that your participation in the study is voluntary, you are 18 years of age, and that you are aware that you may choose to terminate your participation in the study at any time and for any reason. Read every question carefully and please answer the questions as honestly as you can. Please note that this survey will be best displayed on a laptop or desktop computer. Some features may be less compatible for use on a mobile device. If you are using a smart/mobile phone to do the survey, we recommend that you flip the device sideways to see all the question response options more clearly. Thank you for your time and consideration!

If the topic of sexual assault, rape, or any of the contents in this survey make you feel uncomfortable, we strongly suggest that you make an appointment with Sacramento State Counseling and Psychological Services located at 6000 J St, Sacramento, CA 95819 or by phone at 916-278-6461. They are available: Monday-Thursday from 8 a.m.-6 p.m. and Fridays from 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. You can also contact the National Sexual Assault 24-Hour Hotline at 800.656.HOPE (4673) or chat online with a trained staff member who can provide you confidential crisis support at <https://hotline.rainn.org>.

- I consent, begin the study
- I do not consent, I do not wish to participate

APPENDIX H

Sampled Classes

Criminal Justice 101: Introduction to Criminal Justice Research Methods (Sections 1, 4, and 8)

Criminal Justice 102: Crime and Punishment (Sections 3 and 5)

Criminal Justice 121: The Structure and Function of the American Courts (Sections 1 and 2)

Criminal Justice 123: Law of Arrest, Search, and Seizure (Section 3)

Criminal Justice 130: Fundamentals of Corrections (Sections 1, 3, and 4)

Criminal Justice 141: Police and Society (Sections 2 and 4)

Criminal Justice 160: Justice and Public Safety Administration (Sections 1 and 2)

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