

Social Reactions to Acquaintance Sexual Assault: Perceptions of Responsibility and Blame

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ABSTRACT

Employing a mixed quantitative and qualitative methodology among undergraduate students at the University of Ottawa, this research has explored attributions about sexual assault and the role of perceived intoxication in the context of female and male victims of sexual assault. The use of qualitative methodology and the application of a feminist critique of attribution theory and its contemporary application to rape perception research have contributed to a better understanding of these judgements and the varied ways in which undergraduate students apply the core constructs of responsibility and blame to sexual assault, while simultaneously highlighting the limitations of typically positivistic research in this area. Analyses suggest that the judgements students make about the victims and perpetrators involved in sexual assault are varied and complex, and future research employing a similar methodology and theoretical lens among other populations, both within and outside post-secondary spheres, is warranted.

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CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

Sexual assault has been and continues to be a pressing concern for Canadians,¹ particularly so for young adults (Perreault, 2015) and amongst college and university populations (Abbey, 1991; Cowley, 2014; McMahon, 2010; Orchowski & Gidycz, 2012; Untied, Orchowski, Mastroleo, & Gidycz, 2012). In recent years, considerable media attention has been given to controversial cases of sexual violence across university campuses in North America, drawing society's awareness to an already widespread issue (Brennan & Taylor-Butts, 2008; Perreault, 2015). In September 2013, students at St. Mary's University in Nova Scotia participated in a frosh week chant encouraging sex without consent with underage girls (CBC News, 2013). In 2014, two members of the University of Ottawa's men's hockey team were charged with sexual assault in Thunder Bay, resulting in the suspension of the entire men's hockey team for the following two seasons (CBC News, 2016). Also in 2014, the first formal complaint was made against a University of British Columbia graduate student, with complaints of sexual harassment and assault eventually being brought forward by more than six women on campus (Mayor, 2015). After failing to take action for more than a year and a half, the university "quietly expelled" the accused in November 2015 (Mayor, 2015). Dalhousie University launched an investigation nearing the end of 2014 into the sexually explicit social media posts made by a group of male dentistry students, some of which joked about using chloroform on women (CBC News, 2014). Very recently, a York University graduate student was convicted of sexually assaulting Mandi Gray, a fellow student, in January 2015 (Ward & Shahzad, 2016); Gray has also launched a human-rights complaint against the university for its sexual assault policy, which

¹ More than 600,000 Canadians over the age of 15 reported to the General Social Survey on Victimization that they had experienced sexual assault in 2014 (Perreault, 2015, p. 30); approximately 87% of those respondents were female (p. 33). Canadians between the ages of 15 and 24 reported experiencing sexual assault at a rate more than 3 times that of the national rate (p. 33).

she argues is discriminatory and lacks clear procedures for reporting (Hoffman, 2015; Kane, 2016a). The United States has not been exempt from similar high profile cases. Three football players at Vanderbilt University in Tennessee sexually assaulted an unconscious woman in a campus dorm room (CBS News, 2016b; Zimmerman, 2016). In the recent trial of Brock Turner, the former Stanford University student was given a controversial six month sentence, following conviction of sexually assaulting an unconscious woman. In a statement to the court, Turner blamed the culture of partying on campus, attributing his actions to an alcohol-fueled mistake (CBS News, 2016a; Reuters, 2016).

Amidst these controversial cases, universities across Canada have been forming task-forces and developing policies to address campus sexual violence, including the University of British Columbia, York University, St. Francis Xavier University, Saint Mary's University, and Dalhousie University (Tamburri & Samson, 2014). Particularly relevant to this study, the University of Ottawa created the Task Force on Respect and Equality in response to the charges laid against members of the men's hockey team and other sexually derogatory comments made on social media about the female president of the Student Federation of the University of Ottawa (CBC News, 2016; Task Force on Respect and Equality, 2015). Their report, submitted in early 2015, presented findings from a campus climate survey designed "to explore attitudes and behaviour among the University of Ottawa student population in relation to sexualized violence" (Task Force on Respect and Equality, 2015, p. 8), consultations with various stakeholders, collaboration with other universities and community groups, and a literature review of best practices in prevention. In the United States, a White House task force released in April 2014 its first report on campus sexual assault, detailing the initial stages of a nation-wide action plan (Zimmerman, 2016). However, these policies have not been without criticism. For example,

despite being one of only nine universities and colleges in Canada to have a specific sexual assault policy in place, according to a 2014 poll conducted by The Toronto Star (Matthieu & Poisson, 2014), a CBC investigation the following year found that St. Francis Xavier University had initially underreported the number of sexual assaults reported to the university (Gilbert, 2015). Similar to Gray's complaints of York University's policy (Hoffman, 2015; Kane, 2016a), the University of British Columbia's policy, drafted following numerous complaints regarding its lack of effective response to sexual assault, does not include a new process for reporting and investigating sexual assault (Kane, 2016b). As a result, media attention towards campus sexual assault remains prevalent, and societal discourse around the issue of sexual assault may be shifting, bringing with it greater discussion of what can be done regarding prevention and supporting victims from both institutions and peers (Bramham, 2016; Zimmerman, 2016).

In light of these controversial cases of campus sexual violence, the current research aims to explore undergraduate students' judgements about sexual assault. While this diverges from the media's focus on sexual assault occurring on campus, given this shifting discussion amongst these populations (Bramham, 2016; Zimmerman, 2016), conducting research with university students amidst this media and social discourse may be especially timely and pertinent to further develop criminological knowledge of students' judgements about sexual assault. These social reactions are especially important to better understand given that most victims who disclose a sexual assault seek support from friends, family, and other informal sources of assistance such as co-workers and health care providers, rather than official institutions such as police (Brennan & Taylor-Butts, 2008), reflecting the severe underreporting of sexual assaults² (Brennan & Taylor-Butts, 2008; Perreault, 2015). A greater appreciation of these social reactions, which include any

² According to the General Social Survey on Victimization, only 5% of sexual assaults were reported to police in 2014 (Perreault, 2015, p. 25).

positive or negative response to the victim of sexual assault (Untied, Orchowski, Mastroleo, & Gidycz, 2012), will help to develop better organized prevention and response strategies due to the implications that such reactions have for bystander intervention and secondary victimization. For example, the same predictors of perceptions of victim responsibility (in particular, rape myth acceptance and participant gender) have been found to be predictive of participants' anticipated intentions to intervene in potential sexual assault situations (McMahon, 2010). Moreover, negative social reactions by those with whom victims confide exist as a form of secondary victimization (Anderson & Doherty, 2008; Davies & Rogers, 2006; Suarez & Gadalla, 2010) that have considerable negative effects on victims' recovery (Davies & Rogers, 2006; Grubb & Turner, 2012; Ullman, 1996). Furthermore, it is likely that fear of negative judgements contributes to the underreporting of sexual assault (Anderson & Doherty, 2008). Thus, understanding how victims' peers make attributions of responsibility is crucially important when these peers play an important role in both prevention of, and support after the assault.

The *Criminal Code* (1985) defines sexual assault as any unwanted, non-consensual physical contact of a sexual nature that occurs without the voluntary and freely given agreement by all individuals involved to engage in the sexual activity in question.³ Furthermore, consent is not present when agreement to sexual contact has been obtained from an individual who does not have the capacity to consent due to intoxication, or has been manipulated through the use of non-physical force (Perreault, 2015). Additionally, mistaken belief of consent cannot be used as an excuse when it has resulted from self-induced intoxication (Criminal Code, 1985, 273.2). As such, sexual assault includes a full range of behaviours from unwanted touching to forced

³ It should be recognized that the literature often uses 'rape' rather than 'sexual assault', the former often (although not always) representing penetrative instances of sexual assault. The current thesis has, in keeping with the current definition under the *Criminal Code* (1985), primarily used the terminology of 'sexual assault'. However, throughout discussions of the literature, 'rape' has been used in accordance with the terminology used by specific authors.

penetrative sex and can vary in severity from no physical injuries to serious physical injuries which endanger the life of the victim (Brennan & Taylor-Butts, 2008; Perreault, 2015).

However, while the stereotypical sexual assault is often assumed to involve physical violence, forced penetration, and/or an assailant unknown by the victim (Randall, 2010), the majority of sexual assaults are those of a less serious nature, involving unwanted touching (Brennan & Taylor-Butts, 2008; Perreault, 2015) and/or verbal coercion rather than threat or force (Koss, 1995). Moreover, most sexual assaults are perpetrated by someone whom the victim knows, including friends, acquaintances, and family members (Brennan & Taylor-Butts, 2008; Perreault, 2015). Furthermore, the further an assault diverges from the stereotypical violent stranger assault, the more negatively the victim tends to be judged by their peers (Anderson & Doherty, 2008; Davies & Rogers, 2006; Frese, Moya, & Megías, 2004; Oswald & Russell, 2006; Romero-Sanchez, Megias, & Krahe, 2012; Sleath & Bull, 2010; Vandiver & Dupalo, 2012). For these reasons, this research focuses on situations of sexual assault between acquaintances, which involve unwanted touching and no obvious physical injuries or threats.

In this light, this thesis is organized as follows. Chapter 2 situates the current research within the literature on attributions about sexual assault, particularly as it relates to the role of alcohol consumption, the effects of character gender, and the influence of participant factors. The theoretical framework is also established, largely drawing on attribution theory, the sex role socialization analysis, and conceptualizations of rape myth acceptance. Chapter 3 outlines the methodology employed to address the research questions. Specifically, it has employed a mixed methods experimental design using online questionnaires with undergraduate students of the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Ottawa. Chapter 4 presents the quantitative findings, using a combination of descriptive statistics, and non-parametric and multivariate

analyses. This chapter also situates these quantitative results within the empirical and theoretical literature. Chapter 5 presents the qualitative responses, situating this analysis within the literature and making further connections to the quantitative findings. Finally, Chapter 6 concludes with a summary of the contributions which the current study has made towards the empirical, methodological, and theoretical literatures. Further reflections regarding the study's limitations and recommendations for future research are also discussed.

CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A large body of research exists on the study of attributions about sexual assault, most of which relies on the use of hypothetical scenarios (Anderson & Doherty, 2008). This chapter begins with a thorough review of the literature on the effects of alcohol consumption on attributions about sexual assault, with particular attention given to those assessing attributions relating to responsibility and blame. Subsequently, a similar review of the literature on the effects of victim and perpetrator gender is presented, with particular attention given to male-on-male sexual assault. Participant gender and rape myth acceptance, two factors which have been extensively explored as they relate to attributions about sexual assault, are then examined, along with a review of rape myths and commonly used measures of rape myth acceptance. It is argued here that in the research literature, the use of the key constructs of responsibility and blame is often inconsistent, and therefore, a thorough review of their theoretical foundations is presented. Finally, this chapter presents and situates the theoretical framework, which employs a feminist critique of Heider's (1958) attribution theory and its contemporary application to rape perception research (Anderson & Doherty, 2008). This critique is enhanced through an emphasis on the role of feminist notions of sex role socialization (Bridges, 1991; Check & Malamuth, 1983), sexual scripts (Frith, 2009; Jackson, 1995), and cultural rape myths (Bohner, Eyssel, Pina, Siebler, & Viki, 2009; Burt, 1980; Frese et al., 2004) in influencing social reactions to sexual assault.

2.1 – ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION AND ATTRIBUTIONS ABOUT SEXUAL ASSAULT

Given the fact that sexual assaults frequently involve alcohol consumption by the victim, the perpetrator, or both (Abbey, 1991; Cowley, 2014; McMahon, 2010; Untied et al., 2012), and given the high rates of sexual assault amongst university and college populations, in which there

is a widespread culture of drinking and partying (Abbey, 1991; Cowley, 2014), alcohol consumption has been studied extensively with respect to its effects on judgements made about sexual assault. For example, alcohol consumption is often perceived as an indicator of an individual's sexual interest and intent (Abbey & Harnish, 1995; George, Gournic, & McAfee, 1988). George and colleagues (1988) found that in a hypothetical scenario depicting a woman on a date with a man, apparently intoxicated female targets were rated by participants as “more aggressive and impaired, less socially skillful, and more sexually predisposed” compared to their sober counterparts (pp. 1309-1310). The authors argue that these attributions were the result of participants' expectations regarding the physiological and behavioural effects of consuming alcohol; that alcohol disinhibits “social and sexual behavior” (George et al, 1988, p. 1296). Additionally, intoxicated female targets were also rated as behaving more sexually and as having greater sexual intent when the male target was depicted as having paid for the drinks than when the female target did. This suggests that judgements about an individual's sexual interest and intent are influenced not only by their own behaviour, but also by the behaviour of others with whom they interact (George et al., 1988). Similarly, Abbey and Harnish (1995) found that although female targets' alcohol consumption did not consistently increase perceptions of her sexual intent, the alcohol consumption of her male companion did. Female targets were rated as “more sexual when her male companion consumed alcohol than when he did not” (p. 307) and were perceived as behaving the most sexually when both consumed alcohol. By contrast, Maurer and Robinson (2008) found that female targets were rated as having less sexual intent when her male partner was drinking, compared to when he was sober.

In the context of sexual assaults, alcohol consumption of the victims in hypothetical scenarios also influences participants' recognition of the scenario as a sexual assault and their

judgements of the victim's credibility as a witness. For example, a study conducted amongst Spanish college students (Romero-Sanchez et al., 2012) found that participants were less confident in their identification of the situation as a sexual assault when alcohol, rather than physical force, was used as a coercive strategy by the perpetrator. Another study conducted with American college students found that 30% of participants who read a scenario in which alcohol was used as a coercive strategy "did not believe the incident met the legal requirements for sexual assault" (Russell, Oswald, & Kraus, 2011, p.810). Similarly, a number of studies have found that intoxicated victims are perceived as less credible compared to sober victims; such results have been found in mock jury studies (Lynch, Wasarhaley, Golding, & Simcic, 2013), amongst college student samples (Romero-Sanchez et al., 2012), and amongst criminal justice system personnel (Schuller & Stewart, 2000). Overwhelmingly, female victims of sexual violence are rated more negatively when they are depicted as consuming alcohol compared to their sober counterparts (Dent & Arias, 1990; Lynch et al., 2013; Romero-Sanchez et al., 2012; Schuller & Stewart, 2000). Moreover, this pattern appears to occur across types of sexual violence, with a similar effect of alcohol being found in studies which depict spousal abuse (Dent & Arias, 1990).

Of particular interest to the current study, however, is the influence of alcohol consumption on judgements of blame and responsibility. While the relationship between alcohol and sexual aggression has been well established since the mid-20th century (See: Crowe & George, 1989), it was not until 1982 that Richardson and Campbell systematically examined the effects of alcohol consumption on judgements of responsibility and blame. In their study, undergraduate students read a description of a sexual assault scenario wherein a woman was raped by her male neighbour, and then answered a number of questions designed to measure

their attitudes toward the characters involved. These descriptions varied by character alcohol consumption, such that “each participant read a scenario in which offender, victim, both, or neither were apparently intoxicated” (p. 470). Participants were then asked to answer a number of questions designed to measure their attitudes toward the characters involved. Of particular importance were their measures of relative blame, in which participants assigned a percentage of blame to the victim, perpetrator, and situation (to a total of 100%); and separate measures of victim and perpetrator responsibility. While the majority of relative blame was assigned to the perpetrator in all conditions, intoxicated perpetrators were assigned less blame compared to their sober counterparts; greater blame was assigned to the situation in these conditions (p. 471). Additionally, intoxicated victims were assigned greater responsibility compared to sober victims; no significant effects were found on perpetrator responsibility (pp. 471-472). Together, these results suggest a gendered double standard, whereby female victim intoxication increases perceptions of victim responsibility, while intoxication of the male perpetrator decreases perceptions of perpetrator blame.

Many subsequent studies, which have largely used a similar methodology to Richardson and Campbell’s (1982) study, have found similar effects of alcohol consumption. For example, Stormo, Lang, and Stritzke (1997) found that when both the victim and offender were depicted as being equally intoxicated, the victim was perceived by participants as being more responsible and blameworthy compared to her sober counterpart, but the intoxicated offender was perceived as being less responsible. However, when the female victim was depicted as being more intoxicated than the offender, alcohol consumption of the offender actually increased perceptions of his responsibility. These effects also appear to be consistent across nations.⁴ Cameron and Stritzke (2003), for example, examined this effect amongst Australian university students when

⁴ These studies, unless otherwise stated, were conducted in the United States.

either both characters were sober or both characters were drinking. Similar to Richardson and Campbell's (1982) study, alcohol consumption increased perceptions of responsibility and blame for the victim but decreased these perceptions for the offender. Moreover, the alcohol consumption of the victim alone was found in one study to increase ratings of victim responsibility and decrease those of the perpetrator (Sims, Noel, & Maisto, 2007), lending support to the idea that both the behaviour of the target individual and the behaviour of those with whom they interact can influence judgements made about the individual. Together, these studies suggest that there is somewhat of a double standard with respect to the effects of alcohol consumption on perceptions of responsibility and blame in cases of sexual assault; while intoxication increases perceptions of responsibility for the female victim, it tends to mitigate or decrease such perceptions for the male offender.

Many other studies have, however, found the effects of alcohol consumption on participants' social reactions to be somewhat more complicated. For example, Untied and colleagues (2012) examined participants' anticipated social reactions in addition to their perceptions of responsibility. While the results regarding perceptions of responsibility were consistent with previous studies, participants reported anticipating less positive reactions⁵ when only the perpetrator was drinking and the victim was sober, compared to when both were drinking. This result is somewhat surprising given that, while participants viewed the sober victim as less responsible, they appeared to be less empathetic towards them as well. Male participants, in particular, were more likely to anticipate negative social reactions regardless of alcohol condition. Additionally, Leigh and Aramburu (1994) found that while the expected effects of alcohol consumption were observed with respect to the victim in a situation of male

⁵ Positive social reactions in this study were defined as emotional support and information or other tangible aid (Untied et al., 2012, p. 962).

drunken aggression against a woman (i.e. alcohol consumption increased perceptions of the female victim's responsibility), the double standard effect was not observed for the male offender. Instead, alcohol consumption of the male offender served as an aggravating, rather than a mitigating circumstance and actually increased perceptions of his responsibility.

Similarly, Hammock and Richardson (1997) found an interaction between the victim's alcohol consumption and the closeness of her relationship to the assailant on participants' judgements of assailant responsibility. When the assailant was either a date or a stranger, the expected effect of victim intoxication on assailant responsibility occurred; that is, assailants in these conditions were attributed less responsibility when the victim was drunk compared to when she was sober. However, when the assailant was the victim's boyfriend, he was attributed the least amount of responsibility when the victim was sober. Moreover, the boyfriend was attributed with the greatest responsibility compared to the date or stranger only when the victim was drunk; when she was sober, the boyfriend was attributed with the least amount of responsibility. These results serve to highlight the complexity of the effects of alcohol and intoxication on social reactions that is often masked by studies which take a narrower approach and manipulate only characters' alcohol consumption (e.g. Cameron & Stritzke, 2003).

2.2 – CHARACTER GENDER AND ATTRIBUTIONS ABOUT SEXUAL ASSAULT

Although the majority of early research on sexual assault has focused primarily or solely on female victims of male assault, in more recent years, many studies have begun to examine social reactions towards male victims and female perpetrators of sexual assault. In addition to similarities in the characteristics of sexual assault perpetrated against female and male victims (Davies & Rogers, 2006; Struckman-Johnson, 1991), several studies have found that male

victims are blamed and held responsible for their assault in similar ways to female victims. For example, male victims of rape are blamed more if they are assaulted by an acquaintance compared to a stranger (Sleath & Bull, 2010), and greater perceived promiscuity of male victims results in greater perceptions of blame (Davies, Pollard, & Archer, 2006). Other situational factors, such as a greater degree of physical resistance on the part of the victim, have been shown to result in less victim blaming attitudes towards both male and female victims (Davies & Rogers, 2006). Furthermore, studies which have manipulated the gender of the victim in scenarios of other forms of interpersonal violence found no significant effects of victim gender on perceptions of responsibility or blame (Aramburu & Leigh, 1991; Dent & Arias, 1990).

However, several other studies which have similarly manipulated victim gender have found that it significantly affects participants' judgements towards the characters involved. For example, Vandiver and Dupalo (2012) found that scenarios of sexual assault involving a male victim were less likely to be perceived as rape compared to scenarios involving a female victim. Other studies have found that male victims are blamed more than female victims (Gerber, Cronin, & Steigman, 2004; Howard, 1984). Additionally, Hammock and Richardson (1993) found that in scenarios of non-sexual physical aggression perpetrated by a male aggressor, participants held the aggressor more responsible when the victim was female, compared to when the victim was male. By contrast, only one study was found which concluded that female victims of sexual assault are blamed more than their male counterparts (Schneider, Ee, & Aronson, 1994). Additionally, victim gender may influence types of blame differently, as one study found that male victims were blamed more on the basis of their behaviour, while female victims were attributed with greater blame based on their character or personality (Howard, 1984). Similarly, Perrott and Weber (1996) found that male victims were attributed with greater behavioural blame

than female victims, with male victims being expected to be capable of fighting off their attacker. Female victims were also attributed greater characterological blame, being viewed as more trusting than their male counterparts. By contrast, Anderson (1999) found that participants attributed greater behavioural blame to female compared to male survivors, as well as characterological blame amongst male participants.

Few studies have examined the effect of perpetrator gender on participants' judgements towards the victim and perpetrator. Generally, these studies find that female perpetrators of male sexual assault are blamed less and held less responsible than male perpetrators (Davies, Austen, & Rogers, 2011; Davies, et al., 2006; Russell et al., 2011). Additionally, studies have consistently shown that male victims are blamed more when the perpetrator is female, compared to when the perpetrator is male (Davies et al., 2011), although there is an exception to the effect depending on the victim's sexual orientation (Davies & Rogers, 2006). While homosexual male victims are generally blamed more than their heterosexual counterparts (Davies & Rogers, 2006), several studies have found that male victims are blamed more when their sexual orientation is consistent with the gender of the perpetrator. For example, Davies and colleagues (2006) found that homosexual male victims were blamed more when assaulted by a male perpetrator, compared to a female perpetrator, and heterosexual victims were blamed more when they were assaulted by a female. Another study, which examined similar effects by manipulating the perpetrator gender and sexual orientation of an adolescent male victim, found that homosexual victims were assigned greater culpability compared to heterosexual victims when assaulted by a male, and the assault of a heterosexual victim by a female perpetrator was judged to be less severe than when he was assaulted by a male (Davies et al., 2011). Similarly, Wakelin and Long (2003) found that the effects of victim gender were only significant when the victim's sexual

orientation was consistent with the (male) perpetrator's gender. In other words, homosexual male victims were blamed more than heterosexual men and homosexual women, whereas heterosexual women were blamed more than homosexual women and heterosexual men.

2.3 – PARTICIPANT FACTORS

2.3.1 – Gender

In general, male participants tend to hold more negative attitudes towards sex-roles and interpersonal violence against women, and to respond more negatively toward victims of sexual assault than do women (Davies & Rogers, 2006; Flood & Pease, 2009; Grubb & Turner, 2012). Moreover, this gender difference has been well documented within university and college populations and across nations (Flood & Pease, 2009). Studies have repeatedly found that male participants make significantly greater judgements of victim blame compared to female participants (Fischer, 1995; Gilmartin-Zena, 1983; Sleath & Bull, 2010; Wakelin & Long, 2003), with similar results whether the victim is male or female (Davies et al., 2006; Davies & Rogers, 2006). Male participants also tend to hold the perpetrator less responsible than women do (Gerber et al., 2004; Hammock & Richardson, 1993; Russell et al., 2011; Wakelin & Long, 2003). Furthermore, Vandiver and Dupalo (2012) found that male participants were significantly less likely than female participants to perceive a variety of situations depicting a sexual assault as rape. Men also tend to perceive female characters more sexually than do women and are more likely to infer sexual intent from characters' behaviours (Abbey & Harnish, 1995).

Few studies which have examined the effects of participant gender have failed to find a significant effect on victim blaming (Gerber et al., 2004; Hammock & Richardson, 1993). However, a number of studies have found that while participant gender on its own does not have

any significant effect on participants' judgements of blame or responsibility towards the victim or perpetrator, participant gender does significantly interact with other variables. For example, when varying the gender of the victim, male participants have been found to attribute more blame to male victims compared to female victims, while female participants attributed similar amounts of blame to male and female victims (Howard, 1984). Similarly, while female participants made similar judgements of blame regardless of perpetrator gender and victim sexual orientation amongst scenarios depicting the sexual assault of a male victim, male participants blamed homosexual male victims most when the perpetrator was male, and heterosexual male victims most when the perpetrator was female (Davies et al., 2006).

Several studies have also found interaction effects between participant gender and alcohol consumption. For example, Hammock and Richardson (1997) found that while female participants made more positive evaluations of sober victims than did male participants, female participants were "more influenced in their judgements by the drunkenness of the victim than were males" (p. 242) in that they made more negative evaluations of intoxicated victims, compared to sober victims. Similarly, Tryggvesson (2008) found that only female participants made greater judgements of victim blame towards victims who were "described as really drunk [...] compared to when described as only being a bit tipsy" (p. 28). Another study (Klippenstine, Schuller, & Wall, 2007), which manipulated the alcohol consumption of both the complainant and defendant in a mock sexual assault trial found that while women were more supportive of the complainant and less supportive of the defendant than men, the interaction between participant gender and beverage condition was significant only when the complainant was depicted as sober. When both the complainant and defendant were sober, women were more supportive of the complainant than were men. By contrast, when the defendant was intoxicated, women were

actually less supportive of the complainant and more supportive of the defendant, while the opposite trend was observed for male participants (Klppenstine et al., p. 2632). Together, these results suggest that while men are generally less supportive of victims than are women, the effects of victim gender become more complicated when examined in the context of multivariate analyses.

2.3.2 – Rape Myths and Rape Myth Acceptance

A second participant factor which has consistently been found to predict negative social reactions towards victims of sexual assault is rape myth acceptance (McMahon, 2010). Rape myth acceptance, or RMA, is the degree to which an individual holds beliefs about rape, victims, and perpetrators which are consistent with societal rape myths (McMahon, 2010; Payne, Lonsway, & Fitzgerald, 1999). Susan Brownmiller (1975) was among the first feminist researchers to describe rape myths as beliefs about rape “that most men hold” (p. 346), arguing that these beliefs represented four main ideas: (1) that all women want to be raped; (2) that no woman can be raped against her will; (3) that she was asking for it; and (4) that if you’re going to be raped, you might as well enjoy it (p. 346). However, it was not until 1980 that the concept of ‘rape myths’ was formally defined as “prejudicial, stereotypical, or false beliefs about rape, rape victims, and rapists” (Burt, 1980, p. 217). Rape myths were described as “the mechanism that people use to justify dismissing an incident of sexual assault” (Burt, 1991, p. 27). Burt later described four main classifications of rape myths which mirror Brownmiller’s (1975) myths: (1) nothing happened; (2) she wanted or liked it; (3) she asked for it or deserved it; and (4) no harm was done (Burt, 1991, p. 28).

In a review of the literature on rape myths, Lonsway and Fitzgerald (1994) found that previous definitions are varied and often unclear. For example, they argued that Burt's (1980) definition is overly vague in the sense that it fails to identify how rape myths are prejudicial and toward whom; how they are stereotypical; and how they can be verified as either true or false. However, they identified three commonalities between the various definitions of rape myths within the literature: rape myths are "false or apocryphal beliefs that are widely held; they explain some important cultural phenomenon; and they serve to justify existing cultural arrangements" (p. 134). Thus, Lonsway and Fitzgerald (1994) defined rape myths as "attitudes and beliefs that are generally false but are widely and persistently held, and that serve to deny and justify male sexual aggression against women" (p. 134). More recent researchers have argued that a focus on the falsity of rape myths is problematic due to the inability to verify many rape myths and instead argue for a focus on the persistence of rape myths and RMA within the broader society. One definition following from this critique is that rape myths "affect subjective definitions of what constitutes a 'typical rape', contain problematic assumptions about the likely behaviour of perpetrators and victims, and paint a distorted picture of the antecedents and consequences of rape" (Bohner et al., 2009, p. 18). Bohner and colleagues (2009) further identify four types of rape myths: (1) those that blame the victim; (2) those that express a disbelief in claims of rape; (3) those that exonerate the perpetrator; and (4) those that suggest that only certain types of women are raped (p. 19). It is this definition that the current research will therefore utilize.

While RMA is generally low amongst college and university students (Abbey & Harnish, 1995; McMahon, 2010), it remains a consistent and significant predictor of victim blaming and

negative attitudes toward violence against women.⁶ Several studies have found that higher RMA is predictive of both greater victim blaming (Abbey & Harnish, 1995; Romero-Sanchez et al., 2012; Sleath & Bull, 2010) and lower judgements of perpetrator blame (Sleath & Bull, 2010). Additionally, RMA has also been found to predict men's likelihood of engaging in sexually coercive behaviours (Bouffard & Bouffard, 2011) and to negatively predict participants' intentions to intervene in potential sexual assault situations (McMahon, 2010). Moreover, male respondents report higher levels of RMA compared to female respondents (Abbey & Harnish, 1995; Chapleau, Oswald, & Russell, 2008; Grubb & Turner, 2012; McMahon, 2010; McMahon & Farmer, 2011; Melanson, 1999; Sleath & Bull, 2010; Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 1992; Suarez & Gadalla, 2010), consistent with observed gender differences regarding victim blaming.

Although the current study does not attempt to measure RMA, it is important to discuss some of the prominent psychometric scales which have been developed to measure an individual's degree of RMA. While there have been a number of scales developed to measure RMA, the two most commonly used are Burt's (1980) Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (RMAS) and the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (IRMA; Payne et al., 1999). Some of the items included in Burt's (1980) 19-item RMAS are also included in the IRMA (Payne et al., 1999), including items pertaining to the idea that women who dress promiscuously are "just asking for trouble" (Burt, 1980, p. 223; Payne et al., 1999, p.49) and that "a woman who goes to the home or apartment of a man on their first date implies that she is willing to have sex" (Burt, 1980, p. 223; Payne et al., 1999, p. 50). Burt's (1980) RMAS also includes the myth that "if a woman

⁶ While it could be argued that these elements form part of the definition of RMA and that the testing of such associations is therefore tautological, particularly in light of the literature's emphasis on the functions and effects of RMA in definitions of the construct, the literature generally discusses such judgements and RMA as distinct but related concepts.

gets drunk at a party and has intercourse with a man she's just met there, she should be considered 'fair game' to other males at the party who want to have sex with her, whether she wants to or not" (p. 223).

In contrast to the RMAS (Burt, 1980), the 45-item IRMA (Payne et al., 1999) contains several subscales which reflect categories of rape myths discussed within the rape myth literature: 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. Some examples of rape myths included in the IRMA are "many women secretly desire to be raped", "if a woman doesn't physically fight back, you can't really say it was rape", and "if a woman is raped while she is drunk, she is at least somewhat responsible for letting things get out of control" (Payne et al., 1999, pp. 49-50). However, a more recent study published by McMahon and Farmer (2011) updated the IRMA to focus on more subtle rape myths and to increase its relevancy within U.S. college populations. This updated version of the IRMA changed, for example, the words "man" and "woman" to "guy" and "girl" and revised its structure to include only 22 items and 4 subscales: (1) she asked for it; (2) he didn't mean to; (3) it wasn't really rape; and (4) she lied. This revised version better reflects college and university contexts, where, for example, parties and the consumption of alcohol is a common occurrence – this change is reflected in the four items which focus on alcohol, as compared to only one item on the original IRMA (McMahon & Farmer, 2011, p. 77).

Very little research has been conducted on the development of similar psychometric scales for rape myths pertaining to male victims (Maxwell & Scott, 2014). Of the research that has been conducted, one prominent myth which arguably differs from female rape myths is that male rape cannot or does not occur (Melanson, 1999; Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 1992). Similar to female rape myths, male rape myths also embody the ideas that victims are

responsible and are to blame for being sexually assaulted (Melanson, 1999; Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 1992), often referencing ideas of masculinity to assert that men should be able to physically resist rape and that male rape undermines the masculinity of the victim (Melanson, 1999). Only two psychometric scales have been developed and used within the literature: Struckman-Johnson and Struckman-Johnson's (1992) 12-item measure of male rape myths and Melanson's (1999) 22-item Male Rape Myth Scale (MRMS). While there are some similarities to items on the RMAS (Burt, 1980) and IRMA (Payne et al., 1999), many of these myths are specific to male gender expectations. It is also important to note that none of the items on either Struckman-Johnson and Struckman-Johnson's (1992) measure or the MRMS (Melanson, 1999) reference alcohol consumption. Therefore there does not appear to be any research pertaining to male rape myths and alcohol consumption. The current study attempts to fill this gap.

2.4 – RESPONSIBILITY AND BLAME

While the previously discussed research largely attempts to measure participants' judgements of responsibility and blame, there are substantial inconsistencies regarding how researchers define, distinguish, and operationalize these constructs (Anderson & Doherty, 2008; Harvey & Rule, 1978; Shaver & Drown, 1986; Stormo et al., 1997). Few studies explicitly define each construct and maintain consistency throughout (Cameron & Stritzke, 2003; Stormo et al., 1997), and even fewer have systematically tested conceptual definitions in a sexual assault context (Cameron & Stritzke, 2003). As argued by Harvey and Rule (1978), studies frequently use dependent measures for responsibility and blame as if they were distinct, but "comparisons among the studies often have been made as if the measures were the same" (p. 583). For

example, a number of studies either use only responsibility or blame as a dependent measure, or use both as distinct measures, but fail to make any distinction when discussing the existing literature (e.g. Howard, 1984; Romero-Sanchez et al., 2012; Sims et al., 2007; Untied et al., 2012). Others discuss responsibility and blame as if they were distinct concepts, as evidenced by the use of language such as “less responsible and less deserving of blame” (Gerber et al., 2004, p. 2155), but otherwise use them interchangeably (e.g. Gerber et al., 2004; Leigh & Aramburu, 1994). Studies often also use one term exclusively without adequately defining or justifying its exclusive use (e.g. Davies et al., 2006; Hammock & Richardson, 1997), or discuss only one term while using both interchangeably within dependent measures (e.g. Davies et al., 2011; Davies et al., 2006; Sleath & Bull, 2010). Finally, many studies simply fail to make any clear distinction between responsibility and blame and use both interchangeably throughout both their discussion of the literature and the operationalization of variables (e.g. Fischer, 1995; Gilmartin-Zena, 1983; Klippenstine et al., 2007; Maurer & Robinson, 2008; Richardson & Campbell, 1982).

Theoretically, judgements of responsibility and blame can both be considered types of attributions, and as such, research on these judgements within the context of sexual assault is largely based on Heider’s (1958) attribution theory. What Heider (1958) termed “common sense psychology”, attribution theory examines the process by which perceivers – often referred to as “naïve perceivers” – make explanations for events or the behaviour of other actors. As such, an attribution is simply an explanation for an event (Anderson & Doherty, 2008; Bradbury & Fincham, 1990; Calhoun & Townsley, 1991; Heider, 1958); various types of attributions can be made for any event or behaviour which link “an event with its underlying conditions” (Heider, 1958, p. 89). Additionally, although attributions are largely determined by situational cues and relatively objective information about the event and actors involved, the process of making

attributions is a highly subjective one which varies according to additional factors such as the personal biases, ethical and moral values, and past experiences of the perceiver (Calhoun & Townsley, 1991; Heider, 1958).

One type of attribution which is central to the attributions of responsibility and blame is causation. Causal attributions, defined as an “antecedent, or subset of antecedents, that is sufficient for the outcome of an event” (Shaver & Drown, 1986, p. 701), are the first step to attributing responsibility or blame for an event. A cause or antecedent for an event may originate internally from the actor or externally from their surrounding environment, including “those [events] instigated by another person” (Heider, 1958, p. 164). Additionally, a causal attribution can be viewed as a dichotomous variable (Shaver, 1985) in the sense that an antecedent either caused or did not cause the event in question. However, this does not preclude the existence of multiple contributing factors for a single event. Indeed, Shaver (1985) argues that most social interactions involve a number of potential causes, none of which are individually sufficient to produce the effect, but when occurring together, make up a causal subset which is sufficient. Moreover, the higher the number of contributing factors which can be attributed internally to the actor in question, the fewer the number of environmental factors that will have contributed to the event. As such, although individual factors are dichotomous in the sense that they either occurred or did not occur, the actor and elements of their environment may vary in terms of the degree of their contributions.

Once a causal attribution is made, it is possible to begin to attribute responsibility and blame for an event.⁷ Conceptually, earlier theorists often did not distinguish between attributions

⁷ It is important to note that while there are varied definitions of ‘responsibility,’ Hart (2008) further makes a distinction between four “senses” of responsibility (p. 211; Shaver, 1985). While most research on attributions of sexual assault is concerned with what Hart describes as causal or liability responsibility, ‘responsibility’ can also be discussed in terms of capacity or role-based responsibilities.

of responsibility and blame. For example, Harvey and Rule (1978) made a distinction between causal responsibility and moral responsibility or accountability. Causal responsibility, which most closely resembles later definitions of causal attributions (e.g. Bradbury & Fincham, 1990; Shaver, 1985), was often concerned with the antecedents of an accidental event. By contrast, moral accountability was primarily concerned with intentional action. Similarly, Heider (1958) distinguished between two general types of causality: impersonal and personal causality. According to this distinction, impersonal causality can be attributed in events “in which [actor] *p* is part of the sequence of events” (p. 100) or in which the effect “is an unintended consequence” of an intended action (p.100). By contrast, intention or goal-oriented action is central to personal causality. Moreover, an attribution of responsibility, according to Heider (1958), hinges on the motivational aspect of personal causality, a factor which is comprised of both intention and exertion.

A second general conceptualization of responsibility and blame takes the view of a dimensional process. These conceptualizations view responsibility and blame as distinct but overlapping constructs which can be defined by a series of underlying dimensions (Bradbury & Fincham, 1990; Shaver, 1985; Shaver & Drown, 1986). In line with earlier theoretical conceptions (e.g. Harvey & Rule, 1978), dimensional views assume that a causal role can be attributed to the actor in question. In addition to causality, a number of other underlying dimensions are key when making an attribution of responsibility. These include: (a) intentional action; (b) awareness or foresight of the possible consequences; (c) appreciation of the moral wrongfulness of the act; (d) the degree of volition or the absence of coercion (Bradbury & Fincham, 1990; Shaver, 1985; Shaver & Drown, 1986); (e) choice or the capacity to have acted differently; and (f) negative or selfish motivation (Bradbury & Fincham, 1990). While Shaver

(1985) proposed a specific order in which each dimension will be attributed, generally, an attribution of global responsibility will increase with increasing attribution of each underlying dimension (Bradbury & Fincham, 1990; Shaver, 1985; Shaver & Drown, 1986).

While these theoretical conceptualizations provide the clearest definitions of responsibility and its underlying dimensions, there remains some disagreement between major theorists. For example, although intentional action is commonly viewed as a crucial component of responsibility, the type of intentional action required for this dimension to be met is not always clear. Shaver and Drown (1986) clearly define intentional action as “intent to bring about the event (as opposed to the involuntary production of an unintended effect)” (p. 701), and Heider (1958) similarly does not include actions in which the effect was unintended in his conception of personal responsibility. By contrast, many other theorists do not clarify if it is the action or the effect which is most important in an attribution of intent (e.g. Bradbury & Fincham, 1990; Harvey & Rule, 1978). Additionally, Shaver (1985) does not distinguish between the dimensions of volition and choice as does Bradbury and Fincham (1990); rather, ‘voluntary’ and ‘coerced’ are the two extreme endpoints of a single dimension, ‘coerced’ (Shaver, 1985).

Finally, once an attribution of responsibility is made, it is possible to assign blame. Generally, an attribution of blame can be defined as a type of social explanation involving multiple steps and dimensions (Shaver, 1985). However, there are two distinctive processes by which blame may be attributed. Bradbury & Fincham (1990) define blame in terms of an additional dimension which distinguishes it from an attribution of responsibility; while blame shares all of the previously discussed dimensions of responsibility, it also involves liability for censure or condemnation (Calhoun & Townsley, 1991). By contrast, Shaver (1985) does not define blame in terms of any additional underlying dimensions. Rather, Shaver (1985) argues

that an attribution of blame occurs when the actor's justifications and excuses for their behaviour are rejected (Lussier, Sabourin, & Wright, 1993; Shaver & Drown, 1986). By this definition, an actor who does not provide any justification or excuse will necessarily accept all of the blame (Shaver, 1985).

Very little research has been conducted to empirically test these conceptual definitions. This is particularly problematic, as the individuals who make attributions of responsibility and blame may do so in ways which are different from theoretical conceptions (Shaver, 1985). Some studies, which have examined attributions of responsibility and blame in contexts other than sexual assault, have found support for the distinction between these concepts. For example, Harvey and Rule (1978) found that amongst situations of verbal aggression or an accident, factor analysis identified moral evaluations and causal responsibility as two separate factors.⁸ Others have found support for the notion that attributions of causality lead to attributions of responsibility, which in turn results in an assignment of blame within the contexts of drunken aggression (Critchlow, 1985) and marriage (Lussier et al., 1993). However, some researchers, such as Leigh and Aramburu (1994) have argued that theoretical distinctions between responsibility and blame are less important due to the fact that "people often fail to distinguish between them" in practice (Tryggvesson, 2008, p. 20; Cameron & Stritzke, 2003; Stormo et al., 1997). Reflecting this view, the few studies which have assessed the definitions of responsibility and blame within a sexual assault context have largely found that participants do not distinguish between attributions of responsibility and blame (Cameron & Stritzke, 2003; Davies et al., 2006;

⁸ This solution was based on responses to a series of rating scales, which were chosen based on frequently used measures in studies on moral evaluations and causal responsibility. These included seven rating scales regarding moral evaluations (e.g. right/wrong) and three regarding causal responsibility (e.g. intended/not intended; Harvey & Rule, 1978, p.584).

Davies et al., 2011; Sleath & Bull, 2010⁹), although there is some support for their overlapping dimensions (Cameron & Stritzke, 2003). As a result, the concepts of responsibility and blame as referred to within a sexual assault context are unclear at best throughout the literature. It was therefore an objective of the current study to attempt to clarify these concepts.

2.5 – THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.5.1 – Feminist Critiques of Attribution Theory

Previous research in the study of perceptions of sexual violence has typically drawn on attribution theory (Anderson & Doherty, 2008; Ward, 1995), a broad theoretical framework which emerged out of the positivist field within social psychology (Ward, 1995). As previously stated, Heider's (1958) attribution theory is concerned with how individuals form explanations for events and behaviours (Anderson & Doherty, 2008; Bradbury & Fincham, 1990; Calhoun & Townsley, 1991; Heider, 1958). An initial core assumption of attribution theory is that causal attributions, a starting point of most other types of attributions, can be distinguished between internal and external causes (Anderson & Doherty, 2008; Heider, 1958). Internal attributions are those that attribute causal responsibility for the situation to the individual themselves; for example, they did poorly on their exam because they are stupid. By contrast, external attributions are those that attribute responsibility to the situation; for example, they did well on their exam because it was easy (Heider, 1958). Applied to sexual assaults, and in particular to victims, attributions of responsibility or blame are more likely if a process of internal attribution is used – the individual attributes responsibility for the outcome to the decisions and character of the victim rather than the situation or other actors involved. A second core assumption to attribution

⁹ With the exception of Cameron and Stritzke's (2003) study, which utilized a hierarchical regression model to test Bradbury and Fincham's (1990) model of responsibility and blame, these studies employed principal components analyses.

theory is that perceivers are rational (albeit, naïve) beings, and the process by which they make attributions is similarly a rational and systematic one (Anderson, & Doherty, 2008; Heider, 1958). This assumption reflects the information processing view of cognitive psychology, wherein individuals are argued to perceive and process incoming information which originates from neutral stimuli (Anderson & Doherty, 2008; Griffin & Phoenix, 1994).

However, social psychological theories (Anderson & Doherty, 2008; Ward, 1995) and attribution theory as it has been applied to the issue of sexual assault specifically (Anderson & Doherty, 2008) have faced numerous criticisms from feminist scholars. Regarding social psychology more broadly, feminist scholarship emphasizes critical appraisal of the relationship “between empirical research, social experience and the researcher’s engagement (or not) with social concerns” (Anderson & Doherty, 2008, p. 48). This critical reflection occurs partially as a way of minimizing the power imbalance between researcher and participant (Ward, 1995), but also to ensure that researcher and societal biases are not unintentionally reproduced through, for example, the choice of subject and variables to be studied, and the theoretical assumptions underlying their analysis. This practice of reflection and reflexivity, however, is much less common within positivist psychology (Anderson & Doherty, 2008; Griffin & Phoenix, 1994), which typically assumes a neutral and unbiased stance in the researcher (Griffin & Phoenix, 1994). With respect to attribution theory specifically, it has been criticized for the underlying assumption that attributional processes are “essentially rational, logical and systematic” (Anderson & Doherty, 2008, p. 39), as this implies that attributions of victim responsibility and blame are similarly logical. This implication runs counter to feminist arguments which have claimed that victim blaming judgements are biased and irrational (Anderson & Doherty, 2008; Brewer, 1977), particularly as they rely on “presumably irrelevant characteristics of the

perpetrator or victim of an incident” (Brewer, 1977, p. 58).¹⁰ Moreover, this assumption of attribution theory, that attributions are made on the basis of a rational examination of neutral stimuli, implies that this process occurs in a cultural vacuum, effectively disregarding the role of individual and cultural biases and decontextualizing the process of attribution (Anderson & Doherty, 2008). Instead, feminist theory assumes that because sexuality is structured by gendered power relations in society, it is erroneous to “treat individuals as if they were isolated from society” (Griffin & Phoenix, 1994).

While Heider (1958) did acknowledge the role of the perceiver’s motivations,¹¹ contemporary applications of attribution theory to the study of rape perception make more explicit the assumption that attributional processes are influenced by characteristics of the perceiver as well as situational information¹² (Anderson & Doherty, 2008; Frese et al., 2004; Grubb & Turner, 2012; Howard, 1984). In this way, perceiver characteristics – most notably, gender and attitudinal biases – interact with the situational information available to determine the kinds of attributions that will be made (Frese et al., 2004; Grubb & Turner, 2012; Howard, 1984). Similarly, the inclusion of measures of RMA is now a frequent occurrence in contemporary attribution research (Abbey & Harnish, 1995; Davies et al., 2006; Gerber et al., 2004; Grubb & Turner, 2012; Romero-Sanchez et al., 2012; Sleath & Bull, 2010; Stormo et al., 1997; Vandiver & Dupalo, 2012) in an effort to test feminist explanations for victim-blaming (Anderson & Doherty, 2008; Ward, 1995). For example, Ward (1995) has noted that findings of such experimental research have supported “feminist claims of the influence of rape myths in

¹⁰ This is not to say that judgements of victim blame cannot be made in the context of logical and highly rationalized thought processes, but rather that these otherwise logical but erroneous conclusions are made on the basis of biased perceptions.

¹¹ This acknowledgement is made most clear through Heider’s (1958) discussion on egocentric attributions. See: pp. 120-121, 158.

¹² Situational information includes information regarding the actual events that transpired as well as information about the characteristics and behaviour of the actors involved.

patriarchal societies on the perceptions of victims of sexual violence” (p. 89). However, while Ward’s (1995) analysis attempts to highlight “the mutually beneficial relationship of feminist scholarship and the experimental social psychology of rape perception,” it places feminist theory as only preliminary to rigorous experimental methodology and attribution theory (Anderson & Doherty, 2008, p. 43), implying that feminist theory on its own produces knowledge in which we can be less confident. In light of these criticisms, the current study therefore has placed a feminist theoretical lens at the forefront of the analysis in order to understand, from a feminist perspective, the process of making attributions about sexual assault, as well as to further illuminate the problems associated with a strict reliance on attribution theory and positivist methodology (Anderson & Doherty, 2008).

2.5.2 – Sex Role Socialization, Rape Myths, and Risk Discourse: A Framework for Making Attributions about Sexual Assault

One way in which the interaction between perceiver characteristics and situational information is theorized to occur is through sex role socialization of traditional gender roles¹³ (Bridges, 1991; Check & Malamuth, 1983; Krahé, 2000). The sex role socialization analysis:

[...] proposes that, as a result of the developmental processes involved in learning the societally-prescribed behaviors for one’s sex, both males and females develop certain expectations regarding the appropriate sex role behaviors for a sexual interaction (Bridges, 1991, p. 292).

When these gender roles are internalized, they, along with cultural norms about sexuality and sexual behaviour, make up sexual scripts about appropriate roles and behaviour within sexual interactions (Frith, 2009; Jackson, 1995; Krahé, 2000). While it has theoretical origins in both

¹³ While it is recognized that ‘sex’ and ‘gender’ refer to distinct but related concepts, the former generally being used to refer to biological sex and the latter to socially constructed gender (Comack, 2014, p. 18), the literature used here often discusses sex and gender roles as referring to the same idea; namely, those expected characteristics and behaviours associated with one’s role as ‘male’ or ‘female.’

sociology and cognitive psychology, the idea of sexual scripts has been frequently applied by feminists to “refer to cultural messages which define what counts as sex, how to recognize sexual situations and what to do during sexual encounters” (Frith, 2009, p. 100). Part of these sexual scripts is the ascription of appropriate roles for men and women (Frith, 2009; Jackson, 1995), and these roles are “bound up with cultural notions of femininity and masculinity” (Jackson, 1995, p. 18). In line with traditional notions of masculinity, men are expected to be strong, physically capable, and the active initiators of sex (Bridges, 1991; Check & Malamuth, 1983; Cowley, 2014; Fagen & Anderson, 2012; Frith, 2009; Hird, 2002; Jackson, 1995; Warshaw & Parrot, 1991). Furthermore, male sexuality is often believed to be biologically and persistently driven, leading to their aggressive initiation of sex and sense of entitlement to women’s bodies (Hird, 2002). By contrast, in line with traditional notions of passive femininity (Bridges, 1991; Frith, 2009; Hird, 2002; Jackson 1995; Warshaw & Parrot, 1991), women are expected to be the gatekeepers of sex, controlling and confining men’s sexual advances to socially ‘appropriate’ behaviour (Bridges, 1991; Check & Malamuth, 1983; Cowley, 2014; Fagen & Anderson, 2012; Frith, 2009; Jackson, 1995; Randall, 2010; Warshaw & Parrot, 1991), while at the same time women are expected to be receptive to male advances, resulting in sexual relations which are fundamentally coercive (Hird, 2002).

Sexual scripts and sex role socialization have frequently been employed within feminist theory to explain sexual assault (Frith, 2009; Jackson, 1995). For example, some have argued that sexual assault can be seen to be “an extreme manifestation” of these expected roles (Jackson, 1995, p. 27). However they have also been used to explain negative social reactions toward sexual assault. When these sexual scripts and gendered expectations are internalized, they are then able to mediate how situational cues are perceived and interpreted; actors who behave

outside of these gendered expectations may then be subject to negative attributions (Anderson & Doherty, 2008). Additionally, of particular relevance to the current research, expectations about the effects of alcohol further interact with and amplify these gendered expectations when information about the actors' alcohol consumption is available (Cowley, 2014). Where intoxication is believed to disinhibit behaviour and psychological sexual arousal for both men and women (Cowley, 2014; Crowe & George, 1989; Leigh, 1990), the expectations of how this disinhibition will manifest in behaviour reflects gendered expectations of sexual behaviour, generally, where intoxicated men are expected to act more sexually aggressive and intoxicated women are expected to be "more sexually available and powerless" (Cowley, 2014, p. 1263; Abbey, 1991).

A second attitudinal factor which has been extensively studied within both feminist and social psychological research as a theoretical explanation for victim blaming attitudes is that of RMA. Similar to sexual scripts, rape myths and, by extension, RMA, interact with the situational information available by guiding decisions regarding what situational information is relevant to making a causal attribution and further judgements of responsibility and blame (Bohner et al., 2009; Frese et al., 2004). For example, extraneous factors, such as a variety of sociodemographic characteristics of the victim, have often been found to influence perceptions of victim responsibility and blame (Anderson & Doherty, 2008), despite not actually having a direct causal relationship with the sexual assault. While a pure application of attribution theory would suggest that as a result, these factors would not impact attributions made, Anderson and Doherty (2008) instead argue that these factors "often detail aspects thought likely to trigger rape myths" (p. 30). Similarly, Bohner and colleagues (2009) argue that RMA is "a general schema which guides and organizes an individual's interpretation of specific information" as a way to assist in information

processing (p. 23). However, contrary to the assumption of classical attribution theory that information processing is a neutral and rational process, Bohner and colleagues (2009) instead argue that it is selective in the sense that greater attention is given to information that matches schema-related information (in this case, rape myths). As a result, particularly amongst individuals high in RMA, myth-congruent information may be emphasized or information that is not presented may be incorrectly inferred. As such, greater significance may be placed on situational information which is congruent with societal rape myths, thereby leading to negative judgements about the victim when they may not have factually contributed to the incident.

Furthermore, rape myths and RMA interact with sexual scripts in that they reflect and reinforce traditional gender roles and gendered expectations of sexual behaviour. An examination of common rape myths reveals parallels with gendered expectations. For example, the view of men as hypersexual initiators of sex (Frith, 2009) is seen reflected in rape myths which point to men's "out of control" sex drives (McMahon, 2010, p. 77; Payne et al., 1999). Similarly, the focus amongst rape myths on women's failure to clearly indicate their lack of consent or their responsibility for behaving in ways which might suggest sexual interest (McMahon, 2010; Payne et al., 1999) reflects the view of women as sexual gatekeepers and highlights their expected responsibility to minimize their own risk of victimization (Frith, 2009). These gendered expectations are also evident in male rape myths, especially those which suggest that men should be physically capable of fighting off an attack. As a result, this expectation leads to the myths that male sexual assault is either very unlikely, or, that when it does occur, it is the victim's fault for failing to meet the expectations of masculinity and stop their assault (Melanson, 1998; Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 1992).

Burt's (1980) model of RMA provides a useful framework for understanding the process by which sex role socialization occurs, and how it informs rape myths and determines RMA (Bridges, 1991; Check & Malamuth, 1983). Burt (1980) proposed that there are a number of clusters of factors or variables that influence or mediate an individual's degree of RMA. These clusters include background variables, such as age, gender, education level, and occupation; personality variables, such as satisfaction with one's sex role, satisfaction with one's gender role, and self-esteem; experience variables, such as media exposure and personal experiences of victimization or having witnessed victimization; and attitude variables, including those attitudes regarding sex role stereotyping, sexual conservatism, adverse sexual beliefs, and interpersonal violence. Together, these four clusters of variables influence an individual's degree of RMA both directly and indirectly through different levels of clusters; the more directly a variable influences RMA, the stronger and more consistent its effect will be. As such, background variables have the weakest and least consistent effect on RMA, while attitude variables have the strongest. This framework further clarifies the relationship between gendered expectations regarding sexual behaviour and societal rape myths (Bridges, 1991). These attitudes and biases, which are influenced and defined by one's gender and, more importantly, their socialized sex roles, in turn help to shape and define rape myths and determine an individual's degree of RMA (Bridges, 1991; Burt, 1980).

However, what is often ignored in theoretical explanations of perceptions about sexual assault is that these sexual scripts and rape myths exist within a heteronormative framework. Heteronormativity refers to the idea that "heterosexuality is privileged and taken for granted, that is, normalized and naturalized" (Herz & Johansson, 2015, p. 1011). Society, and in turn, society's expectations of gender norms, are thereby implicitly based on this assumption of

heterosexuality (Herz & Johansson, 2015; Richardson, 2000), and this assumption often goes unnoticed and unquestioned even within theoretical and conceptual frameworks used to understand sexual behaviour and relations (Richardson, 2000). The fact that the issue of sexual orientation (of the victim or perpetrator) generally only emerges with respect to male rape myths (Abdullah-Khan, 2008; Melanson, 1998) highlights how heterosexuality is taken for granted and thereby ignored (Richardson, 2000). Furthermore, the dichotomy between men's role as sexual initiator – a role which is often rooted in an aggressive sexuality (Hird, 2002) - and women's role as gatekeeper is necessarily predicated on an assumption of heterosexuality (Herz & Johansson, 2015). As a result of heteronormative assumptions and the belief “that men initiate and control their sexual encounters, we assume they cannot be targets of a sexual attack” (Struckman-Johnson, 1991, p. 193), and this is further seen in the assumption of same-sex sexual assault as homosexual assault (Abdullah-Khan, 2008; Melanson, 1998). Due to these dichotomous beliefs, male sexual assault violates this assumption of heterosexual men controlling sex, and so it is assumed that male sexual assault generally involves homosexual men.

The role that these sexual scripts and rape myths have in the attributional process can be further elucidated through their examination within a neo-liberal framework of risk management. Within a neo-liberal society, ideal citizens are construed as those who are “rational informed and active agents, able to use self-restraint and with a will and a capacity to self-govern” (Anderson & Doherty, 2008, p. 70). With respect to victimization, Anderson and Doherty (2008) argue that individuals are expected to recognize hazards and anticipate risks, and to subsequently manage and avoid these risks in order to prevent their victimization. In this way, “individual responsibility is emphasized and expected” (p. 70), and those who fail to act ‘responsibly’ are subject to blame. Inherent in this understanding of individual responsibility is that hazards and

risks must be predictable in order to avoid, and judgements of victim culpability arise when it can be seen as ‘reasonable’ that the victim would be aware of these risks. What is constructed as a predictable hazard, however, depends on individuals’ “cultural knowledge, including understandings of gender, sexuality and sexual violence” (Anderson & Doherty, 2008, p. 70), and in this way, risk discourse around sexual victimization is both culturally informed and socially constructed.

Rape myths inform perceivers of what situational information is relevant and indicative of a risk to be avoided. For example, the rape myth that a woman who is willingly alone with a man she does not know is at fault if she is raped (Payne et al., 1999; McMahon & Farmer, 2011) highlights this – being alone with a man – as a hazard for women to avoid. Sexual scripts regarding appropriate and expected sexual behaviour similarly indicate what behaviours should be considered a hazard or risk. The sex role socialization analysis suggests that men are expected to generally want sex and to initiate sex (Bridges, 1991; Check & Malamuth, 1983; Cowley, 2014; Fagen & Anderson, 2012; Warshaw & Parrot, 1991), and it can be expected that men’s sexual advances will become more aggressive when alcohol is involved. Similarly, women are expected to be more sexually available when drinking (Abbey, 1991; Cowley, 2014). As such, given their gatekeeper role (Abbey, 1991; Bridges, 1991; Check & Malamuth, 1983; Cowley, 2014; Fagen & Anderson, 2012; Randall, 2010) and general status as ‘victims’ within the sexual assault discourse, women should be able to anticipate these expectations and mitigate their risk of victimization accordingly. Women who fail to do so are then construed as having acted recklessly, allowing for them to be held responsible for failing to prevent their own victimization (Anderson & Doherty, 2008; Frith, 2009; Randall, 2010). By contrast, within the framework of heteronormativity, sexual interactions are assumed to be heterosexual, unless evidence suggests

otherwise (Anderson & Doherty, 2008; Herz & Johansson, 2015; Richardson, 2000).

Consequently, men are not expected to similarly anticipate their victimization, as the same indicators of risk are understood as predictable risks only within a heterosexual context.

Therefore, while men may be held responsible for failing to uphold traditional expectations of masculinity, they may not be held responsible for failing to anticipate risks and prevent their victimization, as they would be less predictable within a same-sex context (Anderson & Doherty, 2008).

2.6 – SUMMARY

In summary, this chapter has provided a thorough review of the relevant literature on attributions about sexual assault, including a discussion of concerns throughout the literature regarding the ways in which core constructs are defined and operationalized in research. While extensive research has been conducted on the effects of alcohol consumption on attributions towards female victims, very little attention has been given to perceptions about the role of alcohol in male sexual assault. As such, it was a goal of the current research to address this gap. Additionally, men tend to make more negative judgements towards victims of sexual assault in hypothetical scenarios, and more lenient judgements towards perpetrators, although the interaction between participant gender and alcohol consumption appears to be more complex. Rape myths and RMA have also been identified as important predictors of victim-blaming attitudes and judgements,¹⁴ although they are employed more extensively in this research throughout the theoretical framework rather than as additional variables of interest. However, the definition and operationalization of the core constructs of responsibility and blame vary

¹⁴ No measures of RMA were included in the current research, largely due to the fact that measures of RMA have generally been developed separately for female and male sexual assault. As a result, this would have necessitated the inclusion of multiple scales, thereby greatly increasing the time commitment required to complete the questionnaire.

considerably across studies, thereby limiting the validity of comparisons made among them. Furthermore, little is known empirically about how these constructs are understood and applied by participants to the context of sexual assault. Finally, the theoretical framework for this study constitutes a feminist critique of attribution theory and its contemporary applications to the study of attributions about sexual assault. In particular, it has largely drawn on ideas of sex role socialization, sexual scripts regarding appropriate and expected sexual behaviour, and the influence of rape myths and RMA in shaping reactions to sexual assault.

CHAPTER 3 – METHODOLOGY

The current research has employed a mixed methods design using online questionnaires to examine how undergraduate students define and perceive responsibility and blame for sexual assault. Following a discussion of the study population, research questions, and hypotheses, a detailed description of the sampling and recruitment methods is presented. The method of data collection is then outlined, which, similar to previous research, has utilized a vignette-based experimental design through online questionnaires (Anderson & Doherty, 2008). A detailed account of how the questionnaire was constructed, with particular focus on the development of vignettes and questions to measure the dependent variables, is provided. Next, the methods of analyses are described. In particular, a number of multivariate and bivariate nonparametric statistical analyses were required due to complications which arose from sampling issues and invalid responses. The qualitative content analysis employed to analyze the qualitative responses is also described. Finally, this chapter concludes with a discussion of the ethical concerns for this research, particularly as they relate to issues of anonymity and psychological distress.

3.1 – STUDY POPULATION

The study population for this research project consisted of undergraduate students enrolled in the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Ottawa. A population of undergraduate university students was selected for a number of reasons. First, the prevalence of both alcohol consumption and acquaintance sexual assault amongst university student populations¹⁵ (Abbey, 1991; Cowley, 2014; Romero-Sanchez et al., 2012) makes the use of such populations for research regarding their perceptions of sexual assault particularly relevant and

¹⁵ Some studies suggest that college and university populations experience alcohol consumption (see Abbey 1991) and sexual violence (see Romero-Sanchez, 2012) at higher rates than the general population.

important to better understand. Furthermore, the recent media attention given to controversial cases of campus sexual violence across North America means that conducting this research with university students is especially pertinent at this time, when social discourses around sexual assault may be shifting, particularly in campus settings (Bramham, 2016; Zimmerman, 2016). Finally, in addition to the unique culture of alcohol and sexual assault amongst university populations, university students represent a relatively young, and therefore unique subset of the Canadian population. University and college students also often experience greater awareness of issues relating to sexual assault, and as such, effects of the independent variables may be more subtle than would be the case in a less aware population (Gerber et al., 2004), particularly as it may increase the likelihood of social desirability effects. Moreover, previous research has generally utilized university and college student populations (Tryggvesson, 2008; e.g. Gerber et al., 2004; Richardson & Campbell, 1982; Romero-Sanchez et al., 2012); thus, in order to maintain some consistency between studies and the validity of comparisons between them, a similar population of undergraduate students has been sampled for the current research. However, maintaining consistency between studies also limits the generalizability of results to other populations, particularly those other than university or college populations. Additionally, the majority of previous research examining social reactions to sexual assault has been conducted using populations from the United States or United Kingdom. Students at the University of Ottawa may also differ in significant ways from other university students in Canada, and Faculty of Social Science students may be similarly unique compared to students from other faculties.

3.2 – RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Given the role which victims' peers have in responding to sexual assault, the current research aimed to answer the following question: How do individuals perceive or attribute responsibility and blame for an acquaintance sexual assault? More specifically, three factors which may influence individuals' perceptions of a sexual assault have been examined: (1) victim gender; (2) alcohol consumption; and (3) participant gender. As such, four additional research questions are identified as follows:¹⁶

1. How is victim gender perceived with respect to responsibility and blame for acquaintance sexual assault?
2. How is alcohol consumption prior to acquaintance sexual assault perceived with respect to responsibility and blame?
3. How is alcohol consumption prior to an acquaintance sexual assault perceived with respect to male victims, and how does this compare to female victims?
4. How do undergraduate students conceptualize responsibility and blame?

3.3 - HYPOTHESES

Based on the theoretical framework and the existing literature, the following hypotheses have been tested:

1. Perceptions of responsibility and blame towards both male and female victims will be greater when the victim and perpetrator are depicted as consuming alcohol, compared to when they are depicted as drinking soda.

¹⁶ The effect of perpetrator gender was originally considered as an additional research question, but was ultimately excluded in order to minimize the number of experimental conditions which would be required for a full factorial design.

2. Perceptions of responsibility and blame toward the perpetrator will be greater when the victim and perpetrator are depicted as consuming soda, compared to when they are consuming alcohol.
3. Male participants will attribute more responsibility and blame to the victim compared to female participants, across contexts.

Due to the fact that there is no consensus within the literature regarding the relationship between victim gender and victim blaming, there are no specific hypotheses pertaining to the univariate effects of victim gender. In other words, there were no hypotheses that male victims would be perceived as more, less, or equally responsible or blameworthy than female victims across alcohol scenarios.¹⁷

3.4 – SAMPLING METHOD

The current research used a convenience sample of undergraduate students within the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Ottawa. Official permission to recruit students for participation in the study was granted from the department heads of the Criminology, Sociological & Anthropological Studies, and the Institute of Feminist & Gender Studies departments.¹⁸ These departments were selected due to the large number of students they could provide access to and due to the likelihood that issues of gender and sexuality may be encountered as part of normal course work, potentially making these students particularly

¹⁷ Hypothesis testing regarding the effects of victim gender therefore employed two-tailed tests of significance.

¹⁸ The School of Psychology was also solicited for recruitment of participants, but was unable to provide permission due to the volume of research already requested from within the department. While psychology students were not recruited directly through presentations given during psychology courses, students whose majors were identified as psychology may have been recruited through participating courses of other departments in which they were also enrolled.

motivated to participate.¹⁹ As such, all students enrolled in a course conducted in English during the Fall 2015 semester, under one of the three solicited departments were eligible to participate in the study. A total of 96 courses were eligible for inclusion in the study.

Once permission was granted by each department head and approval was granted by the University of Ottawa Research Ethics Board (see Appendix A), individual professors from each department were approached for their permission to give a brief informational presentation during class time in order to recruit participants for the study. Professors were also asked to post the letter of information to Blackboard Learn in an effort to facilitate students' access to the online questionnaire (see Appendix B). Professors of 42 of the solicited courses granted permission to give the informational presentation and agreed to post the letter of information to Blackboard Learn. Professors for an additional 5 courses agreed to help facilitate recruitment, but due to time constraints and scheduling conflicts, they agreed to post the letter of information without the informational presentation. A total of 262 responses were received, 124 (47.3%) of which did not complete the entire questionnaire and were subsequently removed from the final sample. The majority of these dropouts occurred before any questions were answered.²⁰ Appendix C provides a detailed breakdown of these dropouts. As a result, the final sample consisted of 138 completed responses, which based on the estimated number of students solicited for recruitment of 3769 students, represents a response rate of 3.7% (Table 3.1). However, this response rate is likely to be somewhat underestimated, as some students may have received the

¹⁹ The School of Social Work, which likely would have similarly exposed students to such issues, was not solicited due to the undergraduate Social Work program being offered only in French.

²⁰ While it was not possible to determine the reasons why some participants dropped out of the study, there are several possible explanations which future research should continue to explore, including a failure to maintain the participant's interest in the study or multiple submissions made by participants (Reips, 2002).

informational presentation multiple times due to their enrollment in more than one course which was solicited for recruitment.²¹

Table 3.1: Response rate

	School of Anthropology & Sociology	Department of Criminology	Institute of Feminist & Gender Studies	Total
Total classes solicited	49	39	8	96
Total classes who gave permission	13	28	6	47
Classroom Response Rate (%)	26.5	71.8	75.0	49.0
Total number of students solicited for recruitment	1045	2348	376	3769
Total questionnaires received	262			
Number of incomplete questionnaires excluded	124			
Total sample size	138			
Response Rate (%)	3.7			

The informational presentation provided to students outlined the research topic, purpose of the study, associated risks, and a description of what students would be asked to do as part of their participation. A recruitment flyer, which contained similar information along with a URL to the online questionnaire and the contact information of the primary researcher and research supervisor, was also distributed to all students at this time. Students were also instructed that the letter of information would be available through Blackboard Learn, which contained a more detailed description of the study, including information about confidentiality and conservation of data, as well as a list of Ottawa-based resources for any student who might experience emotional

²¹ This notion is supported by the fact that approximately 2531 recruitment fliers were distributed, as students who had already seen the informational presentation would be unlikely to take multiple copies of the recruitment flier. Based on this estimate of the total number of students solicited, this represents a response rate of 5.5%. The actual response rate is therefore likely between these two estimates.

or psychological distress as a result of their participation. The letter of information also included a hyperlink to the online questionnaire in order to facilitate students' access to the study. Once participants followed the link to the online questionnaire, they were again provided with information regarding confidentiality and implied consent before beginning the questionnaire.

3.5 – DATA COLLECTION

3.5.1 – Strengths and Limitations of Data Collection Method

Data collection was conducted using online questionnaires that were hosted by Fluid Surveys, a Canadian-based online survey provider.²² An initial advantage to using online questionnaires, and in particular, Fluid Surveys, was easily automated data entry (Granello & Wheaton, 2004; Reips, 2002). Like many other online survey providers, Fluid Surveys has the capability to export data directly to SPSS, thereby decreasing the potential for coding errors prior to analysis. These providers also offered considerable flexibility and control over formatting of the questionnaire, making them highly amenable to a wide variety of research purposes (Granello & Wheaton, 2004). Additionally, online questionnaires often allow access to much larger sample sizes than could ordinarily be achieved through paper- or mail-based questionnaires, and in doing so, are potentially able to provide greater statistical power as a result (Reips, 2002). Online questionnaires are also advantageous over paper- or mail-based questionnaires as they tend to have reduced response times and lower costs (Granello & Wheaton, 2004; Reips, 2002), which was of particular concern in light of the current study's time and financial constraints. Moreover, de Rada and Dominguez-Alvarez (2014) found that online questionnaires produced a lower

²² Fluid Surveys in particular was selected over other online survey providers due to the fact that their servers are located in Canada and data collected through them would be subject to Canadian privacy laws. Other survey providers which were considered stored data in the United States, and data would therefore be subject to the U.S. Patriot Act. The use of a Canadian-based provider therefore offered additional protection of participants' privacy and anonymity.

number of unanswered questions, as well as longer, more detailed responses to open-ended questions compared to mail-based questionnaires, which was of particular interest for this study. Finally, while potential participants' access to internet is usually a concern with online questionnaires, it was less of a concern amongst this study's student population where internet access and usage are typically high (Crawford, Couper, & Lamias, 2001).

There were, however, a number of limitations to utilizing online questionnaires. First, conducting research online creates the opportunity for technology-based problems, including general technical difficulties (Granello & Wheaton, 2004) and the possibility for participants to make multiple submissions (Reips, 2002). As outlined in Appendix C, one response was removed due to a technical error that resulted in a failure to record the version of the vignette to which the participant was assigned. Potentially more concerning, however, was the possibility that participants made multiple submissions, thereby overestimating the total number of responses received. The large number of responses which did not move past the vignette suggests that some participants may have looked at the questionnaire but did not complete it until a later time, resulting in the submission of two responses – one incomplete and one completed – for a single participant, although it was not possible to determine for how many responses this was true. Secondly, the use of online questionnaires poses substantial concerns regarding the generalizability of results, as the convenience and high degree of voluntariness of online questionnaires also creates greater potential for self-selection (Reips, 2002). However, arguably the most prevalent limitation of online questionnaires is their generally low response rates, especially compared to paper alternatives (Crawford et al., 2001; de Rada & Dominguez-Alvarez, 2014; Granello & Wheaton, 2004; Reips, 2002). In accordance with this concern, the response rate for the current study was relatively low, creating additional concerns regarding the

sample size, statistical power, and sample bias. An initial concern regarding response rates is that it is nearly impossible to accurately calculate the response rate for research conducted online, as it is often unknown exactly how many individuals have been exposed to an invitation to participate and given access to the questionnaire (Granello & Wheaton, 2004). It was therefore very difficult to obtain accurate estimates of the response rate, although this issue could have been addressed by providing the URL to the study only to the sampling population (e.g. through email), and/or requiring participants to enter a login ID and password to access the survey (Granello & Wheaton, 2004). Crawford and colleagues (2001) describe low response rates as being indicative of two issues: overall nonresponse, wherein there is a failure to respond to the invitation to participate, and abandonment or dropping out once a participant has begun the questionnaire. They examined the effects of one factor – perceived burden of survey completion – on both types of nonresponse, finding that only modest gains in response rate were found by indicating the length of the survey in the invitation to participate, including more frequent email reminders, and using automatic rather than manual entry of IDs and passwords. Both types of nonresponse were observed in the current study, as indicated by the low response rate and the large number of incomplete responses.

3.5.2 – Steps to Data Collection

Data collection was conducted using a 2 X 2 factorial vignette experiment design using online questionnaires. Vignette experiments present respondents with detailed scenarios of an event (Collett & Childs, 2011; Ganong & Coleman, 2006) in which the respondent is either an actor or observer (Collett & Childs, 2011). These scenarios are systematically manipulated on one or more independent variable, such that multiple versions of a single vignette are created to

be identical in all ways except for the manipulated contrastive dimensions (Burstin, Doughtie, & Raphaeli, 1980; Ganong & Coleman, 2006). Respondents can then be randomly assigned to read one version of the vignette while keeping them unaware of the experimental variations (Burstin et al., 1980), making this technique ideal for the measurement of interpersonal attitudes (Burstin et al., 1980; Ganong & Coleman, 2006). Respondents are then asked to respond to a series of questions designed to measure their reactions to the characters or events depicted in the vignette, typically taking the form of Likert-type scales to produce objectively scored ordinal-level data (Burstin et al., 1980). Furthermore, these experimental designs are easily adapted to a web-based setting (Baron & Siepmann, 2000), allowing for numerous advantages such as automated data entry (Granello & Wheaton, 2004; Reips, 2002) and access to larger sample sizes (Reips, 2002).

During recruitment for this study, participants were directed to the online questionnaire. Each participant was randomly assigned to one of four possible versions of the questionnaire, each version representing a different manipulation of the two independent variables (character alcohol consumption and victim gender). Participants were asked to read a short scenario depicting a hypothetical sexual assault before answering a 34-item questionnaire about the scenario they had just read. Items on the questionnaire consisted of three qualitative questions followed by 27 quantitative questions, and finally, four questions regarding demographic variables. Twenty-four of the quantitative questions represented the dependent variables relating to participants' perceptions of each character, all of which took the form of a seven-point Likert-type scale. After completing the questionnaire, participants were thanked and told the true purpose of the study – to examine how undergraduate students' perceptions of responsibility and blame may differ depending on the alcohol consumption and gender of the characters depicted in the scenario. Participants were then asked to confirm that they consenting to having their data

included in the research. Finally, participants were again provided with the list of Ottawa-based resources for support if needed.

3.6 – CONSTRUCTION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

3.6.1 – Vignettes: The Independent Variables

Two independent variables with two conditions each were examined as part of the current research: character alcohol consumption (alcohol vs. no alcohol) and victim gender (female vs. male). Both independent variables were operationalized and manipulated through the use of short vignettes which depicted a hypothetical sexual assault between two university-aged acquaintances. These vignettes were largely modeled after vignettes used in previous research on social reactions to sexual assault (e.g. Cameron & Stritzke, 2003; Davies et al., 2006; Romero-Sanchez et al., 2012; Sleath & Bull, 2010). The vignettes were designed to depict a sexual assault occurring between two acquaintances which involved unwanted sexual touching but no penetration.²³ This form of sexual assault was chosen both in order to minimize any potential perceived differences between the male and female victim versions and because unwanted sexual touching (as opposed to unwanted penetration) constitutes the majority of sexual assaults reported on victimization surveys (Brennan & Taylor-Butts, 2008; Perreault, 2015). Additionally, a dating scenario was specifically avoided in order to minimize any potential effects of character sexual orientation; as the perpetrator was male in all four scenarios, describing the characters as having dated would imply that the female victim was heterosexual while the male victim was homosexual. This detail would have serious implications, as it would confound the effects of victim gender with their sexual orientation, a factor which has been

²³ While penetrative assault was not described in the vignettes, the scenarios ended with the perpetrator forcibly touching the victim's genitals. No information about the events following this is provided, and it is therefore possible that some students would assume that the assault would continue and progress to forced penetration.

shown to significantly impact participants' attributions towards both characters (Davies et al., 2011; Davies et al., 2006; Davies & Rogers, 2006).

The vignette depicted the victim, a university student in their early twenties (either 'Amy' or 'John'), as attending an off-campus party with some classmates. At the party, they talk and share a few drinks (either beer or soda) with one of their classmates, Michael, who eventually offers to let them stay the night at his nearby apartment. At his apartment, Michael proceeds to sexually assault the victim, despite their verbal and physical resistance. Four versions of the vignette were created to reflect the manipulations of the alcohol consumption and victim gender variables; each of the four versions were identical except for information indicating the condition of each independent variable. As such, the four possible conditions produced by a full 2 X 2 factorial design were as follows: (1) female victim/alcohol; (2) female victim/no alcohol; (3) male victim/no alcohol; and (4) male victim/alcohol. A sample of the female victim/alcohol version is included with the full questionnaire in Appendix E.

3.6.2 – Qualitative Questions

Due to the fact that a primary aim of the current research was to contribute to a better understanding of how undergraduate students define and attribute responsibility and blame to actors involved in sexual assault, the first three questions were open-ended. The first question, "What is your initial reaction to the events just described?" was included as a way to ease participants into the questionnaire, to encourage thoughtful, honest responses, and to capture dimensions or aspects of participants' perceptions of the actors involved that are not captured by the theoretical constructions and quantitative portion of the questionnaire. The remaining two open-ended questions asked participants to define what it means for someone to be responsible

and blameworthy for something, respectively. These questions were included in order to assess the validity (or lack thereof) of theoretical constructions of responsibility and blame with respect to how undergraduate students define and use these concepts.

3.6.3 – Manipulation Checks

Three manipulation checks were included: one to gauge participants' assessment of the scenario as sexual assault, and two to assess participants' recognition of the character alcohol consumption condition. The first was included as an additional check that participants did in fact recognize the described scenario as a sexual assault. If participants disagreed with this assertion, it could suggest a discrepancy between the legal definition and participants' understandings of what constitutes sexual assault. This sexual assault check was presented in the form of a statement: "The events described constitute a sexual assault." Participants were then asked to rate their agreement with the statement on a seven-point Likert-type scale, ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree."

The remaining two questions were included as manipulation checks for the alcohol condition. Since the alcohol consumption of the victim and perpetrator was one of the variables of interest with respect to testing the hypotheses, it was necessary to ensure that participants were able to correctly identify the manipulation of this variable. Participants' failure to do so would mean that its manipulation was unsuccessful and therefore, would not be accurately reflected in subsequent analyses. Separate questions were included for the victim and perpetrator characters that asked participants to identify which of three statements best described the victim (Amy or John) and perpetrator (Michael) in the scenario they just read: (a) didn't drink / sober; (b) drank some / intoxicated; or (c) drank a lot / drunk. All manipulation checks also included a "don't

know / prefer not to answer” option to ensure that participants had the option of refusing any question throughout the study, which were recoded as missing.

3.6.4 – Dependent Variables

Generally, it is recommended that previously constructed and tested questionnaires be used wherever possible, as opposed to creating a new questionnaire for survey research unless they are thoroughly tested (Czaja & Blair, 2005; Peterson, 2000; Saris & Gallhofer, 2014). However, due to the lack of methodological consistency amongst research aiming to measure attributions of responsibility and/or blame, it was difficult to select a previously used questionnaire to use for the current research. The specific questionnaires and questions used to measure these constructs vary considerably across studies, and several studies have used measures which are specific to the details of the scenarios used, making it difficult to adapt these questionnaires for use in other research. Additionally, none of the questionnaires used in the previously discussed research have been systematically tested within their study populations, and only a few have used statistical techniques (such as principal components analysis or regression models) to assess the structure of their questionnaires (Cameron & Stritzke, 2003; Davies et al., 2006; Davies et al., 2011). Furthermore, due to inconsistencies throughout the literature, it was similarly difficult to model the questionnaire items representing the dependent variables for the current research after those used in previous studies. Consequently, in an effort to contribute to a better understanding of how undergraduate students make such attributions, the questionnaire for the current research was developed through a review of the theoretical constructs of responsibility and blame.

Czaja and Blair (2005) recommend that researchers – especially those with less experience – follow a systematic process when designing surveys. Their proposed process begins with the research questions, under which a number of survey question topics should be listed. From these question topics, and on the basis of a review of how previous studies have attempted to measure similar constructs, individual questions can be generated. These questions should then be assessed in terms of relevancy, clarity, and their ability to be analyzed using the proposed analytical technique, and should be revised as needed (Czaja & Blair, 2005, pp. 60-61). On the basis of the main research question of the current research, survey question topics were generated based on the three types of attributions routinely discussed within the literature: causal, responsibility, and blame attributions. In particular, theoretical constructions that clearly distinguished between (or justified the interchangeable use of) causality, responsibility, and blame, as well as their underlying dimensions were utilized. The current questionnaire was therefore largely founded on the theoretical definitions of responsibility and blame proposed by Bradbury and Fincham (1990) and Shaver (1985), as well as the distinction between causal and moral responsibility or accountability, as made by Harvey and Rule (1978). Six levels of attribution were therefore defined: (1) causal; (2) intent; (3) choice/volition; (4) understanding of the moral consequences or wrongfulness; (5) responsibility; and (6) blame. Several attributional statements were then made for each level of attribution, toward both the victim and perpetrator characters, resulting in a total of 23 victim-related statements and 21 perpetrator-related statements (see Appendix D).

From this, 13 victim statements and 13 identical perpetrator statements were retained. Czaja and Blair (2005) caution against using agreement-based rating scales, as respondents tend toward greater agreement with such statements, and so each statement (with the exception of

those regarding cause) was restructured into questions with the form of “How much was...” As Shaver (1985) notes, cause is a dichotomous concept; an action either caused or did not cause an event. By contrast, an action may contribute to an event by varying degrees. As such, the statements regarding cause were kept as agreement-based statements. Of those statements which were abandoned at this stage, the primary reason for doing so was redundancy. For example, the statement “Amy/John is blameworthy” was considered both redundant and more ambiguous than the statement “Amy/John is to blame for the outcome of the events described,” and was therefore abandoned from subsequent versions of the questionnaire. Additionally, all of the causal choice point statements were abandoned largely because of difficulties restructuring into the desired question format, but also in order to maintain symmetry between the victim and perpetrator questions (Anderson & Doherty, 2008).²⁴

In accordance with previous studies, an ordinal rating scale was used to measure participants’ judgements on each of the dependent variable items. Peterson (2000) suggests that there are three decisions to be made regarding the construction of rating scales: (1) how many categories should be included; (2) how to verbally label categories; and (3) what visual form the rating scale will take. While the third decision regarding the rating scales’ visual form largely depends on the experience of the researcher, aesthetic concerns, and functionality (Peterson, 2000), the first two decisions require considerable thought. Regarding the number of categories, it is generally recommended that approximately seven categories be used for subjective judgements (Peterson, 2000; Saris & Gallhofer, 2014), although a greater number of categories may be required in order to get more precise responses (Peterson, 2000; Saris & Gallhofer, 2014) or if more sophisticated analytical techniques are being used (Peterson, 2000). An odd number of

²⁴ This choice was made largely in an effort to avoid emphasizing the importance of one character over the other due to an uneven number of questions about each character (Anderson & Doherty, 2008), as well as to ensure that comparisons could be made between attributions toward each character.

categories should also only be used if a neutral or indifferent response is possible (Peterson, 2000). On the basis of these concerns, as well as through a review of the literature relating to the intended analytical techniques, a seven-point rating scale was used for the current study.

Regarding the second decision of what verbal stimuli should be used to label categories (Peterson, 2000), it is typically recommended that rating scales be bipolar rather than unipolar (Peterson, 2000; Saris & Gallhofer, 2014). Peterson (2000) argues that “anchors must possess opposite meanings” (p. 67) in order to maintain unidimensionality, and therefore bipolar scales, in which the scale is anchored by category labels at both opposite extremes, should be used wherever possible. Furthermore, while unipolar scales may be appropriate if it is known that all respondents’ answers will be on one side of the scale (Saris & Gallhofer, 2014), unipolar scales increase concerns of both ambiguity (Peterson, 2000) and bias (Saris & Gallhofer, 2014). Unbalanced or asymmetrical scales present similar problems, and should therefore be avoided whenever possible (Peterson, 2000; Saris & Gallhofer, 2014). Additionally, there is little consensus on the decision to present all, some, or only extreme category labels in rating scales (Peterson, 2000; Saris & Gallhofer, 2014). While it may become more difficult to appropriately label all categories as the number of categories increases (Saris & Gallhofer, 2014), the decision should generally be made depending on what is most specific and unambiguous²⁵ (Peterson, 2000). Category labels for the current research therefore ranged from “not at all” to “entirely” and for the questions regarding cause, from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” The concern of which category labels to include was addressed throughout pretesting.

Once a first draft of the questionnaire is constructed, it is important to undergo a pretest in order to ensure that the questionnaire has been designed appropriately for the purpose of the research and for the population of study (Czaja & Blair, 2005; Peterson, 2000). While more

²⁵ This implies an emphasis on face-valid measurement.

complicated questionnaires and less experienced researchers generally require more extensive pretesting, such as the use of pilot studies and samples which are representative of (or even sampled from) the study population (Peterson, 2000), time and financial constraints substantially limited the ability of the current research to undergo extensive pretesting. In lieu of more sophisticated – and therefore more expensive and time consuming – methods of pretesting, a convenience sample is most commonly used, which “can vary from spouses, friends, neighbours, or coworkers to individuals who are similar to targeted study participants” (Peterson, 2000, p. 116). Pretest participants can then be directly questioned, either retroactively or concurrently as they complete and review the questionnaire, allowing participants to “bring up thoughts, questions, or ideas that come to mind during the administration of the questionnaire and even offer criticisms of the questions and questionnaire” (Peterson, 2000, p. 117).

The questionnaire for the current research was pretested using direct questioning of a convenience sample of the researcher’s peers. Of particular concern during pretesting was to assess the questionnaire for issues of clarity, ambiguity, relevancy, redundancy, and bias. First, one of the questions regarding choice (“How much was Amy/John able to act differently in order to influence the outcome of the events described?”) was found to be unclear, ambiguous, and difficult to answer. Similar concerns were discussed in response to the parallel perpetrator question, and therefore both were removed from later versions of the questionnaire.²⁶ Secondly, the question regarding the victim’s awareness of the wrongfulness of their actions was found to be particularly concerning due to the implied meaning that their actions were in fact wrongful.²⁷

²⁶ These questions were removed rather than modified due to the fact that the core ideas presented – that they had the ability to act differently and that their actions were able to influence the outcome – were already captured by the questions relating to choice, cause, and contribution.

²⁷ This question does not ask *if* the victim’s actions were wrong, but instead asks about their perceived awareness of this, and was therefore considered a biased and leading question due to the implicit assumption that the victim’s actions were wrong. While it could have potentially been restructured to reflect these dual aspects of the original

This item was subsequently removed along with the parallel perpetrator question. Third, one of the pretest participants noted that the issue of consent was not addressed by any of the questionnaire items, despite its relevance to the issue of sexual assault. Two questions regarding how consensual each character's involvement was were therefore created. While one pretest participant indicated that the inclusion of these items created some redundancy due to the similarities between the dimensions of consent and volition, these questions were otherwise well received and were therefore included in the final version of the questionnaire due to the potential information these questions may add to the analysis.²⁸ The response categories used for each question were also of concern during pretesting, particularly regarding the number of categories included and the appropriateness of category labels; both the number of categories and their labels were found to be reasonable and appropriate. Furthermore, pretest participants also found that the inclusion of full category labels, as opposed to including only some or only the extreme category labels, provided the least ambiguous response choices.

The final questionnaire therefore included 12 items designed to measure participants' judgements of the victim on the dimensions of causality (two items), awareness of the consequences, intent, choice, volition, consent, responsibility, moral accountability, blame, fault, and liability for condemnation. Each item was measured on a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from "not at all" to "entirely," with the exception of the question relating to perceptions of cause, which used a rating scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." Each rating scale was coded for analysis from 1 to 7, with 1 representing "not at all" or "strongly

question, the content itself was deemed to be too socially problematic, particularly in light of this study's theoretical framework.

²⁸ Although the dimension of consent is not discussed as part of theoretical constructions of responsibility and blame, lack of consent is the defining feature of sexual assault (*Criminal Code*, 1985). However, perceptions of consent are rarely directly examined in the literature on attributions about sexual assault (e.g. Klippenstine et al., 2007), and so additional information may be gained by asking participants about the degree of consent involved.

disagree” and 7 representing “entirely” or “strongly agree.” Separate “don’t know” and “prefer not to answer” options were also included with each questionnaire item in an effort to discern respondents who did not know how to answer a question from those who did not want to. These options were originally coded as 98 and 99, respectively, but were later recoded as missing. All 12 items were repeated for the perpetrator character, resulting in a total of 24 items relating to the dependent variables.

3.6.5 – Demographic Variables

Four questions were included to assess the demographic makeup of the sample. Participant gender, which was included as a nominal level variable, was the only demographic variable to be included as a variable of interest in subsequent analyses. Four options were included, of which only two were coded as valid responses (male or female); the remaining two options (“you don’t have an option that applies to me” and “don’t know / prefer not to answer”) were recoded as missing for the purposes of the statistical analyses.²⁹ Participants were also asked to indicate their age in years, their year of study, and their major(s) of study. Possible options for majors of study were selected based on academic units within the Faculty of Social Sciences.³⁰ Appendix E presents the questionnaire.

²⁹ If a substantial number of participants identified as a gender identity other than male or female, their responses could have been included as a third valid participant gender. However, only two participants selected this option, producing an insufficient number of responses from this gender category to provide meaningful statistical results.

³⁰ The name of the programs associated with the Institute of Feminist and Gender Studies (Women’s Studies) are currently under review and therefore are inconsistent with the name of the department. The use of ‘Institute of Feminist and Gender Studies’ to refer to the department from which participants were recruited, and ‘Women’s Studies’ to refer to the major of study included in the questionnaire and presented throughout the analysis is consistent with the department and programs at the time of writing.

3.7 – METHODS OF ANALYSES

A number of analytical techniques were used for the current mixed methods research. These techniques comprised of principal components analysis (PCA), multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA), nonparametric Mann-Whitney U tests, and qualitative content analysis. All quantitative analyses were conducted using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for Windows.

3.7.1 – Subsamples Used for Quantitative Analysis

A total of 138 completed questionnaires were received; however, not all 138 responses were used for the final quantitative analyses. All analyses were performed multiple times using different subsets of the original sample in order to determine which subsample(s) would produce the most valid results. Appendix F provides a breakdown of which subsets of the original sample were analyzed, resulting in the final subsamples of 82 women and 15 men. First, four responses were excluded from analyses due to missing participant gender data, a variable which was of key interest to the research questions. Secondly, 37 responses were excluded due to participants incorrectly answering one or both manipulation checks regarding the characters' alcohol consumption. An additional 18 cases were coded as missing on one or both of these manipulation checks; inclusion of these responses produced similar, but more statistically powerful results compared to only those who correctly answered the manipulation checks and were therefore included in subsequent reported analyses.³¹ Finally, due to the small number of male participants in the sample, the originally planned 3-way MANOVA was not possible, as some cells with male

³¹ While studies that include manipulation checks often simply exclude cases with missing or incorrect responses to these questions, Davies and colleagues (2006) similarly conducted their analyses with incorrect cases excluded, and again with them included, finding similar results with both analyses. Results from the full sample were therefore reported.

participants had too few cases to produce valid results. As such, separate analyses were conducted for the final samples of 82 female and 15 male participants.

3.7.2 – Missing Data

Missing data is a common problem for social science research, and can have extensive negative effects on both the amount and depth of information that can be obtained from the data (Enders, 2010; McKnight, 2007; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). There are many possible options for dealing with missing data (Enders, 2010; McKnight, 2007; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007), with the most commonly used being the deletion of cases or variables with missing data, and imputation, or estimating values to replace missing values (Enders, 2010; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). However, while each method is associated with different advantages and disadvantages which often depend on how and why data are missing (McKnight, 2007; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007), Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) argue that when less than 5% of data are missing in a random pattern, there will be little difference between methods.

Due to the fact that the sample for the current research was already relatively small, particularly once cases were excluded due to incorrect responses to the manipulation checks, missing value imputation was used in order to avoid the loss of additional cases or data through deletion.³² In particular, missing values analysis (MVA) was performed to assess the quantity and pattern of missing data (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007), and expectation maximization (EM) was used to impute missing data. EM is a form of maximum likelihood estimation which imputes missing data based on the observed values and estimates of the parameters of the data using a correlation matrix (Enders, 2010; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). As most statistical software

³² All analyses were run using the default option for dealing with missing cases in SPSS: listwise deletion (Enders, 2010; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). This resulted in the deletion of 44 cases from the original sample of $N = 138$. A deletion method was therefore deemed an unacceptable method of dealing with missing data in the current research.

packages now include EM algorithms, EM is a widely available and easy to implement technique for imputing missing data (Enders, 2010; McKnight, 2007; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

Additionally, EM has significant advantages over other, more traditional methods (such as mean estimation or listwise deletion) with respect to estimating parameters and retaining greater statistical power (Enders, 2010). EM is therefore ideal for use when the amount of data which are missing is small (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

3.7.3 – Scale Construction

In lieu of testing all original questionnaire items, the first set of quantitative analyses examined the structure of the questionnaire in order to assist in the construction of sub scales to be used as dependent variables. Two exploratory multivariate statistical techniques are routinely utilized for similar goals: factor analysis (FA) and principal components analysis (PCA). Both statistical techniques attempt to assess the underlying nature of a large set of variables by analyzing the variance and covariance amongst them. These analyses produce groupings of variables which are highly correlated with each other, referred to as either factors or components, depending on whether FA or PCA is used, respectively (Harlow, 2014; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). In this way, these factors or components can be used to reduce a large number of variables into a smaller, more manageable number of components, for which sum or mean scores can be calculated, to be used as dependent variables in other multivariate techniques such as MANOVA (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007, p. 650; Blaikie, 2003; Harlow, 2014). Additionally, these statistical techniques are ideal for use when “there has been little success after several years in reaching agreement on the major concepts” (Cattell, 1988, p. 132), an issue which is prevalent with respect to the use of responsibility and blame in the context of sexual assault.

Mathematically, both FA and PCA analyze the variance and covariance amongst variables by producing several linear combinations of the observed variables that make up the factors or components (Blaikie, 2003; Harlow, 2014; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Where the two techniques differ is in the amount of variance that is analyzed; while FA analyzes only the variance that is shared by variables, PCA analyzes all of the variables' variance in an effort to extract and use the greatest amount of variance possible (Harlow, 2014; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Theoretically, this means that the two techniques may differ in the relationship between the factors or components, the observed variables they are comprised of, and the underlying construct those factors or components are thought to reflect. In FA, the underlying processes or constructs, which are represented by the factors, are what cause the observed variables; i.e., the factors cause the scores on observed variables. By contrast, the components produced by PCA are merely "aggregates of correlated variables" (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007, p. 610), and therefore, they are produced by the observed variables themselves. As such, it is understood that the components produced through PCA will not necessarily reflect an underlying theoretical process, as would be expected of FA (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

Despite the theoretical advantages of FA over PCA, particularly with respect to the goal of the current research to examine and explore the theoretical constructs underlying attributions of responsibility and blame, a PCA was employed to explore the structure of the questionnaire in the current research. First, Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) suggest that a large sample of at least 300 cases is necessary to produce reliable correlation coefficients in FA, and this is particularly important when it is being used to build and test theory. Additionally, proper use of FA (or, to a lesser extent, PCA) for theory building or testing and for the development of objective measures typically requires extensive pre-testing with multiple large random samples (Harlow, 2014;

Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Substantial time constraints prevented this aspect of FA from being part of the current research. Finally, in light of these limitations, the goals of the current research, as they relate to the theoretical constructs, were simply to explore the structure of the questionnaire, to explore the relationships between observed variables, and to reduce the large number of observed variables into a more manageable number of dependent variables to be analyzed with a MANOVA. PCA is generally accepted as being better suited to these goals (Harlow, 2014; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007) and was therefore employed to construct the scales used in the current research.

A PCA was conducted using data from the subsample of 82 women.³³ Oblique rotation was used to increase the interpretability of the solution, a statistical technique which maximizes the loadings of observed variables on components without changing the underlying mathematical structure (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). An oblique method of rotation (direct oblimin rotation in SPSS) was selected over orthogonal methods, as oblique methods are ideal when it is expected that components will correlate with each other (Blaikie, 2003; Harlow, 2014; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was also reported to assess the adequacy of the PCA with the current sample, with values of at least .60 generally being required for an adequate solution (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Only components with eigenvalues greater than 1 were retained for further analysis, as components with lower eigenvalues are generally assumed to explain less variance than the individual variables on their own (Blaikie, 2003; Harlow, 2014; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Finally, as each component was used to create subscales for use in a MANOVA, the internal reliability of each subscale was

³³ As a primary and pragmatic reason for using PCA to construct subscales was to produce a more manageable number of dependent variables for a multivariate analysis of variance, and because the small number of male participants required that they be excluded from this analysis, the responses of male participants were not included in the PCA.

tested using Cronbach's alpha, the most commonly used statistical test for internal reliability of tests and questionnaires within psychological research (Blaikie, 2003; Helms, Henze, Sass, & Mifsud, 2006). Participants' mean scores for each subscale with acceptable values for Cronbach's alpha were calculated and used in subsequent analyses.

3.7.4 – Multivariate Analysis of Variance

In line with previous studies examining similar effects and using similar experimental designs (e.g. Cameron & Stritzke, 2003; Davies et al., 2006), a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was performed to assess the effects of each dependent variable and test hypotheses. MANOVA is a multivariate method which builds off of analysis of variance (ANOVA) and examines group differences in mean on a number of variables (Harlow, 2014; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Similar to ANOVA, MANOVA allows for the analysis of two or more categorical independent variables; however, unlike ANOVA, it also allows for the analysis of multiple continuous dependent variables (Harlow, 2014; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). This is achieved by creating a new linear combination of dependent variables for each main and interaction effect in a factorial design, each of which are "combined so as to separate the groups as much as possible" (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007, p. 243). In this way, MANOVA is better able to assess the complex interactions between variables and to discover "what it is that changes as a result of different treatments and their interactions" (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007, p. 243). Additionally, MANOVA is advantageous over a series of ANOVAs as it protects against inflated Type I error produced by performing multiple tests for each dependent variable, all of which are likely to be correlated (Haase & Ellis, 1987; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). As such, this technique was ideal for the current research due to the nature of the variables involved; both independent variables were

dichotomous, categorical variables, and multiple dependent variables representing the latent variables of responsibility and blame, which are also expected to correlate to some degree, were examined. Any significant multivariate effects could then be further examined using follow-up univariate F tests and independent t tests as needed to assess exactly how the effects were manifested between groups (Harlow, 2014).

There are a number of assumptions of MANOVA that needed to be addressed in order to ensure valid results. First, MANOVA assumes that data are normally distributed (Harlow, 2014; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). As the sample of female participants surpassed the threshold of $N \geq 30$ for a sample to approach normality, according to the central limit theorem (Harris, 2002), it was reasonable to assume that the distribution of women's scores on the dependent variables would be roughly normally distributed. Monte Carlo studies have also confirmed that MANOVA is robust to violations of normality with similar sample sizes (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Additionally, although research employing ANOVA for ordinal data has often been criticized for violating assumptions of normality (Lubke & Muthen, 2009; Nanna & Sawilowsky, 1998; Wirth & Edwards, 2007), the use of factor or component scores when the number of response categories per item is greater than five is not likely to significantly impact the reliability or validity of results using traditional MANOVA techniques (Wirth & Edwards, 2007). A second assumption of MANOVA is that there are no outliers, as they may produce either Type I or Type II errors with little indication to which one is occurring (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Data were therefore visually screened for the existence of outliers prior to analysis.

Finally, a third major assumption of MANOVA is that there is homogeneity of variance and covariance across variables; i.e. the variance for one variable is roughly equal to that of the other variables (Harlow, 2014; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Testing this assumption and the

effects which violations to it will have on results largely depends on the number of cases in each group. In order to test the assumption that there is homogeneity of variance and covariance, it is necessary to have more cases than dependent variables in each cell; ideally, there would be more than only one or two cases more than dependent variables³⁴ (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). This assumption is routinely tested using Box's test of equality of covariance matrices (Box's *M*), which produces an *F*-test which should not be significant if the assumption is met (Harlow, 2014; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). However, Box's *M* is highly sensitive to violations of normality and often does not provide meaningful results (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) argue that if sample sizes are equal, it is expected that the MANOVA will be robust to violations of this assumption, regardless of the significance of Box's *M*. Robustness cannot, however, be guaranteed if sample sizes are unequal and Box's *M* is significant at $p < .001$. If large samples tend to produce larger variances, then α will be conservative and the null hypothesis can be rejected with confidence. By contrast, if small samples tend to produce larger variances, then α will be liberal and "indications of mean differences are suspect" (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007, p. 252), as there will be an increased likelihood of making a Type I error.

3.7.5 – Mann-Whitney U Test

Due to the small number of male participants in the current research, it was necessary to use a less complicated statistical test than MANOVA to examine the effects of the independent variables amongst men. While a *t* test would ordinarily be employed to test differences in mean between two independent groups, as a parametric inferential test, it assumes that the samples'

³⁴ When a MANOVA was performed on the sample of both male and female respondents, several cells did not meet this criterion due to the small number of men in the sample. It was therefore impossible to test the assumption of homogeneity of variance and covariance, and the validity of results would have been substantially compromised.

scores will be normally distributed (Brysbaert, 2011; Hart, 2001). The Central Limit Theorem states that as the sample size increases, the distribution will approach normality (Brysbaert, 2011). However, as the sample of valid responses from male participants included only 15 cases, a normal distribution could not be assumed and a nonparametric alternative was necessary.

The nonparametric alternative to the *t* test with two independent samples is the Mann-Whitney U test (Brysbaert, 2011; Evans, 1998; Hart, 2001). The Mann-Whitney U test is a relatively simple test which assesses differences between groups by ranking each score and testing whether one group tends to have higher (or lower) scores than the other (Brysbaert, 2011; Hart, 2001). While it is often referred to as a test of differences in medians, the Mann-Whitney U test is actually a test of distributions (Brysbaert, 2011; Evans, 1998; Hart, 2001), and treating it only as a test of medians may mask important and potentially more interesting differences in the overall distributions (Hart, 2001). Consequently, there are two ways in which the Mann-Whitney U test can be used. First, if the distributions are a similar shape, it will test for a difference in location; i.e., it will test for a significant difference in median. By contrast, if the medians of both groups are similar (or, potentially, equal), it will test for differences in the distribution of scores. It is therefore possible to have a significant difference between groups with equal medians (Evans, 1998; Hart, 2001).

A series of Mann-Whitney U tests were performed to test differences between groups (according to the two independent variables) across all 24 observed variables included on the questionnaire. Male participants' scores on each subscale identified through PCA were also tested.³⁵ Additionally, in order to facilitate making preliminary comparisons between male and female participants, a series of Mann-Whitney U tests were also performed on the 24 observed

³⁵ Male participants' data were not included in the PCA. As a consequence, these subscales may not reflect correlations amongst observed variables for male participants, and results concerning these scores should be interpreted with caution.

variables for female participants. It should be noted that nonparametric tests are generally less statistically powerful compared to parametric tests, resulting in a greater likelihood of making a Type II error (Brysbaert, 2011; Harris, 2002). This concern is particularly exacerbated by the very small number of male participants (Harris, 2002), although the difference between *t* tests and the Mann-Whitney U test with respect to statistical power has been demonstrated to be relatively small (Brysbaert, 2011; de Winter & Dodou, 2010).

3.7.6 – Qualitative Content Analysis

While most research on attributions about sexual assault have employed strictly quantitative methods (Anderson & Doherty, 2008), the current study has added to this methodological literature through the use of an additional qualitative component to analyze the three open-ended questions included in the questionnaire. The use of a mixed methods research design was particularly advantageous, as it allowed for the use of qualitative analyses to better understand the quantitative findings (Brannen, 2005; Forman & Damschroder, 2015). Additionally, it allowed me as the researcher to address different aims and research questions which were uniquely suitable for either quantitative or qualitative analyses (Brannen, 2005).

Content analysis, a qualitative method which is ideal for the analysis of textual data, categorizes data “using categories that are generated, at least in part, inductively” (Forman & Damschroder, 2015, p. 40). While this means that categories and the analysis as a whole is generally derived from the data (Forman & Damschroder, 2015; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006), existing knowledge about the phenomena and the theoretical framework can be used, when available, to help frame and direct the development of categories and concepts to be used in the analysis (Forman & Damschroder, 2015). Content analysis is a fluid process, often shifting in

focus as new categories and concepts emerge (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). The content analysis for the current study loosely followed the broadly defined phases of content analysis of immersion, reduction, and interpretation (Forman & Damschroder, 2015). Immersion began as an initial engagement with the qualitative data, largely consisting of summarizing the main idea(s) of each individual response and adding comments as patterns and themes emerged, and to note particularly interesting quotes. These summaries were then used to code the data in a more systematic manner, reorganizing the data into emerging themes and concepts, further separated between the three original questions. Finally, the data were interpreted, situating the analysis within the empirical and theoretical literature and drawing connections between responses to each of the three questions. Appendix F provides a sample of the coding scheme used for content analysis.

3.8 – ETHICAL CONCERNS

Several steps were taken to ensure that the current study complied with the ethical standards set out by the University of Ottawa Research Ethics Board (see Appendix A). A first ethical concern is that of anonymity. In addition to participants' general desire to maintain their privacy, due to the nature of the phenomena of interest (which may elicit responses that are considered socially unacceptable), it was important to ensure participants' anonymity. Additionally, as recruitment was facilitated by professors, it was necessary to assure potential participants that the professors were in no way associated with the study and that their participation would have no impact on their performance in the course from which they were recruited. In order to ensure complete anonymity, no identifying information (such as an email address) was asked of participants, and potential participants were reminded during recruitment

that the study was independent of the course and professor and as such, their responses could not be connected to their performance in the course. Participants' anonymity was further protected through options selected within the survey-building tool. Upon opening the online questionnaire, participants were automatically assigned a numerical respondent ID which was used only to distinguish between respondents. Additionally, while the survey provider is capable of collecting information on respondent's IP address, location, internet browser, and computer operating system, the option to not collect this information was also provided and selected for the current study. However, this complete anonymity was in some ways a limitation to the current research for two reasons. First, this meant it was not possible to offer participants compensation, such as in the form of a raffle, potentially diminishing the response rate to some degree. Secondly, from a methodological and analytical standpoint, the lack of identifying information also prevented any follow-up with participants regarding their qualitative responses, either for clarifying or elaborative purposes. In this way, assurance of participants' anonymity may have compromised the clarity and detail of qualitative responses.

Secondly, due to the topic of the current research, there was some concern that participants may feel distress during or upon completion of the questionnaire. In order to avoid such a situation, during recruitment, potential participants were told that the study would require them to read a brief hypothetical scenario involving a sexual assault. In this way, students who anticipated a negative psychological reaction were able to refuse to participate. However, there remained some risk that students who chose to participate and accept such a risk might experience unanticipated distress.³⁶ In light of this possibility, a list of the contact information of several Ottawa-based sexual assault support services were provided both as part of the letter of

³⁶ The inclusion of the de-briefing at the end of the questionnaire also served to ensure that in light of the nature of the study, participants still consented to having their responses included.

information which professors were asked to post to Blackboard Learn and after completion of the questionnaire.

3.9 – SUMMARY

In summary, this chapter has outlined the methodological procedures employed to answer the research questions and test hypotheses. Using online questionnaires with a convenience sample of 138 undergraduate students of the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Ottawa, the use of a vignette experimental design provided the opportunity to employ a mixed quantitative and qualitative study design. Complications which arose due to small sample size, uneven sampling of male and female participants, and incorrect responses to manipulation checks necessitated the use of separate statistical analyses of male and female participants. As such, a combination of PCA, MANOVA, and nonparametric Mann-Whitney U tests were utilized to test hypotheses, in addition to the qualitative content analysis employed to further explore participants' reactions to the vignettes. The following two chapters present the quantitative and qualitative findings yielded through the methodologies described in this chapter.

CHAPTER 4 – QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

This chapter presents the quantitative research findings, first, by reporting the descriptive statistics for the final 138 participants, as identified through the demographic questions regarding participants' gender, age, year of study, and major(s) of study. Next, the findings from the data screening are presented, including both sets of manipulation checks and an examination of missing data using MVA. Due to the fact that the small number of men obtained in this sample required separate analyses for male and female participants, quantitative results are separated by participant gender. Quantitative findings amongst female participants are presented first, including results from demographic questions, PCA, MANOVA, and Mann-Whitney U tests. Finally, demographic and Mann-Whitney U test findings for male participants are presented.

4.1 – PARTICIPANTS

Participants consisted of 138 undergraduate students solicited from courses within the Criminology, Sociology & Anthropology, and Feminist & Gender Studies departments at the University of Ottawa. One hundred-fourteen participants (82.6%) identified as female, and 20 (14.5%) identified as male. Two participants (1.4%) selected "other" (both identified as "gender fluid"), and another two chose not to respond. Participants ranged in age from 17 to 53, with a mean age of 20.21 and a median age of 20.00 ($SD = 3.67$). Students in their first year of studies represented the largest proportion of participants (37.0%), followed by students in their third year of studies (22.5%; Table 4.1). The largest proportion of participants identified their major of study as Criminology (44.2%), followed by majors of study other than those provided on the questionnaire (20.3%) and Women's Studies (13.8%; Table 4.2).

Table 4.1: Participants' year of study

Year of Study	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
First year	51	37.0	37.0
Second year	27	19.6	56.6
Third year	31	22.5	79.1
Fourth year	21	15.2	94.3
Fifth or higher year	7	5.1	99.4
Don't know / prefer not to answer	1	0.7	100.1
Total	138	100.0	

Table 4.2: Participants' major(s) of study

Code	Major of Study	Frequency	Percent
1	Anthropology	5	3.6
2	Conflict Studies and Human Rights	9	6.5
3	Criminology	61	44.2
4	Economics	0	0.0
5	International Development and Globalization	5	3.6
6	Political Science	10	7.2
7	Psychology	18	13.0
8	Sociology	11	8.0
9	Women's Studies	19	13.8
10	Other (Specify)	28	20.3
99	Don't know / prefer not to say	3	2.2

4.2 – DATA SCREENING

4.2.1 – Sexual Assault Manipulation Check

All participants selected some degree of agreement with the statement “The events described constitute a sexual assault.” Most selected “strongly agree” ($n = 125$), while the remaining participants selected either “agree” ($n = 8$) or “somewhat agree” ($n = 5$).³⁷

³⁷ This finding is, of course, somewhat confounded by the fact that during recruitment, all potential participants were told that the topic of study was sexual assault. Participants were told that the scenario they would read depicted a hypothetical sexual assault, so it is not surprising that all participants agreed to this manipulation check.

4.2.2 – Alcohol Condition Manipulation Checks

Due to the fact that the alcohol condition was one of the variables of interest in regard to the hypotheses, it was necessary to check that participants correctly identified the alcohol condition in the scenario they had read. Fifty-five participants (39.9%) did not correctly identify the alcohol condition for one or both of the characters. Of these, 37 incorrectly identified the alcohol condition for one or both of the characters. The remaining 18 participants either correctly identified the alcohol condition for one character but selected “don’t know / prefer not to answer” for the other character, or selected “don’t know / prefer not to answer” for both characters. Additionally, a greater proportion of participants in either of the non-alcoholic conditions failed to correctly answer these manipulation checks, resulting in an unequal distribution of responses across the four experimental conditions. A chi square test confirmed that the likelihood of participants correctly answering these manipulation checks was unequal across versions, $X^2(6, N = 138) = 56.48, p < .000$ (Table 4.3).

Table 4.3: Responses to alcohol manipulation checks by questionnaire version

Manipulation Check	Alcohol / female victim		No alcohol / female victim		Alcohol / male victim		No alcohol / male victim		Row Totals
	<i>n</i>	Percent within version	<i>n</i>	Percent within version	<i>n</i>	Percent within version	<i>n</i>	Percent within version	
Correct	28	75.7	8	33.3	32	94.1	15	34.9	83
Incorrect	5	13.5	7	29.2	0	0.0	25	58.1	37
Don’t know / prefer not to answer	4	10.8	9	37.5	2	5.9	3	7.0	18
Column Totals	37	100.0	24	100.0	34	100.0	43	100.0	138

No significant differences were found between groups based on their response to these manipulation checks on participant gender, $X^2 (2, N = 134) = 0.41, p = .82$; age, $F (2, 134) = 1.31, p = .27$; and year of study, $X^2 (8, N = 137) = 6.21, p = .62$. Chi square analyses were performed for each major of study, which revealed that a greater proportion of participants who selected “don’t know / prefer not to answer” reported their major of study as Anthropology, compared to the other two groups, $X^2 (2, N = 138) = 20.61, p < .00$.³⁸ No other significant differences were found for the remaining majors of study. All analyses were performed three times: (1) with only those who got the manipulation check correct ($n = 83$); (2) with those who selected “don’t know / prefer not to answer” included ($n = 101$); and (3) with all participants included, regardless of their response to the manipulation checks ($n = 138$). Inclusion of participants who incorrectly identified the alcohol condition produced radically different results,³⁹ and these responses were therefore excluded from reported analyses. Inclusion of participants who selected “don’t know / prefer not to answer” produced similar results to those analyses using only those who got the manipulation check correct and were therefore included in the reported analyses.

In accordance with research which identifies alcohol as a factor in a large portion of sexual assaults (Abbey, 1991; Cowley, 2014; McMahon, 2010; Untied et al., 2012), the current research found evidence that, given the context of the vignettes, participants expected alcohol to be involved. Approximately 40% of participants failed to correctly identify the alcohol consumption of one or both of the characters. It is likely that this failure was the result of

³⁸ Although chi square revealed a significant effect, the difference in terms of number of participants was small, with one participant who correctly answered the manipulation check and four who selected “don’t know / prefer not answer.”

³⁹ The pattern of F statistics produced in the subsequent MANOVA was reversed when these responses were included; i.e. the multivariate effects which were associated with the highest F statistics without these incorrect responses included were associated with the lowest F statistics when these responses were included.

participants who either did not read the vignette carefully enough to pick up on the alcohol condition or, whether they read the vignette carefully or not, were not confident in their assessment of the characters' intoxication.⁴⁰ This explanation is supported by the effect which the inclusion of these responses in the analysis had on results. Presumably, those participants whose responses to one or both of the manipulation checks were missing may have been less confident in their response compared to those who provided a valid response, but did not necessarily fail to recognize the alcohol condition (at least on a subconscious level). This is reflected in the fact that inclusion of these 18 responses produced similar, and in some cases, slightly larger *F* statistics compared to the 79 correct responses alone.⁴¹ By contrast, inclusion of the remaining 37 incorrect responses produced radically different results, suggesting that these participants may not have read the vignette carefully, leading to their incorrect assessment of the characters' intoxication. This is opposed to a potential alternate explanation that participants who did not read the vignette carefully enough selected their response to these questions at random. If this were the case, it could be reasonably expected that their inclusion in analyses would not produce a consistent effect on results.

However, the pattern in which participants correctly or incorrectly answered these manipulation checks provides more interesting information regarding their expectations of the involvement of alcohol. Participants who read one of the soda versions of the vignette were less likely to correctly identify the alcohol condition of one or both of the characters compared to participants who read one of the alcohol versions, with over 60% of responses in both soda

⁴⁰ This in itself is an important methodological finding, and future studies may benefit from making the alcohol condition (or other, similar independent variables) more obvious through the use of additional indicators (e.g. behavioural descriptions which indicate intoxication, such as slurred speech).

⁴¹ Analyses were also repeated in a similar fashion using only the responses from female participants. Similar to the full sample, inclusion of women whose responses were missing on this question produced similar results to only those women who correctly identified the alcohol condition.

conditions being either missing or incorrect. In particular, 32 of the 37 incorrect responses were from participants who had read one of the soda versions. This finding suggests that some participants, given the context of the vignette (a party), may have expected that alcohol would be involved; those participants who did not read the vignette carefully may have subsequently relied on their expectations regarding the involvement of alcohol and thereby incorrectly identified the characters as being intoxicated. By contrast, participants in one of the alcohol conditions may have been less likely to assume the opposite – that the characters would not be consuming alcohol – and therefore, had a higher proportion of correct responses.⁴²

The effects which these expectations can have on how individuals interpret and perceive situations are further documented by research on confirming evidence. For example, Langer, Blank and Chanowitz (1978) have argued that despite the assumption of social psychological theories “that people attend to their world and derive behavioral strategies based on *current* incoming information” (p. 635, emphasis in original), individuals often engage in what the authors describe as “mindless behavior” (p. 636), relying on previously learned rather than new information. This previously learned information is referred to as a prior script on which, once cued by enough new and congruent information, an individual can rely on and thereby fail to attend to and process relevant and potentially contradictory information⁴³ (Howard, 1984; Langer et al., 1978). This reliance of prior scripts is similarly reflected in Bohner and colleagues’ (2009) assertion that information processing is not an unbiased process, but rather, it is selective and may therefore involve emphasizing certain information – such as rape myth-congruent

⁴² Of course, this does not necessarily mean that participants in the alcohol conditions were more likely to read the vignette carefully, therefore resulting in a greater proportion of correct responses. Rather, it is likely that some of these participants did not read the vignette carefully, but that their expectations of the characters’ intoxication matched the actual conditions of the vignette and they were therefore able to correctly answer the manipulation check despite not having read the vignette carefully. It is, however, impossible to determine for how many participants this was true.

⁴³ Furthermore, this selective information processing may also serve to reinforce the prior script by focusing only on information that is congruent with the prior script and overlooking information that contradicts it.

information – over others, or may result in the inference of information that was not presented. This process can be used to explain the unequal distribution of responses based on incorrect manipulation checks. There was some evidence to suggest that there is some expectation amongst participants that alcohol is usually involved both at university parties and in sexual assault; this assumption can be seen to constitute a prior script about what can be expected to happen in similar contexts. Provided with enough information that was congruent with this, participants who did not read the vignette carefully may have relied on this prior script and subsequently failed to process the new relevant information regarding the characters' alcohol consumption (or lack thereof). As such, their response to the manipulation checks, and their overall perception of the situation and characters would have reflected their prior script, thus resulting in both their failure to correctly identify the alcohol condition and the radically different statistical results produced by their inclusion.

4.2.3 – Missing Data

Missing data on the 24 questionnaire items relating to the dependent variables were analyzed using SPSS MVA and an examination of each variable's descriptive statistics and categorical frequencies (see Appendix H and Appendix I). Low proportions of data were missing on a number of variables, with a greater amount of missing data on one victim-related variable and four perpetrator-related variables. Both the victim- and perpetrator-related questions about the characters' awareness of the consequences of their actions had higher proportions of missing data (8.0% and 16.7%, respectively). Additionally, the perpetrator-related questions on his degree of intention (12.3%), voluntary involvement (3.6%), and consent (5.1%) had greater than 2% of data missing. While this suggests that these questionnaire items may have been more

ambiguous or difficult to answer, particularly those pertaining to the characters' awareness of the consequences and the perpetrator's degree of intent, MVA revealed that overall, 2.28% of data were missing in a random pattern from the sample of 97 responses. This proportion of missing data was deemed acceptable for analyses (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). EM was used to impute missing data for all subsequent analyses.⁴⁴

4.3 – FEMALE PARTICIPANTS

4.3.1 – Demographics

Participants in the final subsample of women ($N = 82$) were generally similar to the original sample on demographic variables. Women ranged in age from 17 to 53 ($M = 20.30$, $SD = 4.26$). The greatest proportion of women were in their first year of studies (36.6%), followed by those in their third year of studies (26.8%). Appendix J and Appendix K provide the frequency tables for female participants' year and major(s) of study, respectively.

4.3.2 – Principal Components Analysis

A PCA using direct oblimin rotation was performed on the sample of women only to assess groupings of correlated variables across the 24 questionnaire items.⁴⁵ An examination of the KMO measure of sampling adequacy suggested that the solution was factorable ($KMO =$

⁴⁴ MVA was performed multiple times for each subset of the original sample. Each subsample was revealed to have a similar proportion of missing data, and EM was used to impute missing data for each subsample.

⁴⁵ An exploratory FA using principal axis factoring with direct oblimin rotation was also performed in an attempt to explore the underlying latent variables of the questionnaire. However, as expected and likely due to the small sample size, the seven factor solution this produced was only a mediocre solution as indicated by a KMO of .67. Additionally, due to multiple negative loadings, several factors were conceptually uninterpretable. While the PCA produced a similar KMO value, components were more readily interpretable. The results of this FA confirmed that a PCA was the more appropriate statistical technique to employ for this research (Harlow, 2014; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

.67). In total, 12 of the original 24 items were retained for further analyses (see Appendix L and Appendix M).

Component 1 consisted of seven items, all of which were in relation to judgements about the victim. These items included the questions about blame, fault, accountability, liability for censure or condemnation, responsibility, contribution, and cause. This component had an eigenvalue of 6.97 and accounted for approximately 29% of variance. Cronbach's alpha revealed a high degree of internal reliability ($\alpha = .90$), and this component was subsequently labelled 'Judgements about the victim'.

Six items loaded onto component 2, five of which were in relation to judgements about the perpetrator. These five items included the questions about blame, fault, liability for censure or condemnation, accountability, and responsibility. The sixth item (how much the victim's involvement was voluntary) loaded negatively onto component 2 and was excluded from subsequent reported analyses due to reduced interpretability of the component.⁴⁶ This component had an eigenvalue of 2.96 and accounted for approximately 12% of variance. Cronbach's alpha revealed a high degree of internal reliability ($\alpha = .81$), and this component was subsequently labelled 'Judgements about the perpetrator'.

Component 3 consisted of four items, three of which were in relation to judgements about the perpetrator. These three items included the questions about consent, volition, and awareness of the consequences. The fourth item (how much the victim had a choice) loaded negatively onto component 3 and was excluded from subsequent reported analyses.⁴⁷ The eigenvalue for this

⁴⁶ Cronbach's alpha was calculated twice for this component to assess the impact of the sixth negatively loaded item. Scores for this item were multiplied by negative one to correct for the negative loading. In addition to reducing the conceptual interpretability of the component, inclusion of this corrected item reduced the component's internal reliability ($\alpha = .70$). It was therefore excluded from subsequent analyses.

⁴⁷ Inclusion of this item, corrected for its negative loading, produced a marginally higher (although still unacceptable) internal reliability ($\alpha = .49$).

component was 2.07, and it accounted for almost 9% of variance. Cronbach's alpha revealed a poor degree of internal reliability ($\alpha = .39$). Component 3 was therefore excluded from subsequent analyses.

Component 4 consisted of only two items relating to judgements about the perpetrator: how much he had a choice in, and how much he contributed to the outcome. This component had an eigenvalue of 1.55 and accounted for approximately 6% of variance. Cronbach's alpha revealed a poor degree of internal reliability ($\alpha = .54$). Component 4 was therefore excluded from subsequent analyses.

Component 5 consisted of three items, two of which were judgements about the perpetrator (causality and their degree of intent). The third item (how much the victim was aware of the potential consequences) loaded negatively onto component 5 and was excluded from subsequent analyses.⁴⁸ The eigenvalue for this component was 1.48, and it accounted for approximately 6% of variance. Cronbach's alpha revealed a poor degree of internal reliability ($\alpha = .39$). Component 5 was therefore excluded from subsequent analyses.

Finally, component 6 consisted of only two items relating to judgements about the victim on their degree of consent and intent. The eigenvalue for this component was 1.15 and it accounted for almost 5% of variance. Cronbach's alpha revealed a poor degree of internal reliability ($\alpha = .29$). Component 6 was therefore excluded from subsequent analyses.

Although the limitations of the current study prevented a thorough statistical examination of the underlying constructs of responsibility and blame,⁴⁹ quantitative results still provided important information about how undergraduate students – at least in this sample – understand and make judgements about responsibility and blame. For both the victim and perpetrator

⁴⁸ Inclusion of this item, corrected for its negative loading, produced a higher (although still unacceptable) internal reliability ($\alpha = .60$).

⁴⁹ In particular, the relatively small sample size and use of PCA, rather than an exploratory FA.

characters, responsibility and blame, as well as their related constructs of accountability, fault, and liability for censure, correlated strongly with each other to form the two component scores used in subsequent analyses: ‘Judgements about the victim’ and ‘Judgements about the perpetrator’. Additionally, both causal variables of contribution and cause correlated with these responsibility and blame variables for the victim character. While it cannot be concluded that amongst this sample, responsibility and blame comprise the same underlying construct, it does lend support to the notion that attempts to measure responsibility and blame as separate constructs may be unnecessary and ultimately redundant (Leigh & Aramburu, 1994). Furthermore, these findings reflect those of the few studies which have tested theoretical models and definitions of attributions of responsibility and blame, which have similarly found no statistical differences between the constructs (Cameron & Stritzke, 2003; Davies et al., 2006; Davies et al., 2011; Sleath & Bull, 2010). Descriptive statistics for both component scores amongst women are presented in Appendix N.

4.3.3 – Multivariate Analysis of Variance

It was hypothesized that when both characters were depicted as drinking alcohol, participants would rate the victim character higher, but the perpetrator character lower on the dependent variables compared to when the characters were depicted as drinking soda. Due to a lack of consensus amongst previous research, no specific hypotheses regarding victim gender were tested. A two-way MANOVA was performed using a multivariate general linear model through SPSS. Alcohol condition and victim gender condition were selected as fixed variables. Mean scores on Judgements about the victim and Judgements about the perpetrator were used as dependent variables. Means and standard deviations for each experimental group are reported in

Tables 4.4 and 4.5. Box's M was significant at $p < .001$, and as small samples produced larger standard deviations, the significance tests for this MANOVA can be considered liberal (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007, p. 252). In contrast to the hypotheses and to previous studies, no significant multivariate main or interaction effects were found amongst female participants (Table 4.6), and so the null hypotheses are accepted for the first two hypotheses.

The lack of significant multivariate effects in this study is somewhat surprising given the relatively consistently found effects of alcohol consumption on judgements toward victims of sexual violence (Cameron & Stritzke, 2003; Dent & Arias, 1990; Leigh & Aramburu, 1994; Lynch et al., 2013; Richardson & Campbell, 1982; Romero-Sanchez et al., 2012; Schuller & Stewart, 2000; Sims et al., 2007; Stormo et al., 1997; Untied et al., 2012), as well as the less consistent findings of alcohol's mitigating effects of perpetrator responsibility and blame (Cameron & Stritzke, 2003; Hammock & Richardson, 1997; Richardson & Campbell, 1982; Sims et al., 2007; Stormo et al., 1997). Furthermore, the lack of any significant effects of alcohol in this study is particularly surprising given those previous studies which have found the effects of alcohol on a variety of judgements to be stronger amongst (Hammock & Richardson, 1997; Tryggvesson, 2008), or to be significant only for female participants (Klippenstine et al., 2007). However, the lack of significant main or interaction effects for victim gender may reflect the lack of any clear effect in either direction found within the literature (Gerber et al., 2004; Hammock & Richardson, 1993; Howard, 1984; Schneider et al., 1994) or the similarities found by several studies in the ways in which male and female victims are held responsible and blamed for sexual assault (Aramburu & Leigh, 1991; Davies et al., 2006; Davies & Rogers, 2006; Dent & Arias, 1990; Sleath & Bull, 2010). Additionally, this lack of significant findings may also reflect a Type

II error, although this is somewhat less likely given the liberal α , as indicated by Box's M (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

Table 4.4: Descriptive statistics on Judgements about the victim by alcohol and victim gender condition

		Alcohol Condition						Totals		
		Beer			Soda					
		<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Victim Gender Condition	Female	25	1.32	0.46	14	1.49	1.16	39	1.38	0.78
	Male	27	1.19	0.31	16	1.21	0.36	43	1.20	0.32
Totals		52	1.25	0.39	30	1.34	0.83			

Table 4.5: Descriptive statistics on Judgements about the perpetrator by alcohol and victim gender condition

		Alcohol Condition						Totals		
		Beer			Soda					
		<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Victim Gender Condition	Female	25	6.80	0.38	14	6.96	0.16	39	6.86	0.32
	Male	27	6.92	0.22	16	6.95	0.12	43	6.93	0.19
Totals		52	6.86	0.38	30	6.95	0.14			

Table 4.6: 2-way MANOVA

	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Alcohol	2.27	.11
Victim Gender	1.16	.32
Alcohol X Victim Gender	1.10	.34

4.3.4 – Mann-Whitney U Test

Nonparametric Mann-Whitney U tests were also performed on female participants' responses to each of the 24 dependent variables, according to alcohol condition and victim gender condition separately.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Alcohol consumption and victim gender had to be tested separately due to the fact that the Mann-Whitney U test does not allow for multiple independent variables.

Alcohol condition

A one-tailed Mann-Whitney U test found a significant difference between groups according to alcohol condition only on one variable. Women in the alcohol condition ($n = 52$, $Med = 7.00$, $range = 4-7$) tended to rate the perpetrator as being less responsible compared to women in the soda condition ($n = 30$, $Med = 7.00$, $range = 7-7$;⁵¹ $U = 645.00$, $p = .01$). Appendix O provides the full descriptive and Mann-Whitney U test statistics for women by alcohol condition. While this finding exists only in one case on a univariate level, it reflects those of previous studies which have found significant multivariate effects of alcohol condition on perpetrator judgements (Cameron & Stritzke, 2003; Sims et al., 2007; Stormo et al., 1997). Furthermore, it provides some support for the current study's second hypothesis – that the presence of alcohol would mitigate participants' judgements of the perpetrator's responsibility. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected regarding this nonparametric finding amongst women.⁵²

Victim gender condition

A two-tailed Mann-Whitney U test found a significant difference between groups according to victim gender condition only on one variable; women tended to rate the female victim ($n = 39$, $Med = 2.00$, $range = 1-5$) as having greater awareness of the potential consequences compared to male victims ($n = 43$, $Med = 1.00$, $range = 1-5$; $U = 616.50$, $p = .03$). Appendix P provides the full descriptive and Mann-Whitney U test statistics for women by victim gender condition.

⁵¹ All female participants in the soda condition selected the highest possible rating of perpetrator responsibility (7), resulting in a range of zero on this item.

⁵² It should be noted that due to the large number of tests of significance, it is likely that statistically significant results will be produced by chance, thus representing an inflated risk of making a Type I error. All significant nonparametric effects reported here should be interpreted with caution.

The lack of significant effects on all but this one variable amongst female participants reflects the lack of significant victim gender effects amongst female participants found in Howard's (1984) study. Furthermore, the significance of only the victim's awareness of the consequences in the current study suggests that while men and women are held responsible and/or blamed for their own sexual assault to similar degrees, they are held responsible for preventing and reacting to their own victimization in different ways. In this sense, men and women are expected to prevent their victimization in ways which are consistent with the different role-based responsibilities associated with male/masculine and female/feminine gender roles. The fact that the female victim was judged to have greater awareness of the consequences is reflective of these gendered expectations, wherein women are expected to prevent their own victimization by recognizing and avoiding potentially risky situations (Anderson & Doherty, 2008; Randall, 2010). If women are expected to prevent their own victimization, then they would also need to be able to anticipate this risk and recognize situations as potentially unsafe.

4.4 – MALE PARTICIPANTS

4.4.1 - Demographics

Participants in the final subsample of men ($N = 15$) ranged in age from 17 to 24 ($M = 19.47$, $SD = 1.69$). One third of men were in their first year of studies ($n = 5$), and most reported their major of study as Criminology ($n = 10$). Two men reported their major of study as Psychology, one as Sociology, and three reported a major of study other than those provided.

Table 4.7: Male participants' year of study

Year of Study	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
First year	5	33.3	33.3
Second year	4	26.7	60.0
Third year	4	26.7	86.7
Fourth year	2	13.3	100.0
Total	15	100.0	100.0

4.4.2 – Mann-Whitney U Test

Non-parametric Mann-Whitney U tests were performed for the small sample of men. For both tests grouped by alcohol and by victim gender condition, all 24 questionnaire items were tested, as well as mean scores for Judgements about the victim and Judgements about the perpetrator.⁵³ Descriptive statistics for both component scores amongst men are presented in Appendix N.

Alcohol condition

A one-tailed Mann-Whitney U test was performed using alcohol condition as the grouping variable ($n_1 = 4$, $n_2 = 11$). Results revealed that male participants in the alcohol condition made significantly higher ratings on Judgements about the victim compared to men in the soda condition ($U = 8.50$, $p = .04$); on Victim – contribute ($U = 11.50$, $p = .09$); on Victim – choice ($U = 8.50$, $p = .04$); on Victim – responsible ($U = 8.00$, $p = .04$), on Victim – accountable ($U = 10.00$, $p = .07$); and Victim – blame ($U = 10.00$, $p = .07$).⁵⁴ Additionally, respondents in the

⁵³ Male participants were not included in the PCA used to identify these components. However, PCA was also initially performed with male respondents included. Results from this analysis were not substantially different from the reported results, and so the components obtained with female respondents have been cautiously used for male respondents.

⁵⁴ While SPSS reported an obtained probability for Judgements about the victim and Victim – choice which was significant at $p < .05$, classical distribution tables of critical values for Mann-Whitney U tests suggest a critical value of 8 for group sizes of 11 and 4. Similarly, the obtained probability for Victim – contribute was significant at $p < .10$, while classical tables of critical values suggest a critical value of 11 at this level of significance. Based on these

soda condition made significantly higher ratings on Judgements about the perpetrator ($U = 10.00$, $p = .07$); on Perpetrator – consequences ($U = 8.50$, $p = .04$); on Perpetrator – consent ($U = 11.50$, $p = .09$); and on Perpetrator – responsible ($U = 10.00$, $p = .07$).⁵⁵ The null hypotheses for both of the first two hypotheses are therefore rejected amongst male participants. Appendix Q provides the full descriptive and Mann-Whitney U test statistics for men by alcohol condition.

Table 4.8: Men’s significant Mann-Whitney U tests by alcohol condition

Variable	Alcohol ($n = 11$)		Soda ($n = 4$)	
	<i>Med</i>	<i>Range</i>	<i>Med</i>	<i>Range</i>
Judgements about the victim*	1.86	1.00-4.14	1.14	1.00-1.43
Judgements about the perpetrator	6.80	5.20-7.00	7.00	7.00-7.00
Victim – contribute	3.00	1-4	1.50	1-3
Victim – choice*	3.00	1-7	1.00	1-2
Victim – responsible*	2.00	1-4	1.00	1-1
Victim – accountable	2.00	1-4	1.00	1-1
Victim – blame	2.00	1-4	1.00	1-1
Perpetrator – consequences*	6.00	3-7	7.00	6-7
Perpetrator – consent	6.00	1-7	1.00	1-7
Perpetrator – responsible	7.00	5-7	7.00	7-7
<i>Note.</i> significant at $p < .10$, * $p < .05$				

Together, and in accordance with previous research (Davies et al., 2006; Davies & Rogers, 2006; Fischer, 1995; Flood & Pease, 2009; Gerber et al., 2004; Gilmartin-Zena, 1983; Grubb & Turner, 2012; Hammock & Richardson, 1993; Russell et al., 2011; Sleath & Bull, 2010; Wakelin & Long, 2003), these findings offer limited support for the third hypothesis: that male participants would make more negative judgements about the victim and less negative judgements about the perpetrator compared to female participants. Unfortunately, as it was not

tables, the obtained values for these variables are greater than the critical values, and should therefore result in a failure to reject the null hypothesis. The significance of these effects should therefore be interpreted with caution.

⁵⁵ Due to the small sample size and the fact that non-parametric tests are generally less powerful than parametric tests, effects are reported as significant up to $p < .10$.

possible to make direct comparisons between women's and men's scores on any of the dependent variables, the third hypothesis could not be directly tested. However, the fact that several significant effects were found amongst men, while only one significant effect was found for women supports the idea that the men in the current study were generally more affected by the alcohol condition than were the women – perhaps not with respect to magnitude, but by virtue of there being more significant effects amongst men compared to women. Again, however, this result is somewhat surprising given Klippenstine and colleagues' (2007) findings that the multivariate effects of alcohol consumption were significant only for female participants, as well as others who found stronger effects of alcohol amongst female participants (Hammock & Richardson, 1997; Tryggvesson, 2008).

Victim gender condition

A two-tailed Mann-Whitney U test was performed using victim gender condition as the grouping variable ($n_1 = 7$, $n_2 = 8$). Results revealed no significant differences between men in the female victim and those in the male victim conditions on either of the two component scores or on any of the original 24 dependent variables. Appendix R provides the full descriptive and Mann-Whitney U test statistics for men by victim gender condition. While this lack of significant findings contrasts those of Howard's (1984) study, which found that male participants attributed greater blame toward male victims compared to female victims, this finding may not be surprising given the lack of consistency in victim gender effects found throughout the literature (Aramburu & Leigh, 1991; Dent & Arias, 1990; Gerber et al., 2004; Hammock & Richardson, 1993; Howard, 1984; Schneider et al., 1994).

4.5 – SUMMARY

In summary, this chapter has presented the quantitative findings for female and male participants. Amongst women, some support for the interchangeability of responsibility and blame as proposed by some researchers (Cameron & Stritzke, 2003; Leigh & Aramburu, 1994; Stormo et al., 1997; Tryggvesson, 2008) was found through a PCA, from a methodological (if not theoretical) perspective. In contrast to previous research, no significant multivariate effects were found amongst female participants, a finding which is particularly interesting with respect to the effects of alcohol consumption on attributions of victim responsibility and blame (Cameron & Stritzke, 2003; Dent & Arias, 1990; Leigh & Aramburu, 1994; Lynch et al., 2013; Richardson & Campbell, 1982; Romero-Sanchez et al., 2012; Schuller & Stewart, 2000; Sims et al., 2007; Stormo et al., 1997; Untied et al., 2012). However, limited support for the hypothesis that alcohol would serve to mitigate perpetrator responsibility (Cameron & Stritzke, 2003; Richardson & Campbell, 1982; Sims et al., 2007; Stormo et al., 1997), and the unique finding that female victims were expected to anticipate the consequences of their actions more so than their male counterparts were found through nonparametric analyses. Amongst men, several significant effects were found according to alcohol condition, lending some support to all three hypotheses. However, likely reflecting the varied findings across studies (Aramburu & Leigh, 1991; Dent & Arias, 1990; Gerber et al., 2004; Hammock & Richardson, 1993; Howard, 1984; Schneider et al., 1994), no evidence was found for any effects of victim gender amongst male participants.

CHAPTER 5 – QUALITATIVE RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

This chapter presents findings from the qualitative analysis, situating this discussion within the literature and theoretical framework and drawing comparisons to the quantitative findings. All data presented in this chapter were obtained through responses to the three open-ended questions included in the questionnaire:

1. What is your initial reaction to the events just described? Your answer may include a description of the characters involved.
2. What does it mean for someone to be responsible for something?
3. What does it mean for someone to be blameworthy for something?

This chapter begins by examining the variable of alcohol consumption, first through participants' discussions of the role of alcohol in sexual assault and their expectations that, given the context, alcohol would be involved. It is then examined through the effects of the alcohol condition (or in some cases, the anticipated presence of alcohol) on participants' judgements about the victim and perpetrator. Next, the influence of victim gender is discussed. This variable is illustrated through three broad themes: (1) participants' reactions to, and understandings of male sexual assault; (2) the effects of victim gender on participants' judgements, particularly in the gendered ways in which victims are expected to anticipate and respond to sexual assault; and (3) participants' assumptions of heterosexuality implicit in both of the preceding themes. Participants' understandings and definitions of responsibility are then presented, first through the multiple meanings of responsibility which emerged in analysis, and secondly through an examination of the underlying dimensions of responsibility. Next, a similar discussion of the dimensions of blame is presented, as well as an examination of the view of blame as a moral judgement, with insight into the relationship between responsibility and blame discussed throughout. Finally,

additional themes of consent and the definition of sexual assault which emerged from the qualitative analysis and which, in some ways, diverged from the quantitative variables of interest are presented. Throughout this chapter, participants' major(s) of study are presented numerically rather than descriptively due to space limitations. Majors are identified as per the coding scheme identified in Table 4.2 of the preceding chapter.⁵⁶

5.1 – ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

5.1.1 – The Role of Alcohol and Expectations of Intoxication

As discussed in the previous chapter, an examination of participants' responses to the alcohol manipulation checks suggests that some participants may have relied on a prior script regarding their expectations that the characters would be intoxicated (Howard, 1984; Langer et al., 1978). This idea is further supported through participants' qualitative responses which discussed the prevalence and role of alcohol in the context of a university sexual assault. First, four participants discussed the characters as having consumed alcohol when they had in fact read one of the soda versions of the vignette, providing further evidence that some respondents did not read the vignette carefully. Secondly, several qualitative responses shed light on participants' awareness and subsequent expectation of the frequent involvement of alcohol in similar contexts. For example, one participant noted the frequency with which alcohol is involved in sexual assault, particularly when combined with the situational context of a university party:

“Events like that aren't exactly uncommon. That kind of thing can happen at any [kind] of party (usually ones involving alcohol) and it is the unfortunate reality that this happens more often than people care to admit.”
(Male, age 21, 4th year, major 7)

⁵⁶ Participants' major(s) of study are identified using the coding scheme utilized for analysis. This coding scheme is as follows: (1) anthropology; (2) conflict studies and human rights; (3) criminology; (4) economics; (5) international development; (6) political science; (7) psychology; (8) sociology; (9) women's studies; and (10) other.

Similarly, while one respondent simply noted the absence of alcohol in the vignette they had read, another expressed surprise at its absence:

“I noticed that the subjects did not consume any alcohol, and are both uninhibited.”
(Male, age 19, 2nd year, major 3/9)

“I was also surprised because neither Michael or [*sic*] John were drunk, as said they were drinking only sodas, and it is in my experience people are usually somewhat intoxicated when assault occurs.”
(Female, age 21, 1st year, major 3)

These qualitative responses further support the idea that some participants, given the frequent involvement of alcohol both at university parties and in sexual assault (Abbey, 1991; Cowley, 2014; McMahon, 2010; Untied et al., 2012), may have expected that alcohol would also be involved in the scenario they read. Moreover, this apparent expectation suggests an underlying schema or prior script (Langer et al., 1978) that links (1) alcohol and parties; and (2) alcohol and sexual aggression.

5.1.2 – Effects of Alcohol Condition on Judgements about Sexual Assault

The lack of significant multivariate effects amongst female participants, while surprising given previous research (Hammock & Richardson, 1997; Klippenstine et al., 2007; Tryggvesson, 2008), is reflective of qualitative responses which mention that the presence of alcohol does not excuse the perpetrator’s behaviour:

“Just because he was drinking or because they were at his apartment does not give him the right to force himself upon Amy.”
(Female, age 18, 2nd year, major 2/9)

“I thought the guy who was forcing the other guy to make out with him was in the wrong. It happens often where a friend offers to let you stay at their place. It made me uncomfortable learning how it was expected that he allow the other guy to make out with him. I hate situations like these. The stronger person is drunk and able to pin down the smaller person without being aware of their own actions. Even though they’re drunk they must have a concept of right and wrong, right?”
(Female, age 22, 2nd year, major 10)

Although this second participant appears to express some uncertainty regarding the impact of intoxication, their refusal to accept intoxication as an excuse for sexual assault is further maintained by those female participants who were apparently cognizant of the ways in which alcohol is often used to explain, justify, or excuse sexual assault:

“It's disgusting to do things like that, and he would probably tell her it was because he was under the influence of alcohol or something to excuse himself. It's unacceptable.”
(Female, age 20, 3rd year, major 8)

“It seems like it was very clear that John did not want to engage in any type of sexual behaviour with Michael, but Michael either had too much to drink or simply didn't care what John said.”
(Female, age 18, 1st year, major 2)

“My initial reaction is that Michael may have forced John into something because he was under the influence of alcohol and not thinking properly, as many people get forceful and aggressive when they have been drinking.”
(Female, age 18, 1st year, major 3)

While these responses are, of course, not necessarily representative of all of the women in the current study, it suggests that perhaps their awareness of these issues may have resulted in their being less likely to be affected by information about the characters' alcohol consumption. Alternatively, this is, to some extent, contrasted by the results of the Mann-Whitney U tests. In particular, the presence of alcohol did in fact mitigate the female participants' judgements of the perpetrator's responsibility. One explanation for this finding is that participants' awareness of how alcohol is used as an excuse does not necessarily mean that they disagree with or find this to be an unacceptable excuse or, at the very least, a mitigating factor regarding the perpetrator's responsibility. Indeed, only one of the above responses actually discusses the use of alcohol as an excuse as being unacceptable. This view of intoxication as an understandable explanation for the perpetrator's behaviour is similar to Cowley's (2014) findings, wherein participants viewed alcohol as leading to a loss of control of self and emotions, and is further supported by quantitative research which found similar effects on perceptions of the perpetrator's

responsibility (Cameron & Stritzke, 2003; Sims et al., 2007; Stormo et al., 1997). Similarly, one male participant discussed how context and the presence of alcohol combine to create an atmosphere which is conducive to, and creates opportunities for, sexual assault:

“It was shocking but, unfortunately, pretty common. Parties at a university level usually have a sexual atmosphere; a lot of people attend with the sole intent of hooking up, or meeting members of the opposite sex. Some with this mindset may crave certain affection, and the potentiality of sexual activities more than others. Should an opportunity arise (this may be aided by alcohol but not always), those with the more serious yearnings mightn't take no for an answer. I believe the male character depicted this perfectly.”
(Male, age 18, 1st year, major 5)

This participant's explanation echoes the discussion provided by female participants regarding the ways in which alcohol is used as an excuse or justification for sexual assault. This response is particularly interesting given the significant mitigating effects amongst male participants of alcohol on perceptions of the perpetrator's awareness of the consequences and degree of consent. One explanation for this finding, which reflects the view of sexual assault as being sexually motivated rather than as an exercise of control or power (Abdullah-Khan, 2008), is that by virtue of being intoxicated, the perpetrator was seen to be less able to overcome his sexual desires when the opportunity for 'sex' was presented. Consistent with Cowley's (2014) findings, the sexually charged nature of the context can be seen to interact with the expectations of alcohol's effects to create a situation which is conducive to sexual assault, and this further produces an “extreme manifestation” of heteronormative sexual scripts (Jackson, 1995, p. 27). Through this interaction, the perpetrator's responsibility is mitigated due to their perceived lack of control and ignorance of the consequences of their actions, but also because his actions can be viewed as an otherwise “normal” sexual interaction gone too far.

5.2 – VICTIM GENDER

5.2.1 – Male Sexual Assault

Reflective of researchers who argue that male victims are often overlooked and dismissed in both research and societal discourses of sexual assault (Abdullah-Khan, 2008; Davies & Rogers, 2006; Maxwell & Scott, 2014; Melanson, 1999), 12 participants who read one of the male victim versions expressed surprise or shock at there being two men involved:

“My first reaction was "holy shit, what!?! two dudes"”

(Male, age 25, 4th year, major 1)

“Totally thought Micheal [*sic*] was a girl at first. Was not expecting the whole scenario to end like that at all. [...] It's sad really that I was even surprised we were talking about a situation concerning two male individuals.”

(Female, age 20, 3rd year, major 3)

“It was initially shocking that the two mentioned people in the scenario were men.”

(Female, age 20, 2nd year, major 3/9)

These responses exhibit some degree of self-reflexivity, wherein participants were able to recognize their own biases regarding male sexual assault. Some noted that the vignette diverged from the “typical” sexual assault, and that their surprise stemmed from their expectation that the scenario would have depicted a man sexually assaulting a woman:

“Interesting to say [*sic*] a swap in gender from the typical depiction of sexual assault.”

(Female, age 18, 1st year, major 6/9)

“My initial reaction was surprise. I was surprised because usually in these scenarios, it is an example of a female being assaulted by a male.”

(Female, age 21, 1st year, major 3)

The emphasis on this notion of a “typical” sexual assault clearly characterizes the very definition of rape myths, which are incorporated into cultural definitions of sexual assault (Bohner et al., 2009). More specifically, while none of the participants in this study expressed such a belief, these responses, to a certain extent, reflect the literature on male rape myths which

highlights the belief that men are not (or cannot be) sexually assaulted (Chapleau et al., 2008; Kassing, Beesley, & Frey, 2005; Melanson, 1999, p. 33; Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 1992). Other participants echoed Maxwell and Scott's (2014) criticisms of the violence against women movement, discussing how male sexual assault is rarely talked about in society, unlike female sexual assault which is much more prevalent in societal discourse:

"I am surprised because generally you hear about males raping females and it is rare when you hear about male on male rape. I'm saddened that this clearly occurs and wish that it was talked about more as opposed to only giving the voice to female victims of rape."
(Female, age 20, 1st year, major 1)

"I was surprised to read of male rape especially done by another male. Although it is known to happen, male rape is not mentioned much in society."
(Female, age 22, 4th year, major 3/9)

One participant noted that their surprise at two men was the result of societal expectations that sexual assault is generally perpetrated by men against women, and because of the subsequent lack of awareness of male sexual assault within society:

"I was initially surprised that both characters in this scenario were male. Although I should not have, I did automatically expect a woman to be involved in this scenario because the dominant script in our society (probably because it is so frequent) is that males typically perpetrate violence towards women."
(Female, age 19, 2nd year, major 2)

Similarly, two participants noted in particular the lack of attention paid to male victims in research:

"My initial reaction to this situation was that it was my first time reading a hypothetical situation where it was two men instead of a man and woman."
(Female, age 18, 1st year, major 2)

"I was surprised because this is the first social experiment on the topic of sexual assault that had two men. This example is showing people that sexual assault can happen to both genders."⁵⁷
(Female, age 22, 4th year, major 3/7)

⁵⁷ Of course, this study is not the first experimental research to address the issue of male sexual assault. This response does, however, highlight the relative scarcity of such research compared to female sexual assault.

However, one participant, while referencing the fact that male sexual assault is rarely talked about in society, also discussed the frequency and characteristics of male sexual assault in ways that are in line with common misconceptions and myths:

“I also know that sexual assault from male to male does exist, but is quite rare. Usually, in cases where the male is the victim the perpetrator is an older women and the victim is a younger boy. However, cases like these do exist. My reaction relating to this is that "women do sexually assault men to [sic], we just do not think about it to [sic] often." I believe that this is due to the fact that we think that males are stronger and would be able to "fight each other off" inferring the whole victim blaming scenario when females are assaulted that it is there [sic] fault. WHICH IT IS NOT BTW.”

(Female, age 20, 4th year, major 3)

Although this participant’s reaction and explanation emphasize the importance of resisting an attribution of blame to the victim, their response continues to reproduce problematic beliefs about male sexual assault. In particular, it reflects the belief highlighted in the literature on male rape myths that adult men are rarely the victims of sexual assault outside of prison (Kassing et al., 2005; Melanson, 1999). These comments, which highlight the lack of attention given to male victims of sexual assault and the misunderstandings of male sexual assault which result, are contrasted by the many participants who discussed their lack of surprise at the scenario, almost all of whom read one of the female victim versions of the vignette. Several of these participants referred to the frequency with which sexual assault occurs:

“That it is very invasive to have someone touching you when you clearly refuse. I also feel that it is a situation I see often, people getting drunk at parties and being dragged off or sleeping when they might be better at home.”

(Female, age 18, 1st year, major 2)

“When the actual assault took place, I felt a familiar sadness because situations like this are far too common. It's almost as if this exact scenario has become typical.”

(Female, age 22, 2nd year, major 3)

“Anger at the perpetrators [sic] lack of basic human decency, as well as frustration knowing that real-life situations similar to the hypothetical scenario happen all too often, where the victim is at the mercy of an attacker.”

(Male, age 19, 2nd year, major 10)

By contrast, only one participant who discussed how commonplace sexual assault has become read one of the male victim versions:

“I was shocked. I do not understand how some people think it's okay to do such a thing. It makes me upset to hear even just a hypothetical situation like this because I know how common sexual assault is in our world today.”

(Female, age 21, 4th year, major 6/9)

Furthermore, two participants discussed how their lack of surprise was the result of the common occurrence of sexual assault, but emphasized the idea that their desensitization to the issue does not diminish its importance:

“Not shocked (which says a lot that we've become so desensitized to the idea of sexual assault), but still definitely disgusted.”

(Female, age 18, 1st year, major 1)

“My initial reaction is a mix of disgust and slight calmness. Disgust because Amy was raped/sexually assaulted and that is not okay and slight calmness because these cases have occurred so often that its [*sic*] beginning to sound common. The calmness does not mean I agree with or accept whats [*sic*] happening. Amy was trusting and not at all in the wrong in accepting an invitation to stay with Michael. Michael was wrong in expecting that Amy owed him anything for it. Sexual or not.”

(Female, age 20, 3rd year, major 3/7)

Another participant drew parallels between the vignette and the ways in which society's patriarchal views of women – and men's, in particular – contribute to the existence of violence against women by men:

“Disgusted to know that this is a scenario that actually describes a very prevalent issue in our society. Women are not respected and are treated as objects by males, who subsequently do not care for the needs or wants or even the basic human rights of females.”

(Female, age 20, 3rd year, major 9)

This participant's opinion further reflects critiques of feminist theory and activism, which have argued that feminism's definition of sexual assault as patriarchal oppression rooted in sexism towards women has ignored or downplayed the issue of male sexual assault (Abdullah-Khan, 2008; Davies & Rogers, 2006; Kassing, et al., 2005; Maxwell & Scott, 2014).

5.2.2 – Effects of Victim Gender Condition

Quantitative analyses found only one significant effect for victim gender amongst all participants; female participants tended to judge female victims as having greater awareness of the potential consequences compared to male victims. As previously discussed, this finding may be reflective of gendered expectations that women should be able to anticipate and therefore prevent their own sexual victimization (Anderson & Doherty, 2008; Randall, 2010). This quantitative finding is similarly reflected in the five qualitative responses which made normative judgements about what the female victim should have done, some of which also pointed to assumed faults in her character:

“Any [*sic*] was silly for accepting to spend the night at Michaels [*sic*] *with* Michael however what he did was obviously very wrong.”

(Male, age 19, 2nd year, major 10)

“Amy should have been more cautious in the situation by insisting her friend go with her or refusing to go to the man's house alone. However, the man should have stopped as soon as Amy said “no”.”

(Male, age 18, 1st year, major 5)

Interestingly, all of these responses were made by participants who perceived the characters to be consuming alcohol,⁵⁸ reflecting quantitative findings in previous research which highlighted that perceived intoxication increases judgements of victim responsibility and blame (Cameron & Stritzke, 2003; Hammock & Richardson, 1997; Leigh & Aramburu, 1994; Richardson & Campbell, 1982; Sims et al., 2007; Stormo et al., 1997; Untied et al., 2012). Three other participants – notably all female – made these types of judgements in the context of what they personally would have done in a similar situation, highlighting women’s internalization of these societal expectations of risk management and individual responsibility:

⁵⁸ One of these participants incorrectly identified the characters as drinking alcohol when they had in fact been assigned to one of the no-alcohol conditions.

“Fear, because as a young woman, being molested/raped especially by someone I somewhat trust is terrifying. Confused as to why Amy agreed to go to Michael's apartment, as I would not have made the same decision.”

(Female, age 18, 1st year, major 6/10)

“I thought if I were Amy I wouldn't have gone over to his house if I hadn't known him well but that still doesn't make it her fault, I just think that I'm overcautious. Even if you know someone well they can still do something awful like sexually assault someone, just that if it were me I would not even risk going to sleep at a near-strangers house by myself.”

(Female, age 18, 1st year, major 1)

Furthermore, these responses suggest an internal struggle between such gender-based social expectations and resistance to blaming the victim. Another participant made similar comments, although they recognized the existence of societal pressures for women to prevent their own sexual assault:

“My initial reaction to staying the night at the party was smart, if there was drinking involved this is most likely the safest conclusion. When Amy(?) left with her classmate, I began to feel uneasy. I usually make it a high priority to always stay/leave with my friends at parties. However, I don't think the judgement of Amy should be at fault, often times we teach women how to avoid sexual assault when really we should be combating against sexual assault in general.”

(Female, age 22, 2nd year, major 3)

These expectations and judgements become particularly relevant given the context of a university party, where women are expected to anticipate that their actions and decisions may be interpreted as a sign of her sexual interest and intent, regardless of whether she is interested or not (Abbey 1991), although some noted that this did not mean that the victim was actually consenting to sexual activity. Similarly reflecting rape myths which assert that a woman's decision to go home with a man implies that she is sexually interested (Burt, 1980; Payne et al., 1999), six participants discussed how certain behaviours and contexts are often misinterpreted as sexual interest or even consent to sexual activity:⁵⁹

⁵⁹ This is not to say that there is necessarily a right or wrong way to interpret such contextual cues, as the woman involved may in fact be interested in sexual activity. However, inferring sexual interest or consent from these cues in the absence of other, less ambiguous indicators (e.g. verbal affirmative interest or consent) is particularly erroneous and problematic.

“He may have perceived the situation to be different than she did; in her perspective, she was having a friendly conversation with a classmate and agreed to stay at his place for convenience. In his perspective, he could have seen this as flirting and agreeing to something more.”
(Female, age 18, 1st year, major 3/7/8/9/10)

“I think Michael is wrong in doing what he did. He probably believed that by accepting to spend the night at his house, she was consenting to sexual intercourse. He is wrong in believing that.”
(Male, age 31, 2nd year, major 10)

“Michael is in the wrong in his actions and sexually assaulted her. Although he might have misread her actions he had no justifications in what he did.”
(Male, age 18, 2nd year, major 3)

Interestingly, four of these six participants perceived the characters to be drinking,⁶⁰ reflecting the notion that alcohol consumption is often assumed to indicate sexual interest (Abbey & Harnish, 1995; George et al., 1988), thereby leading to such misunderstandings. However, while participants were aware of this misinterpretation on the part of the perpetrator, some continued to assert that the victim should have expected that their actions would be misinterpreted and, in response to this, should have acted differently:

“My initial thought was that Amy should not have agreed to go home with Michael in the first place. As sad as it is, typically when someone asks you to stay the night, they are in the mindset that they will be getting some kind of action.”
(Female, age 22, 2nd year, major 8)

“I believe that Michael took advantage of Amy’s innocence in some way, but honestly I think its [*sic*] her responsibility too for going to a guy’s pace [*sic*], not really being friends with him, and expect him not to approach her. I’m not saying he isn’t at fault, because he should have stopped when she said no, and maybe have an opportunity later to actually build a friendship or a relationship.”
(Female, age 18, 1st year, major 3)

It is interesting that despite this last response being made by a participant who read one of the no-alcohol versions of the vignette, this is the only participant to explicitly attribute responsibility to the victim. This finding is somewhat in contrast to what might be expected given previous quantitative research on the effects of alcohol consumption (Cameron & Stritzke,

⁶⁰ Two of these participants incorrectly identified the characters as drinking alcohol when they had in fact been assigned to one of the no-alcohol conditions.

2003; Leigh & Aramburu, 1994; Richardson & Campbell, 1982; Sims et al., 2007; Stormo et al., 1997; Untied et al., 2012). Two participants in the male victim condition similarly discussed how their actions and decisions could have been misinterpreted as sexual interest:

“John accepted an offer to sleep at Micheal’s [sic] place. Perhaps Micheal [sic] assumed this meant John was interested and attempted to initiate a sexual advance.”

(Female, age 23, 4th year, major 10)

“I think it is extremely unfair that Michael thought he had the right to do that to John just because Michael offered his place to John to sleep. However, I’m sure this happens often which is horrifying.”

(Female, age 22, 4th year, major 3)

This second response in particular points to a relationship between such misinterpretations and a sense of sexual entitlement on the part of the perpetrator. However, in contrast to the ways in which the female victim was expected to anticipate, recognize, and mitigate her risk of being sexually victimized, qualitative responses revealed that participants more often expected the male victim to stop – as opposed to pre-emptively prevent – his own victimization through physical force or resistance:

“That guy on the bottom better start getting real violent real quick cause this is messed up.”

(Male, age 25, 4th year, major 1)

“John should have tried to get to the main entrance and run away, but everything was too fast and Michael too strong.”

(Female, age 20, 2nd year, major 8/9)

“Also, John, being a male and all, should have been able to defend himself, so I found it weird that Michael was able to easily dominate him.”

(Male, age 23, 2nd year, major 3)

These responses are reflective of Perrott and Weber’s (1996) findings that male victims were attributed greater behavioural blame compared to female victims, and were expected to have been capable of physically stopping their assault. Similarly, they are reflective of both traditional notions of masculinity (Bridges, 1991; Check & Malamuth, 1983; Cowley, 2014; Fagen & Anderson, 2012; Frith, 2009; Jackson, 1995; Warshaw & Parrot, 1991) and male rape

myths which assume that men should be capable of physically resisting sexual assault (Melanson, 1999). Only one participant suggested that the male victim should have been able to anticipate the perpetrator's sexual advances, although this was prefaced with an understanding of why the victim accepted the perpetrator's offer, unlike many of the similar comments about the female victim's decision to do so:

“Uncomfortable with the events unfolding, but not surprised that John went to Michael's house. Based on the information provided in the paragraph Michael did not seem to be belligerent, nor did he seem to be common [*sic*] on to John at all. However, looking back at the [*sic*] how the events unfolded, Michael suggesting that John stay at his place for the night should have raised a red flag for John.” (Male, age 18, 1st year, major 6)

More often, participants in the male victim conditions discussed how quickly the situation escalated from a casual, friendly interaction between two acquaintances to violence:

“That situation quickly turned from friendly to horrible.” (Female, age 23, 4th year, major 10)

“Shock. I didn't expect something so casual to turn into something like this. At the beginning, it just sounded like any night out with friends.” (Gender not disclosed, age 20, 4th year, major 3/10)

Others discussed how this quick escalation was not prefaced by any warning signs:

“At first I didn't see anything from [*sic*] with Michel [*sic*], he seemed like a nice guy just trying to be friendly but that changed very quickly when he ignored John's request to not kiss him. I was worried for John, scared even.” (Female, age 20, 3rd year, major 10)

“My initial reaction is shock. It just shows how you never know who someone truly is. You truly never know who the person sitting next to you in your class is, or what they are capable of.” (Female, age 18, 1st year, major 10)

These comments suggest that men are not expected to anticipate their own sexual victimization by other men, similar to Anderson and Doherty's (2008) argument that heteronormative masculinity precludes men from such expectations. By contrast, only one participant in the female victim condition discussed this idea:

“It escalated very quickly, went from having drinks and a conversation, to an other [sic] to stay the night at his house, and then continuing to touch and kiss her after she had said no.”
(Male, age 18, 1st year, major 1)

Notably, of all of the participants who discussed this quick escalation, only this participant identified as male.⁶¹ One possible explanation for this is that unlike women, men are not socially conditioned to internalize the expectation that they must be constantly vigilant for, and aware of signs of potential sexual violence. Together, these findings reflect traditional gender role expectations, particularly as they relate to sexuality and sexual behaviour. Where men are seen as the active initiators of sex and women are expected to be the gatekeepers, controlling men’s access to their bodies (Abbey, 1991; Anderson & Doherty, 2008; Bridges, 1991; Cowley, 2014; Fagen & Anderson, 2012; Struckman-Johnson, 1991; Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 1992), women are therefore expected to prevent their own victimization by (a) assuming that their actions, particularly in certain contexts, will be interpreted by men as sexual interest, and (b) changing their behaviour accordingly to avoid such risky situations. By contrast, expectations of traditional masculinity assume men are physically strong and should therefore be physically capable of resisting sexual assault (Abdullah-Khan, 2008; Anderson & Doherty, 2008; Kassing et al., 2005; Melanson, 1999), and as a result, the same indicators of risk of victimization may not have been recognized as such outside of the “typical” female victim context. This notion is similarly noted by one participant who expressed concern over the actions of the victim’s roommate:

“The first thing that came to mind was the question of why John's roommate would leave John alone in a stranger's house, but I suppose it would be because men are supposed to be able to take care of themselves.”
(Female, age 21, 4th year, major 3)

⁶¹ One of these participants declined to answer the question about their gender identity.

This dichotomy is particularly evident in the following two responses, where the female victim was praised for being verbally assertive, while the male victim was praised for his physical resistance, despite the actions and decisions of both characters being identical:

“In the end, Amy was doing the right thing for herself. She was assertive and said no in a situation where she did not want anything to happen.”
(Female, age 21, 4th year, major 8)

“John had a lot of confidence and security in himself to push the other guy off of him.”
(Female, age 19, 1st year, major 3)

While these dichotomous responses are interesting given quantitative findings of previous research that greater physical resistance results in less blame attributed to both male and female victims (Davies & Rogers, 2006), they reflect studies which have found that male victims are blamed more for their behaviour than are female victims (Howard, 1984), particularly with respect to their ability to fight off an attacker (Perrott & Weber, 1996). This dichotomy is similarly echoed by the following two responses, wherein the participants projected emotional reactions onto the victim characters:⁶²

“Michael seems disrespectful and if I were Amy I would have been terrified.”
(Female, age 21, 4th year, major 8)

“I also felt bad for John because he didn't ask for Michael to come on to him like that. He must have been scared as he was all alone in this situation. He also might have been angry because Michael was not responding to his requests to stop.”
(Female, age 21, 4th year, major 3)

While both participants thought that the victim would have been afraid, only the male victim was expected to be angry at his situation. This finding further reflects the role of normalized aggression in traditional constructions of masculinity (Anderson & Doherty, 2008).

⁶² Note that these projected emotional reactions are not the same as the emotional reactions of the participants themselves, many of whom expressed sadness, fear, or anger on behalf of both the female and male victims.

5.2.3 – Assumptions of Heterosexuality: An Alternate Explanation

An alternate – or, perhaps, complimentary – explanation for the significant effect of victim gender only on the victim’s awareness of the consequences, along with the qualitative responses, is that these responses are reflective of heteronormative expectations which are prevalent within society (Herz & Johansson, 2015; Richardson, 2000). If heterosexuality is seen as the expected norm, it may be considered reasonable to expect that in an opposite-sex dynamic, the man will want a sexual relationship and will be more likely to interpret her behaviour as indicative of sexual interest. This assumption may be particularly relevant in combination with traditional notions of biologically driven male hypersexuality and the male sexual script as the aggressive initiators of sexual activity (Bridges, 1991; Cowley, 2014; Fagen & Anderson, 2012; Hird, 2002). By contrast, because heterosexuality (and not homosexuality) is automatically assumed, it may be less reasonable to assume the same within a same-sex dynamic.⁶³ As a result, the female victim would be expected to anticipate the perpetrator’s sexual intent more so than the male victim.

Qualitative responses provide some support for this explanation. For example, while none of the participants in the female victim conditions made any mention of the characters’ sexual orientation, one participant in the male victim condition made assumptions about both characters’ sexuality:

“Sexual assault between a homosexual guy and heterosexual guy. It was wrong and disgusting.”
(Male, age 19, 1st year, major 2)

Others made similar assumptions about the perpetrator’s sexual orientation in particular:

“My initial reaction is that it is obvious that John was unaware about Michael's sexuality.”
(Male, age 23, 2nd year, major 3)

⁶³ While these results are contextualized within a non-romantic relationship, future research should further explore how social constructions of masculinity may be different amongst non-heterosexual men and how this may be reflected in the judgements made about sexual violence occurring within same-sex relationships.

“John might have not noticed some effeminate characters in Michael's behavior that lead him to think he was attracted to him.”⁶⁴ (Female, age 20, 2nd year, major 8/9)

These responses allude to the idea that had the victim known about the perpetrator's sexual orientation, he would have been able to act differently in order to prevent his assault, similar to how the female victim was frequently expected to have done. One participant made this connection explicitly:

“Initially, I'm surprised at the outcome of the events. It seemed relatively harmless to invite a friend over to spend the night. I am also inclined to assume that John did not know Michael was gay - if he had, he might have been able to handle the situation better, or they would have a mutual understanding of where each other stand [*sic*] in terms of sexuality. I am also sad for John and embarrassed for Michael as their friendship is likely ruined.” (Female, age 20, 1st year, major 7)

These responses further reflect male rape myths, which are often predicated on the belief that male-on-male sexual assault is homosexual assault. By this, it is assumed that the men involved in male sexual assault, both as victims and perpetrators, are gay (Abdullah-Khan, 2008; Anderson & Doherty, 2008; Melanson, 1999). Interestingly, however, these four responses diverged from these myths regarding the male victim's sexual orientation, as none of these participants made this assumption.⁶⁵ Instead, participants focused on the perpetrator's sexuality, reflecting both those myths which state that men who rape other men must be gay (Abdullah-Khan, 2008; Melanson, 1999) as well as the pervasive view of sexual assault as being sexually motivated⁶⁶ (Abdullah-Khan, 2008).

⁶⁴ Interestingly, in describing the perpetrator as “effeminate,” being gay is constructed as being the opposite of masculine rather than as a sexual orientation distinct from gender.

⁶⁵ This finding may have resulted from the decision to avoid utilizing a ‘date rape’ scenario in the current study, as this would have confounded results with the characters’ sexual orientation.

⁶⁶ The vignettes employed in this study were constructed specifically to depict a sexual assault level 1, as defined in the *Criminal Code* (1985, s.271), and such assaults may be more readily interpreted to be sexually motivated compared to aggravated sexual assault. Future research should explore these understandings of the motivations for sexual assault in the context of aggravated assaults.

5.3 – CONSTRUCTIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY AND BLAME

5.3.1 – Responsibility

Multiple meanings of responsibility

In accordance with Hart's (2008) assertion that there are multiple types of responsibility (Shaver, 1985), participants in the current study broadly characterized responsibility in three ways.⁶⁷ First, 27 participants (19.6%) discussed, in various ways, responsibility as being role-based. For example, some participants noted that an individual is responsible for completing tasks, including those associated with an official role, often being discussed in terms of an obligation or being based on a certain degree of trust:

“Being responsible means that you have agreed or put yourself in a position that you are obligated or in control of. This could result from a job position, or a signed contract.”
(Female, age 20, 4th year, major 3)

“It means that someone should understand that someone has placed their trust in you to complete a certain task or activity. If you are responsible for something, you should do your best to fulfill the role you were given.”
(Female, age 18, 2nd year, major 2/9)

“Having responsibility means that you are given a certain amount of trust either by yourself or others around you. In that context, betrayal of this trust would be deemed irresponsible. For example, the government issues you a drivers [sic] license and entrusts you to operate the vehicle safely and follow the rules of the road. By breaking these rules, you are driving irresponsibly and are therefore subject to punishment to a reasonable extent of the law.”
(Male, age 19, 2nd year, major 10)

The relationship between responsibility and being obligated to perform certain acts is clearly demonstrated in the following response:

“I don't think John is responsible for anything, or is required to do anything just because he accepted Michael's offer to crash at his place. If he were into it, okay, but if he isn't,

⁶⁷ The open-ended question regarding responsibility was worded specifically so as to encourage participants to discuss responsibility in the sense of responsibility *for* something (the focus of the current study's research questions), recognizing the multiple senses of responsibility described by Hart (2008) and Shaver (1985). It is interesting that some participants still discussed the other meanings of responsibility, and this provides an unexpected and unique contribution, particularly with respect to role-based responsibility as it relates to gender roles and sex scripts.

that's okay too. To be responsible for something is to actually have an obligation to do something, which John doesn't, he has a choice.”

(Female, age 20, 3rd year, major 3)

However, the characterization of responsibility as an obligation⁶⁸ opens up the possibility of being negatively judged if one fails to fulfil their obligations, and this may be applied to victims as well as perpetrators:

“No always means no, Michael should have respected that. However, you also have to take the responsible action not to enable a person.”

(Female, age 19, 2nd year, major 3)

Although this response was made in reference to a male victim,⁶⁹ this echoes the preceding discussion on how women are expected to anticipate potentially risky situations and change their behaviour accordingly to minimize or avoid their risk of victimization (Anderson & Doherty, 2008; Frith, 2009; Randall, 2010). More clearly reflecting this view, other participants discussed the victim's responsibility in a positive light, as shown through their decisions:

“You are responsible for your actions and reactions. Amy did drink but she was still able to say no, therefore she was responsible enough to limit her drinking in order to function when she left with someone.”

(Female, age 21, 4th year, major 9/10)

“Responsible means making a decision that is going to benefit everyone in the long run. To be responsible for someone or something would mean taking care of that person or thing and making sure nothing bad happened to them or it. Amy was being responsible in this case in trying to find a place to stay for the night.”

(Female, age 20, 3rd year, major 3/7)

In this sense, these responses characterize this anticipation and avoidance of risks as part of the role-based responsibilities of the feminine gatekeeper role (Bridges, 1991; Check & Malamuth, 1983; Cowley, 2014; Fagen & Anderson, 2012; Frith, 2009; Jackson, 1995; Randall, 2010; Warshaw & Parrot, 1991). The second way in which participants broadly characterized

⁶⁸ Although it may not be explicitly stated or defined as such, this view of responsibility as an obligation exists within a context of a contractual type of relationship.

⁶⁹ It should be noted that this participant did not read the vignette carefully, as indicated by their incorrect description of the scenario as John (the victim) inviting Michael (the perpetrator) to his apartment.

responsibility was being responsible for events. For example, 14 participants (10.1%)

characterized responsibility as being in charge or in control of a situation:

“They are in charge of ensuring something goes a certain way or acts in a certain way. For example, if someone is responsible for another friend's safety, they are expected to make sure that their safety is maintained during that period of responsibility. If they are able/unable to complete the task, they are the ones to reap the benefits or consequences.”

(Female, age 18, 1st year, major 2)

“Someone to be responsible for something means that person has control over that scenario.”

(Female, age 22, 4th year, major 3/7)

As a consequence of this control of the situation, some participants also noted that the responsible person is also accountable for any outcomes of the situation – good or bad – and that this accountability may stem from their involvement in, and direct influence on, the events:

“If someone is responsible for an event, it means they are the one who causes the event and are in control of, and can be held accountable for, the outcome. In this situation Micheal [sic] is responsible for the outcome of this situation (the occurrence of sexual assault) because he makes intentional sexual advances on Amy without consent, and in fact ignores Amy's physical and verbal statements of dissent.”

(Female, age 22, 5th year or higher, major 3/9)

These responses reflect the view of responsibility for events and outcomes (which the actor may or may not have brought about), which can be distinguished from responsibility for one's own actions (Heider, 1958). Reflective of this distinction, the third and most common way in which participants discussed responsibility was in terms of being responsible for one's own actions and decisions, although this may include the outcomes of those actions as well:

“You are responsible for your own actions. If you are drunk, you are responsible for getting drunk.”

(Female, age 18, 1st year, major 2)

“Not letting an excuse like alcohol be the reason for your actions, they are strictly your own, you are responsible.”

(Male, age 19, 2nd year, major 10)

Together, the distinction between having responsibility and being responsible becomes evident. While *having* responsibility (as in role-based responsibility) is characterized by an

obligation to act in a certain way, presumably in the future, *being* responsible is characterized by accountability for something that has already happened (Hart, 2008; Shaver, 1985), either an event or one's own actions. Moreover, this distinction is often subtle, reflecting the earlier discussion of the ways in which victims are often held responsible for failing to fulfil their supposed responsibility to prevent their victimization (Anderson & Doherty, 2008; Frith, 2009; Randall, 2010). Additionally, four participants were apparently aware of the multiple meanings of responsibility, particularly with respect to the ideas of role fulfilment and responsibility for actions:

“Being responsible for something means that you alone did something and have to take ownership of that. It can also mean that you have an obligation to do something.”
(Female, age 21, 4th year, major 3)

“Being responsible means that you have committed an act and you own up to that. You take on the positive or the negative reactions to the act because you know that regardless of how it turned out, you did it and you need to be honest. Or you have committed yourself to doing something and you stand by that by following through.”
(Female, age 18, 1st year, major 3)

However, this third and most common view of active responsibility most clearly reflects the theoretical definitions of responsibility typically used in attributional research (Bradbury & Fincham, 1990; Harvey & Rule, 1978; Heider, 1958; Shaver, 1985; Shaver & Drown, 1986). This understanding of responsibility is therefore the focus of the following sections.

Dimensions of responsibility

Similar to most theoretical definitions of responsibility (Bradbury & Fincham, 1990; Harvey & Rule, 1978; Heider, 1958; Shaver, 1985; Shaver & Drown, 1986), almost all participants discussed it as being responsible for things in which one has an active role. While for 35 participants (25.4%), this simply meant being held responsible for one's actions or

decisions, some participants clarified that one is responsible for the outcomes and consequences of their actions and decisions:

“Did you do it? Then you are responsible for how it turned out. No matter if it affected just you or anyone else, if you had the mental capacity to perform an act, no matter what it may be, then you are responsible.”
(Female, age 20, 3rd year, major 3)

“You are responsible for your actions whether or not the act committed was done legally or illegally. You must take responsibility for your behaviour and accept the consequences that go with it.”
(Male, age 23, 2nd year, major 3)

While it is unsurprising that, given the context of the vignette they had just read, most of these participants discussed taking responsibility for the negative consequences of one’s actions, nine participants acknowledged that this responsibility applies to positive actions and outcomes as well:

“There are consequences for their decisions and actions, either positive or negative.”
(Female, age 19, 3rd year, major 3/9)

“To be held responsible for something means that based on actions, or words, said person should receive the proper credit or consequence based on the action.”
(Female, age 20, 2nd year, major 3/9)

These responses overwhelmingly reflect the idea of a causal (or at least, contributory) role being necessary for an attribution of responsibility which is present in almost every theoretical construction of the concept (Bradbury & Fincham, 1990; Harvey & Rule, 1978; Heider, 1958; Shaver, 1985; Shaver & Drown, 1986). However, while it is largely only implied through these responses, 18 participants (13.0%) discussed this notion explicitly, stating that one is responsible for the things that they have caused through their actions and decisions:

“To be responsible for something is to have been the reason something happened. In the event of a sexual assault, you are the aggressor, the person in question. Being responsible for something means that without you, the act would not have happened.”
(Female, age 18, 1st year, major 3)

“To be responsible for something means that you are linked to that something. Basically, this means that your actions and omissions with [sic] have a direct impact on that

something. It does not matter how much you think of that something or how little an affect [sic] you have on that something; if you can directly have influence over that something in some way, shape or form, you are responsible for that something.”

(Male, age 18, 1st year, major 6)

Interestingly, as these responses were overwhelmingly either explicitly or implicitly directed at the perpetrator rather than the victim, they can be seen to contradict the common rape myths that victims have somehow contributed to their own sexual assault, thereby leading to attributions of responsibility and blame (Burt, 1980; McMahon & Farmer, 2010; Payne et al., 1999). However, with some exceptions, participants overwhelmingly avoided directly attributing responsibility to the victim, both through their quantitative and qualitative responses. In contrast to these rape myths, participants apparently did not view the victim as having causally contributed to their assault, and therefore generally did not view them as directly responsible. Instead, qualitative responses generally directly attributed responsibility only to the perpetrator, with the victim's responsibility often being discussed as an expected role (Hart, 2008; Shaver, 1985), suggesting an implicit gender-based responsibility centred primarily on omission.

Related to the idea of responsibility for one's actions, five participants (3.6%) discussed how the actions for which one is responsible must also be intentional, an element of individual responsibility deemed necessary both by early attribution theorists (Harvey & Rule, 1978; Heider, 1958) and those who later took the view of responsibility as a dimensional process (Bradbury & Fincham, 1990; Shaver, 1985):

“Committing actions purposely. He purposely forced his hands on her, he is responsible for his actions.”

(Female, age 23, 5th year or higher, major 7/9)

“Michael willfully ignoring Amy's requests would make him responsible for acting against her will. Michael was responsible to ask Amy if she wanted to participate in intimate relations, and had the responsibility to act respectfully. Amy has no responsibility in this situation, she agreed to go over to Michael's house, which does not mean that she agreed to have sex with him nor should it be seen as an automatic invitation for any sexual interactions.”

(Female, age 20, 3rd year, major 7)

Similarly, seven participants (5.1%) discussed responsibility in terms of having a choice and choosing to act in a particular way of their own volition, a dimension of responsibility which has been emphasized by Bradbury and Fincham (1990):

“Well humans have radical freedom and thus radical responsibility so you are basically responsible for most things in your life. If we have free will then we decide our course of actions and the results of those actions are our responsibility good or bad.”
(Male, age 25, 4th year, major 1)

“No one else is making you force yourself onto another person sexually after they have told you no except for you.”
(Female, age 20, 3rd year, major 10)

This element of choice as a prerequisite for responsibility is shown most clearly in reference to the vignette, by which the victim’s lack of choice meant that they could not be responsible:

“In the case of sexual assault, I find that the victim can't be held responsible for something that is ultimately someone else's [sic] decision to do, and is beyond their control. There are things you can do to make sexual assault less likely, but ultimately the responsibility is still with the person who chooses to assault someone else.”
(Female, age 18, 1st year, major 1)

This response in particular highlights the difference between participants’ attribution of responsibility for the assault only to the perpetrator, but acknowledgement of the victim’s expected responsibility to prevent and mitigate their risk of sexual assault (Anderson & Doherty, 2008; Frith, 2009; Randall, 2010). Additionally, while most participants discussed this dimension in terms of intentional action, a distinction between intentional action and intended outcomes emerged from the following two responses, reflecting the lack of specificity regarding the dimension of intent observed in some theoretical definitions of responsibility (e.g. Bradbury & Fincham, 1990; Harvey & Rule, 1978):

“That they had the intent of committing the act. That they knew what they were doing - common logic. Even though the results are not what they intended them to be, that someone is still responsible [for] what happened.”
(Female, age 20, 3rd year, major 3)

“They made decisions to bring about the events they wanted to happen.”

(Female, age 20, 4th year, major 3/9)

Fourteen participants (10.1%) also referenced the idea of being responsible for actions or decisions made with an awareness or understanding of what one is doing, an idea referenced by both major dimensional process views of responsibility (Bradbury & Fincham, 1990; Shaver, 1985). For example, mirroring the dimension of an appreciation of the wrongfulness (Bradbury & Fincham, 1990) or moral consequences of an act (Shaver, 1985), two participants discussed being aware of the wrongfulness of one’s actions or decisions:

“That they can make their own decisions and figure out if they are right or wrong.”

(Female, age 31, 5th year or higher, major 9)

“To be responsible means for committing the action, doing something, knowing your role in this act and being responsible to know better if its [*sic*] right or wrong.”

(Female, age 20, 3rd year, major 3)

Three others discussed this notion of awareness similarly, expanding on this to include an awareness of the potential consequences of their actions, and of their causal role in the events (Bradbury & Fincham, 1990; Shaver, 1985):

“It means that they are accountable for what happens, that [*sic*] know, own up and admit to it when they’ve made mistakes. They may learn from them, but that isn’t necessary, really, just that they realize that they are wrong and how they went wrong and why, what consequences there are towards others and in different situations when they are involved.”

(Female, age 20, 2nd year, major 7)

More often, however, it was unclear what a responsible person was expected to have an awareness of, instead being described in relatively abstract and vague ways. Diverging from these theoretical views, 12 participants (8.7%), for example, discussed having the mental capacity, or being in a state of mind to be aware of what they are doing, or simply discussed ‘knowingly’ acting:⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Interestingly, half of these participants identified their major of study as Criminology.

“You're responsible for something when you have the maturity and capacity to understand situations and thus act accordingly to those situations. You can act in a manner that is beneficial to you and to others who may be involved in the situation.”
(Female, age 18, 1st year, major 3)

“It means that they have reasonable mind to be able to weigh the consequences of their actions, and it is up to them to chose [sic] whether to do something or not. Either way, they are to be held accountable for their choice. Micheal [sic] knew that John was protesting, but he chose to go ahead anyways.”
(Gender not disclosed, age 19, 2nd year, major 3)

“If someone knowingly does something, whether they have an "excuse" or not. (in this case drinking is not an excuse)”
(Female, age 18, 1st year, major 3)

Interestingly, the emphasis of these responses on this dimension of awareness – in particular, on an awareness of the consequences and the associated mental capacity – and these participants’ reference to the perpetrator in explaining this aspect of responsibility diverges from other findings of this study. Most notably, quantitative results revealed that, amongst women, female victims were perceived to have greater awareness of the consequences compared to male victims. Qualitative responses, as previously discussed, reflect this quantitative result. However, despite these participants’ identification of awareness as an important dimension of responsibility for the perpetrator, a similar relationship between this variable and responsibility was not observed in relation to the victim.

Responsibility was also discussed by 38 participants (27.5%) in terms of accountability. While this idea was often discussed simply as being accountable, a conception similarly held by Harvey and Rule (1978), for 20 participants, responsibility meant being accountable for, and accepting the consequences of one’s behaviours and decisions:

“It means that you have to be accountable for your actions. In Amy’s case she made a mistake on [sic] going to someone’s place without not really knowing the guy, Michael. And Michael made a mistake in trying and actually touching Amy.”
(Female, age 18, 1st year, major 3)

By contrast, a distinction emerged from 11 participants between being accountable, as an action, and being held accountable, as a process dependent on others:

“When someone is held accountable for something (an action) that they did (or words) that were said.”
(Female, age 20, 3rd year, major 9)

“It means that someone has a mental capacity to control their own actions, so they should be held accountable for the decisions that they made and the way in which they behaved.”
(Female, age 21, 3rd year, major 3)

However, both views of being accountable and being held accountable encompass the idea of being answerable for an event. While neither Bradbury and Fincham (1990) nor Shaver (1985) described accountability as a dimension of responsibility, their discussions similarly used accountability to define responsibility as being answerable for an event. Furthermore, this notion of being held accountable was, for two participants, related to the idea of being at fault:

“It means that they are to be held accountable for something, and that they are accepting to be placed at fault for whatever the turnout is of the situation for which they are responsible.”
(Female, age 18, 1st year, major 3/7/8/9/10)

“Someone being responsible for something means that they are to [sic] fault for what happens. Someone who is responsible of his action is therefore supposed to be held accountable for those actions.”
(Male, age 31, 2nd year, major 10)

Interestingly, Bradbury and Fincham (1990) make reference to this idea of fault only in relation to judgements of blame. The divergence here between the current results and the theoretical constructs becomes especially evident with the three other participants who, in mentioning fault, discussed it synonymously with responsibility:

“If they're responsible for it, it was their fault/idea.”
(Female, age 22, 3rd year, major 6)

What becomes clear is that while almost all participants agreed that an active role in a situation or event is necessary for someone to be responsible – at least with respect to action-based responsibility – there was considerable variation in the importance given to the many other

dimensions of responsibility identified in the literature (Bradbury & Fincham, 1990; Shaver, 1985; Shaver & Drown, 1986). Furthermore, while the elements of most theoretical definitions of responsibility emerged amongst participants (Bradbury & Fincham, 1990; Harvey & Rule, 1978; Shaver, 1985; Shaver & Drown, 1986), the emphasis placed on these elements was highly varied, reflecting the complex ways in which individuals understand and make attributions of responsibility in practice (Shaver, 1985).

5.3.2 – Blame

Quantitative analysis, through PCA, generally found that participants did not distinguish between responsibility and blame, as indicated by the strong correlation between them and the resultant component scores for the victim and perpetrator characters. Accountability, fault, and liability for censure were also included in these component scores for both characters, and the dimensions of contribution and cause additionally correlated strongly with these five variables for the victim character. These quantitative results are further reflected in qualitative responses to the questions regarding participants' definitions of responsibility and blame. Participants' discussions of what it means to be blameworthy were, in many ways, reflective of, and similar to their discussions of responsibility. Twenty-seven participants, for example, defined being blameworthy as being responsible, suggesting, in accordance with some attribution researchers (Leigh & Aramburu, 1994), that the two terms can be used interchangeably (Cameron & Stritzke, 2003; Stormo et al., 1997; Tryggvesson, 2008). More explicitly, two participants discussed the ways in which they thought responsibility and blame were essentially the same:

“Blameworthy is basically the same thing as responsible. If you did something bad, or messed up in some sort of way, you need to take responsibility for it.”

(Female, age 18, 1st year, major 10)

“It has a different tone than responsible, but I think it means the same thing. You were the cause of something and are forced to own up to it.”

(Female, age 19, 1st year, major 2)

However, seven of those participants who defined blameworthy as being responsible added that to be blameworthy is to be responsible for some wrongdoing:

“It means that someone is responsible for doing something wrong.”

(Female, age 19, 2nd year, major 10)

While these responses could be reflective of the view that responsibility and blame are synonymous and can be used interchangeably, they may also reflect the view that they are distinct but related constructs, and that to be blameworthy, one must first be responsible (Bradbury & Fincham, 1990; Shaver, 1985; Shaver & Drown, 1986). Several participants, for example, state this idea more explicitly:

“Your action created an unfavourable consequence, so therefore you are not only responsible for your action but also blameworthy of the negative consequence.”

(Female, age 20, 3rd year, major 9)

“For someone to be blameworthy of something they need to be responsible for the thing that happened.”

(Female, age 19, 1st year, major 10)

“You are blameworthy for any something that you also have a responsibility for. Blameworthiness is directly related to responsibility. You can be blamed for anything that can directly influence. Being blameworthy for something means that you are held accountable for whatever that something is.”

(Male, age 18, 1st year, major 6)

Many participants also discussed blameworthy in terms of underlying dimensions or themes which were similarly used to describe responsibility – in particular, a causal relationship, intentional action, and choice (Bradbury & Fincham, 1990; Shaver, 1985; Shaver & Drown, 1986). For example, for 62 participants (44.9%), an active role and subsequent causal relationship was also necessary for blame:

“If you did it. If you hand [sic] a hand in it, you are blameworthy. Amy did nothing wrong, she did something that would upset most guys. This does not justify assault, where Michael clearly is to blame for his actions.”

(Male, age 19, 2nd year, major 10)

“Someone would be blame worthy for something if they were the cause for an accident or incident. In this case, Michael is blame worthy because although Amy said no repeatedly, he forced himself on her.”

(Female, age 20, 3rd year, major 3/7)

“If someone is blameworthy for something it means the outcome was due to their own actions and they should be held accountable. In this situation Micheal [sic] is blameworthy for the outcome of this situation (the occurrence of sexual assault) because he makes intentional sexual advances on Amy without consent, and in fact ignores Amy's physical and verbal statements of dissent.”

(Female, age 22, 5th year or higher, major 3/9)

While it was implicitly mentioned in their definitions of responsibility, five participants more explicitly discussed the varying degrees to which someone may contribute to an event (Shaver, 1986):

“Somebody is blame worthy if they were one of the primary sources of whatever the result is. For example if a person got in a car crash while drunk, sad, listening to music, in the rain.... all of those are contributing factors but some are more responsible for the result, so isolate that factor and theres [sic] whats [sic] blame worthy.”

(Male, age 25, 4th year, major 1)

However, several distinctions between responsibility and blame also emerged. For example, six participants discussed the notion of being to blame for a failure to act (i.e. not having a direct causal influence), an idea which was discussed only by one participant in reference to responsibility:

“To be blameworthy, is to be worthy of blame, obviously. It is to play a part in the action, without actually being the one to commit the action. So, this could mean seeing the wrongdoing and not stopping it/not reporting it. Or even helping the person responsible for doing it. Someone who is blameworthy is not someone who the finger can be completely pointed at, but is worthy of questioning.”

(Female, age 18, 1st year, major 3)

For this participant, one can be blameworthy by merit of failing to act and thereby allowing a negative consequence which they could have prevented. This idea is reflective of

Shaver's (1985) conceptualization of blame attributions; while both causal and responsibility attributions are seen to be a necessary precondition to an attribution of blame, Shaver (1985) acknowledges that the causal element may be an act of either commission or omission (p. 161). This notion is reflected in another participant's discussion of the distinction between responsibility and blame:

"To be blameworthy is tough. There are people that have hurt others without really being aware of it. But I go back to being aware of the consequences of that situation no matter the direction it goes. If you're responsible, you try to right a wrong or stop something bad before it happens (if you see it coming). To be blameworthy is to see something happening and not do anything about it." (Female, age 22, 2nd year, major 10)

For this participant, what distinguishes blame from responsibility is a failure to act or do the right thing. Together, these responses can be seen to reflect the view of role-based responsibility (Hart, 2008; Shaver, 1985), where one is obligated to perform certain acts (although this appears to be more of an obligation of citizenship rather than a specific or official role); failure to do so results in their being blameworthy. This idea is similarly reflected in the responses of those participants who discussed the significance of making a conscious, willful, or intentional choice to (fail to) act:

"For someone to be blameworthy of something, they have to have acted either ignorantly or was willfully blind to the situation. The person had to have known, or should have reasonably been aware, of what he or she was doing. In this case, Michael did not take necessary steps to get Amy's consent (making him willfully blind) and when she told him no he chose to disregard it (acting ignorant). He knew what he was doing and chose to act anyway, regardless of the consequences." (Female, age 20, 3rd year, major 7)

"For someone to be blameworthy for something, it means it was in their right mind to perform an action at the time, there were limited external influences, and they are the one who made the decision for something to happen." (Female, age 18, 1st year, major 3)

"Someone being blameworthy for something means that they had the opportunity to stop it or prevent it yet they continued with that action so they are to blame for the outcome." (Female, age 22, major 3)

A second significant distinction which emerged was in participants' discussions of accountability and fault. While accountability and fault were both used to describe responsibility and blame, a greater emphasis was placed on accountability in relation to responsibility compared to blame. In contrast to the 38 participants who discussed responsibility in terms of accountability, seven participants (5.1%) described being blameworthy as being held accountable for their actions and consequences:

“An individual based on their actions and the surrounding circumstances can be held accountable for what they did.” (Male, age 18, 1st year, major 3)

“To be blameworthy I think is situational someone could be blameworthy but not actually be blamed, to be blameworthy means you have done something where you are the person accountable for that event.” (Female, age 19, 2nd year, major 3)

Alternatively, fault was more often emphasized in relation to blame than to responsibility. While only two participants discussed this idea in reference to responsibility, 25 participants (18.1%) equated blameworthy with being at fault, sometimes in addition to being held accountable:

“It means that they are to be held accountable for their actions, and that they are placed at fault for a certain situation which was deemed to have happened because of their actions which they knowingly committed.” (Female, age 18, 1st year, major 3/7/8/9/10)

“For someone to be blamed, I think there should be enough evidence showing that one is at fault, like in this scenario, Michael forced himself on Amy although she was saying no. Michael should be blamed for sexual assault.” (Female, age 22, 2nd year, major 8)

“It's their fault x happened. The blame lies with them and it's on them to fix it/offer reparations, or something to make up for it.” (Female, age 20, 2nd year, major 7)

This divergent emphasis of accountability and blame reflects theoretical views of responsibility as accountability (Bradbury & Fincham, 1990; Shaver, 1985) and blame as fault (Bradbury & Fincham, 1990). Similarly, this notion of fault is characterized in Bradbury and

Fincham's (1990) final dimension of fault and liability for censure which distinguishes attributions of blame from those of responsibility. Encompassing the latter part of this dimension, five participants also discussed blame in terms of being deserving of punishment:

"That their actions and decisions were wrong, and deserving of punishment."
(Gender fluid, age 25, 1st year, major 7)

"Someone being blameworthy of something means that they have acted in such a way that has earned them the responsibility of the consequences of their initial motion. The response to their action will almost always be a negative one as they have done something negative to begin with. The perpetrator is one who deserves to be punished because of their action."
(Female, age 21, 4th year, major 3)

"Someone being blameworthy for something means they are responsible for that something and deserve to suffer the consequences for it."
(Male, age 31, 2nd year, major 10)

One participant went further to describe blame as requiring both responsibility and a deservingness of the negative consequences:

"To be responsible for a mistake, and in some way deserve what's coming to them. Amy is in some way is responsible for her mistake, but that doesn't mean that Michael has the right to do anything he wants."
(Female, age 18, 1st year, major 3)

Blame as a moral judgement

A third theme which emerged as a major distinction between responsibility and blame was the view of blame as a moral judgement. While many participants noted that something for which one is responsible could be positive or negative, overwhelmingly, participants focused on negative outcomes with respect to blame:

"To be blameworthy is to do something negative and reprehensible, something worthy of accusation or punishment. I think it's similar to responsibility, however taken to the next level. Blameworthy is when someone does something others fundamentally disagree with, that has a negative outcome, or harms others, your surroundings, etc."
(Female, age 18, 1st year, major 1)

Other participants focused on ‘blameworthy’ being primarily used in reference to criminal acts:

“Being responsible for something and being blameworthy for something are similar concepts but definitely have their distinctions. I feel that being blameworthy holds a negative connotation, and is better used when someone commits a heinous or criminal act. For instance, the male character in the hypothetical scenario is blameworthy for sexually assaulting the female character.” (Male, age 18, 1st year, major 5)

More explicitly, however, being blameworthy was often discussed by participants as a moral judgement, and this notion is somewhat reflective of theoretical definitions. For example, while Harvey and Rule (1978) did not distinguish between responsibility and blame, they were concerned with moral responsibility or accountability. Bradbury and Fincham (1990), however, did not discuss morality in relation to blame, but instead described an attribution of blame as an “evaluative judgement” (p. 18). Participants of the current study were generally more explicit about this moral evaluation; for 28 participants (20.3%), being blameworthy was described in terms of committing a moral wrongdoing:

“To be blameworthy for something, someone must have had to do something morally wrong.” (Female, age 21, 4th year, major 6/9)

“The definition I have off the top of my head is when someone knows they are doing something wrong, and as a result are worthy of the blame placed on them for the actions they have taken.” (Male, age 19, 2nd year, major 3/9)

By contrast, only one participant discussed responsibility for breaking some moral standard. Furthermore, seven participants suggested that this moral wrongdoing is what distinguishes judgements of responsibility and blame. This idea can be characterized by the distinction between being aware of the moral consequences of an act as an *element* of responsibility and a moral evaluation as being *central* to blameworthiness (Bradbury & Fincham, 1990). One participant noted that what counts as ‘wrongful’ depends on, and may change with, the situation and context:

“It means someone did something deemed wrong and is known to be a culprit or actor in what was done. You're blameworthy if you did something wrong essentially. What counts as wrong though is dependent on the situation and context.”

(Female, age 18, 1st year, major 3)

In accordance with this view, 10 participants (7.2%) emphasized not an inherently morally wrong quality to an act, but rather the socially constructed nature of what is considered wrongful. In this sense, what is ‘wrongful’ is what has been deemed socially unacceptable or condemned:

“Someone should be blamed if they committed an offense verbally, physically or psychologically that goes against societal virtues and results in the harm of someone else.”

(Female, age 18, 2nd year, major 2/9)

“It means they have done something that in one persons [sic] view or in society's view was wrong.”

(Female, age 20, 3rd year, major 10)

“Blameworthy has a negative connotation so I am going to assume that in this context we are speaking about Michael being blameworthy. To be blameworthy means that you have committed an act that goes against social norms and morale. You have done something that others see as wrong, so you are in the blame.”

(Female, age 18, 1st year, major 3)

These responses further reflect Shaver's (1985) view of blame as a social process or attribution which originates from how others perceive the act or situation. For example, echoing the idea of incorrectly inferring a causal relationship (Calhoun & Townsley, 1991; Shaver, 1985), one participant asserted that one can be blamed even if their actions are only *perceived* to have caused the events:

“Someone can be blamed for something if others perceive that their actions lead to what happened to them and not the actions of the perpetrator(s). For example, in cases of sexual assault the female victims are often seen as blameworthy because they were drunk, they "lead him on", or were wearing "revealing" clothing.”

(Female, age 20, 3rd year, major 10)

Seven other participants discussed this process more explicitly as being the sole result of others' perceptions:

“When the public [is] looking for someone to pin the responsibility on, they look for people who are blameworthy and pin it on them.”

(Female, age 22, 5th year or higher, major 3/8/10)

“For someone to be considered blameworthy, they need to basically "fit the bill".

Meaning that they need to fit into a prearranged set of characteristics put out by society.

For example, if nail polish is stolen, the blameworthy person would be the girly girl.

Eliminating the males, and the tom boys.” (Female, age 20, 2nd year, major 3/9)

“To be a scapegoat for a situation.”

(Female, age 24, 4th year, major 3/7)

Together, these responses reflect the distinction between the views of blameworthy as committing an act which others or society has deemed to be wrong, and being blameworthy *because* others have made that attribution. This second view is similarly reflected in Shaver’s (1985) view of blame, wherein an attribution of blame is made only through an interaction between the actor and perceivers, and their acceptance (or rejection) of the actor’s justifications for their behaviour. This idea is most clearly depicted in the following response, which emphasizes the absence of potential acceptable excuses or justifications:

“If someone knowingly does something wrong with no mitigating factors then they are to be blamed for what happened.”

(Female, age 17, 1st year, major 10)

By contrast, responsibility was more often discussed as if it were a relatively objective judgement (although no participants stated this explicitly). This dichotomy of the seemingly objective versus subjective natures of responsibility and blame is made clear in the following two responses:

“Personally, I think it means that someone committed an act (good or bad) and they're the ones who take credit for it. They're the ones who did it, therefore they are responsible for it.”

(Female, age 22, 5th year or higher, major 3/8/10)

“I don't think blameworthy should ever be a thing. Everyone acts for a reason, you need to take responsibility but someone shouldn't tell you what you did was right or wrong, you should be the judge of that.”

(Female, age 21, 4th year, major 9/10)

These responses, in combination with the quantitative results, highlight the complex and varied ways in which undergraduate students define, understand, and make judgements about responsibility and blame (Shaver, 1985). While participants' definitions of responsibility and blame, and the process of making these specific attributions are difficult (if not impossible) to capture quantitatively (Leigh & Aramburu, 1994), what emerged qualitatively as perhaps the more interesting understanding was how situational cues, socialized gender and sex roles, and rape myths interact to influence and, in some ways, determine the kinds of judgements which participants made, beyond simply degrees of responsibility and blame. Reflecting feminist critiques of attribution theory and social psychology's almost exclusive reliance on quantitative data (Anderson & Doherty, 2008; Ward, 1995), these findings further underscore the benefits of employing a mixed methods approach (Brannen, 2005; Forman & Damschroder, 2015) and the unique qualitative contributions of this study to understanding the nuances of attributing responsibility and blame in the context of sexual assault through a feminist critique.

5.4 – CONSENT AND THE DEFINITION OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

In response to the first manipulation check question, all participants stated at least some degree of agreement that the events described in the vignette constituted a sexual assault.⁷¹ In a similar vein, 23 (16.7%) participants described the scenario as sexual assault, confirming that participants recognized it as such. One participant discussed how, in line with the legal definition, the events described constituted sexual assault, despite not meeting narrow definitions of rape as forced penetration (Davies & Rogers, 2006):

⁷¹ As presented in Section 4.2.1 of this thesis, 90.6% of participants selected "strongly agree" in response to this question. The remaining 5.8% and 3.6% of participants selected "agree" and "somewhat agree," respectively.

“John was sexually assaulted by Micheal [*sic*], despite it not actually involving sexual intercourse. It is not John's fault at all and there wasn't consent.”

(Female, age 20, 3rd year, major 1)

Another discussed this recognition similarly, with emphasis on the role of consent, or lack thereof, in sexual assault:

“With this information I know that it is sexual assault. Because sexual assault involves: - touching - of another person - without consent - in circumstances of a sexual nature where the sexual integrity of the victim is violated.”

(Female, age 20, 4th year, major 3)

Similarly, 25 participants (18.1%) discussed the clear lack of consent depicted in the vignettes, as indicated by the victim's clear “no” and physical resistance:

“There was no possible way for him to misinterpret Amy's physical and verbal statements of dissent, whether alcohol was a factor or not.”

(Female, age 22, 5th year or higher, major 3/9)

“My initial reaction was that this was a case of sexual assault. John overtly and clearly did not consent to doing anything with Michael, yet Michael still continued to force himself onto him.”

(Female, age 22, major 3)

These statements, along with the others which discussed the clear lack of consent, generally all hinged on the idea of “no means no” (Delamater, 2015; Muehlenhard, Humphreys, Jozkowski, & Peterson, 2016; Little, 2005), either explicitly or implicitly:

“On the other hand, no means no, no matter what the situation.”

(Female, age 22, 2nd year, major 8)

“It makes me feel nauseous. Michael willfully ignores her requests, which she clearly stated by saying no. There is no grey area in this scenario, Amy clearly said ‘no’ and Michael's actions are disgusting.”

(Female, age 20, 3rd year, major 7⁷²)

“My initial reaction is to feel upset. I feel sad about the way that John is being treated. When someone says “no” you must respect that, especially in this context. Michael is taking something from John when he forced him to do these things.”

(Female, age 18, 1st year, major 3)

⁷² This participant's mention of there being “no grey area” suggests that a discussion of consent may be particularly relevant to situations depicting more ambiguous lack of consent (e.g. no obvious verbal or physical resistance).

Several other participants expressed emotional reactions to Michael's ignorance of this concept:

"It hurts me because I feel like "no" should be a universally understood word. It shouldn't be taken lightly at all. Michael should have understood that and he shouldn't have forced himself on her just because he wanted some action. He was being an asshole in my opinion."
(Female, age 22, 5th year or higher, major 3/8/10)

"I was incredibly upset that Michael would blatantly ignore the fact that Amy was clearly not consenting to the sexual act. He should have stopped the minute she said no."
(Female, age 18, 2nd year, major 2/9)

"I feel intense frustration and anger that he would continue to be sexual after Amy said no and then continue even while she repeatedly says no."
(Female, age 18, 1st year, major 3)

Although these participants all agreed that there was a lack of consent, responses diverged with respect to when the lack of consent became evident and, consequently, when the events constituted sexual assault. For example, some participants mentioned that in addition to ignoring or not respecting the victim's clear lack of consent, Michael never even attempted to gain consent, a core tenet of affirmative consent (Delamater, 2015; Muehlenhard et al., 2016; Little, 2005):

"Michael overstepped his bounds did not respect John's words nor did he ever ask for consent."
(Female, age 20, 3rd year, major 1)

"It's unsettling thinking about someone (mike) forcing themselves on someone else (John) without the slightest attempt at receiving their consent."
(Female, age 20, 3rd year, major 3)

"Michael should have gained consent from John instead of forcibly sexually assaulting him. Although getting consent during intimacy can often be complicated, I do think that John provided sufficient behaviour that would lead to a reasonable person to not pursue sexual intimacy with him in this situation."
(Male, age 21, 4th year, major 3)

Interestingly, these three participants all read a male victim version of the vignette. This finding suggests, perhaps, that given heteronormative assumptions of sexuality (Herz &

Johansson, 2015; Richardson, 2000) and the masculine role of men as sexual initiators (Anderson & Doherty, 2008; Bridges, 1991; Cowley, 2014; Fagen & Anderson, 2012), it is expected that in an opposite sex context the man will attempt to initiate sex and is therefore not expected to attempt to gain consent prior to this. By contrast, because heterosexuality is expected, in a same-sex context it cannot be assumed that such attempts would be expected or tolerated by another man, and it is therefore expected that the initiator would need to attempt to gain consent prior to making any sexual advances. To some extent, this idea contrasts Vandiver and Dupalo's (2012) findings that participants were less likely to perceive a situation as rape when the victim was male compared to when they were female. Six other participants, however, focused on the fact that the victim never gave consent, rather than on their indicating a lack of consent⁷³ or on Michael's lack of attempts to gain consent:

"Amy never gave Michael her consent for any kind of sexual activity."
(Female, age 26, 5th year or higher, major 2)

"Michael is sexually assaulting Amy. She did not ask to be touched, or for any sexual advances, this is very wrong and Michael should get into legal trouble along with trouble through the school."
(Female, age 18, 1st year, major 3)

"I am completely disgusted. John is an innocent victim and Michael appears to be a rapist. He did not have the permission to touch Michael in an inappropriate manner."
(Female, age 20, 3rd year, major 3/9)

"John did not give Michael consent to touch or kiss him. John told Michael no, but Michael ignored John and rather forced John into a situation he did not want to be in."
(Female, age 19, 3rd year, major 3/9)

Through this discussion, it becomes apparent that, in accordance with how the *Criminal Code* (1985) defines sexual assault as any unwanted contact of a sexual nature that occurs without the voluntary and freely given agreement by all individuals involved (Brennan & Taylor-

⁷³ Although functionally equivalent in the sense that the activities taking place are not consensual, this represents a subtle distinction between a lack of any indication of consent and the presence of behaviours (i.e. verbal and physical resistance) to indicate a lack of consent.

Butts, 2008), some participants viewed all of the events from the initial advance as sexual assault. In this sense, it reflects the idea that the onus of consent is on the initiator (in this case, the perpetrator) to seek and gain consent prior to sexual activity, rather than on the receiver (in this case, the victim) to assert their lack of consent.

This view is contrasted, however, by those participants whose responses implied that the events did not qualify as sexual assault until the victim verbally resisted. In opposition to the idea of affirmative consent that the onus of consent is on the individual who initiates sexual contact (Delamater, 2015; Muehlenhard et al., 2016; Little, 2005), these responses instead place this onus on the receiver, although this is often conceptualized in the literature as a perceived responsibility of women (Frith, 2009). Furthermore, this view is clearly embedded in rape myths which assume that the victim must clearly resist – either physically or verbally – in order for the assault to count as a “real” rape (McMahon & Famer, 2011; Melanson, 1998; Payne et al., 1999) or for the victim to be absolved of blame (Burt, 1980; McMahon & Famer, 2011; Melanson, 1998; Payne et al., 1999; Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 1992). For example, similar to the many responses which emphasized the importance of respecting “no means no,” 13 participants (9.4%) noted not that Michael should have asked for consent before making a sexual advance, but that he should have stopped once the victim said “no”:

“Also, regardless of what the [sic] thought might happen, one [sic] she said no, he should have stopped. He tried, she said no, stop there. He shouldn't have kept going, that's wrong.”
(Male, age 31, 2nd year, major 10)

“Everything seemed normal until he forcefully kissed him. Sometimes people get caught up in the moment and they kiss people unexpectedly but once John said no, that is when Michael should have stopped.”
(Female, age 20, 3rd year, major 10)

These responses imply that it was at this point – when Michael ignored the victim’s verbal resistance – that a sexual assault occurred. This view of sexual assault and consent can be

seen to emerge out of a view of sexual assault as a “normal” sexual interaction gone wrong (Jackson, 1995), where the interaction becomes problematic only after it has progressed past the initial socially acceptable attempt. Other participants explicitly make this connection:

“Amy and micheal [*sic*] seemed to [be] having a decent night at the party but then after they returned to micheals [*sic*] apartment, micheal [*sic*] tried to come on to amy [*sic*] then started to sexually assault her after she told him to stop.”

(Male, age 18, 1st year, major 3)

“John accepted an offer to sleep at Micheal's [*sic*] place. Perhaps Micheal [*sic*] assumed this meant John was interested and attempted to initiate a sexual advance. However, John turned him down. This is where the situation should have stopped. However it escalated to Micheal [*sic*] forcing himself on John, who had already told him he was not interested. At this point he was assaulting John.”

(Female, age 23, 4th year, major 10)

This focus on stopping only after the victim has verbally resisted again reflects the view of men as initiators of sex (Anderson & Doherty, 2008; Bridges, 1991; Cowley, 2014; Fagen & Anderson, 2012). In this sense, it is then considered to be understandable and acceptable that Michael would make an attempt at kissing the victim character, and only after the victim had expressed their lack of agreement did his actions become problematic. Similarly, the emphasis on the idea of “no means no” emerged more often in responses made by participants in the female victim conditions, reflecting the feminine role of the gatekeepers of sex (Bridges, 1991; Check & Malamuth, 1983; Cowley, 2014; Fagen & Anderson, 2012; Warshaw & Parrot, 1991), controlling men’s sexual advances through verbal dissent. Interestingly, however, three of the five responses which implied that sexual assault begins at the victim’s verbal dissent were made by participants who read male victim versions of the vignette. In contrast to the findings of this study and Anderson and Doherty’s (2008) assertion that heteronormative masculinity excuses men from the expectation of preventing their own sexual victimization, these responses suggest perhaps that in a same sex context, the male victim is expected to take on the feminine gatekeeper role. Furthermore, these varied understandings of consent and what constitutes sexual

assault and their relationship to the gender of the victim are particularly interesting given the influence of perceived intoxication on participants' identification of situations as sexual assault (Romero-Sanchez et al., 2012; Russell et al., 2011) and judgements of the victim's credibility (Lynch et al, 2013; Romero-Sanchez et al., 2012; Schuller & Stewart, 2000) found in previous studies. While no clear effects of alcohol were found in the current study on participants' understandings of consent, future research would do well to continue to examine this issue in the context of male sexual assault. Furthermore, the emphasis which participants placed on the issue of consent despite not being directly questioned about consent draws additional attention to the merits of including feminism-informed qualitative analysis in attribution research on sexual assault (Anderson & Doherty, 2008; Ward, 1995).

5.5 – SUMMARY

In summary, this chapter has presented the qualitative research findings. A number of broad themes emerged in line with the quantitative variables of interest: (1) the role of alcohol in sexual assault; (2) understandings of male sexual assault; (3) gendered expectations of victim responsibility; and (4) heteronormativity. Across these themes, responses generally reflected the view of sexual assault as being sexually motivated (Abdullah-Khan, 2008), and this notion was underlined particularly with respect to the ways in which alcohol interacts with the situation to produce a context conducive to sexual assault (Cowley, 2014) and the heteronormative gendered expectations of how men and women “should” respond to sexual assault (Anderson & Doherty, 2008; Frith, 2009; Randall, 2010). Together, it has contributed to the feminist literature on sexual assault and male victims specifically, highlighting the ways in which heteronormative gender roles both shape and are reflected in societal rape myths, resulting in subtle differences in the

ways in which men and women are expected to behave sexually and to respond to risks of sexual assault (Anderson & Doherty, 2008). Concerning participants' understandings and applications of judgements of responsibility and blame, qualitative analysis revealed participants' varied and complex understandings of these judgements, thereby providing an important qualitative contribution to the literature on such attributions. Finally, an examination of the additional theme of consent highlighted the varied and nuanced ways in which participants understand consent and the responsibilities of those involved in sexual activity to either seek consent or assert their lack of consent. These responses generally reflected the diverging views of consent as "no means no" and as affirmative consent (Delamater, 2015; Muehlenhard et al., 2016; Little, 2005), with the former clearly existing within a heteronormative framework of expected sexual behaviour and gender roles (Anderson & Doherty, 2008; Bridges, 1991; Check & Malamuth, 1983; Cowley, 2014; Fagen & Anderson, 2012; Herz & Johansson, 2015; Randall, 2010; Richardson, 2000; Warshaw & Parrot, 1991). Notably, the use of qualitative methods in combination with more commonly used quantitative ones for attribution research has allowed for a nuanced examination of themes (Anderson & Doherty, 2008; Ward, 1995), such as the highly varied ways in which participants understand and apply the abstract concepts of responsibility and blame, which are often downplayed through strictly quantitative analyses (Anderson & Doherty, 2008).

CHAPTER 6 – CONCLUSION

This research has examined undergraduate students' attributions toward the victim and perpetrator characters in a hypothetical sexual assault. Employing a mixed quantitative and qualitative research design using online questionnaires, this research addressed the effects of alcohol consumption and victim gender on attributions of responsibility and blame. Generally, only limited support was found for the hypotheses. In contrast to previous studies (Hammock & Richardson, 1997; Klippenstine et al., 2007; Tryggvesson, 2008), only male participants attributed greater victim responsibility and blame when the characters were depicted as being intoxicated, and only on a univariate level. Secondly, although no significant multivariate effects were found, both men and women did attribute less responsibility to the perpetrator on a univariate level when alcohol was involved, reflecting the findings of some previous research (Cameron & Stritzke, 2003; Sims et al., 2007; Stormo et al., 1997). Finally, although a direct comparison between the magnitude of male and female participants' judgements was not possible, men in this study did make more (but not stronger) negative judgements about the victim than did women. This finding, to some extent, reflects the well-documented effects of participant gender on attributions about sexual assault (Davies et al., 2006; Davies & Rogers, 2006; Fischer, 1995; Gilmartin-Zena, 1983; Sleath & Bull, 2010; Wakelin & Long, 2003).

Interesting findings similarly emerged from the qualitative analysis. Alcohol consumption was identified through qualitative responses as having a substantial role in sexual assault, particularly when combined with "sexual" contexts (Cowley, 2014). Regarding victim gender, qualitative findings have highlighted the lack of attention given to male victims of sexual assault (Abdullah-Khan, 2008; Davies & Rogers, 2006; Maxwell & Scott, 2014; Melanson, 1999), as well as the ways in which female sexual assault has become, to some extent,

normalized and commonplace. Furthermore, both quantitative and qualitative findings have suggested that participants held male and female victims responsible for their victimization in different ways, rather than to different degrees. These gendered ways in which victims were judged further reflected the role of traditional, heteronormative gender norms and the dichotomous roles of masculine sexual aggressors and feminine sexual gatekeepers (Bridges, 1991; Check & Malamuth, 1983; Cowley, 2014; Fagen & Anderson, 2012; Frith, 2009; Jackson, 1995; Warshaw & Parrot, 1991).

Additionally, this research also sought to examine and better understand participants' understandings and applications of attributions of responsibility and blame. While quantitative results found that items pertaining to responsibility and blame strongly correlated with each other, and therefore, that attempts to measure them independently may be unnecessary (Leigh & Aramburu, 1994), qualitative findings highlighted the complex and varied ways in which participants understood these concepts and actually applied them when making judgements about the characters involved (Shaver, 1985). Finally, an additional theme of consent emerged from the qualitative responses somewhat unexpectedly given that the open-ended questions did not ask about consent. Participants' understandings of consent were seen to reflect heteronormative, gendered expectations of sexual behaviour (Bridges, 1991; Cowley, 2014; Fagen & Anderson, 2012; Herz & Johansson, 2015), as it was generally only expected that the perpetrator should have sought consent prior to any sexual contact when the victim was male. Furthermore, these responses highlighted the different ways in which participants understood consent, generally emphasizing either the idea of "no means no" or of affirmative consent (Delamater, 2015; Muehlenhard et al., 2016; Little, 2005).

6.1 – CONTRIBUTIONS TO CRIMINOLOGY

The current research has made a number of contributions to the criminological literature, methodology, and theory regarding attributions about sexual assault. First, it has addressed the research gap regarding the effects of alcohol consumption on attributions about male sexual assault. Moreover, in light of the relative lack of Canadian study in this area which has employed hypothetical vignettes among university students specifically, this study has further enhanced the literature by contributing both qualitative and quantitative Canadian data on such attributions about both male and female victims. Furthermore, researchers have often criticized feminist scholarship for ignoring and downplaying the issue of male sexual assault, either by simply choosing not to study it or by framing sexual assault as an issue of “violence against women” and thereby excluding male victims from the discussion by definition (Abdullah-Khan, 2008; Davies & Rogers, 2006; Kassing et al., 2005; Maxwell & Scott, 2014). This research has contributed to the literature on male sexual assault and feminist theory by applying a feminist critique of attribution theory and research to the issue of male sexual assault and emphasizing the role of socialized gender and sexual scripts – a major tenet of modern feminist theory (Anderson & Doherty, 2008; Burt, 1980; Frith, 2009) – in judgements of both male and female victims. Future research should continue to employ feminist theorizing from a variety of perspectives to further develop this literature. Secondly, this research has highlighted the pervasive nature of heteronormative assumptions which are often ignored or downplayed in research which does not explicitly examine sexual orientation. However, the fact that none of the participants of this study assumed that the male victim was homosexual, in contrast to male rape myths which frame male sexual assault as homosexual assault (Abdullah-Khan, 2008; Anderson & Doherty, 2008; Melanson, 1999), may indicate shifting attitudes towards gay men and male victims. Third, this

research has made the relatively unique contribution of examining participants' perceptions of consent. While several previous studies have addressed the issue of consent indirectly (Maurer & Robinson, 2008; Sims et al., 2007; Sleath & Bull, 2010; Untied et al., 2012), either through questions about the victim's willingness to participate or participants' recognition of the vignette as sexual assault (Untied et al., 2012), only one of the previously discussed studies explicitly included consent as a variable, and this was only as a measure of participants' belief in the complainant's claim of non-consent⁷⁴ (Klippenstine et al., 2007). Additionally, it has contributed to a better understanding of the attributional processes involved in making judgements about sexual assault and in particular, how undergraduate students define and use 'responsibility' and 'blame' in making such judgements.

Finally, the current study has also provided a relatively unique methodological contribution in that a mixed methods design was employed to address the research questions. While most previous research in the study of attributions about sexual assault have employed largely positivistic, quantitative methods to measure oftentimes ill-defined constructs (Anderson & Doherty, 2008), the use of quantitative as well as qualitative analyses in the current research allowed for greater nuancing and a deeper understanding of the varied ways in which participants define and make such attributions. In particular, the use of qualitative responses to complement the quantitative findings allowed for an examination of subtle distinctions between judgements that would not have been found through the quantitative analysis alone. Moreover, the combination of quantitative and qualitative analyses has further highlighted how gendered expectations of sexual behaviour interact with societal rape myths to shape attributions about sexual assault, oftentimes framing those attributions within a discourse of hazards and risk

⁷⁴ Notably, this study utilized mock trial transcripts, in which the complainant's claim of non-consent would be key in making a case judgement.

management (Anderson & Doherty, 2008). Future research in this area may therefore do well to employ a similar methodology to further enhance our understanding of these processes and the gendered context in which they occur. Interestingly, the notion of role-based responsibility also emerged from the qualitative responses somewhat unexpectedly, and in many ways paralleled the findings regarding gendered roles and sexual scripts. The relationship between gender and responsibility and responsible sexual behaviour as part of the roles associated with one's gender may therefore be an important topic of study for future research.

6.2 – METHODOLOGICAL LIMITATIONS

Despite the contributions of the current research, a number of limitations must be acknowledged. These limitations stem largely from issues relating to sampling method and sample size, although additional concerns regarding internal validity, and participant and researcher bias should also be considered. The lack of significant findings on many of the variables of interest, particularly with respect to multivariate analyses, may be partially explained by concerns of low statistical power. Additionally, several potential effects could have caused participants to be more aware of their own biases and attitudes toward sexual assault and victims, thereby suppressing the effect of the independent variables amongst this sample. Examples of such effects might include history effects (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002), such as the large media attention given to sexual assault in recent years; social desirability effects, which are recognized as a considerable concern for research regarding potentially socially undesirable attitudes (Burstin et al., 1980; Ganong & Coleman, 2006); and researcher influence (Shadish et al., 2002). Researcher influence, in particular, may have resulted from attempts to increase motivation to participate by informing potential participants during recruitment that the goals of

the study were to promote more positive support for victims of sexual assault. Additionally, due to lack of control over when and where participants completed the questionnaire, it is possible that participants may have been made aware of the experimental conditions of the study prior to their completion due to communication with other participants (Shadish et al., 2002). In this case, it would similarly be likely that the effects of the independent variables would be suppressed.

The use of a convenience sample meant that participants were recruited on a voluntary basis, and this opens up the possibility of self-selection bias (Reips, 2002). This study's findings, therefore, may not be generalizable to other students in the Faculty of Social Sciences. Furthermore, the very small number of male participants additionally limits the generalizability of results, particularly as the ratio of male-to-female students was likely unrepresentative of the sampling population, and the male participants of this study were similarly unlikely to be representative of the characteristics of male Social Science students. Finally, while experimental research, through substantial control over variables and the use of random assignment, is generally able to minimize threats to internal validity, this has the effect of increasing concerns regarding the generalizability of results (Shadish et al., 2002). Attitudes and judgements examined within the confines of an experimental study using hypothetical scenarios may not reflect the attitudes and judgements toward real cases of sexual assault (Collett & Childs, 2011). Furthermore, asking participants to explicitly think about, discuss, and in some instances confront their own attitudes and judgements may have interrupted the processes as they would naturally occur in real-life situations.

6.3 – RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH AND POLICY

The limitations discussed above highlight methodological concerns which future research should address. First, a large, random, and representative sample would be ideal in order to address issues of statistical power and validity, as well as the generalizability of results to other populations. In particular, greater representation of male participants is necessary in order to facilitate the use of more sophisticated and powerful multivariate analyses. Secondly, as quantitative attempts to measure attributions about sexual assault remain common (Anderson & Doherty, 2008), future research would do well to make systematic efforts using large random samples to develop standardized measures of relevant attributions (such as responsibility and blame) in order to address the lack of methodological and conceptual consistency across research. An important consideration for such efforts, given the varied constructions of responsibility and blame expressed by participants in their qualitative responses, is how to account for variations in participants' understandings and use of these constructs. Moreover, the gendered ways in which participants judged male and female victims in this study emphasize the importance of developing standardized measures which are more nuanced than the abstract theoretical constructs typically employed. In particular, quantitative measures which allow for an examination of the role of gendered sexual scripts in such judgements, as well as the inclusion of qualitative data and analysis should be employed by future research to advance the field of rape perception research in a way that is more in line with a feminist perspective (Anderson & Doherty, 2008).

In accordance with other research conducted using online questionnaires with undergraduate populations (Crawford et al., 2001; de Rada & Dominguez-Alvarez, 2014; Granello & Wheaton, 2004; Reips, 2002), the response rate obtained in this study was relatively

low. As evidenced in this study, the increasingly common use of such data collection tools presents a number of challenges for researchers. The use of incentives for participation, such as a raffle for a gift card prize, may increase the response rate of future studies, but its use should be carefully considered in light of the practical complications and reduced anonymity it would necessitate. Other methods of recruitment, such as email invitations sent to students (Crawford et al., 2001), should be considered as a way to avoid inviting students to participate multiple times due to their enrollment in multiple courses which facilitated recruitment.

The large proportion of participants who dropped out of the study also presents an important concern for future research to examine and carefully consider when designing studies. The use of an easily accessible online questionnaire via a URL provided to students may also have resulted in multiple submissions by participants (Reips, 2002). While the use of a login ID and password in order to access the questionnaire (Granello & Wheaton, 2004) was not a practical option for this study, future research should consider this strategy as a way of minimizing the number of incomplete responses. Another possible explanation for the large proportion of incomplete responses in this study is that the vignette was not sufficiently engaging or interesting to keep participants' interest in completing the study, a concern which could be addressed through more extensive pretesting, for example.

Additionally, the broader criminological contributions which this research has made further highlight areas of study for future research. Further research gaps exist with respect to female-perpetrated sexual assault, particularly when the victim is also female. Similarly, there are still gaps regarding the effects of sexual orientation, particularly as they relate to female victims and to potential interactions with alcohol consumption. Furthermore, qualitative responses which emphasized the issue of consent suggest that this should be examined more

thoroughly through research on attributions about sexual assault. In particular, the use of vignettes which depict less obvious signs of non-consent may present interaction effects with other variables and, with the use of a qualitative component, may provide greater insight into how undergraduate students understand and conceptualize consent in sexual relationships. Similarly, the current research only examined sexual assault perpetrated by an acquaintance within the context of a university party, and future research should examine similar attributions within different contexts and across different victim-perpetrator relationships.⁷⁵

These findings also have implications for the development of policies geared towards addressing sexual assault, particularly in university environments. The negative responses and lack of support which victims often receive from those with whom they disclose their assault contributes to their experience of secondary victimization (Anderson & Doherty, 2008; Davies & Rogers, 2006; Suarez & Gadalla, 2010) and can have significant effects on their recovery (Davies & Rogers, 2006; Grubb & Turner, 2012; Ullman, 1996). Furthermore, addressing these negative attitudes in combination with promoting bystander intervention as a means of sexual assault prevention may be particularly important within a university context, as it may make students more aware of situations which are conducive to sexual violence and subsequently more likely to intervene (McMahon, 2010). Participants in this study were generally supportive of the victim, a finding which is in line with the findings of the Task Force on Respect and Equality (2015) and encouraging of prevention and support efforts targeted towards students at the University of Ottawa and other similar populations. However, although they did not explicitly blame or hold the victim responsible, many participants did judge the victim for how they behaved or for their failure to mitigate their risk of sexual victimization by avoiding the situation

⁷⁵ A number of previous studies have examined these variables in depth; however, they have primarily used quantitative, experimental methods. The added benefits of using a mixed methods research design should be considered for future examinations of these variables.

all together while simultaneously condemning the actions of the perpetrator. This represents a more complex interpretation of the bystander than simply either supporting or blaming the victim, and more research is needed to further explore these judgements and their implications for bystander intervention policies. Additionally, the surprise expressed by several participants at the male victim underscores the need for greater awareness of and public attention given to the issue of male sexual assault. Furthermore, the current study has highlighted the gendered ways in which men and women are expected to behave and respond to sexual advances and assault, as well as the relationship between these sexual scripts and the dominant constructions of consent that simultaneously normalize male sexual aggression against women and disregard that against other men (Anderson & Doherty, 2008). More research is required to better understand the implications of this relationship on prevention and support efforts.

While extensive research has been conducted on the topic of sexual assault, it remains a common and pervasive issue in society (Perreault, 2015). Considering the impact which sexual assault and social reactions towards those involved in sexual assault have at both societal and individual levels (Anderson & Doherty, 2008; Davies & Rogers, 2006; Grubb & Turner, 2012; Suarez & Gadalla, 2010; Ullman, 1996), it is crucially important for research into these judgements to continue and for this growing body of evidence to inform future policy development and social programming.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – Certificate of Ethics Approval

File Number: 06-15-04		Date (mm/dd/yyyy): 08/13/2015	
Université d'Ottawa Bureau d'éthique et d'intégrité de la recherche	University of Ottawa Office of Research Ethics and Integrity		
Ethics Approval Notice Social Sciences and Humanities REB			
Principal Investigator / Supervisor / Co-investigator(s) / Student(s)			
<u>First Name</u>	<u>Last Name</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>	<u>Role</u>
Christine	Gervais	Social Sciences / Criminology	Supervisor
Christie	Tomkins	Social Sciences / Criminology	Student Researcher
File Number: 06-15-04			
Type of Project: Master's Thesis			
Title: Social reactions to acquaintance sexual assault			
Approval Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Expiry Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Approval Type	
08/13/2015	08/12/2016	Ia	
(Ia: Approval, Ib: Approval for initial stage only)			
Special Conditions / Comments: N/A			
550, rue Cumberland, pièce 154 550 Cumberland Street, room 154 Ottawa (Ontario) K1N 6N5 Canada Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6N5 Canada (613) 562-5387 • Téléc./Fax (613) 562-5338 www.recherche.uottawa.ca/deontologie/ www.research.uottawa.ca/ethics/			

APPENDIX B – Letter of Information



uOttawa

Université d'Ottawa
Criminologie

University of Ottawa
Criminology

Letter of Information

Title of the Study: Social Reactions to Sexual Assault

Principal Investigator: Christie Tomkins
Graduate Student
Department of Criminology
University of Ottawa
120 University, Ottawa, ON
(email)

Supervisor: Dr. Christine Gervais
Associate Professor
Department of Criminology
University of Ottawa
120 University, Ottawa, ON
(phone)
(email)

Invitation to Participate: You are invited to participate in the abovementioned research study conducted by Master's student Christie Tomkins, who is being supervised by Dr. Christine Gervais in the Department of Criminology at the University of Ottawa.

Participation: If you wish to participate in this study, please click on the following link to complete the online questionnaire:

<http://uottawa.fluidsurveys.com/surveys/ctomk085/social-reactions-to-sexual-assault/>. Your decision to complete and submit this questionnaire will be interpreted as an indication of your consent to participate. The survey should take you approximately 15 minutes to complete. You do not have to answer any questions that you do not want to answer. I would appreciate receiving your completed questionnaire before October 31, 2015, but you may respond up until November 30, 2015. Your professor is only facilitating the promotion of this study, and it is, in no way, associated with your professor, teaching assistant(s) or this course. As such, your decision to participate or not will have no impact on your marks in this course. You will not be rewarded for participation, nor will you be penalized for non-participation.

Purpose of the Study: From this research we wish to learn how undergraduate students perceive responsibility and blame for acquaintance sexual assaults.

Benefits: Your participation in this study will help us to better understand how undergraduate students make judgements about responsibility and blame in cases of sexual assault. In doing so, you are contributing to the development of strategies which promote positive support for victims of sexual abuse and the prevention of sexual assault.

Risks: Your participation in this study will require you to read a hypothetical scenario depicting a sexual assault and then answer a series of questions about it. Due to the nature of this scenario, some participants may feel emotional or

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Ottawa ON K1N 6N5 Canada
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psychological discomfort, and you may find some questions difficult to answer. Your participation is important so that our results are as accurate as possible. However, your participation is completely voluntary and you are free to refuse to answer any questions. Additionally, you will be provided with a list of resources for support and counselling that you may consult with this letter of information and after completion of the questionnaire.

Confidentiality and Anonymity: The information that you will share will remain strictly confidential and will be used solely for the purposes of this research. The only people who will have access to the research data are the researcher (Christie Tomkins) and the researcher's supervisor (Dr. Christine Gervais). Your answers to open-ended questions may be used verbatim in presentations and publications but you will not be identified. In order to minimize the risk of security breaches and to help ensure your confidentiality we recommend that you use standard safety measures such as signing out of your account, closing your browser and locking your screen or device when you are no longer using them / when you have completed the study. Results will be published in group format. Anonymity is guaranteed since you are not being asked to provide your name or any personal information.

Conservation of Data: Throughout the study, all data will be stored on the primary researcher's password protected laptop. Once the study is completed, the data will be kept on a USB key in a locked cabinet in the locked office of the supervisor at the University of Ottawa for a period of 5 years, at which time they will be destroyed.

Voluntary Participation: You are under no obligation to participate and if you choose to participate, you may refuse to answer questions that you do not want to answer. Completion and submission of the questionnaire by you implies consent.

Information about the Study Results: Once the thesis is completed, you will be able to access it and the results of the study through [uO Research](#).

If you have any questions or require more information about the study itself, you may contact the researcher or her supervisor at the email addresses and/or phone numbers mentioned herein.

If you have any questions with regards to the ethical conduct of this study, you may contact the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, University of Ottawa, [Tabaret Hall](#), 550 Cumberland Street, Room 154, Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5, tel.: (613) 562-5387 or ethics@uottawa.ca.

Please print and keep this form for your records.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

September 10, 2015

Christie Tomkins
Graduate Student
Department of Criminology

Date

APPENDIX C – Analysis of Dropouts

Point of Dropout	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
No version assigned	21	16.9	16.9
Version assigned, no responses	91	73.4	90.3
Qualitative questions answered	5	4.0	94.3
Quantitative questions started but not completed	1	0.8	95.1
Victim-focused quantitative questions completed	3	2.4	97.5
Failed to answer debrief question	2	1.6	99.1
Technical error	1	0.8	99.9
Total	124	100.0	

APPENDIX D - Proposed attributional statements for the victim and perpetrator characters

VICTIM ATTRIBUTIONS	PERPETRATOR ATTRIBUTIONS	LEVEL OF ATTRIBUTION	ASSOCIATED THEORISTS
Amy/John contributed to the outcome of the events described	Michael contributed to the outcome of the events described	CAUSAL	Bradbury & Fincham, 1990; Calhoun & Townsley, 1991; Lussier, Sabourin, & Wright, 1993; Shaver, 1985; Shaver & Drown, 1986
Amy/John caused the outcome of the events described	Michael caused the outcome of the events described		
N/A	Michael should not have offered Amy/John a drink	CAUSAL CHOICE POINTS	Bradbury & Fincham, 1990; Shaver, 1985; Shaver & Drown, 1986
Amy/John should not have accepted a drink from Michael	N/A		
N/A	Michael should not have offered to let Amy/John stay the night at his apartment		
Amy/John should not have accepted Michael's offer to stay the night at his apartment	N/A		
If Amy/John had acted differently, the events would (could?) have had a different outcome	If Michael had acted differently, the events would (could?) have had a different outcome		
If Amy/John had tried harder to deter Michael, the events would (could?) have had a different outcome	N/A		
Amy/John should (could?) have expected the outcome of the events described	Michael should (could?) have expected the outcome of the events described	KNOWLEDGE	Bradbury & Fincham, 1990; Shaver, 1985; Shaver & Drown, 1986

Proposed attributional statements for the victim and perpetrator characters (*continued*)

VICTIM ATTRIBUTIONS	PERPETRATOR ATTRIBUTIONS	LEVEL OF ATTRIBUTION	ASSOCIATED THEORISTS
Amy/John acted intentionally throughout the situation described	Michael acted intentionally throughout the situation described	INTENT	Bradbury & Fincham, 1990; Shaver, 1985; Shaver & Drown, 1986
Amy/John wanted the outcome of the events described	Michael wanted the outcome of the events described		
Amy/John intended the outcome of the events described	Michael intended the outcome of the events described		
Amy/John could have acted differently to prevent the outcome of the events described	Michael could have acted differently to prevent the outcome of the events described	CHOICE ¹	Bradbury & Fincham, 1990; Shaver, 1985; Shaver & Drown, 1986
Amy/John could have tried harder to stop Michael	N/A		
Amy/John did not have a choice in the outcome of the events described	Michael did not have a choice in the outcome of the events described	CHOICE/ VOLITION	
Amy's/John's involvement in the described scenario was not voluntary / coerced	Michael's involvement in the described scenario was not voluntary / coerced	VOLITION	Bradbury & Fincham, 1990; Shaver, 1985
Amy/John probably knew that what she/he did was wrong	Michael probably knew that what he did was wrong	MORAL CONSEQUENCES/ WRONGFULNESS	Bradbury & Fincham, 1990; Shaver, 1985; Shaver & Drown, 1986
Amy/John should have known that what she/he was doing was wrong	Michael should have known that what he was doing was wrong		

Proposed attributional statements for the victim and perpetrator characters (*continued*)

VICTIM ATTRIBUTIONS	PERPETRATOR ATTRIBUTIONS	LEVEL OF ATTRIBUTION	ASSOCIATED THEORISTS
Amy/John is responsible for the outcome of the events described	Michael is responsible for the events described	RESPONSIBILITY	Bradbury & Fincham, 1990; Shaver, 1985; Shaver & Drown, 1986
Amy/John should be held morally accountable for the events described	Michael should be held morally accountable for the events described		Bradbury & Fincham, 1990; Calhoun & Townsley, 1991; Lusier, Sabournin, & Wright, 1993; Shaver, 1985; Shaver & Drown, 1986
Amy/John is to blame for the outcome of the events described	Michael is to blame for the outcome of the events described	BLAME	Bradbury & Fincham, 1990; Shaver, 1985; Shaver & Drown, 1986
Amy/John is blameworthy	Michael is blameworthy		Bradbury & Fincham, 1990; Calhoun & Townsley, 1991
Amy/John is at fault	Michael is at fault		
Amy/John is liable for censure / condemnation	Michael is liable for censure / condemnation		
There are no acceptable justifications or excuses for Amy’s/John’s involvement in the described scenario	There are no acceptable justifications or excuses for Michael 's involvement in the described scenario		
¹ Only Bradbury & Fincham (1990) make a distinction between choice and volition. For Shaver (1985) and Shaver and Drown (1986), volition is part of the dimension of choice.			

APPENDIX E – Questionnaire Sample

Social Reactions to Sexual Assault

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study. The purpose is to explore how undergraduate students at the University of Ottawa perceive responsibility and blame in cases of sexual assault.

All your answers will be kept strictly confidential. I will not be asking for your name, student number, or any other information that can identify you. When you have completed the questionnaire, I will not be able to link your name or email to your responses; therefore no one will see your answers. When I present the results of the questionnaire, your responses will be grouped together with the responses of other students so that it will be impossible to identify you. The results will not be used for any purpose other than this research study.

Your participation is important so that our results are as accurate as possible. However, participation is voluntary and you may refuse to answer any question. Completion of this questionnaire will be interpreted as an indication of your consent to participate.

If you agree to participate in this study, please click ‘continue’.

The following scenario describes a hypothetical sexual assault. Please read it carefully and be prepared to answer some questions about the events and characters described.

Amy is a university student in her early twenties. To celebrate the end of the semester, Amy and her roommate go to an off campus party hosted by some of their classmates. At the party, Amy sees Michael, an acquaintance from one of her classes. Michael approaches and they talk briefly about the final exam for their shared class. Michael offers to get Amy a drink and pours them both a beer. The two have a friendly conversation for a while, both having a few beers. Eventually, Amy’s roommate comes over to tell her that they will be staying the night at the party. Mentioning that he lives nearby, Michael offers to let Amy stay the night at his apartment. Amy accepts and the two leave the party together. Back at Michael’s apartment, the two are sitting beside each other on the couch when Michael puts his hand on Amy’s thigh and leans in to kiss her. Amy tells him “no” and pushes his hand away. Michael ignores her and forcefully kisses her and tries to undo her pants. Amy continues to protest, but Michael pushes her down onto the couch, pinning Amy beneath him. He continues to forcefully kiss Amy and eventually touches her genitals.

Click ‘continue’.

The following three questions are open-ended.

- 1) What is your initial reaction to the events just described? Your answer may include a description of the characters involved.
- 2) What does it mean for someone to be responsible for something?
- 3) What does it mean for someone to be blameworthy for something?

Please read each question carefully.

- 4) The events described constitute a sexual assault.

a. Strongly agree	e. Somewhat disagree
b. Agree	f. Disagree
c. Somewhat agree	g. Strongly disagree
d. Neither / neutral	h. Don't know / prefer not to answer

Questions 5-17 are about the character Amy from the scenario you just read.

- 5) Which of the following best describes Amy in the scenario just described?

a. Didn't drink / sober
b. Drank some / intoxicated
c. Drank a lot / drunk
d. Don't know / prefer not to answer
- 6) Amy caused the outcome of the events described.

a. Strongly agree	e. Somewhat disagree
b. Agree	f. Disagree
c. Somewhat agree	g. Strongly disagree
d. Neither / neutral	h. Don't know / prefer not to answer

For the following questions, please indicate your response according to the scale provided.

		Not at all	Very little	A little	Somewhat	A lot	Mostly	Entirely	Don't know	Prefer not to answer
7)	How much did Amy contribute to the events described?									
8)	How much was Amy aware of the possible consequences of her actions?									
9)	How much did Amy intend the outcome of the events to be as described?									
10)	How much did Amy have a choice in the outcome of the events described?									
11)	How much was Amy's involvement in the events described voluntary?									
12)	How much was Amy's involvement in the events described consensual?									
13)	How much is Amy responsible for the events described?									
14)	How much should Amy be held morally accountable for the events described?									
15)	How much is Amy to blame for the outcome of the events described?									
16)	How much is the outcome of the events described Amy's fault?									
17)	How much is Amy liable for condemnation for the outcome of the events described?									

Questions 18-30 are about the character Michael from the scenario you just read.

18) Which of the following best describes Michael in the scenario just described?

- a. Didn't drink / sober
- b. Drank some / intoxicated
- c. Drank a lot / drunk
- d. Don't know / prefer not to answer

19) Michael caused the outcome of the events described.

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Somewhat agree
- d. Neither / neutral
- e. Somewhat disagree
- f. Disagree
- g. Strongly disagree
- h. Don't know / prefer not to answer

For the following questions, please indicate your response according to the scale provided.

		Not at all	Very little	A little	Somewhat	A lot	Mostly	Entirely	Don't know	Prefer not to answer
20)	How much did Michael contribute to the events described?									
21)	How much was Michael aware of the possible consequences of his actions?									
22)	How much did Michael intend the outcome of the events to be as described?									
23)	How much did Michael have a choice in the outcome of the events described?									
24)	How much was Michael's involvement in the events described voluntary?									
25)	How much was Michael's involvement in the events described consensual?									
26)	How much is Michael responsible for the events described?									
27)	How much should Michael be held morally accountable for the events described?									
28)	How much is Michael to blame for the outcome of the events described?									
29)	How much is the outcome of the events described Michael's fault?									
30)	How much is Michael liable for condemnation for the outcome of the events described?									

Finally, I'd like to ask you a few questions about yourself.

31) Which of the following best reflects your gender?

- a. Male
- b. Female
- c. You don't have an option that applies to me. I identify as (please specify)

- d. Don't know / prefer not to say

32) What is your age in years? _____

33) What is your year of study?

- a. First year
- b. Second year
- c. Third year
- d. Fourth year
- e. Fifth or higher year
- f. Don't know / prefer not to say

34) What is your major? Please select all that apply.

- a. Anthropology
- b. Conflict Studies and Human Rights
- c. Criminology
- d. Economics
- e. International Development and Globalization
- f. Political Science
- g. Psychology
- h. Sociology
- i. Women's Studies
- j. Other (Specify): _____
- k. Don't know / prefer not to answer

Click 'continue'.

Thank you for participating in this study. Before starting this questionnaire, you were told that the purpose of this study was to explore how undergraduate students perceive responsibility and blame in cases of sexual assault. While this is true of the study's broader purpose, more specifically I was interested in how students' perceptions of responsibility and blame may differ depending on the alcohol consumption of those involved and the gender of the victim. As a result, you completed one of four possible versions of this questionnaire.

If you have any questions about the purpose or procedures used in this study, please feel free to contact the researcher and/or her supervisor.

Principal Investigator: Christie Tomkins
(email)

Supervisor: Dr. Christine Gervais
(phone)
(email)

Do you agree to have your data included in this research? This includes your responses to all questionnaire items and demographic questions. All data will remain strictly confidential and I will have no way of connecting you to your individual data. Given the anonymous nature of the study, data cannot be withdrawn once you consent to its use.

- a) Yes, please include my data.
- b) No, please delete my data.

Click 'continue'.

Resources for Students

If your participation in this study has caused any emotional or psychological distress, or if you or someone you know has been the victim of a sexual assault, please contact one of the resources listed below for help and support.

On Campus Resources

Protection Services: 613-562-5499 or 613-562-5411 (for emergencies)

Counselling and Coaching Service: 613-562-5200

Health Services: 613-564-3950

Rape Aggression Defence: 613-562-5800 x6654

Off Campus Resources

Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre: 613-562-2333

Sexual Assault Support Centre (SASC): 613-234-2266

Ottawa Police Victim Crisis Unit: 613-236-1222 x2223

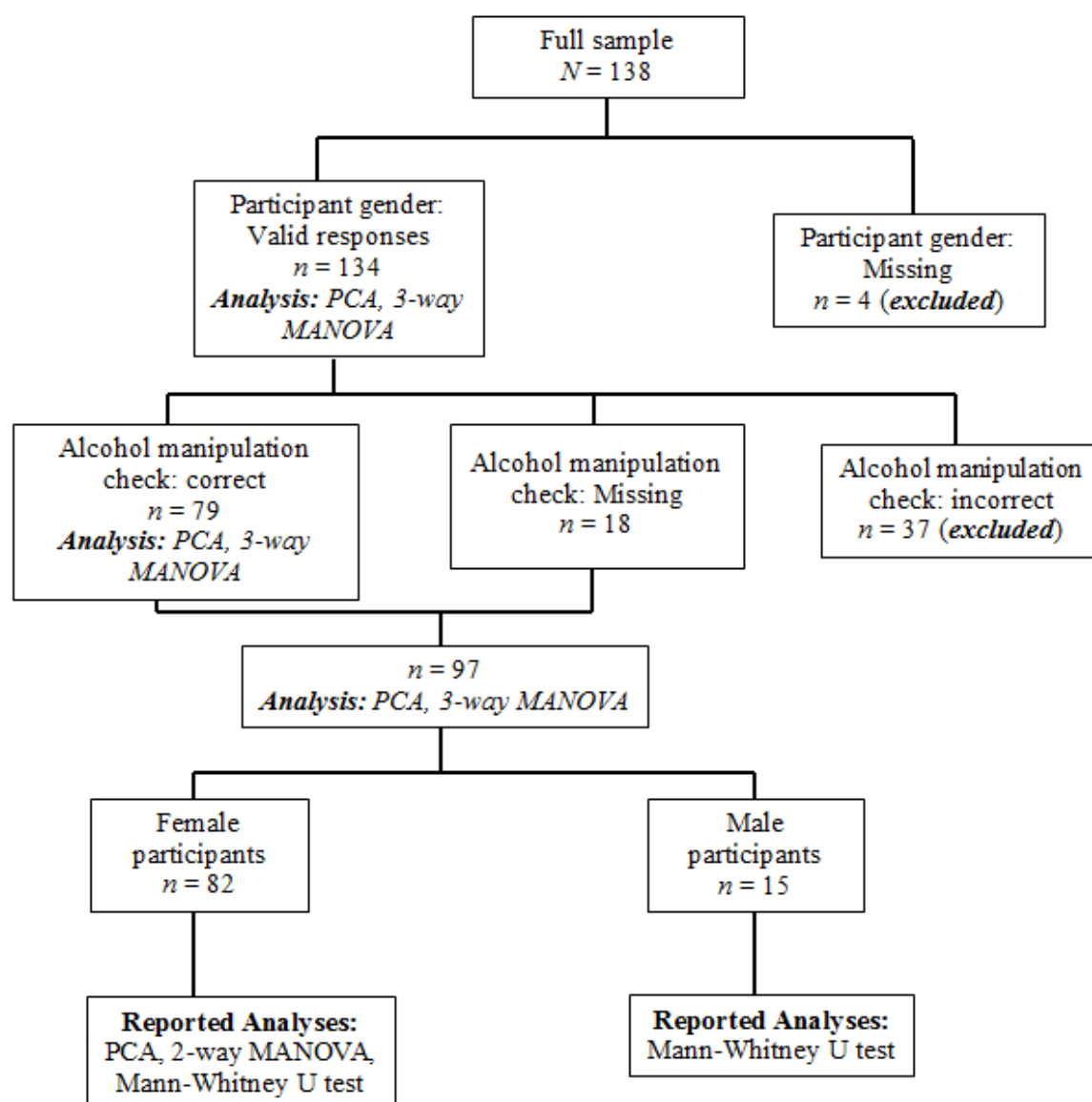
Centre d'Aide et de Lutte Contre les Agressions à Caractère Sexuel (CALACS): 613-789-8096

Distress Centre of Ottawa and Region: 613-238-3311

Support Services for Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse: 1-866-887-0015

Tel-Aide Outaouais: 613-741-6433

APPENDIX F - Subsamples used for quantitative analysis



APPENDIX G - Qualitative coding scheme

CODE	DESCRIPTION	SUB-THEME	THEME
A_frequent	Mention of frequent involvement of alcohol in sexual assault	Frequency of alcohol and sexual assault	Alcohol
A_absent	Noticed absence of alcohol (soda versions)		
A_context	Reference to interaction between alcohol and situational context	N/A	
A_not_excuse	Alcohol/intoxication is not an excuse	Alcohol used as an excuse	
A_explain	Reference to ways in which alcohol is used as an excuse		
MSA_shock	Shock at two male victims	Lack of awareness for male victims of SA compared to female victims	Male Sexual Assault
SA_typical	Reference to "typical" sexual assault		
SA_frequent	Reference to frequent occurrence of (female) sexual assault		
MSA_social_discourse	Lack of social discourse regarding male sexual assault (MSA)		
MSA_research	Lack of attention given to MSA in research		
childhood_MSA	Belief that most MSA involves male children	Misconceptions about MSA	
vic_normative	Normative judgements about what the victim should have done	Normative and/or negative judgements	Normative/Value Judgements about the Victim's Decisions/Behaviour
participant_act	Mention of what the participant would have done in a similar situation		
victim_responsibility	Judgement of victim responsibility		
victim_not_fault	Statements that the victim is not at fault	Victim-supportive judgements	

Qualitative coding scheme (continued)

CODE	DESCRIPTION	SUB-THEME	THEME
women_prevent	Women are expected to prevent their own victimization	Women as passive gatekeepers of sex	Gendered expectations re: sexual victimization
verbal_assertive	Positive affirmation of the victim’s display of verbal assertiveness		
victim_afraid	Projected feelings of fear on the part of the victim		
men_stop	Men are expected to be capable of stopping their own victimization	Masculinity as physical strength and violence	
physical_resist	Positive affirmation of the victim’s display of physical resistance		
victim_angry	Projected feelings of anger on the part of the victim		
misinterpretation	SA may have resulted from misinterpreted interest	Misinterpreted consent	Gendered expectations re: sexual behaviour
agree_not_consent	Agreement to Michael’s offer did not mean the victim also consented to any sexual activity		
expectation	Michael likely expected some sexual activity	Expected male sexual aggression	
anticipate	The victim should have anticipated that Michael would expect/want sexual activity		
quick	Reference to the quick escalation of events from friendly to violent	Unexpected male sexual aggression	
no_warning	Reference to a lack of any warning signs that the situation would escalate to sexual assault		
victim_sexuality	Assumptions about the victim’s sexual orientation	N/A	Heteronormativity
Michael_sexuality	Assumptions about the perpetrator’s sexual orientation		
Note. Code acronyms are defined as follows: A, alcohol; MSA, male sexual assault; SA, sexual assault.			

APPENDIX H – Descriptive statistics, original independent variables

Item No.	Variable	% Missing	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Q6	Victim – cause	0.0%	1.56	1.00	1.21	2.65	7.10
Q7	Victim – contribute	0.0%	1.72	1.00	1.03	1.75	3.48
Q8	Victim – consequences	8.0%	1.95	1.00	1.33	1.48	1.70
Q9	Victim – intent	1.5%	1.12	1.00	0.37	3.27	10.87
Q10	Victim – choice	1.5%	2.03	1.00	1.44	1.55	1.76
Q11	Victim – voluntary	2.2%	1.79	1.00	1.24	1.95	4.22
Q12	Victim – consent	0.7%	1.36	1.00	0.82	3.55	17.47
Q13	Victim – responsible	0.0%	1.43	1.00	0.90	2.92	11.50
Q14	Victim – accountable	0.0%	1.22	1.00	0.69	4.45	23.46
Q15	Victim – blame	0.0%	1.28	1.00	0.79	3.56	14.14
Q16	Victim – fault	0.0%	1.29	1.00	0.78	3.35	12.84
Q17	Victim – liable	0.7%	1.23	1.00	0.67	3.46	12.88
Q19	Perpetrator - cause	0.0%	6.75	7.00	0.82	-5.45	34.88
Q20	Perpetrator – contribute	0.0%	6.64	7.00	0.76	-3.71	21.49
Q21	Perpetrator – consequences	16.7%	5.90	7.00	1.48	-1.40	1.41
Q22	Perpetrator – intent	12.3%	6.31	7.00	1.19	-2.04	4.24
Q23	Perpetrator – choice	1.5%	6.85	7.00	0.50	-3.90	16.75
Q24	Perpetrator – voluntary	3.6%	6.65	7.00	1.19	-4.16	17.01
Q25	Perpetrator – consent	5.1%	4.44	7.00	2.86	-0.29	-1.89
Q26	Perpetrator – responsible	0.0%	6.76	7.00	0.60	-2.76	7.57
Q27	Perpetrator – accountable	0.0%	6.89	7.00	0.43	-4.51	21.86
Q28	Perpetrator – blame	0.0%	6.78	7.00	0.58	-3.68	17.16

Q29	Perpetrator – fault	0.0%	6.77	7.00	0.65	-4.17	22.82
Q30	Perpetrator - liable	0.7%	6.81	7.00	0.64	-6.25	51.69

APPENDIX I – Categorical frequencies, original independent variables

Variable and valid response choices	Frequency	Valid %
Q6: Amy/John caused the outcome of the events described. (victim – cause)		
Strongly disagree (1)	102	73.9
Disagree (2)	19	13.8
Somewhat disagree (3)	4	2.9
Neither / neutral (4)	7	5.1
Somewhat agree (5)	3	2.2
Agree (6)	1	0.7
Strongly agree (7)	2	1.5
Total	138	
Q7: How much did Amy/John contribute to the events described? (victim – contribute)		
Not at all (1)	77	55.8
Very little (2)	37	26.8
A little (3)	14	10.1
Somewhat (4)	8	5.8
A lot (5)	0	0.0
Mostly (6)	2	1.5
Entirely (7)	0	0.0
Total	138	
Q8: How much was Amy/John aware of the possible consequences of her/his actions? (victim – consequences)		
Not at all (1)	68	53.5
Very little (2)	28	22.1
A little (3)	10	7.9
Somewhat (4)	15	11.8
A lot (5)	3	2.4
Mostly (6)	2	1.6
Entirely (7)	1	0.8
Total	127	

Categorical frequencies, original independent variables (*continued*)

Variable and valid response choices	Frequency	Valid %
Q9: How much did Amy/John intend the outcome of the events to be as described? (victim – intent)		
Not at all (1)	122	89.7
Very little (2)	12	8.8
A little (3)	2	1.5
Somewhat (4)	0	0.0
A lot (5)	0	0.0
Mostly (6)	0	0.0
Entirely (7)	0	0.0
Total	136	
Q10: How much did Amy/John have a choice in the outcome of the events described? (victim – choice)		
Not at all (1)	70	51.5
Very little (2)	34	25.0
A little (3)	8	5.9
Somewhat (4)	13	9.6
A lot (5)	6	4.4
Mostly (6)	3	2.2
Entirely (7)	2	1.5
Total	136	
Q11: How much was Amy's/John's involvement in the events described voluntary? (victim – voluntary)		
Not at all (1)	80	59.3
Very little (2)	27	20.0
A little (3)	13	9.6
Somewhat (4)	11	8.2
A lot (5)	1	0.7
Mostly (6)	1	0.7
Entirely (7)	2	1.5
Total	135	

Categorical frequencies, original independent variables (continued)

Variable and valid response choices	Frequency	Valid %
Q12: How much was Amy's/John's involvement in the events described consensual? (victim – consent)		
Not at all (1)	105	76.6
Very little (2)	22	16.1
A little (3)	6	4.4
Somewhat (4)	3	2.2
A lot (5)	0	0.0
Mostly (6)	0	0.0
Entirely (7)	1	0.7
Total	137	
Q13: How much is Amy/John responsible for the events described? (victim – responsible)		
Not at all (1)	101	73.2
Very little (2)	23	16.7
A little (3)	8	5.8
Somewhat (4)	5	3.6
A lot (5)	0	0.0
Mostly (6)	0	0.0
Entirely (7)	1	0.7
Total	138	
Q14: How much should Amy/John be held morally accountable for the events described? (victim – accountable)		
Not at all (1)	118	85.5
Very little (2)	15	10.9
A little (3)	2	1.5
Somewhat (4)	1	0.7
A lot (5)	1	0.7
Mostly (6)	1	0.7
Entirely (7)	0	0.0
Total	138	

Categorical frequencies, original independent variables (*continued*)

Variable and valid response choices	Frequency	Valid %
Q15: How much is Amy/John to blame for the outcome of the events described? (victim – blame)		
Not at all (1)	116	84.1
Very little (2)	13	9.4
A little (3)	4	2.9
Somewhat (4)	3	2.2
A lot (5)	1	0.7
Mostly (6)	1	0.7
Entirely (7)	0	0.0
Total	138	
Q16: How much is the outcome of the events described Amy's/John's fault? (victim – fault)		
Not at all (1)	115	83.3
Very little (2)	13	9.4
A little (3)	5	3.6
Somewhat (4)	4	2.9
A lot (5)	0	0.0
Mostly (6)	1	0.7
Entirely (7)	0	0.0
Total	138	
Q17: How much is Amy/John liable for condemnation for the outcome of the events described? (victim – liable)		
Not at all (1)	117	85.4
Very little (2)	13	9.5
A little (3)	3	2.2
Somewhat (4)	3	2.2
A lot (5)	1	0.7
Mostly (6)	0	0.0
Entirely (7)	0	0.0
Total	137	

Categorical frequencies, original independent variables (*continued*)

Variable and valid response choices	Frequency	Valid %
Q19: Michael caused the outcome of the events described. (perpetrator – cause)		
Strongly disagree (1)	2	1.5
Disagree (2)	0	0.0
Somewhat disagree (3)	0	0.0
Neither / neutral (4)	0	0.0
Somewhat agree (5)	3	2.2
Agree (6)	16	11.6
Strongly agree (7)	117	84.8
Total	138	
Q20: How much did Michael contribute to the events described? (perpetrator – contribute)		
Not at all (1)	1	0.7
Very little (2)	0	0.0
A little (3)	0	0.0
Somewhat (4)	0	0.0
A lot (5)	9	6.5
Mostly (6)	25	18.1
Entirely (7)	103	74.6
Total	138	
Q21: How much was Michael aware of the possible consequences of his actions? (perpetrator – consequences)		
Not at all (1)	2	1.7
Very little (2)	3	2.6
A little (3)	3	2.6
Somewhat (4)	13	11.3
A lot (5)	14	12.2
Mostly (6)	20	17.4
Entirely (7)	60	52.2
Total	115	

Categorical frequencies, original independent variables (*continued*)

Variable and valid response choices	Frequency	Valid %
Q22: How much did Michael intend the outcome of the events to be as described? (perpetrator – intent)		
Not at all (1)	1	0.8
Very little (2)	1	0.8
A little (3)	2	1.7
Somewhat (4)	9	7.4
A lot (5)	8	6.6
Mostly (6)	22	18.2
Entirely (7)	78	64.5
Total	121	
Q23: How much did Michael have a choice in the outcome of the events described? (perpetrator – choice)		
Not at all (1)	0	0.0
Very little (2)	0	0.0
A little (3)	0	0.0
Somewhat (4)	2	1.5
A lot (5)	2	1.5
Mostly (6)	11	8.1
Entirely (7)	121	89.0
Total	136	
Q24: How much was Michael's involvement in the events described voluntary? (perpetrator – voluntary)		
Not at all (1)	5	3.8
Very little (2)	0	0.0
A little (3)	0	0.0
Somewhat (4)	0	0.0
A lot (5)	4	3.0
Mostly (6)	8	6.0
Entirely (7)	116	87.2
Total	133	

Categorical frequencies, original independent variables (*continued*)

Variable and valid response choices	Frequency	Valid %
Q25: How much was Michael's involvement in the events described consensual? (perpetrator – consent)		
Not at all (1)	47	35.9
Very little (2)	8	6.1
A little (3)	0	0.0
Somewhat (4)	2	1.5
A lot (5)	2	1.5
Mostly (6)	3	2.3
Entirely (7)	69	52.7
Total	131	
Q26: How much is Michael responsible for the events described? (perpetrator – responsible)		
Not at all (1)	0	0.0
Very little (2)	0	0.0
A little (3)	0	0.0
Somewhat (4)	2	1.5
A lot (5)	6	4.4
Mostly (6)	15	10.9
Entirely (7)	115	83.3
Total	138	
Q27: How much should Michael be held morally accountable for the events described? (perpetrator – accountable)		
Not at all (1)	0	0.0
Very little (2)	0	0.0
A little (3)	0	0.0
Somewhat (4)	1	0.7
A lot (5)	3	2.2
Mostly (6)	6	4.4
Entirely (7)	128	92.8
Total	138	

Categorical frequencies, original independent variables (*continued*)

Variable and valid response choices	Frequency	Valid %
Q28: How much is Michael to blame for the outcome of the events described? (perpetrator – blame)		
Not at all (1)	0	0.0
Very little (2)	0	0.0
A little (3)	1	0.7
Somewhat (4)	1	0.7
A lot (5)	2	1.5
Mostly (6)	19	13.8
Entirely (7)	115	83.3
Total	138	
Q29: How much is the outcome of the events described Michael's fault? (perpetrator – fault)		
Not at all (1)	0	0.0
Very little (2)	1	0.7
A little (3)	0	0.0
Somewhat (4)	1	0.7
A lot (5)	4	2.9
Mostly (6)	16	11.6
Entirely (7)	116	84.1
Total	138	
Q30: How much is Michael liable for condemnation for the outcome of the events described? (perpetrator – liable)		
Not at all (1)	1	0.7
Very little (2)	0	0.0
A little (3)	0	0.0
Somewhat (4)	0	0.0
A lot (5)	2	1.5
Mostly (6)	16	11.7
Entirely (7)	118	86.1
Total	137	

APPENDIX J – Female participants’ year of study

Year of Study	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
First year	30	36.6	36.6
Second year	16	19.5	56.1
Third year	22	26.8	82.9
Fourth year	10	12.2	95.1
Fifth or higher year	4	4.9	100.0
Total	82	100.0	

APPENDIX K – Female participants’ major(s) of study

Major of Study	Frequency	Percent
Anthropology	5	6.1
Conflict Studies and Human Rights	5	6.1
Criminology	34	41.5
Economics	0	0.0
International Development and Globalization	3	3.7
Political Science	8	9.8
Psychology	10	12.2
Sociology	8	9.8
Women’s Studies	16	19.5
Other (Specify)	16	19.5
Don’t know / prefer not to say	3	3.7

APPENDIX M – Component correlation matrix

Component	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1.00	-.18	-.04	.22	-.18	.18
2	-.18	1.00	.06	-.15	.02	-.16
3	-.04	.06	1.00	-.11	.10	-.08
4	.22	-.15	-.11	1.00	-.09	.19
5	-.18	.02	.10	-.09	1.00	-.08
6	.18	-.16	-.08	.19	-.08	1.00

APPENDIX N – Descriptive statistics, component scores

	Women (<i>n</i> = 82)		Men (<i>n</i> = 15)	
	Judgements about the Victim	Judgements about the Perpetrator	Judgements about the Victim	Judgements about the Perpetrator
Mean	1.28	6.90	1.89	6.63
Median	1.00	7.00	1.43	7.00
Minimum	1.00	5.80	1.00	5.20
Maximum	5.43	7.00	4.14	7.00
Standard Deviation	0.59	0.26	1.01	0.57
Skewness	4.73	-2.87	1.17	-1.41
Kurtosis	30.18	7.99	0.34	1.29

APPENDIX O – Descriptive and Mann-Whitney U test statistics for women by alcohol condition

Variable	Alcohol (n = 52)			Soda (n = 30)			U	p (one-tailed)
	Med	Range	Mean Rank	Med	Range	Mean Rank		
Victim – cause	1.00	1-5	42.88	1.00	1-7	39.12	708.50	.16
Victim – contribute	1.00	1-4	41.97	1.00	1-6	40.68	755.50	.39
Victim – consequences	2.00	1-4	43.85	1.00	1-5	37.43	658.00	.10
Victim – intent	1.00	1-2	42.34	1.00	1-2	40.05	736.50	.16
Victim – choice	1.00	1-6	42.00	1.00	1-5	40.63	754.00	.39
Victim - voluntary	1.00	1-4	43.52	1.00	1-4	38.00	675.00	.12
Victim – consent	1.00	1-7	43.40	1.00	1-2	38.20	681.00	.89
Victim – responsible	1.00	1-3	41.99	1.00	1-4	40.65	754.50	.37
Victim – accountable	1.00	1-2	40.06	1.00	1-5	44.00	705.00	.55
Victim – blame	1.00	1-2	40.85	1.00	1-6	42.63	746.00	.27
Victim – fault	1.00	1-2	40.35	1.00	1-6	43.50	720.00	.15
Victim – liable	1.00	1-2	41.37	1.00	1-4	41.73	773.00	.45
Perpetrator – cause	7.00	6-7	42.92	7.00	1-7	39.03	706.00	.95
Perpetrator – contribute	7.00	5-7	40.56	7.00	5-7	43.13	731.00	.25
Perpetrator – consequences	7.00	2-7	41.37	6.75	3-7	41.73	773.00	.47
Perpetrator – intent	7.00	3-7	41.12	7.00	4-7	41.17	760.00	.41
Perpetrator – choice	7.00	4-7	40.54	7.00	6-7	43.17	730.00	.14
Perpetrator – voluntary	7.00	1-7	42.07	7.00	1-7	40.52	750.50	.30
Perpetrator – consent	7.00	1-7	40.59	7.00	1-7	43.08	732.50	.30
Perpetrator – responsible	7.00	4-7	38.90	7.00	7-7	46.00	645.00	.01
Perpetrator – accountable	7.00	6-7	40.92	7.00	7-7	42.50	750.00	.14
Perpetrator – blame	7.00	6-7	40.19	7.00	6-7	43.77	712.00	.12
Perpetrator – fault	7.00	6-7	40.55	7.00	5-7	43.15	730.50	.19
Perpetrator – liable	7.00	5-7	41.02	7.00	6-7	42.33	755.00	.33

APPENDIX P – Descriptive and Mann-Whitney U test statistics for women by victim**gender condition**

Variable	Female Victim (n = 39)			Male victim (n = 43)			U	p (two-tailed)
	Med	Range	Mean Rank	Med	Range	Mean Rank		
Victim – cause	1.00	1-7	43.26	1.00	1-5	39.91	770.00	.54
Victim – contribute	1.00	1-6	42.65	1.00	1-4	40.45	793.50	.63
Victim – consequences	2.00	1-5	47.19	1.00	1-5	36.34	616.50	.03
Victim – intent	1.00	1-2	43.12	1.00	1-2	40.03	775.50	.16
Victim – choice	1.00	1-5	45.71	1.00	1-6	37.69	674.50	.09
Victim - voluntary	1.00	1-4	43.19	1.00	1-4	39.97	772.50	.48
Victim – consent	1.00	1-7	42.26	1.0	1-3	40.81	809.00	.70
Victim – responsible	1.00	1-4	45.21	1.00	1-3	38.14	694.00	.06
Victim – accountable	1.00	1-5	43.77	1.00	1-2	39.44	750.00	.07
Victim – blame	1.00	1-6	42.26	1.00	1-3	40.81	809.00	.61
Victim – fault	1.00	1-6	41.77	1.00	1-3	41.26	828.00	.86
Victim – liable	1.00	1-4	43.29	1.00	1-3	39.87	768.50	.27
Perpetrator – cause	7.00	5-7	39.74	7.00	1-7	43.09	770.00	.24
Perpetrator – contribute	7.00	5-7	40.45	7.00	5-7	42.45	797.50	.59
Perpetrator – consequences	7.00	2-7	42.51	6.70	4-7	40.58	799.00	.70
Perpetrator – intent	7.00	3-7	39.59	7.00	4-7	43.23	764.00	.39
Perpetrator – choice	7.00	4-7	41.33	7.00	5-7	41.65	832.00	.89
Perpetrator – voluntary	7.00	1-7	38.64	7.00	1-7	44.09	727.00	.06
Perpetrator – consent	7.00	1-7	40.58	7.00	1-7	42.34	802.50	.71
Perpetrator – responsible	7.00	4-7	40.64	7.00	6-7	42.28	805.00	.57
Perpetrator – accountable	7.00	6-7	41.45	7.00	6-7	41.55	836.50	.95
Perpetrator – blame	7.00	6-7	39.14	7.00	6-7	43.64	746.50	.13
Perpetrator – fault	7.00	6-7	38.73	7.00	5-7	44.01	730.50	.06
Perpetrator – liable	7.00	6-7	39.87	7.00	5-7	42.98	775.00	.28

APPENDIX Q – Descriptive and Mann-Whitney U test statistics for men by alcohol condition

Variable	Alcohol (n = 11)			Soda (n = 4)			U	p (one-tailed)
	Med	Range	Mean Rank	Med	Range	Mean Rank		
Judgements about the victim	1.86	1.00-4.14	9.23	1.14	1.00-1.43	4.63	8.50	.04
Judgements about the perpetrator	6.80	5.20-7.00	6.91	7.00	7.00-7.00	11.00	10.00	.07
Victim – cause	2.00	1-5	8.55	1.50	1-2	6.50	16.00	.24
Victim – contribute	3.00	1-4	8.95	1.50	1-3	5.38	11.50	.09
Victim – consequences	1.00	1-4	8.18	1.00	1-6	7.50	20.00	.43
Victim – intent	1.00	1-2	8.91	1.00	1-1	5.50	12.00	.11
Victim – choice	3.00	1-7	9.23	1.00	1-2	4.63	8.50	.04
Victim - voluntary	2.00	1-4	8.82	1.00	1-3	5.75	13.00	.14
Victim – consent	1.00	1-4	8.73	1.00	1-1	6.00	14.00	.17
Victim – responsible	2.00	1-4	9.27	1.00	1-1	4.50	8.00	.04
Victim – accountable	2.00	1-4	9.09	1.00	1-1	5.00	10.00	.07
Victim – blame	2.00	1-4	9.09	1.00	1-1	5.00	10.00	.07
Victim – fault	1.00	1-4	8.91	1.00	1-1	5.50	12.00	.11
Victim – liable	1.00	1-5	8.91	1.00	1-1	5.50	12.00	.11
Perpetrator – cause	7.00	6-7	7.45	7.00	7-7	9.50	16.00	.24
Perpetrator – contribute	6.00	5-7	7.18	7.00	6-7	10.25	13.00	.14
Perpetrator – consequences	6.00	3-7	6.77	7.00	6-7	11.38	8.50	.04
Perpetrator – intent	6.00	4-7	8.55	5.68	1-7	6.50	16.00	.24
Perpetrator – choice	7.00	6-7	7.45	7.00	7-7	9.50	16.00	.24
Perpetrator – voluntary	7.00	5-7	7.45	7.00	7-7	9.50	16.00	.24
Perpetrator – consent	6.00	1-7	8.95	1.00	1-7	5.38	11.50	.09
Perpetrator – responsible	6.00	5-7	6.91	7.00	7-7	11.00	10.00	.07
Perpetrator – accountable	7.00	5-7	7.45	7.00	7-7	9.50	16.00	.24
Perpetrator – blame	7.00	5-7	7.09	7.00	7-7	10.50	12.00	.11
Perpetrator – fault	7.00	5-7	7.09	7.00	7-7	10.50	12.00	.11
Perpetrator – liable	7.00	6-7	7.27	7.00	7-7	10.00	14.00	.17

APPENDIX R – Descriptive and Mann-Whitney U test statistics for men by victim gender condition

Variable	Female Victim (<i>n</i> = 8)			Male victim (<i>n</i> = 7)			<i>U</i>	<i>p</i> (two-tailed)
	Med	Range	Mean Rank	Med	Range	Mean Rank		
Judgements about the victim	1.43	1.00-3.43	7.88	1.86	1.00-4.14	8.14	27.00	.96
Judgements about the perpetrator	7.00	6.20-7.00	9.56	6.20	5.20-7.00	6.21	15.50	.15
Victim – cause	2.00	1-3	8.44	1.00	1-5	7.50	24.50	.69
Victim – contribute	3.00	1-3	8.38	2.00	1-4	7.57	25.00	.78
Victim – consequences	1.00	1-6	7.94	1.00	1-4	8.07	27.50	.96
Victim – intent	1.00	1-2	7.19	1.00	1-2	8.93	21.50	.46
Victim – choice	2.00	1-5	7.44	3.00	1-7	8.64	23.50	.61
Victim - voluntary	2.00	1-4	8.50	2.00	1-4	7.43	24.00	.69
Victim – consent	1.00	1-2	6.88	1.00	1-4	9.29	19.00	.34
Victim – responsible	1.00	1-4	7.19	2.00	1-4	8.93	21.50	.46
Victim – accountable	1.00	1-2	6.63	2.00	1-4	9.57	17.00	.23
Victim – blame	1.00	1-4	7.50	1.00	1-4	8.57	24.00	.69
Victim – fault	1.00	1-3	6.50	2.00	1-4	9.71	16.00	.19
Victim – liable	1.00	1-5	7.50	1.00	1-4	8.57	24.00	.69
Perpetrator – cause	7.00	6-7	8.56	7.00	6-7	7.36	23.50	.61
Perpetrator – contribute	6.50	6-7	8.50	6.00	5-7	7.43	24.00	.69
Perpetrator – consequences	6.58	5-7	9.25	6.00	3-7	6.57	18.00	.28
Perpetrator – intent	5.84	1-7	6.25	7.00	4-7	10.00	14.00	.12
Perpetrator – choice	7.00	7-7	8.69	7.00	6-7	7.21	22.50	.54
Perpetrator – voluntary	7.00	6-7	8.63	7.00	5-7	7.29	23.00	.61
Perpetrator – consent	1.50	1-7	6.25	7.00	1-7	10.00	14.00	.12
Perpetrator – responsible	7.00	6-7	9.38	6.00	5-7	6.43	17.00	.23
Perpetrator – accountable	7.00	7-7	9.50	7.00	5-7	6.29	16.00	.19
Perpetrator – blame	7.00	6-7	9.63	6.00	5-7	6.14	15.00	.15
Perpetrator – fault	7.00	6-7	9.63	6.00	5-7	6.14	15.00	.15
Perpetrator – liable	7.00	6-7	9.06	7.00	6-7	6.79	19.50	.34