

Do Attitudes of Pornography Influence Perceptions of Rape Myths

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DO ATTITUDES OF PORNOGRAPHY
INFLUENCE PERCEPTIONS OF RAPE MYTHS

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Honors in the Major Program in Sociology
in the College of Science
and in The Burnett Honors College
at the University of Central Florida
Orlando, Florida

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Thesis Chair: Dr. Lin Huff-Corzine

Abstract

Rape and sexual assaults are a huge epidemic not only in the United States, but in the world as well. Victims come across all races, ethnicities, ages, religions, classes and cultures. With so many victims, people often investigate what causes people to commit these crimes in order to decrease the likelihood of future incidents occurring. Pornography is often argued for being a possible cause of sexual assaults. While many sex offenders do have large collections of pornography, there has not been any concrete evidence to support that pornography causes people to rape. Acceptance of rape myths also could play a large role in how people perceive the victims of sexual assaults causing them even more trauma as well as them being less likely to report the crime. With over 2000,000 cases of sexual assault reported each year, it is important to attempt to find any possible causes. The intent of this thesis is to explore any possible associations with attitudes on pornography and perceptions of rape myths. Through my analysis, the participants were asked about their attitudes of pornography and details on if they chose to view pornography or not compared with their perceptions of rape myths.

Dedication

Every challenging work requires self-efforts as well as strong guidance and support from those who are very close to my heart.

My humble effort I dedicate to my loving

Father & Mother,

Whose affection, love, support, and guidance helped me reach success.

As well as Dr. Lin Huff-Corzine.

With your early inspiration, coaching, and enthusiasm, you made this possible.

Thank you for your unconditional love that constantly motivates me to set higher goals.

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This thesis would not have been possible without the help of so many people. This thesis was also the product of a large amount of serendipity and meeting inspirational people who still have a large impact of my academic career.

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who has helped me more than words could ever express.
Thanks for making my project one of your priorities and always pushing me to improve.
You truly are an inspiration and my role model.**

**And, finally, to my parents,
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**Thank you for supporting me through my undergraduate career.
Something you both wanted for me as you were never given the opportunity.
Mom, I could not have done this without you. Thank you for being my destresser, my
personal assistance, and my financial accountant.**

**To all my friends, professors, and family, thank you for all of your help throughout me
finishing my undergraduate career at The University of Central Florida.**

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Introduction

Rape is an issue affecting millions of women, as well as some men, in the United States (U.S.) alone. Rape is defined as the “penetration, no matter how slight, of the vaginal or anus with any body part or objects, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim” (F.B.I., 2013). Prior to January 2013, the legal definition of rape was different. The old definition was “The carnal knowledge of a female forcibly and against her will” (F.B.I., 2013). With the definition of rape changing, a new challenge arises: an accurate way to compare statistics. Thus, in 2011, a male could not legally be considered a victim of rape, but now males are included in the statistical data. Beyond these somewhat broad definitions, many people define rape differently, which makes research on the topic difficult. To understand certain views that people in the U.S. have about rape, this study will focus on rape myths related to women’s behavior and the influence that observing pornography may have on beliefs about rape.

The U.S. is sometimes referred to as being a rape culture as victims of rape come from across almost every subgroup; age, culture, race, ethnicity, class, etc. (Buchwald, Fletcher, & Roth, 1993). Rape culture is a concept that links rape and sexual assaults to a culture where prevalent attitudes and practices normalize, excuse, tolerate, and even condone rape. Rape myths play a large role in a rape scenario as the myths people believe may have a major impact on how they act, that is, what people perceive to be true has more influence on how people act than what is factually true. Victims may blame themselves (victim-blaming), which may defer some from reporting the crime to the police. The research states that when a male believes in

rape myths, he is more likely to rape (Lisak and Miller, 2002). And when a female accepts these rape myths, she is more likely to blame herself for the assault. It is estimated that only 40% of rapes are actually reported to the police. Rape Myth Acceptance (RMA) can have very detrimental effects on society, but more importantly, on the victim.

Pornography could have an impact on rape and rape myths. The legality of pornography has been a heated issue over the years as many believe it leads to the objectification of women. Some people also believe that there could be a connection between pornography and the willingness of people to rape and assault women. Pornography may be defined in many ways, especially considering that people have conflicting views about what it really is. There has not yet been sufficient research on the effects of pornography to come to any final conclusions, however, some studies advocate that exposure to pornography may lead people to commit serious sexual assaults (Holmes & Holmes, 2009).

In this paper, pornography, rape, and rape myths will be examined including data from various databases on rape statistics. A discussion of the importance of improving the data on correlations between perceptions on rape myths and attitudes on pornography will follow. Rape and other sexual assaults have always been prevalent in societies. Extensive research on pornography attitudes and perceptions of rape myths could not only fill the gap in literature, but also find possible solutions to the frequency of rape; an epidemic impacting many people worldwide.

Literature Review

Rape has always affected women; women of all races, classes, cultures, and ages. In fact, the U.S. has been defined as having a rape culture. During 2010 alone, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (F.B.I.) reported 85,593 forcible rapes (F.B.I., 2013) and if we accept the assertion that only 40% are reported, it means that over 200,000 forcible rapes of women occurred during 2010. Thus, many may ask what causes people to rape. An issue that has received attention as a possible cause is pornography. Pornography can be defined in multiple ways, and people often have conflicting ideas about both its definition and influence on the viewers' perceptions about rape. People's views on these issues are taken very seriously as they impact the attitudes that can play such a large role in society's reaction to sexual assaults.

Pornography

There are numerous claims about the effects of pornography; both positive and negative (Morash, 2006). There are national organizations like the Citizens for Decency Through the Law (CDTL) that have been founded to lobby for legislation to combat what they believe are possible dangers of pornography. There has not been sufficient research done on the true effects of pornography to come to any final conclusions, however. Some studies advocate that exposure to pornography may lead people to commit serious sexual assaults. On the other hand, other research shows that exposure to pornography does not lead to serious sex crimes (e.g., Holmes & Holmes, 2009). Whether it is exposure that leads to deviance or if there are other factors, such as an aggressive personality, that may lead to sex crimes (Holmes & Holmes, 2009), the victims, who suffer from these crimes number well over 200,000 each year. Some argue that the sexual messages, the amount and characteristics of personal violence, and the level of the objectification of women all have to do more with the predilections of the person viewing sexually violent pornography than the actual media itself or its influence on other behaviors, such as rape (Holmes & Holmes, 2009).

According to Morash (2006), pornography may play a part in motivational rape because many sex offenders have large collections of pornography. On the other hand, pornography may decrease rape by giving the potential offender visual erotica with which to satisfy sexual urges. The laws in the United States concerning pornography criminalize only certain forms of sexually explicit, pornographic material. And what is considered pornography varies greatly from country to country or even state to state in the U.S. Furthermore, Morash (2006) found that some assert that it is our constitutional right under the right to freedom of speech, to have access to

pornography. Others disagree. Neither the courts nor social science can support a direct correlation between pornography nor violence against women, however, Morash's 2006 study did find a connection between watching pornography and sexual aggression aimed at women.

It has been argued that the consumption of pornography is a cathartic that removes any urgent aggressive impulses. But pornography may also be viewed as a tool for causing a viewer to have a deeper sense of anger toward women. The reactions to the pornography can depend on many factors. The person's age, attitude, moral values, and prior arrest record all tie into the reaction. Also, the type of pornography can have a lot to do with the reaction of the viewer. The variations of soft-core and hard-core pornography can cause very different reactions (Morash, 2006). According to (Morash, 2006), soft-core pornography usually distracts men who have angry tendencies, but hard-core pornography is less likely to have this impact. If men can easily be put into this angry state, which causes them to act aggressively toward women, we need to consider whether pornography is the only cause.

Most men without angry tendencies perceive both soft-core and hard-core pornography as strictly a fantasy and can separate their fantasies from reality. As Gray (1982) asserts, pornography, like comic books or murder mysteries, is an art form; a manifestation of popular culture that is created by members of the society. The problem is that not all men have the ability to successfully distinguish between fantasy and reality. For men, who have trouble separating the two, unresolved anger and not pornography may be creating the fundamental problem.

According to Gray (1982), sexual fantasies are not representative of “real” sex life for the majority of people. In most sexual actions, there can be parts that include objectification, dominance, submission, competition, loneliness, and pain. While some people prefer to repress these emotions in their sex lives, others may express them. With these options, pornography reveals these to the viewer, both exploitative and non-exploitative; both of these options are independent of the existence of pornography. While pornography may show the user options that they do prefer, it also demonstrates what the user may not like as well.

According to Gray (1982), materials that are considered pornographic should be researched more in the future to look for a more uniform definition, and to systematically seek a link between viewers’ behavior and pornography with a focus on men, who demonstrate a variety of reaction to viewing pornography, that is from no increased anger expressed toward women to behavior indication a definite link between consumption of pornographic materials and increased anger aimed at women. Research needs to be more precise to test the extent to which viewing pornography may influence the individual, but also how people perceive the societal impact of having pornography available on society at large. This investigation focuses on the latter of these questions; respondents’ perceptions of how pornography influences society.

According to Freymeyer (1997), there is an association between religiosity and acceptance of rape myths, but this relationship is only significant when controlling for sex. Religiosity, in Freymeyer’s (1997) study was measured by amount of prayer. When grouped and analyzed together, sex and religiosity interact to affect the acceptance of rape myths. The study found that men, who had religion as a large part of their life, placed more blame on the victims

of rape, as opposed to men who expressed religion being less important to them. On the other hand, women with increased religiosity, correlated with a decreased rape myth acceptance. Women who are very religious had a lower likelihood of blaming the victim. In general, women are more religious than men and have different religious practices, like attending church services. The study found that men and women did not have any significant differences on the measures of religious beliefs and practices, however, the study did find that men's religious beliefs were positively related to rape myth acceptance, while women's religious behaviors negatively affected their rape myth acceptance (Freymeyer, 1997).

Rape

According to Frese, Moya, and Megias (2004), attitudes toward rape also vary.

Understanding rape attitudes is essential to understanding how people react to a rape victim, or perpetrator for that matter. Some rape attitudes are characterized by victim blaming that attempts to minimize the resulting psychological trauma and justify the offender's actions (Frese et al., 2004). Studies, such as Frese et al. (2004) and Struckman-Johnson, David, and Cindy Struckman-Johnson (1992), have been conducted in an attempt to find links between attitudes toward rape and rape victims and traditional gender role stereotypes, especially those related to sexual behaviors.

Traditionally, women are not supposed to exhibit their sexual urges and only show their sexual interests in serious dating scenarios or in marriage. Women, in these types of situations, are viewed as sexual objects in which their only function is to satisfy the male's sexual desires and fantasies. In comparison, men, who are socialized to behave traditionally, are more likely to view women as subordinates on a good day, and as objects to satisfy their most violent sexual desires on a bad day. Thus, in cultures emphasizing "traditional" gender differences, especially those where pornography may fuel gender-specific attitudes, it only follows that rape would occur at a higher rate than in less "traditional," more advanced societies where women and men are viewed as equals.

In societies where there is widespread tolerance of at least certain types of rape, e.g., marital and date rape, researchers refer to the culture as a rape culture (Frese, et al. 2004). Such cultures, and the U.S. is one such culture, are likely to lead to detrimental effects for women, who are victimized by rape. Instead of blaming offenders, women tend to blame themselves

for the assault and men are more likely to view their behavior as “normal” or, at a minimum, “justified,” but certainly not as a crime (Frese, et al. 2004).

When researchers study rape, they commonly find that misinformation circulates within society concerning the nature, causes, and consequences of forced sexual activity.

Misinformation, such as this, has been coined “rape myths,” which are defined as stereotyped, false, and prejudicial beliefs about rape, rape victims, and rapists themselves. Rape myths can range widely based on the society and culture being studied. Examples of rape myths in the U.S. include (1) women, who are healthy, cannot be raped against their will; (2) women regularly falsely accuse men of rape; (3) the victim enjoys the rape experience; (4) rape is usually committed by maniacs who are sex addicts; (5) rape is unplanned and impulsive; and (6) bad girls are the only ones to get raped.

It has been reported that rape myths are common, yet damaging, because they perpetuate racial and sexual stereotypes, as well as demean the victim. Rape myths are very detrimental to society (Buchwald, et al. 1993), but especially affect the victim. The consequences of a society believing in rape myths affect all aspects of the crime. A female, who has been drinking, knows her rapist, and is not brutally hurt in a rape may fear reporting the rape because she does not fit the typical rape victim persona. She may also blame herself for the rape for not taking extra precautions, not resisting the rape with more physical force that would have resulted in self-injury, as well as experiencing guilt or self-doubt. The victim may also chose to not report the rape because of fear of embarrassment of humiliation.

According to Giacopassi's 1986 study, compared to white women black women are more likely to view both victims and offenders as more blameworthy for the rape. Black women are also more likely to believe in planned rapes, that rapists have severe psychological issues, and that normal males commit rape. More than white women, black women believe that women cannot be forced to have sex against their will, which women fantasize about rape, and that victims are also possibly to blame for their rape. In general, however, women are less accepting of rape myths than males (Giacopassi, 1982). Of all the respondents in the study, black men had the highest proportion of support for rape myths. Giacopassi (1982) found that men are more likely to accept rape myths than women, despite his prior research finding that black women are more likely to participate in victim blaming. Out of all the responses, it can be concluded that America does support a rape culture.

Research studies have found that men are more likely than women to hold flawed beliefs about rape. According to Mori Bernat, Glenn, Selle, & Zarate (1995), for example, the 302 Asian and Caucasian college students in Orange County, California from middle-income backgrounds that they studied indicated a significant difference between men and women, but also among different ethnicities. Students of Asian descent were more likely to endorse negative attitudes toward rape victims, and they believed more of the rape myths than their Caucasian counterparts. Also, compared to women, men were more negative toward rape victims and more accepting of rape myths. This study is important because it examines attitudes toward rape victims while also considering their race, ethnicity, and gender.

According to Morash (2006), the social sciences have failed to sufficiently explain rape. Victim precipitation theory states that the psychological makeup of rape victims differentiates them from other women, therefore leading to the victim-blaming conclusion that the psychological makeup of the victim triggers rape. This so-called psychological makeup of the victim causes them to make poor judgments such as walking alone at night, accepting a ride home from a stranger, etc., which according to this theory, would lead a man to take these behaviors as a sign of willfulness to have sexual intercourse. Many theories focus on blaming the victim and finding fault in the victim's actions; very few theories emphasized the offender as the problem although some rape theories have suggested that offenders had personality problems or psychological issues that would lead them to have a strong hatred against women and, therefore, act commit rape, which many see as an act of violence (Morash, 2006). In a 1992 study by Struckman and Struckman, 157 men and 158 women from mainly the white middle class whom were enrolled in psychology classes at a Midwestern university rated their agreement with statements reflecting rape myths, such as victim blaming and measure of whether women are traumatized by the incident. The statements given to women interviewees varied by whether the rapist was male or female. The majority showed that the students disagreed with all myth statements, but more strongly disagreed with trauma myths. The study found that women were significantly more likely to reject rape myths than were men. Subjects were also found to be more likely to accept myths in which the perpetrator was female rather than male.

Besides the prison population, many rape myths are centered on situations in which men are the rapists and women are the victims. Literature on male sexual assault has many false

beliefs and prejudicial stereotypes about male rape in general. People believe that male rape cannot happen. Many people associate males with being strong and big, therefore not being a target of sexual assault as they cannot be overpowered. Men are also viewed as being controlling or the initiator of sexual activity, not being the victims of sexual assault. Other people may question the ability of the male to be able to perform sexual activity in such a situation. Among college students, male sexual assault is particularly high. According to Struckman and Struckman (page 86, 1992), 12-16% of male subjects indicated there had been pressure or forced sexual activity between dating partners and physical force was used in 1%-7% of the incidents reported in the surveys.

Rape myths are important too because the beliefs people have influence their behavior. Thus, if a potential perpetrator believes these myths, he is more likely to rape. And, if a woman believes these myths, she is more likely to blame herself if she is raped. Rape myths are defined as attitudes, often about rape that may be held by the majority of the population. They are typically used to justify an offender's actions and male sexual aggression against women. Rape Myth Acceptance (RMA) and other variables have been tested, yet these studies have failed to come to theoretical and psychometric precision (Lonsway and Fitzgerald, 1993). Carmody and Washington (2001), in a study of 623 undergraduate college woman investigated the effect of race and prior sexual assault victimizations on the acceptance of rape myths. Interestingly, no significant differences in beliefs were found between Black and White women. In addition, there were no significant differences in beliefs between victims and non-victims. The study also found

that many college women reject rape myths leaving only a small minority who continue to support them.

Sex crimes are serious offenses that can change many people's lives in negative ways. With so many people being affected, it is essential to determine if there is a relationship between factors that cause women to be objectified and rape rates. Finding a strong connection could help with legal regulations, as well as social controls to help end this epidemic in the U.S. With so many studies on rape and sexual assault, it is surprising that such a serious offense is still as prevalent as it is today. It is expected that if people view rape as a crime second only to murder in seriousness, it may not occur as often as it does. It is expected that pornography will have a strong correlation with perceptions of rape myths, which may lead to conclusions that could influence policy changes and to fewer sexual assaults. While a lot of research has been done on the effects of pornography and perceptions/attitudes on rape myths, no research to my knowledge has combined the two. The current project will be conducted to fill the gap in literature by testing whether someone's views on pornography influences their acceptance of rape myths.

Hypothesis

Rape culture is a theoretical concept that connects rape and sexual violence to a society's culture, which could lead a society to practice, normalize, excuse and even tolerate rape and other sexual offenses (Buchwald, et al. 1993). Along with a rape culture, other behaviors are often theoretically associated with rape including victim blaming; sexual objectification, especially the objectification of women by men; and underestimating the number of rapes that occur. Rape culture has been founded to correlate with other social behaviors as well.

Based on the literature and theory review, it is hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 1: The older a participant is, the more likely they are to believe in the rape myths listed in the survey.

Null Hypothesis: There is no relationship between age and belief in rape myths.

Hypothesis 2: The more often a participant views pornography, the more likely they will be to accept rape myths.

Null Hypothesis: There is no relationship between viewing pornography and acceptance of rape myths.

Hypothesis 3: A participant who strongly believes in rape myths will underestimate how many rape cases occurred in the U.S. in 2010.

Null Hypothesis: There is no relationship between beliefs in rape myths and the ability to estimate the number of rapes in the U.S. in 2010.

Hypothesis 4: The more frequent that participants watch pornographic materials the fewer negative consequences on society they will believe are associated with pornography.

Null Hypothesis: There will be no relationship between the frequency of viewing pornography and beliefs about pornography's effect on society.

Hypothesis 5: The more religious a person is, the more likely they accept rape myths.

Null Hypothesis: There will be no relationship between religiosity and acceptance of rape myths.

Theoretical Argument

According to Daigle (2012), routine activities and lifestyles theory emphasize that linked crime victimization risk to the fact that victims must have come into contact with their potential offender. When routine activities theory was developing, it was argued by Lawrence Cohen and Marcus Felson in 1979 that a person's daily activities or routine behavior patterns can impact the chances of a person being victimized. In a person's daily usual behaviors, they can come into contact with a motivated offender, which causes the chance of crime victimization to increase. Motivated offenders are very prevalent, and their motivation to offend does not need to be explained. Instead of studying their motivation to offend, it is important to study how they pick their victims. The victims must have some feature about them to make them targets to offenders. Location, the individual, the individual's attentiveness to their surroundings, and or their attractiveness could all increase a potential victim's suitability as a target. Capable guardianship is seen as a barrier that prevents the crime from occurring by reducing the target's attractiveness. Guardianship is usually a social factor, making the victim less suitable, but guardianship may include environmental factors such as lighting or architectural design. When the three elements of routine activities and lifestyles come together in space, that is where motivated offenders, suitable targets, and lack of capable guardianship occur, the likelihood of victimization is significantly increased. Based off of this theory, victims of rape and sex crimes would most likely be suitable targets when they have too little capable guardianship while in a location where there is a motivated offender (Daigle, 2012).

Data and Methods

The current study uses quantitative survey data. The survey, which is attached as Appendix A, was constructed as part of the requirements for Research Methods (SYA4300C). It was then reviewed by the Institutional Review Board and approved for distribution because no harm was viewed as a potential problem. Each respondent agreed to take the anonymous survey after reading the IRB protocol and the data were collected using two methods. Nearly half of the surveys were collected using Qualtrics, an online survey software, while the other surveys were printed and administered in person. The data collected from Qualtrics was automatically uploaded onto SPSS, whereas data from the personally administered surveys were manually entered into SPSS, adding to the already existing data.

My survey consisted of twenty one questions, six which were used to measure the demographics of the sample. Demographic questions consisted of sex (male=1, female=0), age on last birthday (fill in the blank), race (American Indian = 1, Asian = 2, Black or African American = 3, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islands = 4, or White = 5), ethnicity (Hispanic=1 or Non- Hispanic= 0), religion (Buddhist = 1, Hindu = 2, Jewish = 3, Catholic = 4, Orodox = 5, Muslim = 6, Christian = 7, Black Protestant = 8, Mormon = 9, Unaffiliated = 10, Christian = 11, Other = 12), and annual income (\$0-29,999 = 1; \$30,000-39,999 = 2; \$40,000-49,999 = 3; \$50,000-59,999 = 4; \$60,000-69,999 = 5; \$70,000-79,999 = 6; \$80,000-89,999 = 7; \$90,000–99,999 = 8; and \$100,000 or more = 9). Using a survey in this study is very beneficial because it is a relatively simple and quick way to collect a large number of participants' data. Also, a benefit of using Qualtrics to administer the survey is that it can be individualized based on the participants' responses; allowing the researcher to establish skip patterns.

Population & Sample

The population of interest for this project ranges from college-aged students to elder adults. I am interested in finding a relationship between pornography attitudes and perceptions of rape myths among people of all races, sexes, cultures, and ages. My starting sample consisted of sample of undergraduate students at the University of Central Florida. Anonymous surveys were collected from nearly 300 students at the University of Central Florida and adults contacted through Facebook. In this situation, a convenience sample is very beneficial as it allows the research to obtain participants very easily, less expensive and fast. Yet with advantages, often come disadvantages, there are many issues with this sort of sampling. With a convenience sample, there is no randomization in the selection process and this may result in the data not being completely representative of the whole population. The unit of analysis for this study is the individual.

Variables and Measurements

Dependent Variable: Perceptions of Rape Myths

Perceptions of rape myths are studied by asking participants various questions about rape. Participants were asked how many cases of rape and sexual assault they estimated occurred in the U.S. in 2010. They were also asked to choose the most accurate definition of rape from a list provided (Q #12). Along with multiple choice questions, the survey also asked participants how much they agree with chosen rape myths (Q # 3, 4, & 5) on a five choice scale, where 1= strongly disagree; 2= disagree; 3= neutral; 4= agree; and 5= strongly agree.

Independent Variables: Frequency of Viewing Pornography

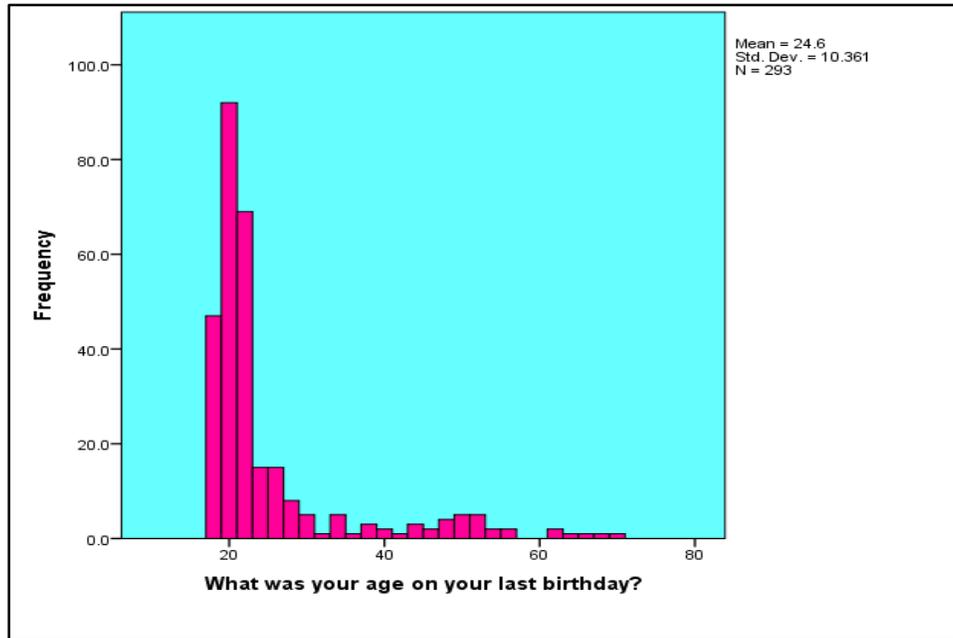
The independent variable of primary interest used in this part of the study was pornography, more specifically a person's own perceptions of pornography's influence on society. Participants were asked a series of questions about their views of pornography and their personal habits. Using the same 5-point scale described above, participants were asked to rate how much they agreed or disagreed with statements such as "Pornography has negative consequences on society (Q: #2);" "Pornography makes the viewer behave more aggressively towards women (Q: #8);" and "Men objectify women more often if they are frequent viewers of pornography (Q: #10)." These questions were asked to seek how much of a role pornography plays in the participants' lives, however, only the first of these questions was analyzed for the current study. The level of measurement is the individual level.

The data I collected from 293 survey respondents had an age range between 18 and 69 years (see Figure 1 below). While the range was very wide, the number of people on the older end of the spectrum was inadequate to use in the analyses. Thus, I did not use age as a control or predictor variable. The survey was distributed on social media and too many students who attend the University of Central Florida. More data would need to be collected to better represent an older age cohort. My hypothesis relating age to (Hypothesis 1: The older a participant is, the more likely they are to believe in the rape myths listed in the survey) may still hold true, but a data set that was not extremely skewed toward a young population would be needed to test this hypothesis.

Control Variables

To reduce the possibility of another variable impacting the results of the study, many of the questions included in the survey centered on demographic information. Prior research studies have shown that socio-demographics play a large role in producing perceptions of rape myths and pornography attitudes, which explains why my survey consisted of many demographic questions. People born and raised in different generations may share certain beliefs about pornography and rape myths. Also, when people are raised in various cultures, including different cultures or subcultures within the U.S., they tend to hold varying views on pornography and rape myths. The Mori et al. 1995 study, for example, found that students of Asian descent were more likely to endorse negative attitudes toward rape victims and they believed more of the rape myths than their Caucasian counterparts. Also, men were more negative toward rape victims and more accepting of rape myths than women.

Figure 1: Age of Participants (N=293)



In addition to age, I did not include the data on income because the answers I received did not accurately represent my sample. The question in my survey asked the participant to select the category that most accurately represented their income before taxes, or if they were dependent of their parents, to select their parents' income. The responses to this question were so inconsistent that they did not accurately represent the population.

Many variables were recoded into dummy variables to better compare results. The question on my survey about religion offered participants many different variables to choose from including Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Catholic, Orthodox, Muslim, Christian, Black Protestant, Mormon, Unaffiliated, and Other (please specify). After completing several sets of regressions where various religious combinations were explored, the variables were recoded into Catholic and Non-Catholic. My population showed the most significant results recoding the

variables by comparing the Catholic religion. I also recoded race from having several categories including American Indian, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islands, White, and Other (please specify) into White and Non-White to test the importance of minority-majority status.

After completing a factor analysis, which indicated that the three rape myths included in the survey were, in fact, representing very similar beliefs, I combined them to form one variable. Specifically, I combined “Sexual assault victims often put themselves in dangerous situations by being alone;” “If a victim of rape or sexual assault was in a risky area at night they could be partially to blame for putting themselves in this condition” and “Rape can be avoided if the victim takes necessary precautions such as not dressing promiscuously.” Once combined, I relabeled them as “Rape Myth Acceptance.” When tested, however, Rape Myth Acceptance, as an index variable, did not reach significant results.

Results

It was hypothesized that the frequency of viewing pornography would significantly influence respondents' opinions about pornography's influence on society. Viewing pornography significantly influences whether respondents' perceive that it has negative consequences on society ($p=.000$) such that the more they view pornography, the less likely they perceive it to have negative consequences on society.

Table 1: Influence of Pornography on society. (N=313)

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | T | Sig. | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|---------|------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | | |
| Frequency of viewing pornography | -.288 | .061 | -.347 | -4.728 | .000*** | |
| Race | -.156 | .167 | -.062 | -.934 | .351 | |
| Ethnicity | -.205 | .192 | -.071 | -1.072 | .285 | |
| Sex | -.011 | .157 | -.005 | -.071 | .943 | |
| Religion | .175 | .172 | .67 | 1.018 | .310 | |
| | | | | | | |
| R2 | .137 | | F Change | 6.425 | Sig. | .000 |

Dependent Variable: Pornography has negative consequences on society.

* $p<.05$ ** $p<.01$ *** $p<.001$

None of the control variables achieved significance, however the model as a whole was very significant ($p=.000$) and the R^2 of .137, means that the variables in the model, primarily the variable of interest, explained 13.7% of the variance in the model. Again, the results suggest that the more often a person watches pornography, the less likely they are to believe that pornography has negative consequences on society.

Table 2: Rape victim to blame if in risky area at night. (N=311)

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | T | Sig. | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|--------|------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | | |
| Estimated number of rapes in 2010 | .013 | .037 | .019 | .338 | .736 | |
| Race | -.339 | .164 | -.114 | -2.060 | .040* | |
| Ethnicity | .078 | .183 | .023 | .427 | .670 | |
| Sex | .464 | .136 | .189 | 3.425 | .001** | |
| Religion | .541 | .155 | .191 | 3.495 | .001** | |
| <hr/> | | | | | | |
| R^2 | .299 | | F Change | 6.109 | Sig. | .000 |

Dependent Variable: If a victim of rape or sexual assault was in a risky area at night they could be partially to blame for putting themselves in this condition.

* $p<.05$ ** $p<.01$ *** $p<.001$

Since the composite variable, Rape Myth Acceptance, did not achieve significance, I chose to look at each individual rape myth individually. When I looked at each individual rape

myth separately, I found that the model explaining rapes occurring mostly in a risky area at night received the greatest significance. Specifically, I found that race was a significant predictor at the $p < .05$ level of believing that if a victim of rape or sexual assault was in risky area at night they could be partially to blame for putting themselves in this condition. As the participant is more likely to be non-white, the more likely they were to believe that the victim was to blame for the rape. Sex was also a strong predictor of acceptance of this rape myth as well with a $p < .001$ significance. Religion was also significant at the $p < .001$ level indicating that if a person was Catholic, they were more likely to accept this rape myth. Finally, the model was very significant, $p < .000$, and explained nearly 30% of the variance in respondents' beliefs about victims being partly to blame for their victimization if they are in a risky area alone at night.

Table 3: Dressing promiscuously (N=272)

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | T | Sig. | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|---------|------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | | |
| Frequency of viewing pornography | -.088 | .056 | -.116 | -1.561 | .120 | |
| Race | -.385 | .155 | -.167 | -2.483 | .014** | |
| Ethnicity | .071 | .176 | .027 | .402 | .688 | |
| Sex | .530 | .145 | .271 | 3.651 | .000*** | |
| Religion | .267 | .159 | .112 | 1.681 | .094 | |
| | | | | | | |
| R ² | .106 | | F Change | 4.803 | Sig. | .000 |

Dependent Variable: Rape can be avoided if the victim takes necessary precautions such as not dressing promiscuously.

*p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

Discussion

Comparing my research and data to past research, I have found that a study conducted by Frese, et al., (2004) similar results. Both studies understand that attitudes about pornography can be in direct relation to sexual behaviors. One of my stronger explanations determined that the people who view pornography often are more likely to believe that pornography does not have negative consequences on society.

According to Giacopassi's study in 1986, black females are more likely to view the victim as blame worthy when compared to white females. My data suggests similar conclusions about race, but not sex. According to my study, blacks, Catholics, and males are the most likely to blame rape victims for their victimization. On the other hand, the current research was similar to the Giacopassi study that indicated that compared to males; females are less accepting of rape myths. In conclusion, the more likely the participant was to be male, the more likely they were to accept rape myths.

While I did find significant results, my data could be improved. With a random sample of participants, I could come to more concrete sociological findings. With my results, I found that the more often a person watches pornography, the less likely they are to believe that pornography has a negative consequence on society. Therefore, a person who watches pornography often may believe that it is okay and a normal activity; which may lead men to objectify women. Further research is necessary to better support these findings.

Strengths and Limitations

When collecting survey data, many issues may arise. There is great potential for participants to be reluctant to take a survey with such personal questions being asked. People, who do choose to participate, may be reluctant to tell the truth, or simply forget the true answers. Since this study consisted of a convenience sample, it is difficult to accurately get a sample that represents the whole U.S. population. Only people who are interested in this study will most likely take part; making the accuracy more difficult. Thus, it is expected that the survey participants will not be a representative sample of the entire population. In addition, with a short amount of time, I could not get a large number of people to participate in my survey. Being a undergraduate student at the University of Central Florida, I was very limited to the people who were willing and able to take the survey. The majority of my responses were from current students and people living in Orlando, Florida.

In addition, information that is collected from surveys is self-reported, which means that the quality of the data gathered is dependent upon the truthfulness and accuracy of the participant. Many people may forget data or may lie on the survey in an effort to please the researcher. Also, with sensitive subjects, such as the one being investigated for this study, many people who were personally victimized may chose not to participate in the survey, which leaves out a large amount of very important information.

Future Research

In future research of the similar topic, there are several directions I would take my investigation. First, I hope to have better age categories. While I did have an excellent range of people from the ages of 18-69, I did not have many people participate who were older. While I did originally have a hypothesis comparing age to rape myth acceptance, because my data was lacking in the older age ranges, example 50 years and over, I decided to remove that hypothesis. Second, working with a college population, it was difficult to capture the income of the respondents. They tended to either answer giving their parents' income or with their own, usually part-time, low income. In the future, I hope to ask a question on income or social class in a way that would better represent the population than was done in the current survey. I would also ask for the number of rapes on a scale to better estimate how often people believe cases of rape and sexual assaults occur in the United States. This would provide better associations between people who estimate high or low with other variables. On my survey I included a question about soft-core pornography and hard-core pornography, which produced no significant results. I hope to somehow compare this data to another variable to see if the type of pornography is viewed correlates with any other variables. In my analysis, I re-coded race into white and non-white because of how limited my data set was. In another study, I plan to have a larger variety of people from different races to compare data with. A more random sample will significantly help my research. Although I realized how many rape myths actually existed, for purposes of my data analysis class, my survey was limited to twenty questions, which severely limited the number of questions I could ask about rape myths. I also did not include many rape myths surrounding the prison population and how prisoners are also victims of rape. In future research, I hope to

include prisoners in my sample and research more on rape myths surrounding the incarceration systems. For future research, I hope to add more rape myths and more specific scenarios to test how people respond to the longer list of rape myths. Because the definition of rape changed in January 2013, there will be a lot more new statistics on rape as males are now included as victims of rape. New data will be available and the data could show significant correlations with other variables now that males are included in the data set.

Appendix

Questioner used in “Do attitudes of pornography influence perceptions of rape myths”

Directions: Please complete the survey by selecting the best choice for each question. The survey should take between 5-10 minutes.

1.) How many cases of rape and sexual assault would you estimate were reported in the U.S. in 2010?

- <99,999
- 100,000-124,999
- 125,000-149,999
- 150,000-174,999
- 175,000-199,999
- >200,000

Rate your agreement with the following statements:

2.) Pornography has negative consequences on society.

- strongly disagree
- disagree
- neutral
- agree
- strongly agree

3.) Sexual assault victims often put themselves in dangerous situations by being alone.

- strongly disagree
- disagree
- neutral
- agree
- strongly agree

4.) If a victim of rape or sexual assault was in a risky area at night they could be partially to blame for putting themselves in this condition.

- strongly disagree
- disagree
- neutral
- agree
- strongly agree

5.) Rape can be avoided if the victim takes necessary precautions such as not dressing promiscuously.

- strongly disagree
- disagree
- neutral
- agree
- strongly agree

6.) How often do you believe that a rape victim knows their offender?

- never
- not usually
- sometimes
- most of the time
- all the time

7a.) Have you ever viewed pornographic material?

- yes (proceed to 7b)
- no (skip to 8)

7b.) How often do you view pornographic material?

- less than once a month
- a couple times a month
- once a week
- 1-6 days a week
- everyday

7c.) Which is the most frequent way you view pornography?

- books
- videos
- magazines
- live shows
- internet
- telephone
- other _____

7d.) How would you describe the pornography you view?

- very hard
- hard
- neutral
- soft
- very soft

7e.) How long have you been viewing pornographic materials?

- less than a year
- 1-3 years
- 3-5 years
- more than five years

Rate your agreement with the following statements:

8.) Pornography makes the viewer behave more aggressively toward women.

- strongly disagree
- disagree
- neutral
- agree
- strongly agree

9.) What do you believe is MOST often associated with pornographic materials?

- violent behavior
- suppressed sexual urges
- strong sexual urges
- objectification of women
- none
- other _____

Rate your agreement with the following statements:

10.) Men objectify women more often if they are frequent viewers of pornography.

- strongly disagree
- disagree
- neutral
- agree
- strongly agree

11.) Sex offenders should be able to view pornographic materials.

- strongly disagree
- disagree
- neutral
- agree
- strongly agree

12.) What is your sex?

Male

Female

13.) What was your age on your last birthday?_____

14.) What is your race?

- American Indian
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islands
- White
- Other, Please specify _____

15.) What is your ethnicity?

- Hispanic
- Not Hispanic

16.) Which of the following best describes your religion?

- Buddhist
- Hindu
- Jewish
- Catholic
- Orthodox
- Muslim
- Christian
- Black Protestant
- Mormon
- Unaffiliated
- Other _____

17.) What is your annual income in U.S. dollars?

(If you are dependent on your parent/guardian, which of the following is your best estimate of their annual income before taxes?)

- 0-29,999
- 30,000-39,999
- 40,000-49,999
- 50,000-59,999
- 60,000-69,999
- 70,000-79,999
- 80,000-89,999
- 90,000-99,000
- 100,000 or more

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