

ATTRIBUTION OF RAPE BLAME IN RAPE CASE: SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

In this study, we summarize research that investigated how different variables affected people's evaluations of hypothetical rape scenarios in controlled lab settings. Judgments on who was at blame, whether the victim or the offender, are crucial. Especially in situations of rape committed by somebody the victim knows, victim blaming may be a barrier to justice. Compared to rapes committed by strangers, those committed by someone they know tend to get more responsibility. However, owing in part to differences in methodology, there is inconsistency in these results (e.g., whether there is a linear connection between victim blame and relationship closeness). There has been a lot of study done to figure out why rape victims are more likely to be blamed for their assault than victims of other interpersonal crimes. A total of 156 people filled out a survey that comprised a vignette showing one of three different rape situations and a measure of participants' sentiments toward rape victims (a stranger rape, date rape and seduction rape). Participants evaluated how much they blamed the rape victim, how much they related to the victim, and how much they related to the offender. Participants consistently attributed the greatest responsibility to the victim in the seduction rape scenario, followed by the date rape scenario, and lastly the stranger rape scenario, with male participants blaming the victim to a higher amount than female participants. Attributions of guilt were adversely linked with degrees of perceived likeness to both the rape victim and the rapist.

Keywords: - Rape, Blame, Sexual Assault, defensive attribution; rape prevention

INTRODUCTION

Finding the reasons behind something that has happened is the first step in assigning blame. At the individual level, the degree to which actors are held accountable for outcomes may have a significant role in shaping how spectators think about and react to those actors. The action sequence seen may not necessarily correspond to the causal attributions made by observers. These interpretations may not be grounded in reality, however, due to cognitive and motivational biases. Although such biases are characteristic of human behavior, it is also clear that individual differences in observers' fundamental personality dispositions lead to each person seeing and interpreting the identical events through their own individually skewed lenses. Assigning blame is a very nuanced process that involves a wide range of internal and external variables.

One in five women worldwide will be the victim of sexual assault throughout her lifetime. However, only a small percentage of rapes are reported to the authorities; figures vary from 15% to 24% across different countries. Studies have shown that victims and survivors of sexual assault often believe the police would react with scepticism to their allegation, which is a major deterrent to coming forward. Victims of sexual assault may have similar feelings of guilt and humiliation after the attack, especially if they fear the judgment of others, particularly loved ones. Women who have been attacked by a friend or acquaintance may be more sensitive to the potential for retaliation from others and the perception of stigma. These numbers are deeply troubling because it has been argued that men's relative freedom to commit sexually violent crimes against large numbers of women represents a miscarriage of justice, prompting the need for additional research into the factors that influence attributions of victim blame in rape cases.

When people attribute blame for unfavorable events or circumstances on the victims themselves, they are engaging in victim blaming. Victim blaming is a widespread problem, but it seems to be more prevalent in instances of sexual assault. Although perpetrators are more often held responsible for sexual assault than those who are assaulted, the degree to which victims are held responsible varies widely between contexts, perpetrators, and observers. Predictors of victim blaming are still a matter of some debate. In reality, there seems to be just one conclusion to be drawn from the sexual assault literature: When it comes to rape, victims of strangers are least likely to be held responsible for the crime, but spouses are held responsible for

the attack much more often. When rapes committed by strangers are compared to those committed by somebody the victim knows, it is usually the former that receives less responsibility. In addition, victims of rape by acquaintances get less blame than victims of rape by intimate partners. In a nutshell, the victim's level of responsibility rises as familiarity and love involvement between the two parties grows.

Men and women are socialized differently from early on in life. The socialization process involves the assignment of gender roles, which has consequences for later behavior and self-perception. That "men and women are moulded almost totally by the society and the institution in which they live; this is the socialization process," as put forward by Andersen and Doherty, is an apt description of this phenomenon. Sexual behavior is only one area of life where gender role indoctrination may have a significant impact. Sexually, males are trained to be the leaders and the ones to make the first move, while women are taught to play second fiddle and wait for a man to make the first move. Forced intercourse promotes the position of the male as the dominant party who makes sexual advances, hence rape between dating partners may be less of a problem than previously thought, according to Sex Role Socialization Theory. Thus, sex role indoctrination helps to explain why males might be sexually violent and why rape has become so commonplace. Traditional gender role assumptions, especially those around sexual conduct, seem to be connected to attitudes toward rape. According to the sex role socialization theory of rape, rape is rationalized as a natural consequence of rigid gender norms. The idea posits that men and women, via developmental processes and societal prescriptions, come to have expectations of gender role behaviors during sexual intercourse. Men are seen as strong, authoritative, and aggressive, whereas women are seen as frail, weak, and helpless. Burt argued further that a hostile climate toward rape victims and widespread incorrect notions about this crime foster sexually aggressive conduct. According to Burt (1980), traditional gender roles are a strong predictor of rape myth acceptance and are to blame for people's unfavorable blaming attitudes toward rape victims.

The disturbing trend of laying the responsibility for rape on the victims rather than the perpetrators. As a result of this tolerance, rape is more common, and the victim is more likely to blame herself for the attack, both of which have significant effects on her ability to heal. Anxiety, sadness, low self-esteem, feelings of humiliation, difficulty interacting socially, and even suicide ideation have all been linked to traumatic guilt. Moreover, the negative social implications connected with reporting rape are exacerbated by this notion, making it harder to eradicate the crime. Studies of rape prevalence have proven time and time again that rape victims are more likely to conceal their experiences than victims of other crimes of equivalent severity. According to studies, many assault victims don't go to the police because they fear being blamed or disbelieved. A victim's decision on whether or not to seek medical attention or report an attack is often influenced by the attitudes of others around them. This implies that many assaulters avoid punishment and many assaulted people avoid getting the treatment they need. Sexual assault survivors are at a higher risk of being sexually victimized again, and studies have shown that victim blaming negatively affects their ability to heal (SRV). The average number of times a woman is raped in a year is 2.9, according to research by Tjaden and Thoennes (2000). In a similar vein, Gidycz, Coble, Latham, and Layman (1993) found that college women who had been victims of sexual assault are up to twice as likely to be re-victimized during the same academic quarter. Miller, Markman, and Handley (2007) showed that individuals in a sample of female college students who had suffered sexual assault who endorsed more self-blame were at elevated risk of SRV over a 4.2-month follow-up period, corroborated by the earlier results of Miller et al. These results, together with a better understanding of victim blaming, have significant implications for the care and rehabilitation of rape victims everywhere.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ayala, E. E., (2018) Although studies on rape myth acceptance (RMA) and other variables related to attribution development have been undertaken, it is unclear how these factors interact to influence victim and offender attributions. Two hundred and twenty-one female college students participated in this study on blame attributions, which compared RMA, victim gender, perpetrator gender, and the link between the two (i.e., stranger vs. acquaintance). The results indicated that RMA, victim gender, and perpetrator gender all contributed significantly to the variation in blame placement. Overall, blame for victims remained rather stable over RMA levels when the offenders were female, but rose dramatically when the perpetrators were male.

Bendixen, M., et.al. (2014) The number of rapes reported to Norwegian police has risen steadily during the previous two decades. In this research, we use a community sample of Norwegian women and men to investigate the characteristics related with attitudes against rape (as evaluated by 11 items from the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale) and the attribution of culpability to rape victims. Based on an analysis of 475 completed surveys (a 32.6% response rate), it seems that men were somewhat less condemning of rape than women were and that males assigned somewhat more blame to rape victims than women did. Attitudes against rape were the primary predictor of attributing culpability to rape victims, and classical sexism was the biggest predictor of attitudes toward rape. Acceptance of intimate partner violence against women was the second strongest predictor of attitudes toward rape. Our findings do not differ from those from the North American culture with respect to the strengths of known group differences and attitudinal correlates to rape attitudes and attribution of responsibility. This is the case even though Scandinavian countries are consistently ranked among the World's most gender egalitarian societies. Potential theoretical and real-world applications are examined.

Cheung, M. W. (2014). In the fields of social science, education, medicine, management, and the behavioral sciences, meta-analysis has become an essential tool for synthesis. The standard assumption of meta-analysis is that effect sizes are independent. On the other hand, there are a number of factors that might influence how big an impact is. For instance, studies may report a variety of effect sizes for the same concept, and within-group consistency in effect sizes is more probable than between-group consistency. This article provides a summary of the issues and popular approaches to dealing with dependent effect sizes. This article aims to show how to model dependent effect sizes using 3-level meta-analyses. We explain why a structural equation modeling technique is preferable to a multilevel approach when doing a meta-analysis at three levels of analysis. As an additional goal, this article attempts to generalize the core ideas of Q statistics, I^2 , and R^2 from 2-level to 3-level meta-analyses. The suggested methods are implemented by utilizing the free and open-source meta-SEM program in the R statistical package. These processes are shown using examples from two real-world data sets. Methodological advances in conducting meta-analyses at three levels are reviewed.

Franklin, C. A., et.al. (2018) More research is needed on how bystanders react to survivors of sexual assault, particularly when factors like the victim's color or the perpetrator's gender might influence whether the response is supportive or blames the victim. Survivors' post-traumatic mental health and their propensity to seek professional care are profoundly influenced by how they are responded to when they disclose their experience of trauma. Students at a mid-sized public institution in the South (mean age = 20.94) were randomly selected to participate in a self-report, paper-and-pencil survey during the fall 2015 semester. The survey was designed using a pair of hypothetical disclosure vignettes involving sexual assault that were distributed at random. The purpose of this research was to compare White and Black participants' levels of empathy, their willingness to assign blame, and their willingness to provide help based on the perpetrator's familiarity with the victim.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Design

Gender and rape type served as the study's two explanatory variables. In this study, we used the following constructs as dependent variables: (a) participants' ARVS (Ward, 1988) scores; (b) participants' assessments of victim/perpetrator responsibility; (c) participants' perceptions of victim blame; and (d) participants' perceptions of similarity to the rape victim/perpetrator.

Participants.

A total of 160 freshmen from a university in the India took part in the study (105 female and 55 male). After excluding the information from four participants who did not finish the survey, we have a final sample size of 156 people. The ages of the women in the sample varied from 19 to 35 years old (mean age 23.74, s.d. 4.71). The ages of the men varied from 18 to 35. (Mean age 24.90; s.d. 4.64). To guarantee uniform dissemination of all three surveys, we shuffled the order in which they appeared.

Procedure

Students responded to a 53-item questionnaire as part of the research. The survey has three parts. In the beginning, participants were requested to finish the ARVS (Ward, 1988). After that, they were given one of three accounts in which a male sexually assaults a lady to read. Readers were then given a number of follow-up questions about the vignette's protagonists, both in terms of their own sense of responsibility for what transpired and their identification with the lady and man depicted. The last series of questions probed respondents' thoughts on how closely they related to the victim and the offender. Before obtaining permission, participants were told of the sensitive nature of the study and given information about a nearby rape crisis center.

Measures

Participants' views on rape were measured using the Attitudes Towards Rape Scale (ARVS; Ward, 1988). Twenty-five statements (eight positive and seventeen negative) make up this scale, which measures positive and negative views on rape victims. The scale used in the survey is a five-point Likert scale, with answers ranging from 0 (strongly disagree) to 4 (agree) (agree strongly). The total score on the ARVS was out of 100, with higher values indicating more negative sentiments toward victims. Good internal reliability ($\alpha=0.83$) and moderate test-retest reliability (Pearson's product-moment correlation= $+0.8$) were reported by Ward (1988).

The research relied on three brief stories. In the first, a "stranger rape" is shown, in the second, a "dating rape," and in the third, a "seduction rape" [see Appendix I for reproductions of the rape vignettes]. The vignettes, each of which was about 350 words long, were selected to realistically portray potential rape situations. None of the three descriptions utilized the term "rape," with the hope that participants would not base their answers on their own preconceived notions of the word's meaning. Each participant in this research was given one of three different versions of the questionnaire, each including one of the aforementioned scenarios.

A set of 10 questions were developed for this research to gauge (1) how much the respondent related to the victim/perpetrator in the vignette and (2) how much blame/responsibility the respondent allocated to the victim/perpetrator. Ten questions were asked, and responses ranged from "not at all" (1) to "absolutely agree" (5) on a five-point Likert scale (5).

Several questions on the woman's culpability for the rape were merged into a single scale to determine the extent to which the victim was to fault. Six of the measures evaluated a single victim blame variable, according to principal component factor analysis. The reliability of this scale for gauging responsibility on the part of victims was determined to be high ($\alpha=0.90$) [the questions indicated by an asterisk were combined into a single scale.

Finally, a series of questions was designed to gauge the extent to which respondents felt they shared individual traits with one another. In a survey, participants were asked to rate themselves on nine dimensions (age, build, background, people you interact with, places you go, things you do, physical fitness, ability to fight off attacker, and attractive target to perpetrator) and nine dimensions (perceived personal similarity to the perpetrator) (age, build, background, people you interact with, places you go, things you do, physical fitness, ability to overpower victim and respect for women). There were three possible responses to these questions: "not at all," "slightly," and "totally," each of which received a score of 0, 1, or 2. Two similarity scores (out of a possible 18) were then calculated based on the replies of the participants, with higher scores indicating a greater degree of perceived resemblance.

DATA ANALYSIS

To examine how gender influences responses on the Attitudes Towards Rape Victims Scale (ARVS), a one-way between-groups analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used. There was a statistically significant difference between male and female ARVS scores ($F(1, 154)21.22, p0.001$), with male individuals scoring substantially higher (mean26.73; s.d.9.94) than female ones (mean19.60; s.d.8.61). Males have much fewer positive opinions toward rape victims than females, as seen by these findings. Males scored substantially

higher than females, but both sexes scored low, suggesting a generally positive attitude toward rape victims within this student body.

Perceptions of likeness to the victim and the factors that influence them Two-way interaction between communities We used analysis of variance to look at how different aspects of the rape scenario, as well as the rape victim's gender, affect feelings of identification. Females identified with the victim more strongly (mean=4.70) than males ($F(1, 150) = 16.44, p0.001$) (mean3.22). Even though the kind of rape did not have a significant main impact, there was a significant interaction between gender and type of rape ($F(2, 150)5.53, p0.05$), indicating that the similarity ratings obtained from females differed more significantly among the three rape scenarios (see Table I). Causes of feeling that you look like the criminal Exchange that goes both ways between communities The effects of gender and rape scenario on feelings of resemblance to the offender were investigated using an analysis of variance. Male participants rated themselves as more similar to the offender (mean 2,98) than female participants rated themselves ($F(1, 150)27.50, p0.001$) (mean2.08). In addition, a significant main effect for rape type was found ($F(2, 150)4.47, p0.05$), with participants identifying more with the seduction rape perpetrator (mean2.63) than the date rape perpetrator (mean2.32) or the stranger rape perpetrator (mean2.63) (mean2.18; Table 1). There was also a statistically significant difference in how similarly male participants felt to the offenders across the three types of rape scenarios ($F(2, 150)4.05, p0.05$) (see Table I).

Factors influencing attributions of victim blame

Further, a univariate analysis was performed on the Victim Blame Scale to assess the impact of participant gender and rape scenario on participants' judgments of the victim's degree of blame. Table I summarizes the findings. Communication between topics that goes both ways Male participants blamed the victim more (mean 13.02) than female participants did, as shown by the ANOVA's significant main effect for gender, $F(1,150) 10.38, pB0.05$ (mean 10.96). More so, those that take part in studies consistently blamed the victim more in seduction rape cases (mean16.51) than date rape cases (mean10.51) and stranger rape cases (mean8.14; Table I), $F(2, 150)64.91, p0.001$; there was no interaction between gender and rape type.

Table I. Participants' perceptions of similarity to rape victim and attributions of blame: means by gender and type of rape scenario

	Type of rape scenario								
	Stranger rape			Date rape			Seduction rape		
	M	F	All	M	F	All	M	F	All
Perceptions of similarity to rape victima	2.94	5.70	4.76	3.18	4.95	4.42	3.53	3.38	3.43
Perceptions of similarity to rapista	2.35	2.09	2.18	3.00	2.03	2.32	3.59	2.13	2.63
Attributions of blame to rape victimb	9.76	7.30	8.14	11.71	10.00	10.51	17.59	5.94	16.51

a Items were scored on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from "not at all" (1) to "completely" (5). b Scores represent summation of six items on the questionnaire following the rape scenario. Scores ranged from 6 to 28

Studies of associations Participants' attitudes toward rape victims, participants' perceptions of likeness to the characters in the rape situations, and participants' attributions to victims in the rape scenarios were correlated using Pearson's coefficient. Results are shown in Table II. Results from Pearson's correlations showed an inverse relationship between victim similarity and victim blame ($r = -0.24, p0.001$), with individuals scoring high on victim similarity also rating low on victim blame. However, a strong connection was established between respondents' likeness to the perpetrator and their blame of the victim ($r0.24, p<0.001$). This means that the more respondents associated with the guy who committed the rape in the scenario, the more they blamed the victim. Respondents with high AVRS scores also reported high victim blame ratings ($r=0.38, p<0.001$), suggesting that the two constructs are connected.

Additional personal victim and offender similarity metrics were also used to calculate their own unique correlation coefficients. Results from Pearson's correlations showed a negative association between victim blame and perceived personal victim resemblance ($r=0.29$, $p<0.01$), suggesting that respondents who scored higher on the perceived personal similarity measure also blamed the victim less often. Personal identification with the victim had a stronger impact on rape blame attribution than personal identification with the offender, since no significant link was discovered between victim blame and perceived personal resemblance between the two.

Analysis by steps of regression by alone, the two measures of victim and perpetrator resemblance accounted for 13% of the variance in attributions of blame ($F_{11.40}$, $p<0.001$ [adjusted r^2 value stated owing to small sample size]), according to a stepwise regression analysis.

Table II. Intercorrelation matrix: Pearson's correlations between attitudes towards rape victim scores, perceptions of similarity and attributions of blame to rape victims

Variables	1	2	3	4
1. Attitudes towards rape victims score	1	0.17*	0.24**	0.38**
2. Perceptions of similarity to female rape victim		1	0.11	0.24**
3. Perceptions of similarity to male rapist			1	0.24**
4. Attributions of blame to rape victim				1

CONCLUSION

This article has found some of the material that influences attribution of guilt or blame whether provided in the form of short vignettes or recorded interviews with a "rape victim." In general, women are more likely to side with the victim than men are, stranger rape victims are more sympathetic than acquaintance rape victims, and people are less likely to place blame on victims they see as having comparable characteristics. This systematic literature review and meta-analysis sheds light on how perceptions of victim blame vary depending on the nature of the offender. There has been a lot of research done on this topic, and one of the most important discoveries is that victims of rape by strangers get more blame than victims of rape by someone they know. It is important to note that the bulk of the research included in this review concentrate on the effect of observer/victim features on attribution of responsibility for rape in situations of rape committed by a stranger. There is a gender gap in the attribution of blame for rape, with male spectators having a more negative attitude toward victims and placing more blame on them than female observers. Consistent with prior study, participants blamed the victims of the seduction rape the most, followed by the date rape and lastly the stranger rape. Participants who scored higher on measures of victim likeness also assigned considerably less blame to the rape victim than those who scored lower on these measures.

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