Investigating Sexual Violence in College-Aged Dating Couples: Does the Medium Affect the Message?

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INVESTIGATING SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN COLLEGE-AGED DATING COUPLES:
DOES THE MEDIUM AFFECT THE MESSAGE?

By

Emily F. Plackowski

THESIS

Submitted to
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ABSTRACT

INVESTIGATING SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN COLLEGE-AGED DATING COUPLES: DOES THE MEDIUM AFFECT THE MESSAGE?

By Emily F. Plackowski

This paper explores the reactions of college students to sexual violence scenarios. Scenarios depicted long-term, same-sex and opposite-sex dating couples. Eight scenarios were created, varying along the factors of: presentation medium (video, written) and sex(es) of assailant and victim (Male/Female (M/F), Male/Male (M/M), Female/Female (F/F), and Female/Male (F/M)). Each participant was presented with one of the eight scenarios, in a between-groups fashion. Participants’ conceptualizations of the scenarios were gathered via comprehension and interpretation questions. Participants were also asked questions to gather demographic information. Demographic analyses showed that over one-third of respondents had experienced sexual assault. Contrary to hypotheses, written scenarios were found to be more believable and emotionally evocative than were video scenarios. Students were also more likely to identify sexual assault as having happened in the written, as opposed to video, scenarios, but showed no significant differences in their determinations of sexual assault among the conditions based on the sex(es) of the assailant and victim. However, respondents did think that M/F scenarios were more believable than F/M scenarios, and clearer than M/M and F/F scenarios. On average, students agreed/strongly agreed that sexual assault and unwanted sexual behaviors had occurred in the scenarios.

Keywords: sexual assault, sexual violence, video, written, scenario, media
DEDICATION

How far that little candle throws his beams! So shines a good deed in a weary world.

– William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*

This thesis would have been unfeasible without the help and support of many wonderful people. The author is eternally grateful to Rachel Fromwiller (editor and videographer), Sigrid Crowel (originator of the video silhouetting idea), Beth Thiele, the excellent NMU theater students, an extremely encouraging group of anonymous advisors, a dedicated group of pilot testers, and other loyal friends.

This thesis is dedicated to the author’s family. Aunt Deb and Uncle John, Zach, Hazel, Mom, and Dad displayed – and continue to display – unwavering support, patience, hugs, and validation through many a difficult day and night. Without them, the author would have been hopelessly lost, and this project would have been impossible.

The author feels truly blessed, and duly grateful, to have such incredible people in her life.
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This thesis follows a combined format, prescribed primarily by the Northern Michigan University (NMU) Office of Graduate Education and Research’s Guide to the Preparation of Theses, and secondarily by the sixth edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association.
**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

List of Tables .................................................................................................................. vi

List of Figures .................................................................................................................. vii

Introduction ...................................................................................................................... 1

Literature Review ............................................................................................................. 2

Objectives ......................................................................................................................... 11

Hypotheses ......................................................................................................................... 12

Method ............................................................................................................................... 13

Data Analysis .................................................................................................................... 30

Results ............................................................................................................................... 33

Discussion ......................................................................................................................... 49

Summary and Conclusions .............................................................................................. 66

References ......................................................................................................................... 70

Appendices ....................................................................................................................... 73
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Data Deletions, Numbers, and Reasoning ........................................... 15
Table 2: Initial Known Participants Presented with Each Scenario and Factor Type 33
Table 3: Initial Participants Lost in Each Condition Due to Inclusion Criteria ....... 34
Table 4: Analyzed Participants Presented with Each Scenario and Factor Type .... 34
Table 5: Top 10 Participant Majors ................................................................. 35
Table 6: Political Affiliations of Participants ..................................................... 36
Table 7: Current Relationship Statuses of Participants ......................................... 37
Table 8: Mean Participant Dis/Agreement with Statements about Sexual Assault ... 37
Table 9: Mean Scenario Quality Scores ............................................................. 39
Table 10: Mean Participant Dis/Agreement Regarding Scenarios’ Sexual Violence .40
Table 11: Mean Participant Ratings Regarding Aggressor/Victim Culpability ....... 41
Table 12: Mean Participant Dis/Agreement Regarding Aggressor/Victim Qualities .42
Table 13: Mean Scenario Quality Scores of Video vs. Written Scenarios ............. 45
Table 14: Effects of Assailant/Victim Sex(es) on DVs ....................................... 46
Table 15: Effects of Assailant/Victim Sex(es), Pairwise Comparisons .................. 47
Table 16: Example Comments Uncertain about Sex and/or Victim Agency ........... 60
Table 17: Example Comments Expressing Hope for the Future of This Research .... 62
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Flowchart of conditions and procedures ..........................................................73
Figure 2: Diagram of stage lighting and setup for videos .................................................74
Figure 3: Example of video silhouetting A .....................................................................75
Figure 4: Example of video silhouetting B .....................................................................75
INTRODUCTION

Sexual violence is a painful and frequent occurrence in American society (Truman & Morgan, 2016). College-aged women and men are particularly vulnerable to sexually violent situations (Sinozich & Langton, 2014). Research and education regarding campus sexual assault is essential for making students aware of the many possible forms of sexual violence, including that which occurs in long-term relationships, and that between couples of different sex and sexual orientation types. Although sexual violence is an oft-studied topic, it is unusual to find a study that portrays relationship-based sexual assault, both same-sex and opposite-sex relationships, and both male and female aggressors and victims (e.g. Smith, Pine, & Hawley, 1988; Hull, Hull, & Sheplavy, 2016; & McEvoy, 2017).

It is common for studies, when portraying sexual assault scenarios, to portray those scenarios solely in written form (e.g. Hull et al., 2016). Sexual assault research has been slow to take advantage of technological advancements past paper and ink. Even simple technologies, such as video-based portrayals of assault, are unique in the research canon (e.g. Sleed, Durheim, Kriel, Solomon, & Baxter, 2002).

This research attempted to tackle these representational problems simultaneously. Sexual violence scenarios between long-term couples of varying sex-traited combinations were presented to participants in either video or written form. Thus, the researcher was able to explore whether individuals responded differently to sexual violence scenarios presented in different media formats (video and written), and/or to sexual violence scenarios portraying male or female aggressors and victims.
Investigating Sexual Violence in College-Aged Dating Couples: Does the Medium Affect the Message?

I didn’t feel okay. I wasn’t fine. To see somebody in the dining hall and freak out all over again… I didn’t feel fine at all.

– Female student survivor, Boston University

(Anderson, Brown, Hendrix, & Svrluga, 2015)

Literature Review

Millions of men and women in America have experienced sexual violence. According to the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), American men and women aged twelve or older experienced over 430,000 threatened, attempted, or completed rapes or sexual assaults in 2015 – a rate of about 1.6 rapes or sexual assaults per 1,000 Americans. From 2006 to 2015, approximately 28% of rape and sexual assault experiences were classified as “completed rapes,” or forced/unwanted sexual penetrations (Truman & Morgan, 2016).

Of national surveys that measure sexual victimization, the NCVS generally finds the lowest estimated rates of rape and sexual assault. A 2015 Washington Post – Kaiser Family Foundation telephone poll of 1,053 17- to 26-year-olds found that one in five women and one in twenty men “reported being sexually assaulted either by physical force or while incapacitated.” The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NIPSVS) resulted in similar statistics: close to one in five women (18%) had experienced rape (i.e. completed or attempted forced penetration) in their lifetimes (Black et al., 2011). Although only 1.4% of men (one in 71) experienced this definition of rape in their lifetimes, 4.8% (one in 21) reported being forced to penetrate someone else. In
their lifetimes, 13% of women and 6% of men reported being sexually coerced, and more than one in four women and one in nine men reported experiences with “unwanted sexual contact” (Black et al., 2011).

An analysis of the NCVS (1995-2013) found that women aged 18 to 24 (“college-age”) experienced the highest rates of rape and sexual assault. Within this age group, female students had lower rates of victimization than did female non-students. However, male students were found to have a higher rape/sexual assault victimization rate than were male non-students (Sinozich & Langton, 2014).

In 2011, then Vice President Joe Biden and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan announced the Obama Administration’s newest efforts to combat campus sexual assault (U.S. Dept. of Education, Press Office, 2011). A guide for schools, colleges, and universities emphasized that, to follow the law under Title IX, the Violence Against Women Act, and other statutes, schools must protect their students from sexual violence. The White House pledged to help stop sexual violence, via both awareness and policy implementation (U.S. Dept. of Education, Press Office, 2011). Many universities have since implemented specific policies to help address sexual assault prevention, reporting, disciplinary procedures, and punishments (Northern Michigan University, 2015). The Obama administration continued its fight against campus sexual assault in 2014, when it announced the beginning of the It’s On Us initiative, a campaign intended to spread awareness and encourage supportive and responsible behaviors (Somanader, 2014).

New-found attention given to sexual wrongdoing in politics, Hollywood, media, and other spheres of influence has increased the awareness of the general public regarding the real-world ordinariness of sexual misconduct. Disclosures have been urged
forth by #MeToo and other movements. Based on the sheer number of recent revelations, sexual misconduct seems to be rampant in modern society. It affects people both locally, on NMU’s own campus, and nationally, stretching up into the highest echelons of the current national government. However, federal, state, nonprofit, Hollywood, and university movements are currently working together to try to combat the problem of sexual assault, on college campuses and in other environments. Recent worldwide attention given to the commonality of student and other sexual violence illustrates both the timeliness and importance of this topic.

**The Inclusion of Male Victims and Same-Sex Scenarios in Sexual Violence Research**

Campus sexual violence is a profound problem, involving high rates of victimization and ongoing and varied efforts to help. Although statistical reports show that women experience sexual violence at higher rates than men, men do experience sexual violence. Research has shown that the gender identity of sexual violence survivors can impact people’s perceptions and judgments regarding sexually violent behaviors and experiences. As one male student survivor noted in a survey conducted for the *Washington Post*, “Guys aren’t supposed to be victims. We’re supposed to be manly” (Anderson et al., 2015).

A study by Smith, Pine, and Hawley (1988) was one of the earliest to include the sexes of sexual assault victims and assailants as manipulated variables. Smith et al.’s (1988) study compared participants’ judgments about male-on-female, male-on-male, female-on-female, and female-on-male “aggravated rape” within the context of a mock jury trial. Although all of the study’s scenarios involved the abduction and rape of a
stranger at gunpoint, participants believed the female-on-male rape to be the most pleasurable and least stressful of the conditions, for the victim (Smith et al., 1988).

Hull, Hull, and Sheplavy (2016) found that all participants in their study (male and female) were less likely to view a female-on-male scenario as rape. Davies, Pollard, and Archer (2006) found that experimental participants thought a male victim was more to blame when he was attacked by someone of the sex he found attractive. The heterosexual male victims of a female perpetrator were blamed more than any other victim type (Davies et al., 2006).

Both women and men can be the perpetrators of sexual assault, just as both women and men can be victims. In a survey of Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) students, male survivors were asked about impactful incidents of sexual assault that they had experienced. They indicated that 35% of their attackers were male, and 67% were female (Office of the Chancellor, 2014). Dr. Alan McEvoy (2017), sociologist and expert in relationship violence theories, has stated that same-sex sexual violence is particularly under-investigated. Research including female-on-female sexual assault is especially uncommon, although male-on-male sexual violence is also under-represented in research (McEvoy, 2017).

The Inclusion of Dating Couples in Sexual Violence Research Scenarios

The origins of the term “date rape” are debated, as is the year of its debut. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary states that the term originated in 1975 (Date Rape, 2017). The editor(s) of the Oxford English Dictionary attribute the first use of the term to a 1980 Mademoiselle magazine (Simpson, 1993). However, until the publication of a Time magazine cover story in the early 1990s, many in the American public did not
comprehend the concept of “date rape.” Children, including a girl named Katie Koestner, were regularly taught that rape only happened in the sensationalized manner of stranger attacks – e.g. a stranger jumps out of a bush, brandishing a weapon, and rapes a passing woman at gun- or knife-point (Koestner, 2016).

In 1990, Katie was an 18-year-old college freshman at Virginia’s College of William and Mary. She publicly spoke out about being raped – not by a stranger, but by her date. Katie had agreed to go on a fancy dinner date with a talented, handsome young college man, who she described as her “prince.” They went up to her room after dinner, and he held her down, undressed her, and forcibly penetrated her. She had repeatedly told him “no” (Koestner, 2016).

When she went to her school’s health center the next day, they gave her sleeping pills. She tried to report the incident to the Dean. He said, “You could ruin his [the perpetrator’s] life and you seem emotionally distraught, so you should go home and think carefully about this” (Koestner, 2016). When she phoned her parents, Katie’s father told her, “It would not have happened if you had not let him in your room” (Koestner, 2016).

In Virginia at the time, someone could only be convicted of “forcible rape” if the victim tried to fight off the attack. The police thoroughly questioned Katie, her attacker, and their friends. Although she was bruised and torn, Katie had not physically attempted to fight off her rapist. The District Attorney decided that he could not win the case, and no further actions appear to have been taken by the police (Koestner, 2016).

The College of William and Mary, in its first-ever sexual misconduct hearing, found Katie’s attacker responsible. He admitted that she had said “no” multiple times
during their encounter. As punishment for his misconduct, he was not allowed to enter Katie’s residence hall for the semester (Koestner, 2016).

Following school and police inaction, Katie went to the news media. The story went national, and public knowledge about the issue increased. In 1991, *Time* magazine published a cover story about Katie and “date rape” (Koestner, 2016). Katie spoke about the effects of date rape versus stranger rape, noting, “If I had been raped on a street, then I'd have been afraid of strangers, but if you're raped by someone you know, then you're afraid of everyone” (Koestner, 2016).

Perpetrators of sexual violence are very commonly known to their victims. An NCVS analysis found that interviewed female victims, aged 18-24, knew their attackers in about 80% of reported incidents (Sinozich & Langton, 2014). According to the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), college women who experienced sexual assault reported knowing their attacker in 85-90% of cases. About 50% of the time, the women were on a date with their attackers (National Institute of Justice, 2008). In the MIT survey, other students were most likely to be the perpetrators of “particularly impactful incidents of unwanted sexual behaviors” against students, and friends were much more likely than strangers to be the perpetrators of unwanted sexual behaviors (Office of the Chancellor, 2014). Most rape victims in the NIPSYS – male and female – knew their attackers. Over half of female survivors were raped by a “current or former intimate partner” (Black et al., 2011).

In spite of these statistics, most rape and sexual assault research has focused on stranger rape, involving victims and attackers who have either never met, or have only just met (e.g. Smith et al., 1988; Hull et al., 2016). Sexual violence between dates or
friends, although common and devastating in real life, is not particularly well-represented in sexual assault research.

**The Use of Video Scenarios in Sexual Violence Research**

To better research and assess people’s perspectives on sexual assault and rape, many studies have made use of written scenarios, depicting various configurations of sexual violence. Questions are usually asked of participants before and/or after the presentation of these written scenarios or vignettes. Written vignettes are cheaper to construct, simpler to find and adapt, and easier to embed into a study than are video scenarios – making them much more commonly used in research. Many previous researchers have used written sexual violence vignettes in their studies (e.g. Davies et al., 2006; Hull et al., 2016; Smith et al., 1988). However, very few studies seem to have presented sexual assault scenarios to participants in video form (e.g. Sleed et al., 2002).

Yet, compared to written vignettes, videos may provide a more realistic, emotionally impactful, and authentic depiction of sexual violence. As Sims, Noel, and Maisto (2007) noted, after conducting research on victim blame, “...the use of video, rather than written vignettes, may produce stronger effects.”

This researcher has found only one study comparing written and video scenarios. Sleed et al. (2002) compared how written versus video scenario presentations might affect how participants assigned blame for a date rape. Researchers created three videos, each portraying a heterosexual couple exhibiting one of three “contextual variables” that have been shown to affect how people assign blame for a rape: “owing,” where a man paid for everything (implying that the woman “owed” him sex); “alcohol,” where a man and woman drank tequila; and “leading on,” where a woman flirted and went skinny-
dipping with her date. The three videos were transcribed to create three written vignettes. There were thus six experimental conditions in this research: three video, and three written (transcriptions). Participants rated the scenarios on believability and emotional evocation. There was no difference in the believability of the written versus video scenarios, but video scenarios were rated as significantly more emotionally evocative. In the “alcohol” conditions, participants presented with the written, as opposed to video, vignette were less likely to think a rape had occurred, and were more likely to blame the victim. Researchers concluded that written vignettes might be better for use in research that investigates verbally-perpetuated rape stereotypes and myths, and video vignettes might be better for research that focuses more on the “real world” context and emotions of rape (Sleed et al., 2002).

Sleed et al.’s (2002) research, although notable, was lacking in several respects. Only heterosexual couples, with male perpetrators and female victims, were studied. The dating situations portrayed in the videos were dissimilar, including different date locations and behaviors. Perhaps most conspicuously, only 82 participants were tested in the experiment. This means that the six conditions in the study were each only viewed/read and tested about 13-14 times (Sleed et al., 2002). Such a small sample size may make the results of this research less useful and generalizable. The results of Sleed et al.’s (2002) study could have been more robust if the research had portrayed different sex mixes (including same-sex and opposite-sex couples, and male and female victims/perpetrators); made the portrayed scenarios as similar as possible, across conditions (including scripts, location, actors, etc.); and recruited more participants.
Conclusion

As noted in the literature review, sexual violence is extremely common, especially among college students. Males (particularly college-aged males) have to deal with sexual victimization, yet often male survivors are not taken seriously by their peers or by investigators. Although same-sex sexual violence occurs, it is not well-represented in research. A high percentage of rapes and sexual assaults are reported as being perpetrated by known entities, yet intimate partner sexual violence is not commonly depicted in research. Sims et al. (2007) suggested that video vignettes of sexual violence may be more realistic and emotionally impactful (as compared to written vignettes), but this researcher has found only one study that created and compared written and video scenarios (Sleed et al., 2002).

The present research investigated participants’ perceptions of sexual violence in college-aged dating couples based on presentation medium (written, video) and assailant/victim sex(es). To adequately represent a more realistic spectrum of survivors’ experiences, and to increase the universality and inclusiveness of research results, same-sex and opposite-sex sexual assault scenarios with male and female college-aged victims and assailants were included in this research. Scenarios depicted sexual violence between a dating couple, and were presented in both video and written form. Additionally, questions asked by Sleed et al. (2002) regarding the believability and emotional impact of the experimental conditions were replicated in the present research.
Objectives

The purpose of this research was to explore whether individuals would respond differently to sexual violence scenarios presented in different media formats (video and written). The secondary purpose of this research was to investigate whether participants’ assessments of sexual violence scenarios were affected by the sex(es) of the individuals in the scenarios.

1. The author created a set of scripts and videos, wherein a sexual assault occurred between a college-aged dating couple. Aggressors and victims of both sexes were portrayed, in same-sex and opposite-sex situations. Scenarios included M/F, M/M, F/F, and F/M aggressors/victims. In total, the author created eight scenarios, including four written and four video.

2. The author presented one of these eight sexual violence scenarios to each participant, in a between-groups fashion. Participants’ perceptions of sexual violence in college-aged dating couples were compared and contrasted based on both the medium of presentation and the sex(es) of attackers and victims. Participants’ conceptualizations of the scenarios were gathered via comprehension and interpretation questions.
Hypotheses

Based on the results and advice of past studies, we hypothesized that the video presentations would have more emotional impact (evocation) than the written scenarios, but that the written and video scenarios would be equally believable. Based on past research, it was thought that participants would be less likely to identify sexual assault as having happened in the male victim/female assailant scenarios.

\[ H_0: \text{Participants' ratings of the scenarios' emotional evocation will not differ between the video and written scenarios.} \quad [E_V = E_W] \]

\[ H_1: \text{Participants' ratings of the scenarios' emotional evocation will differ between the video and written scenarios.} \quad [E_V \neq E_W] \]

\[ H_0: \text{Participants' ratings of the scenarios' believability will differ between the video and written scenarios.} \quad [B_V \neq B_W] \]

\[ H_1: \text{Participants' ratings of the scenarios' believability will not differ between the video and written scenarios.} \quad [B_V = B_W] \]

\[ H_0: \text{Participants will be equally likely to identify sexual violence as having happened in all four sex-mixed scenarios (male assailant / female victim; male assailant / male victim; female assailant / female victim; and female assailant / male victim).} \quad [SA_{M/F} = SA_{M/M} = SA_{F/F} = SA_{F/M}] \]

\[ H_1: \text{Participants will differ in their identification of sexual violence in scenarios with differing sex mixes (male assailant / female victim; male assailant / male victim; female assailant / female victim; and female assailant / male victim).} \quad [SA_{M/F} \neq SA_{M/M} \neq SA_{F/F} \neq SA_{F/M}] \]
Method

Participants

Population. This research project attempted to both replicate and extend prior sexual violence research conducted with college students. Recent news and government initiatives have focused the public consciousness on the state of campus sexual assault. Therefore, choosing to conduct sexual assault research on a population of college students was both timely and appropriate.

Study participants. This research was conducted on a convenience sample of college students ($M_{age} = 21.4$ years; age range: 18 to 68 years) from Northern Michigan University (NMU), in Marquette, Michigan. Efforts were made to recruit as many participants as possible, via a mass e-mailing, announcements in classes and student organization meetings, the enticement of extra credit (for certain classes), and entrance into a (separately-hosted) raffle for gift cards.

The minimum participant recruitment goal for this study was 240 students: eight total conditions, with a minimum requirement of 30 participants per condition.

At the survey’s end, questions were asked regarding the participants’ personal histories and experiences (e.g. gender identification, sexual orientation, victimization history, etc.). Answers to these questions were used to assess the diversity of the sample, and for comparative statistics/analyses. For a breakdown of participants’ demographic characteristics, please see the Results section, Demographics subsection.

Inclusion criteria. The researcher recruited 1,157 total students, all of whom at least accessed the scenario/survey. Based on the inclusion criteria described in this subsection, 610 participants’ data were included in final analyses.
To access the experimental scenario and survey, each participant had to give informed consent and indicate that s/he was at least 18 years old at the time of the study (due to its sexual nature). Due to an unforeseen edge-case glitch in the Qualtrics software, over 100 people were able to access the survey by clicking on only one or the other of the 18+ or informed consent questions. Only those who indicated that they both gave informed consent and were 18 or older were included in data analyses.

All 1,157 student participants who accessed the survey indicated that they were at least 18 years old. However, two people answered the confirmation question, “How old are you?” with numbers less than 18. Therefore, their responses were deleted.

Three hundred forty-two people answered no experimental questions, and were thus unable to be sorted into a presentation medium or scenario couple (assailant/victim sex) type. What existed of their data was deleted.

In the experimental survey, if a person answered approximately the first 15 questions not requiring text input (with a little bit of “wiggle room”), s/he at least answered questions regarding scenario believability and emotional evocation. These two questions were central to the testing of two of the three hypotheses. Therefore, if participants answered less than 15 experimental questions, their data were considered not useful enough for analysis, and were eliminated.

Video scenarios were approximately two minutes, or 120 seconds, long. One person, presented with a video scenario, took 106 seconds to watch the video and answer questions in the survey. Given that this person could not have finished watching the video in this amount of time, his/her data was deleted.
### Table 1

*Data Deletions, Numbers, and Reasoning*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for deletion</th>
<th>Total number deleted</th>
<th>Percent of 1,157</th>
<th>Number of deleted in each condition – condition(s) they were presented with (if known)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Answered no experimental questions</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>29.6%</td>
<td>N/A – N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“How old are you?” &lt; 18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.17%</td>
<td>2 – written, F/M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informed consent box unchecked</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>12 – video, M/F&lt;br&gt;7 – video, M/M&lt;br&gt;9 – video, F/F&lt;br&gt;11 – video, F/M&lt;br&gt;21 – written, M/F&lt;br&gt;19 – written, M/M&lt;br&gt;13 – written, F/F&lt;br&gt;16 – written, F/M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answered less than 15 non-text experimental questions</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>6 – video, M/F&lt;br&gt;6 – video, M/M&lt;br&gt;9 – video, F/F&lt;br&gt;10 – video, F/M&lt;br&gt;12 – written, M/F&lt;br&gt;21 – written, M/M&lt;br&gt;15 – written, F/F&lt;br&gt;15 – written, F/M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presented with video condition, but duration spent on entire survey less than the duration of the video</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.09%</td>
<td>1 – video, F/M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Total participant surveys remaining for analysis = 1,157 – (342 + 2 + 108 + 94 + 1) = 1,157 – 547 = 610

The numbers of participants whose data were deleted, the percentage these participants made up of the total initial participants, the reasons for their deletion, and the conditions with which they were initially presented (if known) are displayed in *Table 1*.

In total, the following types of surveys were discarded: those containing no answers to experimental questions, those answering the question, “How old are you?” with an age less than 18, those lacking a check mark in the box indicating informed consent.
consent, those with less than 15 experimental questions answered, and those taking less than the length of a video to complete a video-linked survey. Following this procedure, 610 surveys were considered valid for analysis.

Please see the Results section for further numeric and comparative tabulations of deleted and analyzed surveys.

**Assignment of participants to study conditions.** To ensure that each condition had a relatively even number and spread of participants, the assignment of participants to the eight different experimental conditions was randomized with even presentation. Evenly-presented randomization was programmed into the Qualtrics survey software, meaning that Qualtrics attempted to present each condition a more or less equal number of times among those who accessed the survey.

**Possible risks to participants / IRB review level.** This research was done on an important, but sensitive, subject. There was no tangible, physical risk to participants, as their participation merely involved watching a video/reading a scenario and answering questions via a computer survey tool. However, the emotionality of the subject matter may have affected some participants in a negative way. A long list of resources for help were provided at the end of the questionnaire (please see Appendix I for this list). The informed consent statement (please see Appendix F) emphasized that participants should feel comfortable leaving or taking breaks from the survey if they were too unsettled.

A debriefing statement (Appendix H) was included at the survey’s end, to thank participants and reiterate the confidentiality of their responses. Participants were also asked not to discuss research particulars with other students until the survey closed, to
help guard against the potential influences of prior research knowledge. The same request was made of student actors, pilot-testers, and other helpers.

The debriefing section also included an embedded link, which took participants to an outside, unconnected form where they could enter into a raffle for one of ten, ten dollar Amazon gift cards. The raffle entry was hosted on surveymonkey.com. The identifying information entered into the raffle form was not in any way connected to the participants’ study data. Participants who chose to enter the raffle were assigned an “entry number.” Three hundred fifteen experimental survey participants chose to enter the raffle.

After all of the data were collected, ten numbers between one and 315 were randomly chosen via randomnumbgenerator.com. The raffle participants associated with the randomly chosen numbers were sent an e-mail to confirm that they were still interested in receiving the gift card. All ten people responded positively. Each was e-mailed a ten dollar Amazon gift card.

In the experimental survey, participants were asked questions of a potentially sensitive nature, specifically regarding victimization history, sexual orientation, and gender identification. Although all possible efforts were made to maintain full participant anonymity and confidentiality, these can never be absolutely guaranteed in a computer-based project. Participants were not asked for their names or other specific identifying information. Full anonymity options were chosen in the Qualtrics survey software, meaning that no IP addresses were recorded. Only the researcher had access to all collected data, including raffle entries and actor and advisor identities. Data has been and will continue to be kept on the researcher’s password-protected computers. Copies
of the data, downloaded to external hard/flash drives, will be kept by the researcher and the NMU Psychology Department for at least seven years.

NMU’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) deemed an administrative review sufficient for this project, as the “human subjects” part of the research was in the form of a survey. (Please see Appendix J for a copy of the IRB approval memo.) No review was necessary for the script or video creation aspects of this project, although signed actor informed consent and media release forms were collected. These forms have been and will be kept in a closed file, in the researcher’s locked home or car.

**Terminology**

The terms “rape,” “sexual assault,” and “sexual violence” are used interchangeably in this report. Although the exact definitions of these terms differ in various state and federal legal codes and national survey parameters, all are often used by the public to mean “unwanted or forced sexual behaviors,” typically including penetration, touching, and sometimes being forced to penetrate. Basile, Smith, Breiding, Black, and Mahendra (2014) recommend that researchers use the inclusive term “sexual violence” for questions and descriptions, which they operationally define as “a sexual act that is committed or attempted by another person without freely given consent of the victim or against someone who is unable to consent or refuse” (Basile et al., 2014). The title of this report uses this recommended term. The term “rape” was avoided in this study’s experimental survey, as its disturbing nature might have caused participants to shy away from telling the truth about themselves and others. However, as this project sought to emphasize real-world relevance and word-usage, the survey used either the term “sexual assault” or a description of that term (i.e. “unwanted sexual behavior(s)”)}
inquire about participants’ opinions, beliefs, and histories.

In this report, the terms “aggressor,” “assailant,” “perpetrator” and the like are used interchangeably to refer to the scenario character who committed sexual violence. In survey questions, however, these terms were avoided. Characters were referred to by name, so participants would not be influenced by accusatory terminology.

**Design (Variables)**

This study had a 2 Presentation Type (written vs. video) x 4 Relationship Type (MM, MF, FF, FM) between-participants design. The first independent variable, scenario presentation type, had two levels (written and video presentation). The second independent variable, relationship type, had four levels, for the four types of sex-mixed couples (aggressors and victims; MF, MM, FF, FM). Four differentially sex-mixed scripts were made into four video scenarios; the written conditions were edited, prose versions of the video conditions’ scripts. Thus, there were a total of eight experimental conditions / specific scenario types. With eight total conditions, each requiring a minimum of approximately 30 participants per condition, there was a total requirement of at least 240 participants for the study. In the end, this goal was surpassed, as 1,157 people at least clicked through the scenario/survey. After discarding survey responses that did not meet the inclusion criteria (described in the Inclusion criteria subsection), 610 surveys were complete enough to be statistically analyzed.

Each participant was randomly assigned to and presented with one of the eight condition types: (1)Video, Male Aggressor / Female Victim; (2)Video, Male Aggressor / Male Victim; (3)Video, Female Aggressor / Female Victim; and (4)Video, Female Aggressor / Male Victim, (5)Written, Male Aggressor / Female Victim; (6)Written, Male
Aggressor / Male Victim; (7) Written, Female Aggressor / Female Victim; (8) Written, Female Aggressor / Male Victim. All participants were asked the same questions about their comprehension of the scenarios, their interpretation of (and opinions about) the scenarios, and their personal characteristics (demographics). Please see Appendix A, Figure 1 for a visual depiction of conditional and procedural flow.

**Materials and Equipment**

Technological media materials were needed for this study, including: Qualtrics survey/questionnaire tools [online computer software]; surveymonkey.com survey tools [free version of online computer software, used for the gift card raffle]; randomnumbergenerator.com [online generator of random numbers, used for the gift card raffle]; Final Cut Pro X for Apple [video and audio recording and editing software]; IBM SPSS Statistics 25 [data analysis computer software]; Microsoft Word 2016 (Microsoft Office Professional Plus 2016); LibreOffice (Version 5.1.3.2 (x64)); a Canon DSLR camera; a professional-grade recording booth and microphone; and various flash and external hard drives for transferring and storing video, audio, and other data.

Theatrical necessities – provided by the NMU theater department – included a filming location (the Forest Roberts Theatre), lighting, a scrim, and “sets.” Silhouetted video settings were created with strong light sources behind a plain white scrim; a wooden bedframe for sitting, cuddling, etc.; and two theatrical black boxes (side tables). Pre-written scripts and fully-briefed actors (two male and two female) were also needed, along with scheduled rehearsal and filming times. The researcher provided props, including a (fake) rose, pizza box, and laptop.
This project also had more non-material needs. For example, the assistance of others was a necessary component of this project. The success of this research was dependent on assistance with filming, direction, and editing; the cooperation and help of technical, performance, and design departments; and the consultation and feedback of experts (those with victimization, therapeutic, and legal experience; advisors in psychology/sociology research; theater, technical, and software specialists; etc.).

**Creation of the scenarios.**

*Creation of scripts.* The scripts were written in a standard theatrical (play) format, encompassing dialogues and stage directions that depicted the sexual assault/violence scenarios. Scripts were written by the researcher (who had prior, formal playwriting experience), and were finalized with the feedback and consultation of those with expertise and experience. The scripts were partly based on past sexual assault research, and partly based on real-life accounts of sexual assault. Due to a lack of scenarios depicting women sexually assaulting women in sexual assault literature, real-world accounts of such instances were sought out via popular media (Brownworth, 2010; & Beck, 2016). Gaining familiarity with this type of sexual assault helped inform the researcher’s writing process, and increased the realism of the scripted scenarios.

Qualitative data about the revision of scripts and the feedback regarding the scripts were collected at various steps in the script-writing process.

The author wrote four scripts depicting sexual assault scenarios: Male Aggressor / Female Victim; Male Aggressor / Male Victim; Female Aggressor / Female Victim; and Female Aggressor / Male Victim. All couples were portrayed as dating and celebrating their anniversary. The scripts were identical except for which sex was portrayed as the
aggressor, and which the victim; the names and pronouns used to refer to the aggressor and victim; and the explicit particulars of the sexual intercourse situations.

The names of the characters were chosen by looking at the top American baby names of 1997 – the year when an (approximately) 20-year-old college student in 2017 would have been born. (The mean age of analyzed study participants was 21.4 years old.) The naming process was intended to be objective, as well as to intensify experimental participants’ potential identification and/or familiarity with the characters in the scenarios, due to their tacit familiarity with the popular names.

Different names were used for each scenario. Although this was a strike against cross-condition similarity, the researcher’s thesis committee advised that using different, “gendered” names for each condition would be less confusing and more useful, should the scenarios be used in a within-subjects design in the future. Additionally, the influence of aggressor/victim sex(es) on participants’ perceptions of scenarios was one of the factors being researched. “Gendered” names, along with vocal pitch and body outline in the video scenarios, were intended to increase participants’ abilities to identify and/or differentiate the sex(es) of the characters in the scenarios.

Any gender-neutral names (e.g. Taylor, Alex/Alexis, Ashley, and Sam/Samantha) on the “top names” list were discarded, to increase the obviousness of characters’ sex(es). Although it was the most popular female-gendered name of 1997, the researcher’s first name, Emily, was rejected for use in the study due to potential researcher bias and awkwardness. Hannah was eliminated for consideration for being too variable in its pronunciation, Madison was eliminated for being too location-specific, and Matt was eliminated for being too similar to the term “doormat,” which could carry victimization
implications. The final female name choices were Sarah, Jessica, Elizabeth (Beth), and Megan. The final male name choices were Michael (Mike), Jacob (Jake), Christopher (Chris), and Joshua (Josh) (Insomnia Team, 2005). Name pairings in the scenarios were chosen to be phonetically dissimilar (i.e. Jake and Josh could not be in the same scenario). The scenarios’ aggressor/victim names were paired as follows: Mike/Sarah, Chris/Jake, Jessica/Beth, and Megan/Josh.

Final scripts were reviewed by a small group of knowledgeable advisors, including a college-aged male and female with histories including childhood and other abuse; a licensed professional counselor, trained in trauma therapy and with extensive experience counseling survivors; an attorney-at-law with long-term experience prosecuting and defending family and relationship crimes; a college-aged member of the LGBTQ+ and non-binary demographics, with a history of relationship abuse; and participating student actors. The advisors vouched for the authenticity of the scenarios (particularly their coercive nature), and appreciated the potential benefits and novelty of the silhouetting idea. The actors and others who helped with filming made some cross-condition adjustments to increase the authenticity of two lines. Some of the scripted body movements and stage directions were also cross-conditionally adjusted, to better work with the real-life stage setup, to make the silhouetting especially effective, and to make the timing of practical matters (e.g. removal of pants) more natural.

Creation of videos. Using the pre-written scripts, the researcher and helpers recorded the actors’ performances of the four scenarios. This required the use of technical equipment (listed in Materials and Equipment), as well as a great deal of help from the theater/communication and art/design departments.
In consultation with the theater department, actors were briefed on the broad objectives of the project, secured for participation, and then briefed more fully about the research process. Informed consent and image/media release of the chosen actors and filming/staging collaborators were acquired before proceeding with the recordings.

Four fully-briefed actors – two male, and two female – were chosen. For consistency of body language and body appearance, one male and one female each portrayed the victims in two scenarios. The second male and female actors portrayed the aggressors in two scenarios. This made for more consistent “victim” and “aggressor” acting across the four scenarios. Efforts were made to make the four videos as similar as possible, in terms of timing, movement, and body language.

The filming process took place over the course of a few long days. Videos were recorded in silhouette (i.e. a “shadow play”). The silhouetting served several purposes: protecting the actors’ anonymity, increasing the actors’ comfort, and reducing possible confounds. The shadow play concept was intended to increase the universality of the portrayed experiences – i.e. by removing factors like race, hair color, makeup, clothing style, individual “attractiveness,” etc., the researcher hoped to reduce the confounds inherent in making judgments about people in videos. In particular, the researcher hoped to lessen the influence that visually-based opinions (e.g. regarding appearance) may have had on participants’ judgments of the situations.

Silhouette effects were achieved by heavily backlighting a blank scrim. The actors and sets were located in front of the scrim. (Please see Appendix B, Figure 2 for a diagram of the stage and lighting setup.) Due to the backlighting, the camera only registered the heavy light/dark contrast. This resulted in a silhouetted recording of the
actors and sets. For two example images of the silhouetting effect, please see Appendix C, Figures 3 and 4.

The four actors memorized the scripts, and then rehearsed with the researcher, filming consultant, and theater consultant. Many “takes” of the scenes were filmed. The best “take” of each scene was chosen by the researcher and filming consultant.

Due to unforeseen quality issues with the “in the moment” audio recordings, the audio had to be dubbed over at a separate time. Two male and two female actors’ voices were recorded and dubbed over the pre-filmed videos. Again, one male and one female actor each portrayed the victims in the relevant scenarios, and the other male and female actors portrayed the assailants. The resultant audio files ended up being very uniform across conditions, as voice actors were able to read their lines from a script in the recording booth. This real-time reference resulted in fewer flubbed lines, and more consistent portrayals of words and emotions. A student in the digital cinema department edited together the video and sound files, which took a great deal of time and effort to mesh together with coherent and artful timing.

As with the scripts, videos were checked by the same small group of knowledgeable advisors, minus the actors. Advisors checked for comprehensibility, effectiveness, emotional accuracy and impact, believability, technological issues, and equivalence across the four videos. The advisors agreed that all of these conditions were met to the best of the participants’ abilities. All of the advisors thought the silhouette effect worked well, and was visually interesting. The counselor noted that the actors’ body type variations made the scenes more believable and relatable. (Please see Appendix D for links to the videos.)
Creation of written scenarios. The researcher edited the video scripts into written, prose conditions. Efforts were made to make the described behaviors as similar as possible to those depicted in the videos. All four written scenarios were identical, except for: (1) the names and gendered pronouns used for the aggressor and victim, and (2) the particulars of sexual intercourse as described for the different sex-mixed couples. Written scenarios were again checked by the small group of knowledgeable advisors for comprehensibility, effectiveness, emotional accuracy and impact, believability, technological issues, and equivalence across the four written scenarios. All agreed that these conditions were met. Advisors also thought the written scenarios matched up well with the video scenarios. For an example of a written scenario, please see Appendix E.

After reading/watching both the written and video scenarios, advisors suggested including two additional questions in the survey: “Have you ever had sexual intercourse?” and “If given the choice, which would you prefer? Reading a book, or watching the book’s T.V. or movie adaptation?” Advisors also commented that the college population may end up finding the written scenarios more effective, both because they require more imagination, and because college students tend to read a great deal more than average. The advisors thought that, in the general population, videos might be more effective.

Procedures

Comparing sexual violence perceptions based on medium of presentation and assailant/victim sex(es). The experimental survey (including the presentation of the (eight total) written and video scenarios, and the questionnaire that followed) was created on and presented with the Qualtrics survey tool / software.
Questions were constructed with a variety of factors in mind, including: issues addressed in the hypotheses, input from consulted experts, and wording and topics used in previous research. Some of the survey questions were adapted from those used in prior sexual assault studies, including in the studies of Hull et al. (2016), Hull (2017), Sleed et al. (2002), Javorka (2014), and George & Martinez (2002).

A few fully-computerized survey instruments were pilot-tested by college-aged adults of varying gender identities and sexual orientations; a psychology professor; and the members of the previously-mentioned advisory panel. Pilot testers attempted to scout for errors and ensure clarity. Pilot tester data were recorded and used to make small edits to the survey, including correcting a few typos and spacing errors. Testers suggested adding the questions, “Do you know anyone who has ever experienced sexual assault?” and “Do you know anyone who has ever been forced to engage in unwanted sexual behavior(s)?” Testers also suggested adding the following notes before and after the video links (respectively) for clarity: “… please pay careful attention to the details of the story, including the names of the people in the story,” and, “Once you have finished watching the video, please close the pop-up (video) window and click the forward arrows to continue.”

As many college students as possible were recruited to take the survey, via mass e-mails, announcements in classes and to campus groups and organizations, and raffle-entering and extra credit enticements. The wording of the e-mails and information forms for the pilot testers, and that of the mass e-mail sent to potential student subjects were initially inspired by those used in Peters’ (2003) domestic violence study.
Participants were randomly presented with one of the eight possible sexual assault conditions (the eight scenarios): (1) Video, Male Aggressor / Female Victim; (2) Video, Male Aggressor / Male Victim; (3) Video, Female Aggressor / Female Victim; and (4) Video, Female Aggressor / Male Victim, (5) Written, Male Aggressor / Female Victim; (6) Written, Male Aggressor / Male Victim; (7) Written, Female Aggressor / Female Victim; (8) Written, Female Aggressor / Male Victim. The eight conditions were run as concurrently as was possible with randomization (via a randomized with even distribution setting in Qualtrics), to equally represent conditions among the subject pool, and to guard against possible data contamination from students potentially hearing about the study. In other words, if students started to hear about the study, their prior knowledge would not have affected one condition more than another.

After the presentation of a randomly assigned scenario, each participant was asked a series of quantitative and qualitative questions. Participants in all eight conditions were asked the same questions, differing only in names and pronouns used. There were approximately three types of questions, overall: (1) questions to ascertain participants’ comprehension of the presented scenario; (2) questions to ascertain participants’ interpretations of the presented scenario, and their opinions / beliefs / judgments about that scenario; and (3) questions to collect demographic information about the participants.

Survey questions attempted to test and compare the believability and emotional impact of the video versus written presentations, as well as the interactive impact of presentation medium and aggressor/victim sex(es) on determinations of sexual assault. Questions also attempted to confirm that the scenarios showed what they were intended
to show (comprehension). Additionally, participants were asked questions about their personal demographics (e.g. gender, personal victimization history, etc.), to assist in assessing the potential covariate interaction(s) of participant / scenario characteristics.

Please see Appendix G for the questions included in the experimental survey.

**Regarding the use of newly-created materials in this research.** It was not feasible to include video or written scenarios from previous studies in this study for two reasons: (1) The researcher was only able to find one sexual assault study that used video presentations, and those videos appeared to be inaccessible (Sleed et al., 2002), and (2) No pre-existing, standardized, video and written scenarios met the parameters or objectives of this research (e.g. both male and female assailants and victims, long-term dating couples, standardization across conditions, etc.). This necessitated the creation of new materials. The written and video scenarios created in this research portrayed long-term dating couples, included both same-sex and opposite-sex couples, and portrayed both males and females as victims and aggressors.
**Data Analysis**

In this research project, data were gathered in both qualitative and quantitative forms. The project itself was completed in phases, with the first phase encompassing the creation of scripts and videos. Qualitative feedback and response data were collected as these tools were refined, as described in the *Materials* subsections.

The second phase of this project involved the production of a survey instrument, relevant to both the actual content of the scripts and videos, and to the wider need for data collection regarding beliefs and statistics about sexual violence. (Please see *Appendix G* for survey questions.) After the computerization of the script and video instruments, as well as the survey, the full experimental instrument was error tested by a small pilot group. Pilot-tester feedback and editing data were logged, as described in the *Procedures* subsection. After error testing, the full survey instrument was administered to students.

The experimental survey instrument was used to collect both qualitative and quantitative data from participants. (Please see *Appendix G* for survey questions.) Participants in all eight conditions were asked the same questions, differing only in assailant/victim names and pronouns. A few survey questions asked for qualitative paragraph responses, which provided the researcher with valuable, quotable feedback.

Other survey questions evaluated participants’ comprehension and interpretation (opinions / beliefs / judgments) of presented scenarios, and collected their demographic information. These questions resulted in a mixture of data types, including nominal, interval (e.g. Likert-type questions), and constructed rankings (e.g. popularity rankings of aggressor sanctions). Statistics were run on data to find descriptive measures of central tendency (primarily means) and variability (standard deviations), where relevant.
“Counts” and percentages of responses were presented when pertinent, as well. For example, percentages were used to report participant statistics regarding various demographic categories (e.g. female / male / otherwise-gendered, homosexual / heterosexual / bisexual, etc.).

Some experimental survey questions were used to determine participants’ comprehension of the written and video tools. These questions attempted to confirm that the scenarios portrayed what they were intended to portray. Some comprehension questions – regarding, for example, the relationship of the characters in the scenarios – had “correct” answers, and were thus “gradable.”

This study had a 2 Presentation Type (written vs. video) x 4 Couple Type (MM, MF, FF, FM) between-participants design. A MANCOVA was conducted to assess the influence of potential covariates and inferentially assess the quantitative data mentioned in the hypotheses. Post-hoc Bonferroni testing, the Shapiro-Wilk test of normality, and Box’s M Test of Equality of Covariance Matrices were also included in the MANCOVA.

These analyses gave insight into differences in participants’ abilities to pick up on audiovisual versus written cues, and the influence of assailant and victim sex(es) on situational judgments. Likert-style opinion questions about the believability, emotional evocation and power, effectiveness, and clarity of scenarios, as well as the occurrence of sexual assault in the scenarios, elicited concrete scores from participants. The relationship(s) of these scores to presentation medium type and assailant/victim sex(es) were analyzed via the MANCOVA. Overall, in the data analyses, the researcher looked for main effects (e.g. video versus written), interaction effects (e.g. Did aggressor/victim sex(es) in a presented scenario interact with the presentation medium to affect how likely
participants were to determine that sexual assault occurred in that presented scenario?), and the influence of covariates (e.g. Did participants’ demographics (gender and personal victimization history) affect how they judged the scenarios?). The researcher used a significance level of 0.05 for all inferential statistical tests.

Based on prior research, data were expected to show that video presentations had more emotional impact (evocation) than written scenarios, and that written and video scenarios were equally believable. Also based on past research, data were expected to show that participants would be less likely to identify sexual assault as having happened in the female assailant/male victim scenarios.
Results

Evenly-presented randomization options were selected in the Qualtrics software, to equalize the presentation of conditions. Student participants were randomly presented with one of eight conditions, varying in medium of presentation (video, written) and sexes of assailant and victim (M/F, M/M, F/F, F/M). According to Qualtrics, each of the eight conditions was displayed 148 times, including to pilot and preview testers. Assuming a similarly equal presentation of conditions to the 1,157 experimental participants, each condition should have been displayed approximately 144-5 times. Unfortunately, 342 students did not answer any experimental questions, so it was impossible to determine the scenarios with which they were presented. Table 2 displays the numbers and percentages of the 815 students who answered at least one experimental survey question, and were thus presented with a known study condition.

Table 2

*Initial Known Participants Presented with Each Scenario and Factor Type*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Video or written scenario?</th>
<th>Scenarios’ assailant/victim sex(es)</th>
<th>M/F</th>
<th>M/M</th>
<th>F/F</th>
<th>F/M</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Video count</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
<td>39.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Written count</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
<td>60.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total count</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>23.4%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 3* shows how many participants were lost from each condition due to the application of inclusion criteria, for a total of 205 lost responses. As noted, an additional
342 students were discarded due to not answering any experimental questions, bringing the total number of analyzed students to 610.

Table 3

*Initial Participants Lost in Each Condition Due to Inclusion Criteria*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenarios’ assailant/victim sex(es)</th>
<th>M/F</th>
<th>M/M</th>
<th>F/F</th>
<th>F/M</th>
<th>Total Lost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Video</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Lost</strong></td>
<td>51</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Following all of the necessary data deletions required by the inclusion criteria (found in the *Inclusion criteria* subsection), *Table 4* breaks down the how many of the final 610 analyzed students were presented with each of the condition and factor types.

Table 4

*Analyzed Participants Presented with Each Scenario and Factor Type*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenarios’ assailant/victim sex(es)</th>
<th>M/F</th>
<th>M/M</th>
<th>F/F</th>
<th>F/M</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Video</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>41.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
<td>58.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>153</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>25.1%</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Demographics**

Participating students ranged in age from 18 to 68 years (*M* = 21.4, *SD* = 5.59).

Students were primarily (98.0%) undergraduates, and came from a variety of majors.
Third year undergraduates comprised 25.2% of participants, while 21.3% were fourth year students, 17.9% first years, and 17.0% second years. Participants fell under another student classification (e.g. fifth year) 10.7% of the time. Table 5 lists the top ten majors of participants, listed in descending order by percentage and count. Other majors each comprised less than 2.0% of total participants.

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art and Design</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Studies and Sustainability</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology/Psychological Science</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Education</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Work</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal Justice</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology – Behavioral Analysis (BA) / Applied BA</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A majority of participants identified as female (66.1%, or 403), while 24.8% (151) identified as male, and 1.5% (9) as otherwise-gendered (e.g. non-binary or agender). Most identified as heterosexual (73.4%), while 11.0% identified as bisexual, 3.5% as homosexual (1.0% gay, 2.5% lesbian), and 4.3% as otherwise-oriented (e.g. pansexual or asexual).

When asked about their racial or ethnic heritage, the majority of respondents identified themselves as of Non-Hispanic White or Caucasian origin (504 students, or
82.6% of total respondents). Twelve participants (2.0%) identified as Native American, American Indian, Alaska Native, or First Nation. Thirteen participants (2.1%) identified as both of the previous two categories. All other possible racial or ethnic heritage choices (e.g. Hispanic, Latino/a, etc.) each comprised less than 1.0% of participants.

The spread of participant political affiliations can be seen in Table 6. Respondents primarily described themselves as Democrats or politically unaffiliated.

Table 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Affiliation</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>29.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libertarian</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Party</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Affiliated</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>30.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants were also asked questions about their lives, relationships, and relationship and victimization histories and experiences. A similar percentage of students said that they had (25.7%) or had not (27.9%) ever been in a long-term relationship, although 53.8% of participants did not answer this question. Still, the majority of respondents (70.8%) indicated that they had had sexual intercourse at some point in their lives. Only 19.2% of respondents indicated that they had never had sexual intercourse. Table 7 shows participants’ responses to a question asking about their current relationship status. The highest percentage of respondents reported being single (never married). Very few college student respondents were separated or divorced.
Table 7

Current Relationship Statuses of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current relationship status</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single (never married)</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>37.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newly Dating</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dating (one year or more)</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohabiting (living together)</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married or Domestic/Civil Partnership</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When participants were asked about entertainment medium preferences, 47.4% preferred reading a book, and 44.4% preferred watching a book’s T.V./movie adaptation.

Participants were also asked to rate several statements about sexual assault on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = Strong Disagreement and 7 = Strong Agreement). Means and standard deviations for these statements can be found in Table 8.

Table 8

Mean Participant Dis/Agreement with Statements about Sexual Assault

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women can and do commit sexual assault against men.</td>
<td>6.62</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men can and do commit sexual assault against women.</td>
<td>6.75</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women can and do commit sexual assault against other women.</td>
<td>6.66</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men can and do commit sexual assault against other men.</td>
<td>6.67</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual assault doesn’t happen in dating relationships.</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>0.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consent to have sex is implicitly given in a long-term relationship.</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>1.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A person must physically fight back during sex to be able to say it was sexual assault.</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A person must say “no” to be able to claim sexual assault.</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>2.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. 1 = Strong Disagreement, 7 = Strong Agreement
On average, participants believed that all sexes can and do commit sexual assault against all sexes, sexual assault can happen in dating relationships, consent to have sex is not implicitly given in a long-term relationship, a person does not need to physically fight back during sex in order to say that it was sexual assault, and a person does not have to say “no” to be able to claim sexual assault.

Two hundred nine respondents (34.3%) indicated that they had experienced sexual assault at some point in their lives, and 214 (35.1%) revealed that they had been forced to engage in unwanted sexual behaviors. Most participants (89.5%) indicated that they had never committed sexual assault, but 45 participants (7.4%) indicated that they had, at some point in their lives, acted in a way that could be considered unwanted sexual behavior. A majority of respondents knew someone who had either experienced sexual assault (79.7%) or had been forced to engage in unwanted sexual behavior(s) (74.6%). (Please see Appendix G for the exact survey questions.)

Comprehension Questions: Descriptive Statistics Summary

The majority of respondents (84.6%) correctly wrote that the couples in the scenarios were celebrating some sort of anniversary. Sixty-nine percent of participants thought that the couple in the presented scenario had been dating for one year or more, while 26.6% thought they were newly dating. Four hundred ninety-three students (80.8%) thought that the couple engaged in sexual intercourse in the scenario, while 45 students (7.4%) did not. Seventy students (11.5%) were unsure whether sexual intercourse occurred, with most stating a variation of one student’s explanation: “it seemed non-consensual… So it was rape. Sexual intercourse seems to imply that both
parties were okay with it.” On average, participants thought the aggressor to be 20.25 years old ($SD = 3.04$), and the victim 19.70 years old ($SD = 2.39$).

**Interpretation/Judgment Questions: Descriptive Statistics Summary**

On average, participants agreed/strongly agreed ($M = 6.40$, $SD = 1.60$, on a 7-point, *Strongly Disagree* (1) to *Strongly Agree* (7) Likert-type scale) that the situational aggressor wanted to have sex with the victim. Most disagreed/strongly disagreed ($M = 1.61$, $SD = 1.56$, on the same scale) that the victim wanted to have sex with the aggressor.

Participants were also asked to rate various qualities of the scenarios, including their believability, emotional evocation and power, effectiveness, and clarity. Scenarios were rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale. For all opinion statements, the number one represented the most extreme negative opinion about the scenarios (e.g. *Extremely Unbelievable* or *Extremely Confusing*), while the number seven represented the most extreme positive opinion about the scenarios (e.g. *Extremely Effective* or *Extremely Clear*). *Table 9* displays the means and standard deviations for these quality statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario Quality</th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Believability</td>
<td>5.70</td>
<td>1.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Evocation</td>
<td>5.49</td>
<td>1.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Power</td>
<td>5.37</td>
<td>1.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness</td>
<td>5.52</td>
<td>1.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confusion / Clarity</td>
<td>5.78</td>
<td>1.37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* 1 = *Extremely Unbelievable* / *Unevocative* / *Lacking in Power* / *Ineffective* / *Confusing*; 7 = *Extremely Believable* / *Evocative* / *Powerful* / *Effective* / *Clear*

Overall, participants seemed to find the scenarios between slightly and plainly believable, effective, clear, and emotionally evocative and powerful.
Using a standard 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree), participants were asked to dis/agree with several statements regarding the scenarios’ depictions of sexual assault and/or unwanted sexual behaviors. Means and standard deviations for these statements can be found in Table 10.

Table 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean Participant Dis/Agreement Regarding Scenarios’ Sexual Violence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual assault occurred in the presented scenario.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What [aggressor’s name] did in the presented scenario was sexual assault.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What [victim’s name] did in the presented scenario was sexual assault.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unwanted sexual behavior(s) occurred in the presented scenario.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What [aggressor’s name] did in the presented scenario would be considered unwanted sexual behavior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What [victim’s name] did in the presented scenario would be considered unwanted sexual behavior.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. 1 = Strong Disagreement, 7 = Strong Agreement

On average, participants seemed to agree/strongly agree that sexual assault and unwanted sexual behaviors had occurred in the scenarios, and that the aggressors, and not the victims, committed these acts.

Participants were also asked to rate their confidence in their decisions on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = Extremely Unsure, 7 = Extremely Sure). On average, respondents were sure about their decisions regarding the occurrence of sexual assault ($M = 6.62, SD = 0.85$) and unwanted sexual behaviors ($M = 6.65, SD = 0.77$) in the scenarios.

Based on scales used by Javorka (2014) and George & Martinez (2002), students were asked questions regarding culpability for the act of sexual intercourse.
Table 11

*Mean Participant Ratings Regarding Aggressor/Victim Culpability*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aggressor culpability</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent was [aggressor’s name] responsible for having</td>
<td>6.36</td>
<td>1.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sexual intercourse with [victim’s name]?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent did [aggressor’s name] act selfishly in having</td>
<td>6.49</td>
<td>1.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sexual intercourse with [victim’s name]?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent did [aggressor’s name]’s behavior cause the sexual</td>
<td>6.42</td>
<td>1.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intercourse to occur?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent did [aggressor’s name] intend for sexual</td>
<td>6.53</td>
<td>1.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intercourse to occur?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much was [aggressor’s name] to blame for having sexual</td>
<td>6.34</td>
<td>1.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intercourse with [victim’s name]?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Victim culpability</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent was [victim’s name] responsible for having sexual</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>1.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intercourse with [aggressor’s name]?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent did [victim’s name]’s behavior cause the sexual</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>1.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intercourse to occur?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent did [victim’s name] have a choice in having sexual</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>1.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intercourse with [aggressor’s name]?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much was [victim’s name] to blame for having sexual</td>
<td>1.82</td>
<td>1.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intercourse with [aggressor’s name]?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent did [victim’s name] intend for sexual intercourse to occur?</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>1.39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. 1 = Not at all Responsible / Not at all Selfishly / Did Not Cause / Did Not Intend / Not at all to Blame / No Choice at all; 7 = Completely Responsible / Completely Selfishly / Completely Caused / Completely Intended / Completely to Blame / Complete Choice

For all statements, rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale, the number one indicated the least culpability (e.g. *Not at all Responsible* or *Did Not Intend*), while the number seven indicated the most culpability (e.g. *Completely Caused* or *Completely to Blame*). Means and standard deviations for these statements can be found in *Table 11*. Overall, participants believed the aggressor culpable for the act of sexual intercourse, and the victim not culpable.

Using a standard 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = *Strongly Disagree*, 7 = *Strongly Agree*), students also rated several statements regarding the feelings, emotions, and
reasoning (i.e. qualities) of the scenarios’ aggressors and victims. Table 12 displays the means and standard deviations for these statements.

Table 12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aggressor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Aggressor’s name] was physically aggressive.</td>
<td>5.56</td>
<td>1.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Aggressor’s name] felt powerful.</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>1.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Aggressor’s name] was in control of the situation.</td>
<td>6.22</td>
<td>1.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Aggressor’s name] enjoyed what happened.</td>
<td>6.24</td>
<td>1.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Aggressor’s name] was apologetic for what happened.</td>
<td>1.82</td>
<td>1.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Aggressor’s name] was upset by what happened.</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>1.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Aggressor’s name] felt scared.</td>
<td>1.66</td>
<td>1.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Aggressor’s name] felt sad.</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>1.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victim</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Victim’s name] was physically aggressive.</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Victim’s name] felt powerful.</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>1.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Victim’s name] was in control of the situation.</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>1.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Victim’s name] enjoyed what happened.</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>1.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Victim’s name] was apologetic for what happened.</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>1.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Victim’s name] was upset by what happened.</td>
<td>6.21</td>
<td>1.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Victim’s name] felt scared.</td>
<td>6.08</td>
<td>1.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Victim’s name] felt sad.</td>
<td>6.14</td>
<td>1.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. 1 = Strong Disagreement, 7 = Strong Agreement*

Overall, participants seemed to agree that the aggressor was physically aggressive, felt powerful, was in control of the situation, and enjoyed what happened, while the victim was upset, scared, and sad.

Students were asked to dis/agree with two consent-related statements on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = *Strongly Disagree*, 7 = *Strongly Agree*). On average, they disagreed/strongly disagreed that the victim consented to have sex ($M = 1.49$, $SD = 1.17$), and agreed/strongly agreed that the aggressor forced or coerced the victim into having
sex (i.e. the legal definition of not consenting) \( (M = 6.46, SD = 1.25) \). Participants were also asked to rate their confidence in their decisions about consent on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = Extremely Unsure, 7 = Extremely Sure). On average, students were sure/extremely sure that they were correct about their decisions regarding victim consent \( (M = 6.64, SD = 0.87) \) and forced or coerced sex \( (M = 6.66, SD = 0.77) \) in the scenarios.

Replicating questions used in research done by Hull (2017), students were asked about potential consequences for the aggressor and victim. Most respondents (83.1%) felt that there should be no consequences for the victim. However, a majority (80.8%) felt that there should be consequences for the aggressor. Students were asked to check the specific sanctions they would recommend for the aggressor from a long list of possibilities. Some aggressor sanctions were more “popular” (i.e. more frequently checked) than others. The most popular sanction chosen by participants was police involvement (64.6%), followed by removal from paraprofessional employment (e.g. Resident Assistant, Admissions Counselor) (53.9%), and removal from elected or appointed office(s) in any college student organization(s) (50.8%). These results indicate that many respondents did not want someone they perceived to be a sexual assailant in a position of power, and preferred that an entity outside of the college (i.e. police) step in to deal with the assailant. (Please see Appendix G for the exact format of survey questions.)

**Interpretation/Judgment Questions: Inferential Analyses**

A 2 x 4 MANCOVA assessed the effects of scenarios’ presentation medium and assailant/victim sex(es) (independent variables (IVs)) on determinations of sexual assault and scenario believability, emotional evocation and power, effectiveness, and clarity (dependent variables (DV$s$)). All DV$s$ were measured on 7-point Likert-type scales. The
number one indicated *strong disagreement* that sexual assault occurred, or the weakest level of a measured scenario quality (e.g. *Extremely Unbelievable* or *Extremely Lacking in Power*), and the number seven indicating *strong agreement* that sexual assault occurred, or the strongest level of a measured scenario quality (e.g. *Extremely Evocative* or *Extremely Clear*). The MANCOVA also evaluated the influence of two potential confounding factors: participant gender identity (male, female, or otherwise-gendered) and sexual assault history (have experienced, have not experienced, and did not know / did not want to share). All effects were analyzed at the 0.05 significance level.

The 2 x 4 MANCOVA revealed that participants’ sexual assault victimization histories significantly affected their ratings of scenarios’ emotional evocation and effectiveness. Participants’ gender identities significantly affected their scoring of scenarios’ believability, emotional evocation and power, effectiveness, and clarity. Gender identity also seemed to affect respondents’ willingness to agree that sexual assault occurred in the scenarios.

After eliminating the influence of participants’ gender identities and sexual assault histories, the corrected MANCOVA model revealed two main effects, but no interaction effects. Presentation medium \((F(6, 543) = 5.209, p < .001; \text{Wilks' } \Lambda = .946, \eta_p^2 = .054)\) and assailant/victim sex(es), \((F(18, 1536) = 2.417, p = .001; \text{Wilks' } \Lambda = .924, \eta_p^2 = .026)\) both significantly affected the combined dependent variables, though their effect sizes were small. There was not a statistically significant interaction effect between scenarios’ presentation medium and assailant/victim sex(es) on the combined dependent variables, \((F(18, 1536) = 0.881, p = .602; \text{Wilks' } \Lambda = .971, \eta_p^2 = .010)\).
A statistically significant difference, with a small effect size, was found in participants’ agreement that sexual assault occurred in the video \((M = 6.55, SD = 0.95)\) versus written \((M = 6.73, SD = 0.78)\) scenarios, \(F(1, 548) = 7.55, p = .006, \eta_p^2 = .014\). Additionally, statistically significant differences based on presentation medium were found for scenario believability \((F(1, 548) = 4.59, p = .033, \eta_p^2 = .008)\), emotional evocation \((F(1, 548) = 17.48, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .031)\), emotional power \((F(1, 548) = 17.14, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .030)\), and effectiveness \((F(1, 548) = 19.11, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .034)\). All of the effect sizes for these significant differences were small. Table 13 shows video and written scenarios’ mean and SD values for the six, non-sexual assault DVs.

Table 13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DV</th>
<th>Presentation medium</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Believability*</td>
<td>Video</td>
<td>5.61</td>
<td>1.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Written</td>
<td>5.83</td>
<td>1.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Evocation*</td>
<td>Video</td>
<td>5.28</td>
<td>1.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Written</td>
<td>5.69</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Power*</td>
<td>Video</td>
<td>5.14</td>
<td>1.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Written</td>
<td>5.58</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness*</td>
<td>Video</td>
<td>5.33</td>
<td>1.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Written</td>
<td>5.72</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confusion / Clarity</td>
<td>Video</td>
<td>5.88</td>
<td>1.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Written</td>
<td>5.82</td>
<td>1.32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note 1. 1 = Extremely: Unbelievable / Unevocative / Lacking in Power / Ineffective / Confusing; 7 = Extremely: Believable / Evocative / Powerful / Effective / Clear

*Note 2. Significantly varied based on presentation medium, \(p < .05\).

Scenarios’ assailant/victim sex(es) were also found to significantly affect participants’ scenario believability scores, \(F(3, 548) = 3.37, p = .018, \eta_p^2 = .018\). The effect size was small. Pairwise comparisons using a Bonferroni correction revealed that
participants found M/F assailant/victim scenarios ($M = 6.01, SD = 1.16$) to be significantly more believable than F/M assailant/victim scenarios ($M = 5.56, SD = 1.29$), $p = .026$. According to these pairwise comparisons, M/M ($M = 5.61, SD = 1.45$) and F/F ($M = 5.70, SD = 1.23$) scenarios’ believability did not significantly differ from that of any other sex-mixed, assailant/victim scenarios.

Scenarios’ assailant/victim sex(es) also significantly affected participants’ scenario confusion/clarity scores, $F(3, 548) = 5.92, p = .001, \eta^2_p = .031$. The effect size was small. Pairwise comparisons using a Bonferroni correction revealed that respondents found M/F ($M = 6.16, SD = 1.04$) assailant/victim scenarios to be more clear/less confusing than either M/M ($M = 5.53, SD = 1.49, p = .001$) or F/F ($M = 5.67, SD = 1.45, p = .017$) assailant/victim scenarios. The clarity of F/M ($M = 5.94, SD = 1.23$) scenarios did not significantly differ from that of any other sex-mixed, assailant/victim scenarios.

_Table 14_ displays the $p$ values for the effects of assailant/victim sex(es) on the six dependent variables (DVs). Pairwise comparison $p$ values for believability and clarity based on assailant/victim sex(es) can be found in _Table 15_.

### Table 14

*Effects of Assailant/Victim Sex(es) on DVs*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DV</th>
<th>$p$ for assailant/victim sex(es)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Believability*</td>
<td>.018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Evocation</td>
<td>.539</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Power</td>
<td>.296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness</td>
<td>.121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confusion / Clarity*</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreement that Sexual Assault Occurred</td>
<td>.069</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Significantly differed based on assailant/victim sex(es), $p < .05$. 

46
**Table 15**

*Effects of Assailant/Victim Sex(es), Pairwise Comparisons*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DV</th>
<th>Assailant/victim sex(es)</th>
<th>Comparisons</th>
<th>$p^{**}$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Believability</td>
<td>M/F</td>
<td>MM</td>
<td>.084</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F/F</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F/M</td>
<td>.026*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M/M</td>
<td>M/F</td>
<td>.084</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F/F</td>
<td>1.00</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F/M</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F/F</td>
<td>M/F</td>
<td>1.00</td>
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<td>M/M</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F/M</td>
<td>M/F</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>M/M</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F/F</td>
<td>.678</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confusion/Clarity</td>
<td>M/F</td>
<td>MM</td>
<td>.001*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F/F</td>
<td>.017*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F/M</td>
<td>.767</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M/M</td>
<td>M/F</td>
<td>.001*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F/F</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F/M</td>
<td>.079</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F/F</td>
<td>M/F</td>
<td>.017*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>M/M</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F/M</td>
<td>.752</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F/M</td>
<td>M/F</td>
<td>.767</td>
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<td>M/M</td>
<td>.079</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F/F</td>
<td>.752</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Significantly differed based on assailant/victim sex(es), $p < .05$.

**Note 2. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Bonferroni.*

Contrary to what was predicted in the third hypothesis, assailant/victim sex(es) did not significantly affect participants’ agreement that sexual assault occurred in the scenarios, $F(3, 548) = 2.38, p = .069, \eta^2_p = .013$. Main effects were not qualified by any significant interaction effects between presentation medium and assailant/victim sex(es).

Based on these results, after controlling for the potential confounds of participant gender identity and sexual assault history, written scenarios out-performed video scenarios on almost all DV measures, though with small effect sizes. For example,
participants were more likely to agree that sexual assault occurred in the written scenarios, as compared with the video scenarios.

While participants’ ratings of the emotional impact of written versus video scenarios did significantly differ, supporting the first hypothesis, it did not differ in the expected direction. Although the effect size was small, participants found written scenarios to be more emotionally powerful and evocative than video scenarios, rather than the expected opposite.

The second and third hypotheses were not supported. Contrary to the second hypothesis, participants found written scenarios to be more believable, as well as more effective, than video scenarios. Effect sizes, however, were small. Contrary to the third hypothesis, the sex(es) of assailants and victims did not seem to influence participants’ agreement that sexual assault occurred in the scenarios. Nevertheless, participants found the scenario with a male aggressor and female victim to be significantly more believable than the scenario with a female aggressor and male victim, and significantly clearer than the scenarios featuring an aggressor and victim of the same sex (M/M and F/F).

Levene’s Test indicated unequal variances for all DVs, and Box’s M Test indicated unequal DV covariance matrices ($p < .001$).

Except for qualitative collection, all data were analyzed via IBM SPSS Statistics 25 and Qualtrics survey software (copyright 2018). Tables were created using Microsoft Word 2016 (Microsoft Office Professional Plus 2016) and/or LibreOffice (Version 5.1.3.2 (x64)).
Discussion

The purpose of this research was to investigate whether college students responded differently to sexual violence scenarios presented in different media formats (video or written), and/or to sexual violence scenarios portraying male or female aggressors and victims.

Sims et al. (2007) and Sleed et al. (2002) suggested that video vignettes of sexual violence might be more emotionally impactful than written scenarios, informing our first hypothesis. The research of Sleed et al. (2002) also suggested that written and video scenarios would be equally believable, informing our second hypothesis. Although Sleed et al.’s (2002) research questions regarding emotional evocation and believability were replicated in this study, research results showed that our written scenarios were thought to be more believable and emotionally evocative than video scenarios, as well as more effective and emotionally powerful. Thus, the results of this research did not support initial predictions, at least not in the expected pattern. The emotional evocation of written versus video scenarios significantly differed, technically supporting hypothesis number one. However, written, rather than video, scenarios were found to be more emotionally evocative, violating the spirit of the first hypothesis. Written scenarios were also found to be more believable than video scenarios, violating the second hypothesis.

In general, presentation medium affected participants’ judgments on a variety of variables, although all effect sizes were small. In addition to previously-discussed results regarding scenario quality, participants were also more likely to agree that sexual assault occurred in written, rather than video, conditions.
The research of Hull et al. (2016) and Davies et al. (2006) suggested that participants would be less likely to view female assailant/male victim sexual violence as sexual assault, informing our third hypothesis. However, this hypothesis was not supported by our research results. Although assailant and victim sex(es) were not related to judgments of sexual assault, they did affect scenarios’ clarity and believability, albeit with small effect sizes. Participants found male assailant/female victim scenarios clearer/less confusing than male assailant/male victim and female assailant/female victim scenarios, a result that is further discussed in the Limitation: The confusion of same-sex naming subsection. Male assailant/female victim scenarios were judged to be more believable than female assailant/male victim scenarios, reflecting an aspect of the third hypothesis.

The author can only speculate as to why students did not differ in their determinations of sexual assault based on assailant/victim sex(es), yet found the M/F scenarios to be more believable than the F/M scenarios. Perhaps modern students were able to recognize that what happened in all of the presented scenarios was sexual assault, but thought that the female assailant/male victim scenarios were less “real” – or, less believable. In other words, maybe participants thought sexual assault occurred in the presented female assailant/male victim scenario(s), but thought that such a scenario was not apt to happen in real life, and was significantly less likely to happen than a male assailant/female victim sexual violence scenario.

It is also possible that students guessed that this research was about the topic of sexual assault, and therefore simply agreed that it occurred, regardless of assailant/victim sex(es). In the debriefing, all but three students indicated that they had no prior
knowledge of this research project. Still, once the experimental survey started, it may not have been too difficult to realize that the researcher was looking for information about sexual assault. Maybe some participants wanted to please the researcher by answering questions “correctly,” or as they thought she wanted. However, this impulse may have been balanced out by those participants who were looking to “troll” the researcher. Additionally, some students may have sublimated their true feelings and thoughts into more “socially correct,” anti-sexual violence answers.

Limitations and Strengths of This Research

Limitation: Inscrutable characteristics of the video and written scenarios.

The statistical comparisons between video and written scenarios did not turn out as expected. Written scenarios were judged to be more believable, emotionally evocative, emotionally powerful, and effective than video scenarios. Participants were also more likely to agree that sexual assault occurred in the written, rather than video, scenarios. However, all of these significant results had small effect sizes.

There are many potential, unknowable reasons for these unexpected findings. Perhaps written scenarios better allowed for the evocative influences of imagination to affect interpretations. The scenarios were presented to students online, and were therefore accessed on phones, tablets, laptops, and other web-enabled devices. Maybe the computer- or phone-based, small-screen presentation of videos favored the written scenarios in some way. Perhaps video scenarios would have been more impactful on a larger screen, while written scenarios were unaffected by screen size.

Also, by necessity, the actors, filming collaborator, and the researcher herself were non-professional students. Therefore, non-professionals were responsible for the
writing, acting, filming, and editing of both the written and video scenarios. This may have affected specific characteristics of both the written and video scenarios, including the production value of the video scenarios, the effectiveness of the written scenarios, etc.

Still, many people commented on the affecting nature of the written and video scenarios. For example, one student stated that, “This was an excellently written survey/scenario. I wrote my... thesis on sexual assault against men and this was a great representation of it. Well done.” Another participant, who had been presented with a video scenario, wrote:

This video was pretty upsetting, but.... I think the more exposure students have to blunt messages like this one, the more likely they are to understand that sexual assault is a very multi-faced thing and that there are SO MANY ways in which it can occur.

**Limitation: The population and sample of choice.** As the advisor group noted, a college population may be more reactive than the general population to written, rather than video, stimuli. College students have to do a great deal of reading, and so may be more affected by it. However, when asked a question regarding their entertainment medium preferences, a similar percentage of respondents said that they preferred reading a book as said that they preferred watching the book’s T.V. or movie adaptation, although a slightly higher percentage favored reading.

Still, the population of choice for this project – college students – may have affected the results. It would be interesting to replicate this research on a sample of the non-college/general population, to see if the results supported or contradicted those of this project.
**Limitation: Demographics.** Although the author attempted to reach out to all genders, sexual orientations, and races/ethnicities, the majority of analyzed participants identified as female (66.1%), heterosexual (73.4%), and/or Non-Hispanic White or Caucasian (82.6%). It is possible that the skewed nature of these demographics affected how participants interpreted scenarios and responded to questions. Perhaps in an area with more racial/ethnic and sexual diversity, results would have differed. Without additional research, however, it is impossible to ascertain the effects of such lop-sided demographics on research results.

Nevertheless, as was discussed in the literature review, reported rates of sexual violence against women are higher than those for men (Black et al., 2011). This project’s majority female-identifying sample may have been more familiar with the realities of sexual assault, and thus more sensitive and sympathetic to the situations in the scenarios. This may have partially accounted for the overall high participant agreement that sexual assault occurred in the scenarios. Since gender identity may have influenced participants’ judgments regarding sexual misconduct situations, participant gender identity was chosen as one of the potential confounding factors (covariates) for use in the MANCOVA analysis. In fact, according to the MANCOVA, participants’ gender identities significantly affected their willingness to agree that sexual assault occurred in the scenarios, as well as their scoring of scenarios’ believability, effectiveness, clarity, and emotional evocation and power.

**Limitation: Numbers of respondents in written versus video conditions.** In the final analyses (after those surveys not meeting inclusion criteria were deleted), included participants were presented with 253 video and 357 written scenarios. For each
type of sex-mixed assailant/victim (M/F, M/M, F/F, and F/M) scenario, an average of 26 more students took the survey after being presented with a written, rather than video, scenario.

Qualtrics software was set to randomly present participants with each of the eight scenario types so that each scenario was presented an approximately equal number of times. Therefore, the fact that fewer people entered usable data into the survey after being presented with a video scenario is curious.

It is impossible to know why more people quit out of the video-linked surveys, or left them unfinished. Perhaps more people, when presented with a link to a video scenario, refused to go to the trouble of clicking a link, waiting for a video to load, etc., and therefore quit the survey out of frustration, impatience, or laziness. In other words, maybe the written scenarios were less troublesome and/or annoying to access, so more people were willing to read them.

Perhaps some people were more viscerally turned off by the video, rather than written, scenarios. Maybe the videos were too emotional or uncomfortable for many people, causing them to quit, or making it impossible to finish the survey. In the same vein, perhaps some people were “grossed out” by the videos, and exited out of them quickly. Given the historical prejudice against sexual minorities, one might wonder if an aversion to same-sex relationships may have played a part in this potentially avoidant behavior. Although the M/M video scenario did have the least analyzed participants, there was not a huge numeric difference between students who completed surveys for same-sex versus opposite-sex relationship-featuring video scenarios.
Therefore, the sex(es) of assailants and victims did not seem to matter much in regards to participant retention. Statistically, students were not more or less willing or motivated to complete surveys featuring, for example, same-sex versus opposite-sex relationships. It seems the medium of the scenarios – their video or written nature – was the important factor in determining participants’ willingness to answer a viable number of questions in the surveys. For some reason, experimental participants were less motivated or willing to complete surveys with videos as a pre-survey presentation medium.

**Strength: The research was novel.** Sexual assault scenarios involving long-term dating couples have been rare in research, which has focused more on rape by strangers or new acquaintances (e.g. Smith et al., 1988; & Hull et al., 2016). However, as evidenced in the literature review, most research has found that sexual assault victims know their attackers (Sinozich & Langton, 2014; & Black et al., 2011). Research has not extensively investigated this type of “known assailant” sexual violence, nor has it capitalized on advances in technology.

Video materials depicting date rape/sexual assault scenarios for use in research have been very rare (e.g. Sleed et al., 2002). Similarly, a silhouetted videography technique seems to be unequalled in sexual violence research. This study’s inclusion of a combination of these three rare factors – sexual violence with known assailants, video-based research materials, and a silhouetted videography technique – was therefore extremely unique.

Although results seemed to show that the written scenarios were somewhat more effective in evoking emotions and depicting sexual violence than were the video scenarios, this project still produced useful and impactful research materials. Comments
by several research participants highlighted the importance of sexual assault education and research, as well as the value of exposing people to novel depictions of sexual assault situations. Two students presented with the written, female assailant / male victim scenario remarked, “… The situation could have been avoided with better education/understanding/exposure to testimonies like this,” and, “I thought this was an interesting experience to take part in. Opened my eyes to the extent that sexual assault can take.” Another participant, presented with the video scenario depicting that same assailant/victim sex arrangement, noted, “This was the hardest survey I have ever taken. It got me really thinking, evaluating my thoughts and helped me see a lot of biases. I hope it does for everyone else.”

The few studies that have used video vignette presentations do not seem to have made those videos readily accessible, or available for use by other researchers (e.g. Sleed et al., 2002). This researcher hopes to change that by making the created video and written scenarios freely available for use in other research. Perhaps future research will be able to use and improve upon the written and video scenarios.

The written and video scenarios created for this project remain unusual in their presentation of sexual violence in the context of long-term couples of varying sex-mixes (McEvoy, 2017). A few participants commented about how appreciative they were that this research used LGBTQ+-inclusive questions and scenarios. A bisexual, female-identifying student noted, “I think it is good you added questions regarding LGBTQ+ people, seen [sic] as I know that there are high amounts of sexual assault that happens [sic] to that group. It is not normally talked about.” Another student commented, “Glad you are researching sexual assault in relationships, specifically among same-sex
relationships. This is a topic that needs much more attention.” Their points are well-
taken, particularly given the discriminatory attitudes expressed by some participants. For 
example, one heterosexual, male-identifying student, who had been presented with the 
video version of the male assailant/male victim scenario, described the scenario as, 
“Faggots trying to be like real people and failing at it.” Education in and exposure to the 
intricacies of LGBTQ+ relationships remains important.

**Limitation: The confusion of same-sex naming.** Results showed that 
participants found the scenario with a male aggressor and female victim to be 
significantly clearer than the scenarios featuring an aggressor and victim of the same sex 
(M/M and F/F). This may be due to a variety of factors, including inattention due to 
discomfort with same-sex relationships and sexual violence. However, it is possible that 
respondents were simply more confused by the names of the same-sex couples (i.e. Chris 
and Jake, Jessica and Beth). Many comments expressed confusion regarding same-sex 
scenarios’ character names. For example, one person presented with the written, M/M 
scenario wrote, “During the course of the survey, I was unsure if I got the names of the 
people switched.” Another participant, presented with the written, F/F scenario, implored 
the researcher to “try to make it more clear who each character is.”

Still, it is curious that only those presented with the male aggressor/female victim 
scenario, and not the other opposite-sex scenario (female aggressor/male victim), were 
significantly less confused than those presented with same-sex scenarios. Was the male 
assailant/female victim scenario more salient and familiar – and therefore clearer? It is 
easy to speculate, but difficult to truly know, the reasoning behind participants’ decisions.
**Strength: The research was timely.** News media have exhibited a recently intensified interest in campus sexual assault, and sexual misconduct in general. A new online database (https://therottenappl.es/) allows one to search for movies and television shows to find out if a member of the cast, a screenwriter, an executive producer, or a director has been accused of sexual misconduct. Decrees of the former executive branch and actions of the current executive branch demonstrate that sexual violence and sexual violence research have the attention of the media, the government, and the public. As one student noted, “Even our own president has talked about sexually assaulting girls.”

**Limitation: The research was timely – or, the unexpected, uncontrollable influences of social movements.** It is possible that this research was, in fact, too timely. Completely coincidentally, this survey was distributed right at the peak of the media-dominating revelations of #MeToo and related movements. Due to this synchronous timing, participants may have been unexpectedly familiar with the seriousness and commonality of sexual assault, harassment, and misconduct, in all its potential iterations. Heightened societal awareness may have influenced responses, leading to, for example, an unexpectedly high overall agreement that sexual assault occurred in the scenarios.

One participant’s comment illustrated awareness that sexual violence can occur in long-term relationships, saying, “sexual assault is not always the man in the bushes. It is someone you know and trust… sexual assault can be committed by anyone in any relationship.” Another student noted, “It doesn’t matter if you’ve been in a relationship for a week, month, years, or are married if you don’t want to engage in any activity whether that be a hug or sex you DO NOT NEED TOO [sic].”
Results showed that participants were unexpectedly cognizant of the fact that sexual assault can happen in both same-sex and opposite-sex dating relationships, and that both men and women can commit sexual violence.

The third hypothesis of this study – that participants would differentially identify sexual assault as having happened in the scenarios depending on the sex(es) of the assailant and victim – was not supported by the results. It turned out that this hypothesis was unduly pessimistic. In fact, results supported the more encouraging null hypothesis: that participants would be equally likely to identify sexual violence as having happened in all four sex-mixed scenarios (male assailant / female victim; male assailant / male victim; female assailant / female victim; and female assailant / male victim).

One of the hoped-for goals of this study was to increase awareness of the ambiguities of sexual violence – specifically, that sexual violence can occur between young couples of all gender identities and sexual orientations. Many students, in their comments, displayed this awareness. For example, one participant noted that sexual assault “is a large problem for both men and women and it needs to be a more talked about subject. People should not feel the need to hide their experience when it is something bad.” Another student commented, “Any human can commit or be the victim of sexual assault regardless of race, gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation.” Some participants were blunter in their comments, such as the student who wrote, “If someone says they don’t want to and please stop you Fucking [sic] stop.” Another student commented with advice for humanity in general:
Let’s just all have sex with people who actually want to have sex with us, okay guys? Sound like a plan? Let’s all have enough mutual respect for one another that we don’t stick things where they’re not wanted, okay?

It seems that many college students at NMU were aware of the realities of sexual violence in relationships, and were able to correctly identify its occurrence.

Still, some research participants expressed a general confusion regarding sex and/or victim behavior, illustrating the importance of further education and research regarding real-life sexual violence. *Table 16* samples some of these students’ comments.

**Table 16**

*Example Comments Uncertain about Sex and/or Victim Agency*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Confusion about sex</th>
<th>Confusion about victim agency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“…I’m not sure what the line that qualifies sexual intercourse for two women is.”</td>
<td>“…Sarah could have done more to stop him if she really didn’t want it to happen. Despite initially pushing him away, she then seemed to just lay back and let it happen.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“…Jake… didn’t do everything that he could have. At the end he kind of gave up and just let Chris do what he wanted…. That situation is never okay… But I do think that there was more that he could have done to stop it.”

“Even though Jake said he did not want to have sex with Chris he allowed Chris to remove his clothing which could have prevented this incident. Why not get up and walk away if there was any question. Especially being a man he should show his strength and take control of the situation he is being coerced into.”

“If Beth let Jessica take her pants off willingly and went along with it that’s not really on either of them. Was it Jessica pushing Beth into it? Yes, however Beth went along with it…”

“While fault lies with the initiator… I still believe that if you are letting yourself be manipulate [sic], you are at fault to an extent….You gave up your agency and surrendered your decision-making to someone else. That is something I have little empathy for.”

“…Josh… could have easily walked out of the room beforehand or even pushed Megan off if he really didn’t want to have sex. She wasn’t being that aggressive, and although I agree she shouldn’t have done what she did, Josh could have removed himself from the situation.”
Sex can be a confusing and fraught topic. These comments show that there is a need for continued research and education regarding sexual relationships, and particularly regarding issues of consent, victim agency, and relationship-based sexual violence.

Based on the responses of the participants in this study, however, optimism is indicated. Results showed that research participants did not believe that the actions portrayed in the scenarios were acceptable. Although they may have been confused about how someone could just “let [that] happen,” even the students quoted in Table 16 commonly expressed that they did not condone the actions of the aggressors in the scenarios. Hopefully, students will be able to apply their overall knowledge about sexual violence to real-life situations and relationships.

**Strength: The topic was (and is) important.** Millions of Americans, and millions more worldwide, have experienced sexual violence. The effects of rape, sexual assault, and other forms of sexual violence can be devastating.

The author was thanked multiple times, in both comments and e-mails, for conducting research on this topic. Many respondents expressed that they were survivors of sexual violence, and appreciated the fact that this survey was, as one said, “bringing attention to other students about this issue.” Many participants also expressed their hopes for the educational future of this research. Table 17 contains a selection of some of these students’ comments.

With a bit of luck, and following along with the wishes of these students, this research can be extended in the future, and used to inspire education regarding sexual violence in long-term relationships.
Example Comments Expressing Hope for the Future of This Research

“I have been the victim of unwanted sexual behavior on NMU’s campus, and I know too many friends who have been victims of similar or worse situations. It would be wonderful if research like this can be shared with future NMU students to raise awareness of the issue on campus and to prevent sexual assault committed by and against NMU students.”

“I have been a victim of sexual abuse in a committed relationship, and a lot of people don’t take it seriously. I hope that maybe this study changes that.”

“I think this is a very serious topic to be talked about…. I’ve had bad experiences myself. I think this is a good way to let people be more aware of the situations going on and how to handle them. I really much so appreciate any research being done on this topic.”

“This was a long survey, but it made me think hard about difficult topics. I appreciate the work that has gone into this and hope it can be used to educate people about sexual assault and sexual harassment, beyond ethnic/racial/economics/social/political divides.”

The Prevalence of Sexual Assault Survivors in the Study Sample

In this research, 209 of 610 analyzed participants – more than one-third – had experienced sexual assault. Even more respondents had been forced to engage in unwanted sexual behaviors. Since this high rate of sexual violence victimization may have influenced participants’ judgments regarding sexual misconduct situations, participant sexual assault history was chosen as one of the potential confounding factors (covariates) for use in the MANCOVA analysis. In fact, according to the MANCOVA, participants’ sexual assault victimization histories significantly affected their ratings of scenarios’ emotional evocation and effectiveness.

So as not to unduly affect results, potential participants were told in the recruitment email and informed consent statement that this project was about “real-life circumstances that can arise in college relationships” (see Appendix F). (This wording was approved by the IRB.) Some respondents even commented that the study should
have included a “trigger warning,” to warn potential participants of the sexually violent nature of the scenarios. Unfortunately, adding such a warning could have affected participants’ responses to many sexual assault-related questions.

Given that this study did not introduce itself with any specific mentions of sexual assault or violence, it should not have elicited an unusually high response rate from survivors of sexual violence. As discussed in the literature review, the NIPHSV found that approximately one in five women (18.0%) had experienced rape in their lifetimes (Black et al., 2011). Of this project’s research participants, more than one in three (34.3%) had experienced sexual assault in their lifetimes – a comparatively high statistic, especially since it was not limited to only female participants.

Perhaps the rates of sexual violence in northern Michigan are higher than the national average, for one reason or another. Perhaps sexual violence survivors are more likely to respond to surveys in general, or to surveys about relationships in particular. Perhaps survivors were less likely to quit out of the survey once the subject matter became more apparent. Therefore, maybe the groups of participants deleted for responding to either no or too few questions contained a greater number of non-survivors. However, even if one were to hypothetically assume that no deleted participants had experienced sexual assault, the number of participant survivors would still be 209 of 1,157 – an 18.1% rate of victimization, or just under one in five students.

It is difficult to know the reasons behind this statistic. Nonetheless, if this survey’s participants are at all representative of the student population of NMU, sexual violence survivorship is widespread at the school. It may be beneficial for policy-makers at NMU to keep survivors in mind when hiring faculty and staff, and/or when
constructing counseling, intervention, and educational programs. At the very least, a kind, understanding mindset should be the default for everyone at NMU.

**Additional Implications**

The results of this research seemed to indicate that written scenarios significantly out-performed video scenarios. Therefore, one might wonder if there is much point in continuing to investigate video presentations of sexual violence scenarios. Why not abandon the idea of videos entirely, and focus solely on the variable qualities of written scenarios? Although the results of this research showed that written scenarios, as compared to video scenarios, were significantly more believable, effective, emotionally evocative, emotionally powerful, and suggestive of sexual assault, effect sizes for all of these qualities were small. Additionally, the results of this study differed from those of another study comparing written and video sexual violence scenarios (Sleed et al., 2002). Sleed et al. (2002) found that video scenarios were more emotionally impactful than written scenarios, and that written and video scenarios were equally believable.

Further research and experimentation regarding variations in sexual assault presentation media should not stop due to one study with small effect sizes, especially when another, related study exhibited contradictory results. Future research should continue to explore the variable effects of presentation media on interpretations of sexual violence scenarios. The topic of sexual violence is too important, and the research on the implications of presentation media too minimal, to halt the forward progress of media-based research.

Sexual violence is a wide-ranging and life-changing problem. Recently, campus sexual assault has received a great deal of public attention, making its study particularly
apropos. This project created a valuable opportunity to try out a novel, multidisciplinary research technique at a uniquely salient time in history. Ideally, this novel, topical research will be a meaningful addition to the canon of sexual violence literature.
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Sexual violence has affected and continues to affect hundreds of thousands of Americans each year (Truman & Morgan, 2016). Much research has been conducted on the issues surrounding sexual violence, but the majority of this research has been conducted using written depictions, often between strangers or new acquaintances (e.g. Davies et al., 2006; Hull et al., 2016; & Smith et al., 1988). Most sexual violence, however, is committed by people known to victims (Sinozich & Langton, 2014; & Black et al., 2011). Research has not extensively investigated this type of “known assailant” sexual violence, nor has it capitalized on advances in technology (e.g. Smith et al., 1988; Hull et al., 2016; & Sleed et al., 2002). This research attempted to creatively replicate and advance the field of sexual violence research through scientific means, by comparing and contrasting controlled video and written scenarios portraying an incident of sexual violence between a long-term couple. The assailant and victim sex(es) in the scenarios were also varied, to represent both male and female victims and perpetrators, as well as same-sex and opposite-sex couples.

In this research, participants were presented with sexual violence scenarios, in either video or written format, depicting long-term couples of varying sex combinations. This allowed the researcher to investigate whether individuals responded differently to sexual violence scenarios presented in different media formats (video and written), and/or to sexual violence scenarios portraying male or female aggressors and victims.

To this end, the author created a new set of eight total written and video scenarios, wherein a sexual assault occurred between a college-aged dating couple. Scenarios
portrayed four differently-sexed combinations of aggressors and victims, including male aggressor/female victim, male aggressor/male victim, female aggressor/female victim, and female aggressor/male victim.

The author presented one of the eight sexual violence scenarios to each participant student, in a between-groups fashion. Participants’ perceptions of sexual violence in college-aged dating couples were compared and contrasted based on both the medium of presentation and the sex(es) of the attacker and victim. Participants’ conceptualizations of the scenarios were gathered via comprehension and interpretation questions.

Research results showed that, although the medium of scenario presentations did seem to matter regarding participants’ determinations of whether sexual assault occurred in the scenarios, as well as regarding scenario believability and emotional evocation, the direction of these differences was not as hypothesized. Contrary to expectations, written scenarios were rated as more emotionally evocative than video scenarios, as well as more believable, emotionally powerful, and effective. Participants were also more likely to agree that sexual assault occurred in written, as opposed to video, scenarios. However, all effect sizes were small.

Contrary to the author’s third hypothesis, the sexes of the assailants and victims in the scenarios did not seem to affect participants’ agreement as to whether sexual assault occurred in the scenarios. In fact, participants were, on average, likely to agree that sexual assault and forced, unwanted sexual behavior(s) occurred in the scenarios. Respondents seemed to agree that aggressors were culpable for the act of sexual intercourse, and were physically aggressive. The majority of respondents also thought
that the aggressor should be sanctioned for his/her behavior, most popularly via police involvement and the removal of the aggressor from positions of authority.

Results of this research may have been influenced by several factors, including recently heightened societal awareness regarding sexual misconduct, a high participant drop-out rate, and the student-driven nature of the video productions.

Descriptive statistics showed that a high number of student respondents had experienced sexual assault and/or forced, unwanted sexual behaviors. Through comments, many students also exhibited a general confusion about sex, sexual assault, common victim behaviors, and consent. These results, combined with the life-affecting nature of this topic, emphasize the importance of continued education and research on these and related topics.

Future Research Recommendations

This project could serve as a catalyst for future research investigations. One wonders if the results of this research would differ depending on location and population. For example, would the general, non-college population find videos more affecting than written scenarios? Would students in Georgia respond similarly to students in upper Michigan, where this study was conducted? Research comparing responses based on population and location could be illuminating, and might be used to inform, for example, state standards for sex education.

Researchers can and should continue to experiment with video and other technologies, to confirm, challenge, or expand upon the results of this experiment. For example, researchers could study sexual violence using video games or virtual reality technology, or by experimenting with video and audio technology. A reference
compendium of materials could be created from scenarios that vary on a variety of specific conditions: body types and sizes, the addition of alcohol or physical violence, vocal qualities, dialogue, etc. Researchers could pull from this assemblage to study any number of combinations of factors related to sexual violence. A sexual violence materials database – including video, written, and other scenarios – could add a great deal to this field of research. Eventually, this database could be expanded to include research scenarios from other fields, including criminal justice and social work, as well as those concerning other marginalized groups. In the ever-changing modern world, the ability to add to and pull from such a database would be invaluable. It could allow for greater adaptability and creativity in the scientific process.

This project was unusual in its scientific use of theatrical videos and prose-like written scenarios. To continue to evolve and progress, we researchers should look for opportunities to make the creative use of technology as a part of scientific research – including sexual violence research – less unique.
REFERENCES


Figure 1. Flowchart of conditions and procedures. This figure illustrates the methodological flow of this research project.
Figure 2. Diagram of stage lighting and setup for videos.
Figure 3. Example of video silhouetting A. This figure is a screenshot taken from the Mike/Sarah, M/F, assailant/victim scenario.

Figure 4. Example of video silhouetting B. This figure is a screenshot taken from the Jessica/Beth, F/F, assailant/victim scenario.
APPENDIX D

Links to Video Scenarios

1. Male Aggressor / Female Victim Video:
   https://drive.google.com/open?id=1DUhKKVIoCBPdcXbRUBg1Iud6EYK2u2Xu

2. Male Aggressor / Male Victim Video:
   https://drive.google.com/open?id=1IZf_3GWjVgn8zO4HM5BK0A-Re3-rrMiR

3. Female Aggressor / Female Victim Video:
   https://drive.google.com/open?id=1FRmtuKgHvN0dZ-E3BkTtbH9CaeHL4kJ-

4. Female Aggressor / Male Victim Video:
   https://drive.google.com/open?id=1Lvl9bSKXdK9MZP4bqRXaG6a_20nJ_got
APPENDIX E

Example of a Written Scenario*

* The four written scenarios used the same exact verbiage. The only differences among the scenarios were: (1) the name(s) and pronouns used to refer to the aggressor(s) and victim(s), and (2) the explicit descriptions of the intercourse situations:

(1) The name(s) of the aggressor(s) and victim(s):

(a) Male Aggressor / Female Victim: Mike / Sarah

(b) Male Aggressor / Male Victim: Chris / Josh

(c) Female Aggressor / Female Victim: Jessica / Beth

(d) (Example Given) Female Aggressor / Male Victim: Megan / Josh

(2) The explicit descriptions of the intercourse situations. For Example:

(a) Male Aggressor / Female Victim: “Straddling Sarah’s hips, Mike gets himself into position. He thrusts himself into Sarah, moaning. Slowly at first, he rhythmically rocks against Sarah.”

(b) Male Aggressor / Male Victim: “Moving quickly, Chris flips Jake over. Jake is now face-down on the bed…. Straddling Jake’s buttocks, Chris gets himself into position. He thrusts himself into Jake, moaning. Slowly at first, he rhythmically rocks against Jake.”

(c) Female Aggressor / Female Victim: “Jessica moves one of her hands between Beth’s thighs, and thrusts her fingers into Beth, moaning. Slowly at first, she rhythmically rocks her hand against Beth. With her other hand, Jessica begins to touch herself, moving rhythmically.”
It’s late evening, this year. Josh is sitting on the bed in his dorm room, playing with his phone. Megan walks into the room, carrying a pizza box and a laptop, and says, “Happy Anniversary, love!”

Josh looks up from his phone, and then stands and rushes up to Megan, saying, “Honey! Happy Anniversary!” He gives Megan a quick hug.

“As promised, I brought pizza and Netflix… and kisses!” Megan says, as she and Josh embrace. Megan places the pizza and laptop on a side table, next to the bed. Josh smiles as Megan pulls him to her, and they kiss. After a bit, Megan pulls away slightly, so she can look Josh in the eye. “I love you, Josh,” Megan says, sincerely.

“I love you, too, Megan,” Josh replies, as the two again embrace.

Suddenly, Megan pulls away. “Oh! I almost forgot!” she exclaims. Megan produces a rose from her back pocket, presenting it to Josh with a purposefully cheesy bow and a flourish. "Here you are," she says, “a flower for my beauty.”

“Oh, thank you! I love it!” says Josh. He turns and puts the flower on a table by the bed.

As soon as Josh turns around and places the flower on the table, Megan grabs him from behind, holding him around the waist and chest. “C’mere, you!” she says, as she kisses Josh’s neck.

Josh giggles a bit. He lets the kissing go on for a second, then gently removes Megan’s hands and pivots out of her hold. As he walks back to the bed, Josh smiles and says, “Come on, let’s cuddle and watch the movie.” Josh sits on the bed, and leans forward to fiddle with the laptop.

Megan, still standing, turns to Josh and says, “Can’t we just… celebrate a little, first?”

Josh stops working on the laptop, and turns his head towards Megan. “Celebrate how?” he asks.

“Oh, you know...,” Megan says, as she draws Josh up and pulls him closely to her.

Josh wriggles away from Megan’s grasp, playfully exclaiming, “Megan! Stop that! C’mon, let’s just cuddle and watch the movie." Josh sits and goes back to fiddling with the laptop. Megan remains standing, arms crossed. “I knew you would do this,” Megan says.

Josh stops working on the laptop, and turns to face Megan. “Do what?” Josh asks.

“You’re ruining it,” Megan says.
“I am not ruining anything,” Josh says, upset. He pulls his feet up on the bed, and crosses his arms.

“Hey, love. Don’t be like that,” Megan says, sweetly. She sits down next to Josh, saying, “You know I love you.”

“I know,” Josh says. Megan reaches over and straightens Josh’s legs out along the bed. Megan lays Josh down on the bed, and leans over his body. Josh resists as Megan attempts to climb on top of him, protesting, “I love you, too, but I don’t want…” Josh gasps and gently pushes his hand against Megan’s chest, saying, “Megan, no. Please. I don’t want to do this right now.”

Megan stops, saying, “Hey, it’s okay. You don’t need to worry. It won’t hurt.” She removes Josh’s hand from her chest and gives it a kiss, setting it down on the bed. Nervously, Josh says, “That’s not what I’m...,” but Megan interrupts him.

“Shhh. It’s all right,” Megan says, as she stands up and moves away from Josh.

“Don’t you love me?” Megan asks, sounding frustrated.

Josh starts to respond, saying, “Yes, but…”

“And I love you,” Megan interrupts, “I love you so much. I just want to celebrate. I want to show you how much I love you.” While Megan is talking, she takes off her own pants and underwear, and climbs back on the bed. Megan reaches down to undo Josh’s pants, and starts pulling them off.

Josh anxiously tries to keep his pants on, although he is unsuccessful. Megan pulls Josh’s pants and underwear all the way down and off, throwing them on the floor.

Josh protests, “Wait, Megan. I don’t want… I don’t know what…”

Megan interrupts him again. “It’ll be fine, Josh. I love you. You trust me, don’t you?”

“Well, I mean, of course I do,” Josh says, hesitantly.


Straddling Josh’s hips, Megan gets herself into position. She thrusts herself down onto Josh, moaning. Slowly at first, she rhythmically rocks against Josh.

Josh tries to say, “Stop,” but it’s not very intelligible. He tries to say, “Please, Megan. No. Stop,” but his voice is shaky, and he seems to be crying. Josh eventually stops moving and speaking.

“I love you so much, Josh,” Megan moans. “You feel so good.”
Josh lies there while Megan continues to move against him. After a while, Megan’s movements speed up. She moans loudly, then stops rocking and lifts herself off of Josh. Josh curls up into a ball on his side, facing the wall. He is crying, softly. Megan reaches out to Josh, placing a hand on his leg. “I love you,” Megan says quietly.
Informed Consent Statement

Dear Student,

Your participation in my research study would be greatly appreciated. I am inviting you to take this survey because you are a student at an American college or university. Hopefully, about 250 people will end up taking part in this study.

The purpose of this study is to investigate real-life circumstances that can arise in college relationships. If you agree to participate, we would like you to watch or read a presented scenario, and then answer the given questions to the best of your ability. It should take about 20-30 minutes to complete this survey.

*Your part in this study is anonymous and confidential.* That means that your answers to all questions are private, and not linked to you or your identity in any way. No one else – including the researcher – will know if you participated in this study, and no one can find out what your answers were. IP addresses, names, and other identifying information will *not* be recorded. Scientific reports will be based on group data and will not identify you or any individual as having participated in this project.

At the end of the survey, you will be taken to an outside link, where you can type in your contact information to be entered into a raffle for a $10 Amazon gift card. The raffle entry site will be hosted separately, and will *in no way* be linked to your survey responses. All answers to survey questions are completely anonymous, and will be *NOT* be linked to you personally.

The survey you are about to take contains mature themes that may be uncomfortable or emotional for some participants. If you need to quit the survey, or want to take a break and come back to the survey, you may do so at any time.

Taking part in this research study is completely voluntary. If you decide not to be in this study, or if you stop participating at any time, you won’t be penalized or lose any benefits for which you otherwise qualify.

Your participation in this study is valuable. We hope that others may benefit in the future from what we learn as a result of this study.

If you have any further questions regarding your rights as a participant in a research project you may contact Dr. Robert Winn of the Human Subjects Research Review Committee of Northern Michigan University (906-227-2300) *rwinn@nmu.edu*. Any questions you have regarding the nature of this research project will be answered by
the principal researcher or her research advisor, who can be contacted as follows: [Researcher] Emily Plackowski (906-286-0943) eplackow@nmu.edu or [Advisor] Dr. Jacob Daar (906-227-2992) jdaar@nmu.edu.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Emily Plackowski
Head Researcher

☐ I certify that I am at least 18 years old.
☐ I have read the above “Informed Consent Statement,” and volunteer to participate in this research project. The nature, risks, demands, and benefits of the project have been explained to me. I understand that my identity and participation will remain anonymous, and that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without incurring ill will or negative consequences.
APPENDIX G

Survey Questions

1. Generic Versions of the Eight Sets of Condition Questions:

– What term best describes the relationship of the two people in the presented scenario?
  o Single / Just Friends (1)
  o Newly Dating (2)
  o Dating (one year or more) (3)
  o Cohabiting (living together) (4)
  o Married or Domestic/Civil Partnership (5)

– Were the two people in the presented scenario celebrating anything?
  o Yes (1)
  o No (2)
  o I don't know / I don't remember (3)

– What were they celebrating? ________________________________

– In the presented scenario, did [aggressor's name] and [victim's name] engage in sexual intercourse?
  o Yes (1)
  o No (2)
  o I'm not sure (please explain:) (3) ________________________________

– *Please indicate your level of agreement / disagreement with the following statement:* In the presented scenario, [aggressor's name] wanted to have sex with [victim's name].
  o Strongly Disagree (1)
  o Disagree (2)
  o Slightly Disagree (3)
  o Neither Agree nor Disagree (4)
  o Slightly Agree (5)
  o Agree (6)
  o Strongly Agree (7)
– *Please indicate your level of agreement / disagreement with the following statement:*
In the presented scenario, [victim's name] wanted to have sex with [aggressor's name].
  o Strongly Disagree (1)
  o Disagree (2)
  o Slightly Disagree (3)
  o Neither Agree nor Disagree (4)
  o Slightly Agree (5)
  o Agree (6)
  o Strongly Agree (7)

– *For the next two questions, please indicate your perception of the gender(s) of the two people in the presented scenario.*

Which of the following terms best describes [aggressor's name]'s gender?
  o Male (1)
  o Female (2)
  o Other (please specify) (3) _______________________________________________

Which of the following terms best describes [victim's name]'s gender?
  o Male (1)
  o Female (2)
  o Other (please specify) (3) _______________________________________________

– *For the next two questions, please indicate your perception of the sexual orientation(s) of the two people in the presented scenario.*

Which of the following terms best describes [aggressor's name]'s sexual orientation?
  o Heterosexual (1)
  o Homosexual (Gay / Lesbian) (2)
  o Bisexual (3)
  o Other (please specify) (4) _______________________________________________

Which of the following terms best describes [victim's name]'s sexual orientation?
  o Heterosexual (1)
  o Homosexual (Gay / Lesbian) (2)
  o Bisexual (3)
  o Other (please specify) (4) _______________________________________________
– For the next two questions, please indicate your perception of the age(s) of the two people in the presented scenario.

How old do you think [aggressor's name] is? __________________

How old do you think [victim's name] is? __________________

– Describe what you think happened in the presented scenario. Please pay attention to describing the feelings, emotions, and reasoning of the people involved.

________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

– How believable did you find the presented scenario?
  o Extremely Unbelievable (1)
  o Unbelievable (2)
  o Slightly Unbelievable (3)
  o Neither Believable nor Unbelievable (4)
  o Slightly Believable (5)
  o Believable (6)
  o Extremely Believable (7)

– How emotionally evocative did you find the presented scenario?
  o Extremely Unevocative (1)
  o Unevocative (2)
  o Slightly Unevocative (3)
  o Neither Evocative nor Unevocative (4)
  o Slightly Evocative (5)
  o Evocative (6)
  o Extremely Evocative (7)

– How emotionally powerful did you find the presented scenario?
  o Extremely Lacking in Power (1)
  o Lacking in Power (2)
  o Slightly Lacking in Power (3)
  o Neither Powerful nor Lacking in Power (4)
  o Slightly Powerful (5)
  o Powerful (6)
  o Extremely Powerful (7)
– How effective did you find the presented scenario?
  o Extremely Ineffective (1)
  o Ineffective (2)
  o Slightly Ineffective (3)
  o Neither Effective nor Ineffective (4)
  o Slightly Effective (5)
  o Effective (6)
  o Extremely Effective (7)

– How confusing did you find the presented scenario?
  o Extremely Confusing (1)
  o Confusing (2)
  o Slightly Confusing (3)
  o Neither Clear nor Confusing (4)
  o Slightly Clear (5)
  o Clear (6)
  o Extremely Clear (7)

– Please indicate your level of agreement / disagreement with the following statement:
Sexual assault occurred in the presented scenario.
  o Strongly Disagree (1)
  o Disagree (2)
  o Slightly Disagree (3)
  o Neither Agree nor Disagree (4)
  o Slightly Agree (5)
  o Agree (6)
  o Strongly Agree (7)

– Please indicate your level of agreement / disagreement with the following statements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (1)</th>
<th>Disagree (2)</th>
<th>Slightly Disagree (3)</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree (4)</th>
<th>Slightly Agree (5)</th>
<th>Agree (6)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (7)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What [aggressor's name] did in the presented scenario was sexual assault.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What [victim's name] did in the presented scenario was sexual assault.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
– How confident are you in your decision about whether or not sexual assault occurred in the presented scenario?
  o Extremely Unsure (1)
  o Unsure (2)
  o Slightly Unsure (3)
  o Neither Sure nor Unsure (4)
  o Slightly Sure (5)
  o Sure (6)
  o Extremely Sure (7)

– Please indicate your level of agreement / disagreement with the following statement:
Unwanted sexual behavior(s) occurred in the presented scenario.
  o Strongly Disagree (1)
  o Disagree (2)
  o Slightly Disagree (3)
  o Neither Agree nor Disagree (4)
  o Slightly Agree (5)
  o Agree (6)
  o Strongly Agree (7)

– Please indicate your level of agreement / disagreement with the following statements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (1)</th>
<th>Disagree (2)</th>
<th>Slightly Disagree (3)</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree (4)</th>
<th>Slightly Agree (5)</th>
<th>Agree (6)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (7)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What [aggressor's name] did in the presented scenario would be considered unwanted sexual behavior.</td>
<td>o</td>
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<td>o</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>What [victim's name] did in the presented scenario would be considered unwanted sexual behavior.</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
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<td>o</td>
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<td>o</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

– How confident are you in your decision about whether or not unwanted sexual behavior(s) occurred in the presented scenario?
  o Extremely Unsure (1)
  o Unsure (2)
  o Slightly Unsure (3)
  o Neither Sure nor Unsure (4)
  o Slightly Sure (5)
  o Sure (6)
  o Extremely Sure (7)
– To what extent was [aggressor's name] responsible for having sexual intercourse with [victim's name]?
  o 1 - Not at all Responsible
  o 2
  o 3
  o 4 - Somewhat Responsible
  o 5
  o 6
  o 7 - Completely Responsible

– To what extent did [aggressor's name] act selfishly in having sexual intercourse with [victim's name]?
  o 1 - Not at all Selfishly
  o 2
  o 3
  o 4 - Somewhat Selfishly
  o 5
  o 6
  o 7 - Completely Selfishly

– To what extent did [aggressor's name]'s behavior cause the sexual intercourse to occur?
  o 1 - Did Not Cause
  o 2
  o 3
  o 4 - Somewhat Caused
  o 5
  o 6
  o 7 - Completely Caused

– To what extent did [aggressor's name] intend for sexual intercourse to occur?
  o 1 - Did Not Intend
  o 2
  o 3
  o 4 - Somewhat Intended
  o 5
  o 6
  o 7 - Completely Intended
– How much was [aggressor's name] to blame for having sexual intercourse with [victim's name]?
  o 1 - Not at all to Blame
  o 2
  o 3
  o 4 - Somewhat to Blame
  o 5
  o 6
  o 7 - Completely to Blame

– To what extent was [victim's name] responsible for having sexual intercourse with [aggressor's name]?
  o 1 - Not at all Responsible
  o 2
  o 3
  o 4 - Somewhat Responsible
  o 5
  o 6
  o 7 - Completely Responsible

– To what extent did [victim's name]’s behavior cause the sexual intercourse to occur?
  o 1 - Did Not Cause
  o 2
  o 3
  o 4 - Somewhat Caused
  o 5
  o 6
  o 7 - Completely Caused

– To what extent did [victim's name] have a choice in having sexual intercourse with [aggressor's name]?
  o 1 - No Choice at all
  o 2
  o 3
  o 4 - Somewhat of a Choice
  o 5
  o 6
  o 7 - Complete Choice
– How much was [victim's name] to blame for having sexual intercourse with [aggressor's name]?
  o 1 - Not at all to Blame
  o 2
  o 3
  o 4 - Somewhat to Blame
  o 5
  o 6
  o 7 - Completely to Blame

– To what extent did [victim's name] intend for sexual intercourse to occur?
  o 1 - Did Not Intend
  o 2
  o 3
  o 4 - Somewhat Intended
  o 5
  o 6
  o 7 - Completely Intended

– Please indicate your level of agreement / disagreement with the following statements regarding [aggressor's name]'s feelings, emotions, and reasoning in the presented scenario:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (1)</th>
<th>Disagree (2)</th>
<th>Slightly Disagree (3)</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree (4)</th>
<th>Slightly Agree (5)</th>
<th>Agree (6)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (7)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[Aggressor’s name] was physically aggressive.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Aggressor’s name] felt powerful.</td>
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<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Aggressor’s name] was in control of the situation.</td>
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<td>o</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Aggressor’s name] enjoyed what happened.</td>
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<td>o</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Aggressor’s name] was apologetic for what happened.</td>
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<tr>
<td>[Aggressor’s name] was upset by what happened.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Aggressor’s name] felt scared.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Aggressor’s name] felt sad.</td>
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<td>o</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please indicate your level of agreement / disagreement with the following statements regarding [victim's name]'s feelings, emotions, and reasoning in the presented scenario:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (1)</th>
<th>Disagree (2)</th>
<th>Slightly Disagree (3)</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree (4)</th>
<th>Slightly Agree (5)</th>
<th>Agree (6)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (7)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[Victim’s name] was physically aggressive.</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Victim’s name] felt powerful.</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Victim’s name] was in control of the situation.</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Victim’s name] enjoyed what happened.</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Victim’s name] was apologetic for what happened.</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Victim’s name] was upset by what happened.</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Victim’s name] felt scared.</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Victim’s name] felt sad.</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please indicate your level of agreement / disagreement with the following statement: In the presented scenario, [victim's name] consented to have sex with [aggressor's name].

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Slightly Disagree (3)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (4)
- Slightly Agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly Agree (7)

How confident are you in your decision about whether or not [victim's name] consented to have sex with [aggressor's name] in the presented scenario?

- Extremely Unsure (1)
- Unsure (2)
- Slightly Unsure (3)
- Neither Sure nor Unsure (4)
- Slightly Sure (5)
- Sure (6)
- Extremely Sure (7)
– Please indicate your level of agreement / disagreement with the following statement:
In the presented scenario, [aggressor's name] forced or coerced [victim's name] to have sex.
   o Strongly Disagree (1)
   o Disagree (2)
   o Slightly Disagree (3)
   o Neither Agree nor Disagree (4)
   o Slightly Agree (5)
   o Agree (6)
   o Strongly Agree (7)

– How confident are you in your decision about whether or not [aggressor's name] forced or coerced [victim's name] to have sex in the presented scenario?
   o Extremely Unsure (1)
   o Unsure (2)
   o Slightly Unsure (3)
   o Neither Sure nor Unsure (4)
   o Slightly Sure (5)
   o Sure (6)
   o Extremely Sure (7)
Do you think there should be consequences for [aggressor's name]’s behavior?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- I don’t know (3)

From the list below, please check the specific sanctions you would recommend for [aggressor's name] (please check all that you think should apply):

- No sanctions (1)
- Verbal warning (2)
- Written warning (3)
- Educational sanction/activity ([aggressor's name] is required to perform a positive action for the college community by completing, for instance, a work assignment, writing a letter of apology, attending an educational program, or writing a reflection paper.) (4)
- Fine (5)
- Assessment requirement ([aggressor's name] must be evaluated by an off-campus mental health counselor.) (6)
- Parental Notification (7)
- Loss of college privileges (such as not being allowed in the residence halls) (8)
- Community restitution ([aggressor's name] must complete non-paid work for the college.) (9)
- Removal from elected or appointed office in any student organizations registered with the college (10)
- Removal from paraprofessional employment such as Resident Assistant or Admissions Counselor (11)
- Loss of scholarship money (12)
- Loss of eligibility to work in a campus job (13)
- Loss of eligibility to play a varsity sport (14)
- Housing Suspension ([aggressor's name] must vacate campus housing for a period of time.) (15)
- College Suspension ([aggressor's name] is required to leave the college for a period of time.) (16)
- Expulsion ([aggressor's name] is permanently and immediately expelled and cannot continue at the college in any status.) (17)
- Police Involvement (including possible criminal charges for [aggressor's name], trial in front of a judge / jury, any resultant punishments, etc.) (18)
– Do you think there should be consequences for [victim's name]'s behavior?
  o Yes (1)
  o No (2)
  o I don't know (3)

– From the list below, please check the specific sanctions you would recommend for [victim’s name] (please check all that you think should apply):
  o No sanctions (1)
  o Verbal warning (2)
  o Written warning (3)
  o Educational sanction/activity ([victim's name] is required to perform a positive action for the college community by completing, for instance, a work assignment, writing a letter of apology, attending an educational program, or writing a reflection paper.) (4)
  o Fine (5)
  o Assessment requirement ([victim's name] must be evaluated by an off-campus mental health counselor.) (6)
  o Parental Notification (7)
  o Loss of college privileges (such as not being allowed in the residence halls) (8)
  o Community restitution ([victim’s name] must complete non-paid work for the college.) (9)
  o Removal from elected or appointed office in any student organizations registered with the college (10)
  o Removal from paraprofessional employment such as Resident Assistant or Admissions Counselor (11)
  o Loss of scholarship money (12)
  o Loss of eligibility to work in a campus job (13)
  o Loss of eligibility to play a varsity sport (14)
  o Housing Suspension ([victim's name] must vacate campus housing for a period of time.) (15)
  o College Suspension ([victim's name] is required to leave the college for a period of time.) (16)
  o Expulsion ([victim's name] is permanently and immediately expelled and cannot continue at the college in any status.) (17)
  o Police Involvement (including possible criminal charges for [victim's name], trial in front of a judge / jury, any resultant punishments, etc.) (18)
2. Demographic Questions:

– How old are you? ________________________________

– What college or university do you currently attend?
  o Northern Michigan University (1)
  o Other (please specify) (2) ________________________________

– Are you an undergraduate or graduate student?
  o Undergraduate (1)
  o Graduate (2)

– What year in school are you?
  o Undergraduate, 1st year (1)
  o Undergraduate, 2nd year (2)
  o Undergraduate, 3rd year (3)
  o Undergraduate, 4th year (4)
  o Other Undergraduate Year (please specify) (5) ________________________________
  o Graduate, 1st year (6)
  o Graduate, 2nd year (7)
  o Other Graduate Student Year (please specify) (8) ________________________________
  o Other Student Classification (please specify) (9) ________________________________

– What is your major?

  ▼ Accounting (1).... Not Listed (to specify, please click the forward arrows) (129)

– If your major was not listed, please write it here: ________________________________
– Which of the following best represents your racial or ethnic heritage? Please check all that apply:
  ▢ Non-Hispanic White or Caucasian (1)
  ▢ Hispanic (2)
  ▢ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (3)
  ▢ East Asian (4)
  ▢ Native American, American Indian, Alaskan Native, or First Nation (5)
  ▢ Black, African-American, or Afro-Caribbean (6)
  ▢ Latino/a (7)
  ▢ Middle Eastern, Arab-American, or North African (8)
  ▢ South Asian or Indian-American (9)
  ▢ Other (please specify) (10) _________________________________________

– Which of the following terms best describes your political affiliation?
  ▢ Democrat (1)
  ▢ Republican (2)
  ▢ Independent (3)
  ▢ Libertarian (4)
  ▢ Green Party (5)
  ▢ Not Affiliated (6)
  ▢ Other (please specify) (7) ________________________________________________

– What do you consider to be your gender identity?
  ▢ Male (1)
  ▢ Female (2)
  ▢ Not Listed (please specify) (3) ____________________________________________

– Which of the following terms best describes your sexual orientation?
  ▢ Heterosexual (1)
  ▢ Homosexual - Gay (2)
  ▢ Homosexual - Lesbian (3)
  ▢ Bisexual (4)
  ▢ Other (please specify) (5) ________________________________________________
Which of the following terms best describes your current relationship status?

- Single (never married) (1)
- Newly Dating (6)
- Dating (one year or more) (2)
- Cohabiting (living together) (7)
- Married or Domestic/Civil Partnership (3)
- Separated (4)
- Divorced (8)
- Widowed (9)
- Other (please specify) (5) ______________________________________________

Have you ever been in a long-term relationship (one year or more)?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- I don't know (3)

Have you ever had sexual intercourse?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- I don't know / I prefer not to say (3)

Have you ever experienced sexual assault?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- I don't know / I prefer not to respond (3)

Have you ever committed sexual assault?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- I don't know / I prefer not to respond (3)

Do you know anyone who has ever experienced sexual assault?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- I don't know / I prefer not to respond (3)
– Have you ever been forced to engage in unwanted sexual behavior(s)?
  o Yes (1)
  o No (2)
  o I don’t know / I prefer not to respond (3)

– Have you ever acted in a way that could be considered unwanted sexual behavior?
  o Yes (1)
  o No (2)
  o I don’t know / I prefer not to respond (3)

– Do you know anyone who has ever been forced to engage in unwanted sexual behavior(s)?
  o Yes (1)
  o No (2)
  o I don’t know / I prefer not to respond (3)

– Please indicate your level of agreement / disagreement with the following statements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree (1)</th>
<th>Disagree (2)</th>
<th>Slightly Disagree (3)</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree (4)</th>
<th>Slightly Agree (5)</th>
<th>Agree (6)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (7)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women can and do commit sexual assault against men.</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men can and do commit sexual assault against women.</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women can and do commit sexual assault against other women.</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men can and do commit sexual assault against other men.</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

– Please indicate your level of agreement / disagreement with the following statements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree (1)</th>
<th>Disagree (2)</th>
<th>Slightly Disagree (3)</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree (4)</th>
<th>Slightly Agree (5)</th>
<th>Agree (6)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (7)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexual assault doesn’t happen in dating relationships.</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consent to have sex is implicitly given in a long-term relationship.</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
– Please indicate your level of agreement / disagreement with the following statements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree (1)</th>
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<th>Slightly Disagree (3)</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree (4)</th>
<th>Slightly Agree (5)</th>
<th>Agree (6)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (7)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A person must physically fight back during sex to be able to say it was sexual assault.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A person must say “no” to be able to claim sexual assault.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

– If given the choice, which would you prefer?
○ reading a book (1)
○ watching the book’s T.V. or movie adaptation (2)

– Do you have any additional comments, input, questions, or concerns you would like to share? If so, please write them here:

________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
APPENDIX H

Closing Statement and Link to Raffle Drawing

Thank you for participating in this study!

As stated before you began the survey, all of your responses will remain confidential. Please try not to discuss the particulars of this research with other students until the survey has closed, so they can participate in the study without bias.

I greatly appreciate the time you have taken to participate in this study. Your participation is valuable!

If you think that you would find it helpful to speak with someone about the topics addressed in this survey, below is a list of resources where you can find more information, or request help. If you'd like to save this information, please print this page from your web browser now by clicking "Print" in the “File” tab of your menu bar. (On certain browsers and/or computers, you may have to press “Alt” to view and access the menu bar.)

Also, you are eligible to enter a raffle for one of ten, $10 Amazon gift cards. If you would like to enter this raffle, please click here. This link will take you to an external website, where you can enter your contact information, and thus be entered into the raffle. The raffle entry site will be hosted separately, and will in no way be linked to your survey responses. All answers to survey questions are completely anonymous, and will NOT be linked to you personally.

The gift card raffle will be conducted by the researcher some time in the winter or spring of 2018. Winners will be notified by e-mail and provided with information about how to collect the prize.

Thank you again for your time and participation!

Sincerely,

Emily Plackowski

eplackow@nmu.edu
APPENDIX I

Resource List, for Those Seeking Help or Information

For More Information, or To Find Help

– RAINN – https://www.rainn.org/
– National Sexual Assault Telephone Hotline (24/7) – 800-656-HOPE (4673) → **You can also visit online.rainn.org to receive support via confidential online chat.**
– National Sexual Violence Resource Center – http://www.nsvrc.org/ → **This site offers a wide variety of information relating to sexual violence including a large legal resource library.**
– The National Domestic Violence Hotline – http://www.thehotline.org/ **Hotline:** 800-799-SAFE → **Advocates can provide local direct service resources (safehouse shelters, transportation, casework assistance) and crisis intervention. Interpreter services available in 170 languages.**
– National Teen Dating Abuse Online Helpline – http://www.loveisrespect.org/ → **Assists teens who are, or may be, in abusive relationships.**
– National Coalition Against Domestic Violence – http://www.ncadv.org/ → **Advocate for victims and survivors; trying to create a zero tolerance society.**

For Male Survivors of Sexual Assault

– Malesurvivor.org – http://www.malesurvivor.org/index.php → **Information and a therapist search for male survivors of sexual violence.**
For LGBTQ Survivors
– The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP) – avp.org/ncavp.htm
*Hotline:* (212) 714-1141

→ *Documents and advocates for victims of many kinds of violence and harassment. Can provide referral to programs across the country.*

– GLBTQ Domestic Violence Project – http://www.glbtqdvp.org/
*Hotline:* 800-832-1901

→ *Website, information and hotline for GLBTQ victims of domestic violence and their families.*

*Hotline:* 617-742-4911

→ *Provides emotional support, information, and safety planning for LGBTQ, transgender, BDSM, or polyamorous folks who are being abused or who have been abused by a partner.*

For College Students

→ *A government website dedicated to educating students and schools about Title IX and sexual assault.*

– Know Your IX – https://www.knowyourix.org/

→ *Provides information for students about their Title IX rights in regards to ending sexual violence on campus.*

– End Rape on Campus – http://endrapeoncampus.org

→ *An advocacy organization dedicated to assisting students file Title IX complaints.*

Marquette Area
– Harbor House / Women’s Center – http://wcmqt.weebly.com/

1310 S Front St.
Marquette, MI 49855

*Emergency Confidential Hotline (24/7):* 906-226-6611 or 1-800-455-6611
Business Line (General Information): 906-225-1346

→ Harbor House is a safe haven that provides emergency shelter to survivors of domestic violence and/or sexual assault. Harbor House offers a 24/7 crisis line and emergency intervention / response to incidents of domestic violence and sexual violence, regardless of gender or gender identity.


→ Provides information and resources for recognizing and breaking away from various types of relationship violence.

→ Tri-County Safe Harbor, Inc. – http://www.safe3c.com/

24-hour Crisis Line: 1-800-682-1649 or 906-789-1166

E-mail: info@safe3c.com

Office Phone Numbers

Escanaba: (906) 789-9207

Menominee: (906) 863-1116

Manistique: (906) 286-4040

→ Free, confidential help. Domestic violence and sexual assault services, including advocacy, children’s services, support groups, referrals, emergency safe housing, education, transportation, and therapy. Serving Delta, Menominee, and Schoolcraft counties.

→ UP Health Systems: Marquette – (906) 228-9440
580 W. College
Marquette, MI 49855

→ UP Health Systems: Bell (Ishpeming) – (906) 486-4431
901 Lakeshore Drive
Ishpeming, MI 49849

→ Pathways: Community Mental Health – (906) 225-1181
24/7 Hotline: (888) 728-4929
200 West Spring Street
Marquette, MI 49855
On Campus: Northern Michigan University

– Health Promotion Office (1201 University Center) – 906-227-1455

– University Health Center (Gries Hall-Ground Floor) – (906)-227-2355

→ Appointment required, but communicating the need for urgency in the event of sexual misconduct will allow for the soonest possible appointment. Can provide a medical examination as well as STI and pregnancy testing.

– Counseling and Consultation Services (3405 Hedgcock) – 906-227-2981

Public Safety and Police Services (100 Services Building) – (906) 227-2151

Emergency: 911

→ When a report of a sexual assault is received, Public Safety and Police Services will immediately assign a specially trained officer to investigate the incident and work with the complainant through all stages of the investigation, prosecution and/or University student conduct system action. The officer will also inform the complainant of other support services available.

– Title IX Coordinator (158 Services Building) – (906) 227-2420
  Janet Koski: Email: jakoski@nmu.edu

– Housing and Residence Life (3502 Hedgcock) – (906)-227-2620

– Dean of Students Office (2001 Hedgcock) – (906)-227-1700
APPENDIX J

IRB Administrative Approval

Office of Graduate Education and Research <graduate@nmu.edu>  
Fri, Sep 8, 2017 at 1:09 PM  
To: eplackow@nmu.edu  
Cc: Jacob Daar <jdaar@nmu.edu>, Derek Anderson <dereande@nmu.edu>  
Memorandum  

TO:  Emily F. Plackowski; Department of Psychology  

CC:  Jacob Daar; Department of Psychology  

FROM:  Dr. Robert Winn; Interim Dean of Arts and Sciences/IRB Administrator  

DATE:  September 8, 2017  

SUBJECT:  IRB Proposal HS17-875  

"Investigating Perceptions of Sexual Violence in Collegiate Dating Couples"  

Proposed Project Dates:  3/1/2017 – 4/1/2018  

Your proposal “Investigating Perceptions of Sexual Violence in Collegiate Dating Couples” has been approved under the administrative review process. Please include your proposal number (HS17-875) on all research materials and on any correspondence regarding this project.

Any changes or revisions to your approved research plan must be approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to implementation. If you do not complete your project within 12 months from the date of your approval notification, you must submit a Project Renewal Form for Research Involving Human Subjects. You may apply for a one-year project renewal up to four times.

All forms can be found at the NMU Grants and Research website:  http://www.nmu.edu/grantsandresearch/node/102

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Graduate Education and Research  
Northern Michigan University  
1401 Presque Isle Avenue  
401 Cohodas Hall  
Marquette MI 49855  
906.227.2400  
graduate@nmu.edu