

THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY
SCHREYER HONORS COLLEGE

DIVISION OF HUMANITIES, ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

DOES AN INDIVIDUAL'S LOVE STYLE HAVE AN EFFECT ON THE WAY HE/SHE
PERCEIVES AGGRESSION IN A SEXUALLY COERCIVE RELATIONSHIP?

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Spring 2011

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements
for a baccalaureate degree
in Applied Psychology
with honors in Applied Psychology

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to investigate the role of love style Mania in relation to perceptions of sexually coercive behaviors perpetrated by a man or a woman. It was hypothesized that individuals high in Mania would perceive a sexually coercive attack toward a target as 'romantic' and rate the quality of the relationship between target and perpetrator higher than those low in Mania. A 2 (perpetrator gender) X 3 (coercive strategy to obtain sex; verbal, alcohol, or physical abuse) X 2 (high-low Mania) MANOVA was computed using perceived romanticism of the coercive behavior and overall relationship quality as the dependent variables. Results found coercive behavior was considered significantly more romantic when it was initiated by a female aggressor compared to a male aggressor. A coercive strategy by Mania interaction also revealed that participants high in Mania rated the physical coercion interaction significantly more romantic compared to verbal coercion and alcohol coercion used to obtain sex. In contrast, when alcohol was used as a coercive tactic those high in Mania found the behavior significantly less romantic than those low in Mania.

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Introduction

Approximately 50% of women in the United States have been, will be, or have experienced an attempted rape in their lifetime (Bostwick & Delucia, 1992; Pumphrey-Gordon & Gross, 2007). Family studies (research conducted by academics) coincide with federal sources which found approximately 302,081 women and 92,748 men are raped each year (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). Though this high prevalence rate may come as a surprise, what is even more astounding is the amount of research that has found date rape to be more common than stranger rape. In a study conducted on college rape survivors, Schultz and Desavage (1975) found that 73% of the rapes had occurred on a date. More intensive studies with a focus on rape victims have found that 39% of rapes were perpetrated by husbands, partners or relatives of the victim, while only 10% to 17% were perpetrated by a stranger (Koss, Koss & Woodruff, 1991; Wilson & Leith, 2007).

Date Rape

Rape has been defined as “penetration against consent through force, threat of force, or when the victim was incapacitated with alcohol or other drugs” (Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski, 1987, 163). Date rape is defined the same way; the only difference is the victim is acquainted in some way with the perpetrator. However, more recently the defining factors of date rape have been twisted in an attempt to excuse the rapist’s behavior in a variety of circumstances. For instance, some people have an issue with date rape because they attribute it to a woman who has had sex with a man and later regrets it, therefore she insists it was rape (Gutmann, 1990 as cited in Koss 1992). Victim blaming is when an aspect about the victim’s character is perceived as the causation of the rape (Janoff-Bulman, 1979; as cited in Davies & Rogers, 2006). This is among one of the many reasons rape incidences often go unreported: the victim fears that family,

friends, and authorities will either not believe them or feel that they have not been victimized (Davies & Rogers, 2006). It is these perceptions, and many more, that have made it difficult for researchers to measure the incidence and prevalence of date rape. Instead what they have found is a variety of perceptions of date rape that have caused it to be controversial and sometimes even excusable. To study such perceptions would be to approach the issue in a more backward fashion, attempting to understand the excuses that justify the behavior so one can understand why such incidences occur in the first place.

One of the most common reasons date rape is excused and differentiated from being legitimate rape is ironically the same factor it is defined by-- the rape is perpetrated by an acquaintance. For this reason, it is often not recognized as being criminal or sexually abusive (Ward, 1995). This skewed perception of reality is prevalent in cases where a couple is in a long term relationship when the date rape takes place. Weis and Borges (1973) suggested that men in a long term relationship feel more entitled to sex. This theory was tested in a study by Giarrusso, Johnson, Goodchilds, and Zellman (1979) when a group of high school students were questioned and 43% of boys and 32% of girls felt it was acceptable for a boy to force sex on a girl if they dated for a long time. Recent studies indicate that it is even worse if the rape occurs between a married couple with 25-30% of people saying that a woman does not have the right to refuse her husband (Kirkwood & Cecil, 2001).

Unfortunately, this perception of entitlement is sometimes accepted by the victim as well. Frazier and Seales (1997) found through their study that 100% of women raped by strangers identified it as rape, while only half of those raped by an acquaintance did the same. Another study had similar findings when 73% of individuals classified as rape victims denied they were raped (Gilbert, 1991; as cited in Koss, 1992). Researchers have found that women may not

describe their sexual assault as rape due to situational factors, one of them being if they are acquainted with the perpetrator (Kahn, Jackson, Kully, Badger & Halvorsen, 2003). Another influential factor they have found to play a role in the reporting of rape is the amount of force or struggle involved (Kahn et al., 2003). Researchers found that when violent force or a considerable amount of struggle was used then the woman was more likely to label her experience as a rape (Kahn et al., 2003). Unfortunately, that still means a lot of rapes are being excused as something less traumatizing, and if the victims can't identify their experience as rape, then how will it get reported? Furthermore, if it doesn't get reported, how can it be stopped? The answer is-- it can't be and it won't be.

The problem goes beyond the perceptions of the victims; depending on the circumstances an individual may not classify a date rape incidence as rape because the victim "had it coming." Those who hold this perception embrace the viewpoints of the Sexual Social Exchange Theory (Basow & Minieri, 2011). In the Sexual Social Exchange Theory, a woman's sexuality holds an exchange value which is reciprocated to a deserving man who has initiated and paid for a date (Belk & Coon, 1993). This theory suggests that the woman "owes" the man who spends time and money on her, and it would be unfair not to reciprocate with an equivalent act of appreciation (i.e. sexual favors) (Basow & Minieri, 2011).

Various studies have found that it is common in the American dating system for money and sex to be exchanged (Korman & Leslie, 1982; McCormick & Jesser, 1983; Weis & Borges, 1973; as cited in Muehlenhard, & Linton, 1987). A study of high school students found that 12% of girls and 39% of boys felt it was acceptable for a boy to force sex on a girl if he spent a lot of money on her (Giarrusso et al., 1979) Similarly, college students indicated that it is more justifiable for a man to force a woman into sex if she allows him to pay for all of the date

expenses and does not offer to split the bill (Muehlenhard, 1987; Basow & Minieri, 2011).

However, Korman and Leslie (1982) suggested that a woman offering to split the bill could have the opposite effect. Splitting the bill may be seen as emasculating the man, and he may take action to regain his pride through aggressive sexual behavior (Korman & Leslie, 1982).

Up until this point, all studies cited have only focused on male perpetrators of date rape, but it should be noted that there are instances where men are victims. Such occurrences are often overlooked and underreported. Men who are date raped are often hesitant to report it, because they are embarrassed or because there is a “societal myth” that men cannot be sexually assaulted by women (Rosenfeld, 1982 as cited in Struckman-Johnson, 1988). Due to this misconception, authorities fail to recognize men as victims of sexual assault (Struckman-Johnson, 1988). To this day the Federal Bureau of Investigation still defines rape as “the carnal knowledge of a female forcibly and against her will” (fbi.gov). Notice how the definition distinctly refers to a female as the victim rather than embracing a gender-neutral definition. Unfortunately, even the legal definition of rape reinforces the “societal myth” which makes it that much more difficult for men to be acknowledged as rape victims.

Despite the fact that male victimization isn't widely accepted, men still have relatively high rates of victimization. One study found that the victimization rates between men and women were fairly close with 22% of women and 16% of men reporting they had been date raped (Struckman-Johnson, 1988). Another study found among 507 male college students, 93.5% had reported being pressured into sexual activity on at least one occasion (Muehlenhard & Cook, 1988). Still, the rate of men perpetrating date rape overshadows their victimization rates, and has caused much attention to be focused accordingly.

However, not all date rape perceptions are based on the perpetrator. Instead, many are based on how or the method. The method used to force an individual into unwanted sexual contact is referred to as a coercive technique. The coercive tactics have been conceptualized on a continuum by numerous researchers (Koss, Leonard, Beezeley, and Oros, 1985; DeKeseredy & Kelly, 1993; as cited in Basile, 2002). Generally the continuum is indicative of the degree of physical harm and potential of injury to the victim (Goodman, Koss, Fitzgerald, Russo, & Keita, 1993; Pryor, 1987; as cited in Russell & Oswald, 2002). Koss et al (1985) arranged the tactics with the offense getting increasingly severe as the continuum goes from one end to the other: sexually non-aggressive, sexually coercive, sexually abusive, and sexually assaultive. This would mean verbal and alcohol coercion would be at the far left of the continuum, while sexual coercion would be ranked as more severe on the continuum.

Verbal Tactics

Regardless of its low placement on the continuum, verbal abuse can be a very powerful coercive technique. Approximately 34% of women and 27% of men admitted to engaging in unwanted sexual activity because of a partner's verbal sexual coercion (Struckman-Johnson, Struckman-Johnson & Anderson, 2003). Verbal sexual coercion may include complaints of sexual frustration, threats to end the relationship, and even blackmail (Zurbriggen, 2000; as cited in Struckman-Johnson et al., 2003). However, this particular study chose to focus on portraying verbal coercion solely through threats of ending the relationship.

Studies have found women are more likely than men to engage in sexual activity because of verbal coercion, yet verbal coercion is still the most frequently cited coercive technique among raped men (Struckman-Johnson et al., 2003). On the other hand, surveys administered to

college men indicated that 22.4% admitted to using “extreme verbal pressure” (Koss et al., 1985). This research indicates that verbal coercion perpetrated by a male is not uncommon.

In terms of acceptability, Struckman-Johnson and Struckman-Johnson (1991) found that men’s ratings regarding verbal pressure were close to the acceptable range while women clearly rated it unacceptable. This may be explained in a finding by Oswald and Russell (2006) who discovered a relationship between participants’ characterization of a man and woman’s use of sexually coercive strategies and gender stereotypes. Participants were more inclined to view the coercive male in the scenario as aggressive while describing a coercive woman as promiscuous. Furthermore, women were rated as more aggressive when they used verbal coercion to obtain sex compared to physical coercion to obtain sex. The researchers suggest this has to do with the stereotype that women cannot inflict much physical harm (Oswald & Russell, 2006).

Another study found that women who experienced verbal coercion as opposed to physical or alcohol, were more likely to disregard the coercive incident as a miscommunication (Abbey, BeShears, Clinton-Sherrod & McAuslan, 2004). It also found that women who were verbally coerced, though they admitted they had been forced into sex seemed to experience less negative effects from the incident (Abbey et al., 2004). Therefore, it makes sense that these women also rated their experience as less serious than the women who were coerced through the use of physical force or alcohol use (Abbey et al., 2004).

Still, it needs to be recognized that verbal coercion can be devastating to victims and sometimes can be seen as worse than other tactics because it entails a level of betrayal from someone the victim trusted (Abbey et al., 2004). One study’s results were in support of this statement after they asked women to describe their worse sexual assault and some women (who had experiences of both physically and verbally coerced attacks) identified the verbally coercive

attack initiated by a trusted friend or boyfriend as being worse than the physical attack (Abbey, Ross, McDuffie & McAuslan, 1996; as cited in Abbey et al., 2004). This finding suggests that the level of aggression used in the attack is not always indicative of the perception of severity of the incidence, instead sometimes the victim's relationship with the perpetrator can be more indicative to how badly the victim will be emotionally affected.

Alcohol Tactics

At the center of the coercive technique continuum is the use of alcohol to drive the victim to engage in unwanted sexual activity. Research has consistently found a strong correlation between alcohol consumption and sexual coercion (Struckman-Johnson, 2003). A recent study found 40% of male participants reported being a victim of sexual exploitation due to intoxication (Struckman-Johnson, 2003). In addition,

Regardless, this technique was found to be one of the lesser reported tactics for women to use against men, with fewer than 5% of women admitting to intentionally trying to get a man drunk (Struckman-Johnson, 2003). However, men were more likely than women to report purposely getting a woman drunk for sex (32% vs. 18%, respectively) (Struckman-Johnson 2003).

Though the use of alcohol as a coercive tactic is more likely to be perpetrated by males, men still reported finding this tactic highly unacceptable (Struckman-Johnson and Struckman-Johnson, 1991). Women also strongly rejected the use of alcohol as a coercive strategy. By contrast, participants in a study by Oswald and Russell (2006) perceived individuals exploited through the use of alcohol to be perceived as significantly less victimized than those coerced with verbal or physical techniques. Researchers have found that drunk victims are likely to be held more responsible for the violence directed toward them than are sober victims (Richardson

& Campbell, 1980). Lerner (1980 as cited in Hammock & Richardson, 1993) proposed the just world hypothesis to explain this twisted perception. Lerner's (1980 as cited in Hammock & Richardson, 1993) just world hypothesis explained that people are constantly trying to see the world as a fair place, therefore in order to maintain this belief they need to justify why the victim deserved his or her fate.

Another explanation by Richardson and Campbell (1982) attempts to explain why drunken victims are often perceived as the guilty party. Through their findings, Richardson and Campbell (1982; as cited in Hammock & Richardson, 1993) discovered that women who become intoxicated are often judged more harshly than intoxicated men. Intoxicated women are more likely to be seen as deviant and their behavior inappropriate for the sex role women are expected to maintain. It is for these reasons Richardson and Campbell (1982) believe intoxicated female victims are all too often seen as responsible for their victimization.

There seems to be a divide as to how acceptable sexual assault is with the use of alcohol. Some find it highly unacceptable while others think the victim had it coming and deserved the assault. Regardless as to why victims are being perceived as guilty for their assault, it is still an inexcusably high prevalence of date rapes that occur with the use of alcohol.

Physical Tactics

There is more clarity when it comes to perceptions of victims and perpetrators of date rape when physical coercion is used. One study found 72% of the individuals sampled indicated that it is never acceptable, under any circumstances, for a guy to restrain a girl to force her to have sexual intercourse (Struckman-Johnson et al., 1991). Various studies have found that the greater the apparent level of force used to obtain sex, the more likely it is the behavior will be

perceived as unacceptable and classified as rape (Burt & Albin, 1981; Krulewitz & Payne, 1978; Shotland & Goodstein, 1983; as cited in Struckman-Johnson, 1991).

Unfortunately, despite the fact that many people find physical coercion to obtain sex as unacceptable, it still is an issue. Results of a questionnaire revealed that 30% of the female and 25% of the male participants had been the victim of at least one tactic of physical force (Struckman-Johnson 2003). Within this category, more women (22%) admitted to being physically restrained than men (9%). Conversely, the same study only had 3% of its participants admit to using physical harm as a tactic to obtain sex.

General Perceptions

The way sexual coercion is perceived is a key component of my study. Oswald and Russell (2006) conducted research to find patterns between the techniques used in sexual coercion and the perceived aggressiveness of the situation. This was done with the use of narratives portraying sexual coercion through the use of physical force, alcohol, or verbal coercion. The narratives were distributed to participants to read and evaluate, which included three coercive scenarios (verbal, alcohol, or physical coercion) and a control scenario (depicting consensual sex). Their findings were surprising; their results showed that participants did not perceive the use of physical force to obtain sex from an unwilling partner as highly aggressive. Furthermore, the participants did not think that the victim in the sexually coercive scenario experienced a decrease in relationship satisfaction in response to the abuse. These findings contradict what one may view as common sense.

However, research has also indicated that the gender of the perpetrator has a lot to do with how the rape is perceived. As previously mentioned, Oswald and Russell (2006) found that gender stereotypes played a large role in how aggressive participants rated the sexual assault.

One reason may be that while women are more likely to use physical aggression, men are more likely to injure their partner during a conflict (Archer, 2000). Lewis, Travea and Fremouw (2002) state these results suggest that “discrepant prevalence rates partially may be a result of assessing physical acts versus physical consequences of violence” (p. 594). Unfortunately, though perpetration of sexual aggression is about the same by each gender, the men still are perceived in a more negative light.

Empirical research has also found that sometimes sexual assault is not even perceived as rape. Cook (1995) found that a high number of college students expect sexual aggression and coercion in a variety of situations yet find the behavior highly unacceptable. In terms of gender, research has consistently shown that men find dating violence victimization more acceptable than women (Lisak, 2001; Mahlstedt & Welsh, 2005; as cited in Kaura & Lohman, 2007). Clearly, individuals do not always use their best judgment when determining whether something is acceptable or not; in a study that sampled individuals who were abusers or abused, 29% of the participants reported they interpreted this behavior as love (Bookwala, Frieze & Grote, 1994). So if some victims perceive abuse as a good thing, exactly how does sexual aggression impact relationship satisfaction?

Relationship satisfaction refers to the positive feelings an individual feels about his or her romantic partner (Kaura & Lohman, 2007). Research thus far has found that dating violence has a negative impact on the relationship satisfaction of the individual who is being victimized (Capaldi & Crosby, 1997; Cramer, 2003; Kasian & Painter, 1992; Kurdek, 1994; Testa & Leonard 2001; as cited in Kaura & Lohman, 2007). Kaura and Lohman (2007) conducted a study on the effects date rape has on victims, including how it influences relationship satisfaction. Through the use of questionnaires they tested 645 undergraduate college students, inquiring

about their history of dating violence victimization and how it affected their relationship. Their results suggested that women who were victimized rated their relationship satisfaction higher than men who were victimized (Kaura & Lohman, 2007). However, relationship satisfaction is based on more than victimization and/or perpetration of date rape. While there is more to relationship satisfaction than violence, there is little to no research that has investigated the role of love styles and how love styles relate to perceptions of relationships when sexual assault is used.

Love Styles

In 1973, John Lee published his theory of the six colours-of-love: “Eros (passionate, romantic love), Ludus (game-playing love), Storge (friendship-based love), Pragma (practical love), Mania (possessive, dependent love), and Agape (altruistic love)” (Lin & Huddleston-Casas, 2005, p 31). Lee came up with the colours-of-love model after conducting extensive interviews with a number of people who came from a variety of backgrounds (Davis & Latty-Mann, 1987). The design of his model is comparable to the color-wheel in that there are three primary love styles (Eros, Ludus, and Storge) and three secondary love styles (Mania, Pragma, and agape), each style equally valid; they are just unique in their characteristics (Hendrick, Hendrick, Foote, and Slapion-Foote, 1984).

Intrigued by Lee’s theory, Hendrick and Hendrick (1986) devised the 42 item Love Attitudes Scale. This instrument measures how much an individual embraces the beliefs and attitudes associated with each love style (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986). The Love Attitudes Scale allows researchers to discover relationships between individuals’ love styles and their behavioral patterns.

Some research has linked relationship satisfaction to various levels of each love style; lower scores on Mania and higher scores on Storge, Pragma and Eros predicted greater relationship satisfaction (Bookwala et al., 1994). Another study had similar results, finding that Eros related positively to relationship satisfaction however, contrary to the previous study, they found Pragma to be associated with lower relationship satisfaction (Morrow, Clark & Brock, 1995). It was also found that women high in Mania expressed a greater level of relationship satisfaction than men high in Mania (Morrow et al., 1995). It is an important sociological concept to study the love styles in terms of relationship satisfaction. Discovering new patterns can lead to new discoveries as to why various behaviors are accepted by some in relationships and not by others.

For the purpose of the current study, Mania will be the primary focus of this research. Due to Mania's obsessive nature and skewed rationale, one may expect Mania to be more accepting of sexually coercive behaviors. An individual who is classified as "Manic" is generally very obsessive and possessive in relationships. In some cases, the individual is so deep into the relationship that perhaps they may overlook harmful behaviors, such as rape, excusing any incidents.

Russell and Oswald (2002,) described Mania as "an ambivalent attitude toward a lover in that one yearns for that lover but at the same time is easily frustrated by the demands of the relationship" (p. 275). This definition coincides with previous research that has found Manic individuals to be more likely to initiate aggression in relationships. For example, the results of a study by Bookwala, Frieze, and Grote (1994) indicated that Mania is a strong predictor of aggression. A possible explanation for this result is that such a strong obsession toward a

romantic partner can lead to frequent jealousy that may then lead to violent behavior (Bookwala et al., 1994).

Not surprisingly Mania has also been linked to avoidance, spying, and destructive conflict (Goodboy & Myers, 2010). Manic lovers have a tendency to produce problematic relationships because of their excessive jealousy, obsessive tendencies, and dependency on their partner (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986; Fricker & Moore, 2002 as cited in Goodboy & Myers, 2010).

Current Study

A recent survey indicated 20% of college students reported being raped at some point in their life (Douglas, Collins & Warren, 1997). Since rape prevalence rates are so high, it is vital researchers take time to study what can be done to reduce the occurrence of rape. My study approaches this issue by studying the perception of the victim in a rape scenario and evaluating if the individual is capable of identifying it as a crime. The idea is, if you can't recognize the act as a crime, then you cannot and will not do anything to stop it from occurring again.

The present study takes into consideration the noted characteristics of a Manic lover and questions how these behaviors lead to the perpetration or acceptability of date rape. Furthermore, the current study examines how Mania may be related to perceptions of relationship satisfaction and romanticism when sexual assault occurs. In other words, I examine how individuals who are high or low in Mania perceive an incident of sexual assault. In addition, I determine how Mania may interact with various sexual strategies used to obtain sex (i.e., verbal, alcohol, physical abuse) to affect perceptions of quality of relationships and romance in a date rape scenario. Currently, there is not a lot of research regarding perceptions of relationship satisfaction in a relationship when rape occurs. This study is an extension of the Oswald and

Russell (2006) study and intends to explain this phenomenon. Like Oswald and Russell's (2006) research, this study observes patterns in how overall relationship satisfaction and romanticism are perceived in a relationship where sexual aggression through verbal coercion, alcohol use, or physical force occurs. Examining the participants' love style may yield patterns among acceptability of sexual coercion.

No known studies have been conducted on how a particular love style affects an individual's perception on how relationship satisfaction and romanticism are perceived in a date rape scenario. Based off the little research available on love styles, the current study suggests that individuals high in Mania would be more accepting of sexually coercive behaviors than those low in Mania. Mania was chosen because of its obsessive and possessive nature. It was hypothesized that those high in Mania would also rate the romanticism and overall relationship quality significantly higher than individuals who are low in Mania.

Procedure

Participants were randomly assigned to read one of eight scenarios; the scenarios depicted tactics (control/consensual, verbal pressure, alcohol intoxication, or physical force) used to obtain sex and were representative of both male and female perpetrators. Using the information provided, participants were asked to complete how they would rate the man and woman (counterbalanced), rate the behavior used to obtain sex, and rate the man's and woman's satisfaction with the relationship (counterbalanced) based on a 7-point Likert Scale. Also, everyone was asked to complete an additional survey which included manipulation checks and participant demographics.

Methods

Participants

Participants were 423 college students (147 males and 276 females) from a medium-sized Midwestern Catholic university (58.3%, $n = 245$) and a small eastern public college ($n = 178$). They were predominately female (65.2%, $n = 274$) and Caucasian American (85.7%, $n = 270$). The mean age was 19.6 years ($SD = 2.74$). Participants received extra credit in an Introductory Psychology course.

Materials/Measures

Vignettes

Eight vignettes of a college student date were developed to manipulate the strategy used to obtain sex (control/consensual, verbal pressure, alcohol intoxication, or physical force) and aggressor gender. In all conditions, the relationship was heterosexual. All scenarios provided general information that John and Carla were college students that have been dating for almost two months. They went on a date where they had dinner and then returned to one individual's apartment to watch a movie. The individual to whom the apartment belonged was the sexual aggressor in the scenario. In all scenarios but the consensual/control condition, it was indicated that the couple started kissing during the movie, however, when the sexual aggressor began to touch the victim "suggestively," the victim clearly stated that he or she did not want to engage in sexual intercourse. The scenarios differed by the coercive strategy used by the aggressor to obtain intercourse. In the verbal pressure condition, the aggressor threatened to end the

relationship if the victim did not agree to sex. In the intoxication condition, the aggressor provided his or her partner alcoholic beverages until he or she became drunk. In the physical force condition, the aggressor physically held down the unwilling partner to have sex. All of the scenarios stated that sexual intercourse eventually occurred as a result of the aggressor's actions. There was no indication that the victim consented to sex. It was also noted that this had been the first time the couple had sex together. In the control condition, the target responded positively to his or her partner's advances to have sex and never said "no" to sexual intercourse.

Perceptions of the Actors

Using a 7-point Likert scale (1 = not at all, 7 = very much), participants were asked to rate the overall relationship quality and the extent to which the behavior was romantic.

Mania. Mania was assessed as a subscale of the *Love Attitudes Scale (LAS)*. The LAS is a 42-item scale developed to measure Lee's (1973) love styles (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986).

Participants rated the extent to which each statement is self descriptive with regard to a current, or most recent, romantic relationship using a five point scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The LAS consists of six independent scales designed to measure Eros, Ludus, Mania, Storge, Pragma, and Agape. For the current research the internal consistencies ranged from .64 to .83. Only Mania was used in the current study and scale reliability was acceptable $\alpha = .80$. The median score for the Mania scale was 3.00, and individuals were placed into high and low Mania categories. Those low in Mania scored lower than 3.00, and those high in Mania scored 3.00 and higher.

Demographics and Manipulation checks

Participants were asked to complete a survey of basic demographics and a set of manipulation checks, which asked the participant to indicate if sex occurred on the date, who initiated the sex, and if John and Carla consented to sex.

Results

Preliminary analyses of the manipulation checks found 17 individuals misreported the person who initiated sex or incorrectly answered that sex did not occur. These participants were excluded from the analyses. We also assessed the extent to which the dependent variables were correlated. A Pearson Product Moment correlation between the two dependent variables was $r(406) = .48$.

In order to assess whether those high in Mania would be more accepting of coercive behaviors of men and women a 2 (perpetrator gender) X 2 (coercive strategy used; verbal, physical, alcohol) X 2 (high-low Mania) MANOVA was computed using overall relationship quality and perceived romanticism of the coercive behavior as the dependent variables of interest. A multivariate main effect for perpetrator gender was found $F(2, 266) = 11.06, p < .0001, \eta^2 = .07$. Univariate follow-ups revealed perpetrator gender was only significant for perceived romanticism. The behavior was considered significantly more romantic when initiated by a female aggressor ($M = 2.57, SD = 1.49$) compared to a male aggressor ($M = 1.84, SD = 1.14$).

Results also found a significant coercive strategy by high-low Mania interaction, $F(4, 554) = 2.87, p = .02, \eta^2 = .03$. Examination of the means showed that interaction effects were found only for romanticism, $F(4, 554) = 4.27, p = .015, \eta^2 = .03$. Post hoc tests showed those high in Mania found the physical coercion scenario significantly more romantic ($M = 2.70, SD = 1.49$). Means were also significantly different in the alcohol condition, suggesting those low in Mania ($M = 2.43, SD = 1.47$) found the behavior significantly more romantic than individuals high in Mania ($M = 1.87, SD = 1.24$ (see Table 1).

Discussion

Consistent with previous research, all coercive behaviors were considered more romantic when initiated by a female compared to a male (Russell & Oswald, 2006). The hypothesis that individuals high in Mania would perceive a sexually coercive attack as more romantic than individuals low in Mania was partially supported by this study. Individuals high in Mania perceived physical coercion as more romantic than those low in Mania; however this did not hold true when alcohol was used as a coercive technique. Surprisingly, we also found that those low in Mania rated the use of alcohol as a coercive tactic significantly higher than those high in Mania. We suspect individuals high in Mania may embrace a more romanticized schema of sexual coercion that includes physical aggression but does not include using alcohol as a coercive tactic. Individuals low in Mania may have perceived the use of alcohol as a coercive strategy as more romantic because it may be associated with a social norm that students are familiar with and, hence, more acceptable. In addition, it is also possible that respondents low in Mania may score higher in another love style such as Ludus (a more manipulative, game playing love style). Like Manic lovers, Ludic lovers are often described as manipulative and prefer to be in control of the relationship (Russell & Oswald, 2002). However, unlike Manics, Ludic lovers view relationships as a game and are often emotionally unattached, for these reasons they may find coercion through the use of alcohol as thrilling. Future research is needed to explore these possible explanations.

In addition, future research should explore possible covariates that might play a role in perceptions of perceived romanticism and relationship quality such as rape myths. Rape myths can be defined as “stereotypical or false beliefs about the culpability of victims, the innocence of rapists, and the illegitimacy of rape as a serious crime” (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994; as cited in

Chapleau, Oswald, and Russell, 2008, 602). Those who embrace rape myths are in a sense excusing the crime, the same way victims would if they perceived high romanticism and relationship quality to be present in a relationship where sexual assault has clearly taken place. Perhaps those who are excusing abusive behavior are supportive of rape myths, and perhaps many of their beliefs and attitudes are reflective of a particular love style. It would be interesting to see if certain love style's characteristics are more embrative of rape myths and how they correlate with the individual rated romanticism and relationship quality.

Along these lines, future researchers may also be interested in looking at how sexism plays a role in acceptance of sexual assault. Sexism plays a large role in rape myth acceptance, therefore individuals' sexist attitudes may have a large impact on which love style they relate to and how they perceive relationship satisfaction in sexually abusive situations. A study by Chapleau, Oswald and Russell (2008) observed how sexism directed toward both men and women has an effect on rape myth acceptance. They studied two different components: hostile sexism and benevolent sexism. Hostile sexism supports the idea that women who do not fit their gender role should be punished, while benevolent sexism is in favor of rewarding women who are traditionally feminine (Glick, Diebold, Bailey-Werner, & Zhu; as cited in Chapleau et al., 2008). Again, it may be beneficial to research which love styles are more embrative of each component of sexism; such information could result in a better understanding of how sexual assault would be perceived.

Limitations

In terms of limitations of the study, the questionnaires were only administered to college students; therefore responses may have reflected the participants' age, and these results should

not be generalized too far beyond this population. A second limitation is that I only studied heterosexual dating relationships. Future research could compare homosexual relationships to determine whether or not Mania has as large an effect on date rape perceptions as it does on heterosexual relationships. Also, for the current study the scale used to measure Mania was not very reliable. The use of vignettes could also be considered mitigating because participants were provided circumscribed information from which they were expected to form their opinions on.

Despite these limitations, this research is valuable in that it identifies characteristics of an individual who may be accepting of sexual aggression. Through the study of these patterns of acceptance, beliefs, and love styles, researchers will be able to profile individuals who are likely to excuse sexual assault. Although this concept is still fresh, it has the possibility of leading to better awareness programs, more efficient intervention strategies, and, ultimately, a reduction of date rapists roaming free.

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Appendix

Table 1

Interaction Means for Perceived Romanticism, Mania, and Coercive Strategy

Coercive Strategy		Mean	SD
Verbal	Low Mania	1.86	1.13
	High Mania	2.18	1.47
Physical	Low Mania	2.17 _a	1.49
	High Mania	2.70 _a	1.34
Alcohol	Low Mania	2.43 _b	1.47
	High Mania	1.87 _b	1.29

Note: Means with the same subscript are significantly different from each other.

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