



HOSTILE SEXISM AS PREDICTOR OF RAPE SUPPORTIVE ATTITUDE AMONG MEN.

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ABSTRACT

Research has reported that rape supportive attitude is a significant precursor of rape among men. Given the high prevalence of rape, it is crucial to understand the factors that significantly predict rape supportive attitude. The objective of this study was to determine if hostile sexism significantly predicts rape supportive attitude. A cross-sectional online survey was used to collect data from 107 men between the age of 18 and 65 years. Data were collected using Rape Myth Scale, Ambivalent Sexism Inventory and Demographic questionnaire. The results of the bivariate correlation showed a statistically significant positive relationship between rape supportive attitude and hostile sexism among men ($r=.33$, $p<.01$, $r^2=.11$). The linear regression result showed that hostile sexism significantly predicted rape supportive attitude ($\beta=.33$, $t=3.29$, $p<.01$). The discussion of the results and the implications for practice were provided.

Keywords: Rape supportive attitude, Hostile sexism, Rape myth acceptance.

INTRODUCTION

The literature on sexual aggression has consistently shown that rape supportive attitude attitudes are associated with perpetration and justification of sexual aggression (Flood & Pease, 2007; Lottes 1999; Morry & Winkler, 2001; Moyano, Monge & Sierra, 2017; Sierra, Bermúdez, Buéla-Casal, & Salinas, 2014; Wegner, Abbey, Pierce, Pegram & Woerner, 2015). As the name implies, rape supportive attitudes are attitudes that rationalize of rape, sexual aggression and situations around rape (Sierra, et al., 2010). It also include rape myth acceptance, victim blaming, hostile attitude towards rape victims, false beliefs about rape, and erroneous belief about the victim and the perpetrator of rape (Sierra, et al., 2010).

Research has identified some factors that are positively related to rape supportive attitude. Some of the factors include male gender (Jimenez & Abreu, 2003; Suarez & Gadalla, 2010; Vanderhaar & Carmody, 2015), benevolent sexism (Chapleau, Oswald & Russel, 2008), lack of empathy (Lee 1987; Miller, Amacker & King, 2010; O'Donohue, Yeater, & Fanetti, 2003), prior victimization (Baughner, Elhai, Monroe, & Gray, 2010; Carmody and Washington, 2001; Egan & Wilson, 2012), gender role socialization (Kings & Robert, 2011), and narcissistic personality (Bushman & Bonacci, 2003). Despite the number of factors found be associated with rape supportive attitude, evidence still suggests that there are still many unknown variables associated with rape supportive attitude (Koss, 2005; Rozee & Koss, 2001). Since one way of reducing sexual aggression is to reduce rape supportive attitude as reduction in rape supportive attitude leads to reduction in sexual aggression (Lanier, 2001; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994), such lack of knowledge is not favourable to rape intervention programs.

Hostile sexism is marked by overt hostility towards women and it is characterized by attitudes that endorse men's domination of women (Glick & Fiske, 1996). It is embedded in the perception that men deserve higher position and status mainly because women are inadequate and inferior to men (Becker & Wright, 2011). It justifies patriarchy and men's sexual exploitation of women by denigrating and objectifying women. Several researches have investigated the role hostile sexism plays in sexual



aggression, and since rape supportive attitude plays an important role in sexual aggression (Flood & Pease, 2007) there is a likelihood that hostile sexism will also have an impact on rape supportive attitude. Lisco, Parrott and Tharp (2012) examined the role of hostile sexism in the relationship between men's alcohol intake and the level at which they commit sexual aggression towards their partners. It was found that amongst men with high level of hostile sexism, there exist a positive relationship between level of alcohol intake and sexual aggression towards intimate partners. However, such relationship did not exist amongst men who endorsed low level of hostile sexism. This is an indicator that hostile sexism is related to sexual violence. Also, Masser, Vicki and Power (2006) investigated the role of hostile sexism and victim type on men's judgments about a victim of acquaintance rape and their self-reported rape proclivity. The results suggest that hostile sexism is significantly related to rape proclivity. In addition, Driskell's (2009) study on predictors of domestic violence myth acceptance supported the hypothesis that hostile sexism is a significant predictor of domestic violence myth acceptance. Furthermore, the findings of Sakalli-Ugurlu, Salman, and Turgut (2010) suggest that people who are high on hostile sexism towards women are more likely to believe in the rape myth that sexual harassment targeted at women resulted from their own provocative behaviour (i.e. victim blaming). The studies of Glick, Sakalli-Ugurlu, Ferreira and de Souza (2002) and Sakall (2001) also provide support for the positive relationship between hostile sexism and perpetration of sexual aggression and endorsement of rape myths. Put together, hostile sexism and sexually aggressive behaviour have a significant positive relationship.

One aim of this research is to enable a better understanding of the rape supportive attitudes, and examine the influence of hostile sexism on the construct. This could potentially aid in the development of effective interventions in the treatment of sexually aggressive individuals (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994). Also, there is a paucity of recent research on the relationship between hostile sexism and sexual aggression and/or rape supportive attitude, hence a gap in the literature, which this research stands to fill. For the purpose of this study, rape supportive attitude and rape myth acceptance will be used interchangeably.

Theoretical Framework

The Confluence Model of Sexual Aggression (Malamuth, Heavey & Linz, 1996) provides a theoretical framework on the possible relationship between hostile sexism and rape supportive attitude. According to this theory, male-to-female sexual aggression is a resultant of different factors that function simultaneously. These factors be can categorized into two broad concepts or pathways- the *hostile masculinity* and the *promiscuous-impersonal sex* pathways (Malamuth, Heavey & Linz, 1996). Malamuth and colleagues argued that the confluence of these two pathways provide a clear explanation for the occurrence of rape and sexual aggression. *Hostile masculinity* is described as a personality profile which consists of two major components: (i) a defensive and mistrustful attitude towards women, and (ii) the need for control and domination (Malamuth et al., 1996). Men who are high on hostile masculinity may be anxious about rejection from women and unwilling to engage in committed relationships. Such men might be intimidated by the power a woman possesses as a result of her sexual appeal. Thus, by engaging in sexual aggression (or any other situation that



enables them take control) the rejection anxiety experienced by such men may be reduced (Malamuth, Feshbach, & Jaffe, 1997). Therefore, the use of sexual aggression reduces her control over him and also ensures he assumes control. Another concept included in this construct is the feeling of hostility, which is associated with the desire to be dominating. When Malamuth and colleagues carried out a study on this construct; the results of their study demonstrated that hostile masculinity is positively related to coercive sexual aggression. In other words, men with higher scores on hostile masculinity measure were more likely to engage in coercive sex than their counterpart that scored low on the construct. Furthermore, the early study of Malamuth, Heavey, Barnes, & Acker (1995) investigated the role of hostile masculinity as a predictor of sexual and physical aggression. The results of their study indicated that there is a more direct relationship between hostile masculinity and sexual aggression than hostile masculinity and physical aggression. Furthermore, in Murnen, Wright & Kaluzny's (2002) meta-analysis, the second highest predictor of self-reported sexual aggression was hostile masculinity, and the highest predictor was hypermasculinity. Thus, the findings of these researches provide support for the confluence model of sexual aggression. The findings of a more recent research support this model (e.g. Parrott et al., 2012).

The model further elaborated on the gender role stress, positing that societies, cultures and people that consider authority, superiority, dominance, and aggression as masculine characteristics may nurture men who exhibit physically and sexually aggressive attitude towards women and to qualities that are feminine. As such, sexual aggression maybe a mechanism to reaffirm ones' own sense of masculine superiority. Based on this, Drieschner & Lang (1999) noted that hostile masculinity pathways predominantly involve cognitive and attitudinal variables, specifically those that are likely to have a link with rape supportive attitude.

Based on these findings, we expect men's hostile sexism to be positively related to rape supportive attitude.

METHODS

A cross-sectional online survey on survey monkey was used to collect data from the participants. The participants were recruited in person at different students' accommodation in London to complete the online survey. Also, recruitment emails and messages were sent across to potential participants with the link to the online survey. The survey was also posted on various social media platforms (e.g., Facebook and Twitter) to recruit other participants. The survey consisted of several questions related to rape supportive attitude, hostile sexism and demographic variables. The original version of Lonsway & Fitzgerald's (1995) Rape Myth Scale was used to assess the level of rape supportive attitude in men.

Participants

Participants were men age 18 and over who completed the online survey (N = 107). The sample size was based on G-power calculator ($r=0.3$, α err prob=0.05, power=0.80). The age section was divided into different categories (18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64 etc.); this enabled the researcher to easily classify the respondents according to stages of development into young adults, middle adults and late adults. Approximately half (42.1%, $n=45$) of the participants were between the age of 25 and 34. The remainder of the participants selected the age bracket of 18-24 (26%, $n=28$), 35-44 (18.7%, $n=20$), 45-54 (13.1%, $n=14$). Additionally, no participant was in the age range of 55-64, 65-74 and 75 years or older, which were also included in the questionnaire. This pattern portrays that the respondents consisted of mainly young and middle adults than late adults. More than half (64.5%, $n=69$) were Black/African and more than a quarter were



White/Caucasian (28%, $n=30$), and a minority of the respondents were Hispanic/Latino (3.7%, $n=4$) and people from other ethnic groups (3.7%, $n=4$).

Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of the participants

Variables	Participants	
	f	%
AGE		
18-24	28	26.2
25-34	45	42.1
35-44	20	18.7
45-54	14	13.1
ETHNICITY		
White	30	28.0
Hispanic/Latino	4	3.7
Black/ African	69	64.5
Others	4	3.7
MARITAL STATUS		
Married	38	35.5
Divorced	8	7.5
Widowed	1	.9
Separated	1	.9
Never been married	59	55.1
LEVEL OF EDUCATION		
College	7	6.5
University undergraduate	19	17.8
University graduate	52	48.6
Post Graduate studies	29	27.1



Measures

The battery of test including measure of rape supportive attitude, hostile sexism, social desirability and demographic information were administered to the participants.

Rape Supportive Attitude. This was assessed using the Rape Myth Scale (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1995). The 19-item measure incorporates all the seven components of rape supportive attitude as identified by Payne (1999) which are victim precipitation, definition of rape, male intention, victim desire-enjoyment, false charges, trivialization of the act, and deviance of the act. Responses are provided on a 7-point scale of agreement ranging from 1= *strongly disagree* to 7= *strongly agree*. The coefficient alpha for the rape myth scale was .89 and the correlation coefficient of the individual items ranged from .38 to .73. All the items within the constructs are worded positively, therefore, higher scores show higher level rape myths acceptance.

Hostile Sexism. This was assessed using the hostile sexism section in the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI; Glick & Fiske, 1996). The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory incorporates the two important constructs that positively correlate with sexism-hostile sexism and benevolent sexism. Hostile sexism section consists of 11 items which measure the negative evaluative attitude towards women. The scale has response options on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1= *strongly disagree* to 7= *strongly agree*. Some items are positively worded and the negatively worded items are reversed. This implies that high scores on the construct indicate high levels of hostile/benevolent sexism. In respect to the validity and reliability of the scale, various researches conducted in variety of cultures and settings have established that the measure has sound psychometric properties (e.g., Glick & Fiske, 2001; Viki, Abrams, & Masser, 2004; Wiener & Hurt, 2000). In all these studies, the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory had a least Cronbach's alpha of .93 for the hostile sexism subscale and .88 for the benevolent subscale.

Social Desirability. This was assessed using the Social Desirability Scale-17 (SDS-17; Joachim Stöber, 2001). The measure seeks to explore how individuals attempt to control how others perceive them. Items on the measure include "*I always admit my mistakes openly and face the potential negative consequences*" and "*I always accept others' opinions, even when they don't agree with my own*". To demonstrate its reliability, the alpha coefficient .72 and a test-retest correlation of .82 portray that the scale has a satisfactory reliability. In respect to validity, the measure demonstrated a substantial convergent validity with the Marlowe-Crowne Scale (correlation coefficient =.74).

Procedure

An online self-report survey method was used to collect information about participants' demographics, levels of rape supportive attitude, hostile sexism and social desirability. Men above the age of 18 were invited for the study. Participants were directed to follow a web link which leads to the online survey on "attitude towards offending behaviour". The participants gave their consent and were guaranteed anonymity. Also, they were notified that they could withdraw their response at any point in time before the 17th of July, 2016. Participants were also provided with a briefing



statement that identified not only the aims of the study but also made participants aware of the ethical issues pertinent to the study. They read through this prior to beginning the survey, and then checked a box to indicate that they understood the various aspects and the nature of the research and that they wish to partake in the survey.

At the end of the survey, there was a debriefing sheet describing the actual aim of the research and why the researcher withheld some of the information about the aim of the study in the briefing stage. Also, as several questions in the survey were related to rape and attitudes that endorse sexual assault, contact information of some support services were included at the end of the survey, should the participants experience any distress as a result of partaking in the study. The Psychology Ethics Committee of London Metropolitan University reviewed and approved the survey instruments and protocols.

Design/statistics

First, the frequencies and descriptive statistics of the sample were conducted. The second step in the analyses plan was to run a correlation analysis using the study's dependent variable (rape supportive attitude), the independent variables (hostile sexism) and the demographic variables. Once the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable was identified by the use of correlation, the hierarchical regression was used to examine the predictive strength of hostile sexism on rape supportive attitude. For the purpose of this study, all statistical levels were set *a priori* to .05. All the analyses were conducted with Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS Version 22)

RESULTS

Preliminary analyses

One-way ANOVA was conducted with each of the demographic variables with three or more response categories. These variables included were age, ethnicity, marital status and level of education. The significant variables from the ANOVA included a post-hoc test to determine differences between response categories. The variable that was not significant in the ANOVA was age.

On the other hand, ethnicity, marital status and level of education were all significant at $p < .05$. Ethnicity was significant with $F(3, 89) = 5.50$, $p = .002$, $\eta^2 = .156$ (indicating small effect size). This suggests that there is a statistical significant mean difference between ethnicity and rape supportive attitude. Specifically, depending on which ethnicity respondent reports he is from, influences his score on the RMA scale. Post hoc analysis, using LSD, showed that the mean score from White respondents ($M = 76.96$, $SD = 26.41$) were significantly ($p < .001$) higher than mean scores from respondents from Black/African racial background ($M = 55.46$, $SD = 23.66$), with a mean difference of 21.50. Also, the mean score from White respondents ($M = 76.96$, $SD = 26.41$) or Black respondents ($M = 55.46$, $SD = 23.66$) did not differ significantly from the mean score from Hispanic respondents ($M = 79.00$, $SD = 4.62$).

Marital status was also significant with $F(3, 89) = 3.49$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .110$. The results showed that there is a significant difference between marital status and rape supportive attitude. The LSD post-hoc test showed that the biggest and significant difference in marital status was between "divorced" ($M = 87.33$, $SD = 16.00$) and "never been married" ($M = 59.19$, $SD = 25.29$) categories, with a significant level of $p < .05$ and a mean difference of 28.15. In brief, divorced respondents scored 28.15 points higher on



average on the RMA scale than respondents who have never been married. Also, the LSD test showed a significant mean difference between “divorced” ($M=87.33$, $SD=16.00$) and “married” ($M=62.66$, $SD=25.12$) at $p<.05$ and mean difference of 24.68. It demonstrated that there is a statistically significant difference between married and divorced respondents with the divorced respondent scoring higher than the married respondent on the RMA scale.

Table 2. Difference on Rape Supportive Attitude depending on Ethnicity, Marital Status and Level of Education

Variable	Groups	M	SD	df	F	P
Ethnicity	White	76.96	26.41	3, 89	5.50	.002
	Hispanic/Latino	79	4.61			
	Black/African	55.46	23.66			
Marital Status	Married	62.66	25.12	2,89	3.49	.035
	Divorced	87.33	16.00			
	Never been married	59.19	25.29			
LOE	College	87.00	30.87	3, 89	3.24	.026
	University Undergraduate	61.06	32.57			
	University Graduate	65.02	21.58			
	Post Graduate Studies	52.91	24.18			

*Note: Only demographic variables with an effect of Rape Supportive Attitude are shown.
LOE- Level of Education.*

The final variable that was significant was level of education. The ANOVA results found that level of education was statistically significant in predicting rape supportive attitude among men, $F(3, 89) = 3.24$, $p<.05$, $Eta^2=.099$. LSD post hoc test illustrated that the statistically significant mean difference was between respondents who were in the following categories: “College” ($M=87.00$, $SD=30.87$) and “University” ($M=61.06$, $SD=32.59$) at $p<.05$ and mean difference of 25.93; “College” ($M=87.00$, $SD=30.87$) and “University Graduates” ($M=65.02$, $SD=21.58$) at $p<.05$ and mean difference of 21.98; and “College” ($M=87.00$, $SD=30.87$) and “Post-graduate studies” ($M=52.91$, $SD=24.18$) at $p<.01$ and a mean difference of 34.09. The results showed that that “College” respondents had a higher mean score than “University Students”, “University graduates” and those pursuing “Post-graduate” studies. However, the most significant mean difference was between “College” students and “Post- Graduate” students, with college students scoring higher than students pursuing Post-Graduate studies.

Main Analyses



Correlations were conducted to determine the level of relationship among the study variables and to identify the significant variables to be included in the regression analysis. The results of the bivariate correlation showed a statistically significant positive correlation between rape supportive attitude and hostile sexism among men ($r=.33$, $p<.01$, $r^2=.11$). This indicates that the higher level of hostile sexism is significantly related to higher level of rape supportive attitude among men. The two-tailed correlation also showed that social desirability is not significantly related to any of the variables ($p>.05$). This absence of a relationship implies that social desirability is not correlated with both the dependent and the independent variables in this study, hence the absence of social desirability in participants' responses. The descriptive statistics of the entire variables which include the mean, standard deviations, distribution skewness and kurtosis statistics were also conducted.

Table 3. Correlation among variables of study

Variables	1	2	3
1. HS	-		
2. RMA	.33**	-	
3. Social_Des	.07	.04	-
Mean	46.54	62.76	6.94
SD	9.30	25.85	3.34
Range	45.00	93.00	16.00
Skewness	-.030	.015	.129
Kurtosis	-.466	-.779	-.259

HS: Hostile Sexism; RMA: Rape Myth Acceptance; Social_des: Social desirability; SD; Standard Deviation. **correlation is significant at $p<.01$;

A linear regression analysis was conducted to determine if hostile sexism significantly predicts RMA. Prior to conducting the regression analysis, the assumptions of regression were tested and none was found to be violated. The linear regression result showed that hostile sexism significantly predicted rape supportive attitude ($\beta=.33$, $t=3.29$, $p<.01$). This indicates that the higher level of hostile sexism is significantly associated with levels of rape supportive attitude among men. Hostile sexism accounted for 11.2% of the variance in RMA, leaving 88.8% of the variance to be accounted by the other variables.

Table 4. Regression analysis of Hostile Sexism and RMA

Dependent variable	Variable	Beta	T	R	R ²	F	Collinearity Statistics	
							Tolerance	VIF
RMA	HS	.33	3.29**	.33	.11	10.83**	1.00	1.00

HS: Hostile Masculinity; RMA: Rape Myth Acceptance; ** $p<.01$

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which hostile sexism predicts rape supportive attitude among men. Hostile sexism is a set of interrelated attitude which justifies patriarchal views and sexual and physical exploitation of women by men and for the purpose of this study; it was operationalized with hostile sexism aspect of the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Glick & Fiske, 1996).

Analysis of the data collected showed a statistically significant positive correlation between hostile sexism and RMA. In other words, as respondents' levels of hostile sexism increase, assessed levels of rape supportive attitude increase as well. Also, hostile sexism significantly predicted RMA. Interpretation of the calculated coefficient of determination indicates that about 11% of the common variance was shared between the hostile sexism and RMA. With such a level of reported shared variance one must consider the possibility that additional variable(s) also co-occur with this phenomenon. Findings this research, however, are consistent with similar studies such as Chapleau et al., (2007), Chapleau & Oswald (2008), Driskell (2009), Glick, Sakalli-Ugurlu, Ferreira & de Souza (2002), Lisco, Parrott, & Tharp, 2012 and Masser, Viki & Power (2006). Masser, Viki and Power (2006) study suggested that hostile sexism is significantly related to rape proclivity. In addition, Driskell (2009) study on predictors of domestic violence myth acceptance supported the hypothesis that hostile sexism is a significant predictor of domestic violence myth endorsement. Furthermore, Glick, Sakalli-Ugurlu, Ferreira and de Souza (2002) study suggested that attitude that legitimize abuse positively correlate with hostile sexism (HS) and benevolent sexism (BS). Again, Glick & Fiske (1996) found that men's sexual harassment of women results from two types of sexism: hostile sexism and benevolent sexism. The studies of Chapleau et al., (2007) and Chapleau & Oswald (2008) found hostile sexism towards women to be the strongest predictor of endorsement of sexual aggression for both men and women.

There are several reasons why hostile sexism significantly predicted rape supportive attitude. Theoretically, the ambivalent sexism theory (Glick & Fiske, 1996) provides a scheme for understanding the relationship between hostile sexism and rape supportive attitude. This theory provides a conceptual understanding of (a) how societal norms or belief about women and their role in the society inform individuals' attitude, and (b) how these attitudes can result in endorsement of sexual violence against women. According to this theory, the paternalism in the society level endorses female subordination, male dominance and gender role socialisation. Hostile sexism reflects men's negative evaluation and hostility towards women who are perceived as low in their adherence to the traditional roles assigned to females. Since traditional gender role belief has a significant relationship with endorsement of sexual assault, acceptance of various rape myth, and adversarial beliefs about sexual assault (Carr & VanDeusen, 2004; Stephens & George, 2009), hostile sexism could influence an individual's level of rape supportive attitude through gender role socialization. This is because most rape myths are linked to the stereotypical explanation of the expected behaviour of men and women in the society (King & Roberts, 2011). These stereotypical beliefs and attitudes may be related to patriarchal values that have been a product of socialization and such beliefs can influence one's level of rape myth acceptance. For example, studies have found that individuals who agree with gender roles which suggest that men should be the breadwinner, and women should stay at home and take care of the children manifest greater rape myth acceptance and rape supportive attitude (Hagan et al., 2002; Kim &



Titterton, 2009). These studies highlight the role that gender role plays in rape myth acceptance, hence, further studies may explore the possibility that this variable may mediate the relationship between hostile sexism and rape myth acceptance.

Still using the ambivalent sexism theory, the gender role ideology in the paternalism society may lead to classification of female into “good” or “bad” based on their adherence to the traditional gender role (Glick & Fiske, 2001). Since hostile sexism reflects hostility towards women that are not abiding by their traditional gender role, one way of expressing such hostility could be through perpetration of aggression (both sexual and physical) or attitude supportive of aggression. From the perspective of the General Aggression Model (GAM), among sexist men, the non-adherent to the traditional female gender role by women (i.e. situational variable) will interact with hostile sexism (i.e. individual variable) to arouse feeling of negative evaluation and hostile cognition. These hostile cognitions towards non-traditional women (i.e. women who are non-adherent to the traditional female roles) may heighten the activation of gender-related scripts and schemas that facilitate the penetration and endorsement of aggression, both sexual and physical (Anderson & Bushman, 2002).

A significant contribution of this study to the literature is the clarification of the association between rape myth acceptance and hostile sexism. The results of the correlation suggested that higher scores on rape myth acceptance were significantly related to higher scores on hostile sexism scale. Therefore, men who tended to endorse sexist beliefs also were likely to endorse rape myths. This finding is also consistent with ambivalent sexism theory, as well as the work of Glick and Fiske (1996), who reported significant correlations between hostile sexism scores and RMA scores in this expected direction. Taken together, these findings present some preliminary evidence that supports endorsing sexist beliefs is significantly correlated with a tendency to endorse attitude that are supportive of rape. While the results would appear to support the contention that men who held more hostile sexist beliefs were more likely to be supportive of rape than those who held less hostile sexist beliefs, this contention should be subjected to additional study in future research due to the relatively small effect size.

Finally, the findings reveal that socio-demographic variables (i.e. ethnicity, marital status and level of education) were significant in the explanation of rape supportive attitude among men. Specifically, the mean score of White respondents were significantly higher than mean scores from respondents from Black/African racial background. Also, there was a statistically significant difference between married and divorced respondents with the divorced respondent scoring higher than the married respondent on the RMA scale. The study also indicated that “College” respondents had a higher mean score than University Students, University graduates and those pursuing Post-graduate studies, hence, the higher the level of education, the lower the level of rape supportive attitude. Such finding is important as it demonstrates the role of educational level on rape myth acceptance. However, there was no significant age difference in rape supportive attitude among men.

Implications for Practice

There are important implications for the findings that significantly linked hostile sexism to rape supportive attitude. Evidence from the present study suggests there is an immediate and practical implication for both sexual aggression education prevention programmes and sexual aggression treatment programmes. Importantly, there is evidence to suggest that changing rape supportive attitudes in some college men results in also changing their reported actual behaviour (see Foubert & Perry, 2007). Results from this study, therefore, could arguably be used to further refine sexual aggression education efforts by directing more intervention efforts on hostile sexist beliefs. In



particular, education and intervention efforts should be used to address hostile sexist views because they are related to rape supportive attitude, which in turn is related to sexual aggression. In respect to treatment, sexual aggression treatment programmes could be targeted at countering views that are consistent with hostile sexist belief system.

Also, given that rape supportive attitude is associated with sexual aggression (see Lanier, 2001; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994) to specifically prevent or treat sexually aggressive behaviours, the various rape myths within the Rape Myth Scale can also be addressed. As previously stated, there is research evidence to suggest that changing rape supportive attitude lead to reduction of sexual aggression in men. Therefore, addressing each specific rape myth, when conducting education programming, should also provide positive results. For example, the first myth states that unless a woman resists her aggressor (i.e., "...doesn't physically fight back...") it is not considered rape. This myth could be addressed in any number of ways. The most immediate method to address this myth is for programmers to include interventions that demystify the notion that non-resistance by a female equals the willingness for sexual contact to start or continue by the male. For example, this could be accomplished by explaining the confounding effects of alcohol on the inability to resist, discussing research results that suggest some women may "freeze" during sexual encounters, and discussing methods for improved communication skills during sexual related encounters. The goal of targeting this category of rape myth would be to indirectly reduce sexually aggressive acts committed by men.

Finally, researchers have suggested that a change of attitudes supportive of rape will only last for a short period if programme refreshers are not put in place immediately after the successful completion of the intervention (Fisher et al., 2008; O'Donohue, Yeater & Fanetti, 2003; Schewe, 2002). And, in order to effectively manage this short term effect, studies may discover certain variables that have an influence on rape supportive attitude so that rape prevention and treatment programmes may structure their programmes accordingly, in order to ensure long term change in attitude. Hence, having discovered that hostile sexism are significant predictors of rape supportive attitude, this knowledge could be incorporated into treatment programmes in order to ensure a long lasting effect of the treatment programme.

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