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The Effect Of Threatened Masculinity On Men's Perceptions Of Women's Refusals And Their Willingness To Continue An Unwanted Sexual Advance

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THE EFFECT OF THREATENED MASCULINITY ON MEN'S PERCEPTIONS OF WOMEN'S REFUSALS AND THEIR WILLINGNESS TO CONTINUE AN UNWANTED SEXUAL ADVANCE

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my incredible friend, Annie. I am so grateful that you found the courage to share your story with me years ago. You consistently inspire me to work towards something bigger than myself. I do not know that I would have found the passion and drive to keep up this often challenging and exhausting work without your trust in me. And of course, to my power-family. Mom, Dad, and Caitlyn—I am so blessed to come from a family that is dedicated to supporting and empowering others by changing lives, training leaders, and building communities. You are my biggest inspiration and my strongest support. Thank you for always listening to my whining, complaining, and crying; and for talking me through my best options. I could not have done this without you. Finally, to my fellow survivors of sexual assault, you are not alone, and your experience is valid!

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Sexual Aggression

Although psychologists have sought to address men's sexual aggression against women for decades, it remains a prominent issue today. In a recent study, 18% of a nationally representative sample of American women reported that they had been raped and almost 45% had experienced other forms of sexual aggression (Black, Basile, Breiding, Smith, & Walters, 2011). The current study, as well as previous research, defines sexual aggression as using strategies, such as coercion and/or force, to attempt or achieve any form of sexual contact or activity when someone does not want to or is unable to give consent (Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski, 1987; Koss & Oros, 1982). Although people often believe sexual aggression is committed by a stranger, most incidents of sexual aggression are committed by someone known to the victim, often acquaintances, current or previous partners (Black et al., 2011). Sexual assault is more likely to occur if a man and woman have had previous or current sexual relations (Black et al., 2011; Muehlenhard & Linton, 1987; Shotland & Goodstein, 1992). For this reason, this study focuses on instances of acquaintance rape rather than stranger rape, which may have a different etiology. Although sexual violence against men is a serious issue, women are disproportionately affected by rape and sexual assault. One in 5 women have experienced rape or attempted rape, compared to 1 in 71 men (Black et al., 2011). Sexual aggression is largely committed by men against women; 98.1% of female rape survivors report male perpetrators and 92.5% of female survivors of sexual violence other than rape report only male perpetrators (Black et al., 2011). Moreover, in a study of the U.S. prison population, 98.8% of incarcerated sexual assault offenders were male (Greenfield, 1997).

Recent research has also found high rates of self-reported sexual aggression by men in both community and campus samples. For example, one study found that about 20% of Navy recruits

self-reported acts of sexual aggression committed before joining the military (Rau et al., 2010). Other studies have found male self-reported rates of sexual aggression ranging from 25% to as high as 64% (e.g., Abbey, McAuslan, & Ross, 1998; Abbey, Parkhill, BeShears, Clinton-Sherrod, & Zawacki, 2006; Koss, et al., 1987; Muehlenhard & Linton, 1987; Thompson, Kingree, Zinzow, & Swartout, 2015).

The present study examines how men's motivations may influence their perception of a sexual encounter, and thereby their willingness to continue to push an unwanted sexual advance. One such motivation that has been suggested in past research is to reassert one's masculinity (as suggested by Malamuth, Linz, Heavey, Barnes, & Acker, 1995). Sexual rejection is viewed by some men as a threat to their masculinity, and the use of coercion or force is seen as justified to reestablish their dominance. Specifically, these men may wish to reassert their masculinity by continuing an unwanted sexual advance in order to relieve masculine gender role stress that has been made salient by a threat to their masculinity. If the motivator of masculinity threat was salient, motivations to achieve the sex act would filter men's perception to see what they wish: a woman who wants to continue the desired level of intimacy (because she is "playing games" or "leading him on"). The present study sought to examine this process by threatening men's masculinity in a lab proxy, then having them read a vignette of a sexual scenario in which the woman character used one of two refusals that varied in the directness of her resistance message. Participants were then asked to rate their perceptions of the woman's refusal, or their "perception of her willingness to have sex", which is intended to reveal if they perceived the woman's refusal as resistance. Participants were also asked to report their willingness to continue having sex, their masculine gender role stress, and other individual difference measures described later. The following sections provide the rationale and hypotheses for the present study.

Traditional Sexual Scripts

One theory that describes men's expectations of sexual encounters is the theory of traditional sexual scripts (TSS). TSS is used as a guide to navigate the ways in which men and women typically interact (or expect to interact) in sexual situations (Byers, 1996; Metts & Fitzpatrick, 1992). Humans use culturally and historically created "scripts" in various situations across the lifespan. Scripts are used to determine how one must behave in social situations and sexual behavior based on contextual information and culture (Irvine, 2003; Jones & Hostler, 2001; Simon & Gagnon, 1986). TSS is largely based on Western gender roles that set expectations for both men and women in sexual encounters. These scripts, although seemingly old fashioned, are prevalent among college-aged people today (La France, 2010; Masters, Casey, Wells, & Morrison, 2013). For example, when asked about a typical sexual scenario in a 2015 qualitative study of TSS, emerging adults largely promoted these sexual scripts, placing men as dominating initiators with women as submissive responders (Sakaluk, Todd, Milhausen, Lachowsky, & Undergraduate Research Group in Sexuality, 2015).

According to the traditional sexual script, it is men's responsibility to get women to engage in sexual behaviors. In previous research, participants have often reported the expectation that men must initiate sex or sexual acts, and that women are "gatekeepers" who must either refuse or accept the man's advances (Byers, 1996; Eaton & Rose, 2011; Sakaluk et al., 2015). According to these widely accepted scripts, men must continue to escalate the level of intimacy in a sexual encounter until the woman gives them a *direct resistance* response (Motley & Reeder, 1995; Sakaluk et al., 2015). Also, according to TSS, and in alignment with traditional male gender expectations, men are obsessed with sex, are always open to sex, and are in constant pursuit of sex (Byers, 1996; Levant, Rankin, Williams, & Hasan, 2010; Masters et al., 2013). Women, according to this script, are nonsexual beings who prefer extensive commitment and are difficult to sexually please (Byers,

1996; Eaton & Rose, 2011; Masters et al., 2013; Sakaluk et al., 2015). Men's worth is wrapped up in sex, while women's status is harmed if she engages in sex casually, with multiple partners or outside of a serious relationship (Byers, 1996).

These beliefs are at the very foundation of many instances of sexual assault because these standards for men and women are largely rooted in upholding men as dominant, sexual beings, and establish a sexual ideology in which sex is inherently used by men to cajole and compel women to submit to sexual advances (Levant et al., 2010, Muehlenhard, 1988; Muehlenhard & Hollabaugh, 1988; Murnen, Wright, & Kaluzny, 2002). That is, according to TSS, when a woman refuses sex, the man is expected to take it upon himself to overcome the woman's hesitancy through coercive and/or forceful acts, maintaining his masculinity (Byers, 1996; Muehlenhard, 1988; Muehlenhard & Hollabaugh, 1988; Weiderman, 2005). This is supported by studies that have found that sexually aggressive men, in comparison to non-sexually aggressive men, were more likely to accept traditional sex roles and adhere to the standards described by TSS (Muehlenhard & Linton, 1987; Murnen et al., 2002).

One example of how TSS may manifest in sexual encounters is exposed in self-reported experiences of "token resistance." Token resistance is the idea that a woman's initial "no" actually means "yes." About 48.3% of men who have reported sexual aggression also report perceiving token resistance from a female sexual partner (Loh, Gidycz, Lobo, & Luthra, 2005). In the scenario of token resistance, it becomes the man's duty to encourage the woman to have sex, and to act on what she "actually wants." However, women do not report using token resistance, so many researchers have labeled token resistance as an excuse that perpetrators of sexual aggression use for coercing or forcing women to engage in sexual acts (Byers, 1996; Johnson & Hoover, 2015; Muehlenhard & Hollabaugh, 1988).

Perception Research in Sexual Aggression

The risk of committing sexual aggression often arises from men's expectations and perceptions of a female sex partner. The effect of men's expectations on their perceptions may play a role in their likelihood to perpetrate sexual aggression. Sexual assault literature has previously shown that men's desire to increase sexual intimacy, even when they have received a refusal from a female sex partner, can often lead to sexual aggression. One prominent example comes from Motley and Reeder (1995). In this study, Motley and Reeder asked women to report their resistance messages against unwanted sexual advances and what they mean when using such messages. They then asked men their interpretation of women's reported resistance messages. The researchers then explored men's possible alternate (to the original meaning) interpretations and perceptions of what women's resistance messages meant. They found that men reported interpreting women's resistance messages incorrectly, and even as nonresistance. Motley and Reeder thus concluded that while in certain situations women's refusals to unwanted sexual advances are recognized and intentionally ignored, in other situations, men are often completely unaware of their female sex partner's refusals—interpreting a resistance message as something different or even *opposite* to its intended meaning. This hypothesis is supported in motivational literature which has shown patterns indicating that humans perceive what they wish to perceive (Belcetis & Dunning, 2006; Balcetis & Dunning, 2010). This body of social-cognitive research has demonstrated that motivations can change what a person perceives, and that motivations and expectations can filter perceptions (Belcetis & Dunning, 2006; Balcetis & Dunning, 2010; Miller, 1987). The environmental information that is filtered out and that which enters consciousness is determined by motivational factors rather than strictly by attention (Allport, 1989). Men's perceptual and social-cognitive processes, as well as a variety of related factors (e.g., rigid gender roles, expectations about sexual encounters, conformity to traditional sexual scripts), often

misguide the way heterosexual sex partners experience sexual encounters. These processes may offer an explanation as to why some men may perpetrate sexual aggression.

The current literature demonstrates that men frequently have inaccurate perceptions of their female sex partner. One such perceptual process is misperception of women's sexual intent. Misperception is defined as taking a woman's friendly interactions as indicators of sexual interest (Abbey, 1982). One study found that most men report having misperceived a woman's sexual intentions at least once (about 93%; see Wegner & Abbey, 2016). Self-reported misperception has been shown to directly predict perpetration of sexual assault (Abbey, Jacques-Tiura, & LeBreton, 2011; Abbey, McAuslan, & Ross, 1998; Bondurant & Donat, 1999). Relatedly, one study found that men felt entitled to continue sexual advances if they believed that the woman was sexually interested in them, or if they and the woman had already engaged in other types of sexual contact (Abbey, McAuslan, Zawacki, Clinton, & Buck, 2004). If men perceive a female sex partner's refusal incorrectly—or not as a refusal—a sexual assault may be likely to occur. The present study advances the literature on men's perceptions of sex partners by demonstrating not only that men's perceptions can be inaccurate, but also that some men may not perceive women's refusals as resistance at all. This is not to excuse the behavior of men, rather to suggest a reconsideration of how men and women communicate in sexual situations.

Masculine Gender Role

Theories of masculinity describe motivating factors that may influence men's perceptions of sexual encounters. A dominant version of masculinity in American culture has been described as an ideology consisting of rigid norms stating that men should never be feminine, they should always strive to be the most successful, they should never show weakness nor emotion, and that violence is acceptable when necessary (Levant et al., 2010). Two features of this version of masculinity that are common in the literature are casual sex beliefs and peer norms. Casual sex

behaviors such as having many sexual partners has been linked to sexual aggression (Abbey et al., 2001; Wegner, Pierce, & Abbey, 2014). Men who engage in more casual sex are more at risk to be in situations where there is the potential for sexual assault. Peer approval and peer pressure for forced or coercive sex have also been linked to sexual aggression (Abbey & McAuslan, 2004; Alder, 1985; Boeringer, Shehan, Akers, 1991; Thompson, Swartout, & Koss, 2013). Men who conform to this version of masculinity view sexual rejection as a threat to their masculinity and view the use of coercion or force as justified to reestablish their dominance (Malamuth, Koss, & Tanaka, 1991; Malamuth et al., 1995; Wegner, Abbey, Pierce, Pegram, & Woerner, 2015). These factors may be associated with a man's willingness to push an unwanted sexual advance. The literature has shown that when a man's masculinity is threatened, he is more likely to become aggressive in an aggression proxy immediately following (Bosson, Parrott, Swan, Kuchynka, & Schramm, 2015; Dahl, Vescio, & Weaver, 2015).

Research has also shown a relationship between men's conformity to masculine norms and aggression (Mahalik, Locke, Ludlow, Diemer, Scott, Gottfried, & Freitas, 2003). Miedzian (1993) suggests that men who experience stress due to a failure to conform to expectations of traditional masculinity may use sexual aggression as a way to reassert themselves to feel like "real men." This stress is often referred to as masculine gender role stress and is related to men's masculine identity and their aggression (Cohn & Zeichner, 2006; Jakupcak, Lisak, & Roemer, 2002). If men feel masculine gender role stress and their masculinity is threatened, they may be more motivated to reassert their masculinity, which could interfere with or influence their perceptions of a sexual encounter.

Women's Refusals of Unwanted Sexual Advances

Women respond to men's sexual advances in varying ways dependent upon personality traits, previous history, and situational factors (Davis, George, & Norris, 2004; Jouriles, Simpson Rowe, McDonald, & Kleinsassed, 2014; Motley & Reeder, 1995; Theiss, 2011). According to TSS, women are the recipients of men's overwhelming advances, but also must preserve their worth—derived from sexual purity—in a passive or indirect manner (Byers, 1996). Here lies a catch-22 where women must respond carefully to protect the man's masculine identity, but also are pressured to set strict limitations and forcefully deny men's sexual advances (Byers, 1996; Weiderman, 2005). When asked, women's reports of refusals of unwanted sexual advances tend to vary in their directness (Davis, et al., 2004). For example, three common categories of refusals that women use have emerged in the literature: (1) assertive resistance (e.g. pushing off their partner; directly saying they are uninterested; trying to get away); (2) polite resistance (agreeably saying they aren't interested; making excuses); and (3) passive responding (freezing or not doing anything). Men report favoring when women use direct resistances (Byers, Giles & Price, 1987), such as assertive resistance, and report misperceiving indirect resistances (polite resistance and passive responding; Jozkowski, Sanders, Peterson, Dennis, & Reece, 2014; Motley & Reeder, 1995). These assertive, forceful, and direct resistances conflict with women's traditional gender roles that bind women to acquiescence, prudence, subservience, and niceness (Byers, 1996), so some women are less inclined to use this approach. It should be noted that these studies utilize men and women's hypothetical responses to vignettes. Previous laboratory studies have shown that some men still continue with unwanted acts even when the woman expresses that she does not want to engage in them (Bosson, et al., 2015; Orchowski, Gidycz, & Kraft, 2018; Woerner, Abbey, Helmers, Pegram, Jilani, 2018).

Women report using direct refusals (assertive resistance) less often than indirect refusals (Lannutti & Monahan, 2004). Women often exhibit concern for protecting the image of their sex partner, the relationship, and themselves; which is better achieved through using indirect resistances (polite resistance or passive response) over making their refusal clearer through a direct resistance (Lannutti & Monahan, 2004). Women also report using direct refusals less often than indirect because of perceived negative consequences from their sex partner or because they may believe they are still in control of the situation and that a more direct response is not necessary (Motely & Reeder, 1995). This is consistent with traditional gender roles in which women can sustain their worth by maintaining a romantic relationship (Byers, 1996).

The present study focuses on two resistance types: direct resistance and indirect resistance. These two were chosen because of their generalizability. In the literature, these two general categories emerge to describe a variety of types of resistance that women use. At the core of these two basic categories of women's refusals lies the dichotomy of women's responses presented in TSS: direct—clearly articulating and showing resistance so the man can understand her clearly—and indirect—remaining conscious of his potential reaction and the possible outcomes of being too direct.

Overview of Current Study

The goal of this study was to identify men's perceptions in sexual scenarios as a potential mechanism by which gender roles and sexual scripts influence a man's likelihood to engage in sexual aggression. Theories of masculinity threat have been directly related to types of aggression towards women, but more research is needed to show a causal effect of masculinity threat on men's perceptions of women's resistance or their willingness to continue an unwanted sexual advance (Bosson, et al., 2015; Motley & Reeder, 1995). The present study seeks to fill this gap by using a lab proxy to threaten masculinity and then having men respond to a vignette depicting a sexual

encounter. While some past research has addressed many questions as to the roles and expectations of men in sexual situations that may lead to sexual aggression, and other past research has examined how women respond to unwanted sexual advances, little research has been done to put these roles and responses together (Motley & Reeder, 1995; Orchowski et al., 2018; Theiss. 2011). In order to do so, after participating in a masculinity threat lab proxy, men read a vignette in which they were asked to imagine a sexual scenario where the female sex partner used one of two types of refusals (direct or indirect). Male participants were then asked to report their thoughts about the scenario in an open-ended response, and then their perception of her interest in having sex and their own willingness to continue having sex.

The outcomes of this study have implications for future research about active consent as well as for sexual violence prevention programs. If a direct refusal is the requirement for men to stop making advances, yet men are unable to perceive such refusals correctly, active and mutual consent may be a possible solution. There may be a need for new sexual scripts and more of a focus on consent as a conversation, rather than merely the lack of a "no."

Two dependent variables were examined: (1) men's perceptions of a woman's interest in having sex and (2) men's self-reported willingness to having sex despite the refusal. Two independent variables were manipulated. The first independent variable is threatened masculinity. Men were randomly assigned to either a *threat* condition or a *no threat* condition. The second independent variable is the directness of a refusal to an unwanted sexual advance that participants receive in a vignette depicting a sexual scenario: either direct or indirect. To examine possible effects of individual differences on the dependent variables, male gender role stress, peer pressure for/approval of forced and coercive sex, and number of lifetime sexual partners were also measured.

Primary Hypotheses

Main effects of masculinity threat (*threat* or *no threat*) and refusal directness (*direct* or *indirect*) were hypothesized.

Hypothesis 1: As compared to participants who receive nonthreatening feedback, participants who receive feedback that threatens their masculinity will perceive the woman as more willing to have sex with them and report that they are more willing to continue engaging in sexual activities despite her refusal.

Hypothesis 2: As compared to participants who receive a direct refusal, participants who receive an indirect refusal will perceive the woman as more willing to have sex with them and report that they are more willing to continue engaging in sexual activities despite her refusal.

A two-way interaction between masculinity threat and type of refusal was also hypothesized.

Hypothesis 3: Participants who receive feedback that threatens their masculinity and receive an indirect refusal will be the most likely to perceive the woman as willing to have sex and to be willing to continue having sex. Participants who receive no threat to their masculinity and receive a direct refusal will be the least likely to perceive the woman as willing to have sex and to be willing to continue having sex. Participants who receive feedback that threatens their masculinity and receive a direct refusal and those who do not receive feedback that threatens their masculinity and receive an indirect refusal will moderately perceive the woman as willing to have sex and be willing to continue having sex.

Secondary Hypotheses

Previous research has shown that gender role stress moderates the relationship between masculine identity and aggression, and accounts for a significant portion of men's aggression on

its own (Cohn & Zeichner, 2006; Jakupcak, Lisak, & Roemer, 2002). Thus, masculine gender role stress may moderate the effect of masculinity threat on the outcome variables. A main effect of male gender role stress was hypothesized.

> **Hypothesis 4:** The greater a man's pre-existing level of masculine gender role stress, the more he will perceive the woman as willing to have sex and the more willing he will be to continue having sex.

A two-way interaction was hypothesized between threatened masculinity and masculine gender role stress.

> **Hypothesis 5:** Participants who receive feedback that threatens their masculinity and who have high pre-existing masculine gender role stress will be more likely to perceive the woman as willing to have sex and to be willing to continue having sex. Participants who receive feedback that does not threaten their masculinity and score low in pre-existing masculine gender role stress will be the least likely to perceive the woman as willing to have sex and to be willing to continue having sex. Participants who receive feedback that does not threaten their masculinity and who score high in masculine gender role stress and those who receive feedback that threatens their masculinity and score low in masculine gender role stress will moderately perceive the woman as willing to have sex and will moderately be willing to continue having sex.

Validation from friends is a key feature of masculinity (Levant et. al, 2010). Sexual assault perpetration may be encouraged directly or indirectly by male friends. Men who are exposed to dominance over women may feel more comfortable committing sexual assault against women than other men (Malamuth et al., 1991). As well, casual sex behaviors have been shown to be related to sexual aggression (Murnen et al., 2002; Woerner et al., 2018).

Hypothesis 6: Peer approval and pressure for forced and coercive sex, number of lifetime sexual partners, and masculine gender role stress will be positively correlated with his willingness to continue having sex.

Lastly, an exploratory qualitative analysis of participants' open-ended responses to the vignette was conducted to explore their unprompted perceptions of the situation, including their thoughts about what they would do next and what else would happen that night.

CHAPTER 2 METHOD

Pilot Testing

Participants

Prior to collecting data for the main study, 20 male undergraduate students were recruited to pilot the experimental materials. Twelve participants were initially anticipated to be needed based on criteria suggested for pilot studies (Hertzog, 2008; Hill, 1998; Isaac & Michael, 1995; Johanson & Brooks, 2010), however, this number was increased in order to test two masculinity threat proxies. Participants were undergraduate males ages 18-25 (M=20.42, SD=2.09).

Procedure

Participants were recruited in the Winter 2019 semester. A pre-screening on the participant pool platform, SONA, ensured that only men ages 18-25 could access the survey ad. Eligible participants responded to the SONA ad to schedule a time to come into the lab and complete the study. The primary investigator served as the experimenter. When participants came into the lab, they were seated at a computer and given verbal directions that they would complete a survey consisting of three personality tests and questions about a social situation. Participants were also told that once they were finished, they would participate in a brief interview with the experimenter about the study. Participants were encouraged to take notes on a blank sheet of paper of anything that stood out to them including grammatical/spelling errors, formatting issues, and sources of confusion. Participants were then asked to read the information sheet open on the computer screen and were given the opportunity to ask the experimenter questions before starting. Then, participants were told to let the experimenter know once they finished, and that clicking the "Next" button indicated that they gave consent to participate and could begin the study. All participants consented. The first question participants saw asked them to confirm that they had engaged in some form of sexual activity with a woman since the age of 14, at least passionate kissing. This

requirement was chosen to ensure that participants could imagine the vignette or a similar experience, inciting both realistic memories and arousal, as well as report how they believe they would act based on previous, similar encounters. All participants indicated that they met this criterion.

Online survey. First, participants took three "personality inventories." The first two inventories were filler tasks that showed participants fixed false feedback that they scored similarly to other men at their university. The third was the first manipulation of the study, masculinity threat, in which participants were given false feedback that they either scored more similarly to men or to women on a gender trait inventory. Two gender inventories were tested to see which more effectively appeared to measure masculinity; both are described below. The next part of the study included the second manipulation: refusal directness. Participants read a vignette and then were randomly assigned to receive either a direct or indirect refusal at the end of the vignette. Participants completed outcome variable questions and attention check questions.

Follow-up interview. Following the completion of the online portion, participants were interviewed by the experimenter. The experimenter told participants that the purpose of the interview was to adjust the study materials and that their honest opinion was valued. Participants were given a printed version of the survey to refer to during the interview. The experimenter asked questions about the personality inventories and vignette to ensure the study materials were clear and were being interpreted as intended. The experimenter asked if participants thought the personality inventory feedback accurately described their personality. For the gender inventories, the experimenter asked which inventory the participant took by referring to the printout. The experimenter then probed participants about how they felt about their score and the accuracy of the test. Participants were further probed about their thoughts about the inventories.

Next, participants were asked if they felt that the sexual scenario was realistic. The experimenter asked if the chronological order of the sexual encounter seemed plausible and what the participants thought about the woman's actions throughout the scenario (is it consensual? does it escalate at a normal pace?) Probing questions were asked when further explanation was necessary. Participants were asked if the description of sex acts was too scientific, too awkward, or overly casual.

Participants were then debriefed via funnel debriefing and were ultimately shown a debriefing sheet that explained that all feedback was false. After being debriefed about the false feedback, participants were asked for their thoughts about the masculinity threat proxy they received. Many participants laughed upon reading the debriefing sheet. At this point, the experimenter reassured the participants that other participants also believed the false feedback and asked if they could help give insight as to how to elicit a strong response from other men. This feedback was used to determine which proxy would be used in the final version of the study and how to adjust false feedback to be more believable and threatening.

Stimulus Materials

Three personality inventories were used to present the masculinity threat proxy. The first two of the inventories were filler tasks that "measured" personality traits from the Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator (Briggs, 1976): Thinking/Feeling (which was originally Introversion/Extroversion; however, this scale was changed due to early participant comments that the false feedback for this scale lacked believability) and Judging/Perceiving. These were chosen because the traits have ambiguous descriptions and are not often taught in psychology courses, so false feedback is believable. All participants were told that they scored more thinking than feeling and more perceiving than judging. False feedback included a visual representation of the percentile in which typical men and women at Wayne State score, followed by the participant's false score in a similar

percentile visual with a description of the given personality trait (see Figure 1). Because the first two of these tasks were filler tasks and were not meant to elicit feelings of masculinity threat, participants were told that these scores were similar to other men at their university. Immediately after receiving their scores, on a new page, participants were asked to report how they scored by moving a sliding scale to match the percentile score they had been shown on the previous screen.

The third personality task was a gender inventory. Participants were randomly assigned to receive either the Gender Knowledge Test (See Appendix B) or the Gender Identity Survey (See Appendix C). Both have been used in past research as masculinity threat proxies and so were evaluated to see which would work best in the context of the main study.

Gender Knowledge Test. The Gender Knowledge Test was created by Rudman and Fairchild (2004). This proxy has been used in past research to show significant effects of masculinity threat on public discomfort, anger, anxiety, threat and shame (Dahl, et al., 2015). The Gender Knowledge Test consists of 30 questions asking about traditionally masculine subjects (e.g., sports, DIY, cars, and mechanics). Men in the "threat" condition are told they score similarly to women, and men in the "no threat" condition are told that they score similarly to other men (Figure 1). Past research has not yielded differences based on the gender of the researcher (Rudman & Fairchild, 2004).

Gender Identity Survey. The "Gender Identity Survey" is a questionnaire comprised of 60 traits that are both traditionally masculine and feminine (e.g., dominant, competitive, athletic vs. affectionate, sensitive to the needs of others, loves children). Items are rated on a 7-point Likert scale (1= *Never or almost never;* 7= *Always or almost always*). Men in the "threat" condition are told they score similarly to women, and men in the "no threat" condition are told that they score similarly to other men (Figure 1). Early pilot data suggested that 60 traits was too long relative to

the other personality inventories, so it was shortened to 32 items. An equal amount of feminine and masculine traits was removed.

Vignette. The first part of the vignette depicts a consensual sexual scenario, which the participants were asked to imagine. The vignette contains a female sex partner with whom participants are told they have "hooked up" before. The term "hook up" describes a range of sexual behaviors (passionate kissing to intercourse; Owen, Rhoades, Stanley, & Fincham, 2010). The ambiguity of the term "hook up" was intended to deter feelings of exclusivity if male participants had not engaged in intercourse (Glenn & Marquardt, 2001). The scene begins with the woman verbally setting a boundary for a sex act she does not want to engage in (e.g., "This is fine, but I don't really want to have sex."). The scene then "progresses" to the man unbuttoning her pants, to which she responds, "I still don't want to go all the way tonight." The participant is led to imagine initiating sex after the female sex partner has stated she does not want to engage in sex (e.g., "She seems to pull back a bit. You go back to just kissing. You are starting to get more and more into it, and you go to remove her pants."). After reading this statement, participants read a refusal from the woman. Participants were randomly assigned to one of two refusals: (1) direct or (2) indirect (See Appendix E). The storyline is based on previous vignettes describing sexual encounters and aggression (e.g., Abbey, Buck, Zawacki, & Saenz, 2003; Davis, 2010; Van Wie & Gross, 2001), as well as women's self-reported resistance messages described by Motley and Reeder (1995), and stories shared by survivors in an investigative magazine article published in the New York Times titled, "45 Stories of Sex and Consent on Campus" (Bennet & Jones, 2018), in which college students shared stories of "navigating the gray zone" of sex and consent.

Measures

The two outcome variables, the participant's perception of the woman's interest in having sex and his own willingness to continue having sex were asked after reading the vignette.

Open-ended response. One open-ended response question assessing participants' immediate reactions to the scenario were used for exploratory analysis. Participants were asked to report, in a few sentences, what they think they would do or say next and what would happen later that evening.

Perception of her interest in having sex. Perception of her interest in having sex questions asked about men's perceptions of the woman's refusal, and if they perceived her refusal as resistance. The scale includes 6 items rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = *Very much disagree*; 7 = *Very much agree*). Questions ask how much one agrees with different perceptions of the woman's refusal to an unwanted sexual advance (e.g., she wants to go further, she was trying to tell you "I want to have sex"). Questions are developed by the author and were designed based on previous research (e.g., Hammond, Barry, & Rodriguez, 2011; McDaniel & Rodriguez, 2017; Motley & Reeder, 1995).

Willingness to continue having sex. Willingness to continue having sex questions were developed by the author to measure participants' willingness to continue pushing for sex. The scale includes 2 items with 7-point Likert-type scale responses (1 = *Very unlikely*; 7 = *Very likely*). Items ask how likely a man is to continue with an act of sexual aggression (e.g., continuing to take off her pants, continuing to try to have sex with her).

Vignette validity questions. Eight questions were included towards the end of the survey, after the outcome variable questions to ask about the validity of the vignette. Questions asked how realistic the vignette seemed and if participants could imagine themselves or others in similar situations. Participants were asked to respond to questions about the vignette (how likely is this scenario to happen in real life? how common do you think sexual encounters like this one are? how arousing did you find this story to be?). These questions were created by the author to assess the ecological validity of the vignette.

Results and Discussion

Results of the pilot study primarily addressed concerns about clarity and believability of stimulus materials. Participants felt that the first two personality inventories were accurate. One participant mentioned that others may not understand what the personality scores mean or may overlook them, so descriptions of each of the personality inventory results were added in order to give meaning to scores. After this change was made, another participant suggested it is more offensive to be referred to as "not masculine" than to be called "feminine." The following six participants agreed, so the description for the gender inventory score was adjusted to, "You scored in the 37th percentile. This means feminine personality traits describe you best and that masculine personality traits do not describe you well. People who are feminine and not masculine tend to: be more emotionally sensitive.; Value vulnerability.; Prefer to communicate and invoke trust.; Be more relationship oriented." All 20 participants said that they felt their scores on the first two tasks were believable.

Pilot data uncovered that the Gender Identity Survey was the best masculinity threat proxy to use in the main study. Of the ten participants who were assigned to the Gender Knowledge Test, the five who were in the threat condition tended to rationalize their score more than those who took the Gender Identity Survey. For example, one participant explained that he did not know much about cars, while another explained that he did not know much about sports, which they assumed is probably why they scored low. Two participants also noted other topics that they felt should be included like video games or more variety in sports. Three participants also stated that it may make more sense for the Gender Knowledge Test to include feminine knowledge as well—otherwise receiving a "feminine" score did not make sense to them. With the Gender Identity Survey, participants felt that they could tell in retrospect which qualities were more feminine or more masculine; however, participants reported that in the moment, they did not think of the traits

as either feminine or masculine. Two participants did explain that they were not surprised by their score of being feminine as they had been previously been told that they were feminine by others. The ten participants who took the Gender Identity Survey consistently felt that it was a true reflection of themselves, whereas the ten participants who took the Gender Knowledge Test found reasons why the Gender Knowledge Test may be inaccurate. The ten participants who were told they scored similarly to other men did not have much of a reaction to the gender inventory, however those who were told they scored similarly to women often expressed surprise or became defensive.

The majority of participants agreed that the vignette scenario was realistic and relatable. Two participants reported that the scenario may be unlikely for men who still live at home and do not date. Because previous sexual experience was a part of inclusion criteria, the researcher did not think this would be an issue with results in the main study.

Main Study

Participants

Participants were recruited from the SONA subject pool of students enrolled in Psychology courses at a mid-size urban university. Participants were required to complete two surveys, a preliminary survey including measures of pre-existing individual difference, and an experimental survey including the two manipulations (masculinity threat and refusal directness). Participants must have taken the preliminary survey to access the experimental survey. Participants who took the experimental survey included men between the ages of 18-25 (N=106, M = 19.92, SD=2.14) who have engaged in some form of sexual activity with a woman since the age of 14, at least passionate kissing. Due to an error in data recording, only 69 of the 106 participants who completed both the experimental and preliminary surveys and were able to be matched (N= 69, M=19.22, SD= 1.43).

Procedure

Data were collected over the Spring/Summer and Fall 2019 academic semesters. Participants who completed the pilot study were excluded from completing the main study. Participants were recruited to participate in a preliminary and an experimental survey that they did not know were connected. The experimental survey could only be accessed on SONA upon completion of the preliminary survey. Participants received 0.5 SONA credit for the preliminary survey and 1.5 SONA credit and a chance to win a $10 Amazon gift card for completing the experimental survey.

The preliminary survey included demographic questions, individual difference measures that have been shown in previous research to be predictive of sexual violence perpetration, and filler questionnaires. Participants who completed the preliminary survey were informed in an e-mail that they were eligible to complete a second, unrelated study. Participants who chose to complete the second survey completed the experimental survey including the masculinity threat paradigm and vignette.

Individual Difference Measures

The preliminary survey included constructs that were included in the hypotheses: Masculine Gender Role Stress (Eisler & Skidmore, 1987), Friends' Approval and Pressure of Forced Sex (Abbey et al., 2001; Abbey & McAuslan, 2004), and number of lifetime and one-time only sexual partners.

Masculine Gender Role Stress. Masculine Gender Role Stress (Eisler & Skidmore, 1987) is a 40-item scale that assesses men's stress related to fulfilling traditional masculine gender roles. Men who score high on MGRS also tend to score high in masculine identity, hypermasculinity, trait anger, and alcohol involvement (Swartout, Parrott, Cohn, Hagman, & Gallagher, 2015). In this inventory, participants rate how stressed they would feel if they experienced certain situations

(e.g., being perceived as having feminine traits, appearing as less athletic than a friend, being compared unfavorable to other men) on a 7-point Likert-type scale. Item means are averaged for an overall MGRS score. Past research has found high internal validity, alphas are around .90 (Eisler & Skidmore, 1987; Eisler, Skidmore, & Ward, 1988). In this study, Cronbach's alpha = .94.

Peer Approval and Pressure for Forced and Coercive Sex. This measure includes questions about peer approval of using alcohol, lies, and force to get a woman to have sex. Participants are asked to rate the amount of pressure they have felt from friends to engage in these sexually aggressive behaviors. Responses are on a 5-point Likert-type scale. Approval and pressure were measured separately but are often highly correlated and combined (see Abbey et al., 2001), alpha = .80. In this study, approval and pressure were significantly correlated, r = .75, $p <$ .01, and were combined into one scale, Cronbach's alpha = .68.

Number of lifetime and one-time only sexual partners. Number of lifetime and one-time only sexual partners is a measure of impersonal sex behaviors and was used in the screening process. This consists of two questions asking participants to report/estimate the number of sex partners they have had. Seven outliers in lifetime sexual partners were identified and were windsorized.

Demographics. Demographic variables included the participants' gender, age, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, relationship status, and years resided in the US (see Appendix I).

The survey also included other measures that have been shown to be predictive of sexual violence perpetration. These measures were not included in hypotheses, rather, they were intended for potential use in post-hoc analyses.

Positive attitudes about casual sex. Positive attitudes about casual sex were assessed using the Permissive Attitudes subscale of the Brief Sexual Attitudes Scale (Hendrick, Hendrick,

& Reich, 2006). This measure includes 10-items rated on a 5-point scale (1 = *Strongly disagree*; 5 = *Strongly agree*). This measure has previously been used to predict sexual aggression and show both strong convergent and discriminant validity and reliability (Abbey et al., 2011; Hendrick et al., 2006; Malamuth et al., 1991). In this study, Cronbach's alpha was .90.

Sexual Dominance. The Sexual Dominance Scale (Nelson, 1979) measures participants' reasons for having sex, particularly to feel dominant. This scale is the 16-item subscale of Nelson's (1979) Sexual Functions Inventory. Participants rate the degree to which reasons for sex are important to them when engaging in sexual behaviors on a 4-point scale (1 = *not important at all*; 4 = *very important)*. Previous research has demonstrated good internal consistency, alpha = .80 (Smith, Parrott, Swartout, Tharp, 2015). In this study, Cronbach's alpha was .72.

Emotion Regulation. Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (Gratz & Roemer, 2004) measures six domains of emotion regulation difficulties. Previous research has shown that emotion regulation is predictive of sexual aggression behaviors (Parkhill & Pickett, 2016; Ullman, Peter-Hagene, & Relyea, 2014). The scale consists of 36 items that are rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = *Almost never,* 5 = *Almost always*). Gratz and Roemer (2004) reported good internal consistency, $\alpha > .80$. In this study, Cronbach's alpha was .92.

Narcissism. The combined Entitlement and Exploitative subscales of the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (Raskin & Hall, 1979) measure how much participants identify with feelings of entitlement and exploitation. These combined subscales include 11 items rated on a 5-point scale (1 = *Not at all*; 5 = *Very much*). Previous research has shown that narcissism is related to sexual aggression (Zeigler-Hill, Enjaian, & Essa, 2013). In this study, Cronbach's alpha was .78.

General Aggression. The Aggression Questionnaire (Buss & Perry, 1992) measures four factors of aggression: physical aggression, verbal aggression, anger, and hostility. This measure consists of 28 questions, rated on an 8-point scale (1 =E*xtremely uncharacteristic of me*; 7 =

Extremely characteristic of me; 8 = *Prefer not to answer*). Previous research has shown good internal reliability, α = .89 (Buss & Perry, 1992). In this study, Cronbach's alpha was .91.

Rejection sensitivity. The Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire (Downey & Feldman, 1996) measures participants' anxious expectations of rejection from others. This measure was chosen because it could be used in post-hoc analysis to further explain how men respond to rejection. The questionnaire consists of 18 hypothetical situations that involved rejection from others. Participants first rate how anxious or concerned they would feel about the outcome of the situation on a 6-point scale (1= *Very unconcerned*; 6 = *Very concerned*), then rate the likelihood that the other person would respond favorably (1= *Very unlikely*; 6 = *Very likely*). Scale scores are computed by (1) reversing the scores for each of the likelihood estimate items; (2) multiplying the concern/anxiety items by their respective reverse-coded likelihood item; (3) summing the products; and (4) dividing the total by the number of items. Past research has shown good internal consistency, α = .83. In this study, Cronbach's alpha = .93.

Filler questionnaires were also included to make the intent of the study less obvious**.**

Life Satisfaction. Life satisfaction was used as a positive measure to break up negative feelings while taking the survey. This study used a 7-item abbreviated version of a larger measure (Andrews & Robinson, 1991). Participants rate how satisfied they are with various aspects of their life on a 7-point scale (1 = *Terrible*; 7 = *Delighted*). This measure exhibits both high internal consistency and moderate test-retest reliability (Andrews & Robinson, 1991), α = .74.

Impression Management-- Social Desirability subscale. The Impression Management subscale from the Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding (Paulhus, 1991) was used to measure social desirability. This subscale includes 20 items rated on a 5-point scale (1 = *Not true;* 7 = *Very true).* This measure was used because it shows good validity and reliability (Kroner & Weekes, 1996; Paulhus, 1991). In this study α = .74.

Independent Variable Manipulations

For the experimental portion of the study, men received false feedback in regard to their scores on three tasks: Introversion/Extraversion, Judging/Perceiving, and Masculinity/Femininity. For each of these tasks, participants answered questions about their personality and then received false personality scores. The false personality scores indicated how they scored relative to women and other men at their university. The first two of these tasks were filler tasks for which participants received fixed false feedback that they scored similarly to other men at their university. The third task was the first manipulation of the study, masculinity threat.

Gender Identity Survey-shortened. A shortened version of the Gender Identity Survey was used. The Gender Identity Survey is a questionnaire compromised of 32 traits that are both traditionally masculine and feminine (e.g., dominant, competitive, athletic vs. affectionate, sensitive to the needs of others, loves children). Items are rated on a 7-point Likert scale (1= *Never or Almost Never True* to 7= *Always or Almost Always True*). Men in the "threat" condition are told they score similarly to women, and men in the "no threat" condition are told that they score similarly to other men (Figure 1). After receiving false feedback on each test, they were asked to report how they scored on a sliding scale.

The next part of the survey included the second manipulation of the study: refusal directness.

Vignette. Participants were asked to imagine a sexual encounter that begins as consensual. The vignette contained a female sex partner with whom participants are told they have "hooked up" before. The term "hook up" describes a range of sexual behaviors (passionate kissing to intercourse) (Owen, Rhoades, Stanley, & Fincham, 2010). The ambiguity of the term "hook up" is intended to deter feelings of exclusivity if male participants have not engaged in intercourse (Glenn & Marquardt, 2001). The scene begins with the woman verbally setting a boundary for a sex act she does not want to engage in ("This is fine, but I don't really want to have sex."). The

scene then progresses to the man unbuttoning her pants, to which she responds, “I still don’t want to go all the way tonight.” The participant is led to imagine initiating sex after the female sex partner has stated she does not want to engage in sex (e.g., “She seems to pull back a bit. You go back to just kissing. You are starting to get more and more into it, and you go to remove her pants.”). After reading this statement, participants read a refusal from the woman. Participants were randomly assigned to one of two refusal directness types: (1) direct or (2) indirect (See Appendix E).

The storyline of the vignette was based on previous vignettes describing sexual encounters and aggression (e.g., Abbey, Buck, Zawacki, & Saenz, 2003; Davis, 2010; Van Wie & Gross, 2001), as well as women’s self-reported resistance messages described by Motley and Reeder (1995), and stories shared by survivors in an investigative magazine article published in the New York Times titled, “45 Stories of Sex and Consent on Campus” (Bennet & Jones, 2018). In this article, college students were asked to share stories of “navigating the gray zone” of sex and consent.

Outcome Measures

Open-ended response. Two open-ended response questions assessed participants’ immediate reactions to the scenario were used for exploratory analysis. Participants are asked to report, in a few sentences, what they would do or say next. They were then asked to describe the rest of the interaction that evening.

Perception of her interest in having sex. Perception of her interest in having sex questions ask about men’s perceptions of women’s refusals, and if they perceive refusals as resistance. The scale includes 6 items rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = *Very much disagree*; 2 = *Very much agree*). Questions ask how much one agrees with different perceptions of a woman’s refusal to an unwanted sexual advance (e.g., she wants to go further, she was trying to tell you “I want to have

sex"). Questions are designed based on previous research (e.g., Hammond, Barry, & Rodriguez, 2011; McDaniel & Rodriguez, 2017; Motley & Reeder, 1995).

Willingness to continue having sex. Willingness to continue having sex questions was used to measure participants' willingness to continue persisting to engage in sex. The scale includes 2 items with 7-point Likert-type scale responses (1 = *Very unlikely*; 7 = *Very likely*). Items ask how likely a man is to continue with an act of sexual aggression (e.g., continuing to take off her pants, continuing to try to have sex with her). Ten outliers were identified and winsorized because the mean was rather low and did not accurately capture high scores.

Planned Data Analysis

Men were randomly assigned to each condition: masculinity threat (threat or no threat) and refusal directness (direct or indirect). The dependent variables are men's perception of a refusal to an unwanted sexual advance (perception of her interest in having sex) and men's willingness to continue having sex.

Data cleaning. First, the data was downloaded into an SPSS file. The file was then examined for careless or patterned responses. Participants were considered for removal if they had unrelated and nonsensical open-ended responses. If there were long strings of patterned data or more than 20% of data missing, participants were considered for removal from analysis. Outliers, both univariate and multivariate, were considered for removal.

Descriptives. Next, descriptives of data were examined including means, standard deviations, and range. Scales were checked for normality, linearity, homoscedasticity, multicollinearity, and outliers. Assumptions for proposed analyses were checked. Violated assumptions were addressed as appropriate (e.g., transformations, outlier removal; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

Scale Formation. Scales were formed for perception of her interest in having sex, willingness to have sex, masculine gender role stress, and peer approval and pressure for forced and coercive sex. The distributions of the scales were evaluated and addressed if needed. Next, reliability of scales was assessed. Two items were used to determine willingness to continue having sex. "Perception of her interest in having sex" was created for this study. Item reliabilities were assessed by examining corrected inter-item correlations of the items (C-ITC). Items with low C-ITC or unexpected correlations were further examined and considered for removal.

Open-ended response coding. The researcher addressed the exploratory hypothesis by examining the open-ended responses. Responses were examined for indication of perceptions of the woman or expectations for what would happen next. Information that went beyond these constructs were disregarded for the purposes of the present study or suggested for future research.

Hypothesis Testing. First, an ANOVA was performed to examine the primary predicted main effects. Second, multiple regression was used to examine secondary hypotheses and predicted interactions of variables. A hierarchical entry method was used. Previous research has shown a direct relationship between masculinity threat in aggression, therefore it was entered into the model first. Male gender role stress was entered next. To assess if the outcome measures were related with sexual aggression predictors, correlations between peer pressure/approval for forced sex, number of lifetime sexual partners, and masculine gender role stress were examined.

Power Analysis. An a priori power analysis using the statistical power program G*Power indicated that for an ANOVA with a 2 x 2 design, threatened masculinity (threatened or not threatened) by refusal directness (indirect or direct), 128 participants total would be needed to achieve 80% power for detecting a small sized effect ($f^2 = 0.25$) when following the traditional .05 criterion of statistical significance (see Tibachnick & Fidell, 2013). A secondary power analysis indicated that for a regression model with three predictors, threatened masculinity, refusal

directness, and masculine gender role stress, 119 participants total would be needed to achieve 80% power for detecting a medium sized effect ($f^2 = 0.25$) when following the traditional .05 criterion of statistical significance (see Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Since the proposed analyses required both an ANOVA and a linear regression, the larger sample of 128 participants was used to determine the desired sample size.

CHAPTER 3 RESULTS

Data Cleaning

The file was thoroughly examined for careless responses, long strings of patterned responses, unrelated or nonsensical open-ended responses, and more than 20% of data missing. Although 115 participants complete the experimental survey, 9 participants were removed leaving 106 for the primary analyses. One participant was removed for unrelated and nonsensical open-ended responses. One participant was removed for indicating he accidentally skipped the vignette and did not read it. Four participants were removed from analysis for long strings of patterned data or more than 20% of data missing. Three participants were removed for answering the survey twice. Univariate outliers were addressed by scale (see Measures section); no multivariate outliers were detected. Further, due to an error in recording email addresses, the two surveys could not be matched for all participants. Only 69 participants were able to be matched, and so secondary hypotheses were tested using a smaller portion of the sample.

Descriptives

Prior to hypothesis testing, descriptives of the outcome variables were examined for indications of misperception of the hypothetical woman's refusal. Overall, misperception of the woman's willingness to have sex was low (M=2.33, SD=1.32). However, 13 participants (13.2%) at least somewhat agreed that she was telling him she wanted to have sex; five participants (4.7%) agreed that she was telling him she will change her mind if he keeps trying; and 29 participants (27.3%) agreed that she was unsure what she wanted—even though she clearly stated what she did not want throughout the scenario.

Participants predominantly were unwilling to continue trying to have sex (*M*=1.77, SD=1.12), although, five participants (4.7%) reported that they would be at least somewhat likely to continue to try to take of her pants. Seven participants (6.6%) reported that they would be likely or extremely likely to continue trying for sex.

Table 1, *Outcome Variable Descriptives.*

		Misperception	Willingness to continue sex
Group	N	*M* (SE)	*M* (SE)
Threat			
Indirect	28	2.69 (.25)	1.98 (.21)
Direct	25	2.10 (.26)	1.56 (.23)
No Threat			
Indirect	25	2.40 (.26)	1.82 (.23)
Direct	28	2.11 (.25)	1.71 (.21)

Descriptives were further examined to be certain that random assignment to the experimental condition groups for the 2 (threat vs. no threat) x 2 (direct vs. indirect) ANOVA was even, see Table 1 below.

Hypothesis Testing

Primary hypotheses (Hypothesis 1-3). A 2 (threat vs. no threat) x 2 (indirect vs. direct) ANOVA was conducted to test for main effects and interactions. There was not a significant main effect of masculinity threat. Participants who received feedback that threatened their masculinity, were not more willing to continue having sex, $F(1, 106) = .00$, $p = .986$, and did not perceive the woman as willing to have sex, $F(1, 106) = .306$, $p = .581$ compared to participants who received feedback that did not threaten their masculinity. There was also not a significant main effect of refusal type. Participants who received an indirect refusal were not more willing to continue trying to have sex, $F(1, 106) = 1.84$, $p = .230$ and did not perceive the woman as willing to have sex, $F(1, 106) = 2.93$, $p = .09$, compared to those who received a direct refusal. The interaction between masculinity threat and refusal directness was not significant for his willingness to continue sex

F(1,106) =.525, p=.471 nor for his perceptions of her willingness to have sex, F(1,106) = .32, p=.573.

Secondary hypotheses (Hypothesis 4-5). As explained above in the planned analysis, a hierarchical aggression was run to examine the role of masculine gender role stress. The main effect of masculine gender role stress on the participant's willingness to have sex was not significant, b =.42, β = .19, t(1) = 1.58, p = .118, accounting for 19% of the unique variance. This main effect was also not significant on his perceptions of the hypothetical woman's willingness to have sex, b =.16, β = .08, t(1) = .64, p = .525, accounting for 7.80% of the unique variance in his willingness to have sex. A two-way interaction was hypothesized between threatened masculinity and masculine gender role stress. The relationship between masculinity threat and in the participant's perceptions of the hypothetical woman's willingness to have sex was not moderated by masculine gender role stress. The relationship between masculinity threat and the participant's willingness to have sex was not moderated by masculine gender role stress. The models of this regression are recorded in Table 2 below.

Table 2. *Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis (N = 69)*

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
Variable	*B*	*SEB*	β	*B*	*SE B*	β	*B*	*SE B*	β
Perceptions of her willingness to have sex									
Masculinity stress	.42	.264	.08	.15	.26	.07	.56	.93	.26
Masculinity Stress				.21	.31	.08	.82	1.36	.33
Masculinity threat x Masculinity Stress							-.25	.54	-.33
R^2		.08			.11			.13	
F for change in R^2		.41			.45			.21	
Willingness to continue having sex									

Masculinity stress	.42	.26	.19	.40	.27	.18	.42	.95	.19
Masculinity threat				.19	.32	.07	.22	1.41	.08
Masculinity stress x Masculinity threat							-.01	.56	-.01
R^2		.01			.01			.02	
F for change in R^2		.41			.45			.21	

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

Hypothesis 6. It was hypothesized that masculine gender role stress, peer approval and pressure for forced and coercive sex, and number of lifetime sexual partners would be positively correlated with the participant's willingness to continue having sex. Correlations were examined and are shown below in Table 3.

Table 3. *Correlations (N = 69)*

Variable	His willingness to have sex
Gender role stress [a]	.19*
Peer influence [b]	.02
Lifetime sexual partners	.03

*p < .05. a Measured by Masculine Gender Role Stress. b Measured by Peer Approval and Pressure for Forced and Coercive sex

Open-ended responses. Directly after reading the vignette and before responding the two outcome scales, participants were given the opportunity to report in an open-ended response what they would do and say next in the scenario. The researcher addressed the exploratory hypothesis about other possible themes related to perception by examining these open-ended responses. Information that went beyond these constructs was disregarded for the purposes of the present study or suggested for future research. Responses were hypothesized to indicate perceptions of the woman or expectations for what would happen next, however, most of the responses indicated understanding that the woman wanted to stop, regardless of the participant's assigned condition.

Relatively few indicated other themes related to misperception. One participant indicated that he was getting mixed emotions from her. Two participants indicated that they would continue with other sexual acts beyond just kissing.

CHAPTER 4 DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of threatened masculinity on men's perceptions of women's refusals to unwanted sexual advances. Theories of sexual aggression have connected masculinity threat to men's aggression towards women, however, the causal nature of masculinity threat on men's likelihood to perpetrate sexual aggression in-the-moment is under researched. Further, little research has examined factors contributing to men's perpetration behaviors in the context of women's varying responses to unwanted sexual advances (Motley & Reeder, 1995; Orchowski et al., 2018; Theiss. 2011). The present study sought to address this gap in the literature by manipulating masculinity threat and the way in which a hypothetical woman refused a man's unwanted sexual advance. Although a few participants reported misperceiving the hypothetical woman's refusal and being willing to continue trying to have sex after her refusal, there was a lack of significant effects overall. As stated previously, the power analysis indicated that at least 128 participants were needed to properly detect a small sized effect. While the researcher would have preferred to continue collecting data, the purpose of this study was to fulfill the requirements of a Master's thesis in time to meet a predetermined deadline. Data collection took longer than anticipated, for this reason, the sample size was smaller than initially planned. In the future, more data will be collected to properly meet the power analysis for this experiment.

Although the results are underpowered, a number of other explanations may also account for the lack of significant effects in this study. Unexpectedly, threatened masculinity did not have an effect on men's misperceptions nor their willingness to continue having sex. Masculinity threat proxies like the one in this study have been used in research about men's general aggression and dominance over women, but not in their sexual aggression behaviors (Dahl, Vescio, & Weaver, 2015; Rudman & Fairchild, 2004). Malamuth (1995) suggested that a woman's refusal itself may

threaten a man's masculinity; however, the present study threatens masculinity separately. It is possible that a proxy of masculinity threat that comes from the woman or that is more proximally related to sexual activity could work better for this manipulation. Motivational factors other than masculinity threat may influence men's misperception in sexual situations. For example, alcohol consumption. Previous research has shown that men who drink when perpetrating, more so than men who perpetrate sober, believe that alcohol increases their sex drive (Abbey, McAuslan, Zawacki, Clinton, & Buck, 2001), and the role of misperception in sexual aggression is often mediated by alcohol consumption (Abbey et al., 1998). For this reason, alcohol consumption may exacerbate one's expectations about sex, leading them to misperceive women's intentions and then perpetrate. Another possible factor from previous research is sexual precedence, that is, if a man has had sex with a woman before, he may feel more entitled to push for sex (Wegner, Pierce, & Abbey, 2014). Sexual precedence was assumed in this vignette, however, varying it in a future studies may manipulate how entitled a man feels about having sex with a woman, and may elicit a willingness to push for sex.

There was also not a significant effect of refusal directness on the participant's perceptions of the woman's refusal and his willing to continue trying to have sex. This variable was manipulated to examine if men misperceive variations in the directness of woman's refusals (Jozkowski, Sanders, Peterson, Dennis, & Reece, 2014; Motley & Reeder, 1995). The present study used two types of women's refusals, however, different refusals to unwanted sexual advances could be tested. For example, Motely and Reeder (1995) gave a number of examples of refusals and asked men to interpret them. Further varying the way in which the hypothetical woman denies his sexual advance in the vignette may elicit different responses. Women also use passive refusals such as freezing, which was not examined in this study (Davis et al., 2004; Jozkowski et

al., 2014). These other types of refusals could be used in future research to compare the extent to which men may misperceive them.

Potential issues with the vignette may partially account for the lack of significant effects. The vignette described that the woman in the scenario did not want to "go all the way" and have sex. Using the term "sex" may have been "too far" or too much of an extreme act for participants to admit trying to continue. Many sexual assaults do not necessarily escalate to penetrative rape, so, defining a less severe form of sexual assault may increase the number of men who would feel comfortable pushing the sexual act described (Black et al., 2011; Koss et al., 1987). Perhaps being specific about a different sex act other than intercourse or keeping the desired act vaguer would have been easier for participants to imagine.

Methodological Strengths

The present study includes a strongly research-informed design. Written vignettes have often been shown to be reliable experimental proxies for sexual aggression (Abbey & Wegner, 2015). Vignettes allow participants to imagine a certain person, familiar place, or similar encounter they've had (Abbey & Wegner, 2015). This could have increased the chance that participants reported accurately about feelings during a similar situation that had already occurred (Davis, Parrott, George, Tharp, Nagayama Hall, Stappenbeck, 2014). Also, in a vignette, atmospheric cues like clothing, race, and attraction can all be imagined by the participant, removing potential biases. Participants took the survey anonymously, not in the lab, reducing the likelihood of social desirability effects, and increasing the opportunity to mentally engage more with the vignette. Another strength of the design is that it is based on previous research that has examined similar effects (see Motley & Reeder, 1995). The current study also includes nuances such as using an experimental design to examine men's perceptions of women's refusals. While this is not a dyadic study, the experiment asks men to consider a scenario with a woman.

Methodological Limitations

A number of methodological limitations were identified. Vignettes in general lack certain aspects of sexual assault (e.g., physical touch), and allow for individual differences in the way that participants read into a given scenario. That is, participants may focus on certain details more than others. Participants may also read into the vignette more and think about the scenario more than they would in-the-moment of a sexual encounter (Abbey & Wegner, 2015). This study focused on women's refusals to unwanted sexual advances, of which there are a variety. Due to feasibility, this study only used two general categories with one specific response in each category. Future research could look at men's responses to more variations of these refusals. This study uses a college population, which may limit the study's generalizability to other forms of sexual aggression (different age range, stranger rape, etc.); although rates of acquaintance sexual aggression are also common among the general population. This study also only examines sexual aggression within the context of the gender roles that apply to heterosexual couples with a male initiator and a female partner. Thus, these results may not generalize to non-heterosexual couples or to situations with a female perpetrator. Masculine identity itself may vary across communities; for example, this study looks at an urban population. While indeed the true threat to masculinity is in the outcome of the masculinity threat proxies (being compared to females), it is also possible that some men do not find the test threatening or as relevant as others.

Future Research

More experimental research on threatened masculinity in the context of sexual situations and sexual relationships is certainly needed. If a larger sample size still does not produce a main effect of threatened masculinity, then the present manipulation of threatened masculinity may not have been strong enough to have an effect on how men would act towards the woman. Participants may not have cared that the personality test told them they were not masculine; rather, being

threatened by male peers or by a woman they like, may matter more to them. To address this, participants could be told that their results are going to be shared with other male peers, increasing their stress. Of course, masculinity could be threatened in a number of different ways that may make the threat more salient such as being threatened by a woman they are attracted to or by other male peers, rather than by the researcher. To do so, future research could manipulate the woman's refusal such that she is the one who threatens the participants' masculinity. Masculinity threat could also be manipulated with more realistic laboratory proxies like a confederate. A female confederate could be used to make the participants' feelings of threatened masculinity stronger when refused by her. A female confederate's actions may also be more easily misperceived because the participant is not being directly reminded by a narrator of the woman's feelings, as would be the case in a vignette. Male confederates could also be used to threaten participants' masculinity by attacking participants' sexuality or status as a man, making them feel more pressure to achieve sex with the woman.

Self-report questions were used to ask participants if they would be willing to push for sex. Future research could use laboratory proxies of sexual aggression to see how the participants' behaviors are affected. One such proxy is virtual reality, in which the participant has the ability to continue pushing a virtual woman for sex (see Abbey, Pegram, Woerner, & Wegner, 2018). Another laboratory proxy of sexual aggression from previous research was developed by Franz, Haikalis, Reimer, Parrott, Gervais, and DiLillo (2018), who gave men the option to send sexually explicit videos to a female confederate. Men who sent the videos were more likely to report past sexual aggression behavior. Future research could threaten participants' masculinity and then have them complete this task to see if they will send sexually explicit material to an unwilling woman.

Also, as previously mentioned, future research could make changes to the developed vignette or use other laboratory proxies of sexual scenarios. Only two types of refusals were tested

in the pilot study. Future research could test different resistance messages from the hypothetical woman to see if certain refusal types lead to more variance in men's perceptions and willingness to push for sex. Women and men could rate how direct or indirect they feel different resistance messages are as well as their misperceptions of each resistance message. These various resistance messages could then be used in a vignette. Other laboratory proxies of sexual scenarios could also be used. For example, past research has used videotapes and audiotapes (Abbey & Wegner, 2005). Various versions of these materials could include different resistance messages, and men could describe how they perceive her refusal in a video or audio recording.

More research is needed on in-the-moment effects of perception and motivation in sexual assault perpetration. Some motivations that could be tested include sexual precedence, alcohol use, peer pressure, and other situational cues. It is necessary that the field continue to examine the mechanisms by which men choose to perpetrate sexual assault during an encounter.

Implications

This line of research is necessary in showing that men's in-the-moment perceptions of sexual interactions are important when deciding how to act in a sexual situation with a woman. Implications of this study suggest that traditional masculine ideologies put men at increased risk to act violently towards women. This study does not imply that women must be more direct in their refusals of men, rather that the extent to which a person's perceptions can be skewed is limited. Due to the inconsistent nature of perceptions, new sexual scripts are needed that involve open communication between partners. The traditional sexual script of the man pushing for sex and woman having to refuse him too often leads to non-consensual sex.

Figure 1

All participants are shown Image A, so they can see "how others score." Participants in the "no threat condition" are shown Image B (70th percentile). Participants in the "threat" condition are shown Image C (37th percentile).

Image A

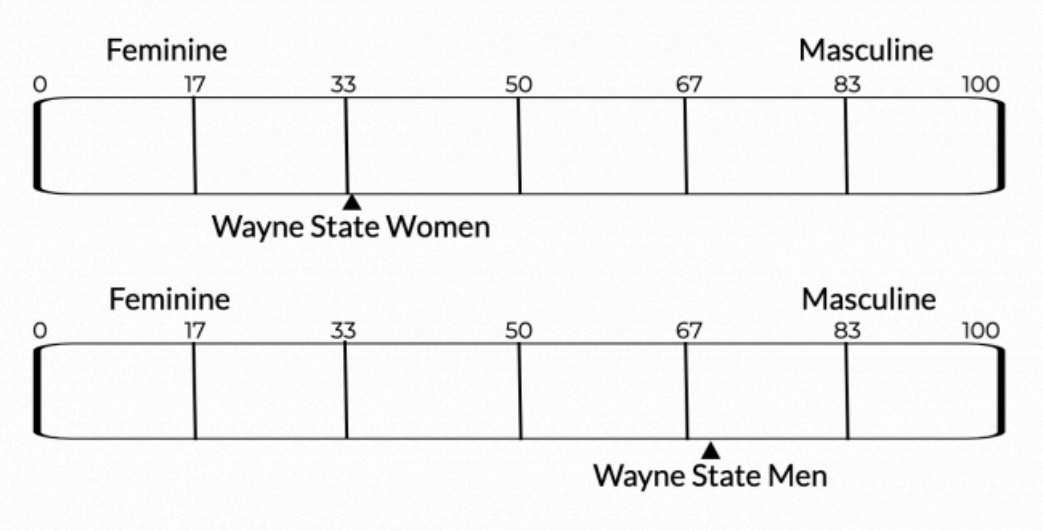


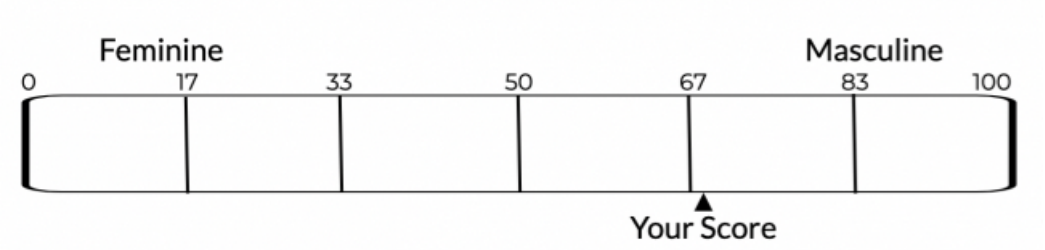
Image B

You scored in the **37th** percentile. This means **feminine** personality traits describe you best and that **masculine** personality traits do not describe you well.

People who are **feminine** and **not masculine** tend to:

- Be more emotionally sensitive.
- Value vulnerability.
- Prefer to communicate and invoke trust.
- Be more relationship oriented.

Image C



You scored in the **70th** percentile. This means **masculine** personality traits describe you best and that **feminine** personality traits do not describe you well.

People who are **masculine** and not **feminine** tend to:

- Be goal-directed.
- Prefer independence.
- Be rational and logical.
- Have good visual/spatial skills.

APPENDIX A

Screening Questions

1. What year were you born? _ _ _ _

2. What is your sex?
   Female
   Male
   Other _____

3. Have you engaged in some type of sexual activity with a woman? This can be anything from **passionate kissing** to **sexual intercourse**.
   Yes
   No (exclude)

The following questions concern your consensual sexual experiences with women. When the term sexual intercourse is used, we mean penetration of a woman's vagina, no matter how slight, by your penis. Ejaculation is not required. Whenever you see the words "sexual intercourse," please use this definition. By consensual we mean that both you and the woman wanted to have sex.

4. With how many women have you had consensual sexual intercourse ***in your lifetime***?
(Use 0 for none) ____ women

5. With how many different women have you had consensual sexual intercourse ***just one time***?
(Use 0 for none) ___ women

APPENDIX B

Gender Knowledge Test

(Rudman & Fairchild, 2004)

1. Anfernee Hardaway's nickname is (Penny vs. Doc).

2. A dime is what kind of play in football? (defensive vs. offensive)

3. The name of the Carolina NHL team is? (Thrashers vs. Hurricanes)

4. What team did Bob Gibson pitch for as a Cy Young winner in 1970? (Cardinals vs. Yankees)

5. In 1982, who won the Super Bowl's MVP award? (Joe Namath vs. Joe Montana)

6–8. *The next trials will show pictures of cars or motorcycles that you must identify.*

(Lamborghini vs. Ferrari) (Porsche vs. Mazda) (Honda vs. Suzuki)

9. A motorcycle engine turning at 8000 rpms generates an exhaust sound at (4000 rpms vs. 8000 rpms).

10. To help an engine produce more power you should (inject the fuel vs. reduce displacement).

11. In nature, the best analogy for a spark plug is (solar fire vs. lightning).

12. Karate originated in martial arts developed in (Japan vs. China).

13. Soldiers in WWII often used what type of guns? (Gatling vs. Tommy)

14. The groove inside the barrel of a revolver is (spiraled vs. smooth).

15. What is the compressed force behind BB guns? (gas vs. air)

16. The first people to use primitive flamethrowers in battle were (Greeks vs. Turks).

17. Identify the machine gun depicted on the next screen. (M240G vs. M16A2)

18. The material used between bathroom tiles is called (spackling vs. grout).

19. If you need to replace the tank ball in a toilet, ask for a (flapper vs. ball cock).

20. The paste used for soldering joints is called (gel vs. flux).

21. When choosing insulation, the R-value should be (high vs. low).

22. Hugh Hefner first published Playboy magazine in (1963 vs. 1953).

23. Arnold Schwarzenegger killed more people in which film? (True Lies vs. Total Recall)

24. After shooting a deer, bear, elk, or turkey, you must attach a (kill tag vs. ID tag).

25. When hunting, the legal amount of Hunter's Orange on your clothes is (25% vs. 50%).

26. By Olympic rules, boxing gloves for all weight classes weigh (12 ounces vs. 10 ounces).

27. When punching someone, you should aim your fist (a foot beyond optimal target vs. directly at target).

28. When punching someone, the majority of the force comes from (the speed of your fist vs. your upper arm and shoulder).

29. What's the best way to deflect a punch? (use the forearm to block it vs. use hand to catch it).

30. When ramming a car to disable it, you should aim for the (rear passenger's tire vs. front driver's tire).

APPENDIX C

Gender Identity Survey--shortened

For each of the following words, please pick a number from the following scale that best indicates how well you think the word describes yourself:

Never or Almost Never True 1-2-3-4-5-6-7 Always or Almost Always True

Once you have picked the number that best describes yourself, enter it into the blank next to the word and move on.

1. Self-reliant _____
2. Helpful _____
3. Cheerful _____
4. Independent _____
5. Conscientious _____
6. Affectionate _____
7. Forceful _____
8. Reliable _____
9. Sympathetic _____
10. Sensitive to the needs of others _____
11. Understanding _____
12. Sincere _____
13. Likable _____
14. Warm _____
15. Willing to take a stand _____
16. Friendly _____
17. Acts as a leader _____
18. Adaptable _____
19. Does not use harsh language _____
20. Competitive _____
21. Tactful _____
22. Gentle _____
23. Defends own beliefs _____
24. Moody _____
25. Shy _____
26. Athletic _____
27. Theatrical _____
28. Compassionate _____
29. Self-sufficient _____
30. Conceited _____
31. Soft spoken _____
32. Aggressive _____

APPENDIX D

Please imagine the scenario below, then answer the questions that follow. Please read the scenario and each question carefully and answer as honestly as you can. You will not be able to return to the scenario once you have gone to the next page and you will be asked questions at the end of the survey about it, so make sure to pay attention when reading.

Imagine you and a woman are alone together watching a movie. You've hooked up with her before. You're laying behind her with your arm around her, her body pressed up against yours. Throughout the night, you've noticed her pushing closer and closer against you. You can feel her lower back pressed up to you. She starts to move, rubbing against you. As she does this, you touch her side starting from her thigh and moving up her waist. She touches your hand as you move it onto her breast. You can hear her breathing get heavier, and you become more excited and start to feel warm.

You lift your head, she turns towards you a little, and you begin to kiss her. She runs her fingers through your hair and pulls you back towards her. You reposition her so you are now on top of her. Then, she pushes you up the slightest bit, tilts her head up and says, "This is fine, but I don't want to have sex." After a brief pause, you pull her on top, and go back to kissing.

Your bodies are against each other again and you start to glide your hand up and down her back. You can feel yourself begin to sweat as you grow more and more excited. You move your hand from her back to her chest, and she continues to kiss you, your tongues continuously touching. The two of you roll over, and you are on top again. You reach down to unbutton her pants and slide your hand in to touch her. This goes on for a little while. Then, she backs away, and says, "I still don't want to go all the way tonight."

APPENDIX E

Direct resistance:

She seems to pull back a bit. You go back to just kissing. You are starting to get more and more into it, and you go to remove her pants. As you start to remove them, she grabs your hand and pulls it off of her, pushing you up with her other hand and says, “Seriously, I meant what I said. I want to stop.” She then rolls over, turning away from you.

Indirect Resistance:

She seems to pull back a bit. You go back to just kissing. You are starting to get more and more into it, and you go to remove her pants. As you start to remove them, she touches your hand and says, “It’s getting late. I should probably go home.”

APPENDIX F

Outcome Measures

Perception of Her Interest in Having Sex

1. What do you think you would say or do next in this situation? (open ended)
2. Please describe the rest of the interaction you and the woman would have that evening. (open ended)
3. Based on how she responded in the story, how much do you agree that she is trying to tell you... (1 Strongly disagree – 7 Strongly agree)
   A. "I want to have sex."
   B. "I don't want to have sex"
   C. "If you keep trying, I will change my mind."
   D. "I want to have sex, but I don't want to appear too easy."
   E. "I am not sure what I want."

Willingness to Continue Having Sex

1. If you were in this situation, how likely would you be to continue trying to take off her pants? (1 Not at all likely – 7 Extremely Likely)
2. If you were in this situation, how likely would you be to try to have sex with her at this point? (1 Not at all likely – 7 Extremely Likely)

APPENDIX G

Masculine Gender Role Stress

(Eisler & Skidmore, 1987)

We have just a few more questions. Please rate from 0 to 5 how stressful you feel each scenario is.

(0 not at all stressful to 5 extremely stressful)

1. Being outperformed at work by a woman (Subordination to women)
2. Letting a woman control the situation (Subordination to women)
3. Having a female boss (Subordination to women)
4. Being married to someone who makes more money than you (Subordination to women)
5. Being with a woman who is more successful than you (Subordination to women)
6. Being outperformed in a game by a woman (Subordination to women)
7. Admitting to your friends that you do housework (Subordination to women)
8. Being with a woman who is much taller than you (Subordination to women)
9. Being perceived by someone as “gay” (Physical inadequacy)
10. Appearing less athletic than a friend (Physical inadequacy)
11. Being compared unfavorably to other men (Physical inadequacy)
12. Losing in a sports competition (Physical inadequacy)
13. Feeling that you are not in good physical condition (Physical inadequacy)
14. Not being able to find a sexual partner (Physical inadequacy)
15. Being perceived as having feminine traits (Physical inadequacy)
16. Having your lover say that [he/she is] they are not satisfied (Physical inadequacy)
17. Knowing you cannot hold your liquor as well as others (Physical inadequacy)
18. Admitting that you are afraid of something (Emotional inexpressiveness)

19. Having your children see you cry (Emotional inexpressiveness)
20. Telling your [spouse] partner that you love [him/her] them (Emotional inexpressiveness)
21. Talking with a woman who is crying (Emotional inexpressiveness)
22. Comforting a male friend that is upset (Emotional inexpressiveness)
23. Having a man put his arm around your shoulder (Emotional inexpressiveness)
24. Having people say that you are indecisive (Intellectual inferiority)
25. Having others say that you are too emotional (Intellectual inferiority)
26. Having others ask for directions when you are lost (Intellectual inferiority)
27. Working with people who seem more ambitious than you (Intellectual inferiority)
28. Talking with a “feminist” (Intellectual inferiority)
29. Working with people who are brighter than yourself (Intellectual inferiority)
30. Staying home during the day with a sick child (Intellectual inferiority)
31. Getting passed over for a promotion (Performance failure)
32. Being unemployed (Performance failure)
33. Not making enough money (Performance failure)
34. Finding you lack the occupational skills to succeed (Performance failure)
35. Being unable to perform sexually (Performance failure)
36. Being too tired for sex when your lover initiates it (Performance failure)
37. Being unable to become sexually aroused when you want (Performance failure)
38. Getting fired from your job (Performance failure)

APPENDIX H

Friends' Approval and Pressure of Forced Sex

(Abbey et al., 2001; Abbey & McAuslan, 2004)

1. Not at all
2. A little
3. Somewhat
4. Quite a bit
5. Very much

This next set of questions has to do with your male friends' beliefs and attitudes.

To what extent would your friends approve of…

1. getting a woman drunk in order to have sex with her.

2. lying to a woman in order to have sex with her.

3. forcing a woman to have sex.

How much pressure have you ever felt from your friends to…

1. get a woman drunk in order to have sex with her.

2. lie to a woman in order to have sex with her.

3. force a woman to have sex.

APPENDIX I

Demographic Questions

First, we would like to ask a few general background questions. This is important because we would like to be sure that the study includes a wide range of people from different backgrounds and with different types of experiences. Sharing this information helps us know that we included people from a wide range of backgrounds.

1. What year were you born? _ _ _ _

2. Where were you born? _____ (drop down menu of countries)

3. What is your sex?
   - Female
   - Male
   - Other _____

4. What is your Racial or Ethnic Background?
   - Black/African-American
   - White/European-American
   - East Asian
   - South Asian
   - Southeast Asian
   - Hispanic
   - Arab/Middle Eastern
   - Native American
   - Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
   - Multiracial
   - Other

5. What is your current relationship status?
   - Single, not dating or seeing any one person exclusively
   - Single in an exclusive dating relationship
   - Living with a romantic partner
   - Married
   - Separated
   - Divorced
   - Widowed

The following questions concern your consensual sexual experiences with women. When the term sexual intercourse is used, we mean penetration of a woman's vagina, no matter how slight, by your penis. Ejaculation is not required. Whenever you see the words "sexual intercourse," please use this definition. By consensual we mean that both you and the woman wanted to have sex.

6. With how many women have you had consensual sexual intercourse ***in your lifetime***? (Use 0 for none) ____ women
7. With how many different women have you had consensual sexual intercourse ***just one time***? (Use 0 for none) ___ women

APPENDIX J

Vignette Questions

1. How likely is this scenario to happen in real life? (5-point, Likert scale; Very likely to Very unlikely)
2. How likely do you think you are to be in a situation like this? (5-point, Likert scale; Very likely to Very unlikely)
3. How believable is this scenario? (5-point, Likert scale; Very believable to Very unbelievable)
4. How common do you think sexual encounters like this one are? (5-point, Likert scale; Very uncommon to very common)
5. How arousing did you find this story to be? (3-point, Likert scale; Very arousing to Not at all arousing
6. How much do you relate to this scenario? (5-point, Likert scale; Not at all to Very much)
7. Have you ever been in a scenario like this one? (yes/no)
8. Do you know someone who's ever been in a situation like this one? (yes/no)

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ABSTRACT

THE EFFECT OF THREATENED MASCULINITY ON MEN'S PERCEPTIONS OF WOMEN'S REFUSALS AND THEIR WILLINGNESS TO CONTINUE AN UNWANTED SEXUAL ADVANCE

by

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Men's sexual aggression against women is distressingly common. Some men use sexual aggression as a way to reassert their masculinity when they have been rejected by a woman (Malamuth, 1995). Some men who perpetrate aggression may not intentionally overlook women's refusals to unwanted sexual advances, rather they might not perceive a refusal as resistance at all. Social perception research has shown that people's perceptions are influenced by their motivations, allowing them to only perceive what they wish to see. Masculinity threat may be one such motivation. A sample of 106 men completed an experimental survey with a 2 (threatened masculinity vs. no threatened masculinity) x 2 (woman's direct refusal vs. woman's indirect refusal) design to test the effect of threatened masculinity and woman's refusal directness on men's perceptions a woman's willingness to have sex and his own willingness to continue having sex in a sexual encounter. Threatened masculinity did not have a significant effect on men's perceptions of the woman as more willing to have sex with them, nor on men's willingness to continue engaging in sexual activities despite her refusal. Refusal directness also did not have a significant main effect on men's perceptions of the woman as more willing to have sex with them, nor on men's willingness to continue engaging in sexual activities despite her refusal. There was also not

a significant interaction between masculinity threat and refusal directness on participants' perceptions of the woman's willingness to continue having sex, nor on their own willingness to continue having sex despite her refusal. The study was underpowered, so more data will be collected in the future. Strength, limitations, future research, and implications for sexual aggression prevention are discussed.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

M. Colleen McDaniel is currently a doctoral student at Wayne State University working toward a degree in Social Psychology. She has a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and a Bachelor of Arts in Women's and Gender Studies, both from the University of Dayton in Dayton, Ohio. She works in Dr. Antonia Abbey's Social Health and Dating Lab, where her primary research interests include sexual aggression, hostile masculinity, men's perceptions of consent and communication during sexual encounters, and male peer groups.