

COLGATE UNIVERSITY
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Hamilton, NY 13346-1385

Institutional Review Board Proposal Cover Sheet

Title of Project: The world between yes and no: Gender effects on the perception of sexual coercion

Anticipated number of participants: females: 75 males: 75

Approximate ages: 18-22

Submission date: XX/XX/XXXX

Anticipated start date: XX/XX/XXXX

Expedited Review: for research that does **not**

Purpose of Investigation and Procedures

Sexual coercion continues to be a problem in American society, especially on college campuses. Despite research demonstrating that non-physical forms of sexual coercion are far more prevalent than physical forms (*missing citation*), empirical investigation has centered on physical coercion (rape or attempted rape), specifically instances of men physically coercing women. The current study seeks to contribute to the body of literature on sexual coercion by exploring differences in gender perception of non-physical sexual coercion. In addition, this study will address the coercion of men by women, which anecdotal evidence suggests is prevalent enough to merit research.

The participants will be in one of four conditions: female participants viewing male perpetrators, female participants viewing female perpetrators, male participants viewing male perpetrators and male participants viewing female perpetrators. Participants in each condition will view six filmed vignettes on a computer, ranging in intensity of nonphysical sexual coercion from clearly consensual to clearly coercive. There will be no physical contact of any kind between the actors in the vignettes. After viewing each vignette, the participants will be asked to rate how sexually engaged each actor was in the situation and how much unwanted pressure those characters were feeling to have sex on a 1-7 likert scale (see attached). Participants will also be asked how certain they are of their assessment. Participants will have been pre-screened with the following measures: Gender Norms Scale (Thompson & Pleck, 1986), and the adaptation of the Race centrality scale for gender (Sellers et. al, 1998), and Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Glick & Fiske, 1996).

Anticipated Risk and Potential Benefits to Participants

There are no potential benefits for the participants. Although this is a very low risk procedure, it is not without some potential risk. It is possible that having to watch visual depictions of nonphysical sexual coercion will be uncomfortable for some, especially for those who may have personal experience with sexual coercion. This could result in psychological distress. This risk is heightened because we cannot tell participants in advance that they will be viewing images of sexual coercion because doing so would taint their perceptions of the videos. In addition, having to make judgments regarding the perpetration and victimization of sexual coercion may make some participants uncomfortable. Although we will take steps to ensure the psychological safety and well-being of participants, the potential benefits to society outweigh the risks. The knowledge gained from this study could be useful to campuses across the United States.

Potential Benefits to Participants

Certificate of Informed Consent

Overview and Procedure. This is a study on sensitive matters relating to sexual relations, including positive and negative depictions. As a participant you will view six video clips, each approximately 30 seconds in length, and be asked to respond to five short questions after each video. The total session will take approximately 30 minutes.

Risks and Benefits. There are no direct benefits to you as a participant, and it is possible that you may feel uncomfortable viewing these videos because they refer to sexual topics. If so, you may wish to participate in a different experiment.

Confidentiality. Your privacy will be protected. At no time will identifying information be attached to your responses. Any information obtained during the course of your participation will remain confidential and will be used solely for research purposes. Within these restrictions, results of this study will be made available to you upon request.

Compensation.

Debriefing Form

This study examines differences in gender perception of nonphysical sexual coercion. We hypothesized that men and women would see identical cases differently, in part because they tend to identify with the person in the video who matches their own gender.

The video clips you saw showed two actors. Some participants saw 6 scenes in which the man pressured the woman to engage in sexual relations, other participants saw the reverse in which the woman pressured the man. We hypothesized that, overall, people would perceive the female victim clips as more severe. However, we also hypothesized that people would display greater empathy for the actor who matched their own gender, regardless of whether the person was the victim or the perpetrator.

In describing the study to you initially, we specifically avoided loaded words such as “coercion,” “victim,” and “perpetrator” in order to avoid influencing your responses.

Furthermore, I did not mention the gender of the actors or the gender of the victim or perpetrator. I also did not mention the gender of the perpetrator or the gender of the victim.

Example vignettes (removed from example)