

Exploring the effects of rape myth acceptance and gender role attitudes on the perceptions of the female victim and male perpetrator of date rape.

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## **Abstract**

*The commonality of date rape is high and includes a forced sexual encounter with a perpetrator that the victim knows and trusts. Conversely, society's views on rape do not fit this idea (Zaleski et al., 2016). People's perceptions of a date rape scenario have been found to be affected by pre-existing beliefs including rape myth acceptance (RMA) and gender role attitudes (GRA), which has great implications for the criminal justice system and future interventions for both victims and perpetrators of date rape (Grubb and Turner, 2012). The present study aimed to explore whether participants GRA and RMA have an influence on their perceptions of victim and perpetrator responsibility, impact, punishment, and guilt in the context of a date rape scenario. University students aged over 18 years (N = 98) were recruited opportunistically via snowball sampling. The results indicated that participants' (with low RMA) perceptions of date rape regarding responsibility, impact, punishment and guilt did not differ across levels of GRA. The study concluded that traditional GRA did not influence people's perceptions on date rape, but this study could only draw conclusions for those with low RMA. Therefore, this study provides supporting evidence for the shift in gender equality. Future research should examine the effects of RMA and GRA on same-sex date rape, as date rape perceptions in this area are less clear.*

**Key words: date rape, rape myth acceptance, gender role attitudes, victim blaming, perceptions.**

## **Introduction**

The occurrence of sexual assault including rape has become a worldwide problem which poses a challenge to the public's health (Ogunwale and Oshiname, 2017). The Sexual Offences Act (2003) states that rape occurs when an individual intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another individual using his penis and the individual does not consent to the penetration and/or the individual committing the offence does not believe that the person consented (legislation.gov.uk, 2018). Date rape is described as "a form of rape that is perpetrated against an individual by someone with whom he/she readily enters into a dating or romantic relationship." (Oshiname, Ogunwale and Ajuwon, 2013:137).

Grubb and Turner (2012) suggest that rape against a woman often occurs with male dating partners. Although both males and females are vulnerable rape victims; young girls, unmarried women and female undergraduates are found to be more common targets (Fork et al., 2008). Research indicates that individuals tend to adopt pre-existing false beliefs that serve to blame or show empathy towards the perpetrator's sexual aggression towards the victim, which influences their perceptions on date rape (Hockett et al., 2016). This is referred to as rape myth acceptance (RMA) which is defined as "prejudicial, stereotyped, or false beliefs about rape, rape victims and rapists" (Burt, 1980:217). Therefore, it is important to address this problem by reducing the stereotypical attitudes adopted by individuals to minimise the influence it has on the decision-making process of jurors (Bohner et al., 2009). This study expands on previous research to better understand whether the level of RMA and Gender Role Attitudes (GRA) has an influence on participants' perceptions of date rape.

Victim blaming occurs when individuals believe that the rape victim provoked the attack because of the way they behaved around the perpetrator and therefore, hold the victim either fully or partially responsible (Harber, Podolski and Williams, 2015). Due to the negative stereotypes against women, female rape victims are frequently blamed for the sexual attack compared to male perpetrators (Felson and Palmore, 2018). This indicates victim blaming can have a major impact on the way females are viewed by society (Sommer, Reynolds and Kehn, 2016). In other words, victim blaming is related to RMA as survivors of rape are highly likely to be blamed if an individual accepts and believes in rape myths that are existent in society (Ayala, Kotary and Hetz, 2018; Sleath and Bull, 2010). Burt (1980) examined both the feminist and social psychological theory to explain RMA and found those who adopt sex-role stereotypes, adversative sex beliefs, personal exposure to the victim, perpetrator and scenario of the sexual assault, will endorse RMA. Hockett et al. (2016) examined rape myth consistency and gender differences in the way rape victims are perceived. They found that males blame the victim more than women and that both males and females' understanding of rape was affected by RMA. Rape myths frequently include victim characteristics (i.e., the way they dress, attractiveness, age and gender) (Sussenbach et al., 2017); victim consumed alcohol (Cameron and Stritzke, 2003); and/or that women lie about being raped and provoke being raped (Littleton, 2011). Nevertheless, individuals with high RMA justify and propagate male violence against females within society (Grubb and Turner, 2012).

A common form of rape myths introduced by Estrich (1987) is the 'real rape' myth. This stereotype involves a stranger using a weapon to attack a woman at night in an

isolated outdoor area which results in the woman sustaining injuries (Waterhouse, 2016). However, the rape statistics from March 2015 to March 2017 in England and Wales report that 45% of victims were raped by a partner or ex-partner, 35% were raped by a family member and 13% were raped by a stranger (Office for National Statistics, 2018). Waterhouse (2016) examined rape cases reported to the UK police force and found that out of 400 cases, not one case met Estrich's (1987) 'real rape' characteristics. They also found that 280 of the rape offences were committed by individuals who were dating or married to the victim, inside closed doors with the victim sustaining no injuries, therefore indicating the inaccuracy of rape myths. Additionally, researchers have found that majority of rape cases in the UK and US do not fit the 'real rape' stereotype (Bows and Westmarland, 2015).

Although rape is extensively prevalent it is one of the most underreported crimes in the UK (Venema, 2016). Stranger rape is less likely to occur than date rape, but it is more likely to be reported (Sleath and Bull, 2015). Many victims believe that their experience of rape does not meet the characteristics of 'real rape' and tend to adopt rape myths (Venema, 2016). Thus, victims are less likely to report date rape to the police (Hayes, Lorenz and Bell, 2013). Rape myths are based on the idea that the way females behave results in their victimisation (Ellis, Clarke and Keatley, 2017). RMA is explained by the attribution theory of blame (Heider, 1958). This states that when making judgements about a rape scenario, individuals who focus on the victims' behaviour or their characteristics (internal attribution) attribute more blame to the victim, as opposed to those who focus on the situation rather than the victim (external attribution) (Rotter 1966).

Eyssel and Bohner (2011) examined the effects of RMA on judgements of blame in rape cases using a mock jury. They found that individuals with high RMA attributed more blame and responsibility to the female rape victim and exonerated the male perpetrator as opposed to those with low RMA levels. Similarly, LeMaire, Oswald and Russell (2016) found that participants with higher RMA levels minimised the guilt and responsibility of the perpetrator. There is extensive supporting research that has found an association between high RMA levels and victim blaming (Gurnham, 2016; Hayes, Abott and Cook, 2016; Persson, Dhingra and Grogan, 2018). However, majority of research exploring the effects of RMA on victim blaming within rape cases has been conducted using US University students and therefore cannot be generalised to wider populations.

Majority of research exploring individuals' perceptions about date rape focus on gender as a causal characteristic that influences individuals' thoughts towards rape, rape victims and perpetrators (White, 2009; Lee, Kim and Lim, 2010) however, findings have been diverse (Black and McCloskey, 2013). Several studies have found that males are more likely to support rape myths, blame rape victims and defend perpetrators than females (Grubb and Harrower, 2008; Schneider et al., 2009; Hayes-Smith and Levett, 2010; Suarez and Gadalla, 2010). Conversely, other researchers have found there to be no difference between both genders across their RMA levels, victim blame and/or punishment of the perpetrator (Grubb and Harrower, 2009; Sims, Noel and Maisto, 2007). It has also been found that females compared to males are highly likely to blame the victim (Black and McCloskey, 2013). Due to such inconsistent findings, it can be suggested that gender fails to provide an adequate explanation on RMA and therefore gender should be withdrawn

when aiming to understand people's perceptions of date rape (Black and McCloskey, 2013). Gender has been found to have no influence on victim blaming (Stromwall, Alfredsson and Landstrom, 2013) as it disguises other significant variables. This provides an explanation for the ambiguous findings of gender on perceptions of date rape (White, 2009). Therefore, compared to participant gender, the GRA of males and females has a greater influence on perceptions of date rape (Angelone, Mitchell and Lucente, 2012).

From the early life stages, males and females are socialised very differently for example, males are allocated masculine roles and females are assigned feminine roles which can have an impact upon each individual's behaviour and beliefs about themselves and others (Grubb and Turner, 2012). Bridges (1991) found that in terms of sexual behaviour males are socialised to be dominant initiators of sexual interactions whereas females are socialised to be submissive. According to the sex role socialisation theory, when an individual is raped by their dating partner, it is perceived more as being a normal sexual interaction rather than rape (Littleton, 2001). This is because rape supports the idea that males should be more dominant when initiating a sexual intercourse (Vandiver and Dupalo, 2013). The theory suggests that people's perceptions regarding date rape are associated with traditional gender role stereotypes (Grubb and Turner, 2012). This is because individuals with traditional GRA view women as fragile, passive and submissive to men which results in more victim blame, whereas individuals with egalitarian GRA believe in gender equality and reducing the dominant gender division (Angelone, Mitchell and Grossi, 2015). Therefore, this theory provides a further understanding of males sexually aggressive behaviour and why rape is normalised within society (Grubb and Turner, 2012).

Research has found a significant relationship between GRA and date rape (Suarez and Gadalla, 2010). Angelone, Mitchell and Lucente (2012) found that individuals with egalitarian attitudes attributed less blame to the victim and held the perpetrator responsible for date rape as opposed to those with traditional GRA. They also found that when examining people's perceptions of date rape, GRA revealed more significant effects in comparison to participant gender. Similarly, Black and McCloskey (2013) found individuals with traditional GRA attributed more blame to the victim and minimised perpetrator guilt. Individuals with traditional GRA justify the perpetrator's behaviour by believing that the female victim secretly wants to be raped and minimising the seriousness of the crime as opposed to those with egalitarian views (Yamawaki, 2007). Chapleau, Oswald and Russell (2008) have also found a consistent link between greater traditional views towards females and greater support of victim blaming, irrespective of participant gender. This further supports the significance of examining the effects of GRA over participant gender.

Furthermore, research has indicated that the influence of GRA is comparable regardless of gender, in simpler terms males and females with traditional GRA attribute more blame to the victim than those of the same gender with egalitarian attitudes (Black and McCloskey, 2013). Therefore, it is suggested that the gender differences in perceptions of date rape demonstrated in previous literature may essentially reflect GRA (Black and McCloskey, 2013). Both GRA and RMA have been found to mediate the association between gender and perceptions on date rape (Silver and Hovick, 2018; Reling et al., 2018). Several studies examining perceptions of date rape have found that males are highly likely to endorse traditional GRA than females

(Reyes et al., 2016; Shnabel et al., 2016). Research also indicates that individuals with traditional GRA and high RMA tend to blame the victim (Yamawaki, 2007; Voller et al., 2015). Therefore, this supports the idea that research examining perceptions of date rape should focus on GRA and RMA as opposed to participant gender, as gender does not provide a unique influence on perceptions of date rape (Black and McCloskey, 2013; White, 2009).

Researchers examining potential juror decision making have found that jurors base their verdict on more than trial evidence (Bornstein et al., 2017; Hammond et al., 2011). Jurors pre-existing beliefs about the rape victim, victim clothing and victim character affect their attributions of guilt (Mitchell, Myers and Broszkiewicz, 2016). Gathering data from a real-life jury is difficult therefore, majority of researchers have conducted mock trials using the public (Dinos et al., 2015). Studies using mock jurors have found high RMA levels and traditional GRA are more likely to blame rape victims and provide a not guilty verdict (Sommer, Reynolds and Kehn, 2016; Waterhouse, Reynolds and Egan, 2016; Smith and Skinner, 2017). However, these studies only focused on stranger rape scenarios. Therefore, it is important to address victim blaming and perpetrator responsibility in the context of a date rape scenario, which may have greater implications for juror selection procedures and perceptions of rape in the criminal justice system (CJS) (Hammond et al., 2011).

Continued research examining perceptions of date rape is warranted, to help address the negative attitudes towards date rape victims. The present study aimed to explore the influence of participants GRA and RMA on their perceptions of date rape, with regards to victim blame and perpetrator responsibility, in the context of a date rape

scenario. Previous research indicates that GRA of males and females have been found to exert a more significant influence on perceptions of date rape than participant gender (Angelone, Mitchell and Lucente, 2012). Therefore, this study aimed to add to a growing body of research highlighting the importance of GRA over participant gender. Also, majority of the research into perceptions of date rape has been conducted using US student populations, therefore this study assessed the effects of RMA and GRA on blame attributions of UK student populations.

### **Hypotheses**

Based on previous literature this study hypothesised that: (H1) participants with high RMA levels are more likely to attribute blame to the female victim than those with low RMA levels; (H2) participants with traditional GRA are more likely to attribute blame to the female victim as opposed to blaming the male perpetrator than those with egalitarian GRA; (H3) participants with traditional GRA and high RMA are more likely to blame the female victim as opposed to those with egalitarian GRA and low RMA.

### **Method**

#### **Design**

A quasi-experimental design was implemented, whereby each participant completed the same standardised questionnaire containing 52 questions from 3 established questionnaires. Thus, each question was received by every participant in the same order. A 2 x 2 between-subjects design was initially going to be used, which would have included two independent variables: RMA level (high/low) and GRA (traditional/egalitarian). However, it was concluded that this design would not be appropriate for this particular data set, as participants with high RMA did not appear to have egalitarian attitudes. Therefore, only participants with low RMA and GRA

were examined. There were two dependent variables: attributing blame to the female victim and attributing blame to the male perpetrator. The following aspects of the original dependent variables were also looked at: negative impact on the female victim; negative impact on the male perpetrator; reporting to authorities; arresting of the male perpetrator; and guilt of the male perpetrator. To form perceptions of date rape, all of these items looked at responsibility, impact, punishment and guilt of the victim and perpetrator.

### **Participants**

A power analysis was used to identify the recommended number of participants for this study. It revealed that a minimum of 90 participants would be suitable for this research study. The power analysis was conducted using the effect size, alpha and means from Black and McCloskey's (2013) study on date rape perceptions. Therefore, a total of 108 male and female University students aged 18+ were recruited. Participants were recruited opportunistically via snowball sampling, which allowed participants to share the weblink of the online survey to their friends and acquaintances. However, due to incomplete data entries, ten participants were removed and so data from 98 participants were included in the analysis. Participant gender was not included in the analysis as gender was not a focus of this study.

### **Materials/Measures**

There was a total of 51 closed-ended questions from three established questionnaires. The questionnaire was accessible via a link to Qualtrics (online survey tool). Questionnaires are established to be an appropriate method for gathering a great amount of data easily and quickly (Coolican, 2009).

### **The Updated Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (U-IRMA; McMohan and Farmer, 2011)**

The U-IRMA scale (McMohan and Farmer, 2011; See Appendix 4) measured whether RMA influences victim blaming. An updated version of the RMA scale was used, which revised the language used and captured more subtle rape myths (McMohan and Farmer, 2011). The scale is considered to be the most reliable ( $r = .93$ ) measuring RMA levels to date (Payne, Lonsway and Fitzgerald, 1999). Bendixen and Kennair (2017) reported internal consistency ( $\alpha = .92$ ) on the usage of this questionnaire. The U-IRMA scale consists of items that form 4 subscales: 'she asked for it', 'he didn't mean to', 'it wasn't really rape' and 'she lied'. This questionnaire contains 22 items and used a 5-point Likert scale (1= *Strongly Agree*, 5= *Strongly Disagree*). Permission for this scale was not required as it was made available to the public and has provided instructions on how to score the questionnaire (See Appendix 4).

### **Attitudes toward Women Scale (AWS; Spence, Helmrich and Stapp, 1978)**

GRA was measured using the AWS (Spence, Helmrich and Stapp, 1978); See Appendix 5). The scale contained 25 items which examined the different attitudes people have toward the role of women in society using a 4-point Likert scale (1= *Strongly Agree*, 2= *Strongly Disagree*). A high score indicates egalitarian attitudes whereas a low score indicates traditional attitudes. Out of the 25 items, 12 (questions 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 18, 21, 24 and 25) were reverse scored. AWS has been found to be reliable (Delevi and Bugay (2013), internally consistent ( $\alpha = .78$ ; Angelone, Mitchell and Lucente, 2012) and has good construct validity (Nelson, 1988). Permission for this questionnaire was not necessary as it was made available to the

public and has provided instructions on how to score the questionnaire (See Appendix 5).

### **Black and McCloskey's (2013) Date Rape Vignette and Questionnaire**

Participants read a modified version of Black and McCloskey's (2013) date rape scenario (See Appendix 6). Permission was granted from the author, to use the date rape vignette and accompanying questionnaire (See Appendix 7). The scenario depicted Mark and Jessica who had been dating for a month. After going to a movie one night, they return to Jessica's apartment. They start kissing and fondling each other. After some heavy foreplay leading to a point just short of intercourse, Jessica said, "No. I don't want to. Stop!" Mark did not stop and intercourse followed. This scenario was utilised because of its ambiguity, as Munsch and Willer (2012) suggest that RMA influences people's perceptions on date rape when the particular rape case is viewed as ambiguous.

Perceptions on date rape were measured using Black and McCloskey's (2013) date rape scenario questionnaire. After reading the date rape scenario, participants were requested to make judgements about responsibility (two items), negative impact (two items, guilt (1 item) and punishment (2 items). Participants responded to these questions using a 5-point Likert scale (1= *Strongly Agree*, 5= *Strongly Disagree*).

A vignette was used because it is easy to construct and an ethical approach to expose participants to particular situations that they may not have experienced before (Griffith, Hart and Brickel, 2010). The vignette was suitable for this study as it helped to ensure sensitive questions were less personally threatening by making

sure there is a distance from topics that may cause the individuals distress, therefore minimising the chances of gaining responses affected by social desirability (Tuliao, Hoffman and McChargue, 2017).

### **Participant Information Sheet**

Participants were provided with a participant information sheet (See Appendix 1) which included information on their eligibility (18+ University students) and what would be required of them if they participate. Participants who felt that the topic area (date rape) may cause them distress were advised not to continue with the study. It also specified the contact details of the researcher and appropriate support groups including rape crisis, victim support and the survivor's trust.

### **Consent Form**

Consent (See Appendix 2) was also obtained from participants. This required participants to confirm they had read and understood all of the information provided in the participant information sheet and to provide full consent to participate in the present study. The online survey was programmed to ensure only participants who provided consent were able to continue with the survey.

### **Debrief Form**

At the end of the questionnaire participants were provided with a debrief sheet (see appendix 3) explaining the true nature of the study. They were also requested to create a Personal identification code to ensure anonymity of the participant and if they wanted to withdraw their data in the future. Additionally, they were provided with the contact details of the researcher and appropriate support organisations.

## **Procedure**

A pilot study was conducted involving 5 participants via opportunity sampling to ensure all questions from the survey were clear to understand. The anticipated time frame for completing the survey was accurate (10 minutes) and any errors in the information were removed.

Participants read the participant information sheet and provided informed consent. The demographic questions based on age and gender were optional.

First participants completed the U-IRMA (McMohan and Farmer, 2011), rating their agreeableness on 22 items. Following this, the AWS (Spence, Helmrich and Stapp, 1978) was completed whereby participants rated their agreeableness with different statements on a 4-point Likert scale. After this, participants read Black and McCloskey's date rape scenario and completed the accompanying questionnaire. All responses were recorded on a 5-point Likert scale. Once reaching the end of the questionnaire participants were thanked for participating and were debriefed.

## **Ethics**

Ethical approval was granted for this survey from the ethics committee of Manchester Metropolitan University (see Appendix 8). The current study followed The British Psychological Society's Code of Ethics and Conduct. Participants were made aware that the data would be destroyed after 10 years.

## **Results**

Results were analysed using SPSS-24 (IBM Corp, 2016). From looking at the data it appeared that participants with high RMA did not have egalitarian attitudes therefore,

the 2 x 2 between subjects ANOVA that was originally going to be used was no longer suitable for this study. Due to no such results, this study eliminated high RMA from the data set and purely focused on the influence of low RMA levels and GRA on the level of agreeableness for the date rape perception items. Thus, hypotheses 1 and 3 could not be tested. High RMA levels were eliminated from the data set, leaving data from 75 participants with low RMA levels to be analysed. Seven independent t-tests were computed to assess whether participants' perceptions on date rape regarding responsibility, impact, punishment and guilt of the victim and perpetrator differ across GRA levels.

The parametric assumptions for the data set were checked. Levene's test for equality of variances for all seven date rape perceptions indicated  $p > .05$ , which means that the equal variances were assumed.

The second hypothesis was that participants with traditional GRA and high RMA levels are more likely to blame the female victim as opposed to those with egalitarian GRA and low RMA levels. There was no significant difference on how participants rated Jessica's (victim) responsibility for the date rape incident  $t(73) = .20, p = .844$ . This indicates that there was no difference in the responses between participants with traditional GRA ( $M = 1.41, SD = .90$ ) and participants with egalitarian GRA ( $M = 1.37, SD = .71$ ). Therefore, the third hypothesis was rejected.

There was no significant difference on how participants rated Marks (perpetrator) responsibility for the date rape incident  $t(73) = -.64, p = .523$ . This indicates that there was no difference in the responses between participants with traditional GRA ( $M = 4.54, SD = .99$ ) and egalitarian GRA ( $M = 4.66, SD = .53$ ).

There was no significant difference on how participants rated whether the date rape incident would have a negative impact on Jessica,  $t(73) = -.51, p = .610$ . This indicates that there was no difference in the responses between participants with traditional GRA ( $M = 4.22, SD = 1.18$ ) and egalitarian GRA ( $M = 4.34, SD = .94$ ).

There was no significant difference on how participants rated whether the date rape incident will have a negative impact on Mark,  $t(73) = -.19, p = .849$ . This indicates that there was no difference in the responses between participants with traditional GRA ( $M = 2.89, SD = 1.27$ ) and egalitarian GRA ( $M = 2.95, SD = 1.25$ ).

There was no significant difference on how participants rated whether Jessica should report the incident to the authorities (punishment),  $t(73) = .03, p = .98$ . This indicates that there was no difference in the responses between participants with traditional GRA ( $M = 4.22, SD = 1.00$ ) and egalitarian GRA ( $M = 4.21, SD = .81$ ).

There was no significant difference on how participants rated whether Mark should be arrested for rape (punishment),  $t(73) = .02, p = .98$ . This shows that there was no difference in the responses between participants with traditional GRA ( $M = 4.16, SD = .93$ ) and egalitarian GRA ( $M = 4.16, SD = .82$ ).

There was no significant difference on how participants rated whether Mark should be found guilty if he was arrested and his case was brought to trial (punishment),  $t(73) = .04, p = .97$ . This indicates that there was no difference in the responses

between participants with traditional GRA ( $M = 4.27$ ,  $SD = .77$ ) and egalitarian GRA ( $M = 4.26$ ,  $SD = .95$ ).

## **Discussion**

The present study aimed to examine the influence of students' GRA and RMA on their perceptions of date rape, with regards to victim blame and perpetrator responsibility, in the context of a date rape scenario. This study hypothesised that participants with high RMA levels are more likely to attribute blame to the female victim than those with low RMA levels. It also hypothesised that participants with traditional GRA are more likely to attribute blame to the female victim than those with egalitarian GRA. Additionally, this study hypothesised that participants with traditional GRA and high RMA levels are more likely to blame the female victim as opposed to those with egalitarian GRA and low RMA levels.

The current study eliminated high RMA levels from the data set and therefore only the data from participants with low RMA will be discussed. Research has shown that participants are highly unlikely to endorse high rape myths and have egalitarian GRA therefore, this cannot have an influence on victim blaming or perpetrator responsibility in the context of a date rape scenario (Reling et al., 2018; Temkin, Gray and Barrett, 2018). This is because individuals who endorse high rape myths tend to blame the female victim of rape, due to victim characteristics (for example, the victim wore revealing clothing, the attractiveness of the victim, age and gender) (Eyssel and Bohner, 2011; Sussenbach et al., 2017), if the victim had consumed alcohol at the time of the incident (Cameron and Stritzke, 2003) and/or that women lie about being raped and provoke being raped (Littleton, 2011; Sleath and Bull,

2015). On the contrary, individuals with egalitarian GRA are less likely to hold the victim responsible for rape, as they believe in supporting and promoting equality and therefore are less likely to judge the victim by their characteristics or their behaviour around the perpetrator (Angelone, Mitchell and Lucente, 2012; Angelone, Mitchell and Grossi, 2015).

The present study found that there was no difference on how participants with egalitarian GRA and traditional GRA rated Jessica's (victim) responsibility for the rape incident. This indicated that participants with low RMA and both types of GRA did not attribute any blame to the victim. Therefore, the present study rejected the second hypothesis: participants with traditional GRA are more likely to attribute blame to the female victim as opposed to blaming the male perpetrator than those with egalitarian GRA. This study found that there was no difference on how participants with egalitarian GRA and traditional GRA rated Marks (perpetrator) responsibility for the rape incident. This showed that participants with low RMA and both types of GRA held the perpetrator responsible for the rape incident. These results partially support previous research which has found that participants with low RMA levels and egalitarian attitudes are found to attribute less blame to the victim and hold the perpetrator responsible (Angelone, Mitchell and Lucente, 2012; Black and McCloskey, 2013). However, the shift in gender equality in the UK could be why there are no differences between the two types of GRA when rating victim and perpetrator responsibility. Research has found that that the UK has a more egalitarian culture as opposed to countries such as India, Iraq and Jordan (Brandt, 2011; Hill and Marshall, 2018). Research indicates that in recent years there has been a growth in pro-feminist attitudes (Kelland, 2016). Feminists use social media

as a platform to encourage women's equality and to spread awareness of the struggles rape victims face (Giraldi and Monk-Turner, 2017). Thus, individuals are more supportive of women in society today and are found to be empathetic towards female rape victims, as they view the rape case from the victim's perspective (Osman, 2016; Weiser, 2017). Additionally, these results contradict the sex role socialisation theory as there were no effects of traditional gender role stereotypes on perceptions of date rape (Grubb and Turner, 2012).

There was no difference on how participants with egalitarian GRA and traditional GRA rated whether the date rape incident would have a negative impact on the victim and the perpetrator. This indicated that participants with low RMA and both types of GRA perceived the sexual attack to have a negative impact on the victim rather than the perpetrator. Research indicates that victims experience post rape trauma (Suarez and Gadalla, 2010). People are more aware of this issue and recognise the importance of recovery for these individuals (Moor, 2007).

Results indicated that the responses of participants with egalitarian GRA and traditional GRA did not differ when rating whether the victim should report the incident to the authorities. Therefore, indicating that participants with low RMA and both types of GRA agreed that the victim should report the rape incident. The responses of participants with egalitarian GRA and traditional GRA did not differ when rating whether the perpetrator should be arrested for rape. This indicated that participants with both types of GRA agreed that the perpetrator should be arrested. One reason for these results may be because University students are educated on gender equality and false beliefs about date rape victims (Lutz-Zois, Moler and

Brown, 2015). Individuals now agree that any form of rape is wrong and are more supportive towards a victim right to report experiences of rape (Reling et al., 2018). Social media has helped to draw awareness on the importance of reporting rape (Giraldi and Monk-Turner, 2017). Survivors of rape use social media to blog about their experiences to encourage current victims to report their experience (Salter, 2013).

There was no difference on how participants with egalitarian GRA and traditional GRA rated whether the perpetrator should be found guilty if he was arrested. This indicated that participants with low RMA and both types of GRA found the perpetrator to be guilty of rape. One reason for this could be that the victim said “No. I don’t want to. Stop!” within the date rape scenario. Research suggests that participants perceive perpetrators as guilty if it is clear that the victim had not given consent for sexual intercourse (Eyssel and Bohner, 2011).

### **Limitations**

The present study had a few limitations. The sample group consisted of 77 females and 21 males. Research indicates that males are more likely to blame the rape victim as they endorse high RMA and traditional GRA (Hockett et al., 2016).

Therefore, the small sample of males may have had an impact on the results. Future research should aim to have an equal sample of both genders. Furthermore, findings from university students may not be representative of the general population therefore, future research should seek to use a more diverse sample for example, the public (Pinciotti and Orcutt, 2017).

The extent to which the results of this study are indicative of the judgements participants would make in real situations is unknown. The results are difficult to generalise to real-life judgements for a date rape trial as jurors would have more detailed information to base their decisions, compared to the ambiguous date rape scenario used in this study.

The AWS assessed overt forms of GRA, which are less frequently endorsed today than when the scale was first developed. This may explain why participants' attitudes towards the victim and perpetrator were not influenced by their GRA. Future research should consider using a scale assessing more subtle GRA for example, the Gender Role Beliefs Scale (Kerr and Holden, 1996; Mills et al., 2012)

### **Implications**

The present research findings propose that victim blaming is less of a problem within student populations, as participants with traditional GRA did not attribute blame to the victim and agreed the perpetrator was responsible. This supports the notion that students are more liberal and are less likely to conform to the stereotype of victim blaming.

Majority of previous research has been conducted using US student populations. The present study suggested that UK students are less likely to be influenced by RMA and GRA as they do not carry pre-existing false beliefs about rape victims. Therefore, they are less likely to blame the victim as they are more educated on rape culture. To help reduce the UK Universities "rape crisis", Universities should continue to provide educational programmes such as the Sexual Assault Resistance

Programme to draw awareness on the date rape issue, to prevent victim blaming from occurring and to ensure individuals are aware of the meaning of consent (Senn et al., 2015).

### **Future research**

To assess date rape perceptions, future research should compare different age groups, as older generations are found to have traditional GRA (Bows and Westmarland, 2015). Future research could explore date rape perceptions in criminal justice and medical professionals. Research suggests date rape is unreported because of high RMA and negative stereotypes about victims held by such personnel (Buddie and Miller, 2001). Using a sample of forensic nurses or police officers could provide an understanding on the extent to which these groups are manipulated by RMA and GRA when making judgements about the victim within a date rape scenario. Future research should use a mock jury paradigm and compare perceptions of victim and perpetrator responsibility across a date rape and stranger rape scenario. Also, majority of research has used heterosexual scenarios where a female is victimised by a male, future research should examine the effects of RMA and GRA on same-sex date rape.

### **Conclusion**

Overall, this study adds to previous research into the influence of RMA and GRA on date rape perceptions. The current study provides unique findings, which suggests that GRA and RMA has less of an influence on UK University students, as they were found to be supportive of the victim. The influence of GRA and RMA is still a crucial area to study, particularly in nurses and police officers where rape supportive

attitudes and victim blaming is suggested to be a problem. Understanding peoples pre-existing beliefs about rape victims will provide great implications for the CJS. Thus, further research is important to understand the effect of these attitudes, to promote gender equality and remove the negative stereotype on date rape victims.

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## **Appendices**

### **Appendix 1 – Participation Information Sheet**

# Participant Information Sheet

Study Title: Exploring Students' Perceptions of Date Rape.

My name is Heena Patel and I am conducting this research for my dissertation as a student in the MSc Forensic Psychology programme at Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester, United Kingdom.

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please do not hesitate to ask the researcher if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Please take your time to read the following information carefully and do not discuss it with others.

### **What is the study about?**

The purpose of this study is to examine people's different thoughts and perceptions on the victim and perpetrator of date rape.

### **Why have I been approached?**

You have been approached because the study requires information from University students.

### **Do I have to take part?**

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be asked to complete a consent form. This study will be mainly focus on date rape and therefore if you feel this topic area will cause you distress it is advised that you do not complete the present study.

### **What will I be asked to do if I take part?**

If you decide you would like to take part, you will be required to complete an online survey. First you will be asked to complete a few questions on demographics. The online survey will be made up of three separate questionnaires. You will first complete the two questionnaires which will assess your attitudes towards rape. Following this you will be asked to read a short scenario describing a date rape situation (a type of sexual crime), however the scenario will be very brief. Once you have read the scenario you will be asked to complete a short questionnaire based on the date rape scenario, which will assess your perceptions and thoughts on the victim and perpetrator of date rape (a type of sexual crime). The duration of the study will be 10-15 minutes. For those who may find reading a scenario on rape distressing are advised to not participate in the present study.

## Will my data be identifiable?

- The information you provide is confidential. The data collected for this study will be stored securely and only the researcher conducting this study will have access to this data. All your personal data will be confidential and will be kept separately from your questionnaire responses. Your anonymity will be ensured and all the information that has been collected about you will be kept secure. At the end of the study, all data will be kept securely in a password protected computer and the files themselves will be encrypted (that is no-one other than the researcher will be able to access them). Electronic versions of the consent forms will be encrypted (that is no-one other than the researcher will be able to access them) and the computer itself password protected. The researcher will destroy all copies of the data on completion of their degree. However, if the anonymised data is to be used in further publications, it will be passed to the research supervisor for safekeeping.

## What will happen to the results?

The results will be summarised and reported in a dissertation and may be submitted for publication in an academic or professional journal.

## Are there any risks?

There are no risks anticipated with participating in this study that are beyond those encountered in everyday life. However, if you feel that the topic area (date rape) may cause you distress then it is advised that you do not continue with the study. Also, if you experience any distress following participation you are encouraged to inform the researcher and contact the resources provided at the end of this sheet.

## Are there any benefits to taking part?

Although you may find participating interesting, there are no direct benefits in taking part.

## Who has reviewed the project?

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Department of Psychology Research Ethics Committee at Manchester Metropolitan University.

## Where can I obtain further information about the study if I need it?

If you have any questions about the study, please contact the main researcher:

Researcher's name: Heena Patel  
Contact: [heena.patel2@stu.mmu.ac.uk](mailto:heena.patel2@stu.mmu.ac.uk).

Supervisor's name: Julia Hulsken  
Contact: [J.Hulsken@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:J.Hulsken@mmu.ac.uk)

## Complaints

If you wish to make a complaint or raise concerns about any aspect of this study and do not want to speak to the researcher, you can contact:

Name of Route Leader: Emma Tarpey  
Job Title: MSc Psychology Programme Leader  
Tel: (0161) 247 2526 | Email: [e.tarpey@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:e.tarpey@mmu.ac.uk)

Department of Psychology | Manchester Metropolitan University | Manchester | M15 6GX

If you wish to speak to someone outside of the Department of Psychology, you may also contact:

Professor Carol Haigh  
Faculty Head of Ethics  
Tel: +44 (0)161 247 5914 | Email: [c.haigh@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:c.haigh@mmu.ac.uk)  
Faculty of Health, Psychology & Social Care  
Manchester Metropolitan University | Manchester | M15 6GX

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.

### **Resources in the event of distress**

Should you feel distressed either as a result of taking part, or in the future, the following resources may be of assistance.

Rape Crisis  
0808 802 9999

Victim Support:  
0808 168 9111

The Survivors Trust  
0808 801 0818

I understand that by clicking NEXT below, I CONSENT TO TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY.

## Appendix 2 – Consent Form

# Consent Form

**Study Title:** Exploring Students' Perceptions of Date Rape.

We are asking if you would like to take part in a research project which aims to examine people's different thoughts and perceptions on the victim and perpetrator of date rape.

Before you consent to participating in the study we ask that you read the participant information sheet and select each statement below if you agree. If you have any questions or queries before signing the consent form please contact the principal researcher Heena Patel on [heena.patel2@stu.mmu.ac.uk](mailto:heena.patel2@stu.mmu.ac.uk).

If you do not select all of the statements, you will not be able to continue with the survey as it will be considered that you do not fully consent to participate in this study.

Please select  
each statement

1. I confirm that I have read the Participant Information Sheet (Version No: 1.0, Date: 30/04/2018) and fully understand what is expected of me within this study.
2. I confirm that I have had the opportunity to ask any questions and to have them answered.
3. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw your data within 2 weeks after taking part without giving any reason and without my legal rights.
4. I understand that in order for my data to be withdrawn, I will need to contact the researcher via email within 2 weeks of participating in the study with the inclusion of the code I have created as part of my participation.
5. I understand that failure to provide a valid code will not allow the researcher to trace my responses and remove them and they will still be included in the analysis and write up of the project.
6. I understand that the information from my responses will be pooled with other participants' responses and may be published.
7. I consent to the data generated as part of this research to be used in reports, conferences and training events.
8. I understand that any information I give will remain strictly confidential and anonymous.
9. I consent to take part in the above study and if I decide not to complete the survey I can close the browser at any time in which case no data will be stored.

## Appendix 3 – Debrief Sheet

# Debrief Sheet

**Title of the study:** Exploring the effects of rape myth acceptance and gender role attitudes on the perceptions of the female victim and male perpetrator of date rape.

Thank you very much for taking part in my research. The data you contributed will help me to complete my dissertation, which is focussed on perceptions on date rape and aimed to *examine whether different levels of rape myth acceptance and gender role attitudes has an effect on students' perceptions of the female victim and the male perpetrator of date rape.*

In other words, whether individuals with stereotypical attitudes and more traditional attitudes towards rape, rape victims and perpetrators are more likely to blame the female victim and reduce responsibility of the perpetrator, as opposed to those who are less stereotypical and hold egalitarian attitudes.

My sincere apologies for not informing you about the full aims of the study. This was necessary as including the full aims would have affected the results.

### What happens now?

I will now start analysing the data from all participants. In the 2 weeks following your participation, you may still choose to withdraw from the study if you no longer wish your data to be used. If you are interested in receiving a summary of your results, you are able to request these after the 16/10/2018 by which time the study will have been completed. You can contact the researcher via email:

Contact: [heena.patel2@stu.mmu.ac.uk](mailto:heena.patel2@stu.mmu.ac.uk).

### What if I would like to remove my data from the study?

In order to withdraw your data from my database which is anonymised I will need your unique, anonymous personal code. Please create an anonymous personal code now by filling in the boxes in the table below:

Table 1: Creating your unique, anonymous personal code:

	Please insert the <u>day</u> of the month on which you were born (e.g., 04 or 12) in the box below	Please insert the <u>last two</u> letters of your <u>home</u> postcode (e.g. AD or SU) in the box below	Please insert the <u>last two</u> digits of your <u>home</u> telephone number (e.g., 02, or 98) in the box below
Your unique, anonymous personal code is:			

Please quote this code if you contact me to withdraw your data from the study.

## What if I need to speak with someone following participation?

I hope you found participating in this study a positive and interesting experience. If, however, the experience has brought up difficult feelings, or left you feeling distressed, I would encourage you to contact one of the services listed below:

Rape Crisis  
0808 802 9999

Victim Support:  
0808 168 9111

The Survivors Trust  
0808 801 0818

If you would like a lay summary of the results, I would be happy to send this to you upon the study's completion. Please let me know if you do require this summary so I can make a note and ensure that I send it to you.

Finally, if you have any further questions, or want an update on the research, please feel free to contact me using the details provided:

Contact researcher: [heena.patel2@stu.mmu.ac.uk](mailto:heena.patel2@stu.mmu.ac.uk).

Thank you again for taking part, your input was invaluable.

## Appendix 4 - RMA Questionnaire

### Updated Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (IRMA)

	Strongly agree		Strongly disagree		
	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Subscale 1: She asked for it</b>					
1. If a girl is raped while she is drunk, she is at least somewhat responsible for letting things get out of hand.					
2. When girls go to parties wearing slutty clothes, they are asking for trouble.					
3. If a girl goes to a room alone with a guy at a party, it is her own fault if she is raped.					
4. If a girl acts like a slut, eventually she is going to get into trouble.					
5. When girls get raped, it's often because the way they said "no" was unclear.					
6. If a girl initiates kissing or hooking up, she should not be surprised if a guy assumes she wants to have sex.					
<b>Subscale 2: He didn't mean to</b>					
7. When guys rape, it is usually because of their strong desire for sex.					
8. Guys don't usually intend to force sex on a girl, but sometimes they get too sexually carried away.					
9. Rape happens when a guy's sex drive goes out of control.					
10. If a guy is drunk, he might rape someone unintentionally.					
11. It shouldn't be considered rape if a guy is drunk and didn't realize what he was doing.					
12. If both people are drunk, it can't be rape.					
<b>Subscale 3: It wasn't really rape</b>					
13. If a girl doesn't physically resist sex—even if protesting verbally—it can't be considered rape.					
14. If a girl doesn't physically fight back, you can't really say it was rape.					
15. A rape probably doesn't happen if a girl doesn't have any bruises or marks.					
16. If the accused "rapist" doesn't have a weapon, you really can't call it rape.					
17. If a girl doesn't say "no" she can't claim rape.					
<b>Subscale 4: She lied</b>					
18. A lot of times, girls who say they were raped agreed to have sex and then regret it.					
19. Rape accusations are often used as a way of getting back at guys.					
20. A lot of times, girls who say they were raped often led the guy on and then had regrets.					
21. A lot of times, girls who claim they were raped have emotional problems.					
22. Girls who are caught cheating on their boyfriends sometimes claim it was rape.					

- Scoring: Scores range from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree).
- Scores may be totaled for a cumulative score.
- Higher scores indicate greater rejection of rape myths.

(Payne, Lonsway, & Fitzgerald, 1999; McMahon & Farmer, 2011)

## Appendix 5 – GRA Questionnaire

### A. Attitudes Towards Women Scale (Spence, Helmrich & Stapp, 1978) – Short version

Instructions: The statements listed below describe attitudes toward the roles of women in society which different people have. There are no right or wrong answers, only opinions. You are asked to express your feeling about each statement by indicating whether you (A) agree strongly, (B) agree mildly, (C) disagree mildly, or (D) disagree strongly.

1. Swearing and obscenity are more repulsive in the speech of a woman than of a man.

A B C D  
Agree strongly Agree mildly Disagree mildly Disagree strongly

- 2\* Women should take increasing responsibility for leadership in solving the intellectual and social problems of the day.

A B C D  
Agree strongly Agree mildly Disagree mildly Disagree strongly

- 3.\* Both husband and wife should be allowed the same grounds for divorce.

A B C D  
Agree strongly Agree mildly Disagree mildly Disagree strongly

4. Telling dirty jokes should be mostly a masculine prerogative.

A B C D  
Agree strongly Agree mildly Disagree mildly Disagree strongly

5. Intoxication among women is worse than intoxication among men.

A B C D  
Agree strongly Agree mildly Disagree mildly Disagree strongly

- 6.\* Under modern economic conditions with women being active outside the home, men should share in household tasks such as washing dishes and doing the laundry.

A B C D  
Agree strongly Agree mildly Disagree mildly Disagree strongly

- 7.\* It is insulting to women to have the "obey" clause remain in the marriage service.

A B C D  
Agree strongly Agree mildly Disagree mildly Disagree strongly

8.\* There should be a strict merit system in job appointment and promotion without regard to sex.

A B C D  
Agree strongly Agree mildly Disagree mildly Disagree strongly

9.\* A woman should be free as a man to propose marriage.

A B C D  
Agree strongly Agree mildly Disagree mildly Disagree strongly

10. Women should worry less about their rights and more about becoming good wives and mothers.

A B C D  
Agree strongly Agree mildly Disagree mildly Disagree strongly

11.\* Women earning as much as their dates should bear equally the expense when they go out together.

A B C D  
Agree strongly Agree mildly Disagree mildly Disagree strongly

12.\* Women should assume their rightful place in business and all the professions along with men.

A B C D  
Agree strongly Agree mildly Disagree mildly Disagree strongly

13. A woman should not expect to go to exactly the same places or to have quite the same freedom of action as a man.

A B C D  
Agree strongly Agree mildly Disagree mildly Disagree strongly

14. Sons in a family should be given more encouragement to go to college than daughters.

A B C D  
Agree strongly Agree mildly Disagree mildly Disagree strongly

15. It is ridiculous for a woman to run a locomotive and for a man to darn socks.

A B C D  
Agree strongly Agree mildly Disagree mildly Disagree strongly

16. In general, the father should have greater authority than the mother in the bringing up of children.
- A                      B                      C                      D  
 Agree strongly    Agree mildly    Disagree mildly    Disagree strongly
17. Women should be encouraged not to become sexually intimate with anyone before marriage, even their fiancés.
- A                      B                      C                      D  
 Agree strongly    Agree mildly    Disagree mildly    Disagree strongly
- 18.\* The husband should not be favored by law over the wife in the disposal of family property or income.
- A                      B                      C                      D  
 Agree strongly    Agree mildly    Disagree mildly    Disagree strongly
19. Women should be concerned with their duties of childbearing and house tending rather than with desires for professional or business careers.
- A                      B                      C                      D  
 Agree strongly    Agree mildly    Disagree mildly    Disagree strongly
20. The intellectual leadership of a community should be largely in the hands of men.
- A                      B                      C                      D  
 Agree strongly    Agree mildly    Disagree mildly    Disagree strongly
- 21.\* Economic and social freedom is worth far more to women than acceptance of the ideal of femininity which has been set up by men.
- A                      B                      C                      D  
 Agree strongly    Agree mildly    Disagree mildly    Disagree strongly
22. On the average, women should be regarded as less capable of contributing to economic production than are men.
- A                      B                      C                      D  
 Agree strongly    Agree mildly    Disagree mildly    Disagree strongly
23. There are many jobs in which men should be given preference over women in being hired or promoted.
- A                      B                      C                      D  
 Agree strongly    Agree mildly    Disagree mildly    Disagree strongly

24.\* Women should be given equal opportunity with men for apprenticeship in the various trades.

A B C D  
Agree strongly Agree mildly Disagree mildly Disagree strongly

25.\* The modern girl is entitled to the same freedom from regulation and control that is given to the modern boy.

A B C D  
Agree strongly Agree mildly Disagree mildly Disagree strongly

In scoring the items, A=0, B=1, C=2, and D=3 except for the items with an asterisk where the scale is reversed. A high score indicates a profeminist, egalitarian attitude while a low score indicates a traditional, conservative attitude.

**B. References:**

Spence, J.T., Helmreich, R., & Stapp, J. (1973). A short version of the Attitudes toward Women Scale (AWS). *Bulletin of the Psychonomic Society*, 2, 219-220.

Spence, J.T. & Helmreich, R.L. (1978). *Masculinity and femininity: Their psychological dimensions, correlates, and antecedents*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

## Appendix 6 – Date Rape Vignette

### Date Rape Vignette and Date Rape Scenario Questionnaire (Black and McCloskey, 2013)

Please read the vignette below and then answer the questions using the following scale:

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
Strongly disagree    disagree            neutral            agree            Strongly agree

Jessica is 28 and Mark is 30. A mutual acquaintance introduced Jessica and Mark to each other at a party. They hit it off immediately and began dating the next week. Jessica told all of her friends how much she liked Mark. He was smart, handsome, and funny. And he had a good job for a company downtown.

One night, after they had been dating for about a month, Jessica and Mark went to a movie. Afterwards, they went back to Jessica’s apartment. They sat on the sofa and before long, they started kissing and fondling each other. After some heavy foreplay leading to a point just short of intercourse, Jessica said, “No. I don’t want to. Stop!” Mark did not stop and intercourse followed.

1. Jessica is responsible for this incident.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
Strongly disagree    disagree            neutral            agree            Strongly agree

2. Mark is responsible for this incident.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
Strongly disagree    disagree            neutral            agree            Strongly agree

3. This incident will have a significant negative impact on Jessica.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
Strongly disagree    disagree            neutral            agree            Strongly agree

4. This incident will have a significant negative impact on Mark.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
Strongly disagree    disagree            neutral            agree            Strongly agree

5. Jessica should report this incident to the authorities.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
Strongly disagree    disagree            neutral              agree                Strongly agree

6. Mark should be arrested for rape.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
Strongly disagree    disagree            neutral              agree                Strongly agree

7. If Mark was arrested for rape and his case was brought to trial, he should be found guilty.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
Strongly disagree    disagree            neutral              agree                Strongly agree

\* Based on Black, K. A., & Gold, D. J. (2008). Gender differences and socioeconomic status biases in judgments about blame in date rape scenarios. *Violence and Victims*, 23, 115-128 and on Smith, E. P., Edmonds, E. M., Cahoon, D. D., & Sappington, J. T. (1997). Black and White females' judgments of rape related to Black and White males. *Psychology: A Journal of Human Behavior*, 34, 26-31.

## **Appendix 7 – Ethics Application Approval**

### **RESEARCH ETHICS AT MANCHESTER METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY**

## **Undergraduate and Taught Masters Student Application for Ethical Approval for Research**

This form must be completed for each project/assessment involving the collection of data or tissue samples from human participants that you undertake on your degree. It must be approved and signed by your unit lead and/or supervisor (where relevant) PRIOR to any data collection and a completed copy given to them.

In completing this form, please consult the [University's ACADEMIC ETHICAL FRAMEWORK](#) for ethical research. Please confirm that you are willing to abide by this code of practice in relation to this research: Choose an item. (*if no, please provide an explanation on a separate page*).

When completed, this form **MUST** be countersigned by the Independent Scrutiniser for UG and PG Taught or delegate. A signed copy should be kept on file by the Department of Psychology. You are also advised to keep a signed copy for your own records.

**You must allow time to make any amendments suggested by your Supervisor/tutor and report any significant changes to the project to them as soon as possible.**

Name of student: Heena Patel

Student MMU email: heena.patel2@stu.mmu.ac.uk

Unit (insert Unit Code and Title) Dissertation (2CP3D300\_1718\_9)

Name of supervisor: Julia Hulsken

Project title: Exploring the impact rape myth acceptance and gender role attitudes on perceptions of the female victim and male perpetrator of date rape.

**Overall aim of the research project** (3 – 4 sentences). Include here your research questions.

This study aims to examine whether different levels of rape myth acceptance and gender role attitudes has an effect on students' perceptions of the female victim and the male perpetrator of date rape.

**Proposed Research Methods.** Include here your method of data collection and analysis. If relevant, consider how you will gather consent, and who will transcribe the data.

Data will be collected via Qualtrics (an online survey tool). Participants will be provided with a participant information sheet providing them brief details about the study, but will not be provided with the full research aims to avoid leading participants. Given that this study will focus on rape, participants will be advised not to complete the study if they feel the topic area will cause them distress. They will then be provided with a consent form through this survey tool where they will be asked to tick each statement. Once they have ticked each statement they will be asked to press 'next' so that they are able to complete questions on their demographics including their age and gender.

Following this they will be asked to complete the survey made up of three established questionnaires. One being the Updated Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale and the second will be the Attitudes Towards Women Scale. Once they have completed these they will be asked to read a scenario on date rape and will be required to complete an accompanying questionnaire based on the scenario.

Once they have completed the survey they will be debriefed on the true nature of the study. They will be provided with the full research aims and will be made aware that they are able to withdraw from the study within 2 weeks of completion. In order to withdraw their data from my database which is anonymised, participants will be asked to make a unique, anonymous personal code.

**Intended participants.** Who they are and numbers; how and where they will be recruited; consider how people will express their interest in the study.

A power analysis was conducted to identify how many participants will be recommended for this study. It revealed that a minimum of 90 participants will be suitable for the present study. Therefore 90 male and female University students aged 18+ will be recruited opportunistically via the Manchester Metropolitan University participant pool. Snowball sampling will also be used as this will allow participants to share the weblink of the online survey with their friends and acquaintances who may be interested in participating.

Please complete all of the following sections by selecting the appropriate answer from the drop-down box.

**1. RISKS**

a. Could any aspects of the study pose a possible risk to participants' physical well-being (e.g. collection of human tissue, use of substances such as alcohol/caffeine/vitamins, or prolonged or repetitive testing)?	No
b. Could participants find any aspects of the study embarrassing or emotionally upsetting?	Yes
c. Are there likely to be culturally sensitive issues (e.g. age, gender, ethnicity etc)?	No
d. Does the study require access to confidential sources of information (e.g. medical, criminal, educational records etc.)?	No
e. Might conducting the study expose the researcher to any risks (e.g. collecting data in potentially dangerous environments)?	No
f. Does the intended research involve vulnerable groups (e.g. prisoners, pregnant women, minors, older or disabled people, people experiencing mental health problems, victims of crime etc.)	No
g. Is this project been conducted in the context of a previously approved project? If 'Yes' attach the original approval.	No
h. Are there any regulatory requirements that the project needs to comply with? (e.g. from professional bodies)	No
i. Are data been collected in a country outside of the UK? If 'Yes', please contact the Insurance Team - <a href="mailto:insurance1@mmu.ac.uk">insurance1@mmu.ac.uk</a>	No
j. Is any aspect of the study related to The Terrorism Act (2006)? If 'Yes' please complete the <a href="#">Security Sensitive Information Form</a>	No
<p>If you have answered 'yes' to any of the above, please give details here of how you will address each issue in your research:</p> <p><b>Participants will be provided with a participant information sheet which will advise them not to continue with the survey if they feel that the topic area may cause them distress. For those who do participate, they are made aware within the participant information sheet that if they feel distressed on completion of the survey they are able to contact the researcher as well as support services. The contact details for the support services will be included at the end of the participant information sheet and the debrief form. Participants are also made aware that they are able to discontinue from the study at any point. For those who want to withdraw their data they are advised to contact the researcher within 2 weeks after completion.</b></p>	

**2. DISCLOSURE**

a. Does the study involve covert methods?	No
b. Please confirm that the study does not involve the use of deception, either in the form of withholding essential information about the study or intentionally misinforming participants about aspects of the study.	<b>Yes, deception is involved</b>
<p>If you have answered 'yes' to any of the above, please give details here of how you will address each issue in your research:</p> <p><b>Only minor deception will be included as the full aims of the study will not be provided. The aim participants will be provided with in the participant information sheet and consent form will be to <i>examine people's different thoughts and perceptions on the victim and perpetrator of date rape.</i></b></p> <p><b>Within the debrief form I will sincerely apologise for not providing participants will the full aims of the study and explain that providing the full aims would have affected the results. This was necessary for the study to gain an objective opinion from participants. Participants will be debriefed on the true nature of the study. They will be provided with the following:</b></p> <p><b>Thank you very much for taking part in my research. The data you contributed will help me to complete my dissertation, which is focussed on perceptions on date rape and aimed to <i>examine</i></b></p>	

*whether different levels of rape myth acceptance and gender role attitudes has an effect on students' perceptions of the female victim and the male perpetrator of date rape.*  
**In other words, whether individuals with stereotypical attitudes and more traditional attitudes towards rape, rape victims and perpetrators are more likely to blame the female victim and reduce responsibility of the perpetrator, as opposed to those who are less stereotypical and hold egalitarian attitudes.**

### 3. INFORMED PARTICIPATION/CONSENT

a. Will participants in the study be given accessible information outlining: a) the general purpose of the study, b) what participants will be expected to do c) individuals' right to refuse or withdraw?	Yes
b. Will participants have an opportunity to ask questions prior to agreeing to participate?	Yes
c. Will any inducements (other than reasonable expenses and compensation for time) be offered to participants?	No
d. Have appropriate authorities given their permission for participants to be recruited from or data collected on their premises (e.g. shop managers, service managers, head teachers, classroom lecturers) (NOTE the additional choice of N/A)?	Not Applicable
e. Is there an existing relationship between the researcher(s) and the participant(s) that needs to be considered (NOTE the additional choice of N/A)?	Not Applicable
If you have answered 'no' to any of the above, please give details here of how you will address each issue in your research: <b>No inducements will be offered for this study.</b>	

### 4. DEBRIEFING

a. Do the planned procedures include an opportunity for participants to ask questions and/or obtain general feedback about the study after they have concluded their part in it?	Yes
If you have answered 'no' to the above, please give reasons, and detail here how you will address this in your research:	

### 5. ANONYMITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

a. Is participation in the study anonymous?	Yes
b. If anonymity has been promised, do the general procedures ensure that individuals cannot be identified indirectly (e.g. via other information that is collected)?	Yes
c. Have participants been promised confidentiality?	Yes
d. If confidentiality has been promised, do the procedures ensure that the information collected is truly confidential (e.g. that it will not be quoted verbatim)?	Yes
e. If participants' identities are being recorded, will the data be coded (to disguise identity) before computer data entry?	Yes
If you have answered 'no' to any of the above, please give details here of how you will address each issue in your research:	

### 6. Data

<p>How and where will data and documentation (e.g. consent forms) be stored?  All data will be kept securely on a password protected computer and the files themselves will be encrypted (that is no-one other than the researcher will be able to access them). The data will be encrypted (that is no-one other than the researcher will be able to access them) and the computer itself password protected.  Participants will consent to participating in the study by clicking on 'NEXT' to continue with the online survey.</p>	
<p>Will the data be destroyed after the project is completed? If so, when? Who will take responsibility to ensure this takes place?  The researcher will destroy all copies of the data on completion of their degree which will be on 31/12//2018.</p>	
<p>Will data stored electronically be encrypted? Password protection alone is not sufficient for identifiable data. Information on encryption is available from IT services <a href="http://www2.mmu.ac.uk/itservices/campaigns/safe-it/encryption/">http://www2.mmu.ac.uk/itservices/campaigns/safe-it/encryption/</a> and their service desk is also able to assist.</p>	<p>Yes</p>

- **Please attach a copy of the following materials if your project requires them\***
  - Your project protocol;
  - Adverts or emails/letters of invitation to participate;
  - Written information sheet for participants;
  - Participant consent form that you will use;
  - Any other materials that will be used to promote or facilitate your research (e.g. posters, interview guides or questionnaires).

*\*Ensure that the University logo appears on all documents made available to research participants.*

**Declaration:**

The information on this form is accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief, and I accept full responsibility for its accuracy.



Student signature: \_\_\_\_\_ 06/06/2018

Unit lead/Supervisor signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Julia Hulsken \_\_\_\_\_ 20/06/2018

**Approval:**

I have reviewed this application, and discussed it with the applicant as appropriate.  
I am happy for this application to receive approval to proceed.

<p>Independent Scrutiniser for UG and PG Taught (or delegate)</p>	<p>Print Name: Michelle Wright</p>
	<p>Signature: Michelle Wright</p>
	<p>20/06/2018</p>

