PREDICTORS OF SEXUAL COERCION IN A SAMPLE OF MALE AND FEMALE
COLLEGE STUDENTS

by

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Abstract

Sexual violence, and sexual coercion in particular, is an understudied field, but research is beginning to show that males and females alike are perpetrators of sexual violence. Research has looked at predictors of sexual violence in males, but little research has looked at predictors of sexual violence in females. Similarly, little research has examined predictors of sexual violence in the context of dating relationships; therefore, this study examined predictors of sexual coercion in males and females within dating relationships. Using a sample of 305 male and 363 female undergraduate students' self-report surveys, hierarchical regression analyses were utilized to test the nature of the sexual coercion predictors. Seven variables (problems with alcohol, past child abuse, anger management skills, relationship satisfaction, acceptability of violence towards wives, acceptability of violence towards husbands, and sexual coercion victimization) served as the independent variables with sexual coercion perpetration as the dependent variables in all of the regression analyses. Using the Revised Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS2; Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, & Sugarman, 1996) to assess sexual coercion perpetration, male and female students were found to exhibit a different set of significant predictor variables in the regression analyses; however, sexual coercion victimization was a significant predictor in both data. Sexual coercion victimization predicting sexual coercion perpetration in males and females suggests that sexual coercion is bilateral and part of a systemic cycle of violence. Clinical implications and recommendations for future research are provided.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my family who has stood by me through this process. And most importantly to my wife who believed in me and gave me our beautiful son.

Introduction

Sexual violence within intimate relationships is relatively unstudied by researchers. There are two primary causes for the scarcity of research (Monson, Langhinrichsen-Rohling, & Taft, 2009). One of the main reasons this lack of research exists is because sexual aggression and rape have been seen as synonymous entities. However, in the past, rape was deemed as a legal act as long as it was within a married relationship. In other words, rape was not illegal in these relationships; therefore, there was not a major need to understand the complexities of rape, or sexual violence, within a committed relationship. The second reason for the lack of research on sexual violence within intimate relationships, proposed by Monson et al. (2009), is due to definitional and related assessment issues. Physical violence was often thought of as a necessary requirement for sexual aggression to occur, and sexual violence in an intimate relationship was often labeled under the spectrum of physical violence. For example, if a husband grabbed his wife (and caused some sort of physical harm) to get her to submit to intercourse, the act of grabbing was considered physical abuse. The sexual act was not labeled as abuse because it was in the context of the marriage. As researchers have begun to study the issue of sexual violence, they have found that there are different ways to perpetrate sexual violence and that physical violence need not always be present. Furthermore, we are beginning to see that there are sexually violent acts that include other types of behaviors (i.e., threats) that would be deemed as sexual coercion, yet these have not been labeled as sexual violence in the past. These acts do not necessarily fit into categories that infer some type of physical violence, yet these types of acts have often placed the behavior into the broad scope of physical violence. Without understanding the situation completely, one can see how it would be easy to define an act as physical violence although the root was something sexual.

Definition of Sexual Coercion

Definitional confusion may be attributed to the lack of research on sexual coercion. O'Sullivan (2005) suggests that the lack of a singular language used for defining sexual coercion has led researchers to identify sexual coercion as "dating violence," "sexual pressure," "rape by acquiescence," "sexual influence," "courtship violence," "date rape," "unwanted sex play," "acquaintance rape," and "intimate partner violence." For this study, I have utilized the constructs (minor and severe sexual coercion) provided by Straus and colleagues used in the Revised Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS2; Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, & Sugarman, 1996) to examine the use of sexual coercion in the context of committed relationships. Sexual coercion is defined by Straus et al. as a behavior that is intended to compel the partner to engage in unwanted sexual activity. The sexual coercion scale is intended to cover a range of coercive acts, from verbal insistence to physical force. Minor sexual coercion encompasses the use of nonphysical tactics by a male or female to gain sexual contact with a nonconsenting partner. These tactics can include the use of lies, guilt, false promises, continual arguments, and insistence. A sample question included in the CTS2 states, "I insisted on sex when my partner did not want to (but did not use force)." Severe sexual coercion involves the use of physical force or threats to obtain sexual access. A sample question from the CTS2 is, "I used force (like hitting, holding down, using a weapon) to make my partner have oral or anal sex." Although minor sexually coercive acts may be less likely to cause physical injury than severe sexually coercive acts, there is evidence to show that sexual coercion, in general, is a widespread societal problem in dating relationships with both men and women serving as perpetrators. Throughout this paper, the term sexual violence will be used to encompass all aspects of sexually violent

behaviors; however, in the literature review, I will use the original authors' terms when citing previous research.

Prevalence

Straus (2004), in an international study involving 8,666 college students from 131 universities throughout the world, reported rates of physical violence from 17% to 49%. He also found that overall men and women reported being perpetrators of violence at similar rates (25% of males, 28% of females). The work of Straus and others has indicated that women are as likely as men to be physically violent in relationships, which is becoming a consistent theme in the domestic violence field. The similar rates of violence perpetrated by men and women have led to a reformulation in the way violence is studied today in that violence perpetrated by both men and women is examined to understand the complexity of the phenomenon. Many studies have utilized the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS), developed by Straus (1979), in examining rates of violence in intimate relationships by both males and females. However, the majority of these studies have looked at physical and psychological violence victimization and perpetration as opposed to other types of violence, including sexual coercion, which was added as a component of the Revised Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS2; Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, & Sugarman, 1996).

Chan, Straus, Brownridge, Tiwari, and Leung (2008) presented prevalence rates of sexual coercion from the International Dating Violence Study. Students worldwide reported perpetrating rates of sexual coercion from 8% to 34% in the previous 12 months. Students in the United States yielded rates greater than the median (28% vs. 24%). In the United States, males were shown to perpetrate sexual coercion at a rate of 36.1% while women reported perpetration rates at 24.6%. The median rate of being a victim of sexual perpetration in the previous 12

months was 24%, while students in the United States surpassed this number with a 32% rate of sexual coercion victimization (34.0% males vs. 30.6% females). In addition, Hines and Saudino (2003) utilized the CTS2 to examine psychological and physical violence and sexual coercion in college dating relationships. They studied 481 male and female college students to understand gender differences in perpetration of violence. Previous studies had researched victims or perpetrators of sexual coercion and sexual violence outside intimate relationships (e.g. Koss, Gidycz, &Wisniewski, 1987), but Hines and Saudino (2003) measured sexual coercion in terms of intimate relationships by using the CTS2. Although these authors found no significant gender differences in the perpetration of psychological and physical violence in these relationships, males were significantly more likely to use sexually coercive acts as opposed to females (29% vs. 13.5%). Thus, both Straus' international study and research by Hines and Saudino make it clear that there is a "substantial minority" of both men and women that sexually coerce their relationship partners.

As O'Sullivan (2005) states, more research is needed to recognize and understand the relevant characteristics of those who engage in sexually coercive behavior. Similarly, Loh, Gidycz, Lobo and Luthra (2005) suggested that the most likely way to reduce sexual violence is to focus on perpetrator characteristics that amplify the possibility of perpetration. The purpose of this study is to enhance our understanding of predictors of sexual coercion in a college sample. Variables examined as predictors in this study include: problems with alcohol, past experience of child physical abuse, low levels of anger management skills, low levels of relationship satisfaction, acceptability of male violence toward women, acceptability of female violence toward men, and sexual coercion victimization.

Literature Review

Identifying variables that influence the likelihood of sexual violence is pivotal for prevention efforts (Loh et al., 2005). Most research has focused on the impact of male sexual violence on female victims, but it is likely that the most effective way to reduce sexual violence perpetration is to focus on the characteristics that increase the likelihood of perpetration by both males and females. As described below, there is some research on factors related to male perpetration, but there is almost no research on female perpetration of sexual violence. Two primary factors have been examined in the literature as risk factors for male sexual violence: alcohol use and experiencing violence as a child. These variables have been examined individually and in conjunction as risk factors with cases that range from severe sexual violence (i.e. rape) (Messman-Moore, Coates, Gaffey, & Johnson, 2008) to cases that involve nonphysical sexual coercion (DeGue & DiLillio, 2004). These two variables have been consistently found to be related to perpetrating sexual coercion or sexual violence by males. The other variables examined as predictors of sexual coercion in this study include low level of anger management skills, low relationship satisfaction levels, acceptability of violence views, and sexual victimization. As stated earlier, there are many different terms used when describing sexual violence; therefore, throughout the literature review, we have used the original authors' terms when citing relevant research.

Alcohol Use

Perpetration of sexual aggression has been consistently associated with alcohol use by the perpetrator, victim, or both (Abbey, Zawacki, Buck, Clinton & McAuslan, 2004; Casey, Beadnell, & Lindhorst, 2009). In their review of research regarding alcohol involved sexual assault, Abbey et al. (2004) reported that up to 57% of college males reported engaging in

sexually aggressive behavior with more than 80% of the sexually violent behaviors occurring with women the perpetrators knew. Furthermore, Abbey, Ross, McDuffie, and McAuslan (1998) found that 47% of college males who had reported sexually aggressive behaviors had been consuming alcohol at the time of the action. Koss (1988), in a sample 6,159 college students, reported that a man's use of alcohol played a role in sexual contact 33% of the time, in sexual coercion 35% of the time, 67% of the time in attempted rape, and 74% of the time in actual rape. Alcohol use has shown a strong correlation with rape (Abbey, 1991). Similarly, two-thirds of 71 male date rapists in Kanin's college sample (1984) consumed alcohol in their sexual assaults. Moreover, about 20% of the sample indicated that they believed the rape would not have occurred if alcohol was not a factor.   In another study conducted by Tyler, Hoyt, and Whitebeck (1998), 23% of college men admitted to getting a date drunk or stoned to engage in sexual intercourse, and 24% of women reported a date getting them drunk or stoned and engaging in unwanted sex. Thus, alcohol use by the perpetrator, as well as the victim, can have a resounding impact on the occurrence of sexual violence.

Alcohol consumption has generally been shown to increase sexual impulsivity while lowering victims' detection of risk and impairing their ability to resist violence (Abbey, 1991). Thus, alcohol use by the perpetrator, as well as the victim, can have an impact on the occurrence of sexual violence due to a decrease of inhibitions and a decrease of sound judgment. Another factor which may help to explain the relationship between alcohol and sexual experiences is the concept of alcohol expectancies. Alcohol expectancies have been defined as individuals believing that certain situations may arise out of their consumption of alcohol (Jones, Corbin, & Fromme, 2001) and that their lack of inhibitions makes these situations acceptable. Abbey, McAuslan, and Ross (1998) proposed that alcohol expectancies may be explained by people

believing that alcohol enhances their sexuality, thus drinking alcohol makes it acceptable for them to feel or be sexual.   Alcohol expectancy theory also suggests that perpetrators who hold stronger alcohol expectancies are more likely to seek out certain sexual situations. The fact that these individuals have distorted cognitions surrounding alcohol consumption and expectancies could create an increased risk for perpetration (Palmer, McMahon, Rounsaville, & Ball, 2010). Similarly, college males who reported using sexually coercive tactics also reported having higher alcohol expectancies (Wilson, Calhoun, McNair, 2002). Sexually coercive men may attain alcohol expectancies for their own sexual behaviors and for the behaviors of their partners as well. In sum, Wilson et al. concluded that alcohol expectancies moderate the relationship between alcohol consumption and sexually coercive behavior for males.

Another tactic often used in sexual abuse perpetration is promoting alcohol consumption. Carr and VanDuesen (2004) reported that perpetrators often encourage high levels of alcohol use in an effort to sexually coerce a partner. Alcohol use allows for a decreased sensitivity to social cues one gives or the misperception of sexual intent one receives (Abbey, McAuslan, & Ross, 1998; Muehlenhard & Linton, 1987) which also correlates to the idea of alcohol myopia theory, which suggests that alcohol use may inhibit an individual in focusing on peripheral cues and only focus on salient cues due to their impairment (Steele & Josephs, 1990). However, contrary to the breadth of previous research, Loh and colleagues (2005) reported from their sample of 325 college males that alcohol use by the perpetrator was not a significant predictor of sexual assault perpetration. One reason as to why this finding may deviate from the rest of the literature regarding alcohol use and sexual violence is that this study utilized a prospective and longitudinal design whereas the majority of scholarly articles studying sexual violence use a retrospective design. This finding suggests the need to continue researching alcohol and its

relationship to different types of sexual violence perpetration. Similarly, the majority of research focuses on alcohol use by male perpetrators with females being perceived as the victims. Nonetheless, as stated above, prevalence rates have revealed that both sexes are sexually coercive; therefore, I expect that problems with alcohol will be a significant predictor of sexually coercive behavior perpetrated by both males and females.

Childhood Abuse

Another factor which has been examined as a predictor of sexual violence is experiencing abuse as a child. Child abuse and neglect have been found to be linked to male perpetration of sexual violence later in life. Lisak, Hopper, and Song (1996) found that 45% of 595 college males in their sample had experienced a form of sexual or physical abuse before the age of 16. Of this subsample, 38% reported perpetrating sexual or physical violence themselves later in life. One explanation for the increased risk of perpetration of sexual violence proposed by Lisak et al. (1996) is that the abused male child builds upon a gender stereotype that encourages him to suppress his emotions and be overly masculine. This emotional suppression may also decrease his empathic feelings, thus hindering him from being able to sympathize with a victim. Similarly, Malamuth, Sockloskie, Koss, and Tanaka (1991), in a study of 2,652 college men, found that a childhood home environment in which abuse was present was a factor in being sexually violent. Furthermore, when comparing sexually coercive and non-sexually coercive college males, DeGue and DiLillo (2004) found that the sexually coercive cohort was more likely to have experienced child maltreatment, and there was a significant association between college males who had experienced sexual abuse as a child and being sexually abusive to their dating partners (Carr & VanDuesen, 2004). Additional studies have also shown that childhood abuse serves as a risk factor for perpetrating sexual violence among males (e.g. Malamuth, Linz,

Heavey, Barnes & Acker, 1995; Simons, Wurtele & Heil, 2002). Casey, Beadnell, and Lindhorst (2009), using male data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, stated that childhood sexual abuse, as well as physical abuse, was significantly associated with being sexually coercive. In fact, Casey and colleagues suggested that a male who had experienced childhood physical and sexual abuse was 450% more likely to perpetrate sexual coercion than men reporting no kinds of childhood victimization. Until recently, there have not been as many studies examining predictors of female perpetrators of sexual violence. However, lately more studies have examined sexual coercion in both male and female perpetrators. For example, Menard, Nagayama Hall, Phung, Erian Ghebrial, and Martin (2003) found that child sexual abuse was predictive of sexual harassment in college males, but sexual coercion was not predicted by child sexual abuse. However, in female college students, Menard et al. reported that childhood sexual abuse was not a significant predictor of sexual harassment or sexual coercion. Furthermore, Busby and Comptom (1997), sampling 3,032 couples, reported that childhood sexual abuse history was not a significant predictor of sexual coercion for males or females in their couple relationships. While the majority of studies regarding childhood abuse and its correlation to sexual coercion perpetration in adulthood focus on the effects on male perpetrators, the aim of this study is to understand the impact of childhood abuse as a predictor of sexual coercion of both males and females in dating relationships.

Anger Management Skills

Anger serving as a determinant of aggression has been documented for some time (Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer, & Sears, 1939). Rule and Nesdale (1973) suggests that anger serves as a facilitator increasing the likelihood of aggression. This aggression often translates into some sort of violence between partners. Anger has been shown to be predictive of physical

dating violence (Parrot & Zeichner, 2003). Additionally, having good anger management skills has been recognized in reducing the likelihood of physical and psychological violence among males (Lundeberg, Stith, Penn, & Ward, 2004). When researchers have examined anger in terms of sexual violence, the results are not as simple. For example, Lisak and Roth (1988), in their study of 254 college males, reported that there is a significant difference in underlying anger levels in sexually aggressive men versus non-sexually aggressive men. However, Calhoun, Berat, Clum, and Frame (1997) reported that anger was not a significant predictor of sexual coercion when comparing groups of sexually coercive men against non-sexually coercive men. There are only a few studies that were identified examining anger in sexual coercion, but considerable research has documented the extent of anger in rapists. According to Groth (1979), the "anger" rapist is the second most common type of male rapist. Additionally, Malamuth (1986) found hostility towards women to be predictive of sexual aggression in males, which is also characteristic of the "anger" rapist. While the results from these studies on sexual violence, outside of rape, appear to be conflicting, it is the ability to manage one's anger that is a question of interest in this study, and we identified no articles documenting this construct in the sexual violence literature. As stated earlier, sexual violence has often been incorporated into forms of physical violence; therefore, we have generalized the research from the physical violence field to fit the idea of sexual coercion. Therefore, since previous research found that both college males and females in dating relationships with better anger management skills were less likely to be physically violent (Baker & Stith, 2008), we propose that those who are better able to manage their anger will be less likely to be perpetrators of sexual coercion.

Relationship Satisfaction

It is known that higher levels of sexual coercion are associated with lower levels of perceived relationship satisfaction (Katz & Myhr, 2008). Relationships in general have been studied to understand different dynamics that may influence sexual coercion or sexual violence in one way or another. One of these dynamics is time spent in the relationship, yet the results are inconsistent. For example, Rapoza and Drake (2009), in their study of 164 college couples, reported that younger couples in the early stages of their dating relationships who are less committed to each other are more at risk of perpetrating sexual coercion and aggression. Meanwhile, a study by Jackson, Cram, and Seymour (2000) found that sexual coercion was shown to be more prevalent in long standing relationships than with new partners or acquaintances, which might be explained by a longer time frame of commitment allowing for more opportunity for perpetration. Another relational concept that has been explored is the idea of investment in the relationship. Katz, Kuffel, and Brown (2006), applying the investment model to 180 undergraduate women, found that women in verbally sexually coercive relationships reported greater investment in their dating relationships than women who did not have sexually coercive partners. While different aspects of the relationship, in regards to sexual violence or coercion, have been researched, the perpetrator's relationship satisfaction levels have not been investigated. Therefore, we hope to add to the literature base surrounding relational domains that may play a factor in relating to sexual coercion, and we hypothesize that lower relationship satisfaction levels will be associated with greater rates of sexual coercion.

Acceptability of Violence

Acceptability of violence has been linked to the occurrence of sexual violence. In particular, rapists have been found to have high acceptance of violence against women (Burt,

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1983). Malamuth (1986), using naturalistic settings to assess predictors of sexual aggression in

155 males, found that acceptability of interpersonal violence as well as hostility toward women

were significant predictors of sexual aggression. Similarly, Malamuth and Check (1983)

reported that males who were regarded as having a high likelihood of rape showed an increased

arousal to scenes where women were nonconsenting of sex. If we apply findings from the

physical dating violence literature base, we know that men who are more accepting of violence

are more likely to engage in such violent behaviors (Cauffman, Feldman, Jensen, & Arnett,

2000). Also, males are more likely to be accepting of violence than females; likewise, males are

more likely to be the perpetrators of sexual aggression, thus making a connection between

acceptability of violence views and the actual act of sexual violence. Finally, rape myths,

defined by Briere, Malamuth, and Check (1985), are false beliefs about rape which seek to deny

its effects on victims or blame the rape on the victim also gravitate towards reinforcing

acceptability of violence towards women. Burt (1980) states that the higher the acceptance of

violence one holds, among other correlates, the individual will attain a greater rape myth

acceptance.

Others have looked at the role of fraternities and collegiate athletics fostering an idea of

acceptability of violence towards women (Boeringer, 1999). Boeringer makes the claim that

there is a potential for the peer groups associated with fraternities and collegiate athletics to

desensitize the individual to the reality of rape or other sexually violent activities through the

support from peers. The idea of "being a team player" may be a powerful reinforcer in these

settings providing a rationale to the individual that makes it tolerable to be more accepting of

violence against women. Murnen and Kohlman (2007) conducted a meta-analytic review of

athletic participation, fraternity membership and their association with sexual aggression among

college men utilizing 29 studies and 57 effect sizes. They reported that membership in these peer groups was associated with attitudes related to sexual aggression. Hypermasculinty was reported as the strongest variable separating athletes and fraternity members from the control group. This is of importance because hypermasculinity was shown to be the strongest predictor of sexual aggression in Murnen, Wright, and Kaluzny's (2003) meta-analytic review of 39 studies examining masculine ideology. There is evidence that supports the notion that particular individuals exhibiting a certain set of beliefs or influenced by particular peer groups display greater attitudes of acceptability of violence toward women. While these, and the majority of scholarly articles, focus on acceptability of violence views attained by males, these studies suggest that there may be a range of ideas that contribute to the acceptability of violence notion as a predictor variable. In addition, our study aims to examine attitudes of both males and females to add to the current findings on the relationship between one's views on acceptability of violence and sexual coercion.

Dating Relationship Sexual Victimization

The characteristics of physically violent dating relationships are understood in greater depth than sexually violent dating relationships due to the abundance of research in that area. In particular, the outcomes of victimization have been explored more frequently, yet the concept of victimization influencing perpetration has also been identified. For example, Baker and Stith (2008), using 474 college students, reported that men and women were more likely to perpetrate physical violence if they were victims of physical violence. While there are numerous studies that look at childhood victimization as a precursor to later sexual violence, the research field lacks findings on sexual victimization within dating relationships as a predictor of sexual perpetration in those relationships. However, Russell and Oswald (2003) reported that 62% of

173 college males that had been identified as being sexually coercive had also been sexually victimized in their dating relationships. Yet only 13% of their sample who had never used sexually coercive techniques were victims of sexual coercion from their partners. These results point to an association between victimization and perpetration in dating relationships. On the other hand, Menard, Nagayama Hall, Phung, Gherbrial, and Martin (2003) reported that adult sexual victimization predicted sexual coercion in men, but not in women using 278 college females and 148 college males, suggesting that sexual victimization may not be predictive of sexual perpetration for women. Therefore, in this study, we aim to add to the literature in examining sexual coercion victimization as a significant predictor of sexual coercion perpetration in the context of a dating relationship for both males and females. We hypothesize, similar to Russell and Oswald, that sexual victimization will be a predictor of sexual perpetration within dating relationships for both males and females.

In sum, sexual coercion is a widespread problem within dating relationships that necessitates the need for more research. The present study will examine the following variables as they pertain to sexual coercion perpetration: problems with alcohol, physical child abuse, low anger management skills, low relationship satisfaction, acceptability of violence views, and sexual coercion victimization. We hypothesize that problems with alcohol, past physical child abuse, low anger management skills, low relationship satisfaction, high acceptability of violence views, and concurrent sexual coercion victimization will be predictive of sexual coercion perpetration for both males and females.

Methods

Study Design

This study used data collected in 2008 from students at a large Midwestern university. A 237-item survey was distributed to undergraduates in sociology, human nutrition, marketing, political science, and family studies and human services classes. Demographic information such as gender, education level, age, race, parents' education levels, family income, and parents' marital status was requested for background information. Questions were also asked regarding the participant's dating status and general relationship information. Only respondents that had been in a relationship for at least one month were asked to complete the scales pertaining to dating relationships (The Revised Conflict Tactics Scale, The Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale, etc.). The relationship scales were to be answered in regard to their current or most recent partner.

Sample

The original sample consists of 305 males and 363 females who voluntarily agreed to participate in the study by completing a survey for research purposes. Just over 22% of the participants are between the ages of 18 and 19 years, with 47.0% falling between the ages of 20 and 21. Just below 23% are between the ages of 21 and 22 years and the remaining 8.5% are 23 and older. Almost 40% of the students are freshman or sophomores, with the remaining 63% being comprised of upperclassmen (juniors and seniors). Less than 1% of the participants were in graduate school. The vast majority of the participants (87.4%) are European American, with 6.3% self-identifying as African American, 2.8% as Latin American, 1.5% identified as Asian,

and the remaining 2.0% were classified as Native American or another race not listed.

Just over 84% of the sample is currently or has been in a dating relationship that has lasted at least one month, and this is the sub-sample that was utilized in the study. The remaining 16% have never been in a relationship that has lasted at least one month and were instructed to skip the sections of the survey pertaining to dating relationships. Of those that have dated for more than one month, 34.3% are no longer with that partner, 23.7% are dating this partner still, 31.5% consider himself or herself to be in a committed relationship with this partner (intend to stay together in the future), and the remaining 10.5% are engaged to be married or are married to the partner that the answered the survey about. Only 21.0% of the sample has cohabited with a partner or is currently cohabiting with a partner. The sample is diverse with respect to relationship length: 30% of the respondents' most recent relationship has lasted five months or less, 20.0% has lasted between six months and one year, 19.9% has lasted between one and two years, 19.7% has lasted between two and four years, and the remaining 10.2% has lasted four years or more.

Measures

Problematic Alcohol Use. The *Rutgers Alcohol Problem Index* (RAPI; White & Labouvie, 1989) was used to assess for problematic consequences due to alcohol consumption. This 24-item measure poses a series of statements related to alcohol consumption during the previous 6 months. Example items include, "Went to work or school drunk," and "Kept drinking when you promised yourself not to." Responses ranged from this has "Never" happened during the past 6 months (1) to this has happened "More than 10 times" (5). Reliability for the RAPI in the current study is α=.93.

Relationship Satisfaction. The *Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale* (KMSS; Schumm,

Anderson, Benigas, McCutchen, Griffin, Morris, & Race, 1985) was used to measure relationship satisfaction. The KMSS is a 3-item scale that assesses one's perceived level of relationship satisfaction. Items such as, "How satisfied are (or were) you with your relationship," are rated on a scale of "Extremely Dissatisfied" (1) to "Extremely Satisfied" (7). The scale has a reliability coefficient of α=.94 in the current study. The score for the KMSS was reverse-coded in order to go in a consistent direction with the other predictors of dating violence.

Dating Violence Victimization and Perpetration. The *Revised Conflict Tactics Scale-CTS2* (Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, & Sugarman, 1996) was used in this study to measure partner violence victimization and perpetration. The CTS2 assesses the frequency with which an individual perpetrates and is a victim of physical assault, psychological aggression, and sexual coercion against and from their partner. Each subscale is broken down into minor and severe forms of violence. Respondents are asked to identify the frequency that they committed each item in the past and were a victim of each item. Response choices range in frequency from "No, this has never happened" (1) to "More than 20 times in the past year" (7). The reliability scores are α=.81 for sexual coercion perpetration, and the reliability scores for sexual coercion victimization are α=.80.

Past Childhood Abuse. Child abuse was assessed by one-item. Respondents were asked, "How were you disciplined as a child?" Responses ranged from "Verbal, mild" (1) to "Physical, severe" (4) with "Other" representing 5. Due to the problematic nature of "Other" as a choice, these responses were coded to missing to eliminate them from interfering with the results. Of note, only 6 respondents, or 1.1% of the sample, responded to "Other" as a form of childhood discipline.

Anger Management Skills. The *Anger Management Scale (AMS;* Stith & Hamby, 2002)

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was used to evaluate one's ability to manage their anger appropriately. The AMS was designed to assess very concrete, specific cognitions and behaviors that can increase or decrease anger in intimate partner relationships and therefore influence the respondent's level of partner violence. Sample items include, "I take a time out to control my anger at my partner" and, "I can usually tell when I am about to lose my temper at my partner." Response choices ranged from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (4). This measure's reliability is α=. 77.

      Acceptability of Violence. The *Inventory of Beliefs About Wife Beating* (IBWB; Saunders, Lynch, Grayson & Linz, 1987*) and Inventory of Beliefs about Aggression towards Husbands* (IBAH; Stith and Rosen, unpublished*)* were utilized to examine views on acceptability of violence within males and females. In this study, Stith and Rosen adapted the IBWB to develop an inventory of beliefs about aggression toward husbands. Sample items from the IBWB include, "There is no excuse for a man hitting his wife," and, "Wives who are hit are responsible for the abuse because they should have foreseen it would happen." The overall reliability of this scale for this sample was α=.76. Sample items from the IBAH include, "There is no excuse for a woman hitting her husband," and, "Episodes of a woman hitting her husband are the husband's fault." The reliability for this measure was α=.81. On each of the scales, the answer choices range from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (7).

Data Analysis

      First, two sets correlations for males and females were run among each of the independent variables (problems with alcohol, past child abuse, relationship satisfaction, sexual victimization, anger management problems, and acceptability of violence) to determine the level of the univariate relationship between independent variables.   Next, the independent variables were correlated with the dependent variable (sexual coercion perpetration) to determine the

univariate relationship between them. These analyses indicated which variables have the strongest and weakest relationships when examined individually.

Next, a hierarchical regression analysis was run with six of the independent variables (problems with alcohol, abuse as a child, relationship satisfaction, anger management skills, and acceptability of female and male violence) were examined as a whole in the first step of the analysis to understand how they predict sexual coercion. Next, sexual coercion victimization was added in the multiple regression in addition to the other independent variables. Sexual coercion victimization was entered in the second block due to its strong correlation with the dependent variable, sexual coercion perpetration. The strength of each individual independent variable in predicting sexual coercion may change based on the inclusion of the other variables. Two separate hierarchical regression analyses were conducted to examine male and female sexual coercion. In each analysis, the planned independent variables were problems with alcohol, past child abuse, relationship satisfaction, anger management skills, acceptability of violence, and sexual coercion victimization with sexual coercion perpetration the planned dependent variable in each model. The purpose of the analyses is to determine the percent of variance accounted for in the models and strength of each independent variable in predicting sexual coercion for males versus females.

Results

Frequency of Sexual Coercion Perpetration

The means, standard deviations, and ranges of each measure are presented in Table 1 by males and females, along with the sample size and reliability coefficients for each measure. Males had a mean of 1.62 with a standard deviation of 0.62 for problems with alcohol ($M = 1.62$, $SD = 0.62$). Female participants had a 2.86 average with a 0.27 standard deviation among anger

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Table 1 Descriptives per Variable by Gender

Variable	n	M	SD	*Range*	*Reliability*
Alcohol				1-5	α = .93
Males	225	1.62	.62		
Females	277	1.40	.44		
Child Abuse[a]				1-4	
Males	236	1.85	.70		
Females	296	1.65	.67		
Anger Mgt.				1-4	α = .77
Males	228	2.84	.30		
Females	277	2.86	.27		
Rel. Sat.				1-7	α = .94
Males	237	5.24	1.51		
Females	292	5.60	1.50		
Acc. Wife				1-7	α = .76
Abuse	251	1.98	.93		
Males	303	1.66	.80		
Females					
Acc. Hus.				1-7	α = .81
Abuse	247	2.62	1.17		
Males	296	2.14	1.05		
Females					
Sex. Vic.				1-7	α = .80
Males	201	1.34	.67		
Females	222	1.26	.67		
Sex. Perp.				1-7	α = .81
Males	201	1.36	.70		
Females	220	1.19	.58		

Note. [a]Due to the one-item nature of this measure, no reliability is provided.
Alcohol=Problems with Alcohol; Anger Mgt.=Anger Management Skills; Rel. Sat.=Relationship Satisfaction; Acc. Wife Abuse=Acceptability of Wife Abuse; Acc. Hus. Abuse=Acceptability of Husband Abuse; Sex. Vic.=Sexual Coercion Victimization; Sex. Perp.=Sexual Coercion Perpetration

management skills (M = 2.86, SD = 0.27). Overall, 39.8% of male respondents (80/201) indicated that they had perpetrated some form of sexual coercion. Similarly, 25.0% of females (55/220) responded that they were the perpetrator of at least one kind of sexual coercion. The frequency and percentage of responses on the sexual coercion perpetration subscale of the CTS2 is presented in Table 2. These results are presented for males and females independently (Table 2).   Men were significantly more likely to self-report sexual coercion perpetration on the following items: "I used force (like hitting, holding down, using a weapon) to make my partner have oral or anal sex," "I insisted on sex when my partner did not want to (but did not use force)," "I insisted my partner have oral or anal sex (but did not use physical force)," and "I used threats to make my partner have sex."   Additionally, the chi-square and phi values of each item of perpetration are given. As can be seen from Table 1 and Table 2, the descriptives and percentages of each variable give insight into the nature of the sample.

Table 2 Types of sexual coercion perpetration used against a partner

	Males	Females
I made my partner have sex without a condom.		
Yes	53 (25.0%)	44 (18.7%)
No	159 (75%)	191 (83.3%)
		$\chi^2 (1) = 2.58$, p = .11, φ = .08
I used force (like hitting, holding down, using a weapon, to make my partner have oral or anal sex.	21 (9.9%)	6 (2.5%)
Yes	191 (90.1%)	233 (97.5%)
No		$\chi^2 (1) = 10.92$, p < .001, φ = .16
I used force (like hitting, holding down, or using a weapon) to make my partner have sex with me.	13 (6.2%)	7 (3.0%)
Yes	198 (93.8%)	228 (97.0%)
No		$\chi^2 (1) = 2.638$, p = .11, φ = .08
I insisted on sex when my partner did not want to (but did not use physical force).		
Yes	49 (23.2%)	24 (10.2%)
No	162 (76.8%)	211 (89.8%)
		$\chi^2 (1) = 13.75$, p < .000, φ = .18
I used threats to make my partner have oral or anal sex.		
Yes	9 (4.3%)	3 (1.3%)
No	200 (95.7%)	229 (98.7%)
		$\chi^2 (1)$ 3.78, p = .052, φ = .09
I insisted my partner have oral or anal sex (but did not use physical force).		
Yes	45 (21.4%)	10 (4.3%)
No	165 (78.6%)	223 (95.7%)
		$\chi^2 (1) = 29.83$, p < .000, φ = .26
I used threats to make my partner have sex with me.		
Yes	15 (7.3%)	5 (2.2%)
No	190 (92.7%)	225 (97.8%)
		$\chi^2 (1) = 6.54$, p < .011, φ = .12

Correlation Analyses

Correlations were run between all independent and dependent variables. These results can be seen in Table 3 and Table 4. First, the correlations show the strength of relationships among the independent variables. The majority of the variables exhibit a significant relationship in the male correlations. In the male data, sexual coercion victimization was significantly related to all of the other independent variables, except for acceptability of violence towards females, with its strongest relationship being with problems with alcohol ($r = .27$, $p < .001$). Table 4 displays the female data highlighting the independent variable correlations. Of note, child abuse did not display any significant correlations.

Table 3 and Table 4 also illustrate the strength of the relationship between independent variables and the dependent variable, sexual coercion perpetration. Problems with alcohol ($r = .27$), anger management skills ($r = -.28$), acceptability of violence towards males ($r = .20$), and sexual coercion victimization ($r = .90$) were significantly related to sexual coercion perpetration at the .01 level in the male data. In the female data, anger management skills ($r = -.19$), acceptability of violence towards males ($r = .17$), and sexual coercion victimization ($r = .86$) were significantly related to sexual coercion perpetration at the .05 level. The highest correlation with sexual coercion perpetration among both models was sexual coercion victimization. It appears that sexual coercion victimization may present a problem with multicollinearity. As predicted, problems with alcohol, low anger management skills, acceptability of violence towards males, and sexual coercion victimization were significantly related to sexual coercion perpetration in males and low anger management skills, acceptability of violence towards males, and sexual coercion victimization in the female correlation at the univariate level.

Table 3 Correlation Matrix of Independent and Dependent Variable Among Males

	1	2	3	4.	5	6	7	8
1. Alcohol	1.00							
2.Child Abuse	-.17*	1.00						
3.Anger Mgt.	-.18*	-.02	1.00					
4.Rel. Sat.	-.11	.02	.20**	1.00				
5.6.Acc.Wife Abuse	.16*	.18**	-.27***	-.18**	1.00			
7.Acc. Husband Abuse	22***	.12	-.16*	-.08	.60***	1.00		
8.Sex. Vic.	.27***	.23***	-.24***	-.16*	.14	.19**	1.00	
9.Sex. Perp.	.27***	.11	-.28***	-.13	.09	.20**	.90***	1.00

Note. Alcohol=Problems with Alcohol; Anger Mgt.=Anger Management Skills; Rel. Sat.=Relationship Satisfaction; Acc. Wife Abuse=Acceptability of Wife Abuse; Acc. Hus. Abuse=Acceptability of Husband Abuse; Sex. Vic.=Sexual Coercion Victimization; Sex. Perp.=Sexual Coercion Perpetration.
*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001.

Table 4 Correlation Matrix of Independent and Dependent Variable Among Females

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.Alcohol	1.00							
2.Child Abuse	-.10	1.00						
3.Anger Mgt.	-.21***	-.09	1.00					
4.Rel. Sat.	-.23***	-.09	.30***	1.00				
5.Acc.Wife Abuse	.03	.07	-.16**	-.21***	1.00			
6.Acc. Husband Abuse	.13*	.01	-.08	-.08	.47***	1.00		
7.Sex. Vic.	.17*	.-.06	-.21**	-.23***	.15*	.21**	1.00	
8.Sex. Perp.	.09	-.07	-.19**	-.13	.10	.17*	.86***	1.00

Note. Alcohol=Problems with Alcohol; Anger Mgt.=Anger Management Skills; Rel. Sat.=Relationship Satisfaction; Acc. Wife Abuse=Acceptability of Wife Abuse; Acc. Hus. Abuse=Acceptability of Husband Abuse; Sex. Vic.=Sexual Coercion Victimization; Sex. Perp.=Sexual Coercion Perpetration.
*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001.

Regression Analyses

The correlations reported above indicate that sexual coercion perpetration is significantly related to some of the independent variables. All of the independent variables listed above were entered into the regression. The correlations reported indicate that sexual coercion victimization is highly related to men and women's sexual coercion perpetration. It was expected that this variable would be account for most of the variance; therefore, sexual coercion victimization was entered in a separate block in the multiple regression after the other six independent variables were entered simultaneously. Males and females were tested separately with sexual coercion perpetration serving as the dependent variable.

Regression Analysis for Male Data

When the first set of variables was entered into the male regression model, they accounted for 11% of the variance in male perpetration of sexual coercion (Table 5). Low anger management skills ($\beta = -.24$, $p = .004$) and acceptability of violence towards women ($\beta = .22$, $p = .023$) were significant initially. When sexual coercion victimization was entered, the model account for 76% of the variance. Sexual coercion victimization was the most significant independent variable by far ($\beta = .86$, $p < .001$). Other significant variables were experiencing child abuse ($\beta = -.10$, $p = .019$), low anger management skills ($\beta = -.09$, $p = .035$), acceptability of violence towards wives ($\beta = -.14$, $p = .005$), and acceptability of violence towards husbands ($\beta = .13$, $p = .009$).

Regression analyses for Female Data

The regression analyses for the female data included the same six independent variables initially (Table 5). The female model accounted for 4% of the variance in female perpetration of

Table 5 Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Sexual Coercion Perpetration

Predictor Variable	Male		Female	
	ΔR^2	β	ΔR^2	β
Step 1	.14***		.07*	
Alcohol		.13		.01
Child Abuse		.06		-.11
Anger		-.24**		.-16*
Rel. Sat.		-.10		-.08
Acc. Wife Abuse		-.17		-.03
Acc. Husband Abuse		.22*		.15
Step 2	.63***		.69***	
Alcohol		-.02		-.06
Child Abuse		-.10*		.00
Anger Mgt.		-.09*		-.06
Rel. Sat.		.04		.09*
Acc. Wife Abuse		-.14**		.00
Acc. Husband Abuse		.13**		.02
Sex. Vic.		.86***		.88***

Note. For males, $R^2 = .11$, $F_6 = 4.08$, (p < .001) for Step 1; $R^2 = .76$, $F_7 = 70.60$, (p < .001) for Step 2. For females, $R^2 = .04$, $F_6 = 2.20$, (p = .046) for Step 1; $R^2 = .76$, $F_7 = 78.60$, (p < .001) for Step 2 (p < .001). Alcohol=Problems with Alcohol; Anger Mgt.=Anger Management Skills; Rel. Sat.=Relationship Satisfaction; Acc. Wife Abuse=Acceptability of Wife Abuse; Acc. Hus. Abuse=Acceptability of Husband Abuse; Sex. Vic.=Sexual Coercion Victimization; Sex. Perp.=Sexual Coercion Perpetration.
*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

sexual coercion. In the female model, the only significant variable was low anger management skills ($\beta = -.17$, $p = .048$). When sexual coercion victimization was added, there were two significant variables: sexual coercion victimization ($\beta = .89$, $p \leq .001$) and low relationship satisfaction ($\beta = .09$, $p = .037$). No other variables approached significance.

In summary, the univariate relationships gave information on the relationships between the dependent and independent variables. However, few of the original hypotheses were confirmed through the multivariate predictive models. The hypothesis that problems with alcohol would be a predictor of sexual coercion was not confirmed in either the male or female model. The hypothesis that abuse as a child would predict sexual coercion was rejected in the female, but supported in Step 2 of the male model. Anger management skills were significant in the female model in Step 1 and in the male regression in Step 1 and 2, thus supporting the original hypothesis. Low relationship satisfaction was not predictive of male sexual coercion perpetration, thus rejecting the original hypothesis. The hypothesis was also rejected in Step 2 of the female model, with higher relationship satisfaction being a significant predictor. The male hypotheses that acceptability of violence views towards wives would be a significant predictor of sexual coercion perpetration was rejected in both steps of the regression analyses. In fact, lower acceptability of violence towards wives was significant for males. The hypotheses that acceptability of violence towards husbands would be significant were supported in Step 1 and 2 for males. Both hypotheses were rejected in the female model regarding acceptability of violence views towards husbands and wives. In both males and females, after adding sexual coercion victimization to the multiple regressions, the hypotheses regarding sexual coercion victimization were supported.

Discussion

The means and standard deviations of each variable were highlighted in Table 1. The alpha levels measuring the reliability of each measure are also incorporated into the table. Each measure is psychometrically sound, and the means and standard deviations are respectable. The frequencies of various acts of sexual coercion perpetration were displayed in Table 2. The difference in actual perpetration rates among the CTS2 items may be expected when considering the nature of the act – minor sexual coercion versus severe sexual coercion. Incorporating the chi-square values allow for comparisons between males and females to be made about each specific act of sexual coercion perpetration. For example, in the item "I made my partner have sex without a condom," men's and women's responses are not significantly different from each other. The fact that men and women do not differ on this question is fascinating. One has to wonder what is going on in the relationship that allows for both sexes to be similar on this item. On the other hand, on a severe item such as "I used force (like hitting, holding down, or using a weapon) to make my partner have sex with me," men and women are significantly different. Likewise, men and women differ in their rates of perpetration on "I insisted on sex when my partner did not want to (but did not use force)," "I insisted my partner have oral or anal sex (but did not use physical force)," and "I used threats to make my partner have sex." While the percentage of male participants (40.8%) responding to sexual coercion perpetration items is greater than that of females (25.0%), there is evidence that sexual coercion perpetration is occurring within both sexes.

The correlations give a view into how each independent variable relates to sexual coercion perpetration when looked at individually. However, when the variables were used in a multivariate analysis, the strength of each independent variable changed based on the inclusion

of other variables. While many of the variables exhibit low collinearity with sexual coercion perpetration, sexual coercion victimization displayed a strong relationship with the dependent variable. It was surprising that more variables were not significant in Step 1 of the male and female models. Given this relationship between victimization and perpetration, the results Step 2 of the regression may have been influenced by the strength of this relationship.

Of interest in this study were the hypotheses that problems with alcohol, past physical child abuse, low anger management skills, low relationship satisfaction, high acceptability of violence views, and concurrent sexual coercion victimization would be predictive of sexual coercion perpetration in both males and females. However, not all of the variables significantly predicted sexual coercion perpetration in males and females. In the initial regression entry for males, the only supported hypotheses predicting perpetration were low anger management skills and acceptability of violence towards husbands. The variance of this model accounted for 11%. After sexual coercion victimization was added, child abuse, low anger management skills, acceptability of violence views against husbands and wives, and sexual coercion victimization were significant predictors of sexual coercion perpetration. The total model accounted for 76% of the variance. While the acceptability of violence variables assesses acceptability of physical violence within relationships, this finding may suggest that acceptability of violence in general is a significant predictor of sexual coercion perpetration within males. Also, when male college students are the recipients of violence, research suggest that they may also be perpetrators (Baker & Stith, 2008), which was also supported in the regression analysis. Likewise, low anger management skills, although not previously researched, was a significant predictor. It is interesting that problems with alcohol and relationship satisfaction had little predictive ability in the model, thus rejecting the initial hypotheses.

For females, sexual coercion victimization and higher relationship satisfaction were significant predictors of sexual coercion perpetration in the total multivariate model with low anger management skills being a significant risk factor in the initial model. The total model accounted for 76% of the variance while the initial model accounted for 4% of the variance. This may suggest that sexual coercion victimization is a vastly strong predictor variable that needs to continue to be explored. Another explanation may be the fact that the high multicollinearity factor may be adjusting the importance of other variables. Based on the positive value of the β of relationship satisfaction, conceivably, female college students who are more satisfied in their relationships may participate in sexual coercion. Time spent in a relationship has been researched as a predictor of sexual violence (Rapoza & Drake, 2009), yet relationship satisfaction levels have not. Exploring this variable more may be helpful in gaining more of an idea on what is going on in the relationship that is leading to perpetration of violence. The remaining hypotheses regarding the independent variables were not supported. It is interesting that more variables were not significant in the model considering the amount of significant predictors in the total male model.

The fact that sexual coercion victimization was significantly predictive of sexual coercion perpetration for both males and females provides a surprising view into the nature of sexually coercive relationships. Similar to the research on partner physical violence that suggests that the physical violence is often bilateral (Baker & Stith, 2008), the regression analyses suggest that sexual coercion within dating relationships may also be bilateral. That is if one partner is being sexually coercive, their partner is more likely to also perpetrate sexual coercion. The strength of the relationship between sexual coercion perpetration and victimization was unexpected because past research highlights other variables as being more predictive of sexual violence perpetration.

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This finding is perhaps the most fascinating because it is not a common notion that both male and female partners are being sexually coercive to each other. A limitation of our data is that it does not identify who initiates sexually coercive activity, but our data does identify that males and females who are victims of sexual coercion were also likely to be perpetrators. Similarly, the strength of the relationship between sexual coercion perpetration and victimization suggests that in some relationships sexual coercion may be part of a systemic cycle of violence where each partner participates in being both coerced and coercive. Moreover, the notion that females are merely recipients of sexually coercive activity from males in relationships needs to continue to be examined as sexual coercion also appears to be of bilateral nature.

Limitations

A major limitation of the study may be the presence of highly correlated variables. This may limit the generalizability of the findings outside of this sample. Also, other predictor variables may have altered due to the existence of this relationship. Next, the study is limited in its ability to generalize the results given the predominant European American sample. Second, the sample consisted of only currently enrolled undergraduate students at a Midwestern university; therefore, the results cannot be generalized to other non-college populations. Another limitation is that the research involved the use of secondary data. The independent variables were chosen from a collected data set. Other variables that were not in the original data set may have had a greater impact in the models. The data was gathered through a self-report survey which may have led to socially desirable answers, especially when considering the nature of sexual violence. Respondents could have minimized the occurrence and/or severity of such activity. Other questions could have also been used to better understand the constructs used.

More questions pertaining to sexual violence and sexual coercion history would give more insight into the relationship between sexual coercion and the independent variables.

Clinical Implications

The finding that both male and female college students participate in sexually coercive behavior suggests that while gender differences need to continue to be examined in prevention programming, greater attention needs to be given to the potential of both partners as perpetrators of sexual violence. The significance of sexual coercion victimization as a predictor of sexual coercion perpetration implies that when sexual coercion is prevalent in a relationship, both partners may be perpetrators. Understanding this dynamic may improve the impact of sexual violence prevention programs, as well as other clinical settings, because it will allow for different interventions to be conducted with both sexes. Adopting a systems approach to explore sexual violence within the relationship may give the clinician greater insight into the problem. If sexual violence is truly bilateral, highlighting how their behaviors influence the system and the changes the couple system undergoes is pivotal. Additionally, knowing about variables that may be influencing sexual coercion is needed in treatment of such cases. In males, continuing to address the impact that anger management skills and acceptability of violence views plays in the occurrence of sexual violence is pivotal, as well as process through past child abuse. Similarly, in females, examining their relationship satisfaction levels and their anger management skills may provide some insight into why they are being sexually coercive to their partners. Problems may arise when partners feel their sexual violence is not a problem. Educating clients about their maladaptive behaviors and why these behaviors are problematic is crucial. Examining consequences and using a systemic approach to process the cycle of violence may be helpful. Discussions may focus on the events leading up to the sexually violent behaviors and the

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aftermath of such behaviors. Likewise, one partner may feel trapped in the relationship or that they have to acquiesce to their partner's insistence and/or threats. Conducting a safety plan and gathering resources are essential if safety is a concern. Still, providing psychoeducation can be valuable to teach males and females about factors which may impact the occurrence of sexual coercion. Regardless of who initiates the perpetration, results show that sexual coercion victimization sexual coercion perpetration are related, and this is critically important in the treatment of sexual coercion.

Future Research

Future research needs to continue to explore other predictors as well as validate research that has previously been conducted. In particular, future research needs to examine the construct of sexual coercion victimization as a leading variable in sexual coercion perpetration, representing the idea that sexual coercion and sexual violence are systemic in nature. Longitudinal studies are needed to examine how sexual coercion by one partner influences the other partner to also be sexually coercive. Recognizing variables within a longitudinal study that contribute to sexual coercion can provide valuable insight into the construct. Additionally, identifying other variables in the relationship between sexual coercion perpetration and sexual coercion victimization is needed in prevention efforts. Variables such as depression, anxiety, stress, and witnessing parental violence, among many others, may add to the research base as sexual violence is something that needs to continue to receive considerable attention from researchers. Qualitative research would be especially helpful to identify causality within the relationship as well as gain information about actual experiences. Furthermore, researching sexual coercion victimization and the risk factors of becoming a victim is also needed in greater depth. This study suggests that there are still variables missing that could be complimentary in

examining sexual coercion. Continuing to fill the gender gap and not looking solely at males as perpetrators of sexual violence is central to creating a clearer picture of the phenomenon as many studies have shown that males and females are perpetrators and victims of sexual violence.

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