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**THE ART OF SEDUCTION:  
MALE PERCEPTIONS OF SEXUAL WILLINGNESS**

by

**Lisa Starrett**

**Capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for graduation with**

**UNIVERSITY HONORS**

**with a major in**

**Psychology  
in the Department of Education and Human Services**

**Approved:**

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**UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY  
Logan, UT**

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## Abstract

The body of sexual assault research historically focuses on survivors, specifically female survivors. Examining male perpetrators is an important gap in the literature. Research demonstrates that men often misperceive the sexual willingness of female partners. Additionally, men predominantly react with guilt, shame, and depression when accused of sexual assault (Brennan, Swartout, Cook, & Parrot, 2018). The current study examined men's perceptions of non-consensual dating advice as provided by a best-selling men's dating book. We found several factors that related to higher endorsement of the non-consensual tactics, including past or present involvement in a fraternity, knowing a sexual assault perpetrator, living in an Urban area, affiliating with a religion, viewing pornography "a great deal," being married, and identifying as a sexual minority. Implications and discussion on greater representation in research for sexual minorities are discussed.

## Acknowledgements

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## The art of seduction: Male perceptions of sexual willingness

Word Count: 6,917

The rate of rapes in the United States far exceeds any other developed nation (Satcher, Hook, & Coleman, 2015). According to the National Crime Victimization survey, one in five women and one in 71 men are raped in their lifetime (Department of Justice, 2017). This number is higher for non-White individuals. Almost half of multiracial women in the United States (49.5%) and Indigenous/Alaska Native women (45%) are subjected to sexual violence in their lifetime (Smith, et al., 2017).

Survivors of rape and sexual assault experience significant short and long-term impacts on their physical, mental, and emotional health (Preston, 2016). The most prominent of these is Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). In fact, 81% of female survivors and 35% of male survivors report experiencing Post Traumatic Stress (Black, et al., 2011).

In addition to the emotional toll on survivors, the economic cost of sexual assault is immense. Abuse and sexual violence constitutes up to 37.5% of total health care costs, or up to \$750 billion (Dolezal, McCollum, & Callahan, 2009). The lifetime cost of rape per victim is estimated to be \$122,461 (Peterson, DeGue, Florence, & Lokey, 2017). The cost doubles if the individual was raped as a child. With over a million annual rapes in the United States (Satcher, Hook & Coleman, 2015), the lifetime economic burden of rape is estimated to be \$3.1 trillion (Peterson et al., 2017).

Much research has been conducted on female victims of sexual assault. But there is a dearth of research conducted on men's perceptions and experiences in this conversation of gendered sexual violence. Current papers posit that understanding perpetrators is paramount for providing better solutions to this emotionally and economically expensive societal problem (Harway & Steele, 2015). Furthermore, past research on male perceptions of sexual willingness

has systematically excluded sexual minorities, choosing to focus on heterosexual men, thereby neglecting the experiences of gay, bisexual and queer men (Barker, 2016). Studies consistently show that sexual minorities experience dating violence at higher rates than their heterosexual counterparts (Edwards, Sylaska, et.al., 2015, Rothman, Exner & Baughman, 2011; Ristock, 2011), making it all the more important for research on this topic to include sexual minorities.

### **Male perceptions of sexual willingness**

Pioneering research is looking at mental and emotional responses to sexual assault of perpetrators in addition to survivors. One such study found shock, guilt, shame, and depression to be predominant reactions of men confronted with sexual assault allegations (Brennan, Swartout, Cook, & Parrot, 2018). Another study found that male participants described sexual assault as “bad, wrong, and selfish” (Jeffrey & Barata, 2018). The researchers went on to interview the participants about their sexual history and found many of the same men who condemned rape and sexual assault described committing sexual acts that, in fact, met the legal definition of sexual violence. The participants’ understandings of rape and sexual assault were different than the true definition. They unwittingly committed sexual violence in their past due to believing in rape myths such as the acceptability of coercion, entitlement to sex in a relationship, or a “woman meaning yes when she says no,” (Jeffrey & Barata, 2018). Studies on convicted rapists present similar findings. The offenders denied that their actions constituted rape, indicated they thought “she wanted it,” or thought their actions were right at the time (Horvath, Hegart, Tyler & Mansfield, 2012; Scully, 1994). Together, these data show that at least some men who believe sexual violence is wrong have committed such acts due to misunderstanding the definition of sexual assault or believing in rape myths.

Past studies have employed role play scenarios, vignettes, and interviews to measure perception of sexual willingness. Data comparing male and female participants consistently show that men rate women's sexual willingness higher than women do (e.g., Lindgren, Parkhill, George, & Hendershot, 2008; Farris, Treat, Viken, & McFall, 2008). Furthermore, incorrect perception of sexual willingness increases as the man's arousal increases (Abbey, McAuslan, & Ross, 1998). Studies find that when male participants are hoping to have sex, they are more likely to overlook cues of discomfort, such as the woman saying she needs to leave soon, and exaggerate cues of sexual interest, such as the woman agreeing to come over (Abbey, 2002).

Alcohol's significant role in sexual assault perpetration has been extensively studied. Data consistently find that over half of sexual assaults involved alcohol (Collins & Messerschmidt, 1993). Intoxication is known to increase how much a man perceives a woman's actions as sexual and interfere with higher order cognitive processes, which decreases effective decision making (Abbey, 2002; Abbey, McAuslan, Zawacki, Clinton, & Buck, 2001). Expecting to be sexual or violent while drinking plays a significant role on the impact of alcohol. Men report feeling sexually aroused and are more responsive to violent erotic stimuli when they are led to believe they consumed alcohol, even if they are completely sober (Briddell, Rimm, Caddy, Krawitx, Sholis, & Wunderlin, 1978; George & Marlatt, 1986; Rapaport & Posey, 1991). This may be related to perceived cultural contexts around alcohol. This phenomenon also manifests in the perception of women drinking alcohol, as men tend to perceive a woman drinking alcohol as more willing to engage in sex than a woman who is not drinking (Abbey, Zawacki, Buck, Clinton, & McAuslan, 2004).

Another factor that may play a role in men's perceptions of sexual willingness is consumption of pornography. There is conflicting data on the correlation between pornography

use and sexual assault. While ample research shows exposure to pornography decreases sensitivity to violence and positively correlates with rape myth acceptance (Foubert, Brosi, & Brannon, 2011; Flood & Hamilton, 2003), the state-to-state comparisons imply more factors are at play. The top ten states for pornography subscriptions have both the highest rape rates (Alaska, Utah, and Nevada) and the lowest rape rates (New Jersey, Maryland, and Massachusetts; Statistics cross-referenced between pornography statistics from Edelman, 2009, and rape statistics from DOJ, 2017). The reverse is true as well. States with the fewest pornography subscriptions have among the highest rape rates (Michigan, South Dakota, and Arkansas). Potential confounding variables between pornography use and sexual assault could include lack of sex education (Schalet et al., 2014; Stanger-Hall & Hall, 2011; Willis & Jozkowski, 2018), and early and frequent sexual experiences (Abbey et al., 1998; Malamuth, Addison, & Koss, 2000; Vega & Malamuth, 2007).

A key explanation for misperceptions regarding sexual willingness could be how it is talked about in media and peer groups. Research shows that having friends or family members who endorse rape myths increases an individual's chance of committing sexual assault (Bannon, Brosi & Foubert, 2013; Boeringer, Shehan & Akers, 1991; Malamuth, Sockloskie, Koss & Tanaka, 1991). In regards to sexual minorities, there is conflicting research on peer group influence. Some studies found that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) individuals encounter more pro-abuse dialogue from peers than their heterosexual counterparts (DeKeseredy, Hall-Sanchez, Nolan, & Schwartz, 2017; Ristock, 2011). Another study argued the opposite, that queer students emphasize communication, consent, and pleasure (Lamont, Roach, & Kahn, 2018). A multitude of factors beyond sexual orientation relate to peer group dynamics, which likely contribute to the contradictions in the limited existing LGBTQ+ research.



Media and popular literature also may influence perceptions of sexual willingness or likelihood of committing sexual assault (Hegarty, Stewart, Blockmans, Horvath, 2018). For example, a study found overlap between messages in magazines aimed at male readers, also known as “lads’ mags,” and the words of convicted rapists (Horvath et al., 2012). Significant positive associations between reading lads’ mags and rape myth acceptance have been observed (Coy & Horvath, 2011) in addition to rape proclivity (Romero-Sanchez, Toro-Garcia, Horvath, Megias, 2017). This can be explained by correlations between consuming lads’ mags and having a diminished sensitivity to women’s nonverbal cues of sexual discomfort (Hegarty, et al. 2018).

### **The Art of Seduction**

The purpose of the present study was to examine another type of medium that may influence perceptions of sexual willingness: self-help literature. Originally released in 2003 and republished several times over the decade, “*The Art of Seduction*” (Greene, 2003) is a bestselling and critically acclaimed book, selling millions of copies across the world and receiving praise from news outlets that include Forbes, Business Insider, The Guardian, The New York Times, and Publishers Weekly (Editorial Reviews, Green, 2003). While advertised as a book on power and manipulation, the heavy-handed use of intimate and sexual seduction illustrations made it widely popular in men’s dating and is consistently referenced in men’s dating forums as a top book to read for dating advice.

The sexually charged and aggressive language throughout the book, while entertaining to read, is concerning. For example, the core syntax of the book illustrated the reader as “the seducer” and the target of their seduction as their “victim.” This format is maintained throughout the book, using the words “seducer” and “victim” dozens of times. “Victims” are also referred to as “prey” and a “target” “for the kill.” A powerful and predatory mentality is praised and

encouraged. Historical figure examples in the book include men using positions of power for sexual coercion, writers stating that women mean yes when they say no, and a prosecuted rape perpetrator.

### **The Present Study**

If there is indeed a link between media and popular culture, and rape myth acceptance, then non-consensual messages in these media could increase an individual's chance of committing sexual assault. To look more closely at the relationship of media and men's beliefs about female sexual willingness, the present study specifically examined male perceptions of the non-consensual advice given in Green's (2003) *The Art of Seduction*.

The vignettes used in the survey are taken word-for-word from the book and participants' endorsement level of the advice was measured.

**Research Question 1.** What percent of male participants are supportive of the non-consensual worldviews presented in this medium?

**Research Question 2.** What factors positively correlate with endorsement of non-consensual worldviews? We predicted factors such as age, fraternity membership, pornography use, and living in a rural area would correlate with support for the non-consensual worldviews.

**Research Question 3.** Is there a difference in non-consensual endorsement between heterosexual and gay, bisexual, or queer men?

### **Method**

#### **Participants**

Male participants ( $N = 381$ ) were recruited through a Qualtrics panel and compensated through their agreement with Qualtrics (not exceeding \$5.00 per participant). Qualtrics utilized quota sampling, and as such, kept demographic factors such as ethnicity, level of education, and

U.S. region similarly proportioned to the latest U.S. census. A total of 420 male participants completed the survey. However, after the debriefing, 36 participants indicated they did not want their data to be included in the analyses. Three additional participants were not included due to suspicious responding, such as selecting “1” on every survey question, or seeming to answer randomly, for example, selecting contradictory answers on multiple response questions such as “atheist,” “LDS,” and “Buddhist.” This left us with a final sample size of 381 male participants. The age of participants ranged from 18 to 60 years old, with an average age of 40 years old. Fifty participants (13%) identified as gay, bisexual, or queer, (GBQ) and 324 participants (85%) identified as heterosexual. The remaining seven participants elected not to provide their sexual orientation. Ninety-three participants reported past or present involvement in a social fraternity and 288 participants reported no involvement in a social fraternity. Sixty participants reported never viewing pornography, 204 reported rare or occasional pornography use, and 117 reported viewing pornography a moderate or great amount.

## **Procedure**

The first page of the survey contained a letter of information, indicating what the participant would be asked to do, how long the survey would take, and the risks and benefits of the study (including their compensation). The participants were initially informed the study’s purpose was to gauge effectiveness of various seduction techniques. If the participant was 18 years old and agreed to participate, he clicked a box of agreement and was directed to the survey.

The first question of the survey asked for the participant’s gender. If they selected “Male or transgender male,” the participant was directed to the rest of the survey. Next, the participant was asked his age and ethnic identity. If the quota for their age or ethnicity had not been reached yet, the participant continued to the survey.

The participant was then asked which gender he was currently most sexually attracted to. The options included “male,” “female,” and “my attractions are non-binary.” If the participants selected “female,” he was directed to a survey in which the romantic interest’s pronouns were she/her. If the participant selected “male,” he was directed to a survey in which the pronouns of the romantic interest were “he/him.” If the participants selected “my attractions are non-binary,” he was directed to a survey with “they/them” pronouns. This questions was asked simply for the purpose of individualizing the survey and ensuring the appropriate use of pronouns; a separate demographic questions was asked at the end of the survey to ascertain how participants identify their sexual orientation (which was a more inclusive question with several categories). The rest of the survey remained identical. To provide an adequate sample of gay, bisexual, and queer participants, Qualtrics ensured that 10% of participants who completed the survey selected a male or non-binary attraction. In the final sample, six participants (1.6%) selected a non-binary attraction, 32 (8.4%) selected a male attraction, and 343 (90.0%) selected a female attraction.

Once participants finished the survey, they were debriefed on the true purpose of the study and provided contact information of the researchers.

**Measures.** The first portion of the survey included five vignettes. (See Appendix). Three vignettes presented non-consensual dating tactics and were taken directly from *The Art of Seduction*, though two were slightly edited for length. Two vignettes were consensual controls (i.e. fabricated dating advice that align with “yes means yes” literature and encourage ensuring the partner’s sexual interest). Four questions followed each vignette.

Question 1 read, “In your opinion, how effective is this strategy for OTHER men?” (presented in the tables as “OTHER”) and the scale was 1 = *very ineffective*, 2 = *somewhat ineffective*, 3 = *neither effective nor ineffective*, 4 = *somewhat effective*, and 5 = *very effective*.

Question 2 read, “For you personally, have you used this strategy in the past?” (“ME”) and participants answered on the following scale: 0 = *No, I have not used this strategy*, 1 = *Yes, and it was very ineffective*, 2 = *Yes, and it was somewhat ineffective*, 3 = *Yes, and it had mixed results*, 4 = *Yes, and it was somewhat effective*, and 5 = *Yes, and it was very effective*. Question 3 read, “How likely are you to try this strategy in the future?” (“FUTURE”) and Question 4 read, “How likely are you to recommend this advice to a friend?” (“FRIEND”). Questions 3 and 4 both used the same scale, 1 = *very unlikely*, 2 = *somewhat unlikely*, 3 = *neutral*, 4 = *somewhat likely*, and 5 = *very likely*.

After responding to the vignettes, the survey asked demographic information such as the participants’ hometown (“Urban,” “Rural,” or “Suburban”), religion, whether they had been in a fraternity, their sexual orientation, marital status, sex education history, how often they view pornography, whether they know a survivor of sexual assault, and whether they know someone prosecuted for committing sexual assault.

Following the demographic questions, participants were given short-form versions of the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (Payne, Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1999) and the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (Reynolds, 1982).

## **Results**

Each of the four questions was analyzed separately due to the slightly different scales used. For each question, we combined participants’ answers on the three non-consensual vignettes.

**Research Question 1: What percent of male participants endorse the non-consensual worldviews presented?**

For Question 1, 29% of participants reported the non-consensual strategies being moderately or extremely effective for other men. For Question 2, 20% of participants reported the non-consensual strategies being somewhat or very effective for themselves. For Question 3, 27% of participants reported being somewhat or very likely to try the non-consensual strategies in the future. And finally, for Question 4, 29% of participants reported being somewhat or very likely to recommend the non-consensual strategies to a friend. Collapsing across all four questions, an average of 26% of the male participants endorsed the non-consensual strategies presented in the survey.

Figures 1 through 4 display the frequency distributions for each of the four questions. Figures 2, 3, and 4 show response frequencies for Questions 2, 3, and 4, which relate to the participant's belief about the non-consensual strategies' effectiveness for themselves or for a friend. As you can see, all three figures show similar frequency patterns, and the majority of participants reported the lowest effectiveness score for the non-consensual strategies. Moreover, in Figure 2, over 25% of participants reported never trying any of the three non-consensual strategies. When participants reported non-consensual effectiveness for OTHER men (Figure 1), the pattern of responding changed slightly. Instead of peaking at the lowest score, "very ineffective," the majority of participants rated the strategy "somewhat ineffective."

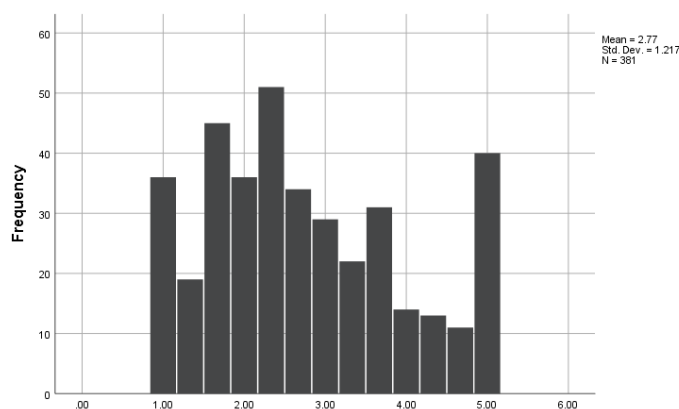


Figure 1: Response frequencies for Question 1, "OTHER."

1 = *very ineffective*, 2 = *somewhat ineffective*, 3 = *neither effective nor ineffective*, 4 = *somewhat effective*, and 5 = *very effective*

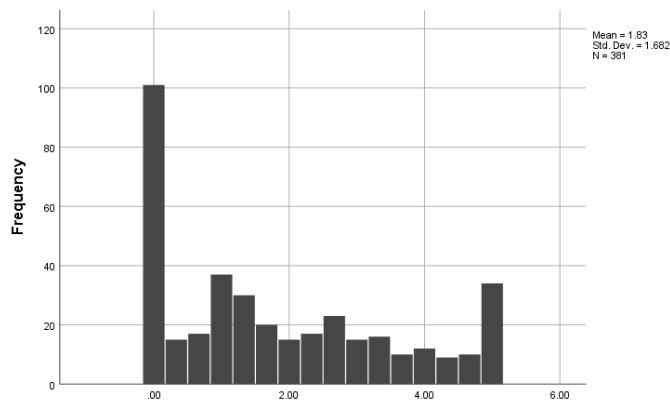


Figure 2: Response frequencies for Question 2, "ME"

0 = *No, I have not used this strategy*, 1 = *Yes, and it was very ineffective*, 2 = *Yes, and it was somewhat ineffective*, 3 = *Yes, and it had mixed results*, 4 = *Yes, and it was somewhat effective*, and 5 = *Yes, and it was very effective*

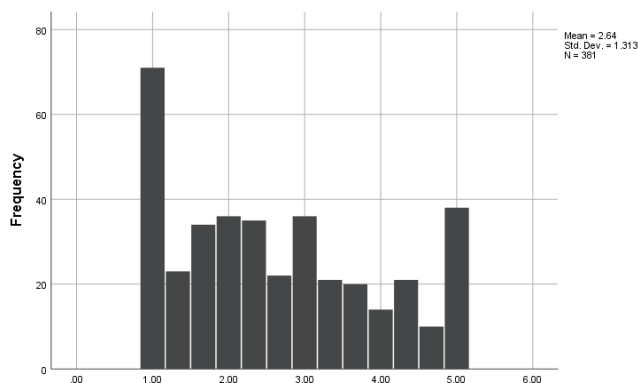


Figure 3: Response frequency for Question 3, "FUTURE"

1 = *very unlikely*, 2 = *somewhat unlikely*, 3 = *neutral*, 4 = *somewhat likely*, and 5 = *very likely*

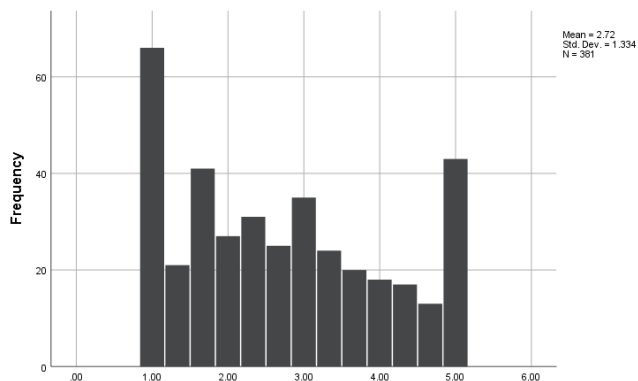


Figure 4: Response frequency for Question 4, "OTHER"

1 = *very unlikely*, 2 = *somewhat unlikely*, 3 = *neutral*, 4 = *somewhat likely*, and 5 = *very likely*

**Research Question 2: What factors positively correlate with endorsement of non-consensual worldviews?**

We anticipated fraternity membership, pornography use, and living in a rural area would predict endorsement of non-consensual worldviews.

A *t*-test was conducted to compare non-consensual endorsement on participants who reported having been involved in a social fraternity ( $n = 93$ ) with participants who had not been in a fraternity ( $n = 288$ ). On all four questions, participants who reported past or present involvement in a fraternity scored significantly higher on non-consensual endorsement than non-fraternity members. See Table 1.

**Table 1: Non-consensual endorsement based on Fraternity Membership**

|                | Non-Fraternity<br>( $n = 288$ ) | Fraternity<br>( $n = 93$ ) | <i>t</i> | <i>d</i> |
|----------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|----------|----------|
| OTHER (1 – 5)  | 2.45                            | 3.76                       | 9.00***  | 1.14     |
| ME (0 – 5)     | 1.32                            | 3.41                       | 11.21*** | 1.40     |
| FUTURE (1 – 5) | 2.29                            | 3.71                       | 9.24***  | 1.16     |
| FRIEND (1 – 5) | 2.36                            | 3.81                       | 9.44***  | 1.17     |

\*\*\*  $p < .001$

Two analyses were conducted to examine whether participants' levels of pornography use related to their endorsement of non-consensual and consensual tactics. On the question regarding pornography use, participants indicated whether they used pornography "Never" ( $n = 60$ ), "Rarely" ( $n = 73$ ), "Occasionally" ( $n = 131$ ), "A moderate amount" ( $n = 64$ ), or "A great deal" ( $n = 53$ ). A Spearman rank order correlation showed no significant correlation between level of pornography use and non-consensual endorsement. Question 1:  $r_s = 0.18$ ,  $p = .73$ ; Question 2:  $r_s = 0.12$ ,  $p = .02$ ; Question 3:  $r_s = 0.08$ ,  $p = .12$ ; Question 4:  $r_s = 0.07$ ,  $p = .16$ .



We then combined the lower four categories and compared them to those who indicated they watched pornography “A Great Deal.” On all four questions, participants who viewed pornography “A great deal” scored significantly higher than participants who viewed pornography “Never” through “A moderate amount” ( $n = 328$ ). See table 2.

**Table 2: Non-consensual endorsement based on pornography use**

|                | Low<br>Pornography Use<br>( $n = 328$ ) | “A Great Deal”<br>( $n = 53$ ) | $t$     | $d$  |
|----------------|---|--------------------------------|---------|------|
| OTHER (1 – 5)  | 2.69                                    | 3.26                           | 2.71*** | 0.43 |
| ME (0 – 5)     | 1.70                                    | 2.64                           | 3.84*** | 0.54 |
| FUTURE (1 – 5) | 2.53                                    | 3.31                           | 3.76*** | 0.58 |
| FRIEND (1 – 5) | 2.60                                    | 3.41                           | 4.16*** | 0.60 |

\*\*\*  $p < .001$

A one-way ANOVA was conducted comparing urban, suburban, and rural participants on their endorsement of non-consensual tactics. Contrary to the hypothesis, participants from Urban areas ( $n = 171$ ) consistently scored higher on non-consensual endorsement than participants from Rural areas ( $n = 65$ ) or Suburban areas ( $n = 145$ ). Participants from Rural areas consistently scored lower than participants from Urban or Suburban areas. See table 3.

**Table 3: Non-consensual endorsement based on Hometown**

|                | Urban<br>( $n = 171$ ) | Rural<br>( $n = 65$ ) | Suburban<br>( $n = 145$ ) | <i>Omnibus</i><br>$F$ test | <i>Eta-squared</i> |
|----------------|------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|
| OTHER (1 – 5)  | 3.08 <sup>a</sup>      | 2.43 <sup>b</sup>     | 2.56 <sup>c</sup>         | 11.06**                    | .06                |
| ME (1 – 5)     | 2.24 <sup>a</sup>      | 1.31 <sup>b</sup>     | 1.57 <sup>c</sup>         | 10.71**                    | .05                |
| FUTURE (1 – 5) | 2.95 <sup>a</sup>      | 2.28 <sup>b</sup>     | 2.44 <sup>c</sup>         | 9.63**                     | .05                |
| FRIEND (1 – 5) | 3.07 <sup>a</sup>      | 2.34 <sup>b</sup>     | 2.47 <sup>c</sup>         | 11.84**                    | .06                |

\*\*  $p < .01$

Note: Values with a different superscript indicate significant post-hoc tests between those groups.

**Research Question 3: Is there a difference in non-consensual or consensual endorsement between heterosexual and gay, bisexual, or queer (GBQ) men?**

There were significant differences between heterosexual and GBQ participants in non-consensual tactic endorsement. Consistent with the hypothesis, on all four questions, GBQ participants consistently scored higher on endorsing the non-consensual tactic than heterosexual participants. See table 4.

**Table 4: Non-consensual endorsement based on sexual attraction**

|                | GBQ<br>( <i>n</i> = 50) | Heterosexual<br>( <i>n</i> = 324) | <i>t</i> | <i>d</i> |
|----------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------|----------|
| OTHER (1 – 5)  | 3.19                    | 2.67                              | 2.87**   | 0.41     |
| ME (0 – 5)     | 2.42                    | 1.69                              | 2.92**   | 0.42     |
| FUTURE (1 – 5) | 3.03                    | 2.54                              | 2.46*    | 0.36     |
| FRIEND (1 – 5) | 3.10                    | 2.62                              | 2.38*    | 0.35     |

\*\*  $p < .01$ , \*  $p < .05$

**Exploratory analyses**

In addition to the main research questions, we examined whether knowing a sexual assault perpetrator, knowing a sexual assault survivor, being married, having a history of consent education, and being religious would relate to endorsement of non-consensual tactics.

Seventy-six participants reported personally knowing someone who had been prosecuted for committing rape or sexual assault (referred to in this paper as “knowing a perpetrator”), and 305 participants did not report knowing a perpetrator. Men who reported knowing a perpetrator scored over one point higher on non-consensual endorsement on all four questions than men who reported not knowing a perpetrator. See table 5.

Perhaps contrary to common sense, men who reported knowing a sexual assault survivor ( $n = 188$ ) scored higher on non-consensual endorsement than men who did not report knowing a

survivor ( $n = 193$ ). Only questions one and two showed significant differences between men who did or did not know a survivor. See table 6.

**Table 5: Non-consensual endorsement based on knowing a perpetrator**

|                | Know a<br>perpetrator<br>( $n = 76$ ) | Does not know<br>a perpetrator<br>( $n = 305$ ) | $t$     | $d$  |
|----------------|---------------------------------------|---|---------|------|
| OTHER (1 – 5)  | 3.71                                  | 2.54  | 7.60*** | 1.00 |
| ME (0 – 5)     | 3.24                                  | 1.48  | 9.01*** | 1.13 |
| FUTURE (1 – 5) | 3.64                                  | 2.39  | 7.45*** | 0.99 |
| FRIEND (1 – 5) | 3.74                                  | 2.46  | 8.10*** | 1.02 |

\*\*\*  $p < .001$

**Table 6: Non-consensual endorsement based on knowing a survivor**

|                | Knows a<br>survivor<br>( $n = 188$ ) | Does not know<br>a survivor<br>( $n = 193$ ) | $t$    | $d$  |
|----------------|--------------------------------------|--|--------|------|
| OTHER (1 – 5)  | 2.91                                 | 2.63   | 2.26*  | 0.23 |
| ME (0 – 5)     | 2.11                                 | 1.55   | 3.33** | 0.34 |
| FUTURE (1 – 5) | 2.76                                 | 2.53   | 1.70   | 0.18 |
| FRIEND (1 – 5) | 2.84                                 | 2.60   | 1.77   | 0.18 |

\*\*  $p < .01$ , \*  $p < .05$

To measure the relationship between non-consensual tactic endorsement and marital status, participants reported if they were “Single, never been married” ( $n = 173$ ), “Divorced” ( $n = 29$ ), “In a relationship” ( $n = 40$ ), were “Married, in a civil union, or domestic partnership” ( $n = 134$ ), or “Widowed” ( $n = 5$ ). A One-Way ANOVA was conducted to compare the groups. For each question, the overall F-test was statistically significant. The means are presented in Table 7.

Married individuals consistently had higher endorsement scores than the other groups. On all four questions, married participants differed significantly from participants who were divorced or in a relationship. Married participants did not differ significantly from the widowed

group on any of the questions; however, this may reflect low power since there were only five widowed participants. Married participants did not differ from single participants on questions 1, 3, or 4.

**Table 7: Non-consensual endorsement based on marital status**

|                | Married<br>( <i>n</i> = 134) | Relationship<br>( <i>n</i> = 40) | Divorced<br>( <i>n</i> = 29) | Single<br>( <i>n</i> = 173) | Widowed<br>( <i>n</i> = 5) | <i>Omnibus<br/>F test</i> | <i>Eta-<br/>squared</i> |
|----------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| OTHER (1 – 5)  | 3.01 <sup>a</sup>            | 2.26 <sup>b</sup>                | 2.25 <sup>bc</sup>           | 2.81 <sup>a</sup>           | 2.27 <sup>ab</sup>         | 4.79***                   | .05                     |
| ME (0 – 5)     | 2.29 <sup>a</sup>            | 1.43 <sup>b</sup>                | 1.24 <sup>b</sup>            | 1.67 <sup>b</sup>           | 1.40 <sup>ab</sup>         | 4.56***                   | .05                     |
| FUTURE (1 – 5) | 2.86 <sup>a</sup>            | 2.03 <sup>c</sup>                | 2.21 <sup>bc</sup>           | 2.70 <sup>ab</sup>          | 2.13 <sup>abc</sup>        | 4.36**                    | .04                     |
| FRIEND (1 – 5) | 2.96 <sup>a</sup>            | 2.14 <sup>b</sup>                | 2.09 <sup>b</sup>            | 2.78 <sup>a</sup>           | 2.20 <sup>ab</sup>         | 5.06***                   | .05                     |

\*\*\*  $p < .001$ , \*\*  $p < .01$

Note: Values with a different superscript indicate significant post-hoc tests between those groups.

To observe the relationship between sex education and consensual tactic endorsement, participants were asked “What style of sex education did you receive in high school?” The answer options were, “Abstinence only,” “Abstinence and STD’s,” “Safe sex with consent education,” “Safe sex without consent education,” “My school did not have sex education,” and “I don’t know.” Thirty-six participants (9.4%) reported receiving abstinence only sex education, 57 (15.0%) reported abstinence and STD sex education, 161 (42.3%) reported safe sex with consent education, 30 (7.9%) reported safe sex without consent education, 78 (20.5%) reported receiving no sex education, and 19 (5.0%) selected that they did not know.

Two analyses of sex education and consent endorsement were conducted. The first was a *t*-test to compare participants who received consent education to those who did not. The second was a *t*-test to compare participants who received safe sex education to those who did not. No significant results were found in either test.

A *t*-test was conducted to compare participants who reported belonging to an organized religion or not. Two participants elected not to respond, 271 participants reported belonging to an

organized religion, and 108 participants reported no organized religion affiliation. Participants in an organized religion scored significantly higher on all non-consensual endorsement questions than participants who were not affiliated. See table 8.

**Table 8: Non-consensual endorsement based on religious affiliation**

|        | Religious<br>affiliation<br>( <i>n</i> = 271) | No religious<br>affiliation<br>( <i>n</i> = 108) | <i>t</i> | <i>d</i> |
|--------|---|--|----------|----------|
| OTHER  | 2.96  | 2.29   | 5.19***  | 0.58     |
| ME     | 2.03  | 1.31   | 4.15***  | 0.45     |
| FUTURE | 2.82  | 2.16   | 4.83***  | 0.53     |
| FRIEND | 2.91  | 2.23   | 4.83***  | 0.54     |

\*\*\*  $p < .001$

The relationship of Social Desirability scores to the participants' non-consensual endorsement scores were as expected. Participants high in Social Desirability (*n* = 50), i.e. scored 10 and higher on a 12-point scale, reported lower endorsement scores than participants with average or low Social Desirability (*n* = 331). This suggests the study's average scores for non-consensual endorsement is lower than the true average. See Table 9.

**Table 9: Social Desirability related to non-consensual endorsement**

|        | High Social<br>Desirability<br>( <i>n</i> = 50) | Low Social<br>Desirability<br>( <i>n</i> = 331) | <i>t</i> | <i>d</i> |
|--------|---|---|----------|----------|
| OTHER  | 2.37  | 2.83  | 2.54*    | 0.40     |
| ME     | 2.26  | 1.91  | 2.58**   | 0.40     |
| FUTURE | 2.28  | 2.69  | 2.09*    | 0.32     |
| FRIEND | 2.23  | 2.79  | 2.81**   | 0.43     |

\*\*  $p < .01$ ,  $p < 0.05$

Finally, the relationship between Rape Myth Acceptance and non-consensual endorsement was also as expected. In a Pearson correlation, Rape Myth Acceptance scores positively correlated with endorsing the non-consensual strategies. Question 1:  $r = 0.70$ ,  $p <$

.001; Question 2:  $r = 0.70$ ,  $p < .001$ ; Question 3:  $r = 0.71$ ,  $p < .001$ ; Question 4:  $r = 0.72$ ,  $p < .001$ .

## Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine whether men in our sample would endorse some of the non-consensual dating advice provided in the popular book, *“The Art of Seduction”* (Green, 2003). Excerpts from the book that suggest advice that is clearly consistent with non-consensual courtship interactions were used in this study. Collapsing across all four questions, an average of 26% of the male participants endorsed the non-consensual strategies presented in the survey.

Limited research observes endorsement of non-consensual messages in popular media, such as books, movies, and dating websites. Some studies found correlations between pornography consumption and holding rape myth beliefs (Foubert, Brosi, & Brannon, 2011; Flood & Hamilton, 2003), and others found significant correlations between reading “lads’ mags” (magazines aimed at male readers that often contain sexually charged articles and demeaning depictions of women) and rape myth acceptance, even rape proclivity (Hegarty, Stewart, Blockmans, Horvath, 2018; Romero-Sanchez, Toro-Garcia, Horvath, Megias, 2017).

The present study used existing non-consensual messages in a popular dating advice book to identify subgroups at-risk for endorsing sexually violent or coercive tactics. We found several factors significantly associated with endorsing non-consensual tactics, which include identifying as a sexual minority, past or present involvement in a fraternity, viewing pornography “a great deal,” affiliating with a religion, being married, and living in an urban area. We also found that participants who knew a perpetrator of sexual assault were more likely to endorse the non-consensual tactics. Sex education did not yield any significant findings.

## **Gay, bisexual, and queer men**

A significant difference in non-consensual tactic endorsement was found between heterosexual and gay, bisexual, or queer (GBQ) men. On all four questions, GBQ men scored higher than heterosexual men on endorsing the non-consensual tactics.

Lack of research on LGBTQ+ relationships is a common theme among the sexual assault literature. In a meta-analysis of sexual consent literature, Barker (2016) reported a severe dearth of research regarding LGBTQ+ relationships. This lack of attention towards sexual violence among sexual minorities may exacerbate the danger and make it harder for LGBTQ+ survivors to seek and receive proper help. Studies comparing sexual violence among sexual-minority and heterosexual college students found that LGBTQ+ individuals encountered higher rates of dating violence (Edwards, et al., 2015; Rothman, Exner & Baughman, 2011), and other studies found that LGBTQ+ students received more negative peer support after surviving sexual assault such as not being believed, being blamed, or being disregarded, than their heterosexual counterparts (DeKeseredy, Hall-Sanchez, Nolan & Schwartz, 2017; Ristock, 2011). The present study is a small step in the right direction for providing more research on consent beliefs among gay, bisexual, and queer men. The present study showed that gay, bisexual, or queer participants had higher non-consensual endorsement than the heterosexual participants, lending support to the statistics of sexual violence being more prevalent among sexual minorities.

## **Fraternity membership**

Consistent with the predicted relationships, participants who had been involved in a social fraternity were more likely to endorse non-consensual strategies. The high rate of non-consensual endorsement among fraternity members is consistent with existing research (Willis & Jozkowski, 2018). Knowing a perpetrator is also consistent with existing research, as scholars

have found that having friends or family members with rape myth acceptance increases an individual's chance of committing sexual assault (Burt, 1980; Loh, Gidycz, Lobo & Luthra, 2005). Craig (2016) found that peer groups who engaged in excessive alcohol consumption, sexist and homophobic banter, and objectification of women showed a "normalization" and "tacit acceptance" of rape culture as part of student life. In an optimistic turn, Craig noted a cultural shift and posited that "student men are beginning to oppose [and] disassociate themselves, as individuals, from the phenomenon," (p. 3).

### **Pornography use**

Also consistent with expectations, those who viewed pornography "A great deal" were more likely to endorse non-consensual strategies compared to those who viewed pornography less. However, the spearman rank correlation was not statistically significant, suggesting a complicated relationship between pornography use and endorsement of non-consensual dating advice.

The findings of the present study lend support to conflicting research on the relationship between pornography use and sexual assault. Only participants who reported viewing pornography "a great deal" scored significantly higher on non-consensual endorsement than the other participants. In a meta-analysis of pornography literature, researchers found that self-report studies, like this one, typically found no relation between pornography consumption and rape myth acceptance (Allen, Emmers, Gebhardt & Giery, 1995), while experimental studies in which exposure to pornography is manipulated showed a decrease in sensitivity to violence and an increase in rape myth acceptance after viewing pornography (Flood & Hamilton, 2003; Foubert, Brosi & Brannon, 2011). Furthermore, Allen and colleagues found that recent and/or persistent exposure to pornography increased an individual's propensity to sexual violence (Allen et al.



1995), which could explain why participants in this study who viewed pornography a great deal scored higher on non-consensual tactic endorsement. More research should be conducted to observe differences between individuals who chronically view pornography and those who view it a rare to moderate amount.

## **Religion**

The present study found that participants who reported a religious affiliation had significantly higher endorsement of non-consensual tactics compared to participants who were not affiliated with any religion. This is consistent with studies that found a link between religion and rape myth acceptance, even after controlling for conservative political ideology (Barnett, Sligar, & Wang, 2016). In the same study, religiosity was found to relate to rape myth acceptance only among male participants. Religious women were less likely to blame the sexual assault survivor, whereas more religious men thought a female survivor should accept some blame (Freymeyer, 1996). Additionally, Belief in a Just World (BJW) is positively associated with endorsing rape myths and blaming assault on the survivor (Russell & Hand, 2017), and in many studies religiosity is positively associated with just world beliefs (Furnham, 2003; Kleinke & Meyer, 1990). Interestingly, Hunt (2000) found that religious affiliation in particular, not church attendance, resulted in higher scores on BJW measures. The results presented here are consistent with the body of literature on the relationship between religious affiliation and rape-related attitudes.

## **Marital Status**

The present study found that married individuals had significantly higher endorsement of non-consensual strategies than participants who were divorced or in a relationship. Married participants did not differ significantly from single participants on the “OTHER”, “FUTURE,”

and “FRIEND” questions. No meaningful findings could be obtained for widowed participants since only five participants reported being widowed.

There is little research examining marital status and perceptions of rape and rape survivors. However, there is research examining attitudes towards marriage. Studies show that traditional ideas about “marital duties” effect the way people perceive rape when it occurs between a husband and wife (Whatley, 2005), causing participants to “normalize” the rape when it committed by a husband, thereby reporting less violation of victims’ rights in marital rape than in stranger rape (Frese, Moya & Megias, 2004; Monson, Byrd & Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 1996) or acquaintance rape (Ferro, Cermele & Saltzman, 2008). It is plausible that individuals who are married have more traditional views about marriage compared to single individuals, and thus the results observed in the present study may reflect traditional ideology about gender roles and marital roles. Russell and Hand discuss the regrettable lack of research on gay marriages, and encourage future studies to look into attribution of blame when the complainant in a marital rape situation is a man (2017).

### **Urban, suburban, and rural**

One unexpected finding was that urban participants in the present study scored highest on non-consensual endorsement, and rural participants scored lowest. This finding conflicts with previous research on rape myth acceptance based on rurality. Several studies found that living in a rural area correlates with acceptance of traditional gender roles, which in turn correlates with greater rape myth acceptance (Johnson, Kuck & Schander ,1997; Gagne, 1992; Costin & Schwarz, 1987). In contrast, and consistent with our findings, a study comparing rurality and rape myth acceptance did not find a significant relationship between living in a rural area and accepting rape myths and traditional gender roles (King & Roberts, 2011). These findings

suggest that more factors are at play than rurality of one's hometown, and further research should be conducted on multi-factor relationships. A factor that could help explain the conflicting findings on Urban vs. Rural individuals is religious affiliation, as people who live in rural areas tend to report being more religious than people in urban areas (Chalfant & Heller, 1991).

### **Limitations.**

Certain limitations are inevitable when conducting online, self-report studies. Qualtrics aimed to maximize accurate representation of the population by implementing quota sampling. However, quota sampling itself is a potential limitation, as rejecting individuals once a quota is met may make the sample less representative of that specific demographic. In addition, it is nearly impossible to control for all participants who answer dishonestly. While Qualtrics rejected participants who completed the survey too quickly or seemed to answer randomly, we still found three participants who clearly appeared to have dishonest responses. Another measure we took to maximize honest responding was providing a message at the beginning of the survey that informed the participant of the scientific nature of the survey, and the importance of their honest responses for the research. Participants could then check a box if they agreed to answer as honestly as possible. Those who did not check the box were not directed to the survey. We also included a short-form Social Desirability Scale at the end of the survey as one final way to monitor for dishonest responding.

For the organized religion measure, the findings are limited to religious affiliation, not church attendance or level of involvement. This distinction may be important, since a study on Belief in a Just World found that specifically religious affiliation and not church attendance resulted in higher scores on the measure (Hunt, 2000). In addition, the majority of participants

reported a Christian affiliation, so the findings may not be applicable to individuals of non-Christian faiths.

There are several concerns regarding the sex education measure. Primarily, participants may not remember what kind of sex education they had received in school, especially among the older participants. In addition, participants may have received several different kinds of sex education due to moving schools, being home schooled, or receiving training in the workplace. This makes the analyses on this question difficult to interpret.

Although we aimed to achieve a diverse sample across the U.S., we did not measure certain variables such as socioeconomic status or occupation. It remains unknown in the present study what influence other demographic variables may have had on the results.

### **Implications and Future Directions**

This study was a step in the right direction for sexual assault literature that addresses dating violence among LGBTQ+ communities. While our findings suggest non-consensual endorsement may be slightly higher among gay, bisexual, and queer men compared to heterosexual men, much more research is necessary to corroborate that finding, as well as find explanations and solutions. It is important for future sexual violence studies to analyze the prevalence of non-consensual messages in LGBTQ+ communities and popular media. In addition, studies should look into the interplay of sexual orientation and other subgroup-factors such as peer groups, rurality of hometown, religiosity, pornography consumption, and marriage.

While we included consensual vignettes as controls, analyses of the participants' responses to those controls are not summarized in the present paper. Research specifically on consensual endorsement or rejection could be beneficial in creating holistic safe-sex solutions. In a large-scale literature review, Barker (2016) found that studies and articles related to sexual

consent amounted to 1-2% of those related to rape or sexual assault. Barker also noted that analyses of mainstream sex advice books, articles, and websites found that consent was “rarely, if ever, mentioned, despite its pivotal role in ensuring sex is not abusive,” (p. 1045). Beres (2014) suggests changing consent language entirely, arguing that consent is of little use when it comes to sexual violence prevention. One change Beres suggests is moving the conversation from “consent,” which implies non-resistance, to “willful sex,” which implies both parties being actively and enthusiastically involved.

Finally, it is concerning that the present study found no differences in non-consensual endorsement between men who did or did not receive consent education. As discussed above, it may have been difficult for participants to remember or summarize the type of consent education received. However, it is important to conduct more research on the efficacy of current sex and consent education programs. In a study of college men’s responses to a woman confiding a rape experience, Scheel and colleagues (2001) found that men “want to know how to support women” but unfortunately feel “unprepared to do so,” (p. 258). The researchers went on to report that men described their past rape education as “insufficient, inappropriate, and irrelevant.” Several studies suggest a shift to empathy-based rape prevention programs, with an emphasis on teaching men how to be supporters and allies for rape and sexual assault survivors (Foubert & Perry, 2007; Foubert & Newberry, 2006; Lawson, Munoz-Rojas, Gutman & Siman, 2012; Scheel, Johnson, Schneider & Smith, 2001). Research observing differences in consent endorsement or rejection between current consent programs and proposed empathy-based programs could be beneficial in creating prevention programs that help men feel informed, empowered, and prepared.

In sum, much more research is needed to construct adequate rape-prevention programs. There appears to be certain populations especially at-risk for endorsing non-consensual messages in media, such as men who were involved in fraternities, view pornography “a great deal,” are married, affiliate with a religion, live in an urban area, or personally know a perpetrator of sexual assault. Developing curriculum that targets these at-risk groups could help with preventing future sexual violence. LGBTQ+ communities may also be an at-risk group for developing non-consensual worldviews, and increasing research for LGBTQ+ individuals could help decrease the large rates of sexual violence against individuals who are part of a sexual minority. Furthermore, the non-consensual messages observed in *The Art of Seduction* are by no means out of the ordinary. Non-consensual messages such as these can be seen throughout film, television, magazines, and dating books. More research should be done on the relationship between rape culture and non-consensual messages in popular media, and their combined effect on how men develop perceptions of sexual willingness.

## Reflection

Word Count: 1,746

I began developing the concept for this research project four years ago, in the first semester of my sophomore year at Utah State University. I entered USU's psychology program with the specific intent of specializing in trauma therapy and one day working with trauma survivors, specifically survivors of sexual trauma. While researching sexual trauma, sexual assault in particular, I became increasingly disturbed at the lack of scientific information on sexual assault perpetrators. By ignoring the perpetrators in assault literature, we are ignoring half the problem. Consequently, any sexual assault prevention measures would be lacking vital information on how to speak to potential perpetrators. My concern grew upon learning that Utah, the state I love, was among the leading states in sexual assault perpetration. I became dedicated to pursuing a course of research that delved into the behaviors and attitudes of sexual assault perpetrators. My goal was, and is, to develop effective and culturally sensitive sexual assault education for high school sex ed. curriculum.

Following the fall semester of my sophomore year, I deferred three semesters at Utah State University to accept a job opportunity in Los Angeles. At this time my research project was still a concept, and I was consistently brainstorming ways to structure the study. One month into living in Los Angeles, the #MeToo Movement began. I had the unique opportunity of being immersed in the epicenter of the worldwide sexual assault conversation. Many people I worked closely with were friends and business partners with Harvey Weinstein, Les Moonves, Kevin Spacey, and other prominent people in the entertainment industry who were put on trial for sexual assault. I was in the room as powerful men talked about their fear, their confusion, and their annoyance at the movement. I spoke with dozens of women and men about their experience

surviving sexual assault, and their helpless feelings within the entertainment industry. All of these experiences were paramount in the conceptualization of this research project. The conversation with men and women, perpetrators and survivors, exposed the uncomfortable reality that many sexual assault perpetrators genuinely did not understand what they did was assault. To combat this, I wanted to design a research study that created meaningful conversation across gender and cultural lines. Instead of focusing on the internal faults of people, I chose to take a social psychology approach and focus on the culture that taught and perpetuated sexual assault norms.

I decided to delve deeper into this concept of “rape culture” and how prevalent it may be in the United States. Essentially, the extent that sexual violence is normalized, the extent it is perpetuated within popular culture, and how that may affect how men perceive sexual willingness. I read and listened to more books, movies, podcasts, and articles on men’s dating advice than I care to count. Again, what I read disturbed me. It seemed that, indeed, many non-consensual messages were being printed, filmed, and recorded then broadcasted as truth to men across the country – which brings me to the featured book of this study, “The Art of Seduction.”

My interest in the book was initially innocent. Numerous friends, both male and female, recommended the book to me as an empowering piece for dating advice. Moreover, the friend who lent me her copy of the book was a sexual assault survivor. You must then understand my shock as I read the profoundly disturbing advice throughout the book encouraging the reader to “force on” if their “victim” resists (yes, the author chose across the book to describe the person of the reader’s interest as their “victim,” see Appendix). This book became the poster-child of my study on perpetrators, and I set out to find just how many men put the advice into practice and what specific demographics are at higher-risk for endorsing it.



Upon putting the research project into motion, finding a mentor was the most difficult obstacle. My first mentor was a wonderful and ambitious woman who astounded me with the multitude of projects she undertook. Unfortunately, her understandably very busy schedule made communication very difficult. On the positive side, this allowed me to be very hands-on with the project and I taught myself many things including the grant writing process, IRB approval, and submitting to conferences. Going through that self-taught process was immensely valuable in my education and I am grateful for the opportunity. After several months of not hearing from my mentor, I contacted the college and found out she had withdrawn from the university for health reasons. I dearly hope she is doing well.

At this point, I had one semester until graduation (I found out that year I was eligible to graduate two semesters early) and desperately needed a mentor to hone my rough understandings of research studies. My wondrous DHA Dr. Jennifer Grewe connected me with Dr. Kathryn Sperry and it was a perfect match. Dr. Sperry saw the potential of my project and thoughtfully and firmly advised me in an improved direction. She gave me the space to explore and learn and gave consistently thorough feedback whenever I sent her ideas and drafts. Moreover, she undertook the difficult task of mentoring a distance student, because at this time I was back working in Los Angeles and taking my last remaining classes online. Together we found creative ways to overcome the distance including Facetime, Google Hangouts, a vast number of emails, and meeting in person whenever I was in Utah. This research project would be a shadow of what it is without her.

The survey-writing process was more intense than I ever imagined. I accrued hundreds of pages notes and dozens of drafts before the survey was finalized. It was important to me to make the survey as inclusive as possible – such as providing proper pronouns, ethnicities, and religions

– without giving the participants survey-fatigue. I also needed to narrow down the list of dozens of non-consensual messages in the book to just three and write two consensual controls that epitomized a modern understand of sexual consent without sounding clinical. To do this, I gave mock-surveys to friends and interviewed them about their honest reactions to it. Once I made the decisions for the survey's structure I needed to find the most scientifically sound way to distribute the survey. After months of brainstorming and interviewing other researchers for their ideas, Qualtrics became the perfect solution.

All the benefits of Qualtrics (census data for diverse demographics, professionals eager to help, quality control, etc.) came with two main difficulties. One, it was complex software that I had to learn the ins and outs of. Two, it was expensive. Very expensive. At five dollars per participant, the study needed at least two thousand dollars to fund an ideal number of participants, which meant I needed to earn at least two \$1000 research grants. I first applied to URCO back when I was essentially self-mentoring and was unsuccessful, although I learned a lot and received helpful feedback from the URCO reader. I succeeded in earning the URCO grant the second time I applied, this time with the marvelous aid of Dr. Sperry. The second grant I applied for was the Honors research grant, and thankfully earned that as well.

Data analysis was a beast, for lack of a better word. What I expected to be a simple click of a few buttons turned out to be the most difficult undertaking of my college career. First and foremost, it was immensely challenging to receive the necessary SPSS software as a distance student. I flew to Utah twice simply to use the Utah State University computers with SPSS software for a couple of days. Afterwards, I was informed I could buy the software myself. I fortunately found a student discount and paid to download SPSS onto my computer. Turning the thousands of Qualtrics numbers into something understandable was an exercise in creative and

logical thinking. For several weeks I read and watched countless articles and YouTube videos on the complexities of SPSS and became a self-proclaimed professional. While there is still *much* more to learn, I now feel confident in my ability to organize, analyze, and summarize data for future projects.

Writing the literature review was among my favorite parts of the research project. I freely admit I spent far too long on reading background literature. I find so much joy in learning new things and have a hard time stopping once I start down a rabbit hole of new information. The eight pages of references below are a *fraction* of the articles I read and wrote annotated bibliographies for. To illustrate this, a single one of the annotated bibliography Word Docs I wrote contains 9,995 words across 44 pages. Dr. Sperry was instrumental in helping me hone the vision of the study and cut dozens of pages of background literature that would have fatigued future readers.

Other skills I acquired during the research paper writing process include a thorough understanding of APA formatting and how to implement it in Word documents; building tables in Word and Excel; creating reader-friendly charts; properly organizing the method, results, discussion, conclusion, reference, and appendix sections of a research paper; and effectively accessing research articles across a variety of sources including Google Scholar and the University's library database.

I am thrilled and pleasantly surprised at the positive reactions to the research study. Before the study was even completed, I was invited to present the research's concept at both Research on Capitol Hill and the Utah Conference of Undergraduate Research. It sparked remarkable conversations with adults and students and even received attention from prominent Utah legislators. I had the honor of speaking personally with several legislators and each gave

me their contact information to reach out once the study is published. I look forward to seeing the study's public and professional reception once submitted to academic journals.

I already have numerous research questions in mind to study and eagerly anticipate pursuing them in my post-graduate career. I grew a deep respect for researchers during the hundreds of hours and thousands of dollars that went into this single Capstone project. I always appreciated researchers, and enjoyed reading articles, but never grasped the immensity of time and resources that goes into a few published pages. It's excited and slightly disheartening, that so much effort goes into "a drop in the bucket" as Dr. Sperry so perfectly describes it. I am grateful for this opportunity and am itching to begin the next two hundred hours of research.

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## Appendix

### Survey Vignettes

1. Even if she doesn't kiss back, still force on regardless! She may resist, yet she wants to be overcome. Of course she struggles, but that is only a sign her emotions are engaged.
2. At all cost, resist the temptation to rush to the climax of your seduction. You are not being seductive but selfish. If the person you are pursuing holds back or resists, do not push them. Take your time, respecting them and the seductive process.
3. Do not give your targets the time or space to worry about, suspect, or resist you. Remember – people secretly yearn to be led astray by someone who knows where they are going. It can be a pleasure to let go, and even to feel isolated and weak.
4. A man should proceed ONLY after a woman clearly shows equal interest in him. For example, she initiates physical contact, reacts enthusiastically, and both verbally and physically encourages his advances.
5. Never hold back or meet the target halfway, under the belief that you are being correct and considerate; you must be seductive now, not political. One person must go on the offensive, and it is you.

## Bio

Lisa Starrett majored in psychology and minored in computer science at Utah State University with the specific intention of one day working with survivors of trauma. She is especially interested in helping women and men, boys and girls rescued from human trafficking. Lisa is also passionate about sexual assault prevention and aspires to diminish the United States' atrocious distinction of having the highest rates of sexual assault of any industrialized nation in the world. Her goal is to work with researchers and legislators to write and pass consent education curriculum that is effective and culturally sensitive for high school sex ed. courses.

Lisa was a Presidential Scholarship recipient at Utah State University and graduated summa cum laude of her 2020 graduating class. She was involved in numerous research projects during her time at Utah State, including "Behavioral Analysis of Self Control and Impulsiveness" in Dr. Amy Odum's lab, "Interruption Frequency and Client Satisfaction in Couple Therapy" in Dr. Megan Oka's lab, and "Gender Differences in Group Participation" with the Psi Chi research team. Moreover, Lisa's Capstone thesis, "The Art of Seduction: Male Perceptions of Sexual Willingness," was presented to fellow researchers, legislators, and the public at both Research on Capitol Hill and the Utah Conference of Undergraduate Research. Lisa is a member of Psi Chi, the International Honors Society in Psychology, the Association for Psychology Science, and the Society for a Science of Clinical Psychology.

Lisa earned internships at several trauma-related organizations throughout her college career, including Citizens Against Physical and Sexual Abuse (CAPSA), Sexual Assault and Anti-Violence Awareness (SAAVI), and Resilience. Her passion for helping youth overcome trauma led to her becoming the Outreach Director for Project Contrast, where she works with

LGBTQ+ youth across the nation to help empower them, connect them with others, and share their story.

During her career in Los Angeles, Lisa acted in several critically-acclaimed productions including the film “Nine Days” which won the Waldo Salt Screenwriting Award at the 2020 Sundance Film Festival. While she loves her acting career, Lisa will jointly continue her post-graduate education to attain a PhD in Clinical Psychology and further pursue her research interests in trauma psychology.