

WOMEN'S REACTIONS TO A REALISTIC RAPE PORTRAYAL AND THE INFLUENCE OF FEMINIST IDENTITY AND RAPE MYTH ACCEPTANCE

Gretchen M. Reinders

Dr. Laurie Mintz, Dissertation Supervisor

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to expand knowledge regarding the effects of viewing sexually violent stimuli on college women. Specifically, this study is the first to examine women's reactions to a popular media depiction of a date/acquaintance rape scene. This study also examined if either feminist identity or rape myth acceptance was related to these reactions. Sixty college females enrolled at the University of Missouri were exposed to either a neutral film clip or one depicting a date/acquaintance rape. Anger, negative affect, and disempowerment were assessed, along with feminist identity and rape myth acceptance. Repeated measures ANOVAs demonstrated a significant interaction effect, in that women reported significantly higher feelings of anger and negative affect after viewing the rape scene. Significance was not reached for disempowerment. Rape myth acceptance and feminist identity did not influence women's affective responses. Implications for future research, prevention, and counseling are discussed.