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Adolescent Bystander Perceptions of Sexual Violence Scenarios

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ADOLESCENT BYSTANDER PERCEPTIONS OF

SEXUAL VIOLENCE SCENARIOS

(Thesis Format: Monography)

by

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Abstract

Sexual violence is an ongoing problem in Canada that affects youth, and has become complicated due to the increased use of social media and the Internet. As a result, new violence prevention programs focus on bystanders' potential to intervene and has been shown to promote prosocial attitudes toward sexual violence (e.g. Banyard, Moynihan, and Plante, 2007; Katz, Heisterkamp, & Fleming, 2011). The present study examine current attitudes of adolescents in wrongfulness and willingness to intervene in scenarios of sexual violence that occur in either online or offline contexts. The study replicated and modified an existing evidence-supported American questionnaire that uses written bystander scenarios depicting potential sexual violence. Participants were 154 high school students from southwestern Ontario. Significant gender differences, as well as indications for anonymous online victims were found. Implications for future bystander intervention and violence prevention strategies are explored further.

Keywords: bystander intervention, violence prevention, cyberbullying, sexual violence, adolescents, gender, teen dating abuse, cyber abuse

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Sexual violence in Canada continues to be an ongoing concern. In 2008, over 13,600 sexual assaults of youth under the age of 18 were reported to police, with 82% of victims being female (Statistics Canada, 2008). Due to the gender specificity of the crimes, most rape prevention specialists are now opposed to focusing on risk reduction strategies for women since this model risks placing the responsibility and blame on victims (Rozee & Koss, 2001). As a result, the focus of violence prevention has shifted to the "bystanders", a term that describes any person who is present in an act of harassment, abuse, or violence but is neither the perpetrator nor the victim (Katz, Heisterkamp, & Fleming, 2011). As these individuals can potentially interrupt or prevent violence, many prevention programs such as the Mentors in Violence Prevention Program (MVP) are being recognized around the world (Katz, 1995). The MVP program utilizes realistic scenario questions and group discussion to facilitate awareness, and has been implemented in many schools, athletic organizations, and even military bases in the United States (Katz et al., 2011). By building on this foundational work, there exists the potential of preventing sexual assaults at an even earlier age if bystander programs are tailored to adolescents.

A newer phenomenon of Internet-related abuse is also increasing in prominence and recently has been changing the way that violence prevention is being approached (Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004). With the use of text messaging and "apps", clear definitions of what constitutes as abuse online have not been determined in the current literature (Walther, 2007). Therefore, part of what needs to be researched with youth is what specific motivations and preconceptions already exist, and how the evolving presence of social media plays a role in violence prevention.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The field of violence prevention is extensive and constantly expanding, and so it is imperative to review important definitions and specific key concepts.

2.1 Sexual Violence: Definitions and Prevalence in Canada

The term "sexual violence" is an umbrella term used to describe the complexity of experiences that include unwanted verbal, coercive, physical, and sexual events (Kelly, 1987). Thus, this definition is broad and is not limited to only physical aspects, such as assault or rape, but also includes verbal harassment (e.g. "catcalling", threats) and noncontact harassment (e.g. inappropriate staring). Developmental research also shows that increased peer sexual harassment is a characteristic of adolescence, indicating normalized behaviours such as spreading sexual rumours and touching (Perry & Pauletti, 2011). Perpetration of such violence is considered heavily gendered, as most victims are female whereas offenses are largely committed by men (Rozee & Koss, 2001). For example, crime statistics in 2011 showed that 98% of all Canadian persons charged with sexual assault were male (Brennan, 2012). Moreover, self-report data on victimization has consistently shown that most incidents of sexual violence are not reported to the police (Statistics Canada, 2008). One of the reasons for this behaviour is thought to be the concept of victim blaming, in which the victim is perceived to have contributed to their abuse in some way, moreover that men blame victims more frequently than do women (Anderson & Lyons, 2005; White & Kurpuis, 2002). Thus, the reliance on quantitative survey data makes it problematic to discern the complex experiences of sexual violence in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2008).

2.2 Definitions: Bystander Intervention Approach

Recent developments in the area of sexual violence prevention revolve around the concept of educating and encouraging bystanders to become actively involved with intervention and prevention (Fabiano, Perkins, & Berkowitz, 2004). Latané & Darley (1968) used the term "diffusion of responsibility" to describe the social phenomenon in which people feel less motivated to act in an emergency situation when others are present, as if the responsibility were dispersed amongst all who are present. This phenomenon can also be applied to numerous situations of sexual violence as well. However, research has shown that bystanders will feel more responsible to intervene in a situation if the following circumstances are met: If they possess attitudes and beliefs that oppose sexual violence, they perceive intervention as a social norm, and believe that they have the skills to effectively intervene (Ajzen, 1991). Lastly, bystanders are less likely to feel defensive if they are considered allies against violence, rather than potential perpetrators or victims (Banyard, Plante, & Moynihan, 2004).

Traditionally, the term bystander alluded to a passive role, as suggested by the definition by Alan Berkowitz (2009) as "someone who witnesses a problem behavior and does not do anything about it". To fully express the expansive and influential role of the bystander, this current study will adopt the definition of a bystander as "essentially anyone who plays some role in an act of harassment, abuse, or violence but is neither the perpetrator nor the victim" (Katz et al., 2011). This new definition implies that a bystander can be any person who has some potential influence on an individual that is perpetrating some form of violence, and thus has some power to interrupt or intervene with the situation. Therefore, silence is not considered a neutral response to violence.

The bystander approach empowers community members by providing individuals with skills and knowledge that may prevent violence before it happens, as well as by speaking out against ideas that support sexual violence, and by supporting survivors after an assault has occurred (Potter & Stapleton, 2011). The approach also shifts social responsibility to both men and women as being key roles in preventing sexual violence (Tabachnick, 2008). Therefore, this research suggests that it is possible for communities and individuals to become more responsible for violent occurrences.

2.3 Masculinity and Male Involvement

Kaufman (1987/1998) was one of the earlier researchers who discussed how male violence was related to the way children are socialized at an early age into expectations of behavior by society. Such expectations for males are often referred to as the "boy code" or "guy code", which include rules of conduct and expectations to not be perceived as weak or feminine (e.g. Pollack. 1998; Kimmel, 2008). In particular, several researchers have identified "high-risk" men as those belonging to groups that reinforce misogynistic attitudes and sexually aggressive behaviour, such as athletes and members of fraternities and the military (e.g. Stephens & George, 2009; Malamuth, Linz, Heavey, Barnes, & Acker, 1995). Berkowitz (2011) suggested that there exists a sense of responsibility for males to protect each other from being held accountable for misconduct. This aspect of male culture can make it difficult for males to act outside of gender roles as it creates a risk of social disapproval.

One of the greatest challenges in sexual violence prevention is described as the lack of identifiable goals for males to become involved; in other words, men are unsure of how to intervene without the risk of social ridicule (Crooks, Goodall, Hughes, Jaffer, & Baker,

2007). Many factors contribute to this, such as violence prevention being mainly considered a women's issue (Berkowitz, 2004), and a lack of a sense of responsibility for sexual violence (Shaw, 2001). Even the terms "feminism" and "violence against women" are gendered and may deter males from becoming involved.

A Canadian study by Coulter (2003) examined a specific group of high school males who chose to become involved with anti-violence and gender equity work. What she found was that although these adolescent boys came to recognize their own male privileges, the theme of becoming the traditional "women's protectors" role was one of the greatest motivations for becoming involved. This suggests that the adoption of only certain prosocial attitudes was enough to convince these boys to become engaged.

These studies draw attention to the difficulties of male involvement in the topic of gender equality, despite the development of the bystander model. While the studies revealed valuable knowledge about the barriers that may prevent boys from becoming interested, these studies focus primarily on specific male populations (such as the ones already volunteering), as well as ignoring female motivations to getting involved in violence prevention. If the definition of a bystander does indeed encompass "anyone" witnessing an act, then research should be inclusive towards all genders.

2.4 Bystander Programs: Mentors in Violence Prevention Program (MVP)

The MVP began as a pilot program to encourage male athletes in college to become involved in the prevention of sexual harassment (Katz et al., 2011). The program utilizes a pedagogical approach that involves an interactive workshop with written and oral exercises, discussions, and the *MVP Playbook* scenarios that depict situations of potential violence in which a bystander can intervene. In addition to exploring different options a bystander may

choose from, the *Playbook* also identifies attitudes that influence whether or not the bystander chooses to intervene. This is arguably one of the most well-known bystander programs, and many further studies have either used similar formats or adopted parts of the original MVP.

2.5 Bystander Programs: College Populations

Another bystander intervention program for college students was created by Banyard, Moynihan, and Plante (2007).The program successfully influenced self-reports of decreased rape myths, increased sexual violence knowledge and prosocial attitudes, as well as improved confidence in intervening in situations. In addition, the participants were also more likely than the control group to actually engage in intervention behaviours after a two-month follow up.

In another study, Gidyczl, Orchowski, & Berkowitz (2011) randomly selected students at a university to participate in a similar bystander intervention program for sexual violence. When compared to a control group, the participating students reported less likelihood of engaging in sexually aggressive behavior, fewer associations with sexually aggressive peers, and indicated less exposure to sexually explicit media.

A study conducted by Lynch & Fleming (2005) found that college students who attended an MVP-inspired intervention program called the "VFC" reported increased understanding of violence that was comparable to those who attended MVP programs. The authors made the conclusion that MVP and the VFC were both effective in changing attitudes of college students.

The results from these various studies suggest that the bystander model is successful

at significantly changing self-report attitudes and knowledge of young adults, even when facilitated as different variations of the original program.

2.6 Bystander Programs: High School Populations

Bystander intervention research with high school students is relatively new in the field. Several researchers from the United States developed a survey for high school students that mirror the scenarios from the MVP *Playbook,* and three measures were used to investigate attitude changes after implementing an MVP program (Katz, Heisterkamp, & Fleming, 2011). Students rated different written scenarios in terms of perception of wrongfulness, willingness to intervene, and the likelihood of other students intervening. Results showed that that students exposed to the MVP model were more likely to perceive forms of violence as wrong, and were more likely to intervene, in comparison to students not exposed to the program. The generalizability of the results may be limited, as the study was conducted in two schools in a Midwestern state such that one school implemented the MVP program and the other did not. A similar questionnaire is currently being used to assess the effectiveness of a high school violence prevention program called The Sioux City Project, which was founded in 2007 by Cindy Waitt, Alan Heisterkamp, and Michael Fleming. The project also includes the *MVP* program as part of a school curriculum intervention that is facilitated by older student mentors (Waitt Institute for Violence Prevention, 2011). Findings showed that students' prosocial beliefs and attitudes towards sexual violence changed over a mere four year period; for example 71% reported *"Telling jokes that make fun of women and girls"* to be wrong, in comparison to the original 2.6% (Waitt Institute for Violence Prevention, 2011).

Even though the bystander programs were originally created for college men, these

recent studies show that the same model has been successfully applied to a younger population. This implication is important, as it suggests that violence prevention can potentially be implemented earlier in the life span. In fact, recent literature reviews have shown that community-based interventions amongst boys and girls have successfully prevented intimate partner violence and sexual violence (Lundgren & Amin, 2014). Researchers agree that addressing these issues in adolescence remains a crucial point of intervening in the cycle of violence (Wolfe, Jaffe, & Crooks, 2006, p.98).

2.7 New Developments: Sexual Violence and Social Media

A newer phenomenon of Internet-related abuse is increasing in prominence (e.g. Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004). Due to anonymity of the Internet and wide use of media, controlled research on the topic is rather limited (Drogin & Young, 2008). A recent survey with 1058 youths (aged 14 to 21) found that adolescent perpetrators of sexual violence reported greater use of violent sexual media than non-perpetrators (Ybarra & Mitchell, 2013). Even more troubling was the finding that 98% of these individuals reported committing the first perpetration at only age 15. Thus, the link between consumption of violent media and violent offenses is a concern.

In addition to this, sharing images is easier and more accessible than ever, with the popular use of apps like Instagram and Snapchat amongst adolescents. A recently released NIJ-funded study found that 18% of adolescents reported cyber abuse from a romantic partner, such as partners sending "texts/emails to engage in sexual acts I did not want" (Zweig, Dank, Lachman, & Yahner, 2013). The authors of the study categorized this abusive behaviour as "sexual cyber dating abuse", which include threats and harassment through technology and media, and using a person's social networking page without permission. The

same study found that less than one out of ten victims reported seeking help from an authority.

In summation, empirical comparisons of the literature shows that researchers have not determined clear differences between online and offline forms of abuse (Law, Shapka, Hymel, Olson, & Waterhouse, 2012). While some studies have suggested that students perceive victims and perpetrators equally in both Internet and traditional settings (Morrow & Downey, 2013), others have experienced difficulties establishing definitions of cyber abuse (e.g. Viegas, 2005; Walther, 2007). Furthermore, studies have shown that some adolescents have indicated "no way to reduce cyberbullying" as an acceptance coping strategy to deal with negative effects of cyber abuse (Parris, Varjas, Meyers, & Cutts, 2012). Thus, these new findings can make the field of violence prevention very confusing to navigate and cannot be ignored when studying adolescent behaviour. Therefore, researchers agree that is crucial to understand how online and traditional violence differs, and to examine underlying differences in future studies (Dooley, Pyzalski, & Cross, 2009; Werner & Bumpus, 2010).

2.8 Perspective

As the overarching nature of this research can be extended for social justice purposes, it is important to deflect stereotypes that violence prevention education is inherently anti-male (Katz et al., 2011). Therefore, the current study includes both male and female students to participate in order to promote gender neutrality. Since perpetrators and victims can potentially be any gender, the author argues that all individuals can benefit from becoming an empowered and educated bystander. In addition, investigating both genders may be useful for comparing girls' and boys' reasons for intervening or not intervening in situations of sexual violence.

2.9 Research Question

Sexual assault related bystander intervention research on high school aged adolescents is still considered lacking, since the majority of studies are conducted with college men (Gidycz et al., 2011). In addition, the majority of research that has been conducted with adolescents was usually limited to highly specialized students such as athletes and activists, and not a general sample (Ward, 2001). A better understanding of high school students is therefore crucial, considering that approximately 20% of those charged for sexual assault in Canada are youth aged 18 and under (Statistics Canada, 2008). The use of the attitude measures for adolescents utilized in both the high school MVP program (Katz et al., 2011) and The Sioux City Project are two promising examples of researchers beginning to fill this gap in the literature.

Another area for improvement consists of including technology-related abuse, or cyber dating abuse, as a defined portion of surveys. The survey used by Katz and colleagues (2011) only included 2 items that specifically mention the use of internet and devices as a medium for perpetrating sexual violence. Due to the increasing presence of Internet and media in adolescents' lives as demonstrated by this literature review, the author argues for the inclusion of scenarios particular to this domain.

The rationale is to understand potential bystanders at an *earlier* stage of development to ensure that educators have effective strategies for adolescents. Many resources have been directed at college populations but there may be a need to have differential messages aimed at a younger population once we understand their motivations and knowledge. Therefore, the three main research questions are as follows:

1)   What are the current attitudes and perceptions of wrongfulness of high school students toward various forms of sexually violent situations?

2)   Do attitudes and willingness to intervene differ between online and offline based forms of sexual violence?

3)   Do attitudes and willingness to intervene differ between adolescent males and females?

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Participants

Participants in this study were 154 male and female students from 3 Southwestern Ontario high schools, in grades 11 and 12. Classes were recruited through the Thames Valley District School board as the "Media & Social Life Survey" on adolescents and use of media and perceptions of sexual violence. The study was offered to teachers interested in participating in the study and voluntary classrooms were selected as convenience samples, along with consenting students and parents. Participants were selected based on a convenience sample of volunteering teachers and students. Of this sample, 48.7% were male and 51.3% were female, ranging from grades 10 to 12 (See table 1). Ages ranged from 15 to 18, with the majority of participants being 16 year old and in grade 11. All participants completed the survey and attended the debriefing presentation for a total of 35 minutes during a class period. Students were asked to provide their gender, age, and grade.

Table 1

Gender and Grade of High School Students

Participants (N = 154)

Grade	**Male** (n = 75)	**Female** (n = 79)
Grade 11 (n= 109)	32.5%	38.3%
Grade 12 (n= 45)	16.2%	13.0%

3.2 Materials

    Consent & Assent Forms. Permission from both students and parents were obtained in order to uphold ethical standards and to abide by the school board's policies (Appendix D & E). Forms were collected prior to the study, and students who did not give consent had the opportunity to complete individual homework at their desks. Teachers were provided with a script to describe the research to students as a study on adolescent attitudes of sexual violence and social media (Appendix C). The rationale for this description was to protect the integrity of the study and because students were later debriefed about the background research of this topic.

    Bystander Intervention Survey. The 24-item scenario survey was part of a larger survey in conjunction with another researcher studying adolescent dating violence (Appendix A & B). 12 (x 2 scales) scenario questions were taken from the Adolescent Perceptions of Wrongfulness Scale and Self-Report of Taking Action measures by Katz et al. (2011). The questions of interest that were included in the present study were selected based on contexts of sexual violence, whereas the original survey also included scenarios pertaining to racism and general violence, which is not the focus of this current study. In addition, 5 new

scenarios related to cyber abuse were added to further investigate perceptions of online adolescent behaviour.

The *Wrongfulness* measure (Appendix A) asks students "*How Wrong Do I Believe These To Be*?" For each of the 12 scenarios, participants could select their rating of wrongfulness as: "Not wrong at all"; "A little wrong"; "Uncertain"; "Wrong", and "Very wrong". The *Taking Action* measure (Appendix B) provides students with the same scenarios and asking "*How Likely Am I To Take Action?*" The 5-point scale for this set of questions is listed as: "Very unlikely"; "Somewhat unlikely"; "Uncertain"; "Likely", and "Very likely". The original "Uncertain" midpoint was used in the current study as an appropriate choice for youth who may be genuinely uncertain as to how to respond to these sensitive situations.

In addition, a comment section was included as an opportunity for students to openly express thoughts and opinions about the survey content. This open-ended section was intended to compliment the otherwise closed-question nature of the questionnaire.

Questions are categorized into two categories: *Offline* and *Online* behaviours. *Offline* items (seven scenarios) included more traditional scenarios that do not necessarily involve the use of media and technology, such as, *"Making sexual advances on someone who is drunk"*. *Online* items (five scenarios) include scenarios such as, *"Using his/her cell phone to degrade or harass a friend with words or pictures"*.

Debriefing Presentation. After completing the survey for 25 minutes, participants were debriefed by the experimenters using a 10-minute long PowerPoint presentation that explained the purpose of the study and a brief overview on violence prevention. The

presentation also included community and school-based resources for accessing help and support services.

3.3 Procedure

During a classroom period, students were verbally instructed by the experimenters to complete the survey within 25 minutes, followed by a 10 minute debriefing segment. Students who did not hand in consent forms were asked to complete individual homework at their desks. After the surveys had been collected, the experimenters debriefed the class on the field of sexual violence prevention using an educational PowerPoint presentation, as well as provided community and school support resources. A total of 35 minutes was used for each class who participated in the study.

3.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis focused on examining current trends in attitudes toward sexual violence, gender and grade differences, as well as comparing online to offline items. Analyses also examined the frequency of students rating scenarios as "Wrong" and "Very Wrong", as well as frequency of those reporting "Likely" and "Very Likely" to intervene. Similarly to the original study by Katz and colleagues (2011), the data was interpreted as 4 scales which are of key interest to the current study. The *Wrongfulness-Offline* subscale consisted of seven items ($\alpha = .77$) that describe students' perceived wrongfulness of sexual violence perpetrated in traditional offline settings. The *Wrongfulness-Online* subscale consisted of five items ($\alpha = .88$) that describe students' perceived wrongfulness of acts committed through the use of technology and/or the Internet. The *Taking Action-Offline* subscale consisted of seven items ($\alpha = .76$) about willingness to intervene in offline scenarios. Finally, the *Taking Action-Online* consisted of five items ($\alpha = .93$) that describe

students' willingness to intervene in scenarios committed through the use of technology and/or the Internet. These 4 scales were analyzed for their relationships with gender and grade using the analysis of variance (ANOVA) in SPSS. Effect sizes were calculated as well.

Another research interest was whether significant differences could be found between the online and offline survey items. A paired samples t-test was conducted for the *Wrongfulness-Offline* and *Wrongfulness-Online* subscales, as well as for *Taking Action-Offline* and *Taking Action-Online* subscales.

Chapter 4: Results

The current study collected primary data from three secondary schools in southwestern Ontario to explore students' attitudes and willingness to take action in hypothetical scenarios depicting potential sexual violence. Out of a total number of 154 students, 75 were male and 79 were female, with ages ranging from 15 to 18. Although all high school grades were originally included in the data collection, it was later discovered that the grade nine and 10 sample only contained seven male students, thus skewing the overall gender ratio to 38.5% males and 61.5% females. The decision was made to include only the grade 11 and 12 samples in order to ensure a balanced and more representative gender ratio. Two additional participants were also removed from the final data, due to the fact that half or more of the questionnaire items were unanswered. Finally, seven participants each were missing one item, and a missing data imputation was conducted on SPSS to account for these values using the existing data.

Overall Frequencies for Wrongfulness and Taking Action Scales

Likert scale items for both *Wrongfulness* and *Taking Action* measures utilized a 5-point Likert scale. Total reported *Wrongfulness* scores were calculated for the frequency of students who reported "Wrong" or "Very Wrong" to the 12 total scenarios (see table 2). Therefore, the remaining scores include students who reported "Not wrong at all", "A little wrong", and "Uncertain".

Table 2

Overall Frequencies for Reporting Wrong and Very Wrong in Scenarios

Scenario	Percent of Sample
1. Making sexual gestures or remarks to others.	53.8%
2. Making sexual advances on someone who is drunk.	91.6%
3. Teasing others about their bodies or clothing.	89.6%
4. Discussing other students' sexual activity.	59.7%
5. Listening to music lyrics that degrade women.	39.0%
6. Gossiping and spreading rumors about others.	79.9%
7. Telling jokes that make fun of women and girls.	66.9%
8. Using the internet to degrade or harass other students with words or pictures.	94.2%
9. Sharing sexual photos of his girlfriend.	94.8%
10. Sharing sexual photos of a girl you don't know.	88.3%
11. Pressuring his girlfriend to send sexual pictures.	90.9%
12. Pressuring a female acquaintance to send sexual pictures.	92.2%

Frequencies for total reported *Taking Action* scores were similarly calculated for students who reported "Likely" and "Very Likely" to intervene in the 12 scenarios (see table 3).   The remaining scores therefore include the frequency of response for "Very unlikely", "Somewhat unlikely", and "Uncertain".

Table 3

Overall Frequencies for Reporting Likely and Very Likely to Take Action in Scenarios

Scenario	Percent of Sample
1. Making sexual gestures or remarks to others.	14.3%
2. Making sexual advances on someone who is drunk.	66.2%
3. Teasing others about their bodies or clothing.	65.6%
4. Discussing other students' sexual activity.	22.7%
5. Listening to music lyrics that degrade women.	21.4%
6. Gossiping and spreading rumors about others.	38.3%
7. Telling jokes that make fun of women and girls.	41.6%
8. Using the internet to degrade or harass other students with words or pictures.	61.7%
9. Sharing sexual photos of his girlfriend.	58.4%
10. Sharing sexual photos of a girl you don't know.	57.1%
11. Pressuring his girlfriend to send sexual pictures.	57.1%
12. Pressuring a female acquaintance to send sexual pictures.	62.3%

Overall Trends in Adolescent Attitude as Function of Gender

Both genders rated the more criminally liable scenarios as being the most wrong, such as sharing intimate pictures and pressuring an acquaintance to send pictures (see table 4, top panel). Males and females only differed on one scenario for the top three most wrong scenarios, out of a total of 12 scenarios (*"Using the internet to degrade or harass other students with words or pictures"* for males, compared to *"Pressuring his girlfriend to send sexual pictures"* for females). On the other hand, ratings for the least wrong scenarios were identical for both genders and depicted more socially acceptable forms of behaviour, such as discussing other students' sexual activities and listening to musical lyrics that degrade women (see table 4, bottom panel). All top three "most wrong" scenarios were items from the online subscale, whereas the bottom three "least wrong" scenarios were from the offline subscale.

Table 4

Top/Bottom Scenarios and Means for Perceived Wrongfulness for Male and Female High School Students

Male (Top 3 Most Wrong)		Female (Top 3 Most Wrong)	
Sharing sexual photos of his girlfriend.	4.6 (0.72)	Sharing sexual photos of his girlfriend.	4.86(0.5)
Using the internet to degrade or harass other students with words or pictures.	4.51(0.83)	Pressuring his girlfriend to send sexual pictures.	4.82(0.64)
Pressuring a female acquaintance to send sexual pictures.	4.37(1.11)	Pressuring female acquaint-ance to send sexual pictures.	4.8(0.67)

Male (Bottom 3 Least Wrong)		Female (Bottom 3 Least Wrong)	
Making sexual gestures or remarks to others.	3.03(1.19)	Making sexual gestures or remarks to others.	3.43(1.03)
Discussing other students' sexual activity.	3.32(1.19)	Discussing other students' sexual activity.	3.87(1.01)
Listening to musical lyrics that degrade women.	2.85(1.15)	Listening to musical lyrics that degrade women.	3.34(1.26)

Note: Standard Deviations appear in parentheses beside means.

The three scenarios that students rated least likely to intervene in were the same as the least wrong scenarios, and were again identical for both genders. However, girls and boys appeared to differ in the top three scenarios they reported most willing to take action in. While *"Teasing others about their bodies or clothing"* was a top scenario for girls to intervene in, boys had reported higher scores for *"Using the internet to degrade or harass other students with"* (see table 5, top panel). Half of all the top items for willingness to take action were scenarios that occur in an online setting. The bottom three scenarios that were reportedly least likely to take action, were once again from the offline subscale (see table 5, bottom panel).

Table 5

Top and Bottom Scenarios and Means for Willingness to Take Action for Male and Female

High School Students

Male (Top 3 Most Willing To Take Action)		Female (Top 3 Most Willing To Take Action)	
Using the internet to degrade or harass other students with	3.57(1.36)	Making sexual advances on someone who is drunk.	3.92(1.11)
Making sexual advances on someone who is drunk.	3.43(1.18)	Pressuring female acquaintance to send sexual pictures.	3.92(1.25)
Pressuring a female acquaintance to send sexual pictures.	3.41(1.4)	Teasing others about their bodies or clothing.	3.87(1.04)
Male (Bottom 3 Least Willing To Take Action)		**Female (Bottom 3 Least Willing To Take Action)**	
Discussing other students' sexual activity.	2.52(1.07)	Discussing other students' sexual activity.	2.89(1.18)
Making sexual gestures or remarks to others.	2.27(1.03)	Making sexual gestures or remarks to others.	2.47(0.96)
Listening to musical lyrics that degrade women.	2.0(1.26)	Listening to musical lyrics that degrade women.	2.42(1.31

Note: Standard Deviations appear in parentheses below means.

Gender Differences in Perceptions of Wrongfulness & Willingness to Intervene

  There were significant group differences between male and female participants for all four subscales: *Wrongfulness-Offline* [$F_{(1, 152)}= 16.32$, p< .01], *Wrongfulness-Online* [$F_{(1, 152)}= 10.90$, p< .01] *Taking Action-Offline* [$F_{(1,152)}= 14.27$, p< .01], and *Taking Action-Online* [$F_{(1, 152)}= 4.41$, p< .05]. Reported means indicate that female students rated all four

scales as more wrong and were more willing to take action than their male counterparts (see table 6).

Furthermore, moderate to high effect sizes were found for *Wrongfulness-Offline* (η^2= .10), *Wrongfulness-Online* (η^2= .07), and *Taking Action-Offline* (η^2= .09). However, the *Taking Action-Online* subscale was found to have an effect size which suggested low practical significance (η^2= .03).

Table 6

Overall Reported Means as Function of Gender

Scale	*Males*	*Females*	*df*	*F*
Wrongfulness – Offline	3.56(.62)	3.98(.67)	1, 152	16.32**
Wrongfulness – Online	4.46(.72)	4.79(.53)	1, 152	10.90**
Taking Action – Offline	2.71(.73)	3.16(.73)	1, 152	14.27**
Taking Action – Online	3.39(1.25)	3.80(1.14)	1, 152	4.41*

*Note: *p <.05, **p <.01. Standard Deviations appear in parentheses beside means.*

Comparison of Online Versus Offline Items

A paired samples t-test revealed a significant difference between scores for the *Wrongfulness-Offline* (M= 3.78, SD= .67) and *Wrongfulness-Online* (M= 4.62, SD= .65) subscales; t(153)= -19.80, p< .01 (see table 7). A significance difference between scores was also found for *Taking Action-Offline* (M = 2.94, SD = .76) and *Taking Action- Online* (M= 3.60, SD= 1.21) subscales; t(153) = -8.84 , p< .01 (see table 7). Sample means indicate that online scores were higher on both *Wrongfulness* and *Taking Action* measures (see table 7).

Table 7

Online and Offline Subscale Means

Subscale	Offline Mean	Online Mean	df	t
Wrongfulness	3.78(.67)	4.62(.65)	153	-19.80**
Taking Action	2.94(.76)	3.60(1.21)	153	-8.84*

*Note: *p <.05, **p <.01. Standard Deviations appear in parentheses beside means.*

Gender Differences on Specific Items Analysis

Upon closer examination of the data, some gender differences were found for the individual 12 scenarios using ANOVA analyses. Perceptions of wrongfulness for 11 items were found to be significantly different between males and females, with the exception of *"Gossiping and spreading rumors about others"* (see table 8).

Table 8

Reported Means for Perception of Wrongfulness Scenarios as Function of Gender

Perception of Wrongfulness for 12 Scenarios	Male	Female	*df*	F
1. Making sexual gestures or remarks to others.	3.03	3.43	1, 152	4.90*
2. Making sexual advances on someone who is drunk.	4.35	4.66	1, 152	5.16*
3. Teasing others about their bodies or clothing.	4.11	4.57	1, 152	12.72**
4. Discussing other students' sexual activity.	3.32	3.87	1, 152	9.78**
5. Listening to music lyrics that degrade women.	2.85	3.34	1, 152	6.16*
6. Gossiping and spreading rumors about others.	3.8	4.06	1, 152	3.01

7. Telling jokes that make fun of women and girls.	3.49	3.95	1, 152	6.78*
8. Using the internet to degrade or harass other students with words or pictures.	4.51	4.75	1, 152	4.34*
9. Sharing sexual photos of his girlfriend.	4.6	4.86	1, 152	6.92**
10. Sharing sexual photos of a girl you don't know.	4.29	4.73	1, 152	10.06**
11. Pressuring his girlfriend to send sexual pictures.	4.37	4.82	1, 152	9.60**
12. Pressuring a female acquaintance to send sexual pictures.	4.51	4.8	1, 152	5.29*

(Where: *1 = Not wrong at all, 2= A little wrong, 3= Uncertain, 4= Wrong, 5= Very wrong.* *p <.05, **p <.01)

Most scenarios for willingness to take action had a significant group difference for gender, except for three items ("Making sexual gestures or remarks to others", "Using the internet to degrade or harass other students with words or pictures", "Sharing sexual photos of his girlfriend") (see table 9).

Table 9

Reported Means for Taking Action Scenarios as Function of Gender

Willingness to Take Action for 12 Scenarios	Male	Female	*df*	F
1. Making sexual gestures or remarks to others.	2.27	2.47	1, 152	1.58
2. Making sexual advances on someone who is drunk.	3.43	3.92	1, 152	7.31*
3. Teasing others about their bodies or clothing.	3.27	3.87	1, 152	11.49**
4. Discussing other students' sexual activity.	2.52	2.89	1, 152	4.07*
5. Listening to music lyrics that degrade women.	2.00	2.42	1, 152	4.062*

6. Gossiping and spreading rumors about others.	2.82	3.2	1, 152	4.29*
7. Telling jokes that make fun of women and girls.	2.68	3.33	1, 152	8.87**
8. Using the internet to degrade or harass other students with words or pictures.	3.57	3.66	1, 152	.16
9. Sharing sexual photos of his girlfriend.	3.37	3.81	1, 152	3.82
10. Sharing sexual photos of a girl you don't know.	3.2	3.73	1, 152	5.26*
11. Pressuring his girlfriend to send sexual pictures.	3.4	3.86	1, 152	4.71*
12. Pressuring a female acquaintance to send sexual pictures.	3.41	3.92	1, 152	5.74*

(Where: 1= *Very unlikely, 2= Somewhat unlikely, 3= Uncertain, 4= Likely, 5= Very likely*

** p <.05, **p <.01)

Gender Differences for Total Reported Frequencies

Total reported frequencies for students who answered "Wrong" or "Very wrong" revealed similar disparities between male and female students. For each of the 12 scenarios, higher percentages of females than males rated all 12 scenarios as "Wrong" or "Very wrong" (see table 10). For *Online* items, both genders showed a higher frequency of reporting "Wrong" or "Very Wrong" for sharing sexual photos of a girlfriend, as compared to sharing sexual photos of a stranger.

Table 10

Reported Frequencies for Wrong and Very Wrong Scenarios By Gender

Scenarios	Percentage Reporting Wrong or Very Wrong	
	Males	*Females*
1. Making sexual gestures or remarks to others.	20.8%	33.1%
2. Making sexual advances on someone who is drunk.	42.9%	48.7%
3. Teasing others about their bodies or clothing.	40.9%	48.7%
4. Discussing other students' sexual activity.	22.7%	37.0%
5. Listening to music lyrics that degrade women.	13.6%	25.3%
6. Gossiping and spreading rumors about others.	36.4%	43.5%
7. Telling jokes that make fun of women and girls.	27.9%	39.0%
8. Using the internet to degrade or harass other students with words or pictures.	45.5%	48.7%
9. Sharing sexual photos of his girlfriend.	45.5%	49.4%
10. Sharing sexual photos of a girl you don't know.	41.6%	46.8%
11. Pressuring his girlfriend to send sexual pictures.	48.7%	51.3%
12. Pressuring a female acquaintance to send sexual pictures.	48.7%	51.3%

On the other hand, the frequency of both genders who reported "Likely" or "Very Likely" to intervene appear to be lower than the frequency of those reporting "Wrong" and "Very Wrong" on the Wrongfulness scale (see table 11). While higher percentages of females than males still reported willingness to take action, the disparity is less apparent in the 12 scenarios (such as an equal fraction of males and females who reported willingness to

intervene for *"making sexual gestures or remarks to others"*).

Table 11

Reported Frequencies for Likely and Very Likely to Take Action in Scenarios By Gender

Scenarios	Percentage Reporting Likely or Very Likely	
	Males	*Females*
1. Making sexual gestures or remarks to others.	7.1%	7.1%
2. Making sexual advances on someone who is drunk.	27.9%	38.3%
3. Teasing others about their bodies or clothing.	25.3%	40.3%
4. Discussing other students' sexual activity.	8.4%	14.3%
5. Listening to music lyrics that degrade women.	8.4%	13.0%
6. Gossiping and spreading rumors about others.	14.9%	23.4%
7. Telling jokes that make fun of women and girls.	14.3%	27.3%
8. Using the internet to degrade or harass other students with words or pictures.	29.9%	31.8%
9. Sharing sexual photos of his girlfriend.	25.3%	33.1%
10. Sharing sexual photos of a girl you don't know.	23.4%	33.8%
11. Pressuring his girlfriend to send sexual pictures.	24.7%	32.5%
12. Pressuring a female acquaintance to send sexual pictures.	26.0%	36.4%

Grade and Age Differences in Perceptions of Wrongfulness & Willingness to Intervene

A significant group difference was found between grade 11 and 12 students for only the *Taking Action-Online* subscale [$F_{(1, 152)}= 5.08$, $p < .05$], and no significant differences were discovered for the remaining three scales. When comparing overall means, it was the grade 11 students who reported greater willingness to take action for scenarios occurring online, as compared to the grade 12 students (see table 12). However, effect sizes indicated a low to moderate degree of practical significance ($\eta^2 = .03$)

Table 12

Overall Reported Means as Function of Grade (Bystander Intervention Survey)

Scale	Grade 11	Grade 12
Wrongfulness – Offline	3.82(.58)	3.69(.86)
Wrongfulness – Online	4.69(.58)	4.48(.78)
Taking Action – Offline	3.00(.76)	2.79(.76)
Taking Action – Online	3.74(1.13)	3.26(1.35)

Note: Standard Deviations appear in parentheses beside means.

Correlations Between Perceived Wrongfulness & Willingness To Take Action

A 2-tailed Pearson correlation between the *Wrongfulness-Offline* subscale and the *Taking Action-Offline* subscale revealed a significant positive correlation ($r = .41$, $p< .01$). In addition, the *Wrongfulness-Online* and *Taking Action-Online* subscales were found to have a significant positive correlation ($r = .28$, $p< .01$).

Chapter 5: Discussion

The present study examines the current attitudes of high school students through various written scenarios depicting potential sexual violence. Twelve scenarios were selected to portray both online and more traditional offline forms of behaviours, to which students reported perceptions of wrongfulness and willingness to intervene. Although the original measure by Katz and colleagues (2011) was used with American high school students, the present modified survey was conducted with high school students in southwestern Ontario. Although the study is mostly focused on exploring findings pertaining to gender and grade, the results also provided insights into the role of anonymity and how it may affect bystander behaviour online.

Overall Trends

The scenarios were rated on a 5-point Likert scale measuring both wrongfulness and willingness to intervene in the scenario. Reported frequencies showed that although an overwhelming percentage of students rated almost all 12 scenarios as "Wrong" or "Very Wrong", the subsequent ratings for *Taking Action* for these same scenarios was low. For example, 10 out of 12 scenarios received at least 60% rate of "Wrong or "Very Wrong", whereas only four out of 12 scenarios had 60% of participants rating "Likely" or "Very Likely" to take action. This trend seems to suggest that while all the scenarios were generally perceived as inappropriate, the overall willingness to take action was weak in comparison, even though some small significant correlations were found between *Wrongfulness* and *Taking Action* subscales. These findings are consistent with the idea that attitudes and beliefs alone do not necessarily translate into behaviour (Ajzen, 1991).

Gender Group Differences

Girls reported significantly higher perceptions of wrongfulness and willingness to intervene than boys, across all 12 scenarios. These findings seem to fall in line with the current literature on men's lack of involvement, which outline barriers such as perceiving violence prevention as a women's issue and feeling pressured by the risk of social ridicule (Berkowitz, 2004; Crooks, Goodall, Hughes, Jaffe, & Baker, 2007). Another theme in the current literature describes masculine culture as not wanting to being perceived as feminine or weak, which is shown to translate into reinforcing misogynistic and sexually aggressive attitudes (e.g. Barnes, & Acker, 1995; Kimmel, 2008). If significant gender disparities are already apparent in adolescent populations, this finding might indicate how socialization and the media can send powerful messages about gender roles and violence to youth. Therefore, these aspects of male culture and misogynistic attitudes might be present in males as young as adolescents.

When looking at group differences for the individual scenarios, it appears that there is no gender difference for the item *"Gossiping and spreading rumors about others."* Even though the item was generally rated as wrong, it does not necessarily entail sexual violence. Similarly for the *Taking Action* scales, there was also no gender group difference for *"Making sexual gestures or remarks to others"*, which reflects the normalized peer sexual harassment that has been shown to increase in adolescence (Perry & Pauletti, 2011). There was also no difference between boys and girls for willingness to intervene on *"Using the internet to degrade or harass other students with words or pictures"*, and *"Sharing sexual photos of his girlfriend"*.

Both genders shared the same lowest-ranking scenarios for both wrongfulness and

willingness to take action: *"Making sexual gestures or remarks to others"*, *"Discussing other students' sexual activities"*, and *"Listening to musical lyrics that degrade women"*. These three scenarios share commonalities, such that they appear to depict normalized gossiping behaviours and popular media in society. For example, research shows that American pop music has become increasingly explicit with references to sex over recent decades (Christenson, Roberts, Strange, &Wild, 2004). Another observation is that while both sharing *and* pressuring of sexual photos were in the top three most wrong scenarios, only "*Pressuring for sexual photos"* made it into the top three most willing to intervene. It might be perceived that once a sexual photo has been leaked into the public, students perceive less personal responsibility or ability to help contain the situation. This is consistent with the literature that suggests some adolescents do not believe online abuse can be prevented (Parris et al., 2012). On the other hand, it may be seen as more effective to intervene during the event of pressuring to provide photos, to prevent these private photos to become available in the first place. One of the circumstances under which bystanders feel more responsible to engage, is that the individual must believe that he or she has the skills to effectively intervene (Ajzen, 1991). Despite the clear results reporting that nonconsensual sharing of sexual photos is wrong, the findings suggest that adolescents may still lack the knowledge and skills to intervene.

Grade Differences

When comparing grades, the only significant finding was that grade 11 students reported greater willingness to intervene in situations occurring online. Again, this finding reflects back to the current challenges in the literature in terms of unclear definitions of online and offline abuse (Law et al., 2012). The reported means for *Wrongfulness* subscales

revealed that both grades rated *Online* scenarios more wrong than *Offline* scenarios. These results suggest that although both grades rated *Online* scenarios as equally wrong, the older grade may experience more barriers to translating this attitude into willingness to take action. It is difficult to discern how grade plays a specific factor in this result, although the author may offer some hypotheses. The pressure of university applications and graduation may have diminished helping behaviours for grade 12 students, especially since the time of data collection was near post-secondary application deadlines. Another explanation could be that older adolescents have accumulated greater acceptance of cyber abuse, which has been shown in the literature to be increasing in prominence over time (Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004). It may seem trivial to older and more experienced students to even attempt intervention at all, considering how normal these inappropriate behaviours seems to be in adolescent culture. Again, this is consistent with research that indicates some adolescents have adopted accepting attitudes toward prevalent online abuse and believe that it cannot be prevented (Parris et al., 2012). Thus, the reluctant impression of the grade 12 students may reflect the lack of feeling enough power, competence, or responsibility when faced with an unjust situation online.

Comparing Online to Offline Scenarios

When comparing overall reported mean scores, both genders scored higher on *Wrongfulness* measures for *Online* scenarios. Many of the *Online* items reflected scenarios of invaded private photos, which was not a consistent theme for the traditional *Offline* scenarios. Thus, it is possible that the highly perceived wrongfulness of *Online* scenarios was biased in favour of attitudes toward invaded privacy. Both genders also scored higher on the *Taking Action* measures for *Online* scenarios, indicating greater willingness to intervene

on online forms of abuse versus traditional offline situations. Because of the anonymous nature of online intervention, recent apps and crime tip websites may steer a new direction for crime reporting. These findings may indicate that turning toward discreet online forms of intervention may reduce feelings of social disapproval that prevent adolescent bystanders from engaging. For example, researchers have found that enforcement personnel born in Generation X were more willing to support an electronic reporting system than Baby Boomers (Knapik, 2004). It may be valuable for future efforts to consider the benefits of including the use of the Internet as part of violence prevention and intervention.

The Role of Anonymity in Online Scenarios

Due to the anonymous nature of Internet use, researchers agree that it is difficult to conduct controlled research on cyber behaviour (Drogin & Young, 2008). Findings from the present study seem to suggest a difference between soliciting sexual pictures from intimate partners, and those of less-familiar female acquaintances. When examining overall frequencies for attitudes toward *"Sharing sexual photos of his girlfriend"*, an overwhelming 94.8% of all students rated the item as "Wrong" or "Very Wrong". In comparison, only 88.3% of students rated the same degree of wrongfulness for "*Sharing sexual photos of a girl you don't know*". However when comparing willingness to intervene for these two different scenarios, the total scores were almost equal. Although the general consensus was that it is *more* wrong to spread sexual photos of someone's girlfriend, it did not subsequently translate into reporting more willingness to take action in this situation.

In addition to the scenarios about sharing sexual photos, there were two follow up scenarios about pressuring a girlfriend or female acquaintance for these photos. More students reported willingness to intervene when a female acquaintance was being pressured

to send sexual photos, versus when a girlfriend was being pressured. *"Pressuring a female acquaintance to send sexual pictures"* was in the top three scenarios for most willing to take action for both genders, whereas pressuring a girlfriend was not. All of these cases suggest that students seem more hesitant in becoming involved in other's personal relationships, and possibly feeling the lack of personal responsibility as described in the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991). A similar barrier to intervention regarding fear of social ridicule was also indicated in masculinity research (Crooks et al., 2007). A good example of this mindset include some remarks left in the comment section of the survey: "I am definitely a bystander when it comes to these sorts of private affairs", "Not likely to take action because more often than not, the issue is none of my business and it would be an unwelcomed obtrusion/intrusion into another person's personal life". These comments further emphasize the social norm that other people's private lives and personal relationships are perceived to be off-limits, and may be seen as an unwelcomed intrusion if one tried to intervene.

Limitations

Although this study would contribute to the developing knowledge of violence prevention in schools, it is not without its limitations. Some challenges are associated with those generally found with self-report and survey research. However, limitations unique to the study include the demographics of the primarily Caucasian students in the study's schools from southwestern Ontario. Thus, the findings might not be generalizable to other cultural backgrounds or across Canada. Findings may also reflect characteristics unique to the schools or neighborhood. One possible idiosyncrasy is that this region of schools has implemented a violence prevention program into the curriculum, covering topics such as healthy relationships. For this reason, the attitudes of these students may not reflect a general

adolescent population that has not been exposed to the special curriculum.

The specific logistics regarding data collection may have its own limitations as well. When conducting the actual study, the researchers noticed that classroom gender ratios varied depending on the subject, such as the gender segregated health and physical education classes. It is important to consider how environmental factors of sitting in a co-ed class versus a segregated class may impact students' attitudes to a survey that reflects gender norms. The data was also collected between the months of November and December of 2014, due to the research timeline. This time period raised some concerns regarding a pre-holiday mindset that may be present in the students, as well as university and college application deadlines for graduating students. Regardless, there usually exists a risk of events occurring around the time of the data collection that may influence students' responses, although such occurrences lie beyond the researcher's control.

The survey itself may pose some limitations to the overall study. The word "Uncertain" being used as the scale midpoint could potentially be interpreted as confusing. As both teachers and students were aware that the research involved the topic of sexual violence, this may have presented a social desirability effect if students felt expected to rate the scenarios as wrong. In addition, the unequal ratio of online to offline scenarios may not accurately represent all aspects of sexual violence, whether it is the degree of severity or form of activity. In lieu of recent events in the media, the current selection of online scenarios focused on online privacy issues. The author recognizes that the limitations of a short survey do not fully explore the wide range of behaviours that are witnessed on the Internet.

In addition, the purpose of the current research is different from the original study by

Katz and colleagues (2011). While the original survey was used to measure longitudinal attitude change in response to an implemented MVP program, the present study measured current beliefs and attitudes amongst students. Therefore, this study was not intended to critique or evaluate any programs but rather provide insight on the current status and beliefs of Ontario high school students.

Finally, the proposed study uses scales that indicate students' intentions or likelihood of engaging in intervening behaviours. Therefore, it is important to clarify that although these beliefs and attitudes are necessary to eventually impact behaviour (e.g. Ajzen & Cote, 2008), the present study does not measure actual prosocial behaviours that students are engaged in. In other words, a high score for willingness to take action does not directly translate into an actualized behaviour. Such a study would require more extensive resources in the future. Regardless of the fact, the intention to intervene is still an important and necessary step towards the final goal of implementing action (Ajzen, 1991).

Implications of Research

The findings of this research may contribute to increasing our understanding of how sexual assault prevention can be implemented earlier in the life span. In order to make our society a safe place for women and men alike, it is absolutely crucial to focus on the issues of sexual violence in high schools since the majority of current research is only done with college men (Gidycz et al., 2011). With the increasing and ever evolving use of Internet and social media, it is important to also consider these variables as part of violence prevention for youth. The present study hoped to provide educators with greater insight on how to address sexual violence in high school students.

In addition, the results yielded valuable results in regards to gender differences that

suggest how socialization of masculinity and gender roles may be established as early as adolescence. Bystander intervention programs could subsequently be modified to fit the needs and motivations of a younger population for all genders. Findings on the perceptions of the privacy invasion of romantic partners versus strangers reveal additional barriers to what prevents adolescent bystanders from engaging in scenarios. Higher willingness to intervene for online scenarios also may help develop a future discussion about the value of using online reporting systems. The anonymous nature of the Internet has certainly allowed for the development of harassment and abuse (Erdur-Baker, 2010). However, this same identity protection may actually motivate adolescents to report crimes if they fear the social disapproval from getting involved, which is described to be one of the barriers to bystander intervention (Ajzen, 1991). Overall, this research continues to support the important efforts of violence prevention in schools.

Future Research Directions

Future research could examine a wider range of the adolescent ages to explore how attitudes toward sexual violence may change as individuals approach adulthood. For example, a point of interest would be to compare the attitudes of grade nine students who have just entering adolescence, to the grade 12 students who are soon to become adults. Researchers still suggest that addressing sexual violence in adolescence is a crucial step to understanding the cycle of violence (Wolfe, Jaffe, & Crooks, 2006).

As only three schools were used in the current study, the topic of neighbourhoods, cultural variety, and environmental factors becomes a potential issue. Future studies should explore the role of different social economic statuses, and whether adolescents demonstrate different attitudes based on neighbourhoods. Southwestern Ontario is a region that is not as

culturally and ethnically diverse as other major Canadian areas, which is a factor to be considered for future studies. Research has shown significant differences in cultural responses to stressful events, which may be clarified with a more diverse sample (Davis, Greenberger, Charles, Chen, Zhao, Dong, 2012).

Adapting the original measure byKatz and colleagues (2011) provided excellent insight into further improvements for uses of this survey. Future research may consider greater focus on scenarios occurring online, as Internet-related abuse continues to increase in prominence (Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004). Expanding on online scenarios may help further clarify the difficulties of establishing clear definitions between online and offline abuse, which remains a challenge in the field (e.g. Viegas, 2005; Walther, 2007). In addition, some of the original items from Katz and colleagues (2011) survey can be considered vague in the sense that they could occur both online and offline (e.g. *"Making sexual gestures or remarks to others"*). Years ago, these scenarios may have obviously been perceived of as occurring in person, however a recent study has indicated the growing rates of sharing sexual photos and messages over cell phones and other forms of media (Levin, 2013, p.257). Revised future measures can ensure that these scenarios are more specific to describe the method of communication. Combining the current survey with other measures that examine cyber dating abuse and pornography may help identify relationships between multiple forms of online activity.

The current study provided insight into attitude differences between genders, which generally suggested that females tend to be more concerned about the subject matter. A next step could be to examine interactions between the gender of bystander, perpetrator, and victim. For example, current research shows that female adolescents are more likely to

engage in online forms of abuse than males adolescents (Wolak, Mitchell, & Finkelhor, 2007). The present study does not indicate whether female students are more willing to intervene when victims are either male or female, and vice versa. Such a study would require additional resources and a more rigorous evaluation design beyond the scope of the present research.

A few of the students' comments raised concerns over the terminology used in this survey, particularly: *"The word pressuring feels like you're forcing them to do something they don't want to do. It is very hard to have sex with someone without expressing intent to do so."* Another comment asked whether being "bugged" for a kiss constituted as being forced or pressured. It may be of value to clarify the meaning of "pressuring" in this survey. Furthermore, the limits and definitions of what is considered consent is an overarching future direction for research.

If an ultimate goal of this type of research is to prevent future sexual violence, then it would be interesting to explore any potential predictive potential for this survey. For example, this can include comparing survey results of individuals who have self-reported actually engaging in intervention behaviour, to those who have not. The next step in bridging this gap is to further explore the barriers which may prevent an individual from intervening in a situation. A future study that incorporates observational data or focus groups may provide a wider scope of exploration beyond the current quantitative data. Onwuegbuzie & Leech (2004) named mixed methodology as the "gold standard" of research, as each separate data set is complimentary and produces a combination of "micro and macro levels of study". Finally, future research should explore the many factors that contribute to sexual violence

and bystander behaviour, including peer pressure, media violence, pornography, and violence in the home.

Conclusion

The present study examined the current attitudes of adolescents toward varying scenarios of potential sexual violence, including perceptions of wrongfulness and self-reported willingness to intervene. Using a modification of a bystander intervention survey originally created by Katz and colleagues (2011), southwestern Ontario high school students rated their attitudes towards 12 items, including online and offline scenarios.

The findings indicated that females rated all scales significantly higher for wrongfulness and willingness to take action, as compared to their male counterparts. Much of the current literature on masculinity and male involvement indicate that violence prevention is largely perceived as a women's issue, which plays into men's lack of responsibility for sexual violence (Berkowitz, 2004; Shaw, 2001). It is unsettling to see an attitudinal disparity based on gender during adolescence, which brings into to question how socialization and the media might play a role in shaping attitudes at such a young age.

Overall frequencies and reported means also suggest that although sharing a girlfriend's sexual pictures was reported to be more wrong than sharing a stranger's sexual pictures, students still reported less willingness to intervene when the scenario involved a girlfriend as opposed to when it was a female acquaintance. This idea of staying out of people's "private affairs" may still be a contributing barrier to taking action, regardless if it was perceived as unjust. The study has many implications for both future research and prevention effort with adolescents who are engaged in sexual violence or have the opportunity to intervene.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Wrongfulness Scale

WRONGFULNESS SCALE
"How Wrong Do I Believe These To Be?"

Listed below are behaviors I may observe among students during the school day, on my way home from school, at school related events, or at social events with other students. **Please indicate how wrong you believe each of these to be using the scale to the right.**

	How <u>wrong</u> do I believe each of the following actions to be if I observed it by a student I don't know? A student is:	Not Wrong at All	A Little Wrong	Uncertain	Wrong	Very Wrong
1.	… making sexual gestures or remarks to others.					
2.	... making sexual advances on someone who is drunk.					
3.	… teasing others about their bodies or clothing.					
4.	… discussing other students' sexual activity.					
5.	… listening to music lyrics that degrade women.					
6.	… gossiping and spreading rumors about others.					
7.	… telling jokes that make fun of women and girls.					
8.	… using the internet to degrade or harass other students with words or pictures.					
9.	… sharing sexual photos of his girlfriend.					
10.	…sharing sexual photos of a girl you don't know.					
11.	… pressuring his girlfriend to send sexual pictures.					
12.	… pressuring a female acquaintance to send sexual pictures.					

Appendix B: Taking Action Scale

TAKING ACTION SCALE
How Likely Am I To Take Action?

Listed below are student behaviors that I may observe during the school day, on my way home from school, at a school related event, or at a socual event with other students. ***Please indicate how likely you are to*** <u>***do something***</u> ***to stop the behaviors. Use the scale to the right of the questions.***

	When I observe the following, how <u>likely am I to do something</u> to try and stop the behaviors or situations if... *A student is:*	Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Uncertain	Likely	Very Likely
1.	… making sexual gestures or remarks to others.					
2.	... making sexual advances on someone who is drunk.					
3.	… teasing others about their bodies or clothing.					
4.	… discussing other students' sexual activity.					
5.	… listening to music lyrics that degrade women.					
6.	… gossiping and spreading rumors about others.					
7.	… telling jokes that make fun of women and girls.					
8.	… using the internet to degrade or harass other students with words or pictures.					
9.	… sharing sexual photos of his girlfriend.					
10.	…sharing sexual photos of a girl you don't know.					
11.	… pressuring his girlfriend to send sexual pictures.					
12.	… pressuring a female acquaintance to send sexual pictures.					

Appendix C: Teacher Scripting for Information and Consent Form Distribution

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Version: (09/13/2014)

Appendix C

Recruiting script for information/consent form distribution

Name of Study: Adolescents' Perceptions of Violence & Cyberbullying: An Analysis of High School Students' Experiences.

Investigators:

Peter Jaffe, Ph.D., C. Psych – Western University

Jessica Sciaraffa, M.A. (candidate) - Western University

Gloria Zhang, M.A. (candidate) - Western University

Recruitment Script

As students from [school name], you are being asked to complete a short survey examining cyber bullying, media, and sexual violence. The whole study will take approximately 35 minutes to complete. You will be participating amongst your peers within our classroom setting. There will be questions about your understanding of violence, cyber abuse, experiences, and media. In addition, you'll be asked about your perceptions of wrongfulness and likelihood of you and others intervening in situations involving potential sexual violence. If you choose not to participate at any point during the study, you will be asked to complete individual homework at your desk without any penalty.

In order to participate, you are required to read the Information Letters and provide signed copies of both sets of Consent Forms. The information you give the researchers is confidential, and this confidentiality will be protected to the extent permitted by law. If you tell one of the researchers about a child being hurt (please note that a child refers to an individual under 18 years of age), or that you intend to hurt yourself or someone else, or that you have perpetrated or experienced violence, the researchers are required to contact the proper authorities. Identifiable, verbal disclosures of dating abuse perpetration and victimization will be directly reported by the researchers to the appropriate authorities.

Your responses will not be linked back to your name. Your name on your consent form will be kept separate from the other information you provide. At the end of the program the researcher will shred any papers with your name on it. The information collected during this research may be used for educational purposes or become part of a published scientific report. This information will only be reported in terms of group findings. NO information will be reported that would allow anyone to be identified individually.

It is possible you might feel uncomfortable or embarrassed about answering personal questions in the survey. You will not be required to answer any question that makes you uncomfortable. The researchers will provide you with information on cyberbullying and violence at the end of the study. If you experience distress please talk to the researchers. They will provide you with information on community supports and/or supports within the school that you can access.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Even if your parent has signed the consent form allowing you to participate, your participation in the study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions, or withdraw from the study at any time with no effect on your academic status.

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Cyberbullying is a relatively new phenomenon and is increasing with technological advancements, for this reason it is a topic that is interesting to many teens. Sexual violence is also seen in high schools. In addition, this research may provide significant social and scientific benefits through the knowledge that will be gained.

If you have any questions about the conduct of this study or your rights as a research participant you may contact the Office of Research Ethics, Western University. Further contact information is provided on your Information Letter.

Distribute the following (4 forms should be given to each student)

1. **Parental Information Letter**
2. **Youth Information Letter**
3. **Parental Consent Form**
4. **Youth Assent Form**

*Please ensure that each student has received 1 copy of each letter. As well, please remind them that their consent/assent forms need to be brought back signed in order to participate.

Thank you for your participation and help! ☺

Appendix D: Youth Information Letter and Consent Form

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Version: (09/13/2014)

Youth Information Letter

Name of Study: Adolescents' Perceptions of Violence & Cyber bullying: An Analysis of High School Students` Experiences.

Investigators:

Peter Jaffe, Ph.D., C. Psych – Western University

Jessica Sciaraffa , M.A. (candidate) - Western University

Gloria Zhang, M.A. (candidate) - Western University

As a student in [school name], you are invited to participate in a research project being conducted with the [school board name]. We are seeking your agreement to participate in a research study, as described below. Students from your school in grades 10, 11 and 12 will be asked to participate in this study, developed by Western University.

Study Procedures

We are asking students to fill out surveys, which will take approximately 35 minutes to complete. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to participate in the study during regular school hours. Students wishing not to participate will have the opportunity to complete individual homework at their desks and will also miss 35 minutes of class time. You will be asked to complete a short survey on your use of media and pornography, attitudes towards dating violence, and experiences and involvement in dating violence and cyber-bullying. In addition, you'll be asked about your perceptions of wrongfulness and likelihood of you and others intervening in situations involving dating violence. Students who choose to discontinue their participation at any point during the study will also have the opportunity to complete individual homework at their desks. You will not be penalized for withdrawing at any time or for not participating in the study.

Privacy and Confidentiality

The information you give us is confidential, and this confidentiality will be protected to the extent permitted by law. If you tell one of the researchers about a child being hurt (please note that a child refers to an individual under 18 years of age), that you intend to hurt yourself or someone else, or that you have perpetrated or experienced abuse or violence we are required to contact the proper authorities. If you tell this information to teachers or any other school personnel, they too will be required to report it. Identifiable, verbal disclosures of dating abuse perpetration and victimization will be directly reported by the researchers to the appropriate authorities.

Your responses will not be linked back to your name. Your name on your consent form will be kept separate from the other information you provide. At the end of the program we will shred any papers with your name on it. The information collected during this research may be used for educational purposes or become part of a published scientific report. This information will only be reported in terms of group findings. NO information will be reported that would allow anyone

to be identified individually.

Risks

It is possible you might feel uncomfortable or embarrassed about answering personal questions about your experiences with violence and cyber bullying and your use of various forms of media. You will not be required to answer any question that makes you uncomfortable. The researchers will provide you with information on cyber bullying and violence at the end of the study. If you experience distress or have any questions or concerns please talk to the researchers. They will provide you with information on community supports and/or supports within the school that you can access.

Voluntary Participation

Participation in this study is voluntary. Even if your parent has signed the consent form allowing you to participate, your participation in the study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions, or withdraw from the study at any time with no effect on your academic status.

Potential Benefits Associated with Participation

Cyber bullying is a relatively new phenomenon and is increasing with technological advancements, for this reason it is a topic that is interesting to many teens. In addition, sexual violence and harassment is something that high school students experience. Please note that while ALL genders may be victims of bullying and dating violence, this study is focused on the prevalent issue of violence against girls and the role of the media including pornography. In addition, this research may provide significant social and scientific benefits through the knowledge that will be gained about the phenomenon of cyber bullying.

This letter is yours to keep. Please sign the attached assent form, and return it and the parental consent form to your teacher.

Questions
If you have any questions about the conduct of this study or your rights as a research participant you may contact the Office of Research Ethics, Western University.

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Youth Consent Form

Study: Adolescents' Perceptions of Violence & Cyber bullying: An Analysis of High School Students` Experiences.

I have read the letter of information, have had the nature of the study explained to me and I agree to participate in the study. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

_____ _____

Your name (please print)   * Signature

_____

Date

Principal Investigator:

Peter G. Jaffe, Ph.D., C. Psych.

Western University

Appendix E: Parent Information Letter and Consent Form

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Parent Information Letter

Name of Study: Adolescents' Perceptions of Violence & Cyber bullying: An Analysis of High School Students` Experiences.

Investigators:

Peter Jaffe, Ph.D., C. Psych – Western University

Jessica Sciaraffa, M.A. (candidate) - Western University

Gloria Zhang, M.A. (candidate) - Western University

As a parent of a student attending [school name], your son/daughter is invited to participate in a research project being conducted with the [school board name]. We are seeking your consent and that of your son/daughter to participate in a research study, as described below, which is a collaborative effort of [school board name] and Western University. Approximately 100 participants will take part in this study.

Procedures

We are asking students in your son/daughter's class to complete a short survey, which will take approximately 35 minutes in total. Students will be asked to participate in the study during regular school hours, and as such will miss 35 minutes of regular class time. Students who are not participating in the study will have the opportunity to complete individual homework in the school library for the duration of the study and will also miss 35 minutes of class time. If you agree that your son/daughter may participate, s/he will complete the survey within a classroom setting. The survey will ask questions about their use of media, as well as their knowledge of and experiences with violence and cyber bullying. In addition, they will be asked about their perceptions of wrongfulness and likelihood of intervening in situations involving violence Students may choose not to participate or discontinue their participation at any point during the study without penalization and will be asked to complete individual work in the school library.

Privacy and Confidentiality

The information your son/daughter gives us is confidential, and this confidentiality will be protected to the extent permitted by law. If your child is to reveal to one of the researchers information about a child being hurt (please note that a child refers to an individual under 18 years of age), that he or she intends to hurt him/herself or someone else, or that he/she has perpetrated or experienced abuse or violence, the researchers will, however, be required to contact the proper authorities. If your child discloses this information to his/her teachers or any other school personnel, they too will be required to report it. Identifiable, verbal disclosures of dating abuse perpetration and victimization will be directly reported by the researchers to the appropriate authorities.

Your son's/daughter's name or information which could identify him/her will not be used in any publications or presentation of the study results. Only the investigators and their research assistants will have access to this information. At the end of the project we will shred all papers with your son's/daughter's name on it and destroy informal notes.

The information collected during this research may be used for educational purposes or become part of a published scientific report. This information, however, will ONLY be reported in terms

of group findings. NO information will be reported that would allow anybody to be identified individually.

Risks

It is possible that your child might feel uncomfortable or embarrassed about answering personal questions about their experiences with violence and cyber bullying and their use of various forms of media. He or she will not be required to answer any questions that make him/her uncomfortable. The researchers will provide students with information on cyber bullying and violence at the end of the study. Students who experience distress or have any questions or concerns will be encouraged to speak to the researchers. Researchers will provide students with information on community supports and/or supports within the school that he/she can access.

Voluntary Participation

Participation in the study is voluntary. He or she will not be required to answer any question that makes him/her uncomfortable. You or your son/daughter may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions, or withdraw from the study at any time with no effect on his/ her grades or school involvement.

Potential Benefits Associated with Participation

Cyber bullying is a relatively new phenomenon and is increasing with technological advancements, for this reason it is a topic that is interesting to many teens.
In addition, this research may provide significant social and scientific benefits through the knowledge that will be gained about the phenomenon of cyber bullying.

This letter is yours to keep. Please complete the attached consent and assent forms and give them to your son/daughter to return to his or her teacher.

Questions

If you have any questions about the conduct of this study or your son's/daughter's rights as a research participant you may contact the Office of Research Ethics, Western University.

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Parental Consent Form

Study: Adolescents' Perceptions of Violence & Cyber bullying: An Analysis of High School Students` Experiences.

I have read the letter of information, have had the nature of the study explained to me and I agree that my son/daughter may participate in the study. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

_____   _____
Your Name (please print)   Full name of student (please print)

_____   _____
* Signature of parent or guardian   Date

Principal Investigators:
Peter G. Jaffe, Ph.D., C. Psych.
Western University

Curriculum Vitae

Name	Gloria Zhang

Post-secondary Education and Degrees

M.A. Counselling Psychology (Candidate) 2013-2015
Western University
London, Ontario, Canada

Hon. B.Sc. with Distinction, Psychology 2009- 2010
University of Toronto
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Related Work Experience

Master's Thesis (2013 – 2015)
Western University *(London, ON)*
> • Adolescent Bystander Perceptions of Sexual Violence Scenarios *(In progress)*

Research Assistant (2011 – 2013)
Hospital For Sick Children
> • Research on threat perception in relation to CBT using data from EEG results of anxious children
> • Published study on CBT with anxious children (see Publications below)

Research Assistant (2012 – 2013)
Aging Lab, University of Toronto
> • Administered studies and questionnaires using both computer software and interview methods
> • Recruitment of participants and questionnaire scoring

Research Assistant (2012 – 2013)
University of Toronto
> • Worked in team to code and analyze of qualitative data from interview study on racial stereotype perception
> • Recruited and transcribed interviews for 31 participants

Counselling Intern & Group Facilitator
Merrymount Family Support & Crisis Centre
London, ON
2014 – Present

Learning Skills Counsellor Intern
Learning Skills Services, Western University

London, ON
2014 – Present

Student Counsellor
CMHA Waitlist Clinic
London, ON
2013 – 2014

Support Line Worker & Outreach Facilitator
Ontario LGBT YouthLine
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2012 – 2014

Publications:
Manassis, K., Hum, K.M., Lee, T.C., Zhang, G., & Lewis, M.D. (2013). Threat perception predicts cognitive behavioral therapy outcomes in anxious children. *Open Journal of Psychiatry, (3),* 1-8.