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ATTITUDES TOWARD CRIME:
A STUDY ON THE TECH EFFECT

By

ANNA IVANOVA GROZDANOV

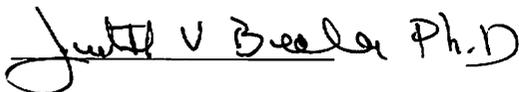
A Thesis Submitted to The Honors College
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ABSTRACT The goal of these two studies was to examine the relationship between technological familiarity/Crime TV Shows/News and myths about rape or distorted schemas about trials involving rape and to then examine the effects of evidence presence and stereotypicality on different rape scenarios. Participants completed an online questionnaire covering technology and media information, as well as rape questionnaires including the Rape Stereotype survey, the Rape Trial Schemas survey, the Bumby Scale, and the Rape Supportive Attitude Scale. Participants also read a series of rape case scenarios and answered questions regarding each one. The results of the first study indicated that there does appear to be some relationship between Crime TV shows and beliefs about rape and rape trials, however the relationships are not consistent. There was also evidence of positive correlations between familiarity with technology and beliefs about the importance of evidence. However, the results were not consistent overall. The second part of the study revealed that the stereotypicality of the scenario appeared to have the strongest effect on attitudes about the scenario, and that physical evidence did not seem to play an important role in individual's attitudes towards the scenarios. In terms of future directions, more subjects and the use of regression would provide more useful results.

INTRODUCTION Technology has become an important factor in the court of law and affects everyone involved in the justice system both directly and indirectly. One technological issue that has been raised concerning the court of law is the CSI (crime scene investigation) effect. There have been multiple definitions assigned to the term "CSI effect". However, it most commonly refers to the allegation that jurors who watch television programs like CSI want

more forensic evidence in case trials, and are more likely to acquit defendants if they believe there is not enough forensic evidence given (Shelton, Kim & Barak, 2009). Real crime scene investigators agree that these television shows have given audiences inaccurate information about what really happens in crime labs (Willing, 2004). This is problematic because these shows could make people form certain ideas about forensic evidence and its importance. If the forensic evidence from a real trial doesn't fit into the idea that these television shows have created for their audiences, jurors who watch these shows would be more likely to question it. However, there has been little empirical evidence to prove that the CSI effect is what is causing this need for more forensic evidence. Recent studies have found interesting empirical evidence that shows that there might be more to the story than we think.

In one particular study (Podlas, 2005), researchers wanted to see what kind of impact the CSI effect had on jurors. They wanted to investigate whether CSI viewers would be more likely to give "not guilty" verdicts based on CSI-oriented reasons versus reasons not associated with the show. The results found that frequent viewers were no more influenced by the CSI factors than non-frequent viewers. There was no significant difference between the two groups and their reasoning for giving a non-guilty verdict (Podlas, 2005). This study showed that frequent viewers of CSI shows were either not influenced by the CSI effect, or they were influenced by it as much as non-frequent viewers. The study also yielded interesting results pertaining to rape or sexual assault cases. Participants (regardless of whether they watch CSI or not) stated that they would find the defendant not guilty if there was no scientific evidence included in the trial. Even if the victim were to testify in court, they would still be more likely to find the defendant not guilty if there was no proof of scientific evidence (Podlas, 2005). This is problematic

because many rape cases are not based on the issue of scientific evidence but rather on the issue of consent. Overall, the study showed that there was no visible CSI effect on jurors' reasoning.

So if there is no CSI effect, what is affecting the juror's perception of scientific evidence?

Shelton et al. (2007) came up with the theory that if there is a media effect on juror expectations, it is indirect and part of a larger picture. They believed that instead of a CSI effect, there is what they termed a "tech effect." This tech effect represents a change in culture regarding the use of technology (Shelton, Barak & Kim, 2007). Since technology has become so prevalent in many different cultures, it could be the cause of these effects on the public.

In a follow up study (Shelton, Kim & Barak, 2009), researchers wanted to explore the suggestion of the tech effect. In this study, researchers wanted to examine the tech effect, the CSI effect, and the general effect of the media on juror expectations. They wanted to see whether these effects, either alone or a combination of them, would have an effect on the jurors expectations. The results showed that participants' expectations for forensic evidence are very high and have almost doubled since the previous study was done. This study also confirmed that these higher expectations are not related to watching CSI shows. Instead, these expectations come from the tech effect, which includes the familiarity and awareness of technology (Shelton, Kim & Barak, 2009). This awareness comes from the media in general. CSI programs are a part of this media, but CSI programs alone do not have a significant effect on juror expectation.

It is obvious that higher juror expectation is the effect, but we must determine what the cause of this is. We believe that the reason for this increase in scientific evidence is due to juror

perception, specifically cognitive schemas. A schema is defined as a cluster of facts, information, and experiences that organize how a person perceives and remembers the world around them (Ramsland, 2013). "Schemas are influenced by a person's prejudices, belief systems, basic ways of thinking and narrative plots" (Ramsland, 2013, pp 2). People tend to make associations from their past experiences. The more they experience something, the more they believe it to be true, regardless of its true validity. People create "scripts" of certain situations they experience frequently, which in turn make them attend to only certain aspects of those situations. In an experiment by Victoria Holst and Kathy Pezdek (1992), they questioned participants on popular beliefs about common crime scenarios. They gave participants a script depicting a common bank robbery (masked man, has gun, demands money, escapes). Then they exposed participants to a mock trial of a similar bank robbery. Only in this case some key elements were missing (robber did not use gun or did not take money). The participants were then asked to describe the trial, and they ended up "remembering" things that did not happen. This proved that prior ideas and beliefs affect the participants' memory when attempting to recall what really happened. They expect something to happen and rely on their scripts to fill in the gaps in their memory (Ramsland, 2013).

We believe that this is a factor in juror decision-making. Due to all of the exposure to technology, people tend to create schemas about criminal scenarios. By watching crime shows, listening to the news, and being exposed to so much information about the world, people expect to see this same information in court. This is especially accurate in rape cases. People expect to find scientific evidence in rape cases. They always see evidence, such as DNA, in crime shows and have a belief that it is necessary to have scientific evidence in a rape case in order to

prove guilt. However, as stated above, rape case verdicts are more likely to be based on the question of consent. This causes a dilemma in the court system because defendants who are guilty of rape may get acquitted without scientific evidence even if they are guilty.

The aims of this experiment are to find out how much exposure people have to technology, and whether this exposure has created a schema about rape trials in peoples' minds. Once a schema is created it is very hard to remove it. Therefore, if technology is creating schemas in people, we must address this issue and figure out how to prevent these schemas from affecting their verdicts in court. This is extremely important because the justice system is the foundation of our country, and everyone must be treated as equal in the court of law. If these schemas change jurors' perceptions of trials and evidence, then we must make sure that the court system makes necessary changes to accommodate the jurors and remove any biases.

The goals of this experiment (which was broken down into two studies) was to examine the relationship between technology familiarity/Crime TV Shows/News/TV Shows and myths about rape or distorted schemas about trials involving rape and to examine the effects of evidence presence and stereotypicality of different rape scenarios.

We came up with three hypotheses that we wanted to test. Our first hypothesis was that the amount of time spent watching crime TV shows and news TV shows (including how well they pay attention to the shows and to what extent they believe crime TV shows represent reality) would be positively correlated with rape supportive attitudes/beliefs and with distorted beliefs concerning trials involving rape. Our second hypothesis was that technological familiarity (including access to technology and self-rated skill with technology) would be positively

correlated with rape supportive attitudes/beliefs and with expectations regarding the presentation of physical evidence at trials involving rape (as measured by the Rape Trial Schema scale). Our final hypothesis was that individuals would assign more criminality and more certainty of guilt in rape scenarios that combine physical evidence and stereotypicality.

STUDY ONE: Crime/News TV and effect on myths about rape/rape trials

METHOD

PARTICIPANTS

Participants were recruited through the Department of Psychology Subject Pool. This is a pool of subjects brought together from undergraduates at the University of Arizona who are taking introductory courses in Psychology. In their courses, they have the option of gaining course credit by participating in psychological experiments or some alternative (usually a written assignment). This subject pool is typically comprised of freshmen and sophomore students with a slight majority being women. Participants who were under 18 were allowed to participate for educational benefits, but their data was not be collected or used in subsequent analysis. The number of subjects was based on a power analysis which took into account the planned data analytic strategy, with adequate power, Type I error, and Type II error, the number of conditions as well as estimates based on studies with similar construction. 50 college students participating in an introductory psychology course at the University of Arizona participated in this experiment. The mean age of the participants was 19.62 (SD=2.06) years of age. Seventy-two percent of the participants were women, making the majority of the

participants' women. Twenty-five of the fifty participants were freshman in college. The majority of the participants (58%) were Caucasian.

Measures

Bumby Scale and the Rape Supportive Attitude Scale These scales were designed to measure people's stereotypes or distortions on rape. They examine people's outlook on rape and the factors leading to rape. They examine people's attitudes towards rape and whether they feel as though the victim or the offender should be held accountable. These scales would ask questions such as, "If a woman does not resist strongly to sexual advances, she is probably willing to have sex." The participants would then rate their responses on a 1-5 scale, where 1 would represent that they strongly agree and 5 would represent that they strongly disagree.

The Rape Trial Schema scale This scale was created for this particular study and consisted of questions that involve common myths about behaviors of victims and perpetrators in court, activities of the police, the importance of physical evidence vs. testimony, and the frequency of false reports of rape. It would ask questions such as, "how often do you believe cases involving sexual assault proceed to trial? How often do you believe alleged perpetrators of rape are arrested?" Then the participant would rate their response on a 1-5 scale, where 1 would represent that they would never believe that statement and 5 would represent that they believe this all the time.

Technology Use and Media Survey People were asked a variety of questions about their behaviors surrounding the use of technology and about their exposure to different types of media.

PROCEDURE

In Study 1 the participants completed online questionnaires related to their television and media use habits (crime-related and news-related) as well as their responses to standardized measures of attitudes towards rape, which were measured using the Rape Supportive Attitudes scale and the Bumby Rape Scale. Participants also completed the Rape Trial Schema Scale which was created specifically for this experiment.

RESULTS

Correlations between TV, News, Crime, Technology and Rape Supportive Attitudes/Distortions											
	TV	News	NewEng	Crime	CrimeEng	CrimeDist	Tech Access	Tech Capa	Bumby	RSA	RTS
TV Time (Hours per week)											
News Time (Hours per week)	.260										
News Engagement	0.1	.391*									
Crime Time (Hours per week)	.165	.201	.07								
Crime Engagement	-0.22	-.173	-.17	.303*							
Crime Distortions	0.18	-.20	.02	.02	.169						
Tech Access	-.12	-.33*	-.16	-.09	.02	.07					
Tech Capability	-.02	-.09	.35*	-.24	.159	.179					
Bumby Rape Scale	-0.33*	-.015	.23	-.181	.42**	-.21	.04	.36*			
Rape Supportive Attitudes	-0.32*	-.12	.14	-.11	.28	-.19	.03	.18	.79**		
Rape Trial Schema	-0.06	-.19	-.02	-.07	.26	.33*	.22	.32*	.05	-0.05	
Mean (SD)	2.52 (2.82)	2.81 (1.53)	52.9 (28.89)	2.18 (1.16)	74 (27.43)	3.02 (.82)	10.4 (2.30)	4.09 (.64)	3.39 (.46)	3.27 (.42)	2.8 (.40)

*=p<.05, **=p<.01

Alpha Levels for Calculated Scales	
	Alpha
Crime Distortions	.93
Bumby Rape Scale	.93
Rape Supportive Attitudes	.75
Rape Trial Schema	.72
Tech Access	.73
Tech Capable	.93

All calculated scales demonstrated good to very good reliability (alpha ranged from .72 to .93).

We found that there was a significant moderate negative relationship between the amount of time per week in hours that the participant estimated watching TV with the attitudes supportive of rape as measured by the Bumby Rape Scale and the Rape Supportive Attitudes Scale. This means that as the amount of time watching TV increases, the level of rape-belief endorsement decreases. There was also a significant strong positive relationship between the participant's report of attention while watching crime TV shows (CSI, Law and Order, 48 Hours, etc.) and rape supportive attitudes as measured by the Bumby Rape Scale, which means that as the reports of attention to crime TV shows increased, the level of rape-belief endorsement increased. There was also a significant very strong positive correlation between believing that crime television shows were accurate portrayals of real life and distorted schemas about how trials involving sexual assault proceed. This means that as the reports of believing that crime television shows are accurate portrayals of real life increased, the score on the Rape Trial Schema Scale increased.

There was a significant moderate correlation between self-reported access to technology and endorsement of rape supportive beliefs as measured by the Bumby Rape Scale, which means that as self-rated access to technology increased, scores on the Bumby scale increased. There was also a significant moderate correlation between self-reported access to technology and endorsement of distorted beliefs about trials endorsing as measured by the Rape Trial Schema Scale. This meant that as self-rated access to technology increased, scores on the RTS increased.

Interestingly, the pattern of results is not necessarily consistent. For example, engagement in crime television shows does not appear to be significantly correlated with distorted beliefs about rape, nor do distorted schemas about rape trials appear to be related to false beliefs about rape in general. Access to Technology also does not appear to be correlated with Rape Stereotype Attitude Scale, despite correlating with the Bumby scale (which ostensibly measures the same thing). This suggests that we probably need more subject to get a consistent pattern of results.

Also, Access to technology showed a moderate positive correlation (.33-.34) to rankings of the importance of physical evidence in all rape trial examples, except in the case of the stereotypical rape where no physical evidence was presented (where no correlation was found). This might have occurred because it was so obvious that the defendant was guilty, that the lack of evidence was not important. Perhaps participants require physical evidence in cases that are not considered stereotypical because they want physical evidence to help clarify their confusion.

STUDY 2: RAPE CASE SCENARIOS

METHOD

Participants

Participants were recruited through the Department of Psychology Subject Pool. This is a pool of subjects brought together from undergraduates at the University of Arizona who are taking introductory courses in Psychology. In their courses, they have the option of gaining course credit by participating in psychological experiments or some alternative (usually a written assignment). This subject pool is typically comprised of freshmen and sophomore students with a slight majority being women. Participants who were under 18 were allowed to participate for educational benefits, but their data was not be collected or used in subsequent analysis. The number of subjects was based on a power analysis which took into account the planned data analytic strategy, with adequate power, Type I error, and Type II error, the number of conditions as well as estimates based on studies with similar construction. 50 college students participating in an introductory psychology course at the University of Arizona participated in this experiment. The mean age of the participants was 19.62 (SD=2.06) years of age. Seventy-two percent of the participants were women, making the majority of the participants' women. Twenty-five of the fifty participants were freshman in college. The majority of the participants (58%) were Caucasian.

Measures

Crime Rape Scenarios These scenarios were used in this experiment to examine the effects of stereotypicality of the rape and presence/absence of physical evidence on opinions about victims, perpetrators, criminality, and potential guilt.

Stereotype	Non-Stereotype	Physical Evidence Present	Physical Evidence Absent
Gendered names	Gender neutral names	“a rape-kit done; semen was retrieved and kept for use as DNA evidence in court.”	No mention of DNA evidence or a rape kit.
Stranger	Friend		
Force	Pressure		

Procedure

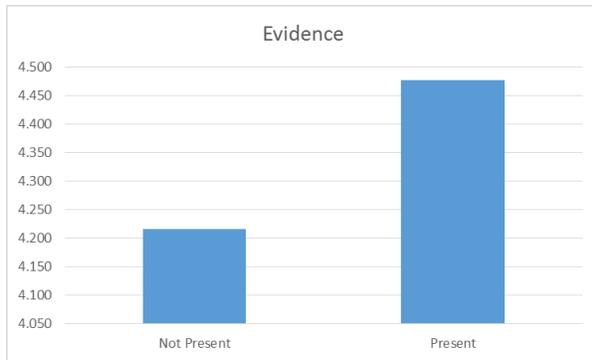
Study 2 was a 2x2 within subjects design using scenarios that varied in terms of being stereotypical or non-stereotypical and having physical evidence present or not. It was an online questionnaire as well. The same participants read the scenarios and responded to questions about the scenario. We had four different scenarios that each participant read and answered questions about. The first scenario was a non-stereotype/non-evidence scenario. In this scenario, we used gender neutral names because it is usually not expected for a woman to rape a man, or a woman to rape a woman, etc., and we wanted the scenario to be as non-stereotypical as possible. In other words, we wanted the scenario to be different than rape scenarios people view in the media. It is also considered a non-stereotypical rape scenario because a friend of the victim attacked the victim. Whereas, in stereotypical rapes, people usually expect the victim to be raped by a stranger. We also clearly stated that the friend pressured the victim into having sex. There was also no mention of DNA evidence or a rape-kit. The second scenario was a stereotypical rape scenario that had no physical evidence. In this

scenario, we used gendered names to make it clear that a man was raping a woman because in most stereotypical cases, a woman is being raped by a man. We also made the attacker a stranger because in most cases, people expect rapists to be strangers. We also stated that the stranger used force in order to attack the victim. In this scenario, there was no mention of DNA evidence or a rape kit. The third scenario was a non-stereotypical rape scenario that involved physical evidence. In this scenario, we clearly stated that a rape-kit had been done, and that semen was retrieved and kept for use as DNA evidence in court. We also stated that the attacker was a friend who used pressure to have sex with the victim, and the names were gender neutral again. The final scenario was a stereotypical rape scenario that included physical evidence. This scenario also made it clear that a rape-kit had been done and that there was DNA evidence. However, this scenario also stated that the attacker was a random stranger that used force, and the names were gendered.

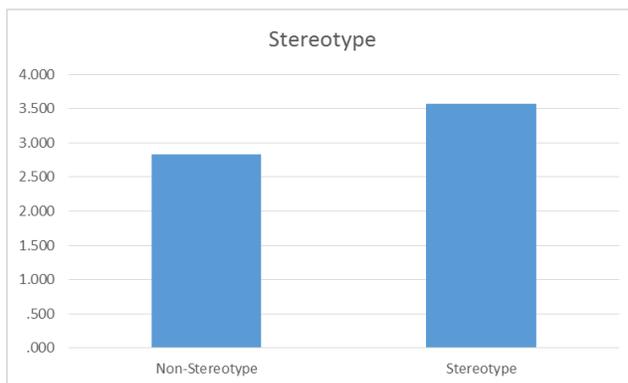
RESULTS

A series of two-way within subjects ANOVAs were conducted to compare the effect of Rape Stereotypes (Stereotype or Non-Stereotype) and Physical Evidence (Present or Not-Present) on attitudes toward the victim, the perpetrator, the rape and aspects of a potential trial.

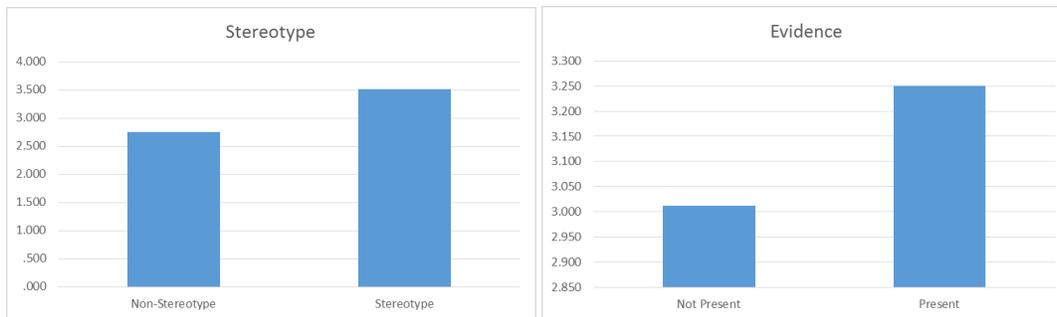
The first analysis revealed a main effect for Evidence on participant ratings of how responsible the potential perpetrator was for the circumstances leading up to the rape, $F(1, 3)=4.58$, $p<.05$, $\eta^2=.10$, such that the potential perpetrator was held more responsible in physical evidence present conditions ($M=4.48$) as opposed to physical evidence not present conditions ($M=4.22$).



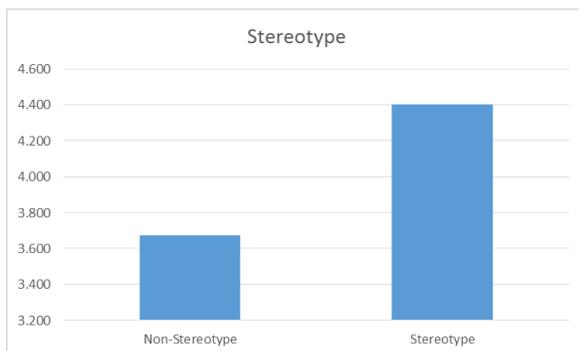
Another analysis revealed a main effect for Stereotype on participant ratings of whether the victim used enough physical resistance to make the perpetrator to stop, $F(1, 24.20)=12.86$, $p=.001$, $\eta^2=.23$, such that the victim's perceived physical resistance was rated as higher in Stereotype ($M=3.57$) versus Non-Stereotype ($M=2.83$) conditions.



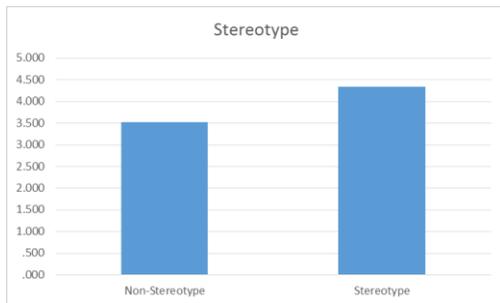
Another analysis revealed main effects for both Stereotype, $F(1, 25.51)=19.00$, $p<.001$, $\eta^2=.31$, and Evidence, $F(1, 2.51)=4.74$, $p<.05$, $\eta^2=.10$ on participant ratings of whether the perpetrator believes he has committed a crime. The results are such that for Stereotype conditions ($M=3.51$) the ratings were higher than for Non-Stereotype Conditions ($M=2.75$), and similar results were found for Physical Evidence Present ($M=3.25$) and Not-Present (3.01) conditions. No interaction effect was evident.



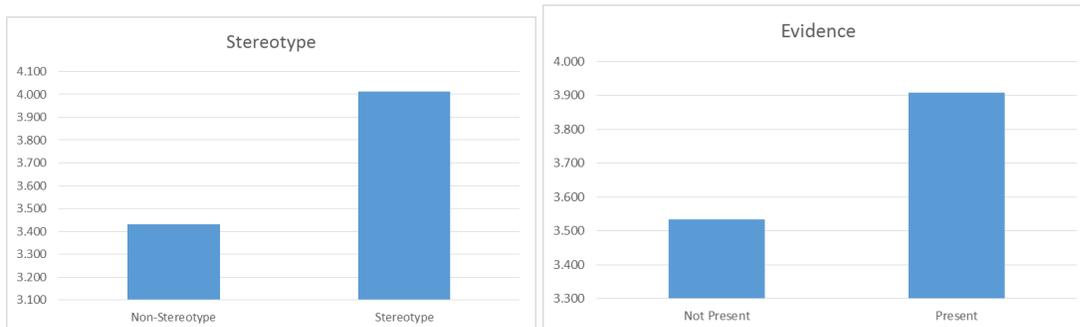
In the case of participant ratings of whether the victim believed a crime had been committed (despite the fact that in all conditions the victim did call the police and had unwanted sex), a main effect was evidenced for Stereotype, $F(1, 24.40)=27.55$, $p<.001$, $\eta^2=.38$, such that participants rated the victim as being more likely to believe a crime had been committed in the Stereotype ($M=4.40$) conditions than in the Non-Stereotype conditions ($M=3.67$).



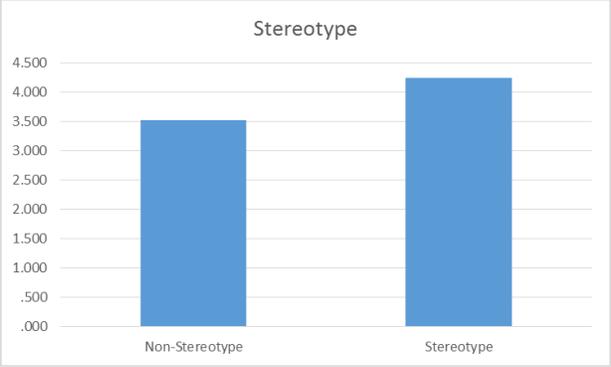
Similarly, in the case of participant ratings on whether the perpetrator should have been arrested based on the scenario, a main effect for Stereotype was found, $F(1, 29.46)=13.05$, $p=.001$, $\eta^2=.23$. Participants were more certain the perpetrator should have been arrested in Stereotype conditions ($M=4.34$) as opposed to Non-Stereotype conditions ($M=3.52$).



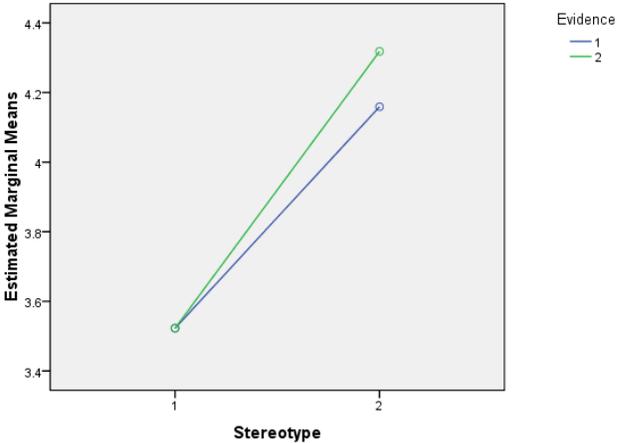
In the case of participant ratings of whether there was evidence of a rape, main effects were found for both Stereotype, $F(1, 14.78)=13.53$, $p=.001$, $\eta^2=.24$ and Evidence, $F(1, 6.12)$, $p<.05$, $\eta^2=.10$, such that participants were more likely to believe that there was evidence in the Stereotype ($M=4.01$) versus the Non-Stereotype ($M=3.43$) conditions and the Evidence Present ($M=3.91$) versus Evidence Not-Present ($M=3.53$) conditions.



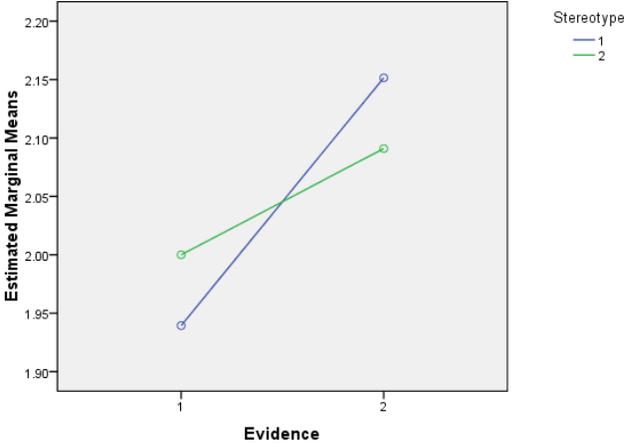
In terms of rating likelihood of conviction, a main effect was found for Stereotype, $F(1, 22.55=10.13)$, $p<.01$, $\eta^2=.19$ when participants rated their own likelihood of convicting the perpetrator. They rated their own likelihood of convicting as higher in Stereotype ($M=4.24$) versus Non-Stereotype ($M=3.52$) conditions, regardless of the presence of evidence.



Estimated Marginal Means of MEASURE_1



Estimated Marginal Means of MEASURE_1



DISCUSSION

The small N and the inability to fully examine the effect of gender on the results make it difficult to draw firm conclusions from these preliminary results. It should be noted that the low number of subjects indicates there may not be enough power to reliably detect effects. Even so, there is evidence of positive correlations between engagement in crime TV shows and the Bumby Rape scale and belief that crime TV shows are representative of reality and distorted beliefs about rape trials. Furthermore, it appears that there is a positive correlation between access to technology and rape supportive attitudes and distorted beliefs about rape trials. However, TV watching in general appears to be negatively correlated with beliefs/attitudes supportive of rape, and the results are not consistent overall. In response to our first hypothesis, there does appear to be some relationship between Crime TV shows and beliefs about rape and rape trials; however the relationships are not consistent. Our second hypothesis was partially supported by the relationship between familiarity with technology and beliefs about the importance of evidence partially supported the hypothesis. Technological capability is positively correlated with myths about rape trials including an overreliance on physical evidence. Our third hypothesis was not well supported. Physical Evidence did not seem to play an important role in individual's attitudes towards the scenarios. The stereotypicality of the scenarios appears to have had the strongest effect on participants' attitudes about the scenario, even in places where the subsequent differences seem irrational (whether the victim is sure a crime occurred). The presence of evidence did not show a strong or consistent effect, additionally there were no interaction effects between the conditions.

In terms of future directions, I require more subjects to detect relationships consistently. I would also like to use regression to better understand the interrelationships and possible interactions. The Rape Trial Schema scale also needs to have its validity further confirmed. Utilizing additional permutations of the scenarios would be useful to clarify the group differences found in this study. Having more participants would allow us to assign different scenarios to different participants instead of having the same participants read all four scenarios. This could cause the results of the crime scenarios to change. Even if crime TV shows are not responsible for attitudes towards rape victims and trials, there is still clearly a need for better public education regarding the reality of rape and trials involving rape.

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