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Rape Acknowledgement in the Context of the #MeToo Movement

By

Brandin Glos

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
through the Department of Psychology
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Arts
at the University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

2019

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Rape Acknowledgement in the Context of the #MeToo Movement

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ABSTRACT

Sexual violence perpetrated by men against women is a pervasive social issue that affects women around the world. Sexual violence has taken place in what has been termed “rape culture,” or a culture in which sexual violence is normalized, minimized, or tacitly condoned. In October 2017, #MeToo gained global attention when numerous women began sharing experiences of male perpetrated sexual violence via social media. The recent attention given to issues of sexual violence has included little discussion about the issues facing women who have not acknowledged, or women who report male perpetrated coercive experiences that fall within the legal definition of rape, but who do not identify a perpetrator’s actions as “rape” or “sexual assault.” The present study recruited women ages 18 years and older who reported an experience meeting the legal definition of rape or sexual assault but who did not identify with those labels. This study used qualitative methods to explore the impact of #MeToo from the perspective of women who have not acknowledged. Themes derived in the present study suggested that #MeToo raised participants’ awareness that unwanted and/or coercive sexual experiences are “not unique” and that survivors are “not alone,” encouraged openness about survivors’ experiences, and validated that these experiences are problematic. Contradictions were also found across participants’ writing. Overall, #MeToo was described as having a positive emotional impact for women participating in this study without necessarily changing their own ambivalence or the external beliefs of those close to them.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The #MeToo Movement gained global attention in October 2017 when women began sharing experiences of male perpetrated sexual violence via social media (Burke, 2017; Garcia, 2017). #MeToo draws upon traditional and social media to facilitate an open discussion about sexual violence (Garcia, 2017). #MeToo also seeks to challenge rape culture, or a culture that tacitly condones sexual violence (Buckwald, Fletcher, & Roth, 1993; Gavey, 2005), by encouraging a new cultural conversation led by the survivors of sexual violence. However, the recent attention given to issues of sexual violence has included little discussion about the issues facing women who report male perpetrated coercive experiences that fall within the legal definition of rape, but who do not identify a perpetrator's actions as "rape" or "sexual assault" (Koss, 1985). This has been termed "rape acknowledgement" in research literature, a phenomenon that represents the pervasiveness of sexual violence in the lives of women (Johnstone, 2013). The present study sought to examine the perspectives of women who have not acknowledged in relation to #MeToo. The #MeToo Movement and the common abbreviation #MeToo will be used interchangeably throughout this thesis.

Given the nature of this research, several important considerations need to be addressed at the outset. First, this research was undertaken from a feminist research perspective. A concern facing feminist research has been approaching research in ways that do not recreate the power imbalances found in society at large (Naples & Gurr, 2014). As such, it is important to reflect upon my own cultural identities as a White, cis-gender, middleclass, university educated man and the inherent paradox of my researching the male-dominated power structures that oppress women. My journey to this research topic started with my involvement in the Bringing in the Bystander

Initiative at the University of Windsor (Senn & Forrest, 2016) beginning in the Fall of 2015. Bring in the Bystander courses train students to facilitate workshops for undergraduate students on topics pertaining to rape culture, sexual violence on college campuses, and how individuals can intervene to effect social change. This experience prompted a strong personal reaction and incited my interest in pursuing an undergraduate thesis aimed at increasing our understanding of women who have not acknowledged (Glos, Fritz, Johnstone, & Wilson, 2018). Moreover, during my graduate training, I have had the opportunity to be a member of the Healthy Relationships Research Group and the Healthy Research Centre for Violence Against Women which have further developed my research goals.

Despite my intention to pursue social justice through research, I recognize that my identity affords me with cultural privilege that creates barriers to effective research outcomes. Male “allyship” has historically been used to cover malintent (Filiopovic, 2018; Maqsood, 2019), meaning that my male identity will inevitably be met with skepticism and suspicion. Some suggest that masculinity and the male identity is antithetical to feminism whereas others promote a reformulation of normative masculinity that uniquely challenges male dominated power structures (Almassi, 2015; Brod & Kaufman, 1994; hooks, 1984; Kimmel, 1996). As Ravarino (2013) writes: “Feminism teaches men something that patriarchy ultimately ignores; that when others are oppressed, no one is free” (p. 156).

Although efforts have been made to reduce bias in this research, I fully recognize that my white male privilege cannot be entirely removed from the interpretation of this study. For instance, the recruitment of participants could have been shaped by my name being attached to the study. Moreover, the framing of the data analysis cannot be completely free of male-centric bias. This said, prioritizing the narrative authorship of the women participating in this study was the primary

goal for this research. To address male-centric bias, a female-identified coder independently coded and reviewed the my thematic and narrative analyses. The second coder reviewed the relevant themes to protect against bias during the interpretation of the qualitative data.

Next, it is important to state that the term “rape acknowledgement” adopted by this field of research poses the problematic paradox of labelling experiences that are, by definition, unlabelled. Johnstone (2013) used the person-first language of “women who have not acknowledged” (p. 2) to balance respect for women’s authority over their experience and the need for new language to refer to a complex phenomenon of research interest. For similar reasons, the present study adopts the person-first language of “women who have not acknowledged.” The term was chosen merely as a way of identifying a population and a topic of research focus and was not meant to impose a label on women’s experiences. The guiding methodology underlying this research approaches women’s personal narratives of unwanted and/or coercive experiences as valid. The primary issue posed by the study of “unacknowledgement” is not women’s decision to label or not to label a perpetrator’s actions as rape, but rather to remedy the barriers to health services facing many women who have not acknowledged (Conoscenti & McNally, 2006). This research also sought to identify whether new barriers exist for women who have not acknowledged within the context of #MeToo.

This study takes a critical realist and feminist standpoint approach to data and what they represent about the world. According to critical realism, an objective world exists, but it can only be understood by examining the subjective lens through which individuals make sense of it (Braune & Clarke, 2013). In the case of acknowledgement research, critical realism encourages the narratives of women who have not acknowledged to be viewed as the only valid source of data regarding their experience (i.e., not imposing outside social or legal definitions). Furthermore,

feminist standpoint theory views the experiences of women within their personal social contexts as valid data for understanding the issues directly impacting them (Devault, 1999). Feminist standpoint theory is an approach to research that challenges the general methods of inquiry (Naples & Gurr, 2014) that “hide the personal and particular” (Devault, 1999, p. 105) by grounding research within women's direct interpretations of experience (Janck, 1997). In the present study, feminist standpoint theory was present in the collection and analysis of the narratives of women who have not acknowledged.

Finally, it should be noted that researchers in the area of “rape acknowledgement” have used the terms rape, sexual assault, or both to define the term “acknowledgement.” Many studies use definitions of rape that includes penile and nonpenile penetration and the inability to consent due to intoxication. Other research includes the term sexual assault in addition to rape based on the common understanding and use of the term “sexual assault” as well as this term’s prevalence across different legal definitions (Johnstone, 2013). The present study included the terms rape and sexual assault to encompass a broad range of sexually violent behaviour that best reflects Canadian legal definitions (Criminal Code, 1985), other legal system definitions, and the behaviours challenged by the #MeToo.

Rape Acknowledgement Research

Male perpetrated rape and sexual assault is a pervasive social issue that impacts women around the world (World Health Organization [WHO], 2013). According to the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, male perpetrated rape has been reported by an estimated 19.3% of U.S. women during their lifetime, in addition to 43.9% of women who reported having experienced another form of sexual violence (Briedling et al., 2015). In 2016, there were 21,000 police reported incidents of sexual assault in Canada, with women accounting for the majority of

survivors (Keighley, 2017). Furthermore, social science research shows that one in five female college students report having been sexually assaulted on college campuses (Muehlenhard, Peterson, Humphreys, & Jozkowski, 2017).

Potential psychological health outcomes for survivors of sexual violence include posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), chronic anxiety, depression, and lowered self-esteem (Centres for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2018; World Health Organization [WHO], 2013). Physical health complications can include chronic pain, sexually transmitted infections, genital injuries as well as increased likelihood for developing high risk behaviours such as substance abuse and unsafe sexual behaviours (CDC, 2018; Martin & Macy, 2009; WHO, 2013). Based on the prevalence and the wide-reaching impact of sexual violence, an exploration into the experiences of survivors is warranted.

Despite the prevalence and the devastating impact for survivors, sexual violence remains one of the most underreported crimes in Canada and the United States (Benoit, Shumka, Phillips, Kennedy, & Belle-Isle, 2015; Fisher, Daigle, Cullen, & Turner, 2003; Langton, Berzofsky, Krebs, & Smiley-McDonald, 2012; Luce, Schragar, & Gilchrist, 2010; Keighley, 2017; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). At the forefront of underreporting is a rape culture that is hostile toward survivors of sexual violence (Buckwald, Fletcher, & Roth, 1993). Rape culture shapes biased scripts that influence underreporting in a number of ways. For example, underreporting can sometimes be based on survivors' perceptions of reactions to their disclosure. Ullman (2010) writes about the silencing of survivors before and after disclosures, both in the anticipation of and actual experience with negative reactions to sharing their experience with others. Furthermore, Fisher, Daigle, and Cullen (2003) identified both the "believability" of an assault and the presence of alcohol and drugs as reasons that women in their study did not report to authorities.

“Believable” assaults were those in which the perpetrator used a high degree of force, used a weapon, and/or was unknown to the survivor. Moreover, the presence of alcohol and drugs served to blame survivors for a perpetrator’s actions and to mitigate perpetrator culpability. Studies have also found that women were less likely to identify an unwanted or coercive sexual experience as “rape” or “sexual assault” if it matched their personally held beliefs about what is considered a “legitimate” form of sexual violence (Kahn, Jackson, Kully, Badger, & Halvorsen, 2003; Peterson & Muehlenhard, 2004).

During the early 1970s, research began to shift focus away from the perpetrators of sexual violence and toward survivor recovery (Gavey, 2005). During this time, research also began to address the underreporting of sexual violence. The term “hidden rape victim” was first used by Koss (1985) after discovering that 43% of women in her study did not identify with the term “rape.” These findings conflicted with the fact that participants disclosed unwanted and/or coercive sexual experiences that could be legally defined as “rape.” The term “hidden rape victim” was originally used to reflect the underreporting and underrepresentation of women who label unwanted and/or coercive sexual experiences in ways that fall outside of legal frameworks for understanding sexual violence (Koss, 1985). “Unacknowledged” took the place of “hidden rape” as a result of the growing understanding that sexual violence is comprised of varied and distinct perpetrator actions and survivor experiences (e.g., marital rape, date rape; Johnstone, 2013). The person-first term “women who have not acknowledgement” adds a new dimension to the understanding of sexual violence by accounting for women who do not identify with the label of rape (Johnstone, 2013).

After Koss’ (1985) initial study, additional research was conducted on “rape acknowledgement” with findings increasingly indicating that women’s labelling decisions

regarding unwanted sexual experiences are fluid and complex (Harned, 2005; Johnstone, 2013; Kahn & Mathie, 2000; Wilson, Miller, Leheny, Ballman, & Scarpa, 2017). A recent meta-analysis found more than half of women who had experienced the legal definition of rape (60.4%) did not identify their experience as such (Wilson & Miller, 2015). These findings show that the acknowledgement and underreporting of rape and sexual assault continue to be prevalent issues.

Quantitative research has explored factors predicting women's "acknowledgment status." Notably, situational factors surrounding rape victimization have been researched in relation to whether or not women label an unwanted and/or coercive sexual experience as rape or sexual assault (Bondurant, 2001; Botta & Pingree, 1997; Cleere & Lynn, 2013; Turchik, Probst, Irvin, Chau, & Gidycz, 2010). For instance, research has found that women are less likely to identify an experience as rape or sexual assault when they know or are familiar with the perpetrator and when the perpetrator uses low levels of force (Jaffe, Steel, DiLillo, Messman-Moore, & Gratz, 2017; Kahn, Mathie, & Torgler, 1994; Littleton, Rhatigan, & Axsom, 2007; Orchowski, Untied, & Gidycz, 2016). Moreover, myths for culturally prescribed "legitimate rape" have been a focus of research. For example, the common stereotype in which rape is thought to be primarily perpetrated by strangers using high levels of force has been termed "blitz-rape scripts" (Parrot, 1991). The widespread nature of blitz-rape scripts limits the definition of rape to strict and infrequent circumstances that serve to delegitimize survivor experiences and minimize perpetrator actions outside of blitz-rape parameters (Gavey, 2005; Littleton & Henderson, 2009). In fact, research shows that men are more likely to assault women they know than strangers (Keighley, 2017; Sinozich & Langton, 2014).

Acknowledgment research has also explored post-assault differences between groups identified by researchers as "unacknowledged" and "acknowledged." This research spans topics

such as re-victimization risk (Littleton, Grills, Layh, & Rudolph, 2017), body image (Merwin & Osman, 2017), posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD; Cohn, Zinzow, Resnick, & Kilpatrick, 2013; Layman, Gidycz, & Lynn, 1996; Littleton & Henderson, 2009), and other health outcomes (Littleton, Axsom, Breitkopf, & Berenson, 2006). Few studies have reached a consensus on differential post-assault experiences for women who do not label an unwanted and/or coercive sexual experience as rape or sexual assault compared to women who do identify with these labels. Although some researchers have found “acknowledged” groups to be more likely to develop posttraumatic stress disorder (Cohn, Zinzow, Resnick, & Kilpatrick, 2013; Conoscenti & McNally, 2006; Littleton & Henderson, 2009), others have found no difference between “acknowledged” and “unacknowledged” groups (Clements & Ogle, 2009; Layman et al., 1996). Furthermore, some studies have found acknowledgement status irrelevant when assessing health outcomes (Harned, 2004). Although differences may not be clear in terms of health outcomes, distinctions exist according to women’s access to health services and general help seeking behavior. Specifically, women who do not acknowledge are less likely to seek and/or receive support services due to their marginalized cultural position (Conoscenti & McNally, 2006).

“Women who have not acknowledged” reflects what Johnstone (2013) referred to as a liminal space, or a position between two conflicting understandings of an unwanted and/or coercive sexual experience. This liminal space encompasses experiences that are simultaneously understood as rape and something other than rape. A woman’s understanding of an unwanted and/or coercive sexual experience becomes an active process of navigating the conflicting positions of “it was rape” and “it was not rape.”

The #MeToo Movement

The term “Me Too” was coined by civil rights activist Tarana Burke in 2006. In October of 2017, actress Alyssa Milano appealed to the public via the Twitter #MeToo to support the women who accused film producer Harvey Weinstein of sexual assault (Garcia, 2017). Since this initial call to action, many survivors have shared experiences of sexual violence and harassment via traditional and social media platforms. This mass disclosure of coercive and unwanted sexual experiences has sparked a global phenomenon.

#MeToo draws upon traditional and social media’s strength in numbers to facilitate the open sharing of experience, promote healing, and incite meaningful social change (Garcia, 2017). #MeToo encourages survivors of sexual violence to share experiences of sexual victimization with the implied assurance of a changing and supportive culture. This movement seeks to combat a longstanding rape culture that serves to isolate, silence, and delegitimize women’s voices. This goal is sought through the networking of individuals willing to support and validate survivors. However, #MeToo presents potential risks for women who conceptualize unwanted and/or coercive sexual experiences in ways that do not conform with mainstream understandings of sexual violence. This potential risk underscores the complex nature of this social movement, namely the interplay between public and private constructions of meaning. Specifically, it involves the interplay between how women derive meaning from unwanted and/or coercive sexual experiences and how culture views that same experience (Hermans, 1996). Therefore, when women’s personal understandings of unwanted and/or coercive sexual experiences do not align with the cultural framework for sexual violence, there is a potential pressure to either conform to culture or to stay silent.

Tarana Burke (2017) has spoken openly about concerns regarding the public stage upon which women are now sharing their stories:

At first I thought ‘oh my god. This is mass disclosure across the internet and there’s no after care. Who’s going to have the discussion of what #metoo is really about?’ [...] The next step in the movement will be helping women navigate what happens *after* they disclose an experience (para. 2).

Burke followed this concern with the potential directions for the movement:

I’m driven by the gaps, the things that are missing, the areas where marginalized people exist — and where the least resources are available for them [...] Because, the power of #MeToo isn’t just naming it. Naming it is just the beginning of the journey (para. 5).

A legacy of silencing and devaluing women’s voices leaves lasting implications for the understanding of unwanted and/or coercive sexual experiences. This study explored how women who have not acknowledged perceive #MeToo. This study also examined whether or not #MeToo influences the understandings of women who have not acknowledged regarding unwanted and/or coercive sexual experiences.

Rape Culture

One of the roles occupied by #MeToo has been to combat the influence of rape culture, defined as a culture that blames women for being raped, mitigates and ignores the actions of perpetrators, and provides no support to women after an assault (Buckwald, Fletcher, & Roth, 1993). Gavey (2005) credits feminist theory for recognizing the dominance-submissive dynamics of common heterosexual scripts. This means that violence and everyday sexual scripts are not categorically different but fall along a continuum. Moreover, social scripts normalize sexual violence in everyday conversation and form the “building blocks” of rape culture (Gavey, 2005).

This perspective underscores the contention that “violence and coercion are not inherently absent from sex” (p. 33). #MeToo’s efforts toward cultural change potentially threatens existing, male-dominated power structures that create barriers for women in both the labelling of their lived experience and in having their voices heard in a public space. These cultural barriers are supported by cultural rape scripts that limit the range of experiences considered valid forms of sexual violence and victimization. These scripts also frame sexual violence through the use of male-dominated language. #MeToo attempts to construct new cultural scripts based on the narratives of women who share their experiences publicly.

Rape culture influences the everyday language employed in conversations about sexual violence. Based on interviews with men who were violent toward women, Adams, Towns, and Gavey (1995) identified common conversational patterns used when discussing topics such as women’s rights and romantic relationships. The identified patterns included men intimidating female partners in ways not obviously threatening or violent from the perspective of a third party (e.g., leaving presents on the doorstep of an ex-partner is not considered intimidating without the context of the partner being frightened for their safety); the use of metaphor in order to establish power dynamics (e.g., “king of the castle” in describing the male role in the household); synecdoche, or the devaluing of women by referring to them by parts of their bodies; and metonymy, or the indirect expression of male superiority via substituted objects (e.g., “who wears the pants in the family?”). Adams et al.’s (1995) research highlights how violent men use normalized cultural strategies to make their behaviour seem acceptable and as a part of regular, everyday life. Cultures that accept such language and/or ways of describing these male-female interactions in common conversation provide tools for violent men to obscure their behaviour.

Such rhetorical strategies are theorized to be normalized within culture and to stem from male antagonism toward women.

Moreover, Peterson and Muehlenhard (2007) identify another aspect of language that facilitates rape culture: the lack of distinction between wantedness and consent. Consent refers to explicit verbal permission whereas sexual wanting refers to the inner desire to engage in sexual activity. Self-blame was found to arise in instances where there was a discrepancy between wantedness and consent (commonly considered as a unitary concept in Western society). Specifically, self-blame was more likely to occur in the presence of a woman's own sexual wanting and the absence of verbal consent or in the presence of pressured consent and the absence of sexual wanting. Peterson and Muehlenhard's (2007) work highlights two important tenants of rape culture. First, rape culture facilitates perpetrators' manipulation of a common societal belief that consent is the same as wantedness. Second, overarching heterosexual scripts place the responsibility upon women to navigate this discrepancy rather than upon the male perpetrators using these cultural beliefs to disguise their behaviour.

A third way that language facilitates the development and the maintenance of rape culture is in that language itself alters women's ability to describe their experiences in their own terms. This form of silencing underscores the insidious nature of a culture that allows women to speak but that values the voices of women far less than those of men (Devault, 1999; Spender, 1980). Available language engrained within male dominated scripts becomes the means by which women are forced to conceptualize and communicate their lived experience. This linguistic bias limits the utility of language in communicating personal experience by inevitably filtering women's communicative power through language geared toward male experience (Devault, 1999). These limitations of available language can be overcome, however, by seeking and documenting women's voices and

narratives as valid constructions of meaning. Specifically, linguistic bias can be overcome by (a) approaching women's linguistic representations of their experience as the core data by which a study's research questions are answered, and (b) accepting constructions of meaning that fall outside of mainstream linguistic parameters (Devault, 1999). Therefore, "acknowledgement" and "unacknowledgement" become loose conceptual frameworks for approaching women's fluid understandings of unwanted and/or coercive sexual experiences. The authentic understanding of experience exists within nuanced narrative descriptions rather than within the prescribed categories of "acknowledged" and "unacknowledged."

It is evident that cultural and linguistic framing continues to shape conversation about sexual violence, reinforce male dominance, and frame responsibility as belonging to survivors of sexual violence rather than to perpetrators. This conversation manifests itself across social spheres, including but not limited to college and university campuses (Herman, 1989; Muehlenhard, Humphreys, Jozkowski, & Peterson, 2017), the entertainment industry (Mendes, Ringrose, & Keller, 2018), and gaming and other online communities (Massanari, 2015). Rape culture serves to construct "gray areas," or cultural scripts in which sexually predatory behaviour is excused or tacitly condoned within society (Gavey, 2005). These destructive cultural scripts marginalize women based on biased and stereotyped societal values.

The cultural context within which women who have not acknowledged label and understand experiences is comprised of a conflict between an emergent #MeToo culture and longstanding rape culture. Specifically, the normalization of sexual violence is challenged by #MeToo merely through the open discussion of issues relevant to survivors' experiences. The cultural atmosphere created by #MeToo points to a new friction between public accounts of sexual violence and personal understandings of unwanted and/or coercive experiences. This may, in turn,

create pressure for women who have not acknowledged to change their understanding of an unwanted and/or coercive experience. Conversely, #MeToo may provide women who have not acknowledged with an opportunity to pursue a new and equally authentic understanding of their experience that was not present in the context of rape culture. Furthermore, #MeToo may have no impact on women's labelling decisions at all. The aim of this study was to qualitatively examine the potential impact of #MeToo on women who have not acknowledged, their understanding of past unwanted and/or coercive sexual experiences, and their views of #MeToo.

Rape Scripts

Cultural scripts are templates for understanding the world that often rely on cultural biases (Goddard & Wierzbicka, 2004). Cultural rape scripts form the foundation for rape culture by shaping the cultural narrative for how sexual violence is defined (Gavey, 2005). Rape myth acceptance was found to mediate courtroom jurors' assignment of blame toward survivors, with greater rape myth acceptance increasing the likelihood of victim-blame (Hammond, Barry, & Rodriguez, 2011). One common way in which rape culture normalizes victim-blame is the myth of miscommunication (Gavey, 2005). The myth of miscommunication depicts men as confused by women's expressions of consent or lack of consent and insinuates that many acts of sexual violence are "accidents" (Gavey, 2005). Specifically, men are viewed as possessing poor receptive communication skills regarding women's consent. These assumptions have not been supported by research, with studies finding that men and women share a clear understanding of the methods by which consent is and is not expressed (Beres, 2010; Gavey, 2005). The myth of miscommunication underscores how rape culture permits victim-blaming attitudes by normalizing misleading depictions of consent, wantedness, and communication.

The myth of miscommunication has been found to be especially pervasive in the context of alcohol consumption. Alcohol-based rape myths promote victim-blaming attitudes by attaching blame to the behaviours of survivors rather than those of perpetrators. In a study of alcohol-based rape scripts, participants considered rape in the context of a woman being drugged by an assailant to be more “legitimate” than after a woman’s voluntary consumption of drugs or alcohol (Littleton, Tabernik, Canales, & Backstrom, 2009). Moreover, women have been found to be more likely to label unwanted and/or coercive sexual experiences as “a miscommunication” if they had consumed alcohol before the assault (Glos, Johnstone, Fritz, & Wilson, 2018; Dardis, Kraft, & Gidycz, 2017). Alcohol-related myths facilitate the cultural belief that women who voluntarily consume alcohol are responsible for being victimized whereas perpetrators’ intoxication serves as mitigating circumstances for predatory behaviour. These scripts obscure the picture of alcohol consumption in the context of sex to lessen the culpability of men and provide the opportunity for perpetrators to hide behind normalized scripts for “healthy sexual interactions.”

Another script that has been studied in relation to rape and sexual assault has been “hook-up culture.” Hook-ups have been defined as “spontaneous sexual encounter[s] (that may or may not involve sexual intercourse) between two people who are brief acquaintances or strangers, usually lasting one night without the expectation of developing a romantic relationship” (Paul & Hayes, 2002, p. 640). Littleton et al. (2009) explored whether college students perceived sexual violence as a risk within hook-up situations. Participant responses regarding “bad hook-up” scenarios clustered into three themes: alcohol-facilitated hookup, hook-up as a result of manipulation, and date hook-up. Each of these themes were consistent with previously studied rape scripts used to normalize sexual violence and place blame upon survivors (Littleton et al.,

2009). Despite representing a marked change in traditional cultural scripts for dating, hook-up scripts contain many myth-laden notions synonymous with victim-blame.

Another script depicts sexual violence as being more commonly perpetrated by strangers than by acquaintances – referred to as blitz-rape scripts (Bondurant, 2001). Research indicates that men are more likely to assault women they know than they are to target strangers (Keighley, 2017; Sinozich & Langton, 2014). Research also indicates that sexual violence perpetrated by men known to women carries a higher sense of guilt and self-blame in addition to the trauma of the assault (Bowie, Silverman, Kalick, & Edbril, 1990). Despite this research, acquaintance and date rape scenarios are often viewed as less “legitimate” than violent stranger attacks (Gavey, 2005; Littleton & Henderson, 2009; McDaniel & Rodriguez, 2017). Peterson and Muehlenhard (2011) found that the motivation for not labelling a partner’s coercive sexual behaviour as rape was discomfort with labelling their partner as a rapist. Further research has reached similar findings (Koss, 2011) that show how normalized rape scripts and the frequency rape perpetrated by acquaintances as opposed to strangers obscures acts of sexual violence and redirects blame toward women.

Research has also explored the personal belief in rape myths held by women who have not acknowledged. Harned (2005) conducted a mixed method study exploring how women label unwanted and/or coercive experiences with dating partners. Many women provided reasons that aligned with common rape myths surrounding victim-blame and the normalization of violence within sexual interactions. These findings link labelling decisions to the culture in which these experiences occur and are assigned personal meaning. The reasons for not labelling unwanted sexual experiences as rape aligned with wide-spread myths directing blame toward survivors for their clothing or their familiarity with the perpetrator, or imply women secretly want to be raped.

Other studies have found similar links between women's labelling of unwanted and/or coercive sexual experiences and personal beliefs in blitz-rape scripts (Bondurant, 2001; Kahn, Jackson, Kully, Badger, & Halvorsen, 2003; Kahn, Mathie, & Torgler, 1994), hostile and benevolent sexism (Wilson, Miller, Leheney, Ballman, & Scarpa, 2017), and- intoxication of either themselves or the perpetrator as mitigating factors (Glos et al., 2018; Kahn, Jackson, Kully, Badger, & Halvorsen, 2003; Dardis, Kraft, & Gidycz, 2017). This literature underscores how rape culture influences how society views survivors of sexual violence and how survivors of sexual violence understand and label unwanted and/or coercive sexual experiences.

Narrative Development and the Construction of Meaning

The purpose of this study is to understand the interaction between rape culture, the culture of #MeToo, and women who have not acknowledged. Research in the field of rape acknowledgement has focused on labelling in the context of dominant rape culture. #MeToo represents a potential shift within this dominant culture. Research had not, as of this study, adequately examined how this modern cultural shift has impacted survivors of sexual violence or women who have not acknowledged.

The potential influence of culture upon the individual is addressed by narrative psychology. Narrative psychology approaches the understanding of self-experience and identity construction through the individual process of organizing experience according to time, place, and self (Vassilieva, 2016). Hermans, Kempen, and van Loon (1992) and Hermans (1996) discuss "the self" as a dialogical narrator. The theory of the "dialogical self" puts forth that an individual possesses a multitude of imagined perspectives engaged in constant communication (or dialogue). Similar to how a novel is comprised of multiple characters with independent perspectives and motivations within the overarching story, Hermans (1996) conceptualizes human beings as relying

upon similarly imagined and independent “I positions.” For example, “it was rape” and “society does not view this experience as rape” form a conflictual narrative interaction. “I positions” can agree, disagree, or even ridicule other “I positions.” In this sense, strong emotional dynamics play out between different positions for one person (Hermans et al., 1992). Individuals derive their understanding of experiences from a variety of sources, including cultural stories both past and present. Rape scripts, as discussed above, are examples of cultural stories that shape the rape culture in which individuals understand experiences. A single individual can take on a multitude of perspectives based on their experiences within their social context. Therefore, “I positions” are derived from the interaction between personal experience and cultural influence (Hermans et al., 1992).

Moreover, like characters in a story, “I positions” interact to continually change an individual’s overarching narrative of experience. Personal narratives are constructed from the interactions between “I positions.” For instance, in resolving a personal dilemma, individuals refer to numerous internalized perspectives, such as family, friends, or media figures, that exchange information in order to arrive at some form of resolution. At any given time during this process, conflicts may arise between different “I positions” resulting in some positions gaining dominance over others (Hermans et al., 1992). Hermans et al.’s (1992) dialogical “I positions,” shaped by culture and individual perception, are a means for understanding the self within the world.

The construction of meaning in the presence of cognitive dissonance becomes relevant in approaching the dynamics between women who have not acknowledged and their perception of the society in which they live. Johnstone (2013) used analysis of narratives to identify contradictory voices that uniquely blend to construct labels for unwanted and/or coercive sexual experiences. Johnstone (2013) theorized the narrative voices of Not Knowing, Knowing, and

Ambivalence. These contradictory positions represent contrapuntal voices (Gilligan, Spencer, Weinberg, & Bertzch, 2003), or the presence of contradictory perspectives that fuse to produce an overarching narrative (Johnstone, 2013, p. 51). The Not Knowing Voice encompassed the understanding or perspective that an unwanted and/or coercive sexual experience was not rape by women who had not acknowledged. The Knowing Voice represented the determination that an unwanted and/or coercive sexual experience was harmful in some way as well as the tentative appraisal of the labels “rape” and “sexual assault” by women who had not acknowledged. Finally, the Ambivalent Voice blended both the Knowing and Not Knowing voices and highlights the cognitive dissonance inherent in the equal weighting of contradictory positions (Johnstone, 2013). That is, the Ambivalent Voice represented the understanding that an experience (or perhaps various aspects of an experience) was both rape and not rape.

The theory of cognitive dissonance represents an individual’s tendency toward consistency in the presence of dissonance, or the simultaneous presence of contradictory information (Festinger, 1957). Peng and Nisbett (1999) theorize psychological responses of individuals when faced with dissonance between two competing thoughts. Peng and Nisbett (1999) theorize that there are four potential psychological responses, including denial, discounting, differentiation, and dialectical thinking. Denial is a strategy for responding to cognitive dissonance by denying the presence of contradiction altogether. Discounting is another response in which the presence of contradiction leads an individual to determine that both pieces of information are false. Differentiation is a response in which a person reduces cognitive dissonance by coming to a definitive conclusion about which piece of information is true and which is false. Finally, dialectical thinking accepts the contradiction and determines both pieces of information to be accurate representations of reality in their own right. Peng and Nesbitt’s (1999) findings indicate

that Western cultures promote resolution through differentiation whereas Eastern cultures are more likely to encourage dialectical thinking.

Labelling decisions are represented by a fluid blend of conflicting “I positions” (Hermans et al., 1992). An individual’s overarching narrative voice is derived from the quality of interactions between “I positions.” When an individual gives one voice dominance over another, the narrative is altered (Hermans et al., 1992). Moreover, Johnstone (2013) speculated that the Western societal tendency toward differentiation likely contributes to heightened discomfort with ambivalence in the labelling of unwanted and/or coercive experiences. This indicates a Western preference for more definitive understandings of experience over the acceptance of ambiguity. An individual’s preference for resolving dissonance is another component that shapes the dynamics of personal narratives. For example, the competing positions of “society views this experience as rape” and “I don’t feel that this experience was rape” could lead to differentiation (selecting of one statement as true and the other as untrue) or dialectical thinking (determining there is truth in both statements).

This study explored what, if any, influence #MeToo has had on women who have not acknowledged. Specifically, it examined how #MeToo has affected the internal “I positions” that shape personal narratives as well as the dissonance between internal positions (Hermans et al., 1992; Peng & Nesbitt, 1999). The introduction of #MeToo represents a potential for altered dialogical relationships between the personal and cultural “I positions” of women who have not acknowledged (Hermans, et al., 1992). For women who have not acknowledged, the shifting dialogical relationship between personal and cultural voices holds the potential to: (a) change personal narratives and encourage positive reconstructions of meaning, (b) create internal conflict

regarding the labelling of experience and construction of meaning, or (c) have no impact on personal constructions of meaning.

Hermans' (1996) "I voices" represent a theory for explaining how individuals make sense of their complex social experiences. "I voices" (Hermans, 1996) are present in the interpretation of social experiences by both men and women. Hermans (1996) theory states that culture is represented by "I positions" that participate in the process of deriving meaning from experience. As has been outlined in this literature review, men and women experience rape culture very differently. Specifically, rape culture serves to devalue women's experiences while simultaneously privileging the voices of men.

Critical realism and feminist standpoint theory require that this research accept responsibility for prioritizing participating women's understandings of reality and the narratives regarding their experience. This study approached labelling decisions of women who have not acknowledged as valid constructions of the objective world in the pursuit of answers to the present research questions. Furthermore, this study sought to shed light on how "I voices," derived from personal experience, #MeToo, and rape culture, interact to shape individual narratives of experience. This requires going beyond research derived categories of "acknowledgement" and "unacknowledgement" and finding commonalities among the idiosyncratic constructions of experience presented by each woman participating in this study.

Current Study

Two year after #MeToo entered public consciousness (Garcia, 2017), little empirical research has been conducted to address women's thoughts, feelings, and understandings of this social movement. Furthermore, no known research to date has explored the perspectives of women who have not acknowledged regarding #MeToo.

#MeToo has the potential to alter the relationship between the competing “I positions” within the narratives of women who have not acknowledged (Hermans et al., 1992). This study examined whether there were unique consequences for women who have not acknowledged resulting from #MeToo. Specifically, the study explored the impact of a #MeToo “I position” from the perspective of women who have not acknowledged. This research goal was achieved by using narrative and thematic analytical approaches.

#MeToo is a movement in which substantive change is being sought regarding cultural attitudes toward survivors of sexual violence and perpetrator behaviour. Women who have not acknowledged face barriers for seeking and receiving supports designed for support and healing (Conoscenti & McNally, 2006). By reaching out to women who have not acknowledged, this study endeavored to better understand the changing cultural voices represented by the #MeToo and the impact of this change on women who have not acknowledged.

CHAPTER 2

Method

Participants

To be eligible for the main portion of the current study, participants needed to meet the following inclusion criteria: (a) identified as female, (b) were 18 years of age or older, (c) reported having experienced at least one unwanted and/or coercive experience perpetrated by a man that met the legal definition of rape or sexual assault on the Modified SES (Koss & Oros, 1982), (d) labelled this experience as something other than rape or sexual assault on the Modified SES (Koss & Oros, 1982), and (e) indicated that they had some familiarity with the #MeToo. This research only focused on women who reported sexually coercive and unwanted experiences perpetrated by men because research suggests that men disproportionately perpetrate sexual violence against

women (Briedling et al., 2015; Keighley, 2017; Muehlenhard et al., 2017). Although sexual violence perpetrated against men is a serious social issue leading to numerous negative consequences for survivors (Lowe & Rogers, 2017), differences exist between male and female victimization that make it important for researchers to distinguish between these groups. Notably, differences exist in the barriers and outcomes faced by male and female survivors seeking help and support (Donne et al., 2018; Hammond & Fewster, 2017). Moreover, survivors of same-sex rape and sexual assault face unique sequelae that warrant focused research attention (Javaid, 2017; Twinley, 2017).

In order to identify participants for the main portion of the study, a set of screening procedures was used (Part 1 of the study). Thus, this study was comprised of two parts. Part 1 consisted of a screening survey to determine participants' eligibility for Part 2, which contained the open-ended qualitative items prompting text responses for qualitative analysis. Eligible participants who provided their permission to be re-contacted at the end of Part 1 were sent a recruitment email with a link directing them to Part 2 of the study. Research ethics clearance and permission was obtained for all recruitment procedures.

Recruitment for Part 1. Four recruitment methods were used for Part 1: (a) the University of Windsor Participant Pool, (b) a mass Email sent to all undergraduate students at the University of Windsor by university administration, (c) a recruitment email that was sent to University of Windsor department secretaries, requesting that the secretaries forward the recruitment email to undergraduate students in their department, and (d) an online Kijiji classified advertisement.

Participant pool recruitment. The first recruitment method was conducted through the University of Windsor Psychology Department Participant Pool, which is a group of students enrolled in courses offering extra credit as compensation for participation in research. Recruitment

through the Participant Pool took place during the Intersession and Summer semesters of 2019. An online Participant Pool advertisement for Part 1 (Appendix A) was visible to undergraduate students enrolled in the Participant Pool who were 18 years of age or older and who identified as cis-female. Participants who signed up for a timeslot were sent an email (Appendix B) inviting them to complete Part 1. In this email, participants were provided with the URL for the online survey and a unique (i.e., person-specific) ID code to use when completing the survey. Investigators invited 39 women in the Participant Pool to complete Part 1 of the study.

University of Windsor mass email recruitment. The second method of recruitment for Part 1 consisted of a mass email (Appendix C) sent out to all University of Windsor undergraduate students via a mass email system available through the University of Windsor. The mass recruitment email (a) explicitly stated the study's eligibility requirements (undergraduate students who identified as women and were 18 years of age or older), and (b) included the URL for Part 1's online screening survey.

University of Windsor department secretary email requests. The third recruitment method for Part 1 consisted of email requests (Appendix D) sent to undergraduate departmental secretaries of various University of Windsor departments/programmes asking them to forward a recruitment email (Appendix E) to their students. The recruitment email (a) explicitly stated the study's eligibility requirements (undergraduate students who identified as women and were age 18 years or older), and (b) included the URL for Part 1's online screening survey.

Kijiji advertisement. The fourth recruitment procedure involved posting an advertisement for Part 1 on kijiji.ca. Kijiji.ca is a Canadian classifieds site with live ads for a wide variety of products and services. Potential participants were provided with a detailed study advertisement (Appendix F) and a link directing them to Part 1 of this study.

Screening (Part 1) sample description. A total of 350 women completed Part 1 of the study (the online screener survey). However, given that all participants were provided with the same study URL across all recruitment sources, I was not able to determine how many participants were recruited from each of the recruitment sources, except from the Participant Pool. The majority of participants were recruited through the mass emails and kijiji.ca (see Table 2). The women participating in Part 1 were between the ages of 17 and 58 ($M = 22$; see Table 1) years and primarily White.

Recruitment for Part 2. Participants eligible for Part 2 (a) completed Part 1, (b) identified as female, (c) were 18 years of age or older, (d) reported having experienced at least one unwanted and/or coercive experience perpetrated by a man that met the legal definition of rape or sexual assault on the Modified SES (Koss & Oros, 1982), (e) labelled this experience as something other than rape or sexual assault on the Modified SES (Koss & Oros, 1982), and (f) indicated that they had had some familiarity with the #MeToo. No upper limit was set regarding the age at which women could participate in this study.

A recruitment email (Appendix R) was sent to eligible participants ($N = 39$) who provided permission to be further contacted by researchers. The Part 2 recruitment email included a unique (i.e., person-specific) ID code that differed from ID codes used in Part 1 of the study. A list of psychological and medical community resources (see Appendix N) was provided as an attachment to the recruitment email itself. A link to Part 2 of this study was provided in the recruitment email for those interested in further participation. Of the 39 email invitations sent, 13 women completed Part 2 of the study (33% response rate). The women participating in Part 2 were between the ages of 18 and 29 ($M = 23$) years and primarily White (see Table 1).

Table 1

Demographic Information for Parts 1 and 2

Characteristic	Part 1 (n = 350)		Part 2 (n = 13)	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Age group (years)				
17-19	141	40.3	1	7.7
20-22	119	34.0	5	38.5
23-25	37	10.6	4	30.8
26-29	13	3.7	2	15.4
30-58	30	8.6	0	0.0
Ethnicity				
First Nations/Metis/Inuit/Indigenous	3	0.9	0	0.0
Asian	20	5.7	0	0.0
South Asian	11	3.1	0	0.0
Black	8	2.3	0	0.0
Latinx/Hispanic	6	1.7	0	0.0
Middle Eastern/North African	22	6.3	1	7.7
Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian	1	0.2	0	0.0
White	252	72.0	11	84.6
Multiracial	14	4.0	0	0.0
Not listed	6	1.7	1	7.7

Table 2

Recruitment Information for Parts 1 and 2

Recruitment Method	Part 1 (n = 350)		Part 2 (n = 13)	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Participant Pool	26	7.4	2	15.4
Mass Email/Kijiji.ca	324	92.6	11	84.6

Procedure

Procedure for Part 1. Participants were provided one of two consent forms depending on their recruitment via the Participant Pool (Appendix G) or mass email and kijiji.ca (Appendix H). Both consent forms outlined the study's purpose, its potential risks and benefits, issues related to confidentiality, information about compensation, and links to download instructions for clearing their browser history and accessing community resources. Participants then completed a brief online survey that determined their eligibility for Part 2 of this research project. Specifically, they completed, in the following order: (a) the Modified Sexual Experiences Survey (SES; Koss & Oros, 1982; see Appendix I), (b) a question about familiarity with #MeToo (see Appendix J), (c) a demographics questionnaire (see Appendix K), and (d) two qualitative mood neutralizing items (asking participants to describe their happiest childhood memory and an activity that they do for fun; see Appendix L). The Modified SES, #MeToo familiarity questions, and age and gender questions within the demographic questionnaire served as pre-screen questions to identify individuals eligible for participation in Part 2 of this study.

At the end of Part 1, participants who were ineligible for participation in Part 2 received post-study information for Part 1 (Appendix M), a list of community resources (Appendix N), and a link containing instructions for clearing their browser history should they wish to ensure that others would not be able to see that they visited the survey URL (see Appendix O). Participants eligible for Part 2 were automatically presented with a form asking for their permission to be contacted by researchers via email. The recontact permission form differed depending on participants' recruitment through the Participant Pool (Appendix P) or mass email and kijiji.ca (Appendix Q). Eligible participants provided their permission to be re-contacted by clicking a relevant button and providing their email address in a text box. All participants were made aware

that their identifying information would be held confidential and used only for the purposes of re-contacting them (with their permission) and assigning compensation. They were also informed that their information would not be linked to their online survey data.

Part 1 took participants no more than 30 minutes to complete. Participants who completed Part 1 and were enrolled in the Participant Pool were awarded 0.5 bonus points toward an eligible course. Participants who completed Part 1 and were not enrolled in the Participant Pool were entered into a raffle for the opportunity to receive one of two \$25 Amazon eGift Cards. A separate Qualtrics survey link and platform was used to collect participant emails for purposes of compensation. This was done to ensure that researchers were removed from at least one aspect of linking up contact information with participants' sensitive data.

Procedure for Part 2. Eligible women who provided permission to be contacted for Part 2 were sent a recruitment email directing them to a second online survey platform. On the first page of the second survey platform, participants were asked if they were currently enrolled in the Psychology Department Participant Pool (Appendix S). Using Qualtrics branch logic, participants were then provided with one of two versions of the Part 2 consent form based on their recruitment through the Participant Pool ($n = 26$) or mass email and kijiji.ca ($n = 350$) (Appendix G and Appendix H, respectively). They were then invited to consent to or decline further participation by clicking a relevant button. Links to download instructions for clearing their browser history and accessing a community resource list were also attached to the consent form in the event that participants closed their browser immediately after deciding not to participate.

Participants who clicked the button indicating consent to participate in the main study completed the Modified SES (Appendix I) and the demographics questionnaire (Appendix K) for a second time. This was done to ensure that participating women still reported having experienced

an unwanted and/or coercive sexual experience and that their acknowledgement statuses had not changed since completing Part 1 of the study. In the event that participants were no longer eligible for Part 2, participants were directed to qualitative mood neutralizing items (asking them to describe the best thing that happened to them last month and something they are most looking forward to next year; [Appendix T]), a post-study information page (Appendix U), a list of community resources (Appendix N), and a link with information for clearing browser history (Appendix O).

Eligible participants were directed to a page with a number of open-ended items prompting written (i.e., typed) responses about their understandings of the #MeToo, their reported unwanted and/or coercive experiences, and these experiences in the context of #MeToo (see Appendix V). This questionnaire was followed by two qualitative mood neutralizing items (Appendix S), post-study information for Part 2 (Appendix T), a list of psychological and medical community resources (see Appendix N), and a link containing instructions for clearing their browser history (Appendix O).

Part 2 took participants no more than 60 minutes to complete. Participants enrolled in the Participant Pool earned one bonus point for an eligible undergraduate course and participants recruited from sources other than the Participant Pool earned a \$25 Amazon eGift Card as compensation for participation in Part 2 of this study.

Measures

Demographic information. The demographic questionnaire was presented to participants after the consent form (Appendix K) in Part 1 and after the Modified SES (Koss & Oros, 1982) was completed in Part 2 (Appendix I). It asked participants to provide their age, gender, sexuality, year in school, country of birth, age at immigration, relationship status, ethnicity, employment

status, and living situation. The questionnaire was repeated at Part 2 to ensure that participants continued to meet the eligibility criteria at the time of completing Part 2.

Modified Sexual Experiences Survey. The Modified Sexual Experiences Survey (SES; Koss & Oros, 1982) was used to determine which women were eligible for Part 2 of the study (Appendix I). The Modified SES is a 7-item scale that measures women's experience with sexual violence and whether they label these experiences as "rape" or "sexual assault." Women either select *yes* or *no* for each item. The first question asks about a consensual sexual experience with a man to provide context for women's other potentially coercive sexual experiences. Four subsequent behaviourally-based questions ask about past experiences of male-perpetrated sexual coercion and/or violence victimization (i.e., perpetrator used continual arguments to pressure the female victim into sexual intercourse when she did not want to have it; perpetrator tried to have sexual intercourse with the female victim by using some form of physical force but did not complete the act; perpetrator threatened to or used physical force to engage in sexual acts or have sex with the female victim when she did not want to; unwanted sexual intercourse occurred while the female victim was incapacitated) followed by two labelling questions ("Have you ever been sexually assaulted?", "Have you ever been raped?"). These questions were used to identify women whose experience(s) met the legal definition of sexual assault and/or rape but who did not identify their experience as such. Specifically, participants who indicated *no* they had never been sexually assaulted or raped, but *yes* to one or both of the following two questions (i.e., have not acknowledged) met the eligibility criteria for Part II:

- Have you ever had sexual intercourse (oral, anal or vaginal) or experienced sexual acts (oral, anal or vaginal penetration by objects other than a penis) when you didn't want to because a man threatened or used some degree of physical force?

- Have you ever been in a situation in which you were incapacitated due to alcohol or drugs (for example, you were physically unable to resist, passed out, or unaware of what was happening) and had unwanted sexual intercourse (oral, anal or vaginal) with a man?

Participants who met these eligibility criteria and who agreed to participate in Part 2 had the opportunity to complete the Modified SES for a second time at the beginning of Part 2 of the study. This was to ensure that no labelling changes occurred between completing Part 1 and participating in Part 2. Koss and Gidycz (1985) report that the SES has a mean test-retest item agreement of 94% and a Pearson correlation of .73 between responses on the SES and responses for in-person interviews (16% changed their response to reflect a higher level of victimization during an interview).

Mood neutralizing items. Mood neutralizing items were administered to participants at the conclusion of both Parts 1 and 2. At the end of Part 1, before the invitation to participate in Part 2, participants were sent to a page with two qualitative, open-ended items asking them to describe their happiest childhood memory and an activity that they enjoyed in separate unlimited character text boxes (see Appendix L). At the end of Part 2, participants were sent to a page with two open-ended items asking them to describe the best thing that happened to them last month and something they were most looking forward to next year (Appendix T). These questions were included in an attempt to mitigate any emotional distress arising during the completion of Part 1 and/or Part 2. Positive mood induction has been found to be an effective means of mitigating emotional distress (Siedlecka & Denson, 2019; Westermann, Spies, Stahl, & Friedrich, 1996).

Qualitative questionnaire. Open-ended questions asking participants for detailed narrative responses were used in Part 2 of this study (see Appendix V). Research has shown that participants are more comfortable sharing information about sensitive topics online rather than in

person (Newman et al., 2002). Furthermore, written and/or typed out responses have the added benefit for analyzing both content and patterns of written communication practices. Using unlimited text boxes provided participants in this study with the opportunity to express themselves without restrictions on length, organization, or language. The unrestricted nature of the questions comprising this questionnaire were intended to promote unique and rich narratives.

Participants were first asked a closed-ended question about their familiarity with #MeToo and/or the MeToo movement. Next, in the following order, participants were prompted to share a narrative account of their understanding of #MeToo, an unwanted sexual experience, and their perception of their unwanted sexual experience in relation to #MeToo.

The question regarding familiarity with #MeToo was as follows, “Can you please tell us about your understanding of #MeToo and the “MeToo” movement? How would you describe ‘Me Too’ to someone unfamiliar with it?” The narrative question pertaining to a past coercive experience read:

Please tell us the story of your most significant coercive experience. In the following space we would like you to describe the experience by setting the scene. Where did it happen? How did it begin? What was the nature of your relationship with the man involved? What did he say? How did you respond? Please provide as much detail as you feel comfortable sharing.

Lastly, a question asking for a narrative that connects these two topics together was “In your opinion, how has #MeToo impacted you? Has this been a positive, negative, or neutral experience for you?” These questions asked in order to prompt participants to write about their personal constructions of meaning in the context of #MeToo.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis and analysis of narratives were used to analyse the data. Given that both of these analytic approaches help identify patterns of meaning from participants' responses and/or narratives (and not from preconceived theories) participants selected in order to shed light upon topics that have received little research attention (i.e., the #MeToo Movement and women who have not acknowledged). Thematic analysis was used to identify broad patterns across participating women's responses. Analysis of narratives was used to examine the interaction between "I voices" identified through the thematic analysis. The main study questions were divided into three domains, or "I voices": (a) #MeToo questions, (b) coercive sexual experience questions, and (c) #MeToo and personal experience questions (see Appendix V).

For thematic analysis, data-derived codes were generated and organized into relevant themes and subthemes (Braun & Clarke, 2013). First, the data were analyzed *within* the three domains of inquiry for "I position" statements, or statements reflecting meaning-making pertaining to #MeToo, coercive sexual experiences, and MeToo in the context of personal experience. Participants' "I positions" were then organized into thematic categories and subcategories (Braun & Clarke, 2013). For example, one theme that arose from the "I voice" pertaining to the #MeToo Movement was "Feeling Less Alone Challenges Stigma." Subthemes regarding the types of "stigma" included "shame," "powerlessness," and "fear of backlash." Lastly, pertinent quotations from participating women's narrative responses were included to contextualize the generated themes and subthemes. An iterative process was used when reviewing and analyzing the data (i.e., reading and re-reading through the responses multiple times to identify themes and subthemes and to extract meaning from the responses).

After distinguishing themes *within* each domain of inquiry, participant responses were coded for dialogical interchanges *across* the three domains. Connections were made between domains of inquiry by focusing on the entirety of women's written responses for analysis. Specifically, narrative threads of agreement and contradiction between the "I voices" relevant to #MeToo and women's personal construction of meaning were examined (Hermans, 1996). An analysis of narratives was conducted to highlight meaningful underlying interactions between themes that likely would have been overlooked by focusing solely within domains of interest. Saturation was achieved for the relevant questions posed by this study (Braune & Clarke, 2013).

Credibility checks are important to qualitative research (Anney, 2014) and several checks were implemented in the present study, including credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility was increased by asking for open-ended narrative responses by which participants could express themselves with as much or as little detail as they felt necessary to convey their experiences. To ensure transferability and dependability, all research methods, analytic procedures, and participants were described in detail. Finally, to increase confirmability, a second, female-identified coder analyzed the data and created her own thematic codes without knowledge of the primary investigator's initial results. Training was done through written instruction with examples and relevant literature and a phone meeting (approximately 1 hour). Moreover, both the primary investigator and second coder were open and reflective throughout the research process and prioritized participants' written responses over any preconceived ideas.

Comparison of the primary and second coders' coding revealed a high level of intercoder agreement. First, the second coder's themes matched all of the primary investigator's themes except for "creates a safe space in which survivors feel comfortable sharing their stories."

Additions of specific language identified by the second coder were made in order to reflect both coders' findings (i.e., the second coder's "safe space" reflected an extension of an existing theme and was added to the results in order to reflect both coders' findings).

Within the topic of Unwanted and/or Coercive Sexual Experience, the second coder's themes matched the primary coder's analysis except for the following themes: (a) women afraid to say no to sexual advances, (b) giving in to unwanted sexual advances, (c) males continuing sexual contact despite being told no, (d) pressuring or guiltting women into having sex. Differences were found in the second coder's inclusion of themes reflecting the commonalities of male perpetrated coercive sexual behaviour. The subtheme "Men Pressuring Women into Unwanted and/or Coercive Sexual Experiences" was added to the main results in order to include the second coder's findings. Finally, within the topic of "Personal Experiences in the Context of #MeToo," the primary investigator's and the second coder's thematic analyses showed no meaningful disagreement.

CHAPTER 3

Results

The #MeToo Movement

Participants' descriptions of #MeToo was the first subject explored by this research study (see Figure 1). Women participating in this study responded to open-ended questions broadly asking for narratives about #MeToo, how it started, its purpose in society, and how they first became aware of it (Appendix V). Participant descriptions of #MeToo reflected knowledge of cultural information communicated through social media, social interactions, and other sources. This information about #MeToo represented an internalized "I position" involved in shaping how the women participating in this study understood their personal experiences. The themes that arose

across participants' writing about #MeToo included: *Feeling Less Alone Challenges Stigma, Validation Combats Silencing, and Accountability for Perpetrators.*

Feeling less alone challenges stigma. Women participating in this study described #MeToo as connecting women sharing similar unwanted and/or coercive sexual experiences. A common theme across participants' writing was the concept that feeling less alone can challenge common stigma about unwanted and/or coercive sexual experiences. For example: "I feel it is important to hear the stories of other women and to feel comforted knowing that I am not the only person who has felt this way" (Participant 1). Specifically, participants talked about how feeling less alone challenges the consequences of stigma, including shame, powerlessness, and the fear of backlash from rape culture.

Feeling less alone challenges shame. Women participating in this study wrote about the community formed by #MeToo as protecting against feeling "alone," which was linked to feeling less "ashamed." As Participant 2 described, "The MeToo movement gives me the freedom to talk about events such as this, tells me that I am not alone, and that there is nothing for me to be ashamed of." The fear of sharing an unwanted and/or coercive sexual experience and feeling isolated in this experience was discussed as a means of silencing women's voices. For example, "The movement is to empower women with telling/reporting their stories and not to be ashamed of it, attempting to de-stigmatize it. The hashtag is to help bring these women together and have their voices heard" (Participant 8).

Participant 5 made a connection between the environment prior to #MeToo and the environment that preceded it: "[#MeToo] is very important because in the past it wasn't something that was talked about often. By having movements like this it allows for women to feel supported, understood, and cared about." Others shared similar sentiments about the #MeToo and a

community of shared experience: “[#MeToo helps] other women know that they are not alone in this struggle” (Participant 1), “It shed some light on how much of an issue sexual assault is” (Participant 4), “[The] aim [is] to make a lot of suffering people feel better and not alone” (Participant 9), and “The concept that you are not alone with what you are going through — there [are many] others who happen to be close to you that have experienced unwanted sexual attention or behaviours hence Me Too” (Participant 13).

Participant 7 succinctly conveyed what the community formed by #MeToo means to her: “It can all be summed up in one sentence. Not all men have harassed a woman, BUT all women have been harassed by a man.” In essence, rape culture is a dominant yet unspoken force in the lives of women. Women participating in this study described the importance of community in helping survivors to feel less isolated and less ashamed, and in turn, gives women a voice to discuss unwanted and/or coercive sexual experiences.

Feeling less alone challenges powerlessness. Another theme that arose from participant responses was community’s role in challenging feelings of powerlessness. A community of women with shared experiences was described as carrying social power not afforded to individual women. Participant 1 clearly articulated this concept in the following excerpt:

[...] [W]hen we do not speak on these issues we feel that we are the only ones it happens to and that we are powerless victims. When we speak together, we feel less alone in this struggle and can stand together to say that sexual assault and harassment does happen and that when we talk about it it will not allow it to continue.

The idea of power through feeling less alone was reflected in several participants’ written responses: “[#MeToo] leads to women having an autonomous voice - they can raise consciousness and empathize with other women, feel less alone” (Participant 11), “[...] [T]he words and actions

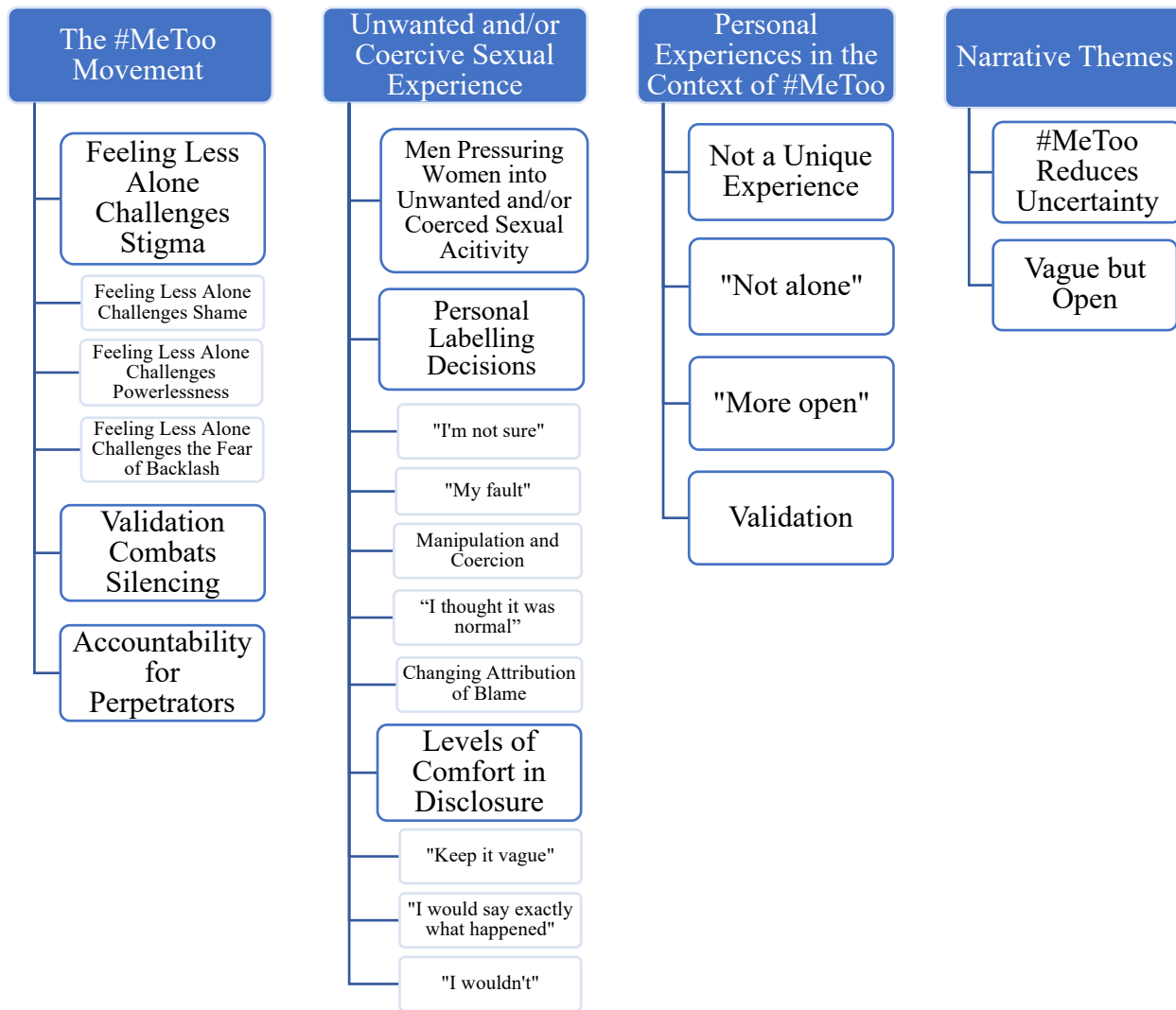


Figure 1. Themes found across and within participants' written responses.

of just a few people speaking out against sexual harassment/assault gave other women the courage to share their own stories of sexual abuse within and outside of Hollywood” (10), and “I think the motifs are to have survivors of sexual assaults heard and empower them to stand up for themselves and not be afraid to tell someone what happened.” (Participant 8). Participants’ writing suggested that identifying with a community of women with shared experiences can challenge the powerlessness felt by individual women within rape culture.

Feeling less alone challenges the fear of backlash. Finally, participants spoke about the role of feeling less alone in reducing the fear of backlash from rape culture. For example, Participant 11 wrote:

It gives women a place to share their experiences without fear of backlash. Many women are too afraid to speak up about what happened to them because they are scared they won't get the support they need. #MeToo provided that support.

The role of community was described as one that mitigated the fear of hostile reactions to disclosure through identification with a supportive group of people: “[T]he #MeToo movement it not only empowered women to share their stories, it normalized supporters sharing information about these issues” (Participant 8). Participants also described the community formed by #MeToo as “a safe place to share stories” (Participant 1), “[a] group that makes it less intimidating to talk about sexual assault” (Participant 6), and “[creating] a sense of safety, and many women felt that they could finally tell their stories because they weren't alone and there were people there to listen” (Participant 11). “Safety” was described as counterbalancing hostility with the support of others sharing in similar experiences.

Validation combats silencing. #MeToo was described as encouraging the validation of women’s unwanted and/or coercive sexual experiences against cultural misrepresentation. As

such, validation was perceived as challenging the cultural silencing tactics of rape culture by providing a safe space for sharing experiences. Participant 2 spoke about this shift: “It's finally validating survivors and not gaslighting them or ignoring them completely.” Moreover, Participant 7 addressed a common misrepresentation of #MeToo by critics: “[T]he goal of metoo is NOT to blame all men. It's there to show that sexual harassment is a real problem that happens to women and girls all the time.” Both excerpts exemplify the perceived importance of validating women’s experiences and combating misrepresentation in the face of hostile culture.

Moreover, according to Participant 13, education and public awareness are other forms of validation that can challenge silencing tactics:

I believe [#MeToo’s] motives are to share stories that will enlighten others who may not have had these encounters to understand that sexual assault and harassment is never okay, and that it is currently a huge tactic used to coerce victims and make them feel powerless. The goal of the movement is to bring light to the conversation that is long over due about sexual assault.

Others shared this sentiment by describing #MeToo as “[e]nlightening the public about rampant misogyny and rape culture” (Participant 2), “[shedding] some light on how much of an issue sexual assault is” (Participant 4), and “[...] letting people know that these issues do still exist in the current climate, and that we need to make sure all people know that this is never okay” (Participant 1).

Participant 8 described #MeToo as bringing public awareness to the statistics of sexual assault: “The idea that people believe it doesn't happen to people they know is also an issue to address, because the rate of women experiencing sexual assault (if I'm not wrong) is about 1 in 4.” Women participating in this study often spoke to the misrepresentation and complete marginalization of women’s experience and voices. By encouraging conversation about statistics

and women's lived experiences, #MeToo was described as challenging culture through validation. As Participant 10 wrote, "Firstly, when we share our stories we are able to educate people about the issues and become aware of them - this leads to policy changes and a new feminist conversation about how to stop sexual exploitation."

Accountability for perpetrators. A topic discussed by women participating in this study was the idea that #MeToo represented increased consequences for perpetrators. Participant 9 wrote "[I]t can [frighten] the assaulters and can change some minds about the respect you need to show to other people" and Participant 2 stated that #MeToo is "holding cis-men accountable for their actions for the most part." In line with these quotes, participants also mentioned various high-profile cases such as Harvey Weinstein (Participant 4 and 10) and Aziz Ansari (Participant 13). Nevertheless, it should be noted that women's responses were weighted toward how #MeToo challenges cultural norms that harm women (compared to the impact on perpetrators).

Unwanted and/or Coercive Sexual Experiences

Participants' descriptions of unwanted and/or coercive sexual experiences was the second topic explored by this research study. Women participating in this study responded to open-ended questions asking for as much description about an unwanted and/or coercive sexual experience as they were comfortable sharing, how they labelled this experience, and how they would describe this experience to someone else (Appendix V). Labelling decisions reflect the result of negotiation between competing "I voices." Specifically, labelling represents an interaction between knowledge of existing rape culture and knowledge of "#MeToo" (see above). Participating women's responses were grouped into the following themes (see Figure 1): *Men Pressuring Women into Unwanted and/or Coerced Sexual Activity*, *Personal Experience Labels*, *Levels of Comfort in Disclosure*, and *Changes in Labelling*.

Men pressuring women into unwanted and/or coerced sexual activity. Participants were asked to provide a description of an unwanted and/or coercive sexual experience using as much detail as they felt was necessary to describe this experience. Women participating in this study described varied experiences in which men ignored their lack of consent and pressured them into sexual activity by use of threat. Despite describing varied experiences, the theme common across all participants' writing was men's use of "pressure" and the internal experience of this "pressure."

Male "pressure" was described in the form of (a) guiltning women into sexual activity (Participant 1, 9, and 11), (b) making a woman fear for her safety and/or reputation (Participant 4, 5, 6, 7, and 13) and (c) repeated requests to engage in sexual activity despite a woman communicating her lack of interest and/or consent (Participant 2, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, and 12). Pressure through guilt often took the form of male perpetrators suggesting that women's lack of interest and consent meant that the women did not care about them. Pressure through fear was described as women fearing what a man would do if they did not engage in sexual activity (e.g., release intimate "pictures," become "angry," become violent). Finally, pressure through repeated requests for sex was often described as another means for guilt by tacitly suggesting a woman's lack of interest and consent was hurtful and unfair.

Personal experience labels. Participants were asked to share the label they would use to most accurately identify their unwanted and/or coercive sexual experience. Women participating in this study often shared multiple terms they would use to identify their experience and often in the form of a narrative explanation for their decision. The following were the common subthemes that arose across participants' writing about labelling: "*I'm not sure,*" "*My fault,*" *Manipulation or Coercion,* "*I thought it was normal,*" and *Changing Attribution of Blame.*

“I’m not sure.” Participant 1 described her then-boyfriend continually “pressure[ing] [her] into having sex” by tracking their sexual activity and stating that they “hadn’t been having enough sex lately.” She also described her boyfriend “guilt[ing] [her] into having sex without a condom” by accusing her of not being committed to their relationship. Participant 1 expressed uncertainty about how she would label this experience: “I’m not sure entirely, perhaps sexual coercion.”

Participant 2 described meeting a man online when she was 14 years old and later in-person when she was 17 years old. She described being manipulated into sexual activity that she labelled: “[m]aybe Molestation, the end result of Grooming, perhaps sexual assault, I am not sure.” Participant 5 described an event in which a man she met on an online dating app pressured her to have sex through continual advances after she had expressed “not want[ing] to hook up with him.” She also wrote: “He stayed overnight and I woke up to him touch me and fingering me. We had sex because I didn’t know what to say and then he got up and left.” When asked how she would label this experience, Participant 5 wrote: “I’m not sure, I guess it could be called sexual assault.”

Participant 10 shared an experience in which she was uncomfortable with the escalation in sexual activity with a dating partner:

I wanted to kiss him of course, but I mostly wanted to talk. He immediately asked if the backseat was big enough, we moved there and started to kiss. Without asking for my consent, he lifted my shirt and bra and put his mouth on my nipples which I was not ready for. [...] I said I was uncomfortable and it was my first time doing anything, then asked if we could just kiss for now. He said sure and we kept kissing and then laid down, but he tried to go under my shirt again. I tried to get out of the situation by asking if we could just talk, but he said "we can talk later" and went back to kissing me. [...] Then, he lifted

my shirt up and kissed my nipples again. This time, I didn't say anything. I just let it happen.

She described this experience as making her feel “[...] so pressured and small and powerless.” In discussing how she would label this experience, Participant 10 expressed uncertainty based on the perceived severity of the experience:

I actually have so much trouble with this. I know it was a form of sexual coercion. I guess I would call it sexual assault? I feel bad saying that because it wasn't rape but still, it falls on the spectrum of sexual assault. It also happened multiple times throughout our relationship, which I would call sexual abuse.

“My fault.” Participant 4 described a date in which the man ignored her refusal to engage in sexual activity:

I was kind of afraid to say anything at this point because he was a lot bigger than I, and since I didn't really know him I don't know how he would have reacted. Clearly he didn't listen to me at first, so I was afraid that he could get angry. He ended up performing oral sex and fingered me as well and I definitely didn't want that to happen at all. I was very uncomfortable but I guess I was too afraid to say anything.

Participant 4 labelled this experience as “putting [her]self in a bad situation,” explaining further: “I know it's not all my fault, obviously it's mostly his, but I blame myself for putting myself in that situation. The least I could do is try to avoid situations like that.”

Participant 12 described being pressured by a male classmate into engaging in sexual activity: “We ended up going to my room and making out and one thing led to the next. I did not want to have sex with him, and he seemed frustrated so he kept pressuring me to do oral and I did,

I felt bad after and guilty.” She labelled this experience as “[a] learning experience” and that she “wouldn't put [her]self in this situation today and would speak up more.”

Participant 9 wrote that by her then-boyfriend “persuaded [her] to have [her] first sexual relation” by telling her “that [she] should be ashamed of being a virgin at 21 years old” and threatening to end the relationship. She wrote that she would describe this experience as “kind of an error, because [she] wanted this to be special.”

Participant 11 shared an experience in which a male friend pressured her into sexual activity:

I dont remember how it happened but we started making out. He tried to take my shirt of, but I told him that I didnt want him to do that. He said okay and we kept making out. [...] He took my shirt off again, this time I let him, I didnt want to be called a tease. Things escalated, he was on top of me, everything happened so fast. I felt conflicted because I liked him, but that wasnt how I wanted to lose my virginity. I panicked and told him to stop, I explained to him how I was feeling. He apologized for pushing me and helped me put my shirt back on. [...] Soon after he started making jokes about how I was teasing him and he was so ready to go and now I was giving him blue balls, he made me feel bad. I curled in on myself because of what he was saying. [...] Then everything started up again, he was kissing me, grabbing me, pushing me, pulling me, putting me where he wanted me. I let it happen, I couldn't stop him again, I went through the motions. He didnt try to put his penis in [me], but he didnt put other parts of his body in me. And I let him, I couldn't keep stopping him.

Participant 11 later wrote about how she would label this experience: “My fault because I didnt stop him.”

Manipulation or coercion. Participant 13 wrote about her then-boyfriend pressuring her into having sex with the threat of sharing “intimate pictures” of her. She wrote: “Although part of me was consensual, the other part of me was scared that he would show people.” Participant 13 said she would label this experience as “[m]anipulation.”

Participant 7 shared an experience in which she was pressured into having sex with a man “because [she] was scared for her safety.” In labelling this experience, she said it was “sexual exploitation / coercion.” Additionally, Participant 8 labelled an experience used “sexual coercion” to describe being pressured by her boyfriend to engage in sexual activity she was uncomfortable with. Specifically, she wrote:

I would label the experience sexual coercion for sure, but I also feel bad calling it this because it wasn't intentional and don't want to make him sound like a bad person. I think many people just aren't educated enough about consent and don't take "no" as a proper no, and just take it as a "feel free to try to convince me.”

“I thought it was normal.” Women participating in this study often described a time in which they considered an unwanted and/or coercive sexual experience as “normal.” Participant 1 described the sequence in which her understanding of her experience as “normal” changed in relation to her understanding of coercion within romantic relationships:

Initially I was so in love with him that I thought it was normal. Perhaps not normal, I knew it was not right because it made me feel so awful inside that I had to beg him to see it my way and he continued not to listen, but I never thought about it that it was not okay. I thought that because he was my boyfriend, it was my "job" as his girlfriend to take care of him and do things to keep him happy, even if it meant sacrificing what I wanted. Now I know that is not a healthy relationship, that sexual coercion and assault can in fact happen

with someone you are in a relationship with, and that no ALWAYS means no. It took me a very long time to figure out these feelings.

Participant 5 shared a similar experience, “When it first happened I didn't think anything of it. But as time is going by I am realizing that what he did to me was wrong.” Moreover, Participant 13 wrote, “As I grew up I realized that what he did was not okay.”

Changing attribution of blame. Participants also described changes in their attribution of blame for an unwanted and/or coercive sexual experience. For example:

I think previously I didn't realize what the situation really was, I didn't label it as sexual coercion. I know from the outside that's what it was, but it feels more complicated when you know the person wasn't trying to pressure me into sexual activity that I absolutely did not want to do. I thought it was just the lack of understanding of what no means. [...] Now I realize that no is clearly understood and it's not fair to try to convince someone to do something when they've stated they don't want to (Participant 8).

Similarly, Participant 9 described first thinking that “[the unwanted sexual experience] was something [she] wanted to do too, but after a while [she began to feel] that it was wrong.” This shift of blame from oneself to the perpetrator was a common theme across responses.

Participant 10 described a change in self-blame once she began to view her own actions as a direct response to the actions of the perpetrator. She framed her writing with her present realization that she was “gaslighted” (i.e., manipulated into questioning her judgement and sanity): “Right afterwards, I really questioned myself because of the gaslighting. I felt like I wasn't clear enough or the fact that I just pretended to be into it made my experience somehow not valid.” She later wrote: “[N]ow I realize that he violated my boundaries over and over and never asked for my consent.” Participant 10's writing indicated that, over time, she began to view the perpetrator's

actions as encouraging her to blame herself. She attributed this change in perspective to “talk[ing] about this situation with [her] best friends.” She wrote that her friends “reassured [her] that it was not [her] fault [...] and [that she] was not overreacting.” In this case, supportive friends provided her with a new perspective that encouraged Participant 10 to re-evaluate her understanding of the perpetrator’s actions within an unwanted sexual experience.

Participant 11 discussed more subtle changes in her sense of self-blame:

I've come to understand that it wasn't all my fault, but I do still take some of the blame for it. I think my thoughts changed the more I learned about sexual assault and what it entails. I don't think of this experience as sexual assault, I don't even know if it classifies. But it is something I have to accept happened.

Participant 11 described learning more about sexual assault slightly changing her attribution of “fault” within an unwanted sexual experience. She also indicated that this change was not dichotomous and that she still attributed some blame to herself.

Participant 12 described her attribution of blame from the perspective of “a learning lesson” for the future. She wrote, “Everything happens for a reason and through many experiences, each come as a learning lesson. [...] At the time I thought about the experience as a negative one but it became a learning lesson for myself.” From the perspective of “a learning lesson,” Participant 12 indicated that she perceived her actions were partially to blame for the unwanted sexual experience. “A learning lesson” frames this self-blame as something in the past and that future behaviour can be altered to avoid the perpetration of unwanted sexual experiences by men.

Participant 6 wrote that, over time, she came to view herself as “over reacting”: “Yeah I don't think it's a big deal anymore because I might have just been over reacting.” For Participant 6, she viewed her initial perception as incongruent with the unwanted sexual experience.

Contrasting with other participants' writing, Participant 6 reported that she had shifted blame away from the perpetrator and more to her initial appraisal of the unwanted sexual experience. Regardless of the direction of change, it was not uncommon for women to change their attributions of blame for an unwanted and/or coercive sexual experience

Levels of comfort in disclosure. Participants were also asked to consider how they would describe this experience to a third party. Women's descriptions of how they would describe an unwanted and/or coercive sexual experience to someone else were compared to their personal labelling decisions listed above. The following were common subthemes that arose across participants' writing about labelling: "*Keep it vague,*" "*I would say exactly what happened,*" and "*I wouldn't.*"

"Keep it vague." The majority of women participating in this study reported that, were they to describe an unwanted and/or coercive sexual experience to someone else, they would "keep it vague" (Participant 1). Participant 1 said that "[she would] say that [her ex-boyfriend] used [their] relationship to guilt [her] into sexual acts that [she] was unsure about." Participant 5 shared similar feelings, "I would just say that we had sex, I would not give the details about what happened leading up to it or prior to it." Likewise, participant 8 said that she would "describe the situation [as] consensual even though [she] didn't really want to do it." She continued by saying: "It's fine because I knew he care[d] about me, and I did say yes."

These same participants had expressed uncertainty about labelling the experience for themselves. For example, "I'm not sure entirely, perhaps sexual coercion" (Participant 1), "I'm not sure, I guess it could be called sexual assault" (Participant 5), and "I would label the experience sexual coercion for sure, but I also feel bad calling it this because it wasn't intentional and don't

want to make him sound like a bad person” (Participant 8). For these participants, uncertainty in labelling was reflected in the choice of vagueness during disclosure.

Others participating in this study also endorsed “vague” descriptions of an unwanted and/or coercive sexual experience. Participant 11 described an instance in which she actually disclosed her experience to others, “I’ve told other people before, but I seriously down play how bad it was. I didnt want them to look at me differently.” Similarly, Participant 10 described fear and apprehension surrounding how others would respond, “I would describe it as sexual coercion. I’m too scared to say I was sexually assaulted.” Participant 10 and 11 described vague disclosures as lessening their apprehension about sharing their experience with others.

“I would say exactly what happened.” Other participants wrote that their description to someone else would be “I would say exactly what happened” (Participant 6) as how they personally label an unwanted and/or coercive sexual experience. Participant 9 wrote about how continuity between her description to others and personal understanding helps to lessen feelings of shame, “I would say exactly what happened, I don’t think that I should feel ashamed anymore.” Participant 7 and 13 used the same terms in describing their experience to others as they did for how they personally labeled this experience (“sexual exploitation / coercion” and “[m]anipulation,” respectively). Moreover, Participant 2 reported that she would share how the experience genuinely impacted her as opposed to a specific label, “I would tell someone that I felt violated, manipulated, and panicky about what happened.” Overall, continuity between how experiences would be described to others and how they were personally understood was a theme found across participant responses.

“I wouldn’t.” Two participants wrote that they would not share their experiences with someone else. Participant 3 wrote that she would not share this experience and that she personally

labels this unwanted and/or coercive sexual experience as “nothing.” Participant 4 wrote, “I wouldn't. I don't want people to know about the stupid decision I made, and I don't want people to make a big deal out of it. They would be more concerned than I.” She had labelled this experience as “[p]utting [her]self in a bad situation.” Overall, the subthemes within “Levels of Comfort in Disclosure” can be viewed along a continuum. Specifically, “I would keep it vague” represents a middle ground between the two poles of “I wouldn't” and “I would say exactly what happened.” The majority of women participating in this study endorsed either “I would keep it vague” or “I would say exactly what happened.”

Personal Experience in the Context of #MeToo

Participants' understandings of unwanted and/or coercive sexual experiences in relationship to #MeToo was the final topic explored by the study. Participants were asked whether they felt personally impacted by #MeToo, if #MeToo changed how they understood an unwanted and/or coercive sexual experience, and, if there was a change, whether this had been a positive, negative, or neutral experience (Appendix V). Participants were asked to consider their personal experience in the cultural context of #MeToo in order to gain an understanding of how women who have not acknowledged experience #MeToo.

Participating women's responses were grouped into the following themes (see Figure 1): *Not a Unique Experience*, *“Not Alone,”* *“More Open,”* and *“Validation.”*

Not a unique experience. Many women participating in this study wrote about #MeToo as facilitating the realization that their unwanted and/or coercive sexual experience was not a unique experience in society. For example, Participant 2 wrote that #MeToo showed her “[t]hat what happened to [her] was [not] a ‘unique event’ and that it was normal.” Participant 2 tied the concept of “[not] a unique event” to unwanted sexual experiences being “normal” within pre-

existing culture. She went on to explain her comment further: “I believe it has bee[n] a positive experience even though it angered me on how others (even celebrities) had similar or worse experiences too.”

Participant 8 similarly described #MeToo as helping her to become aware of the widespread impact of sexual violence: “I think prior to #MeToo I didn't realize how common and serious the issues of sexual assault was.” Participant 3 shared a similar realization: “I never realized how many women are affected everyday and how hard it can be for someone to speak out about their personal experience involving sexual assault or harassment.”

Participant 13 wrote that both she and her friends have gained a new perspective on sexual violence as a result of #MeToo:

So many of my friends and I have experienced forms of sexual coercion that we didn't really have the language to describe before MeToo. Like, after reading some articles - Aziz Ansari is coming to mind - I realized that even if something isn't the textbook definition of rape, it's still sexual assault. It's still coercion and it's still traumatizing.

She cited the media coverage of Aziz Ansari, a U.S. comedian who was accused of engaging in sexually coercive sexual behaviour (Way, 2018), as providing new “language” in discussing her own and others’ unwanted sexual experiences.

“Not alone.” “Not Alone” represented the emotional support participants experienced after learning about #MeToo. This theme’s emotional component separated it from the educational tone of the theme “Not a Unique Event.” For example, “[#Me Too] just made me feel less alone about my experience” (Participant 2), “I realized that I wasn't alone. It has been a positive experience” (Participant 9), and “[I] [r]ealiz[ed] that other people have gone through this and were brave enough to talk about it” (Participant 6).

Participant 10 wrote that “#MeToo changed [her] perspective to make [her] feel less alone in [her] experience of sexual coercion and gave [her] the language to describe [her] experience” (Participant 10). She further explained what learning about #MeToo has meant for her:

Seeing other women talk about their personal experiences with sexual coercion made me feel so much less alone, and it made me feel [less] ashamed. The biggest issue with sexual assault is carrying the shame of it, but when women are open and vulnerable and they share their experiences, that shame is eradicated and empathy replaces it. It's definitely been a challenging but still positive experience for me.

Similarly, Participant 11 connected #MeToo with a reduction in negative emotions: “Learning about #MeToo has changed how I think about this experience because I know I'm not alone anymore. I dont have to carry the guilt alone anymore.” Participant 10 and 11 directly attributed a reduction in negative feelings about their unwanted sexual experiences to the knowledge that others have experienced similar male perpetrated behaviour.

“More open.” Participants also described being “more open” in discussing their unwanted and/or coercive sexual experiences after #MeToo: “I feel that MeToo has allowed me to be more open about my story and I hope that by sharing these stories, other women will see that it is NEVER okay and will be able to avoid similar situations” (Participant 1). Other participants shared similar experiences: “[#MeToo] made me feel more at ease when talking about it” (Participant 2), “[...] I am feeling more comfortable to talk about these things myself” (Participant 5), and “[...] I think the way I was able to process this situation was impacted positively by this” (Participant 6). Participant 7 extended this theme by describing other “people [as] more open and understanding” (Participant 7).

Furthermore, Participant 10 described the emotions she associates with #MeToo: “Emotions I associate with #MeToo are anger, shame, sadness, and literally madness sometimes. BUT releasing these emotions leads to vulnerability, courage, love, happiness, freedom, and empathy.” This excerpt indicates that Participant 10 viewed expressing negative emotions as leading to increased emotional openness.

Participant 11 spoke about developing increased comfort in discussing her experience but highlighted that this is not a simple process: “#MeToo made me feel like I could talk about what happened to me. I've become a little more open about my experiences, but I still don't talk about it often. For me it's been a pretty neutral experience.” Furthermore, Participant 12 elaborated on the culture in which women's increasing comfort sharing experience occurs:

I think it has had a more positive impact on me and to other women more specifically, I say this because as a woman in society you always have to be careful and look out for yourself. This to me has given a voice to many young girls as well and is encouraging them to speak up.

The theme of participants' feeling and becoming “more open” with their experiences was described as resulting from #MeToo. This said, openness and comfort were described as occurring within a society in which women's apprehension continues to be warranted.

Validation. Women participating in this study also wrote about how #MeToo has helped to validate an unwanted and/or coercive sexual experience as problematic. Participant 10 wrote: “#MeToo has personally impacted me by helping me see that even if I was not raped, I still experienced a form of sexual assault and that is valid.” Her description of #MeToo helping to validate her understanding of her experience was shared by others in this study. For example, “[#MeToo] has helped validate my belief that what happened to me is never okay and that I am

not alone” (Participant 1), “It has changed how I think because I have realized that what happened was wrong and that I should not have to deal with that” (Participant 5), and “Learning about #MeToo has changed how I think about this experience because I know I'm not alone [and] I dont have to carry the guilt alone anymore” (Participant 11). In response to whether her attitudes or beliefs changed after #MeToo, Participant 9 wrote: “First I was ashamed of some things that happened to me in the street, but now, I can see better that I have nothing to be ashamed of.”

Participant 11 said that #MeToo has changed how she feels about an unwanted sexual experience, “Yes, [#MeToo] has changed how I feel about it. I dont take all the blame anymore. I understand that it was a bad thing that happened, but it wasnt all my fault that it did.” Conversely, Participant 1 stated that, although #MeToo has helped to validate her experience, her feelings have remained the same: “I do not believe it changed how I feel about it, but my current feelings are that now I know more and have a better understanding about what happened and I will not let it happen again” (Participant 1). In this sense, #MeToo’s reported impact on validating unwanted sexual experiences as problematic did not always result in changes to participants’ feelings about that same event.

Participant 2 shared her perception about how #MeToo has helped to validate women’s unwanted sexual experiences as problematic:

Sometimes, well most of the time, we have inherent biases and even blinders about what occurs in our society, we also can be in denial about our personal experiences. Education and personal stories from other people can enlighten and challenge us on our personal beliefs.

For Participant 2, #MeToo represented outside perspectives that can help to “challenge” an individual’s biases regarding issues related to sexual violence.

Narrative Themes

The themes presented thus far represented participants' responses to questions strictly within the three topics of inquiry: “#MeToo,” “Unwanted and/or Coercive Sexual Experiences,” and “Personal Experiences in the Context of #MeToo.” Participants' writing about #MeToo and their understanding of an unwanted and/or coercive sexual experience represent internalized “I positions.” These “I positions” interact to shape how women participating in this study view their own experiences within a cultural context. Narrative themes can be derived across the three topic areas assessed in the current study (“#MeToo,” “Unwanted and/or Coercive Sexual Experiences,” and “Personal Experiences in the Context of #MeToo”). These narrative themes represented unique underlying interactions between the “I voices” (Hermans, 1996) that shaped how women in this study experienced potentially contradictory ideas about sexual violence and coercion. The following themes arose across topics (see Figure 1): *#MeToo Reduces Uncertainty* and *Vague but Open*.

#MeToo reduces uncertainty. Across written responses, it was common for women participating in this study to report uncertainty about how they would label an unwanted and/or coercive sexual experience while at the same time indicating that #MeToo provided certainty about at least one aspect of their coercive experience. Participants' depiction of #MeToo was overwhelmingly positive, specifically about the movement's ability to destigmatize, validate, and support women's experiences. This positive view of #MeToo translated, at least in part, to increased clarity about an aspect of their unwanted and/or coercive sexual experience.

For example, Participant 10, who shared an experience in which she was made uncomfortable by a dating partner's escalation in sexual activity, described difficulty in labelling her experience: “I actually have so much trouble with this [...] I feel bad saying that because it

wasn't rape but still, it falls on the spectrum of sexual assault.” Despite difficulty in labelling this experience, Participant 10 stated that “#MeToo changed [her] perspective to make [her] feel less alone in [her] experience of sexual coercion and gave [her] the language to describe [her] experience.” Despite uncertainty about where this experience “falls on the spectrum of sexual assault,” Participant 10 indicated that #MeToo gave her “the language” to better describe this “spectrum of sexual assault.” She went on to write about the emotions she associated with #MeToo: “[A]nger, shame, sadness, and literally madness sometimes. BUT releasing these emotions leads to vulnerability, courage, love, happiness, freedom, and empathy.” Participant 10’s description of #MeToo suggested a process by which negative emotions become positive and by which women gain new “language” in conceptualizing previous uncertainty about labelling an unwanted sexual experience. She concluded with the following statement: “#MeToo has personally impacted me by helping me see that even if I was not raped, I still experienced a form of sexual assault and that is valid.”

#MeToo encouraging the reduction of participants’ uncertainty about an unwanted sexual and/or coercive experience was a common narrative across responses. Many women participating in this study described gaining new perspective via #MeToo despite also endorsing uncertainty about how they would label an unwanted and/or coercive sexual experience. Participant 1, who described being pressured into sexual activity by an ex-boyfriend, labelled this experience with uncertainty: “I’m not sure entirely, perhaps sexual coercion.” She went on to write about her experience with #MeToo: “[#MeToo] has helped validate my belief that what happened to me is never okay and that I am not alone.” Despite describing uncertainty about how to label this unwanted sexual experience, Participant 1 described #MeToo as validating her underlying beliefs about her experience as “never okay.” Participant 1’s use of “never okay” suggested a shift away

from her previous belief that it was her “‘job’ as his girlfriend to take care of him and do things to keep him happy” and a shift toward an increased certainty that this experience was harmful. At the same time, she also described this unwanted sexual experience in terms of “a learning lesson.”

Participant 5 also expressed uncertainty about an unwanted sexual experience: “I’m not sure, I guess it could be called sexual assault” (Participant 5). Despite expressing uncertainty in how she would label this unwanted sexual experience, Participant 5 wrote that #MeToo “has changed how [she] think[s] because [she has] realized that what happened was wrong and that [she] should not have to deal with that.” Participant 5 added that #MeToo encourages women to feel more comfortable sharing their experiences and that “[...] [she] [feels] more comfortable to talk about these things [her]self.” Similarly, Participant 9 labelled her experience as “kind of an error, because [she] wanted [her first sexual experience] to be special.” She went on to describe #MeToo as helping her realize “that [she] wasn’t alone [and] it has been a positive experience.”

In labelling a male friend pressuring her into sexual activity, Participant 11 expressed uncertainty about the term “sexual assault”: “I dont think of this experience as sexual assault, I dont even know if it classifies.” She also said that #MeToo has changed how she feels about this experience: “I dont take all the blame anymore. I understand that it was a bad thing that happened, but it wasnt all my fault that it did.” Participant 11 described #MeToo’s influence as an incremental: “I’ve become a little more open about my experiences, but I still dont talk about it often. For me it’s been a pretty neutral experience.” Overall, Participant 11 described #MeToo as helping her to gain certainty about the blame she attributed to herself and an increased ability to discuss her experience with others.

Participant 13, who described being pressured into sex by an ex-boyfriend with the threat of releasing intimate pictures, described the conflicting elements that comprised her understanding

of this experience: “Although part of me was consensual, the other part of me was scared that he would show people.” Similar to Participant 10, Participant 13 wrote about “language”: “So many of my friends and I have experienced forms of sexual coercion that we didn't really have the language to describe before MeToo.” She went to cite the media coverage of Aziz Ansari as a particular point of realization that “even if something isn't the textbook definition of rape, it's still sexual assault. It's still coercion and it's still traumatizing.”

In summary, women participating in this study described uncertainty about labelling an unwanted sexual experience and a partial reduction in uncertainty through their exposure to #MeToo. Participants described #MeToo as helping to partially reduce uncertainty through (a) new “language” by which to understand unwanted and/or coercive sexual experiences (Participant 10 and 13), (b) hearing others speak about experiences similar to their own (Participant 1 and 9), (c) increasing women’s comfort in discussing topics of sexual coercion (Participant 5 and 11), and (d) validating coercive sexual experiences along a “spectrum” of severity (Participant 1, 10, and 13). Overall, participants’ uncertainty about how to label an unwanted and/or coercive sexual experience did not appear to have been a barrier to positive engagement with #MeToo.

Vague but open. Many women participating in this study described “keep[ing] it vague” when talking to others about an unwanted and/or coercive sexual experience despite also indicating that #MeToo had helped them to be more open in talking about their experience. These descriptions appeared contradictory and suggested a complicated picture of how unwanted and/or coercive sexual experiences were shared and received. For example, Participant 5 stated that she would “just say that [they] had sex [and she] would not give the details about what happened leading up to it or prior to it.” Participant 5 also wrote that “[...] [she is] feeling more comfortable to talk about these things [her]self.” Participant 8 shared similar sentiments: “[I would] describe

the situation [as] consensual even though I didn't really want to do it. It's fine because I knew he care[d] about me, and I did say yes.” She also noted that, for her, #MeToo encourages “survivors of sexual assaults [to be] heard and empower[s] them to stand up for themselves and not be afraid to tell someone what happened.”

Participant 1 said that she would “keep it vague” by telling someone that “[her ex-boyfriend] used [their] relationship to guilt [her] into sexual acts that [she] was unsure about.” She also wrote about feeling more open in sharing her experience: “I feel that MeToo has allowed me to be more open about my story and I hope that by sharing these stories, other women will see that it is NEVER okay and will be able to avoid similar situations.” Participant 1 connected “sharing stories” to “a learning lesson,” indicating her view of having control over an unwanted and/or coercive sexual experience in the future.

Participant 11 described an instance in which she disclosed her experience to others: “I've told other people before, but I seriously down play how bad it was. I didnt want them to look at me differently.” She also wrote that, “#MeToo made [her] feel like [she] could talk about what happened to [her].” She also said that she has “become a little more open about [her] experiences, but [that she] still [doesn't] talk about it often.” Participant 10 described fearing others' reactions in response to her sharing her experience, “I would describe it as sexual coercion. I'm too scared to say I was sexually assaulted.” She also wrote that #MeToo is associated with emotions such as “[...] anger, shame, sadness, and literally madness sometimes. BUT releasing these emotions leads to vulnerability, courage, love, happiness, freedom, and empathy.” For Participant 10, although releasing negative emotions lead to positive outcomes, she also talked about her fear about experiencing those negative emotions.

In summary, women participating in this study described “keep[ing] it vague” when describing an unwanted and/or coercive sexual experience to someone while also stating that they felt more open in sharing these same experiences. Several women participating in this study indicated certain barriers to the full expression of their experience, including (a) anticipation of negative reactions from others (Participant 10 and 11) and concern about identifying their ex-partner’s behaviour as harmful (Participant 1, 5, and 8). Overall, the narrative of feeling more open in sharing experiences while also “keep[ing] it vague” suggested that participants’ engagement with #MeToo has resulted in a partial rather than complete shift toward comfort in sharing unwanted and/or coercive sexual experiences.

CHAPTER 4

Discussion

This study explored what, if any, influence #MeToo has had on women who have not acknowledged rape or sexual assault. Specifically, it examined how #MeToo affects the internal “I positions” that shape personal narratives as well as the dissonance between internal positions (Hermans et al., 1992; Peng & Nesbitt, 1999). The introduction of #MeToo represents a potential for altered relationships between the personal and cultural “I positions” of women who have not acknowledged (Hermans et al., 1992). The present study thus examined the perspectives of women who have not acknowledged in relation to #MeToo.

Thematic analysis of participants’ written responses was conducted for three topics of research interest: “The #MeToo Movement,” “Unwanted and/or Coercive Sexual Experiences,” and “Personal Experience in the Context of #MeToo.” Themes were also identified across these topics in order to identify narrative trends about participants’ perceptions of an unwanted and/or coercive sexual experience in the context of #MeToo. The narrative themes identified were

“#MeToo Reduces Uncertainty” and “Vague but Open.” The following discussion of results will (a) summarize the themes found within each topic, and (b) discuss each theme using the relevant literature.

The #MeToo Movement

Women’s descriptions of the #MeToo movement centered on three main themes that encompassed the awareness that male perpetrated sexual coercion is a common occurrence (“Feeling Less Alone Challenges Stigma”), that this awareness can, in turn, help create safe spaces for disclosure and challenge cultural mischaracterizations of sexual coercion (“Validation Combats Silencing”), and that perpetrators should be held accountable for their actions (“Accountability for Perpetrators”). Participants often wrote about #MeToo as raising their personal awareness about the widespread presence of sexual violence in the lives of women (Johnstone, 2013). Specifically, #MeToo was described as spotlighting the fact that many women have experienced harmful male perpetrated acts of sexual coercion and violence. Participants also depicted #MeToo as encouraging society to recognize the frequency of sexual violence within culture, a fact that means participants are “not alone.” The realization of “not being alone” reflected an awareness of what Gavey (2005) termed the “building blocks” of rape culture. Specifically, participants described #MeToo as helping themselves and others to identify problematic behaviour that was once normalized as “healthy” sex (Gavey, 2005).

The majority of women participating in this study spoke about the positive impact that feeling less alone has had in challenging their feelings of powerlessness and shame. Shame and powerlessness were depicted as resulting from their belief that an unwanted and/or coercive sexual experience was “a unique event.” Participants described feeling “not alone” as challenging negative emotions by allowing them to identify with the experiences of other women, especially

experiences that fall outside of narrow cultural scripts. Rape scripts shape the cultural understanding of sexual violence and are maintained by normalizing and minimizing experiences that do not fit within these narrow and infrequent sets of experiences (Hammond, Barry, & Rodriguez, 2011). For example, blitz-rape scripts depict sexual violence as perpetrated by strangers (Bondurant, 2001), despite research suggesting that men are more likely to assault women they know than they are to target strangers (Keighley, 2017; Sinozich & Langton, 2014). Therefore, when many women participating in this study share experiences in which a male romantic partner was sexually coercive, the notion that blitz-rape is the most common form of sexual violence is contradicted.

Moreover, #MeToo's impact on feelings of shame and powerlessness was described as mitigating the fear of cultural backlash to the disclosure of coercive sexual experiences. Rape culture allows women to speak but values their voices far less than those of men (Devault, 1999; Spender, 1980); therefore, participants' depiction of #MeToo as providing "safety" suggested that a collective voice has greater social power than the power afforded to an individual woman. This social power was described as mitigating the fear of rape culture's backlash by forcing society to value a collective voice. In addition to a collective voice, public awareness of #MeToo was described as challenging cultural mischaracterizations of the unwanted and/or coercive sexual behaviour of men. "Validation" was described as "Combatting Silencing" by making public the reality of women's lived experience with sexual coercion and violence. Women taking authorship of the narratives of sexual violence challenges the tactics of a culture in which myths such as "miscommunication" are accepted defenses of male behaviour (Dardis, Kraft, & Gidycz, 2017; Littleton, Tabernik, Canales, & Backstrom, 2009).

Finally, whereas the cultural conversations surrounding #MeToo often discuss male perpetrators' actions and the social and legal consequences for men who sexually coerce and assault women (Garcia, 2017), the majority of participants in the present study focused more on the personal insights that arose as a result their introduction to #MeToo. This said, two participants spoke directly about #MeToo's perceived role in providing social consequences for men who engage in coercive sexual behaviour. Participants' writing about male accountability further connects with a cultural shift in which women's voices are becoming prioritized in conversations about sexual violence (Gavey, 2005).

The absence of more discussion about male accountability across responses may suggest that this was not deemed to be the most salient topic by participants writing about #MeToo. Another explanation could be that women participating in this study experienced discomfort with labelling a perpetrator's actions as either harmful or severe enough for social and/or legal punishment. Peterson and Muehlenhard (2011) found that a barrier to women labelling an experience as rape or sexual assault was their discomfort with labelling their partner as a "rapist." Similarly, rape culture's normalization of stranger perpetrated sexual violence was found to result in women's greater self-blame after a sexually coercive experience that was perpetrated by a romantic partner (Koss, 2011). Therefore, participants' perception of their own "fault" potentially created a level of discomfort in considering the topic of "abuser accountability."

Unwanted and/or Coercive Sexual Experiences

Women's writing about unwanted and/or coercive sexual experiences centered on three main themes that spoke to women having been pressured to engage in unwanted sexual activity ("Men Pressuring Women into Unwanted and/or Coercive Sexual Experiences"), their labelling of these experiences ("Personal Labelling Decisions"), and their degree of comfort in sharing these

experiences with others (“Levels of Comfort in Disclosure”). First, every woman participating in this study endorsed having been pressured into unwanted sexual activity by a man. This theme reflected how the reality of sexual violence and coercion is often minimized or completely ignored by cultural rape scripts. For example, the myth of miscommunication (Beres, 2010; Gavey, 2005) suggests that many acts of sexual violence and coercion are “accidents” resulting from men’s inability to detect nonverbal cues. However, women participating in this study wrote about experiences that did not fit this depiction of sexual coercion by describing men who used continual verbal pressure and implied threat. Overall, women participating in this study reported unwanted and/or coercive sexual experiences that fell outside of culturally prescribed rape scripts.

In addition to how participants reported experiencing men’s coercive sexual behaviour, participants also wrote about how they would label this behaviour. “I’m not sure” often reflected hesitance to label an experience with a single term which represented conflict between women’s lived experience and their knowledge of how society views this experience. Conversely, “Manipulation or Coercion” served as a compromise by differentiating between these two positions. “I’m not sure” reflected the cognitive dissonance captured in Johnstone’s (2013) *Ambivalent Voice*, or the simultaneous understanding of an unwanted and/or coercive sexual experience both as “rape” and “not rape.” These findings also underscore the importance of culture in shaping the language that is permitted for labelling coercive sexual experiences (Devault, 1999). Therefore, “I’m not sure” represents a label for an unwanted and/or coercive experience outside of experiences commonly recognized by society. Overall, “I’m not sure” reflected a state of dialectical thinking (Peng & Nesbitt, 1999) in which aspects of two conflicting positions (ie. personal experience and societal expectations) were taken as true.

Moreover, women participating in this study described varying degrees of self-blame when discussing an unwanted and/or coercive sexual experience. Participants often spoke about the concept of “consent,” or explicit verbal permission, versus “wantedness,” or the inner desire to engage in sexual activity (Peterson & Muehlenhaard, 2007). Peterson and Muehlenhaard (2007) found that self-blame was more likely to occur in the presence of a woman’s own sexual wanting and the absence of verbal consent or in the presence of pressured consent and the absence of sexual wanting. Women participating in this study often spoke about “fault” when they had wanted to engage in sexual activity but did not provide consent or when they were pressured to consent to sexual activity that made them uncomfortable. Furthermore, participants also described a change in the amount of self-blame they attributed to themselves over time. Notably, some participants wrote from two different “I positions” (Hermans et al., 1992), both from what their unwanted experience “looked like” and what this experience “felt like.” Moreover, participants’ change in self-blame required that they partially resolve the dissonance between how they view their experience and how others view that same experience.

In a qualitative study of eight Canadian women who did not acknowledge, a theme similar to “a learning lesson” emerged (Glos, Johnstone, Fritz, & Wilson, 2018). Specifically, women who did not acknowledge endorsed self-blame for an unwanted sexual experience by viewing their own behaviour as a “learning experience.” Glos et al. (2018) connected this theme with the “just world hypothesis” that views individuals as generally “getting what they deserve” (Lerner & Miller, 1978). The present study’s theme of “a learning lesson” draws upon this fallacy by making a causal link between the aspects of an unwanted sexual experience within a woman’s control (ie. her actions) and the occurrence of a man’s unwanted and coercive sexual behaviour toward her. The “just world hypothesis” relieves fear about an individual’s powerlessness over negative

experiences but also breeds a sense of shame when individuals are inevitably unable to control the actions of others. For some participants, they described fearing for their safety and labelled this experience with self-blame. Similarly, Harned's (2005) research linked women's labelling decisions to wide-spread myths that blame survivors for their clothing or imply that women secretly want to be assaulted. "A learning lesson" attributed blame more toward women's own behaviours and less toward a male perpetrator's decision to act in a coercive and violent manner.

"I thought it was normal" spoke directly to the feminist position that sexual violence is normalized within everyday culture and Gavey's (2005) argument that normalized rape scripts serve as the foundation of rape culture. The shift from an experience being considered "normal" to "not okay" also reflected Johnstone's (2013) *Ambivalent Voice*, specifically in the ongoing negotiation of which aspects of an experience are considered "normal" versus which aspects are considered "harmful." "I thought it was normal" also reflected a shift toward dialectical thinking (Peng & Nesbitt, 1999) by which certain pieces of how participants once thought about an experience are considered true in addition to new and contradictory ways of understanding this same experience.

Similar to the range of responses women provided for how they would label unwanted and/or coercive sexual experiences, women tended to range in whether or not and/or how they would describe their experiences of sexual coercion to others. In fact, some women indicated that they simply would not tell others about their experience, whereas some indicated they would "keep it vague," and still others indicated that they "would say exactly what happened." "Keep it vague" reflected Glos et al.'s (2018) finding of "The Reciprocal Influence of Disclosure," in which women described altering their description of an unwanted and/or coercive sexual experience in order to protect against potential negative reactions. Apprehension about reactions from others has also

been reflected in the literature (Campbell & Ahrens, 2012; Campbell, Ahrens, Sefl, Wasco, & Barnes, 2001; Ullman, 2010). Conversely, “I would say exactly what happened” and “I wouldn’t” reflected participant’s decision to definitively share or not to share their experience with someone else rather than “keep it vague.”

Lastly, responses also reflected that women in this study may label coercive sexual experiences differently across time. Many participants wrote about unwanted and/or coercive experiences as “complicated” and requiring time and effort in order to find resolution. Recovering from the effects of “gaslighting” and the clarity gained by “talk[ing] about this situation with [her] best friends” were two ways in which women participating in this study reported resolving dissonance between how an experience “looks” and “feels.” This said, the resolution of dissonance did not always involve the removal of self-blame, but instead incorporated pieces of self-blame and perpetrator blame in a more dialectical approach (Peng & Nesbitt, 1999).

Personal Experiences in the Context of #MeToo

The topic of “Personal Experiences in the Context of #MeToo” represented interaction between the culture and the personal experience of women who have not acknowledged. The theory of the “dialogical self” (Hermans et al., 1992) posits that an individual possesses a multitude of imagined perspectives engaged in constant communication (or dialogue). For example, “it was rape” and “society does not view this experience as rape” form a conflictual interaction.

Women’s writing about their personal experiences in the context of #MeToo centered on four main themes that encompassed learning about the widespread nature of sexual violence (“Not a Unique Experience”), feeling supported by learning that they are “not alone” (“Not alone”), feeling more comfortable talking about these experiences (“More open”), and gaining confirmation about how they perceive an unwanted sexual experience (“Validation”). There was

a high degree of overlap between the topics “The #MeToo Movement” and “Personal Experiences in the Context of #MeToo” given that women’s overall understanding of #MeToo was expected to be similar to the way in which #MeToo has impacted them personally.

Participants’ view of #MeToo as increasing their own awareness about the widespread impact of sexual violence resulted in the realization that theirs was “not a unique experience.” Women participating in this study predominantly described their initial exposure to #MeToo as raising their awareness about the presence of coercion and sexual violence in the lives of women. In terms of Herman’s (1992) theorized “I positions,” “Not a unique experience” represented participants’ initial exposure to the messaging of #MeToo’s “I voice.” The positive experience participants described after learning that coercive sexual experiences are more frequent than they had realized spoke to a shift away from the silencing of rape culture (Campbell & Ahrens, 2012; Campbell et al., 2001; Ullman, 2010). For many participants, discovering that countless other women have had similar experiences to their own reduced the fear that their experience was somehow “unique” to them.

Women participating in this study described their existing “I voice” of shame in “uniqueness” as shifting toward a sense of community. It thus makes sense that as women began to shift toward a sense of community, they described feeling “not alone.” “Not alone” extended the realization that their experience was not “unique” by capturing the emotional support that participants experienced in learning that other women have had similar experiences. Moreover, women in this study depicted #MeToo as “challenging” which reflected a common theme across participants’ writing and spoke to #MeToo’s role in providing a counterpoint to the isolated and silenced “I voice” of rape culture. Overall, the women participating in this study depicted #MeToo as providing a new “I voice” that challenged their existing “I voice” shaped by rape culture. This

new “I voice” was described as viewing that views sexually coercive and unwanted experiences as (a) widespread and (b) valid.

Feeling less alone often resulted in participants describing increased comfort and “openness” in sharing their experience. Hermans et al.’s (1992) “I positions” suggest that interaction between conflicting positions leads to new insights that help to resolve disagreement. The conflict between #MeToo and participants’ prior understanding of their own unwanted and/or coercive sexual experience was not resolved by this “openness,” but the introduction of #MeToo allowed participants to feel more comfortable sharing and, in some cases, beginning to re-evaluate their experiences.

Finally, in addition to feeling less alone and more open, participants described #MeToo as confirming that the unwanted and/or coercive sexual experience is indeed problematic regardless of how they chose to label their experience (which, in turn, provided validation). The theme of “Validation” suggested two important findings: (a) women who have not acknowledged reported experiencing control over how they engage with #MeToo, and (b) they perceive personal benefits of #MeToo without feeling pressured to change their labelling of an unwanted and/or coercive sexual experience. #MeToo was described as clarifying aspects of participants’ unwanted and/or coercive sexual experiences that produce negative experiences such as shame (Ullman, 2010). Although differences may not be clear in terms of health outcomes, women who do not acknowledge are less likely to seek and/or receive support services due to their marginalized cultural position (Conoscenti & McNally, 2006). Regardless of whether they label their experience as “rape,” “sexual assault,” “it was wrong,” “it was never okay,” “it wasn’t all my fault,” or “I’m not sure,” women participating in this study described #MeToo as encouraging them to evaluate their experience in ways that helped them to find partial resolution. This resolution did not always

reflect a shift away from self-blame, but rather partial resolution in how women participating in this study understood an unwanted and/or coercive sexual experience.

Narrative Themes

The following themes arose across topics: “#MeToo Reduces Uncertainty” and “Vague but Open.” First, women participating in this study reported uncertainty about how they would label an unwanted and/or coercive sexual experience while also depicting #MeToo as providing certainty about at least one aspect of this same experience. It is notable that Participant 13 spoke about the news coverage of U.S. comedian Aziz Ansari, who was accused of engaging in sexually coercive behaviour in 2018 (Way, 2018). More than other high-profile cases of male celebrity’s sexually coercive and violent behaviour, media coverage of the accusations against Ansari drew heated debate about what constitutes “bad sex” vs. sexual coercion and sexual assault (Gash & Harding, 2018; Weiss, 2018). Participant 13 spoke directly to how the media coverage of Ansari helped her to gain “new language” to describe her own unwanted and/or coercive sexual experience. This directly connects with Gavey’s (2005) writing about the “cultural scaffolding of rape” in which violence is a normalized part of everyday sexual scripts that fall along a continuum. For example, Gavey (2005) posits that “cat calling,” verbal harassment, and some sexually coercive behaviours on the “non-violent” and “legal” end of a spectrum of sexual violence. Therefore, when society normalizes behaviour at the lowest end of the spectrum, more violent behaviours are tacitly condoned and normalized. The “new language” afforded to participants through coverage of Ansari and others suggests both a new way of conceptualizing sexual violence and describing personal experiences to themselves and others. For many women participating in this study, the “I position” of #MeToo provided new ways of thinking about and sharing their experiences that are unrestricted by language geared toward the male experience (DeVault, 1999).

Additionally, women participating in this study wrote that they would “keep it vague” when talking to others about an unwanted and/or coercive sexual experience despite also indicating that #MeToo has helped them to be more open in talking about their experience. These descriptions appear contradictory and suggest a complicated picture of how unwanted and/or coercive sexual experiences are both communicated and received. Several women participating in this study indicated certain barriers to the full expression of their experience. These barriers align with research about the anticipation of negative reactions to disclosure by women who have not acknowledged (Glos et al., 2018; Ullman, 2010) and discomfort with labelling a partner as a rapist (Peterson & Muehlenhard, 2011). The narrative of feeling more open in sharing experiences while also “keep[ing] it vague” suggested that participants’ engagement with #MeToo has resulted in a partial rather than complete shift toward the resolution of dissonance. This contradiction suggests dissonance between participants’ internal “I voice” in response to #MeToo and the continuance of the rape culture in which they live (Peng & Nesbitt, 1999). Therefore, #MeToo was described as having a positive influence personal to individual women without the direct involvement of surrounding culture or those closest to them.

The narrative themes “#MeToo Reduces Uncertainty” and “Vague but Open” speak to interactions between themes identified across women’s written responses. These themes reflect interactions marked by agreement (“MeToo Reduces Uncertainty”) and contradiction (“Vague but Open”) and help to clarify the incorporation of #MeToo into the lives of women who have not acknowledged. These themes suggest a process whereby perceptions of rape culture and #MeToo coexist and achieve coherence through ongoing negotiation and dialectical thinking (Peng & Nesbitt, 1999).

Limitations

The present study has several limitations. First, due to the extensive screening process and difficulty with recruiting large numbers of women, I was only able to recruit 13 participants for the main study and analysis. Although saturation was achieved for the research questions, a larger sample would ensure that the findings accurately represent the perspectives of women who have not acknowledged. Furthermore, the majority of participants in the main study identified as White, which presents limitations for generalizing findings to other ethnic groups. This point also speaks to limitations in this study's ability to meaningfully recruit diverse populations. It is possible that women of colour felt particularly reluctant to participate in the present research. Moreover, participants in the present study were mainly recruited from the University of Windsor, meaning that the majority of the sample was university educated. This presents limitations for applying the conclusions of the present study to women who have not pursued a university education. Future research with larger samples is necessary in order to generalize findings to a larger and more diverse population.

Moreover, transferability is also limited because only a subsection (13 out of 39) of women completed Part 2 of the study. This may reflect hesitance on the part of women who have not acknowledged to participate in a study asking for their perspectives and reflection on issues that they choose not to definitively label. Thus, women who chose to participate in this study may differ from women who chose not to participate in this study, which limits the transferability of the study's findings to all women who have not acknowledged.

Limitations are also present in the methodology used in the current study. Although research shows that participants are more comfortable sharing information about sensitive topics online rather than in person (Newman et al., 2002), online surveys do not provide the opportunity

for follow-up questions or clarifications. Future research should explore the perceptions of women who have not acknowledged in relation to #MeToo using in-person interviews.

Clinical Implications and Future Directions

The results of the present study have implications for understanding #MeToo and the experiences of women who have not acknowledged. Participants in the present study described #MeToo as having a positive personal impact despite also endorsing continued ambivalence regarding how they label an unwanted and/or coercive sexual experience. For example, participants describe experiencing less shame, powerlessness, and fear as a result of #MeToo. Many of the barriers facing women who have not acknowledged are created by their marginalized position within society and low levels of help-seeking (Conoscenti & McNally, 2006). This study suggests that #MeToo can have a uniquely positive impact for women who have not acknowledged because it does not require them to seek outside support or change their understanding of their experience in ways that are uncomfortable or harmful. Future research could also explore women's perceptions about #MeToo longitudinally in order to understand the impact of this movement over time.

Moreover, results have implications for understanding the importance of community in reaching out to women who have not acknowledged. Many participants reported that #MeToo has helped them to understand the widespread nature of sexual violence and coercion and that "feeling less alone" has been a major source of emotional support for them. Future research could explore ways by which women who have not acknowledged can engage with others with similar experiences as a means for healing.

Conclusion

This study sought to explore the effect, if any, #MeToo has had for women who do not acknowledge an unwanted and/or coercive sexual experience as rape or sexual assault. This question becomes important when considering that women who do not acknowledge are less likely to seek and/or receive support services due to their marginalized cultural position (Conoscenti & McNally, 2006). Overall, it was found that women participating in this study perceived their exposure to #MeToo as being positive, that the messaging of #MeToo has helped them to resolve aspects of unwanted and/or coercive sexual experiences, and that the positive impact of #MeToo did not require that they label their experience in a specific way.

Despite positive descriptions of #MeToo, the effects of rape culture remain present across participant responses. Women participating in this study described apprehension about sharing unwanted and/or coercive sexual experiences with others and self-blame regarding a male perpetrator's coercive behavior. Herman's (1992) description of "I voices" helps to conceptualize the interaction between participants' existing rape culture acculturation and the introduction of #MeToo as a new cultural voice. #MeToo was described as a complex set of ideas, aspects of which participants could choose to engage with or to ignore. In this sense, #MeToo encouraged dialectical thinking by allowing for aspects of the messaging to be adopted and others not. Rather than creating dissonance requiring definitive decisions to resolve discomfort (Peng & Nesbitt, 1999), a more subtle process of accommodating new ideas was described by participants. For example, many participants described feeling "more open" about their experience after #MeToo while also describing concern about how others would view this experience. Feeling "more open" was described as an inner experience resulting from learning that they are "not alone"; therefore, #MeToo "I voice" was described as having a positive emotional impact for women participating

in this study without necessarily changing their own ambivalence or the external beliefs of those close to them.

Rape culture shapes language in order to silence the voices of women and their ability to accurately describe their inner experience (DeVault, 1999). Participants in the present study described gaining “new language” for both understanding and describing the unwanted and/or coercive sexual behavior of men (e.g., learning that experiences outside of rape scripts are frequent and harmful). Regardless of existing rape culture’s willingness to accept the messaging of #MeToo, participants described the personal impact of this cultural shift as being both meaningful and positive.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Participant Pool Study Description (Part 1)



University
of Windsor

Title: Sexual Coercion Experiences of University Women (Part 1)

Detailed Description: The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of women's experiences with sexual coercion. If you agree to participate, you will sign up for an available timeslot, and complete a brief online survey asking about your background, potential sexual experiences, including coercion, and past memories. **You will be emailed the survey link after you sign-up for the study.**

This screening survey will take up to 30 minutes to complete and is worth 0.5 bonus credits towards an eligible psychology course. Based on your responses to questions asked in this study, you may be eligible for a second study and the opportunity to earn up to 1 additional bonus point towards an eligible psychology course. You will have the option to accept or decline further contact by researchers and you do not have to participate in additional studies if you choose not to do so.

Eligibility Requirements: To participate in the current study, you must **(a) identify as a female University of Windsor student** and **(b) be 18 years or older.**

Duration: 30 minutes
Points: .5 point (Part 1)

Testing Dates: This study will be conducted online and the study must be completed within a week after receiving an email from the researcher.

Research Contact Information:

Brandin Glos, Master's student, Adult Clinical Psychology, [\[EMAIL\]](#)

Dr. Patti Timmons Fritz, supervisor, [\[EMAIL\]](#)

Appendix B

Participant Pool Recruitment Email (Part 1)

Dear Student,

We *sincerely* thank you for signing up for our study on women's experiences with sexual coercion, and for contributing to scientific advancements being made at the University of Windsor. This research study is conducted by Brandin Glos under the supervision of Dr. Patti Timmons Fritz from the Department of Psychology, University of Windsor.

Please note that given the subject matter you may experience some discomfort when answering some of the questions. As a reminder, to be eligible for this study, **you must (a) identify as a woman and (b) be 18 years of age or older.**

INSTRUCTIONS: Please complete the online survey by [ENTER DATE], or as close to this date as possible. The survey can be accessed by clicking on the following URL link or by copying and pasting the URL into your Internet browser: [INSERT POOL HYPERLINK]. After reading the online consent form and agreeing to participate in the study, you will be prompted to enter the study ID given to you by the researcher.

We ask that you do not participate in this study for a second time if you have previously participated through another recruitment email.

YOUR STUDY CODE IS: [ENTER CODE]

Please enter this number—AND ONLY THIS CODE—into the space next to, “Please type in the ID given to you by the researcher.” Then, click *next*, and proceed to answer the remainder of the survey questions.

We ask that you answer all questions as honestly and as accurately as possible, without the assistance of others, in a safe and secure location where no one can view your responses, as some of the questions are quite personal. Please **DO NOT** type your name, student ID number, or any other identifying information in the survey unless prompted. If you are unsure about an item, please make your best guess.

When you are finished, you can email the researchers at [EMAIL] to let them know that you have completed the online survey. Participants will receive 0.5 bonus points for 30 minutes of participation towards the psychology participant pool, if registered in the pool and enrolled in one or more eligible courses. Once we verify that you have completed the online survey, we will award your bonus point.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us. We would be more than happy to assist you. You can contact the Primary Investigator, Brandin Glos at [EMAIL], or his faculty supervisor, Dr. Patti Timmons Fritz at [EMAIL], [PHONE NUMBER].

Thank you again for your time and participation in scientific research. Your contribution to our understanding of women's experiences with sexual coercion is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,
Brandin Glos
MA Candidate, Adult Clinical Psychology
University of Windsor
[EMAIL]

APPENDIX C

Mass Email and Kijiji Recruitment Email (Part 1)

Dear Student,

We would like to invite you to participate in our study on women's experiences with sexual coercion, and to contribute to scientific advancements being made at the University of Windsor. This research study is conducted by Brandin Glos under the supervision of Dr. Patti Timmons Fritz from the Department of Psychology, University of Windsor. REB clearance has been obtained for REB # 19-055.

Please note that given the subject matter you may experience some discomfort when answering some of the questions. To be eligible for this study, **you must (a) identify as a woman and (b) be 18 years of age or older.**

INSTRUCTIONS: Please complete the online survey by [ENTER DATE], or as close to this date as possible. The survey can be accessed by clicking on the following URL link or by copying and pasting the URL into your Internet browser: [INSERT MASS EMAIL HYPERLINK].

After reading the online consent form and agreeing to participate in the study, you will be prompted to enter the study "ID given to you by the researcher."

We ask that you do not participate in this study for a second time if you have previously participated through the University of Windsor Participant Pool.

YOUR STUDY CODE IS: [ENTER CODE],

Please enter this number—AND ONLY THIS CODE—into the space next to, "Please type in the ID given to you by the researcher." Then, click *next*, and proceed to answer the remainder of the survey questions.

We ask that you answer all questions as honestly and as accurately as possible, without the assistance of others, in a safe and secure location where no one can view your responses, as some of the questions are quite personal. Please **DO NOT** type your name, student ID number, or any other identifying information in the survey unless prompted. If you are unsure about an item, please make your best guess.

When you are finished, you can email the researchers at [EMAIL] to let them know that you have completed the online survey. Participants will have the chance be entered into a raffle for a chance to win a \$25 Amazon eGift Card. Once we verify that you have completed the online survey, we will enter you into the raffle.

APPENDIX D

Email Request to University of Windsor Department/Programme Secretaries

Subject Line: Looking for research participants

Hello, My name is Brandin Glos and I am completing my Master's in Clinical Psychology at the University of Windsor. I am looking for participants to complete my study and would appreciate your help recruiting. Would it be possible for you to forward the below email to your students? If you have any questions, concerns, or requests for additional information, please do not hesitate to email me at [EMAIL].

This study has been approved by the Research Ethics Board of the University of Windsor (approval #19-055).

Please obtain the appropriate permissions to forward this message.

[see Appendix E for attached email]

APPENDIX E

Recruitment Email Forwarded by University of Windsor Department/Programme Secretaries (Part 1)

Dear Student,

We would like to invite you to participate in our study on women's experiences with sexual coercion and to contribute to scientific advancements being made at the University of Windsor. This research study is conducted by Brandin Glos under the supervision of Dr. Patti Timmons Fritz from the Department of Psychology, University of Windsor.

Please note that given the subject matter you may experience some discomfort when answering some of the questions. To be eligible for this study, you must (a) identify as a woman and (b) be 18 years of age or older.

INSTRUCTIONS: Please complete the online survey by [one week from time of sending] or as close to this date as possible. The survey can be accessed by clicking on the following URL link or by copying and pasting the URL into your Internet browser:

https://uwindsor.ca/qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_b4qEn1Jsfh8wXnD

We ask that you do not participate in this study for a second time if you have previously participated through the University of Windsor Participant Pool or in response to other email requests.

We ask that you answer all questions as honestly and as accurately as possible, without the assistance of others, in a safe and secure location where no one can view your responses, as some of the questions are quite personal. Please DO NOT type your name, student ID number, or any other identifying information in the survey unless prompted. If you are unsure about an item, please make your best guess.

When you are finished, you can email the researchers at [EMAIL] to let them know that you have completed the online survey. Participants will have the chance to be entered into a raffle for a chance to win one of two \$25 Amazon eGift cards. Once we verify that you have completed the online survey, we will enter you into the raffle.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us. We would be more than happy to assist you. You can contact the Primary Investigator, Brandin Glos at [EMAIL], or his faculty supervisor, Dr. Patti Timmons Fritz at [EMAIL], [PHONE NUMBER].

Thank you again for your time and participation in scientific research. Your contribution to our understanding of women's experiences with sexual coercion and #MeToo is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,
Brandin Glos

MA Candidate, Adult Clinical Psychology University of Windsor
[EMAIL]

APPENDIX F

Kijiji Advertisement and Study Description (Part 1)



University
of Windsor

[the University of Windsor logo served as the study's Kijiji advertisement image]

Title: Sexual Coercion Experiences of University Women (Part 1)

Detailed Description: The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of women's experiences with sexual coercion. If you agree to participate, you will click the link below and complete a brief online survey asking about your background, potential sexual experiences, including coercion, and past memories. This study will be conducted online and the study must be completed within a week after opening the study link below.

This screening survey will take up to 30 minutes to complete. Participants will be compensated with entry into a raffle for a chance to win one of two \$25 Amazon eGift cards. Based on your responses to questions asked in this study, you may be eligible for a second study (approximately 60 minutes in length) and the opportunity to earn one \$25 Amazon eGift card. You will have the option to accept or decline further contact by researchers and you do not have to participate in additional studies if you choose not to do so.

Eligibility Requirements: To participate in the current study, you must (a) identify as female, (b) be a resident of Canada or the United States and (c) be 18 years or older.

Duration: 30 minutes

Compensation: Entry into a raffle for the chance to win one of two \$25 eGift cards

This study has been clearance from the Research Ethics Board of the University of Windsor (approval #19-055).

Study Link: https://uwindsor.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_b4qEn1Jsfh8wXnD

Research Contact Information:

Brandin Glos, Master's student, Adult Clinical Psychology, [EMAIL]
Dr. Patti Timmons Fritz, supervisor, [EMAIL]

APPENDIX G

Participant Pool Consent Form (Part 1)

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Title of Study: Sexual Coercion Experiences of University Women (Part 1)

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Brandin Glos under the supervision of Dr. Patti Timmons Fritz from the Department of Psychology, University of Windsor. If you have any questions or concerns about this research please feel free to contact Brandin Glos at [EMAIL] or Dr. Patti Timmons Fritz, through email ([EMAIL]) or by telephone (519-253-3000, ext. 3707). The results from this study will form the basis of a Master's thesis research project.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to understand more about women's coercive sexual experiences and thoughts about #MeToo. More specifically, we want to find out about experiences that might be related to different perceptions of the "Me Too" social movement.

PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in Part 1 of this study, we would ask you complete an online questionnaire asking about some background information, your experiences with coercive sexual experiences, and your familiarity regarding #MeToo.

Participation should take no more than 30 minutes and you will be compensated with 0.5 bonus points from the participant pool that you can apply to an eligible psychology course in which you are enrolled. If eligible, at the end of this study, you will be asked for your permission to be contacted by email to participate in Part 2 of this study. You can indicate whether you agree to be contacted further by clicking "No, I do not want to be contacted" or "Yes, I would like to be contacted." If you are interested in being contacted about Part 2 of the study, you will also need to provide your email address.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

The subject matter of this study may cause some distress or you may feel uncomfortable answering questions about coercive sexual experiences or the #MeToo Movement. However, you do not have to answer any questions that you do not want to answer, and you can stop participating in this study at any time without penalty. Should you experience anxiety, sadness, embarrassment, anger, or any form of distress after being in this study, please contact someone from the list of community resources that will be given to you.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

Information obtained from this study will add to our understanding of what women's experiences with sexual coercion and #MeToo are like, and how they think and write about these experiences. Such information can be used to help raise awareness and to develop a better understanding of the impact of sexual coercion as well as #MeToo. In addition, some people report that they learn something about themselves in the process of taking Part 1n research.

COMPENSATION

Participants who complete the study will receive a 0.5 bonus points for 30 minutes of participation towards the psychology participant pool, if registered in the pool and enrolled in one or more eligible courses.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The following measures will be taken to ensure the confidentiality of your data: (a) we ask that you do not identify yourself or other individuals using easily identifiable information within your written responses, (b) any identifiable information obtained in this study will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission, (c) once all data have been collected and compensation awarded, your ID number will be deleted and will no longer be linked to your survey data, (d) the electronic compensation data file will be retained for one year from the end of the semester in which data completion occurred, (e) all of the information that you reveal on the online questionnaire will be kept private and will only be accessed by researchers directly involved with the study, (f) all information will be stored and transported using secure and encrypted devices, (g) the information from this study may be published at a later date but no personally-identifying information will be discussed, (h) data will be destroyed if not used for subsequent research or publication, (i) your data will be kept for five years following the last publication of the data, and (j) a link will be provided at the end of the study with instructions on how to delete your browser history.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

If you volunteer to be in this study, you will be able to: (a) discontinue participation at any time without consequences of any kind, (b) refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer and still remain in the study (the investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances warrant doing so), and (c) withdraw from the survey by scrolling to the bottom of your current survey page and selecting "Discard responses and exit."

Closing the browser before completing the online survey will mean that your data will not be used for analysis. You can withdraw your partial or completed online study data from the study by emailing the researcher. Please email [EMAIL] within two days (i.e., 48 hours) from when you completed or partially completed the online survey if you would like to request that your data be withdrawn from this study. The two-day time limit aligns with the time interval within which researchers must award credit to participants per Participant Pool policies. We will be able to identify your data based on when you signed up for a slot in the SONA system with your email address.

FEEDBACK OF THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY TO THE SUBJECTS

A summary of research findings will be available to you upon completion of the project on the Research Ethics Board website, <https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/research-result-summaries/>
Date when results are available: December 2019.

SUBSEQUENT USE OF DATA

The data from this study may be used in future research.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact:

Research Ethics Coordinator,
University of Windsor
Windsor, ON
N9B 3P4
Telephone: 519-253-3000 ext. 3948
Email: ethics@uwindsor.ca

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT/LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

I understand the information provided for the study Sexual Coercion Experiences of University Women (Part 1) as described herein. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. By clicking “I agree” I know that I am consenting to participating in this study.

You are encouraged to print a copy of this consent form.

Click the link below for information about clearing your browser history:
[Clear Browser History](#)

Click the link below for a list of community resources:
[Community Resources](#)

- I agree
- I do not agree

APPENDIX H

Mass Email and Kijiji Consent Form (Part 1)

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Title of Study: Sexual Coercion Experiences of University Women (Part 1)

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Brandin Glos under the supervision of Dr. Patti Timmons-Fritz from the Department of Psychology, University of Windsor. If you have any questions or concerns about this research please feel free to contact Brandin Glos at [EMAIL] or Dr. Patti Timmons Fritz, through email ([EMAIL]) or by telephone (519-253-3000, ext. 3707). The results from this study will form the basis of a Master's thesis research project.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to understand more about women's coercive sexual experiences and thoughts about #MeToo. More specifically, we want to find out about experiences that might be related to different perceptions of the "Me Too" social movement.

PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in Part 1 of this study, we would ask you complete an online questionnaire asking about some background information, your experiences with coercive sexual experiences, and your familiarity regarding #MeToo.

Participation should take no more than 30 minutes and you will be compensated with entry into a raffle for the opportunity to receive one of two \$25 Amazon eGift Cards. If eligible, at the end of this study, you will be asked for your permission to be contacted by email to participate in Part 2 of this study. You can indicate whether you agree to be contacted further by clicking "No, I do not want to be contacted" or "Yes, I would like to be contacted." If you are interested in being contacted about Part 2 of the study, you will also need to provide your email address.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

The subject matter of this study may cause some distress or you may feel uncomfortable answering questions about coercive sexual experiences or the #MeToo movement. However, you do not have to answer any questions that you do not want to answer, and you can stop participating in this study at any time without penalty. Should you experience anxiety, sadness, embarrassment, anger, or any form of distress after being in this study, please contact someone from the list of community resources that will be given to you.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

Information obtained from this study will add to our understanding of what women's experiences with sexual coercion and #MeToo are like, and how they think and write about these experiences.

Such information can be used to help raise awareness and to develop a better understanding of the impact of sexual coercion as well as #MeToo. In addition, some people report that they learn something about themselves in the process of taking Part 1n research.

COMPENSATION

Participants who complete the study will be given the opportunity to be entered into a raffle for one of two \$25 dollar Amazon eGift Card for 30 minutes of participation. Participants will still be entered into the raffle should they withdraw before completing the online survey in its entirety.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The following measures will be taken to ensure the confidentiality of your data: (a) we ask that you do not identify yourself or other individuals using easily identifiable information within your written responses, (b) any identifiable information obtained in this study will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission, (c) once all data have been collected and compensation awarded, your ID number will be deleted and will no longer be linked to your survey data, (d) the electronic compensation data file will be retained for one year from the end of the semester in which data completion occurred, (e) all of the information that you reveal on the online questionnaire will be kept private and will only be accessed by researchers directly involved with the study, (f) all information will be stored and transported using secure and encrypted devices, (g) the information from this study may be published at a later date but no personally-identifying information will be discussed, (h) data will be destroyed if not used for subsequent research or publication, (i) your data will be kept for five years following the last publication of the data, and (j) a link will be provided at the end of the study with instructions on how to delete your browser history.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

If you volunteer to be in this study, you will be able to: (a) discontinue participation at any time without consequences of any kind, (b) refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer and still remain in the study (the investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances warrant doing so), and (c) withdraw from the survey by scrolling to the bottom of your current survey page and selecting “Discard responses and exit.”

Closing the browser before completing the online survey will mean that your data will not be used for analysis. You can withdraw your partial or completed online study data from the study by emailing the researcher. Please email [EMAIL] within two days (i.e., 48 hours) from when you completed or partially completed the online survey if you would like to request that your data be withdrawn from this study.

FEEDBACK OF THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY TO THE SUBJECTS

A summary of research findings will be available to you upon completion of the project on the Research Ethics Board website, <https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/research-result-summaries/>

Date when results are available: December 2019.

SUBSEQUENT USE OF DATA

The data from this study may be used in future research.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact:

Research Ethics Coordinator,
University of Windsor
Windsor, ON
N9B 3P4
Telephone: 519-253-3000 ext. 3948
Email: ethics@uwindsor.ca

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT/LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

I understand the information provided for the study Sexual Coercion Experiences of University Women (Part 1) as described herein. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. By clicking “I agree” I know that I am consenting to participating in this study.

You are encouraged to print a copy of this consent form.

Click the link below for information about clearing your browser history:
[Clear Browser History](#)

Click the link below for a list of community resources:
[Community Resources](#)

- I agree
- I do not agree

APPENDIX I

Modified Sexual Experiences Survey (Koss & Oros, 1982)

When answering the following questions, please only consider experiences that occurred when you were 18 years of age or older.

1. Have you ever had sexual intercourse (oral, anal, or vaginal) with a man when you both wanted to?
 Yes
 No
2. Have you ever had sexual intercourse (oral, anal or vaginal) with a man when you didn't want to because you felt pressured by his continual arguments?
 Yes
 No
3. Have you ever been in a situation where a man TRIED to have sexual intercourse (oral, anal or vaginal) with you when you didn't want to, by using (or threatening) some degree of physical force (twisting your arm, holding you down, etc.), but for various reasons sexual intercourse did NOT occur?
 Yes
 No
4. Have you ever had sexual intercourse (oral, anal or vaginal) or experienced sexual acts (oral, anal or vaginal penetration by objects other than a penis) when you didn't want to because a man threatened or used some degree of physical force?
 Yes
 No

5. Have you ever been in a situation in which you were incapacitated due to alcohol or drugs (for example, you were physically unable to resist, passed out, or unaware of what was happening) and had unwanted sexual intercourse (oral, anal or vaginal) with a man?
- Yes
 - No
6. Have you ever been sexually assaulted?
- Yes
 - No
7. Have you ever been raped?
- Yes
 - No

APPENDIX J

#MeToo and/or “Me Too” Familiarity Question

1. Are you familiar with #MeToo and/or the “Me Too” movement? Please check yes or no

Yes

No

APPENDIX K

Demographics Questionnaire

1. Age (in years): _____
2. What is your gender?
 - Cis-Female
 - Trans-Female
 - Cis-Male
 - Trans-Male
 - Gender Fluid/Neutral
 - Prefer not to state
 - Other (please specify): _____
3. Do you self-identify as (please choose the MOST relevant):
 - Asexual
 - Bisexual
 - Heterosexual
 - Lesbian, gay or queer
 - Pansexual
 - Other: _____
4. Current year in your university program:
 - First
 - Second
 - Third
 - Fourth
 - Fifth

Other (please specify): _____

5. Where were you born?

Canada

US

Outside Canada or the US: (Please specify what country: _____)

6. If you were not born in Canada, how old were you when you came here?

7. Relationship Status:

Single, never in relationship

Single, not currently in relationship

Currently in relationship

Common-law

Married

Separated/divorced

Other (please specify): _____

8. Although the categories listed below may not represent your full identity or use the language you prefer, for the purpose of this survey, please indicate which group below most accurately describes your racial identification? (check all that apply)

First Nations/Metis/Inuit/Indigenous

Asian

South Asian

Black

Latinx/Hispanic (Non-White)

Middle Eastern/North African (Non-White)

- Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian
- White
- Multiracial (*please specify*): _____
- Not listed (Specify if you choose)

APPENDIX L

Mood Neutralizing Questions (Part 1)

1. What is your happiest early/childhood memory?
2. What is an activity that you do for fun?

APPENDIX M

Post-Study Information (Part 1)

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this study! By contributing to this project you are contributing to a much larger body of research on women's experiences with coercion and violence. This kind of information can help us to educate and raise awareness about the problems associated with sexual coercion.

I have included a package of resources that I would encourage you to read through. These resources are attached to the consent form and available at the end of this survey. You may not find that they are all relevant to your personal experience, but you may have a friend, or know of another woman for whom they would be beneficial.

If you need additional referrals or resources, please do not hesitate to contact me by email at [EMAIL] or my faculty supervisor, Dr. Patti Timmons-Fritz, at [EMAIL].

Once this study has concluded I will post a summary of the findings on the University of Windsor Research Ethics Board website, which can be found at <https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/research-result-summaries/>. The findings from this study will be available by December 31, 2019.

If you have any questions or concerns following this study, you may contact me by email at [EMAIL].

Sincerely,
Brandin Glos
MA Candidate, Clinical Psychology

APPENDIX N

Community Resources

Psychological Resources

Dusty Johnstone – Sexual Misconduct and Prevention Office

Phone: (519) 253-3000, Extension 4550

For more information visit <http://www.uwindsor.ca/sexual-assault/311/contact-form>

At the University of Windsor, sexual misconduct includes all forms of sexually inappropriate behaviour and sexual violence. It includes, but is not limited to, rape and sexual assault, sexual and gender-based harassment, stalking, cyber harassment, and relationship violence.

Hiatus House

Phone: 519-252-7781 or 1-800-265-5142

The Sexual Assault Crisis Centre

Location: 1770 Langlois Avenue

Phone: (519) 253-3100

The Sexual Assault Crisis Centre 24-Hour Hotline

Phone: (519) 253-9667

For more information visit <https://saccwindsor.net/>

The Student Counselling Centre

Hours: 8:30 am – 4:30 pm, Monday – Friday

Location: Room 293, Second Floor, CAW Student Centre

Phone: (519) 253-3000, ext. 4616

Email: scc@uwindsor.ca

For more information visit <http://www1.uwindsor.ca/scc/>

Psychological Services and Research Centre, University of Windsor

Phone: 519-973-7012 or 519-253-3000, ext. 7012

Distress Centre Line Windsor / Essex

Hours: Available 12 pm to 12 am seven days a week.

Phone: 519-256-5000

Community Crisis Centre of Windsor-Essex County

Hours: Open 9 am to 5 pm, Monday – Friday, at Hotel-Dieu Grace Hospital

Phone: 519-973-4411 ext. 3277

24 Hour Crisis Line

Phone: 519-973-4435

Assaulted Women's Helpline

Phone: 1-866-863-0511 or 1-866-863-7868 (TTY)

Medical Resources

Sexual Assault Treatment Centre

Location: **The Windsor SATC is located at the Windsor Regional Hospital (Metropolitan Location) 1995 Lens Avenue (intersection of Lens Avenue and Kildare Road).**

Phone: 519-255-2234

For more information visit <http://windsorsex.cioc.ca/record/WIN2261>

Student Health Services

Location: **Room 242, Second Floor, CAW Student Centre**

Phone: (519) 973-7002

For more information visit www.uwindsor.ca/health

- For anonymous HIV/AIDS testing in Windsor you may contact the following places:
 - 1) HIV Care Program, Windsor Regional Hospital (Metropolitan Location, 1995 Lens Avenue), provides anonymous testing, individual and group counselling, and follow-up care. Phone (519) 254-6115.
 - 2) Windsor Essex Health Unit (1005 Ouellette Avenue) provides anonymous HIV and STI testing. Phone (519) 258-2146.

Windsor Essex Health Unit

Location: **1005 Ouellette Ave., 2nd floor, Windsor**

Phone: (519) 258-2146, ext. 1200 or 1201

For more information visit <http://www.wehealthunit.org/sexual-health>

Other Information Services

Information on Sexual Assault in Canada

<http://www.casac.ca/content/anti-violence-centres>

<http://www.springtideresources.org/resource/fact-sheet-common-criminal-charges-vaw-cases>

<http://www.sexualassaultsupport.ca/Default.aspx?pageId=535883>

Resources for Women and Survivors of Sexual Assault

<http://www.sacc.to/home/home.htm><http://www.sexualassaultsupport.ca/Default.aspx?pageId=57132>

<https://aasas.ca/support-and-information/following-sexual-assault/>

For more information on sexual assault and sexual misconduct visit:

<http://www.uwindsor.ca/sexual-assault/>

Thank you for your participation!

APPENDIX O

Clear Browser History

If you would like to clear your browser history after completing this study, click the link below and follow the instructions outlined on the website:

<https://www.howtogeek.com/304218/how-to-clear-your-history-in-any-browser/>

Thank you for your participation!

APPENDIX P

Participant Pool Re-Contact Permission Form

Would you be willing to be contacted in the future about a research study about sexually coercive experiences and the #MeToo Movement in order to earn (additional) bonus points? Participants who are registered in the Psychology Department Participant Pool will receive 1 bonus point for 60 minutes of participation towards the psychology participant pool.

The study is expected to take approximately 60 minutes to complete.

No, I do not want to be contacted.

Yes, I would like to be contacted.

I understand that the research staff will contact me in the near future to discuss my possible participation in a research study about coercive sexual experiences and the #MeToo Movement. By giving my permission to be contacted in the future, I am agreeing only to discuss further participation, and I understand that I am completely free to decline further participation without giving a reason and without penalty.

If you are willing to be contacted in the future, please provide your email address, so that we can contact you.

E-mail:

APPENDIX Q

Mass Email and Kijiji Re-Contact Permission Form

Would you be willing to be contacted in the future about a research study about sexually coercive experiences and the #MeToo Movement in order to earn Amazon eGift Cards? Participants will receive one \$25 Amazon eGift Card for 60 minutes of participation.

The study is expected to take approximately 60 minutes to complete.

No, I do not want to be contacted.

Yes, I would like to be contacted.

I understand that the research staff will contact me in the near future to discuss my possible participation in a research study about coercive sexual experiences and the #MeToo Movement. By giving my permission to be contacted in the future, I am agreeing only to discuss further participation, and I understand that I am completely free to decline further participation without giving a reason and without penalty.

If you are willing to be contacted in the future, please provide your email address, so that we can contact you.

E-mail:

APPENDIX R

Recruitment Email (Part 2)

Dear Potential Participant,

Thank you for your participation in the first part of my two-part research study titled “Sexual Coercion Experiences of University Women.” My name is Brandin Glos and I received your email address because you provided your permission to be contacted for further participation in my research study. I am a supervised MA student, supervised by Dr. Patti Timmons Fritz. I am conducting a study on women’s experiences with sexual coercion - which many young women have experienced in some form or another. This could include experiences with men who have used verbal pressure, or manipulation, or threats, or physical force to try to have some form of sexual experience with you. It could also include experiences with men who tried to have sexual contact with you when you were too intoxicated to resist. If you have experienced anything like this when you were age 18 years or older, you are eligible to participate in this research.

This research will also ask questions about interactions and thoughts surrounding #MeToo and the “Me Too” Movement. This topic is addressed to better understand/or experiences in present day society and assess women’s thoughts and opinions about the public conversation surrounding sexual harassment and sexual violence.

The purpose of my research is to get a better understanding of what women’s experiences with sexual coercion is like, and how they think and potentially talk about these experiences. In order to do this, I am inviting women to complete an online study that will pose a series of questions on this topic. If you choose to participate, I would encourage you to complete the study in a private location where no one can view your responses, as some of the questions are quite personal.

The study will take approximately 60 minutes to complete. Participants who are registered in the Psychology Department Participant Pool and enrolled in one or more eligible courses will receive 1 bonus point for 60 minutes of participation. Participants who are not registered in the Participant Pool will receive one \$25 Amazon eGift Card for 60 minutes of participation.

The benefit of participating is that by sharing your experiences, we may be able to improve our understanding of what young women’s experiences with coercion are like, which may help the lives of other women through understanding how sexually coercive experiences are affected by the conversation surrounding #MeToo. This research has the potential to bring a new perspective to the understanding of sexual coercion and culture.

If you think that you would be interested in participating, please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns that you might have. You can reply to this email, or if you would prefer to discuss your concerns over the phone please let me know when would be a good time to reach you, and what phone number you would like to be contacted at.

If you are interested in participating now you may use the following link: [LINK]

In order to keep your responses confidential, I would ask that you use the following code: XXXXXX to log into the survey

You will be asked to enter it on the first page of the survey, once you have indicated your consent to participate.

I have attached a package of resources at the bottom of this email. You may not find that they are all relevant to your personal experience, but you may have a friend, or know of another woman for whom they would be beneficial. If you need additional referrals or resources, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Please note that this study has received clearance from the University of Windsor Research Ethics Board.

Thanks kindly for your time.

Brandin Glos, Master's student, Adult Clinical Psychology, [EMAIL]

Dr. Patti Timmons Fritz, supervisor, [EMAIL]

[Attached PDF file (see Appendix K) with community resource information]

APPENDIX S

Current Enrollment Status Question (Part 2)

Are you currently enrolled in the Psychology Department Participant Pool?

Yes

No

APPENDIX T

Mood Neutralizing Questions (Part 2)

1. What is the best thing that has happened to you in the last month?
2. What are you most looking forward to this year?

APPENDIX U

Post-Study Information (Part 2)

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this study! By contributing to this project you are contributing to a much larger body of research on women's experiences with coercion and violence, and are providing us with a better understanding of how women experience sexual coercion in a modern social context. This kind of information can help us to educate and raise awareness about the problems associated with sexual coercion as well as generate information about women's views and attitudes toward #MeToo.

Thinking about our experiences of sexual coercion can be an emotional and challenging experience; however, it often helps us make sense of our experiences and can ultimately help us to move on. It is important to talk to people who are supportive and understanding, and who do not try to blame us for our experiences. You may find that it is helpful to talk about your experience with someone you trust and feel safe with, for example, a close friend, a family member, or a counsellor. If you would like to talk to someone, but don't have anyone in your life who seems appropriate, I would encourage you to call the Sexual Assault Crisis Centre hotline (see the resources list for contact information). Even if you have never been sexually assaulted or raped, it is perfectly acceptable for you to call them to discuss your experiences with coercion.

I have included a package of resources that I would encourage you to read through. You may not find that they are all relevant to your personal experience, but you may have a friend, or know of another woman for whom they would be beneficial. I have included a list of websites that you may find helpful. If you need additional referrals or resources, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Once this study has concluded I will post a summary of the findings on the University of Windsor Research Ethics Board website, which can be found at www.uwindsor.ca/reb. The findings from this study will be available by December 31, 2019.

If you have any questions or concerns following this study, you may contact me by email at [EMAIL].

Sincerely,

Brandin Glos

MA Candidate, Clinical Psychology

APPENDIX V

Main Qualitative Study Questions

#MeToo Questions

We would like to know more about women's attitudes and thoughts regarding #MeToo. Please provide as much detail as you feel comfortable with. We ask that you do not identify yourself or individuals by name within your written responses.

- Can you please tell us about your understanding of #MeToo and the “MeToo” movement? How would you describe “Me Too” to someone unfamiliar with it? Please write a story for us with as much detail as necessary to convey your thoughts and opinions:
- How did you personally come into contact with “Me Too” (via social media, television, news articles)? Please write a story for us with as much detail as necessary to convey your thoughts and opinions:
- In your opinion, what are the motives and goals of “Me Too”? What does “Me Too” mean to you? Please write a story for us with as much detail as necessary:
- Have any of your prior attitudes and beliefs changed after learning about #MeToo?
 - yes
 - no

If participants answer *YES* they will be asked to complete the following:

- What attitudes and/or beliefs changed for you after learning about #MeToo? Please share your thoughts in as many words as necessary to reflect your experience:

- Are there examples from your life that indicate a change in your attitudes and/or beliefs? Please share your thoughts in as many words as necessary to reflect your experience:
- Why do you think your attitudes and beliefs changed? Please share your thoughts in as many words as necessary to reflect your experience:

If participants answer *NO* they will be asked to complete the following:

- Why do you think your attitudes and beliefs remained the same? Please share your thoughts in as many words as necessary to reflect your experience:

Questions on Coercive Sexual Experiences

We would like to know some more information about the coercive sexual experience you indicated earlier. If you have had more than one experience like this, please think about the one that is most significant to you or that stands out most clearly. We ask that you do not identify yourself or other individuals using names or easily identifiable information within your written responses.

1. How long ago did this experience occur?
2. How old were you at the time?
3. Please describe the nature of your relationship with the man who engaged in coercion at the time when the coercion occurred.
4. How did you meet this person?
5. How long did your relationship last?
6. Was your relationship sexually monogamous?

7. Please tell us the story of your most significant coercive experience. In the following space we would like you to describe the experience by setting the scene. Where did it happen? How did it begin? What was the nature of your relationship with the man involved? What did he say? How did you respond? Please provide as much detail as you feel comfortable sharing.

Labelling Questions

1. If you had to label this experience, what would you call it?
2. How would you describe this situation if you were to tell someone else about it?
3. Have you ever thought about this experience in a different way than you do now? If so, how have your feelings/thoughts about this experience changed? What caused your feelings/thoughts to change?

#MeToo and Personal Experience Questions

- In thinking about your previously described coercive experience, would you say that #MeToo and the “MeToo” movement has impacted you personally?
 yes
 no

If participants answer *YES* they will be asked to complete the following:

- In your opinion, how has #MeToo impacted you? Has this been a positive, negative, or neutral experience? We ask that you do not identify yourself or other individuals using names or easily identifiable information within your written responses.
- What emotions do you associate with #MeToo? Please share your thoughts in as many words as necessary to reflect your experience.

- In thinking about your previously described coercive experience, would you say that learning about #MeToo has informed or changed how you think about this experience? Why or why not?
- Has learning about #MeToo influenced your feelings associated with your coercive experience? If yes, how have your feelings changed or shifted? If no, how would you describe your feelings about your coercive experience at present?

If participants answer *NO* they will be asked to complete the following:

- In your opinion, how might #MeToo impact individuals who have experienced sexual violence? What might be the emotional impact for survivors of sexual violence?
Please share your thoughts in as many words as necessary to reflect your thoughts and opinions. We ask that you do not identify yourself or other individuals using names or easily identifiable information within your written responses.

APPENDIX W

Participant Pool Study Description (Part 2)

Title: Sexual Coercion Experiences of University Women (Part 2)

Detailed Description: The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of women's experiences with sexual coercion and the #MeToo Movement. If you agree to participate, you will complete an online survey asking about your background, potential sexual experiences, including coercion, and past memories.

If you provide permission to be rec-contacted, you will receive a recruitment email for Part 2 with a link to a second survey platform.

Eligibility Requirements: To participate in this study, you must (a) identify as female, (b) are 18 years of age or older, (c) report having experienced at least one unwanted and/or coercive experience perpetrated by a man that meets the legal definition of rape or sexual assault on the Modified Sexual Experiences Survey, (d) label this experience as something other than rape or sexual assault on the Modified SES, (e) report this unwanted and/or coercive experience occurred when they were age 18 years or older, and (f) indicate that they have some familiarity with the "Me Too" movement on the open-ended question inquiring about participants' familiarity with "Me Too."

Duration: 60 minutes

Points: 1 point (Part 2)

Testing Dates: This study will be conducted online and the study must be completed within a week after receiving an email from the researcher.

Research Contact Information:

Brandin Glos, Master's student, Adult Clinical Psychology, [EMAIL]

Dr. Patti Timmons Fritz, supervisor, [EMAIL]

VITA AUCTORIS

NAME: Brandin Glos

PLACE OF BIRTH: Windsor, ON

YEAR OF BIRTH: 1992

EDUCATION: Vincent Massey Secondary, Windsor, ON, 2012

University of Windsor, B.A., Windsor, ON, 2017