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SEXISM, RELIGION, AND POLITICS: AN EXAMINATION OF
RAPE MYTH ACCEPTANCE

A Dissertation

By

DANIELLE E. WETUSKI

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Prairie View A&M University
in partial fulfillment for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

May 2024

Major Subject: Juvenile Justice

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Approved as the style and content by:

Camille Gibson
Chair of Committee
Interim Dean of College

Myrna Cintron
Member
Head of Department

Thiagarajan Ramakrishnan
Member

Serita Whiting
Member

Tyrone Tanner
Dean of Graduate Studies

May 2024

Major Subject: Juvenile Justice

ABSTRACT

Sexism, Religion, and Politics: An Examination of Rape Myth Acceptance

(May 2024)

Danielle E. Wetuski, M.A., Sam Houston State University

B.S., Sam Houston State University

Chair of Advisory Committee: Dr. Camille Gibson

The literature is inconclusive about the relationship between religion, politics, sexism, rape myth acceptance, and the behavioral implications of the latter. Therefore, the goal of this study was to develop an understanding of the relationship between religion, political affiliation, sexism, and rape myth acceptance. The study utilized primary data collection through surveys of youth using MTurk. The survey involved the administration of the Faith Activities Scale, Moral Foundations Scale, Religious Fundamentalism Scale, Modern Sexism Scale, Ambivalent Sexism Scale, Gender Stereotypes Scale, and the Gender Inclusive Rape Myth Acceptance Scale. Data were analyzed through structural equation modeling to indicate which political affiliations and major US religious adherence predicted various gender stereotypes or sexist beliefs which were also predictive of rape myth acceptance. It was expected that those youth who described being more religious and conservative politically would evidence more sexism and in turn, rape myth acceptance. Although previous research indicated that those who identified as Republican often held stronger rape myth acceptance compared to Democrats (Conroy, 2019; NRP, 2019), the current study did not support these results. Possibly, the results of this study may be attributed to its narrow demographic, or that

more young adults are becoming less affiliated with their parents' religion and political beliefs systems and are thinking differently from them on these issues. Nevertheless, the findings offer implications for correcting gender miseducation amongst youth toward holding perpetrators accountable, encouraging victims to pursue justice, and reducing instances of sexual victimization in religious organizations.

Keywords: juvenile, sexual assault, religious affiliation, political affiliation

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this body of work to my husband and my son. These two people have added so much meaning to my life. In addition, I would like to thank all of those who have supported me through this long process. Without you all, this would not be possible.

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Firstly, I would like to acknowledge my family. Without them I would not have been able to pursue my doctorate. They have provided so much support and care for my education. Thank you all for your encouragement and belief in me.

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Lastly, I would like to thank anyone who expressed interest or had to listen to me talk about my research (looking at you, my students) continuously. Thank you for asking questions and supplying follow up commentary on my dissertation. Your interest kept me going in the times when I felt like the research was irrelevant to society.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Since the early 1980s, researchers began to argue that sexual assault, including rape, is a growing concern in the United States, calling it an epidemic (Davis, 1981; Russell & Bolen, 2000). *Sexual assault* is defined as sexual abuse, incestual sexual relationships, or any sexual contact with another person without consent (RAINN, 2018). As of 2009, one in six women was a victim of sexual assault (RAINN, 2018). In addition, 44% of lesbians and 61% of bisexual women are raped (Human Rights Campaign, 2023). Also, about 26% of gay men and 37% of bisexual men are victimized through rape or sexual assault (Human Rights Campaign, 2023).

Although these statistics are alarming, the sexual abuse statistic only includes those who report their rape to authorities (RAINN, 2018). RAINN (2023) stated that one child protective service found evidence of children sexually abused or assaulted every nine minutes. Therefore, as of 2023, Child Protective Services agencies determined that over 57,000 American children had been sexually victimized (RAINN, 2023). Also, according to statistical analysis, 82% of sexual victims are girls, and one in nine girls are sexually assaulted, whereas one in 20 boys are sexually assaulted (RAINN, 2023). The most common age for sexual assault is between the ages of 12 and 17 years old (RAINN, 2023). Sexual assault is found to be one of the most underreported crimes in the United States (Barnett, 2018). Therefore, it is likely that there are more victims of sexual assault than are statistically shown.

According to The Global Office of National Statistics (2020), there has been a significant increase in both violent and sexual violence due to the lockdowns caused by the highly contagious COVID-19 transmissions. Government officials called for a country-wide lockdown in 2020 after numerous individuals became deadly ill due to a global virus, COVID-19. When lockdowns went into effect, families were forced to be quarantined at home, which not only gave rise to potential physical and sexual violence but also increased stress regarding family income, financial stability (Williams et al., 2020), personal loss, and anxiety (Pieh et al., 2021).

This stress also contributed to heightening the possibility of physical and sexual violence (Pieh et al., 2021). For instance, The Global Office of National Statistics (2020) reported a 60% increase in both physical and sexual violence in 2020. In addition, access to healthcare after an assault has been limited to those who were experiencing these forms of violence due to hospitals orders to be hyper-focused on providing aid to those with COVID-19. (Leslie & Gaskin, 2020; World Health Organization, 2023).

Sexual assault has been common and many individuals share the understanding that sexual assault is a part of life and is inexorable (Buchwald et al., 1993; Mackenzie et al., 2020). This belief is an extension of myths accepted in the rape culture found in Western societies. Rape culture gives breath to the negative perception of those who are victimized by sexual assault (Barnett et al., 2018). The beliefs behind them often reflect gender stereotypes and ancient cultural norms (Barnett et al., 2018).

Rape Myth Acceptance (RMA) is untrue beliefs regarding rape victims, rape, and the rapist (Burt, 1980; Finely, 2016). For example, a rape myth is that a man cannot

control himself if he is enticed to sexually offend against another because men are naturally an aggressive gender. This belief not only harms the victim but also takes the responsibility for the sexual assault away from the offender. In addition, this widely accepted belief negatively affects the victim's perception of the assault (Jenkins, 2016; Monson et al., 2000). Therefore, those who are sexually assaulted are commonly viewed as if the assault was ultimately their fault (Page, 2008). To illustrate, if a woman was sexually assaulted late at night, then a person may ask questions like, "Why were you out so late?" "Why were you alone?" or "Why were you dressed in such a way that provoked someone to assault you sexually?"

The questions listed above are also examples of victim-blaming (Bohner et al., 1998) a leading cause of underreporting (Heath & Sperry, 2021). Only about 30% of those who are sexually assaulted report the incident (RAINN, 2009). Further understanding the ingredients of the development of RMA development is important to distinguish the myths and to increase the reporting of sexual assaults.

Previous research suggests that victim blaming is interconnected with the Christian religion (Heath & Sperry, 2021). In addition, embedded in the Christian religion are patriarchal views (Lidzy, 2005) and gender roles (Bryant, 2006). Therefore, those who identify as religious in the United States are more likely to participate in victim-blaming. For instance, within a church, there are specific rules that a woman needs to follow to avoid unwanted attention. According to Traditional Catholic Femininity (2017), a Christian website, in some of the most gender-restrictive churches, women must wear long skirts, blouses that do not expose the skin on their shoulders, and headdresses

to hide their hair. If the church's women do not follow these instructions, then they are placing themselves in danger of receiving unwanted sexual attention (tradcatfem.com, 2017; How to Dress for Mass, 2007).

Traditionally, men are more likely to endorse rape myth acceptance compared to their women counterparts (Suarez et al., 2010). Rape myth acceptance has a direct line connection to hyper-masculinity, homophobia, and hostility toward women (Anderson & Anderson, 2008; Parrot & Zeichner, 2003). Rape myth acceptance also has roots in Judeo-Christian religiosity. As such, religious men are more likely to blame the victim for a sexual assault than religious women (Freymeyer, 1997).

Religious affiliation also plays a significant role in rape myth acceptance as a source of value within culture and socialization (Finlay et al., 2003; Sapienza et al., 2006). Specifically, those who are Christian and follow the Bible are more susceptible to accepting stereotypical roles and gender norms (Barnett et al., 2018). Although there are several versions of the Bible for those who practice Christianity, like Catholics and Protestants, the messages of gender roles are similar. For instance, pursuant to Christian Biblical standards, a woman is meant to be submissive to a man; men are meant to be the leaders of their household and in the Church. In addition, individuals who practice the Christian religion are more likely to have rape myth acceptance related to a call for female modesty and the avoidance of sexual assault in the Bible (Barlas, 2009; Franiuk et al., 2001; Gross, 1993; Mir-Hosseini, 2006).

To demonstrate, the story of Susanna, found in Daniel 1:1-44 in the Catholic Bible, states that "her beauty was the cause of attracting unwanted sexual attention from

her elders” (The New King James Version Bible, 2020). Moreover, in Daniel 1:47-63, a man named Daniel rescues Susanna from sexual assault only to tell her that if she were less beautiful, then she would be safe from sexual danger. Thus, Christianity not only shapes many beliefs surrounding sexual assault but also plays a role in sustaining patriarchal views. The Protestant Bible has omitted the story of Susanna; however, it does contain the story of the fall of “the sons of God” in Genesis Chapter Six, after these males were tempted by the beauty of women. Thus, there are verses that follow, requiring women to have modest appearances to keep males from sexual sins (1 Timothy 2: 8-10; 1 Peter 3: 1-4).

The current study is significant because sexual assault and rape are thought to be a new phenomenon when seen in the religious Church. However, sexual assault within the bounds of religion has been a part of the Church's history (Barnett et al., 2018). A case in point can be seen in the Catholic Church. In the Catholic Church, a Church built on patriarchal views, sexual assault dates back 2,000 years (Dale & Alpert, 2007). In fact, sexual assault was so common within confession practices that a barrier was placed between the congregation and the clergymen or priest (Johannsson & Percy, 1996).

According to Dale and Alpert (2007), the religions that are influenced by patriarchal views are ones that endorse male hierarchy and protection, as well as not allowing diversity in certain positions, such as clergy-member. The Catholic Church is only one example of how sexual assault found in religion is a significant issue. Many Protestant denominations have also held similar patriarchal views that have allowed sexual exploitation in their congregations (Barnett et al., 2018). Thus, this study explored

the types of beliefs that are associated with various religious identifications that are most predictive of youth holding gender stereotypes, sexist views, and in turn, rape myth acceptance.

This study is relevant to juvenile justice as it offers insight into beliefs that foretell serious deviance. Thus, the current research should be relevant to informing efforts to keep youth safer from sexual victimization. It uses structural equation modeling to demonstrate the extent to which political affiliation, gender stereotypes and sexism predict whether a person holds rape myth acceptance.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous research suggests that religion and political affiliation both play a role in rape myth acceptance (Barnett et al., 2018; Finley, 2016;). Today, there are circumstances where religion and political standing have influenced or protected the offender within the hierarchy of the Church or through the judicial system simply because the offenders were men within a particular denomination. For instance, the Southern Baptist Convention Churches have drawn numerous headlines within the Houston Chronicle newspaper in Texas regarding its years of coverups of sexual abuse.

The Southern Baptist Convention Churches cases reflect a common pattern of coverups to avoid scandal, which includes victim-blaming and silencing the victims while protecting the sexual perpetrator, often allowing him, most are males, to simply re-locate and continue his offending (Ingersoll, 2022). Most notably, the Catholic Church has been exposed regarding such conduct increasingly since the 1990s, and the Southern Baptists and various evangelical churches such as Hillsong 2017 (Texas Chronicle, 2022). Most often in breaking news exposes, the perpetrators are White, conservative evangelicals, and the women involved are portrayed as shameless tempters who failed to manage their virtue (Ingersoll, 2022).

Rape Myth Acceptance

Rape myth acceptance is a phenomenon that oppresses the victim of sexual assault (Maltby et al., 2010). Rape myth acceptance refers to specific false beliefs about sexual assault. Six examples of rape myth acceptance are:

1. A victim elicited the sexual attack by wearing provocative clothing.

2. Men cannot be raped.
3. The LBGQIA community does not experience sexual assault as often as heterosexual individuals.
4. It is not rape if one of the individuals in the sexual act changes this/her mind about having sexual intercourse with someone else.
5. One can convince or coerce someone else to have sexual intercourse.
6. If a person achieves an orgasm, then he or she was not raped because the person received some pleasure from the act.

Although these are popular examples of rape myth acceptance, they are only a few of many ideas. A typical church depiction of rape myth acceptance is a teenage girl begins to have a relationship with a man within the Church and is then sexually assaulted. This is often viewed as the girl's fault for becoming close to the man. In this example, the victim is blamed for the offender's behavior because she should not have placed herself in harm's way. Instead of blaming the offender, the girl is accused of doing something wrong. Pursuant to rape myth, she must have done something to elicit his sexual attention and unhinged urges.

Another common example of rape myth acceptance lies within the language surrounding rape. For instance, when discussing sexual assault, persons tend to highlight the victim instead of the perpetrator. Specifically, persons tend to report that *1 in 9 girls are likely to be sexually assaulted* (RAINN, 2023), instead of *1 in 5 men have stated he has forced himself on another sexually*. The shift in subject matter suggests that sexual assault is the victim's problem (Katz, 2006). Therefore, the victim is the focus without even mentioning the offender.

This language phenomenon can also be found on popular and trusted statistical websites like RAINN.org, CDC.gov, and nscvrc.gov. In many instances, the statistics are geared toward victims and their experiences. In addition, the common belief that sexual assault is a victim's problem is also suggested in current scholarly studies due to the spotlight of sexual assault placed on victims instead of offenders. Even though websites like RAINN.org provide statistics on whether a stranger, acquaintance, or known person may sexually assault another, there is no defining statistic on how many individuals are sexually offending. When conducting research, little is known statistically about those who sexually offend (Bach et al., 2021; Alaggia et al., 2020; Dworkin et al., 2023; Dworkin et al., 2021).

The fact that societal culture focuses on girls as guardians of male sexual purity leaves it open to the boys' interpretation that they are not responsible for their sexual urges and are free to act upon them. The message that boys will not be blamed for their sexual behavior has been perpetuated for a significant time in history. Thus, boys, many boys, suffer from the consequences when they misunderstand the risks of acting on their sexual desires improperly. In sum, boys are at high risk if they accept rape myths to behave in a sexually criminal manner related to stalking, sexual assault, rape, and other consequences such as unplanned pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases.

Rape myth acceptance can be found in behavior and language and is a common concept among not only Christians but in Western culture. Previous researchers have concluded that the more a person believes in Christianity, the more likely he or she will believe in rape myths (Maltby et al., 2010). In other research on RMA, religion's connection to victim-blaming is a contemporary topic because of the #MeToo movement

that emerged in 2017. The #MeToo movement shed light on how often people are sexually victimized but keep quiet about it, given the prevalence of RMA. As many individuals came forward as not just victims but survivors of sexual assault, it encouraged others to bring their truth to light. Survivors who came forward with their stories of sexual assault seemed hopeful that their voices would make a difference and influence change.

Ingersoll (2022) suggested that another issue that contributes to rape myth acceptance is how Western culture values female sexual purity. She offered an example of a 1992 purity program introduced to adolescent girls to encourage them to maintain their virginity. Thus, the girls were asked to take a course explaining the importance of controlling their sexual desires, as well as helping their male counterparts to maintain their virginity by not enticing them to sexual behavior. The program placed a heavy responsibility on adolescent girls. Specifically, adolescent girls were responsible for their virginity and the boys' virginity. The goal of the purity program was to ensure that young girls remained pure for their wedding day. However, the program created shame, embarrassment, and guilt for many girls (Ingersoll, 2022).

Rape Culture and Myths

One of the Church's purity culture's main objectives is to prevent sexual activity among youth, especially female youth. Specifically, religious groups speak on the concept of purity to help young Church members not to sin sexually. Religious groups promote sexual purity to help guide the youth away from unwanted sexual attention and teen pregnancy. However, researchers have concluded that the purity culture movement created more harm than good (Clonan-Roy et al., 2020; Filipovic, 2013). Clonan-Roy et

al. (2020) did a qualitative content of analysis of sex education in 34 states. They found a pattern of messages across the texts that stated that if a girl/woman does not sustain from sex, then there is an increased risk that she would be sexually assaulted.

In addition to purity culture's aim to control youth sexual activity, there is a particular focus on female adolescents more than male adolescents regarding the importance of their virginity. *Virginity* is loosely defined as a person who has not had sexual relations with another individual (Valenti, 2010). However, Valenti (2010) informed her readers in *The Purity Myth: How America's Obsession with Virginity is Hurting Young Women* that there was not an exact and medical definition of virginity—that the concept merely exists to place an extreme value on sex specifically sexual intercourse with a virgin. Valenti (2010) also emphasized that the word *virgin* is synonymous with the word *woman*. However, there is no similar word to *virgin* that is nearly synonymous with the word *man*. Within the Christian Bible, virgins can only be found about women. For example, Esther 2:19 speaks of how Esther, one of the noted virgins in the kingdom, won the attention of the King. In Matthew 25:1, the kingdom of heaven is described as 10 virgins who have met with their bridegroom. The term *virgin* within the reference of only women can also be found in Exodus 22:17, Esther 2:2, 2:19, Songs of Songs 6:8, Lamentations 5:11, Ezekiel 44:22, Matthew 25:7, 25:10, 1 Corinthians 7:25, and Revelation 14:4.

The significance of a woman's virginity is emphasized among conservative, evangelical Church girls and women who have the responsibility of controlling both their and the boys/men's sexual behavior (Valenti, 2010). The belief that a girl or woman has the power to prevent or encourage a boy or man's sexual behavior at all times has

connections to rape myth acceptance. Modern examples include dress codes that limit the amount of skin showing; these are enforced to control female attire. The dress code may specify a specific length in skirts and shorts, shoulders should not be exposed, and there should not be any revealing blouses that show cleavage. Dress codes are not usually less detailed for the boy attending school, yet the codes are there to suggest that the boys cannot sustain sexual thoughts and behavior if they were to see a girl dressed in revealing clothes (Aghasaleh, 2018).

Dress codes are found not only in the school but also in the Christian Bible. For example, 1 Timothy 2:9-10 states:

9 I also want the women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, adorning themselves, not with elaborate hairstyles of gold or pearls or expensive clothes
10 but with good deeds, appropriate for women who worship God (The New King James Version Bible, 2020).

Another example can be found in 1 Corinthians 11:6-7, which states:

6 If a woman does not cover her head, she might as well have her hair cut off, but if it is a disgrace for a woman to have her hair cut off or her head shaved, she should cover her head (The New King James Version Bible, 2020).

7 A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man (The New King James Version Bible, 2020).

Thus, according to the Bible, both genders are meant to wear modest attire not to draw attention, and both genders are forbidden from cross-dressing (Deut. 22:5), but there are more verses related to women's attire.

Religion, Sexism, and Rape Myth Acceptance

Religion is an important concept throughout western culture. Specifically, religion is a categorical indicator of a person's religious affiliation, if there is one (Steensland et al., 2000; Wald & Calhoun-Brown, 2014). Many persons may identify with a religion but score low on religiosity. Religiosity is a measure of religious devotion or how much a person engages in religious practices (Neff, 2006). Nevertheless, religion impacts youth socialization (Finlay & Walther, 2003; Sapienza & Guiso, 2006) regarding not only their religious mindset but relatedly, people's politics, social beliefs, and norms (Newport, 2012).

Further being male is a risk factor for severe criminal behavior (Office of Surgeon General, 2001). Exactly why is unclear. There are theories that certain expressions of masculinity are common in predicting male criminality. For example, males displaying high masculinity hormones are more likely to participate in criminal activity. Specifically, there have been correlations between a certain level of masculinity and violent behavior, but how much of this is nature versus nurture?

Brown (2016) examined violence among youth who were sexual abusers and others who committed general delinquency (N=378). Brown (2016) found that masculinity did not create a risk for male youth on the path to criminality; however, misogynistic beliefs seemed to be more of a risk for male youth participating in criminal behavior than masculinity. Misogynist beliefs have been predictive of male sexual assaults in the United States, which is also a large male perpetrated offense (Brown, 2016).

Examples of misogyny are found in ambivalent sexism. Ambivalent sexism is the foundation for benevolent and hostile sexism (Deregisi, 2002). Benevolent sexism is the belief that men should cherish women. According to benevolent sexism, men should cherish women because women are understood to be of a delicate and pleasant in comparison to men (Glick & Fiske, 2001). In addition, benevolent sexism beliefs foster the thought that women are good-natured and, therefore, need to be protected by men. Benevolent sexism is correlated with religious priming (Haggard et al., 2008). For instance, gender roles are taught early to both boys and girls as they join the Christian Church. Specifically, girls are taught to be malleable, and boys are taught to be authoritative. Therefore, Haggard et al. (2018) suggested that benevolent sexism tends to increase the obstructive belief that a victim's sexual assault is his or her fault. For example, if a man has sexually assaulted a young woman, then the young woman must have acted or behaved in such a way to entice the man to give her sexual attention (Viki & Abrams, 2002; Yamawaki & Tschanz, 2005).

On the other hand, hostile sexism is the belief that men are superior to women (Glick & Fiske, 2012). Within hostile sexism, men are not the only gender to hold this belief. Some women also tend to believe they are inferior to men (Glick & Fiske, 2001). In addition, women are also thought to be characterized as meek and kind, while men are thought to be leaders, decision-makers, and at the forefront of the family dynamic. These beliefs are based on Bible passages such as 1 Timothy 2: 11-13, which states, "11 a woman should learn in quietness and full submission. 12 I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man; she must be quiet. 13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve"(The New King James Version Bible, 2020). Also, in Genesis 3:16, the

Bible states, "...your (woman) desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you"(The New King James Version Bible, 2020),

Hostile sexism plays into the rape myth by assuming that women should be submissive to men because men are superior to them. Specifically, men are more dominant than women and should be able to take what they need from women (Glick & Fiske, 2012). This dominant mindset may lead a man to believe that he is entitled to a woman's body. Therefore, even if the woman were to reject him, he could still assault her because she is inferior to him, and she is meant to be docile.

Maltby et al. (2010) in a study of 337 evangelical undergraduates in the south, found that as men's beliefs in religion increase, so do their beliefs in sexism. Glick and Fiske (2001) concluded that women with a higher moral compass will submit to their husbands according to a sample of 15,000 men and women from several different nations. Indeed, Judeo-Christians believe that men are called upon to be the leaders and protectors of their families and provide a suitable home life. Thus, both genders are meant to hold different roles within the family. However, pursuant to findings in the literature, these roles tend to be sexist in that women's rights are automatically diminished compared to men. Given these patriarchal assumptions, men are given more privileges related to traditional gender stereotypes of males as leaders and females as followers (Baker et al., 2019). Thus, men are more likely to be placed in positions of power.

Patriarchal ideas are passed down to youth in the United States. Children internalize the gender roles assigned to them. Boys are supposed to be more authoritative and outspoken, and girls should be submissive and supportive of their male counterparts.

Consequently, these gender roles influence sexual relationships. The boys are supposed to chase after the girl, and the girl is the gatekeeper to sexual gratification (Jozkowski & Peterson, 2013). Therefore, boys are encouraged to continue chasing the girl even when she rejects them. The boys are taught that this is simply the girl playing *hard to get*. Hence, a cultural endorsement of male harassing behavior. Relatedly, if the girl does not eventually give in to the boy's chase, then, to some, she is wrong, not the boy who harassed her. A hostile sexist orientation can lead a person onto a pathway of sexual harassment and assault. Therefore, recognizing the underlying beliefs that govern sexual crimes can aid in creating a safer and more judicious United States.

Political Affiliation and Young Adults

According to a 2019 survey, many parents have strong beliefs that their religious and political views should be passed down and upheld by their children (Cooperman, 2023). Within the said survey, children from ages 13 to 17 years old were asked if they supported their parents' political affiliations. Eighty-one percent stated that they were Republicans due to their parents' beliefs and 89% stated they were Democrats due to their parents' beliefs (Cooperman, 2023). Political ideations often pass to the next generation through the parents' teachings of political beliefs (Lyons, 2017). Parents who are active in their political affiliation tend to influence their children's political beliefs more than parents who are less involved in politics (Jennings et al., 2019).

Lyon (2017) conducted a longitudinal study that measured the political affiliation with which a person identified at age 18, 35, and 50. Lyon (2017) stated that a young adult at 18 years old tended to identify with the parents in political affiliations. However, as a person aged, it became more unpredictable whether the person continued to believe

in the same political standards taught by the parents (Lyons, 1997, 2017). In 2009, another study examined how political affiliation changed as persons aged (Dawes, 2009). Results indicated that social environments were crucial to belief systems and that as those changed, so did the beliefs that people held (Dawes, 2009).

Political Affiliation and Rape Myth Acceptance

In a 2016 poll, Republicans began to doubt women's claims of sexual assault, and these suspicions seemed to grow leading up to the #MeToo movement in 2017 (Conroy, 2019). It can be argued that the Anti-MeToo movement reflected many Republicans' skepticism toward women who claimed to have been sexually assaulted. Differences of opinion on the #MeToo movement are indicative of political differences regarding rape myth acceptance (Conroy, 2019). About 43% of Americans agreed that the #MeToo movement went too far (NRP, 2019). Within that 43%, 75% of Republicans agreed with the statement, and 21% of Democrats supported the claim (NRP, 2019). Conroy (2019) found that 44% of the Republican party stated that they did not support the #MeToo movement, whereas 81% of Democrats stated that they did. In addition, there was a Republican group that formed an Anti-MeToo movement to spread awareness of how the #MeToo movement brought negative consequences to males.

Further, 32% of Americans support the idea that if a sexual assault happened some time ago, then it is less relevant than an assault that has recently happened (NRP, 2019). Of these 32% of Americans, 54% identified as Republicans, and 21% identified as Democrats (NRP, 2019). In a study conducted in 2017, 78% of Republicans stated that the person accused of sexual assault should be given the benefit of the doubt (NRP, 2019). By 2018, the statistic decreased to 67% of Republicans believing that a person

accused of sexual assault should be given the benefit of the doubt (NRP, 2019). Last, if an individual were to run for office, 60% of Republicans stated that they would consider supporting the candidate with a vote if the candidate was also accused of a sexual assault (NRP, 2019). However, 64% of Democrats stated they would not consider voting for a candidate who had been accused of sexual assault (NRP, 2019).

These statistics also supported Conroy's (2019) findings that the two political parties are divided on sexual assault beliefs. Although these statistics can be daunting, the root cause for the political parties being harsh on sexual assault victims compared to the sexual assault perpetrators is undetermined. Previous research demonstrates that conservative Republicans tend to support small government, whereas liberal Democrats tend to support social justice and equality. However, O'Connor et al. (2021) stated that conservatives tend to feel more attached to their party due to in-group loyalty than other political parties. For example, previous studies have found that conservative political groups are more likely to endorse unlimited in-group loyalty and, in the same breath, tend to give less support to social justice and change because these groups are out-groups to the Republicans (Haidt & Graham, 2007; Jost et al., 2018). Jost and colleagues (2018) continued that this explanation of in-groups and out-groups described what conservatives tend to value in terms of tradition and conformity. In contrast, liberals tend to promote change and acceptance. Thus, the two parties are on opposite ends of the political spectrum.

Just as important, the Republican and Democratic parties have been at odds regarding legislation dealing with sexual assault and abuse—specifically, the Violence Against Women Act. The Violence Against Women Act was signed into law at the

suggestion of (then) Senator Joe Biden in 1994. The Violence Against Women Act aided physically and sexually abused victims by increasing the training of law enforcement, providing funding services for survivors, developing the Office of Violence Against Women within the Justice Department, and increasing the penalties for sexual assault and abuse.

Although there is noteworthy evidence that the two parties can be found on the opposite end of sexual assault and rape myth acceptance, there is also evidence that the parties have shared ideas about the protection of people when it comes to domestic and sexual violence in more recent years when comparing political positions in 1994 (snopes.com, 2018). For example, in 2000, 2005, and 2013, both political parties fought to maintain the Violence Against Women Act. In addition, each year since the act was up for renewal, the Republicans and Democrats were able to work together to add new safety support, develop better prevention efforts, and increase the response to gender-based violence (MacGuill, 2018).

Even though the Violence Against Women Act has been a law that both parties have strived to maintain, the New York attorney general, Letitia James, claimed on social media that former President Trump, a part of the Republican party, has had 18 sexual assault allegations filed against him (abcNews, 2020), and that he let the act quietly expire in 2018. However, former President Trump did renew the Violence Against Women Act during his presidency, according to MacGuill (2018), on Snopes.com, a website whose goal is to debunk political theories and rumors. It was not until later in the Trump administration that the law lapsed due to Congress failure to reauthorize it at the end of 2018. As a result, the Violence Against Women Act was no longer in effect.

In 2020, the Violence Against Women Act was reactivated and strengthened by President Joe Biden's administration. However, Read (2021) noted that Congress was at odds regarding renewing the Violence Against Women Act. Specifically, 172 Republicans voted against the new regulations within the act regarding limiting gun purchases to an individual with a record of stalking.

Since the initial signing of the Violence Against Women Act in 1994, some provisions have been strengthened. President Joe Biden increased the security that the law provides in the renewal and expansion of the Violence Against Women grant program. The program now addresses non-Native perpetrators of sexual assault, child abuse, sex trafficking, and stalking within tribal law enforcement, expanding services to the LGBTQ+ survivors, developing protection to those whose intimate evidence of sexual assault surfaces on social media, providing programs for rape prevention, updating SMART Prevention Programs, providing healthcare to those who are survivors of sexual abuse, increasing victim-centered training, and strengthening background checks on abusers (The White House, 2022). In addition, the Biden administration has continued to expand the Violence Against Women Act by increasing funding to address sexual assault within the military and on university campuses, increasing survivor resources, reducing online sexual harassment and abuse, and recognizing and strengthening the protection of Indigenous women and girls (The White House, 2022).

One example of how power within politics trickles down into RMA can be seen on May 30, 2021, when Drew Clinton, an 18-year-old man, raped a 16-year-old high school girl, Cameron, at a party. Cameron stated that she told Clinton several times that she did not want sexual contact with him. However, Cameron stated that after consuming

alcohol, she woke up to find Clinton on top of her while a pillow was placed over her head. In October 2021, Republican Judge Robert Adrian found Clinton guilty of sexual assault. Yet, after five months of Clinton serving time in prison, Judge Adrian reversed his original guilty verdict and released Clinton from prison. Judge Adrian stated that Clinton had served enough time for his actions. Judge Adrian backed his reversed ruling by shifting the blame for the assault to Cameron and the parents of the teenagers attending the party. Specifically, Judge Adrain expressed that Cameron was at fault for enticing the assault by swimming in her underwear at the party. In addition, Judge Adrian said the parents were to blame for letting teenagers consume alcohol. He added that Clinton had only turned 18 years old two weeks before the assault and should not have to spend any more time in prison.

Another example of illustration above can be drawn from a lawsuit where a rape victim was blamed for her sexual assault by the senior attorney general (Ganim, 2014), in the case of a 24-year-old typist who was on duty at Rockview prison in Bellefonte, Pennsylvania. She was choked to unconsciousness and raped by an inmate, Omar Best, who was known for sex-rated crimes. Even though Best was known for his sexual criminal behavior, the employees of the prison were not protected from immediate contact with Best. For instance, the typist was not allowed to be in a secure area away from Best. Instead, the typist was forced to work in an area that Best could easily access (Ganim, 2014). After the victim filed a lawsuit, the senior attorney general stated that the victim acted in a way that encouraged the event to happen (Ganim, 2014).

In sum, both political parties have different ideas and beliefs when it comes to sexual assault victims and perpetrators. The idea that each political party supports

different standards and ideas further separates the parties on their beliefs. In addition, the two parties support for different beliefs may be linked to beliefs within rape myth acceptance, like victim blaming. Conservatives tend to believe in more traditional gender norms, which are in line with Biblical sexual stereotypes which tend to excuse the sexual offender which comes across in this party's politics.

Moral Foundations Theory

The theory of moral foundations was developed to understand the intuitive moral ability of individuals in numerous cultures. The theory and scale were created by two social and cultural psychologists, Jesse Graham and Johnathan Haidt (Dobolyi, 2021). Regarding the morals of people in religious and political affiliation, the Christian religion's primary aim is to be accepting of humans and to love one another as God loves His people. In addition, the conservative Republican party also values traditional Christian teachings (Greeley & Hunt, 2006). On the other hand, liberal Democrats tend to vocalize their acceptance of many groups and promote change for diverse types of people. These two opposing political parties claim the same Judeo-Christian moral foundations. However, in politics, they remain far apart in their interpretations of gender.

Although the research on the relationship between religion, religiosity, moral foundations, and rape myth acceptance is still developing, prior research has concluded there may be a significant connection between these concepts (Finlay & Walther, 2003; Newport, 2012; Sapienza & Guiso, 2006). For instance, the Bible alludes to the ordinary circumstances of sexual assault against women in verses like Genesis 34, 18-19, Jeremiah 17:9, Deuteronomy 22:28-29, and 2 Samuel 13, while maintaining the idea that sexual harm against women is a part of life on Earth (The New King James Version Bible,

2020). Furthermore, in Deuteronomy 22: 28-29, God teaches his followers that if a man should sexually assault a woman, then he must care for her as his wife because it is now his moral duty not to allow her to become destitute and alone. Yet, this is more of a moral instruction that does not instruct men not to harm women sexually, but instead, to care for them in some way once they have already sexually assaulted her. This study sought to understand how the morals that a person internalizes can be predictive of RMA.

Empirical findings have connected political affiliation with RMA through moral foundations (Barnett et al., 2018; Clifford et al., 2015; Frankiuk & Shain, 2011; Reynolds et al., 2020). For instance, Rosewood and Hammond (2023) found that those in higher authoritative positions who scored higher on a Conservative scale were more likely to support RMA. Specifically, higher authoritative figures like school superintendents, were more likely to place blame on the victims of sexual assault than the offender.

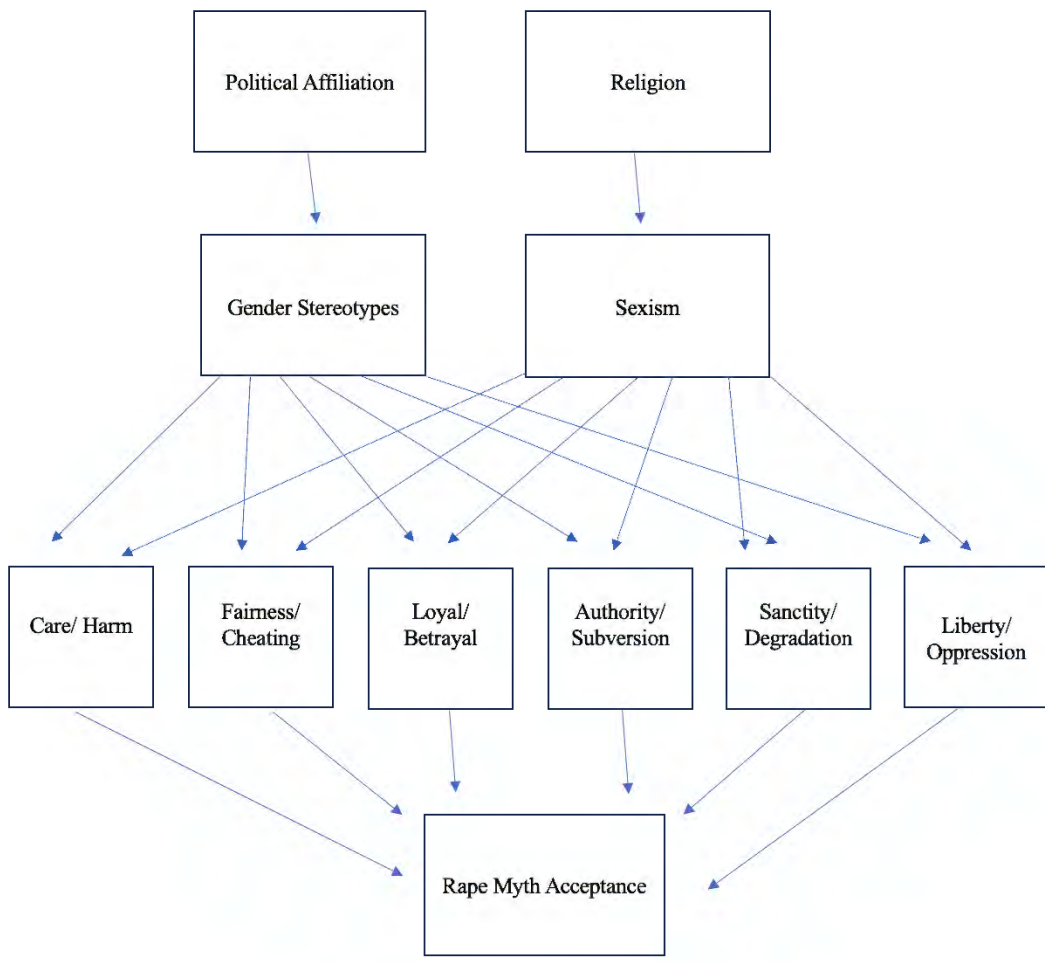
Rosewood and Hammond (2023) used the morals foundation theory to explain why those in higher positions were likely to believe in RMA. Thus, Rosewood and Hammond (2023) concluded that individuals who were likely to believe in RMA were at a higher risk of placing blame on the victim instead of the offender due to the participant's nature to sympathize with those who were more culturally similar to them, and therefore, are less deserving of punishment (Bongiorno et al., 2016; Hayes et al., 2013). In addition, prior research demonstrated that political values tend to be rationalized and then justified through foundations that bond one another, such as loyalty/betrayal, authority/subversion, and sanctity/degradation, while individual foundations further separate one another, care/harm and fairness/cheating. Thus, conservatives tend to place greater value on the foundations that bond them to one

another, which endorses familiar behavior yet distances themselves from behavior that promotes emotional sensitivity (Barnett et al., 2018; & Reynolds, 2020).

Model I (see Figure 1) based on findings in the literature depicts how persons' political affiliations and religion in the United States relate to their internalizing of rape myth acceptance. Political affiliation does not relate directly to RMA but is influenced by whether the person holds gender stereotypes and the extent to which these impact the person's moral foundations. Religion has a parallel influence on sexism to predicting whether this in turn affects a person's moral foundations toward rape myth acceptance.

According to Newport (2021), religion informs right and wrong. Specifically, religion tends to help shape a person's mindset, political ideations, and belief systems (Newport, 2021). In addition, religion provides the concepts that a person would need to feel secure in behaviors and ideations. For example, Christian religions tend to promote gender social constructs and reinforce sexual purity based on assigned sex at birth (Clonan-Roy et al., 2020). For instance, Christian religions have a specific focus on sexual purity for women and girls (Valenti, 2010). Specifically, women and girls are meant to be the gatekeepers to men and boys' sexual gratification and pleasure (Valenti, 2010). Thus, the Christian Bible is outlined with stories from Exodus to Revelations of how women and girls should remain virtuous throughout their single lives.

Figure 1: Model I Political Affiliation and Religious Pathways to Rape Myth Acceptance



Christians believe that they follow God's will as described in the Bible (Aghasaleh, 2018). The Bible states that women and girls can hinder men and boys from eliciting sexual behaviors. This includes women and girls dressing modestly (Aghasaleh, 2018). If their clothes are too revealing, then it is assumed that it is their fault if a man or boy makes sexual advances (Aghasaleh, 2018). This belief is one of many that reinforces rape myth acceptance.

Gender stereotypes are beliefs that specific genders are meant to behave in a particular way. For example, men and boys are meant to be masculine, while women and girls are meant to be feminine (Brown, 2016). Within masculinity, it is common for both men/boys and women/girls to partake in stereotypical behaviors simply because they were raised to believe them (Glick & Fiske, 2012). However, some gender stereotypes can be harmful. Glick and Fiske (2016) noted that gender stereotypes reflect misogyny, a belief that indicates severe power over females. Specifically, men and boys are meant to be leaders while women and girls are meant to be followers of men, as stated in the Christian bible (1 Corinthians 11:3; 1 Timothy 2:11-12, Colossians 3:18; Ephesians 5:22-24, 6:2; 1 Peter 3:1). Although these verses in the Bible are meant to be encouraging to both genders, some argue they promote hostile and benevolent sexism (Clonan-Roy et al., 2020; Filipovic, 2013). Ambivalent sexism is the foundation for benevolent and hostile sexism (Glick & Fiske, 2012). Benevolent sexism is the belief one may have that men should cherish women (Glick & Fiske, 2012).

Glick and Fiske (2001) noted that within benevolent sexism, men should cherish women because women are understood to be of a delicate and of a sweeter nature compared to men. In addition, benevolent sexism beliefs foster the thought that women

are good-natured and, therefore, need to be protected by men. Benevolent sexism has been found to be correlated with religious priming (Haggard et al., 2008). For instance, gender roles reflecting Christian ideals are taught early to both boys and girls in their societal socialization. Specifically, girls are taught to be accommodating and boys are taught to be authoritative. Therefore, Haggard et al. (2018) suggested that benevolent sexism tends to increase the obstructive belief that a victim's sexual assault is his or her fault. For example, if a man has sexually assaulted a young woman, then the young woman must have acted or behaved in such a way to entice the man to give her sexual attention (Viki & Abrams, 2002; Yamawaki & Tschanz, 2005).

In addition, in a study of 245 participants, Maltby et al. (2010) found that as men's beliefs in religion increased, so did their beliefs in sexism. Glick and Fiske (2012) concluded that women with a higher moral compass will submit to their husbands. Men are called upon to be the leaders and protectors of their families and provide a suitable home life. Accordingly, both genders are meant to hold different roles within the family. However, these roles tend to be sexist in that women's rights are automatically diminished compared to men.

As sexism is promoted within religious beliefs and gender stereotypes, the influence of rape myth acceptance increases (Maltby et al., 2010). Previous research has found that there is a correlation between religion and rape myth acceptance. For instance, these roles tend to accept the man as a more sexually active person and the woman as a less sexual individual, and the gatekeeper in helping men control their sexual urges (Glick & Fiske, 2012). An example of this would be the understanding that women are

responsible for covering their skin so as not to tempt their male counterparts to desire them sexually (Viki & Abrams, 2002; Yamawaki & Tschanz, 2005).

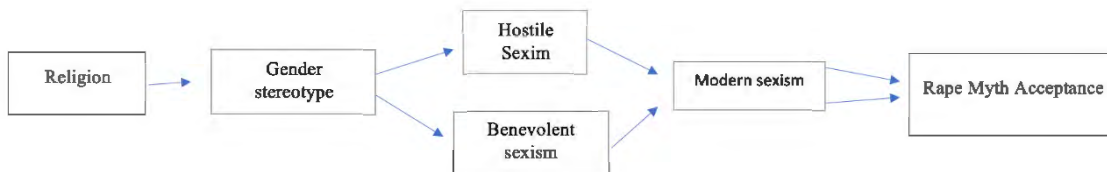
In sum, previous researchers concluded that there is a link between political beliefs and rape myth acceptance (Jost et al., 2018). For example, those who are in line with more conservative beliefs tend to believe in traditional gender roles (Haidt & Graham, 2007; Jost et al., 2018). These roles tend to give more grace to the sexual offender and place blame on the assaulted victim. These ideas are outlined in Model II (see Figure 2).

Model II offers a framework for examining the connection between religion, gender stereotypes, sexism, and RMA. It does this by attempting to distinguish the impact of hostile sexism versus benevolent sexism to see which is more impactful on the existence of modern sexism and in turn RMA. It was expected that both paths of sexism would have a positive relationship with RMA, but the more hostile sexism would have a stronger relationship.

Religion refers to religious identification. This differs from religiosity. Religiosity which can be measured by the Faith Activities Scale by Lambert and Dollahite (2010), refers to a person's dedication and activeness in his or her religion (Neff, 2006). These are displayed through church involvement and teachings to others outside the congregation. Model III (see Figure 3) depicts the theoretical framework regarding how religiosity may influence religious fundamentalism, which depending on a person's specific type of local church denomination, may evidence more of a certain form of sexism or stereotypical gender thinking and in turn RMA. For instance, persons who have significant loyalty to

their local church may attend most of the church events and perceive that it is his or her duty to spread the church's gospel.

Figure 2: Model II Religious Pathways to Rape Myth Acceptance

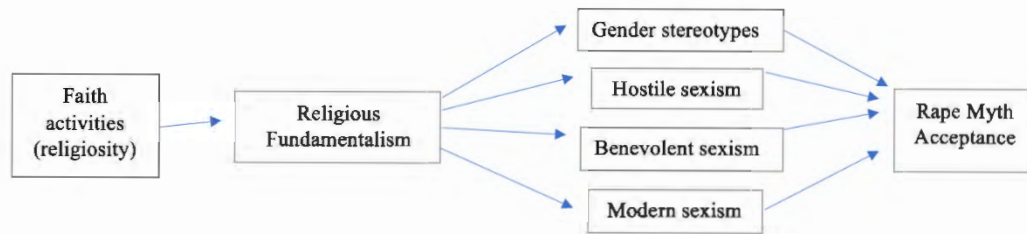


In addition, fundamentalism is the understanding that the belief a person has in a higher power is the only correct belief to have. Thus, the believer's faith is so significant that it includes a dogmatic endorsement of Biblical theories. Such ardent believers dislike criticism of their beliefs and will not listen to outside ideas about their faith (Pareek & Dhanda, 2022). One way to measure religiosity within an individual is through Altemeyer and Hunsberger (1992) Fundamentalism Scale. This scale links religiosity to a sense of duty and commitment to the religion and local church. Other research has concluded that as religious fundamentalism increased, so did sexist and stereotypical beliefs (Hannover et al., 2018; Pareek & Dhanda, 2022). Adamczyk (2013), who examined World Value Survey data, found that the more religious fundamentalism a person endorsed, the more they believed in gender inequality.

The current study extends the literature on religiosity, political affiliation, gender stereotypes, sexism, and rape myth acceptance. It had the goal of identifying exactly what ideas existed and the possible source of the ideas related to RMA. Identifying these points was expected to offer insights on exactly what type of miseducation needs to be addressed toward reducing the burden on females for preventing their own sexual victimization and addressing harmful societal beliefs might also increase the likelihood of

reporting these victimizations to the authorities. In turn, there could be an increase in the likelihood that sexual assault and rape cases will make it to court and that when they do, they are adjudicated like any other crime.

Figure 3: Model III Activities and Fundamentalism Pathway to Rape Myth Acceptance



Hypotheses

The study examined the following hypotheses:

Model 1:

H1a: There exists a positive relationship between political affiliation and gender stereotypes.

H2: There exists a positive relationship between religion and sexism.

H3a: There exists positive relationships between gender stereotypes and care/harm.

H3b: There exists a positive relationship between gender stereotypes and fairness/cheating.

H3c: There exists a positive relationship between gender stereotypes loyalty/betrayal.

H3d: There exists a positive relationship between gender stereotypes and authority/subversion.

H3e: There exists a positive relationship between gender stereotypes and sanctity/degradation.

- H3f: There exists a positive relationship between gender stereotypes and liberty/oppression.
- H4a: There exists a positive relationship between religion and care/harm.
- H4b: There exists a positive relationship between religion and fairness/cheating.
- H4c: There exists a positive relationship between religion and loyalty/betrayal.
- H4d: There exists a positive relationship between religion and authority/subversion.
- H4e: There exists a positive relationship between religion and sanctity/degradation.
- H4f: There exists a positive relationship between religion and liberty/oppression.
- H5a: There exists a positive relationship between care/harm, and RMA.
- H5b: There exists a positive relationship between fairness/cheating and RMA.
- H5c: There exists a positive relationship between loyalty/betrayal and RMA.
- H5d: There exists a positive relationship between authority/subversion and RMA.
- H5e: There exists a positive relationship between sanctity/degradation and RMA.
- H5f: There exists a positive relationship between liberty/oppression and RMA.
- H6a: There exists a positive relationship between sexism and care/harm.
- H6b: There exists a positive relationship between sexism and fairness/cheating.
- H6c: There exists a positive relationship between sexism and loyalty/betrayal.
- H6d: There exists a positive relationship between sexism and authority/subversion.
- H6e: There exists a positive relationship between sexism and sanctity/degradation.
- H6f: There exists a positive relationship between sexism and liberty/oppression.

Model II:

- H7: There exists a positive relationship between religion and gender stereotypes.

H8: There exists a positive relationship between gender stereotypes and hostile/benevolent sexism.

H9: There exists a positive relationship between hostile/benevolent sexism and old-fashioned/ modern sexism.

H10: There exists a positive relationship between old-fashioned/ modern sexism and RMA.

Model III:

H11: There exists a positive relationship between faith activities (religiosity) and religious fundamentalism.

H12a: There exists a positive relationship between religious fundamentalism and gender stereotypes.

H12b: There exists a positive relationship between religious fundamentalism and gender stereotypes.

H12c: There exists a positive relationship between religious fundamentalism and hostile sexism, benevolent sexism.

H12d: There exists a positive relationship between religious fundamentalism and old-fashioned sexism.

H12e: There exists a positive relationship between religious fundamentalism and modern sexism.

H13a: There exists a positive relationship between gender stereotypes and RMA.

H13b: There exists a positive relationship between gender stereotypes, and RMA.

H13c: There exists a positive relationship between hostile sexism, and RMA.

H13d: There exists a positive relationship between benevolent sexism, and RMA.

H13e: There exists a positive relationship between old-fashioned sexism, and RMA.

H13f: There exists a positive relationship between modern sexism, and RMA.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

Research Design

This study was a quantitative examination of the relationship between religion, religiosity, political affiliation, gender stereotypes, sexism, and rape myth acceptance using structural equation modeling. It utilized primary data collected via surveying youth in the United States via Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk). MTurk is a surveying website that many researchers use to collect primary data for studies. The survey included the Faith Activities Scale (Lambert & Dollahite, 2010), the Moral Foundations Scale (Graham et al., 2008), the Religious Fundamentalism Scale (Altemeyer, 2010), the Modern Sexism Scale (Swim, 1995), the Ambivalent Sexism Scale (Glicks & Fiske, 1996), the Gender Stereotypes Scale (Sekhar & Parameswari, 2020), and the Gender Inclusive Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (Urban & Pyland, 2020). The outcome variable was rape myth acceptance. The main predictive variables were religion and political affiliations. It was expected that those who identified as conservative in politics and who were more religious would evidence more rape myth acceptance as mediated by persons having gender stereotypes and sexist ideas.

The study utilized MTurk to locate participants and distribute the study's survey. MTurk is a popular economic marketplace for crowdsourcing created by Amazon in 2005. Within MTurk, individuals can create an account as a Requester to post Human Intelligence Tasks (HITs), which are minor tasks for individuals who maintain an account as a Worker on MTurk to complete. Some of these tasks offer a monetary reward for

completing the tasks. The tasks that an individual may have access to complete include a wide range of surveys, data validation, image recognition, and content moderation.

Research Questions

The following are the three research questions for the current study:

1. How effective is Model 1 with political affiliation, religion, gender stereotypes and sexism at predicting the elements of moral foundation and in turn, rape myth acceptance?
2. How effective is Model 2 with religion and gender stereotypes at predicting different types of sexism and in turn rape myth acceptance?
3. How effective is Model 3 with religiosity and religious fundamentalism at predicting gender stereotypes and different forms of sexism and in turn, rape myth acceptance?

The study utilized structural equation modeling to determine whether relationships existed between the variables in the models and the nature of those relationships. Within a path regression analysis, there are direct effects and indirect effects. Direct effects were effects that are found between the three main variables, such as religion, political affiliation, and rape myth acceptance. Indirect effects involved mediators that can be found in-between the three main variables. A mediation in statistical analysis suggests there may be an underlying influence between the variables. Therefore, one variable may be indirectly influencing another variable.

Data Collection

The data utilized in the current study were primary data collected from surveying youth ages 18 to 24 in the United States through MTurk. This survey website allowed

participants to submit their answers electronically. The sample was made up of individuals who were maintaining an account with MTurk. The study was advertised on MTurk by alerting individuals of the survey and offering monetary gain upon completion. Participants received three dollars once they completed the survey. For structural equation models typically less than 100 cases are needed. However, the current study aimed to have up to 500 participants to increase the strength of the models' predictiveness. Nevertheless, of the reported 500 participants, only 289 produced sufficiently completed usable surveys, thus $N=289$. This was still adequate for Structural Equation Modeling (Boyer et al., 2002; Singh et al., 2009).

The participants were alerted at the beginning of the study that if they no longer wanted to partake in the study for any reason, they were welcome to exit the study browser, and their data would not be included in the analysis or results. Of the participants who completed the study, there were 161 (55.7%) females and 127 (43.9%) males. The sample participants were between 18-24 years old, with a standard deviation of 1.35.

Procedure

Random sampling was utilized through MTurk. After collecting consent from the participants, descriptive statistics like age, race, gender, sexuality, religion, and political affiliation, were collected, followed by the administration of the study scales. The researcher built the survey on Qualtrics and then transferred the survey link to MTurk to advertise and distribute. Once the data were collected, the data were analyzed through path analyses using SMART PLS.

The Study Instruments

There were six scales for predictive variables in this survey: Moral Foundations Questionnaire, Religious Fundamentalism Scale, Faith Activities in the Home Scale, Modern Sexism Scale, Ambivalent Sexism Inventory, and Gender Stereotypes Scale. To ensure that the surveys produced data that could be comparable to one another, the Likert scales for each survey displayed a 7 Likert scale that was converted to a 5 Likert scale. These scales were converted into a 5-point Likert scale to maintain similarities across scales for analysis. Once the survey's Likert scales were compatible, the scales were placed into Qualtrics and distributed to participants through MTurk. Each participant consented to participate and were awarded three dollars for compensation of completion through MTurk. The Gender Inclusive Rape Myth Acceptance Scale measured the outcome variable.

Political Affiliation was a major predictive variable and was measured by one question, "with which political party do you identify the most?" The answer options were Democrat, Republican, Independent, Other.

Religion also a predictive variable was measured by one question: "What is your religion?" with answer choices are: Christianity, Jewish, Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, Other, Agnostic, Atheist.

Religiosity another major predictive variable was measured by the Faith Activities in the Home Scale. The related concept of religious fundamentalism was measured with the Religious Fundamentalism Scale.

Religious Fundamentalism Scale: the Religious Fundamentalism Scale was developed in 2006 by Bob Altemeyer and revised in 2012. The scale has 12 statements

with a 9-point Likert scale. The answer choices for the scale are (-4) very strongly disagree, (-3) strongly disagree, (-2) moderately disagree, (-1) slightly disagree, (0) feel exactly and precisely neutral, (1) slightly agree, (2) moderately agree, (3) strongly agree, (4) very strongly agree. For the current study, the scale was converted into a 5-point Likert scale. Previous research reported a correlation for this scale as .37 with a reliability of .68, and a Cronbach's Alpha of .672 (Altemeyer & Hunsbereger, 2000).

Faith Activities in the Home Scale: the Faith Activities in the Home Scale (FAITHS) was developed by Nathaniel M. Lambert and David C. Dollahite in 2010. The scale measures the number of faith-based practices a family participates in together (Ozbay, 2023). The scale is a 9-item statement questionnaire where the participant ranks the statements on a 7-point Likert scale. The answer choices range from 0 = never to 6 = more than once a day. For the current study, the scale was converted into a 5-point Likert scale to maintain similarities across scales for analysis. The reliability as measured by Lambert and Dollahite (2010) was $r = .86, p < .001$.

Modern Sexism Scale: the Modern Sexism Scale was developed by Janet K. Swim (1995). The scale measures if the participant has any sexist beliefs. For this study, this scale was converted into a 5-point Likert scale to maintain similarities across scales for analysis. The answer choices to each question are (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) agree, (5) strongly agree. Previous research found that the coefficient of this scale is .08 (Yoder et al., 1997).

The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory: the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory was developed in 1996 by Glick and Fiske. The inventory measures the level of sexism held by an individual. Specifically, the inventory examines the possible amount of benevolent

versus hostile sexism that a person may hold. The scale is comprised of 22 statements. The scoring was measured on a 6-point Likert scale, with the higher scores indicating an increase in sexism. The answer choices include (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) agree, (5) strongly agree (6) undecided. For the current study, the scale was converted into a 5-point Likert scale to maintain similarities across scales for analysis. Previous research showed that Cronbach's Alpha for this scale was .85, while the reliability was .87 (Dergisi, 2002).

Gender Stereotypes Scale: the Sexual Stereotype Scale was developed by Sekhar and Parameswari (2020) to measure if the participant had any stereotypical beliefs regarding men and women. The scale had 23 statements that the participant is asked to rate on a 5-item Likert scale. The answer choices for each question are (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) agree, (5) strongly agree. Previous research has demonstrated that the reliability of the current scale is .76, with a validity of .4 (Sekhar & Papameswari, 2020).

Moral Foundations Questionnaire: the Moral Foundations Questionnaire was developed by Graham et al. (2008). The scale had consisted of two portions of statements that are ranked on two different Likert scales. The first section has 16 statements with a 5-point Likert scale. The answer choices for each question are (1) not at all relevant (this answer choice is neither right nor wrong within the bounds of the statement/questionnaire), (2) not very relevant, (3) somewhat relevant, (4) very relevant, (5) extremely relevant, one of the more important answers when determining right and wrong. The second part consists of 16 more statements, which the participant rates on another 6-point Likert scale. The answer choices for the second part of the questionnaire

range from (0) strongly disagree, (1) moderately disagree, (2) slightly disagree, (3) slightly agree, (4) moderately agree, and (5) strongly agree.

Within the Moral Foundation scales, there were six foundations. The six foundations were care/harm, fairness/cheating, loyalty/betrayal, authority/subversion, sanctity/degradation, and liberty/oppression. First, care/harm is the foundation that recognizes the attachment that a person has to another. Within the attachment, there are feelings of kindness, gentleness, and nurturing behaviors. This foundation measured the ability to make an attachment with another person and if the relationship is intended to provide care or harm to the other.

Second, fairness/cheating is characterized by the evolutionary process of altruism. Specifically, this foundation emphasizes justice, right from wrong, and autonomy. Therefore, this foundation measured the depth of fairness and justice that a person may interpret in sexually offending another. In addition, Dobolyi (2021) suggested that fairness/cheating is embedded in inequality.

Third, the loyalty/betrayal foundation was developed based on *one for all, and all for one*. Thus, this idea is connected to a group relying on one another for support and trust. Loyalty/betrayal is interactive within the current study because it may aid in the idea of how many individuals who are sexually assaulting children can continue to do so for consecutive years. Specifically, Dale and Alpert (2007) stated that individuals within Christian churches were able to continue sexually assaulting youth despite many of the clergy members knowledge regarding specific instances of sexual misconduct. Therefore, the assaulters did not hold one another accountable for the sexual deviance against youth.

Fourth, authority/subversion is the foundation that aligns with the sense of obeying authoritative figures. This foundation was interactive in the current study because there may be a trend among minors who surrender to their assaulter due to authoritative practices. Thus, the victim may feel that he or she is supposed to obey and participate in the assault because of the offender's status.

Fifth, sanctity/degradation is the foundation consistent with the psychological emotion of disgust and contamination. Thus, there are underlying religious aspects to this foundation regarding whether a person's life is more sanctified or carnal (Dodolyi, 2021). Specifically, this foundation highlighted the thought that a religious person's body is a temple of God and must be cared for. Pursuant to this foundation, a person may maintain the idea that his or her body is a sacred temple of God. It may be likely that the victim of sexual assault feels he or she has lost the sanctity of his or her body.

Last, liberty/oppression is the foundation that measures the reaction and resentment a person may feel toward another individual who has interfered with their liberty or oppressed them. Historically, those who are oppressed tend to band together to bring the person(s) oppressing them to justice. However, victims of sexual abuse may feel so deprived of lack of liberty and so oppressed by their abuser, that they lack the agency to defend themselves.

In conclusion, the moral foundations theory and scale were utilized within this study to measure the moralities and beliefs that seem predictive of rape myth acceptance. The moral foundation theory was expected to aid in the understanding of the relationship between religion, political affiliation, and rape myth acceptance by investigating the type of thinking behind rape myth acceptance. Previous research has found that the reliability

range for this scale is between .79 to .92 and validity is high on 17 out of 18 external-validity scales (Zakharin et al., 2023).

Outcome Variable

Gender Inclusive Rape Myth Acceptance Scale: the Gender Inclusive Rape Myth Acceptance Scale was developed by Rebekah E. Urban and Claudia Porrás Pyland in 2021 as an attempt to create a contemporary gender inclusive rape myth scale. It had 18 items on a 5-point Likert scale. The answer choices for each question were (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) agree, (5) strongly agree.

Table 1: Frequency Table for Independent and Dependent Variables (N=289)

Variable	Frequencies	Percentage
Sex		
Female	161	55.70%
Male	127	43.90%
Nonbinary	0	0%
Do not wish to disclose	0	0.00%
Age		
18	5	1.70%
19	1	0.30%
20	12	4.20%
21	19	6.60%
22	38	13.10%
23	48	16.60%
24	165	57.10%
Ethnicity		
Black	5	1.70%
White	274	94.80%
Asian	1	0.30%
Latino/Latina	1	0.30%
Other	0	0.00%
Religion		
Christianity	280	97.20%
Jewish	2	1%
Muslim	2	1%
Hindu	1	0.30%
Buddhist	1	0.30%
Agnostic	1	0.30%
Atheist	0	0%
Political Affiliation		
Democrat	195	67.40%
Republican	84	29.20%
Independent	9	3.10%

Analysis

Structural equation modeling is a popular statistical analysis used within the social sciences to analyze and better understand intricate variables within a study (Whittaker et al., 2022). It facilitates the analysis of multiple variables in a theoretical model by combining factor and regression analyses to see the inter-relationships among variables (Whittaker et al., 2022). It is important to note key terms to complete an analysis within structural equation modeling. For example, these terms include latent variables, observed variables, path diagrams, structural modeling, and measurement models (Whittaker et al., 2022). Latent variables allow the researcher to deal with both observed and unobserved variables (Whittaker et al., 2022). Observed variables are overt variables that can be directly measured within the study (Whittaker et al., 2022). Other names for observed variables are manifest variables, indicators, or independent variables. These variables can either be continuous or categorical.

The unobserved variable is called a latent variable. Latent variables are explained through a construct that cannot be overtly measured. However, a statistical model distinguishes latent and observed variables (Whittaker et al., 2022). For this specific study, an example of a latent variable is rape myth acceptance.

The structural equation model (SEM) reflects the researcher's theoretical expectations of how variables impact each other. It allows the researcher to analyze regressions and factor analyses (Whittaker et al., 2022). Path analysis is an example of a regression often found in structural equation modeling. Within a path regression analysis, there are direct effects and indirect effects (Whittaker et al., 2022). In this study, the direct effects were found between the three main variables of religion, political

affiliation, and rape myth acceptance. Indirect effects were impacted by mediators that can be found between the three main variables (Whittaker et al., 2022). A mediation in statistical analysis is a term that suggests that an underlying influence between the variables may exist (Whittaker et al., 2022). Therefore, one variable may be indirectly influencing another variable. In addition to path analysis, there were path diagrams. Path diagrams display the latent variables with circles and observable variables with rectangles, thus distinguishing the direct and indirect effects between variables (Whittaker et al., 2022).

A structural model within the structural equation model indicated the hypothesized direct or indirect paths/relationships regarding the latent and observable variables (Whittaker et al., 2022). The direct paths indicated that the relationship is a casual relationship. A causal relationship within statistics suggested that one variable may directly affect or influence another variable (Whittaker et al., 2022). An indirect path suggested that the relationships correlate with one another. A correlation within statistics stated that two variables are linked to one another in a significant way (Whittaker et al., 2022). However, correlation does not simply mean that a reaction has been inevitable through another variable. In other words, correlation does not indicate causation.

Another way to examine relationships between latent and observable variables is through measurement models (Whittaker et al., 2022). Measurement models display the relationship between latent and observable variables and identify the relationship at hand. After the relationship is noted, factor loading may be useful in quantifying the noted relationships (Whittaker et al., 2022). Factor loading is an analysis that seeks to

understand the correlation between the latent and observable variables (Whittaker et al., 2022).

In sum, social science researchers utilize the structural equation model, a common and complex statistical analysis because it examines relationships or paths among multiple variables when these are informed by a theoretical framework. In addition, the structural equation model analyzes direct and indirect relationships that indicate casual or correlated relationships between the variables within the study. Therefore, structural equation modeling is the appropriate statistical method for the current study.

Benefits of the Structural Equation Model

The benefits of using structural equation modeling (SEM) include capturing complex relations, causality awareness, measurement error corrections, integration of confirmatory and exploratory analysis, model fit assessment, complex mediation, and moderation testing, multivariate analysis, model comparison, visual representation, and missing data processing (Larsson, 2021; Tomarken et al., 2004). First, SEM allows researchers to examine complex relationships between multiple variables (Larsson, 2021). This benefit is significant because it promotes understanding between observable and latent variables. Latent variables are difficult to observe and, therefore, measured in equations utilizing SEM (Tomarken et al., 2004). The current study's latent variable is beliefs one may have regarding gender stereotypes, sexism, moral foundations, that are related to rape myth acceptance.

Second, in addition to SEM examining relationships between variables, SEM also evaluates casual relationships within variables (Larsson, 2021). Therefore, researchers can predetermine the path in which SEM examined the study's variables. By

predetermining analysis pathways, the researcher can also assess the direction in which the analysis is directed (Larsson, 2021). This is beneficial in understanding the trajectory of the overall SEM model and framework.

Third, measurement error corrections benefit SEM because they permit the researcher to be mindful of errors within the observed variables (Larsson, 2021). The researcher's ability to measure error corrections is beneficial to SEM because it tends to improve the accuracy of parameters and allows the researcher to have increased reliability in conclusions within relationships between the variables (Larsson, 2021). Therefore, the SEM utilized in the current research will need to be reliable for the statistics to be significant.

Fourth, integrating confirmatory and exploratory analysis allows the researcher to conduct both confirmatory and exploratory analysis in SEM (Larsson, 2021; Tomarken et al., 2004). Confirmatory analysis aids the researcher in testing pre-specified hypotheses. Exploratory analysis determines the model developed for the study and generates a hypothesis that fits it (Larsson, 2021). As confirmatory and exploratory analyses are examined, the researcher can modify the information by gathering more data to promote flexibility in the model (Tomarken et al., 2004).

Fifth, SEM provides a model that best fits the analysis. The best-fit model benefits the study by allowing the researcher to assess how well the data represents the model (Larsson, 2021). For example, a good model will appropriately indicate the hypothesized relationship and explain the model accurately.

Sixth, SEM promotes complex mediation and moderation testing within its analysis, which aids the researcher in examining the intermediate variables within the

study (Larsson, 2021; Tomarken et al., 2004). For example, the current study's mediator is sexism when considering religion and political ideation. Therefore, complex mediation in SEM is beneficial because it can determine the strength of the relationships that vary through the variables in alternative conditions (Tomarken et al., 2004).

Seventh, multivariate analysis featured in SEM can analyze multiple independent and dependent variables simultaneously (Larsson, 2021). Therefore, multivariate analysis in SEM assists with its capability to generate complex models and systems between the observable and latent variables.

Last, visual representation in SEM includes diagrams and models that can direct the reader in observing the results collected within the study (Larsson, 2021). The visual representation of the data provides a better understanding of how the results have aligned with the hypotheses and theoretical explanations of the variables and their relationships with one another (Tomarken et al., 2004). In other words, providing a visual representation of the data is beneficial because it aids in the overall interpretation and understanding of the study.

SmartPLS

This study utilized SmartPLS for statistical analysis. SmartPLS provides context on loads when factoring for confirmatory factor analysis (Ramakrishnan et al., 2012). In addition, SmartPLS assesses the measurement of properties within latent constructs within the structural equation model. Furthermore, SmartPLS examines two models within the analysis (1) the measurement model and (2) a structural model (Ringle et al., 2009). The measurement model suggests a relationship between the measured variables

and the latent variables. The structural model attempts to assess the relationship between the theoretical construct within the study.

Within SmartPLS, the specific analysis used for SEM is the partial least square-structural equation model (PLS-SEM). PLS-SEM has been utilized by other social science researchers and has gained popularity within this field because of its ability to examine the relationship between theoretical constructs. PLS-SEM is known for managing smaller sample sizes in complex models when compared to other multivariate techniques (Hair et al., 2017). PLS-SEM is useful for both exploratory and confirmatory research within factor analysis. Although PLS-SEM is known for smaller samples, it is important to note that this analysis is not always the best analysis to use with smaller data (Ramakrishnan et al., 2012). To ensure PLS-SEM is the proper analysis to utilize within a study, a minimum sample size needs to reflect at least 10 times the number of predictor constructs affecting a singular outcome construct (Ramakrishnan et al., 2012).

PLS-SEM specifically considers the latent variables, path modeling, measurement model, structural model, and bootstrapping. First, PLS-SEM examines the relationships between the latent and observable variables while allowing the researcher to provide examples of models of the said relationships. These models may appear in graphs and tables. Second, the measurement model within PLS-SEM examined the underlying effects of each variable and how they interact with one another (Hair et al., 2017). Measurement modeling is specifically where factor loading takes place, cross-loadings, and reliability of the model (Hair et al., 2017). Third, in structure modeling within PLS-SEM, the system explores the variables more thoroughly, providing context to the researcher's hypothesis, which is similar to the traditional examination structural equation

modeling (Hair et al., 2017). Fourth, bootstrapping, PLS-SEM estimates the standard errors and confidence intervals for the overall model (Hair et al., 2017). In other words, bootstrapping examines the statistical significance of the hypothesis testing. Fifth, PLS-SEM also considers the model assessment, where the analysis evaluates the fit and quality of the PLS-SEM model in reference to the study (Hair et al., 2016). To complete this task, goodness-of-best-fit is utilized, cross-validated redundancy (Q²) and coefficient of determination (R-squared) are utilized. The model assessment also uses metrics to explain the model's exploratory predictive ability and power (Hair et al., 2017). Lastly, formative, and reflective constructs within PLS-SEM assess the formative and reflective measurement models (Hair et al., 2017). Specifically, the formative constructs are noted through their manifest variables, and reflective constructs are understood to be indicators for underlying concepts. In conclusion, PLS-SEM is a well-accepted statistical analysis in social science to determine the relationship between latent and observable variables in small samples.

A variance base structural equation model was known as partial least square path modeling (PLS-SEM). By using PLS-SEM allows collected data to be of a smaller sample while multiplying the most significant number of numerous structural paths within 10 constructs (Hwang et al., 2018; Lowry & Gaskin, 2014). To perform the structural analysis, SmartPLS 4.0 was utilized.

Assessment of Measurement Model

The model utilized for the study's measure analyses the relationship between the latent variable and these variable items. Therefore, the validity and reliability are addressed through the model's measurement. First, the convergent validity was examined

through factor loadings and the average variance extracted (AVE). The AVE considers the amount of variance explained by the measured items of the construct that tends to be related to the number of variances noted the measurement error. In addition, the latent construct must maintain adequate construct validity through factor loadings that exhibit a score greater than or equal to 0.7 (Hair et al., 2017). In comparison, the AVE scores for the construct should yield a score greater than or equal to 0.4 (Hair et al., 2017).

Second, the Fornell-Lacker criterion and the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio were also utilized within the current study to analyze the discriminant validity. The Fornell-Lacker criterion allows the discriminant validity to be investigated by observing the relationship between the square root of the AVEs latent constructs and considering the correlation among these constructs (Ramakrishnan et al., 2012). Thus, the square root of the AVEs is greater than the correlation among the latent constructs and indicates that all the constructs within the model have adequate discriminant validity.

Third, the HTMT ratio of the correlations for discriminant validity was also analyzed within the current study. Pursuant to the criterion, for the constructs to maintain adequate discriminant validity, the HTMT score must yield a correlation between the latent constructs recognized as less than 0.9 (Henseler et al., 2015). The the values of HTMT correlation between the latent construct less than 0.9, which states that the constructs have adequate discriminant validity.

Last, the reliability was assessed by analyzing Cronbach's alpha and the composite reliability score. A score greater than 0.7 must be met for the constructs to yield adequate reliability (Nunnally, 1978). Therefore, in the statistical scores within the current research will need to reach at least a 0.7 to be significant.

Assessment of Standard Method Bias

A collinearity test was run (Kock, 2015) to examine the VIFs the collinearity produced. Thus, the factor-level VIFs yielded a result less than 3.3 from a full collinearity test, which proved that the common method bias is not a concern for the current study.

Assessment of Structural Model

The structural model demonstrates the relationship between each theoretical construct (Ramakrishnan et al., 2021). The researcher evaluated the structural model of each of the three models within the current study which used a bias-corrected and accelerated bootstrapping analysis with 500 iterations. Bootstrapping the results reduces the potential of normality assumption violations that are related to the distribution of each variable within the study. In addition, bootstrapping provides the significance of each corresponding variable. The results can be seen in Tables indicating p-value significance for each model's relationships. The results are presented in the next chapter.

Organization of the Study

This chapter described the research design. To examine the relationship between politics, religion, gender stereotypes, sexism, and youth having rape myth acceptance, three models were examined with structural equation modeling. Structural equation modeling is a statistical analysis that produces both a regression and a factor analysis when considering the relationships between predictor variables and outcome variables (Statistical Solution, 2016). A structural equation model also provides information on direct and indirect effects that could be enlightening when examining all relationships between the predictor variables and outcome variables. The study's main outcome variable was an observed variable, rape myth acceptance. The study's main predictor

variables were also observed (religion, religiosity, and political affiliation). Mediators were gender stereotypes, various forms of sexism, and different elements of moral foundations. Chapter IV offers study results, and Chapter V presents a discussion of the results, limitations of the study, suggestions for future studies, and policy and practice implications of the results.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This chapter presents the findings in reference to the structural equation model performed in SmartPLS. A conformity analysis is often used when an assessment of structured relationships is necessary to assess validity. Thus, a conformity analysis was run with Smart-PLS to determine if the items converged with minimal cross-loadings. The results showed that each item utilized within the current study was not converging with other items and was measuring the intended item.

When conducting a Structural Equation Model, Hair et al. (2017) suggested that the sample be four to five times larger than the number of variables within the study. Thus, the target was 500 participants for the survey on MTurk but only 289 participants provided sufficiently completed responses for an N=289.

Variation of Results for Model I, Model V, Model VI

For each model, a structural equation was run. Model I indicated underlying issues with separating Moral Foundations into its six latent constructs, that is, calm/harm, fairness/cheating, loyalty/betrayal, authority/subversion, sanctity/degradation, and liberty/oppression. Specifically, the model demonstrated that three of the six items did not maintain acceptable average variance extracted. For example, according to the hypothesis for Model I, it can be concluded that the data and results do not support a positive relationship between political affiliation and gender stereotypes. Neither is there support from the data and results that there exists a positive relationship between religion and sexism. In addition, the discriminant Tables suggested results that indicated that the

model needed to be adjusted to show that all variables in Moral Foundations should be represented as a whole instead of individually.

The models utilized for the study's measure analyses the relationship between the latent variable and these variable items. Therefore, the validity and reliability are addressed through the model's measurement of average variance extracted, which need to be a value of .4 or higher, the Fornell-Lacker criterion and the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) (Hair et al., 2017). Model I is problematic due to the HTMT exceeding levels above 1. The results for Model I are shown in Tables 2 through 8.

In Table 2, the items represent the survey questions with the questions respective loadings, which show the strengths and answers provided by the participants. According to Haire et al. (2017) a loading needs to be .7 to have the appropriate strength to increase the average variance extracted (AVE). The AVE needs to be at least .4 (Hair et al., 2017) to be significant. In addition, the Cronbach's alpha would need to yield at least a .5 to be sufficient for significance with a composite reliability of .6 (Hair et al., 2017). Thus, it can be concluded that for Table 2 all statistical requirements were met to maintain significance.

Table 2: Model 1 Political Affiliation and Religious Pathway to Rape Myth Acceptance Convergent Reliability

	Items	Loadings	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	AVE
Rape Myth Acceptance	GIRMA10	0.734	0.944	0.95	0.515
	GIRMA11	0.782			
	GIRMA12	0.757			
	GIRMA13	0.742			
	GIRMA14_A	0.737			
	GIRMA15	0.761			
	GIRMA17	0.749			
	GIRMA2	0.71			
	GIRMA4	0.702			
	GIRMA5	0.76			
	GIRMA7	0.751			
	GIRMA8	0.74			
	GIRMA9	0.716			

	Items	Loadings	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	AVE
Gender Stereotype					
	GS10	0.775	0.932	0.941	0.552
	GS11	0.716			
	GS13	0.754			
	GS14	0.72			
	GS15	0.8			
	GS20	0.738			
	GS4	0.742			
	GS6	0.776			
	GS8	0.726			
	GS9	0.772			
	GA17	0.765			
Moral Foundations					
Liberty		0.854	0.356	0.752	0.605
	MA1 6	0.854			
	MA2 6	0.693			
Loyalty			0.533	0.76	0.516
	MA1 3	0.694			
	MA1 9	0.805			
	MA2 9	0.647			
Sanctity			0.569	0.773	0.533
	MA1 16	0.718			
	MA1 11	0.804			
	MA2 11	0.663			

	Items	Loadings	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	AVE
Authority	MA1 10	0.803	0.591	0.785	0.549
	MA1 15	0.71			
	MA1 4	0.706			
Caring	MA1 1	0.799	0.6	0.787	0.553
	MA1 12	0.703			
	MA1 7	0.726			
Fairness	MA1 13	0.785	0.644	0.806	0.582
	MA1 2	0.703			
	MA1 8	0.796			
Sexism	AS1	0.733	0.852	0.887	0.53
	AS2	0.731			
	AS3	0.715			
	AS4	0.739			
	AS5	0.706			
	AS8	0.776			

Table 3: Model I Political Affiliation and Religious Pathway to Rape Myth Acceptance Discriminant HTMT

	Authority	Caring	Fairness	Rape Myth Acceptance	Gender Stereotype	Liberty	Loyalty	Sanctity	Sexism
Authority									
Caring	1.075								
Fairness	1.006	0.94							
Rape Myth Acceptance	0.483	0.474	0.501						
Gender Stereotype	0.461	0.469	0.505	0.84					
Liberty	0.988	0.982	1.088	0.514	0.508				
Loyalty	0.949	1.067	0.889	0.551	0.512	1.114			
Sanctity	0.969	0.988	1.088	0.646	0.594	1.045	1.149		
Sexism	0.663	0.596	0.621	0.755	0.73	0.816	0.626	0.648	

In Table 3, the HTMT needs to yield statistics for each column and row that is under 1.0 (Hair et al., 2017). If the statistic is greater than or equal to 1.0 then there is an issue between the two latent variables when computing the correlation and results in an error in discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2017). Discriminant validity measures whether the two latent variables are related or have a relationship. Thus, Table 3 indicated that there were several issues when considering discriminant validity between the latent variable.

Table 4: Model I Political Affiliation and Religious Pathway to Rape Myth Acceptance Discriminant Fornell-Lacker

	Authority	Caring	Fairness	Rape Myth Acceptance	Gender Stereotype	Liberty	Loyalty	Sanctity	Sexism
Authority	0.741								
Caring	0.637	0.744							
Fairness	0.618	0.578	0.763						
Rape Myth Acceptance	0.369	0.363	0.402	0.751					
Gender Stereotype	0.357	0.361	0.407	0.784	0.743				
Liberty	0.478	0.474	0.532	0.315	0.318	0.777			
Loyalty	0.543	0.609	0.544	0.402	0.382	0.498	0.718		
Sanctity	0.565	0.579	0.663	0.484	0.453	0.485	0.637	0.73	
Sexism	0.474	0.438	0.467	0.676	0.654	0.454	0.425	0.469	0.728

In Table 4, the Fornell-Lacker discriminant needs to yield statistics that are greater than the previous statistics in the column and row (Hair et al., 2017). The Fornell-Lacker technique is to determine if there is discriminant validity which is a popular tool for SEM and is an additional analysis to ensure that the HTMT discriminant test is accurate and without multicollinearity issues (Hair et al., 2017). Discriminant validity measures whether the two latent variables have a relationship. Thus, Table 4 indicated that there were no issues when considering discriminant validity between the latent variables.

Table 5: Model I Political Affiliation and Religious Pathway to Rape Myth Acceptance Latent Variable Correlates

	Authority	Caring	Fairness	Rape Myth Acceptance	Gender Stereotype	Liberty	Loyalty	Sanctity	Sexism
Authority	1								
Caring	0.638	1							
Fairness	0.618	0.579	1						
Rape Myth Acceptance	0.375	0.381	0.41	1					
Gender Stereotype	0.357	0.361	0.406	0.783	1				
Liberty	0.475	0.473	0.531	0.345	0.316	1			
Loyalty	0.543	0.609	0.544	0.433	0.381	0.497	1		
Sanctity	0.565	0.58	0.664	0.503	0.453	0.484	0.636	1	
Sexism	0.475	0.438	0.468	0.707	0.655	0.454	0.425	0.469	1

Table 5 indicates the correlates between variables. The correlation informs whether there is a positive or a negative relationship. For example, negative statistical correlation will have a negative result, which means as x increases, y decreases. In addition, positive statistical correlations will yield positive results, which means as x increases, so does y . The statistical number itself will need to maintain a number close to 1.0 to demonstrate its strength. Thus, a statistic that is close to +1.0, or a -1.0 is strong and indicates there is a strong relationship between the two variables. Table 5 indicated that there were weak (.3), medium (.5) and strong (.7) relationships between variables.

Table 6: Model I Political Affiliation and Religious Pathway to Rape Myth Acceptance Relationships with Religion and Political Affiliation

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean	Standard deviation	T statistics	P values
Authority -> Rape Myth Acceptance	0.064	0.063	0.081	0.792	0.428
Caring -> Rape Myth Acceptance	0.026	0.025	0.084	0.309	0.757
Fairness -> Rape Myth Acceptance	0.071	0.074	0.075	0.948	0.343
Gender Stereotype -> Authority	0.081	0.087	0.076	1.062	0.288
Gender Stereotype -> Caring	0.13	0.136	0.076	1.707	0.088
Gender Stereotype -> Fairness	0.177	0.182	0.08	2.211	0.027*
Gender Stereotype -> Liberty	0.036	0.041	0.076	0.482	0.63
Gender Stereotype -> Loyalty	0.182	0.191	0.081	2.253	0.024*
Gender Stereotype -> Sanctity	0.256	0.264	0.08	3.217	0.001**
Liberty -> Rape Myth Acceptance	0.037	0.038	0.07	0.523	0.601
Loyalty -> Rape Myth Acceptance	0.101	0.111	0.082	1.237	0.216
Sanctity -> Rape Myth Acceptance	0.304	0.303	0.09	3.379	0.001**
Sexism -> Authority	0.422	0.424	0.08	5.241	0**
Sexism -> Caring	0.353	0.357	0.091	3.861	0**
Sexism -> Fairness	0.352	0.354	0.086	4.106	0**
Sexism -> Liberty	0.43	0.434	0.077	5.561	0**
Sexism -> Loyalty	0.306	0.31	0.092	3.335	0.001**
Sexism -> Sanctity	0.301	0.302	0.099	3.047	0.002*

PA_Dem -> Gender Stereotype	-0.169	-0.168	0.121	1.398	0.162
Religion_Christ -> Sexism	-0.442	-0.441	0.553	0.799	0.424
PA_Rep -> Gender Stereotype	0.153	0.153	0.124	1.235	0.217
<hr/>					
Significance p=0.05*, p=0.001**					

In Table 6, each variable's relationship to another regarding the corresponding Model is displayed. The p value informs whether there is significance in relationships between variables. Therefore, the variables that were significant are labeled with either a * (p=.05) or ** (p=.0001).

*Table 7: Model I Political Affiliation and Religious Pathway to Rape Myth Acceptance
VIF*

	Authority	Caring	Fairness	Rape Myth Acceptance	Liberty	Loyalty	Sanctity	Sexism
Authority				2.087				
Caring				2.15				
Fairness				2.285				
Rape Myth Acceptance								
Gender Stereotype	1.75	1.75	1.75		1.75	1.75	1.75	
Liberty				1.572				
Loyalty				2.071				
Sanctity				2.303				
Sexism	1.75	1.75	1.75		1.75	1.75	1.75	

Table 7 demonstrates the VIF collinearity analysis for Model I. Collinearity is to have a correlation between two variables (Hair et al., 2017). To have full collinearity the results would need be less than 3.3 (Hair et al., 2017). According to Table 7, all collinearity between the variables was adequate.

Table 8: Model 1 Political Affiliation and Religious Pathway to Rape Myth Acceptance Hypothesis Support

	Hypotheses for Original Model 1	Results
H1	There exists a positive relationship between political affiliation and gender stereotypes.	Not Supported
H2	There exists a positive relationship between religion and sexism.	Not Supported
H3a	There exist positive relationships between gender stereotypes and care/harm.	Supported
H3b	There exist positive relationships between gender stereotypes and fairness/cheating.	Supported
H3c	There exist positive relationships between gender stereotypes loyalty/betrayal.	Supported
H3d	There exist positive relationships between gender stereotypes and authority/subversion.	Supported
H3e	There exist positive relationships between gender stereotypes and sanctity/degradation.	Not Supported
H3f	There exist positive relationships between gender stereotypes and liberty/oppression.	Not Supported
H4a	There exists a positive relationship between religion and care/harm.	Not Supported
H4b	There exists a positive relationship between religion and fairness/cheating.	Not Supported
H4c	There exists a positive relationship between religion and loyalty/betrayal.	Not Supported
H4d	There exists a positive relationship between religion and authority/subversion.	Not Supported
H4e	There exists a positive relationship between religion and sanctity/degradation.	Not Supported
H4f	There exists a positive relationship between religion and liberty/oppression.	Not Supported
H5a	There exist positive relationships between care/harm, and RMA.	Supported

H5b	There exist positive relationships between, fairness/cheating and RMA.	Not Supported
H5c	There exist positive relationships between loyalty/betrayal and RMA.	Not Supported
H5e	There exist positive relationships between authority/subversion and RMA.	Supported
H5f	There exist positive relationships between sanctity/degradation and RMA.	Supported
H6a	There exist positive relationships between sexism and care/harm.	Supported
H6b	There exist positive relationships between sexism and fairness/cheating.	Supported
H6c	There exist positive relationships between sexism and loyalty/betrayal.	Supported
H6d	There exist positive relationships between sexism and authority/subversion.	Supported
H6e	There exist positive relationships between sexism and sanctity/degradation.	Supported
H6f	There exist positive relationships between sexism and liberty/oppression.	Supported

Table 8 represents the p value significance found regarding the relationship hypothesized at the start of the study. Thus, each hypothesis is written out for Model I and instructs whether the results from the study's data support the hypotheses. For Table 8, 10 out of the 25 hypotheses were supported.

While running the first model, Smart-PLS could not recognize categorical variables within religion and political affiliation due to a significantly low number of participants identifying with religion outside of Christianity and political affiliations outside of Republican and Democrat. Therefore, the model demonstrated only Christianity as the religion, and it did not have a positive relationship with sexism. Further, Democrats and Republicans showed no support for a positive relationship with gender stereotypes. This means that Christians who completed this survey did not tend to have sexist views. In addition, those who completed the survey and identified with either party of Democrats or Republicans did not have a tendency to have gender stereotypical views.

Although these two hypotheses were not supported, several hypotheses were supported within Model I. First, the data and results support that there was a positive relationship between gender stereotype and fairness/cheating ($\alpha=.05$, $\beta-.177$, $p=.027$), and loyalty/betrayal ($\alpha=.05$, $\beta-.182$, $p=.024$). Second, the data and results supported a positive relationship between sexism and care/harm ($\alpha=.05$, $\beta-.353$, $p=.000$), fairness/cheating ($\alpha=.05$, $\beta-.352$, $p=.000$), loyalty/cheating ($\alpha=.05$, $\beta-.306$, $p=.001$), authority/subversion ($\alpha=.05$, $\beta-.422$, $p=.000$), and sanctity/degradation ($\alpha=.05$, $\beta-.301$, $p=.002$). Last, the data and results also supported a positive relationship between sanctity/degradation and rape myth acceptance ($\alpha=.05$, $\beta-.304$, $p=.001$). This means that those who completed the survey and maintained four of the latent constructs in Moral Foundations, those of care/harm, fairness/cheating, loyalty/cheating and sanctity/degradation, tended to have sexist views. For example, those who scored high on these three latent constructs may have been more likely to elicit sexist views like *women*

are not as smart as men (The Modern Sexism Scale) or *Women should be cherished and protected by men* (The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory). In addition, those who completed the survey who scored high in authority/subversion and sanctity/degradation tended to have views of sexual assault that aligned with rape myth acceptance. For example, those who scored high in these latent constructs may have believed that *someone who is transgender is more likely to commit rape* (Gender Inclusive Rape Myth Acceptance Scale) or *if both people are drunk, it can't really be rape* (Gender Inclusive Rape Myth Acceptance Scale). Overall, the model explains about 22% ($R^2 = .224$) of authority, about 20% ($R^2 = .196$) of caring, 23% ($R^2 = .231$) of fairness, 1% ($R^2 = .001$) of gender stereotypes, 20% ($R^2 = .201$) of Liberty, 19% ($R^2 = .193$) of Loyalty, 25% ($R^2 = .252$) of sanctity, 2% ($R^2 = .002$) of sexism and 27% ($R^2 = .270$) of Rape Myth Acceptance have a perceived importance of variance. Therefore, the six latent constructs of Moral Foundations were combined into one variable, and Model I was run based on this alteration. With the alteration, Model I became a new Model shown as Model IV. The data and results indicated that there was a positive relationship between moral foundations and rape myth acceptance ($\alpha = .05$, $\beta = .084$, $p = .000$), religion and sexism ($\alpha = .05$, $\beta = .456$, $p = .000$), and between sexism and moral foundations ($\alpha = .05$, $\beta = .486$, $p = .000$). Overall, Model IV explains about 24% ($R^2 = .242$) of Rape Myth Acceptance, and about 34% ($R^2 = .342$) of Moral Foundations have a perceived importance of variance (see Figure 4). Results can be found in Tables 9 through 15.

Figure 4: Model IV Political Affiliation and Religious Pathways to Rape Myth Acceptance Combined

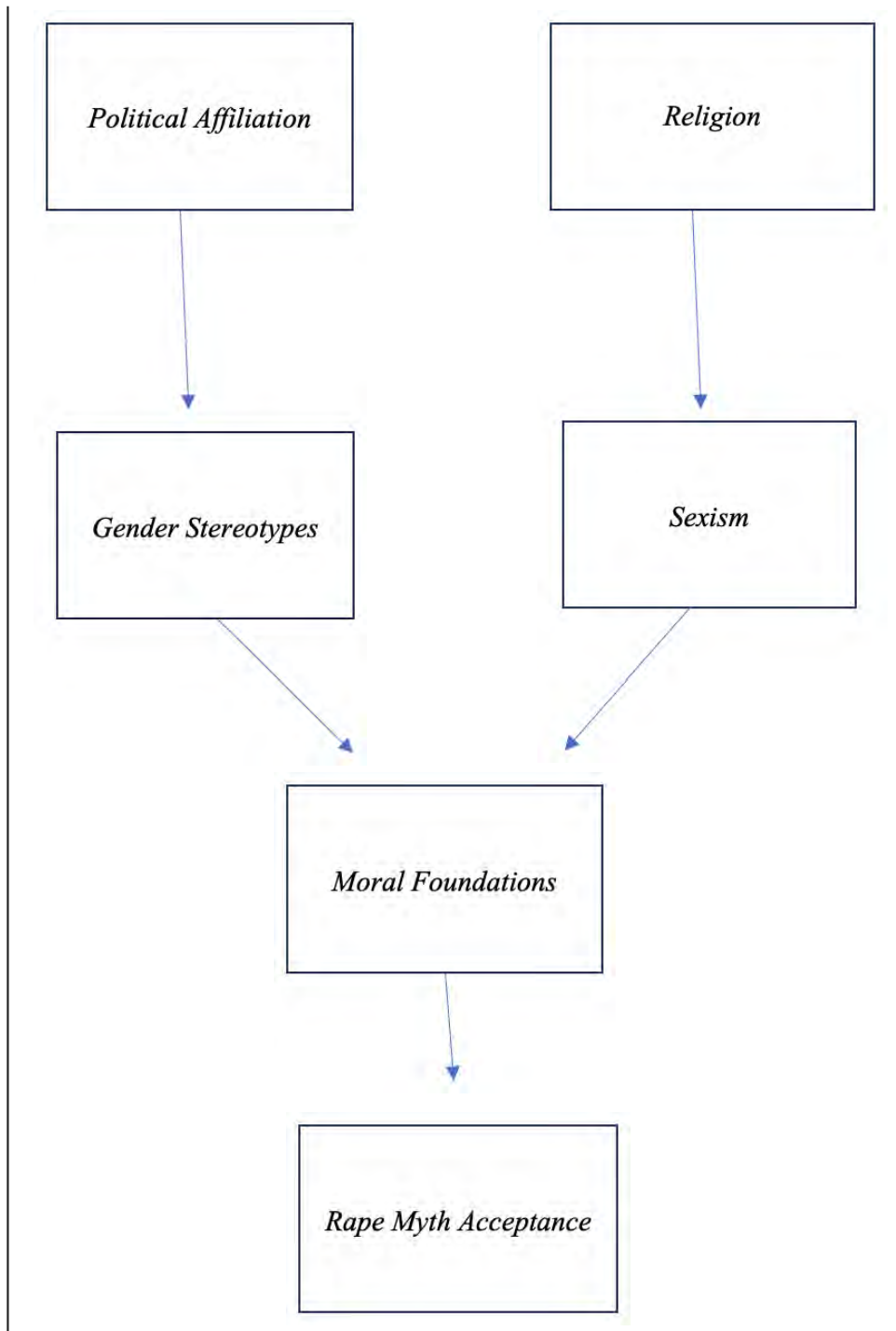


Table 9: Model IV Political Affiliation and Religious Pathway to Rape Myth Acceptance Combined Convergent Reliability and Validity

	Items	Loadings	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	AVE
Rape Myth Acceptance	GIRMA10	0.787	0.912	0.927	0.586
	GIRMA11	0.799			
	GIRMA12	0.78			
	GIRMA15	0.789			
	GIRMA17	0.769			
	GIRMA2	0.727			
	GIRMA5	0.777			
	GIRMA8	0.736			
	GIRMA9	0.727			
Gender stereotype	GS10	0.789			
	GS11	0.725			
	GS13	0.749			
	GS14	0.801			
	GS16	0.789			
	GS18	0.746			
	GS23	0.766			
Moral Foundations	MA1 16	0.767	0.695	0.83	0.62
	MA1 10	0.723			
	MA1 13	0.741			

Sexism					
	AS1	0.707	0.776	0.844	0.576
	AS2	0.717			
	AS9	0.751			
	AS8	0.785			

In Table 9, the items represent the survey questions with the questions respective loadings, which show the strengths and answers provided by the participants. According to Haire et al. (2017) a loading needs to be .7 to have the appropriate strength to increase the average variance extracted (AVE). The AVE needs to be at least .4 (Hair et al., 2017) to be significant. In addition, the Cronbach's alpha would need to yield at least a .5 to be sufficient for significance with a composite reliability of .6 (Hair et al., 2017). Thus, it can be concluded that for Table 9 all statistical requirements were met to maintain significance.

Table 10: Model V Political Affiliation and Religious Pathway to Rape Myth Acceptance Combined Discriminant HTMT

	Rape Myth Acceptance	Gender stereotype	Moral Foundations	Sexism
Rape Myth Acceptance				
Gender stereotype	0.851			
Moral Foundations	0.537	0.454		
Sexism	0.757	0.727	0.087	

In Table 10, the HTMT needs to yield statistics for each column and row that is under 1.0 (Hair et al., 2017). If the statistic is greater than or equal to 1.0 then there is an issue between the two latent variables when computing the correlation and results in an error in discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2017). Discriminant validity measures whether the two latent variables are related or have a relationship. Thus, Table 10 indicated that there were no issues when considering discriminant validity between the latent variables due to the statistics between the said variables are less than 1.0.

*Table 11: Model V Political Affiliation and Religious Pathway to Rape Myth Acceptance
Combined Discriminant Fornell-Lacker Criterion*

	Rape Myth Acceptance	Gender stereotype	Moral Foundations	Sexism
Rape Myth Acceptance	0.766			
Gender Stereotype	0.76	0.767		
Moral Foundations	0.443	-0.067	0.654	
Sexism	0.63	0.537	-0.075	759

In Table 11, the Fornell-Lacker discriminant needs to yield statistics for that is greater than the previous statistics in the column and row (Hair et al., 2017). For instance, each statistic between the variables in Table 11 that must be greater than the previous statistics are the numbers in bold. The Fornell-Lacker technique to determine if there is discriminant validity is a popular tool for SEM and is an additional analysis a person can run to ensure that the HTMT discriminant test is accurate and without multicollinearity issues (Hair et al., 2017). If the statistic is greater than the bolded statistic then there is an issue between the two latent variables when computing the correlation and results in an error in discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2017). Discriminant validity measures whether the two latent variables have a relationship. Thus, Table 11 indicated that there were no issues when considering discriminant validity between the latent variables.

Table 12: Model V Political Affiliation and Religious Pathway to Rape Myth Acceptance Combined Correlates

	Rape Myth Acceptance	Gender stereotype	Moral Foundations	Sexism
Rape Myth Acceptance	1			
Gender stereotype	0.76	1		
Moral Foundations	0.443	0.38	1	
Sexism	0.63	0.609	0.537	1

Table 12 indicates the correlates between variables. The correlation informs whether the is a positive or a negative relationship. For example, negative statistical correlation will have a negative result, which means as x increases, y decreases. In addition, positive statistical correlations will yield positive results, which means as x increases, so does y . The statistical number itself will need to maintain a number close to 1.0 to demonstrate its strength. Thus, a statistic that is close to +1.0, or a -1.0 is strong and indicates there is a strong relationship between the two variables. Table 12 indicated that there were weak (.3), medium (.5) and strong (.7) relationships between variables.

Table 13: Model V Political Affiliation and Religious Pathway to Rape Myth Acceptance Combined VIF

	Rape Myth Acceptance	Gender stereotype	Moral Foundations	Sexism
Rape Myth Acceptance				
Gender stereotype			1.589	
Moral Foundations	1			
Sexism			1.589	

Table 13 demonstrates the VIF collinearity analysis for Model V. Collinearity is to have a correlation between two variables (Hair et al., 2017). To have full collinearity the results would need be less than 3.3 (Hair et al., 2017). According to Table 13, all collinearity between the variables were adequate.

*Table 14: Model V Political Affiliation and Religious Pathway to Rape Myth Acceptance
Combined Hypothesis and Support*

Hypotheses for Model 1 After Adjustments		Results
H1	There exists a positive relationship between political affiliation and gender stereotypes.	Not Supported
H2	There exists a positive relationship between religion and sexism.	Supported
H3	There exist positive relationships between gender stereotypes and moral foundations.	Supported
H4	There exists a positive relationship between religion and moral foundations	Supported
H5	There exist positive relationships between moral foundations and RMA.	Supported

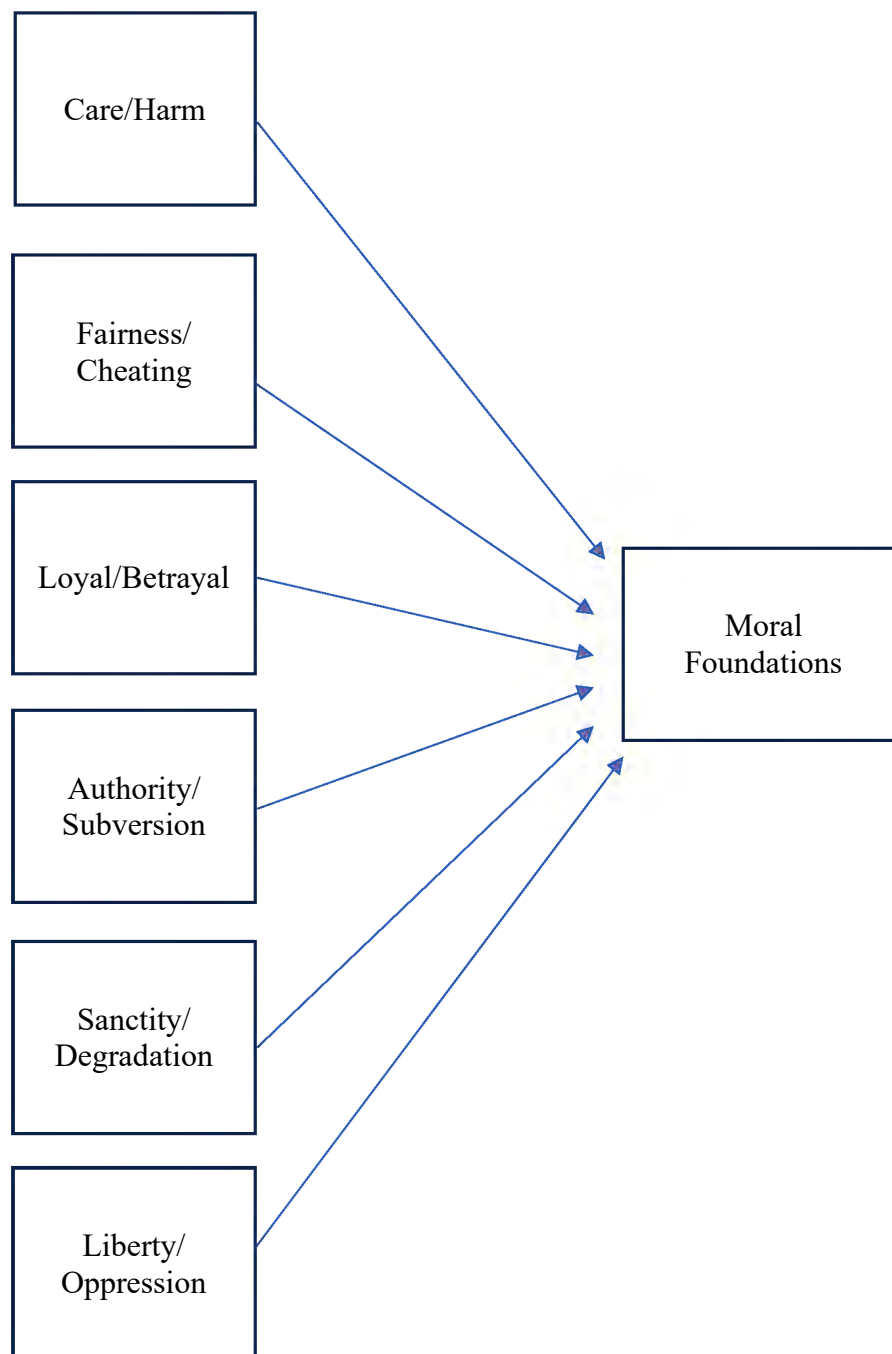
Table 14 represents the p value significance found regarding the relationship hypothesized at the start of the study. For

Table 14, four out of the five hypotheses were supported.

Model V demonstrated that the latent variables for the first-order, i.e., calm/harm, fairness/cheating, loyalty/betrayal, authority/subversion, sanctity/degradation, and liberty/oppression, were directly related to the second-order latent variable of Moral Foundations. A second-order is a higher-order model that examines component models within the second-order, also known as a two-layered construct analysis (Hair et al., 2017). For instance, the two-layer model seeks to meet a satisfactory abstraction of both the first-order and second-order constructs. In this instance, first-order variables are the six latent constructs for moral foundations. Model V demonstrated levels of latent variables (Hair et al., 2017). In addition, the first-order variables were latent and related to the second-order of latent variables (Jiang et al., 2020). Thus, calm/harm, fairness/cheating, loyalty/betrayal, authority/subversion, sanctity/degradation, and liberty/oppression were the first-order latent variables directly related to the second-order latent variable, Moral Foundations.

The Model VI second-order maintained the original six characteristics that make up Rape Myth Acceptance in the first order. However, after examining the latent variables, the Rape Myth Acceptance that were analyzed in the second order were Authority and Sanctity. Results demonstrated there was a positive relationship between religion and sexism ($\alpha=.05$, $\beta=.501$, $p=.000$), between gender stereotypes and moral foundations ($\alpha=.05$, $\beta=.213$, $p=.000$), and between moral foundations and rape myth acceptance ($\alpha=.05$, $\beta=.426$, $p=.000$). Overall, Model VI explains .1% ($R^2=.001$) of Gender Stereotypes, .3% ($R^2=.003$) of Sexism, about 22% ($R^2=.221$) of Rape Myth Acceptance, and about 24% ($R^2=.241$) of Moral Foundations had a perceived importance of variance. The results can be found in Tables 16 through 22.

Figure 5: Model V Rape Myth Acceptance Second-Order Break Down



Model V demonstrates how the items within the current study have influenced one another. The results for Second Order can be found in Tables 16 through 22.

Figure 6: Model VI Rape Myth Acceptance Second-Order

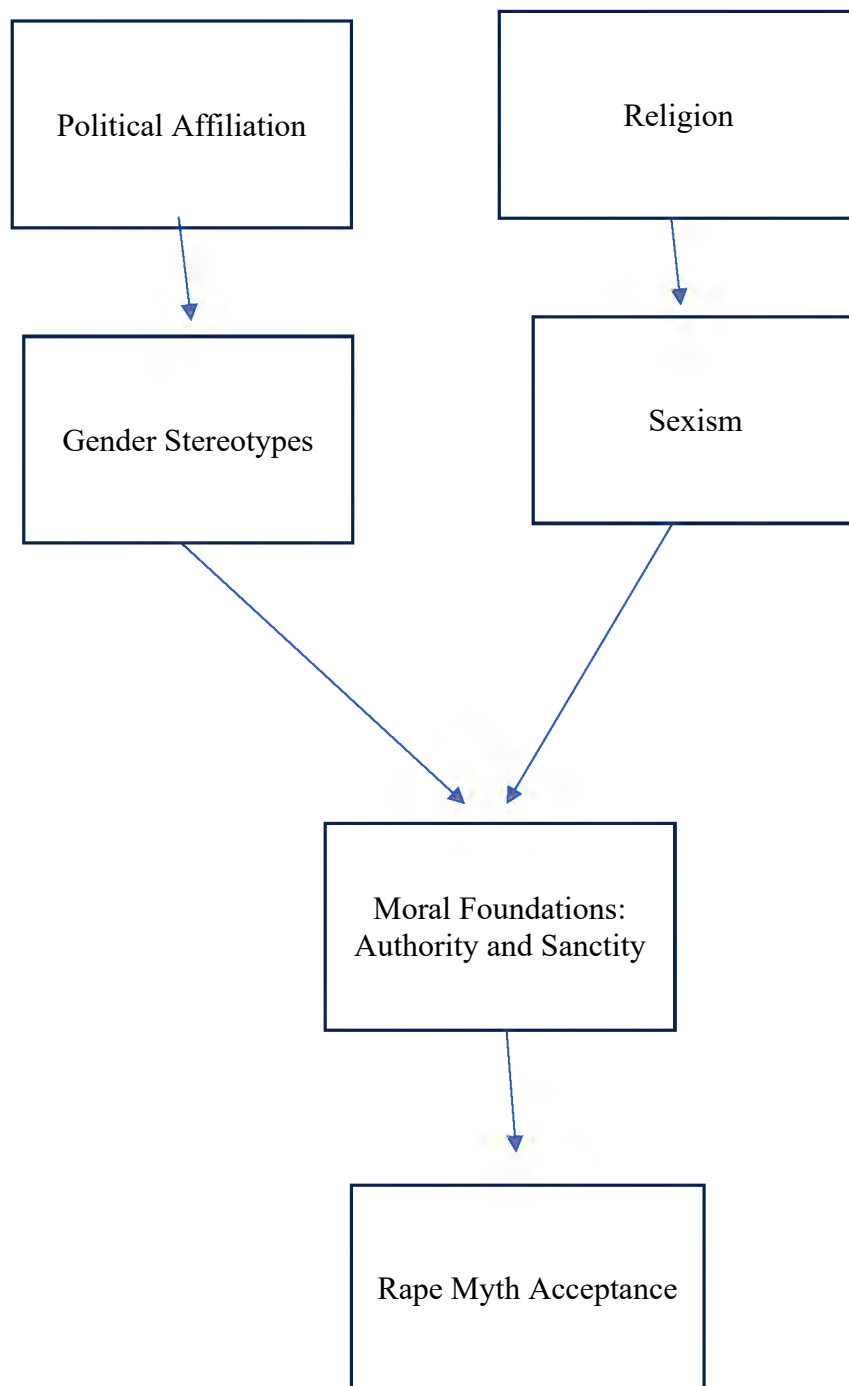
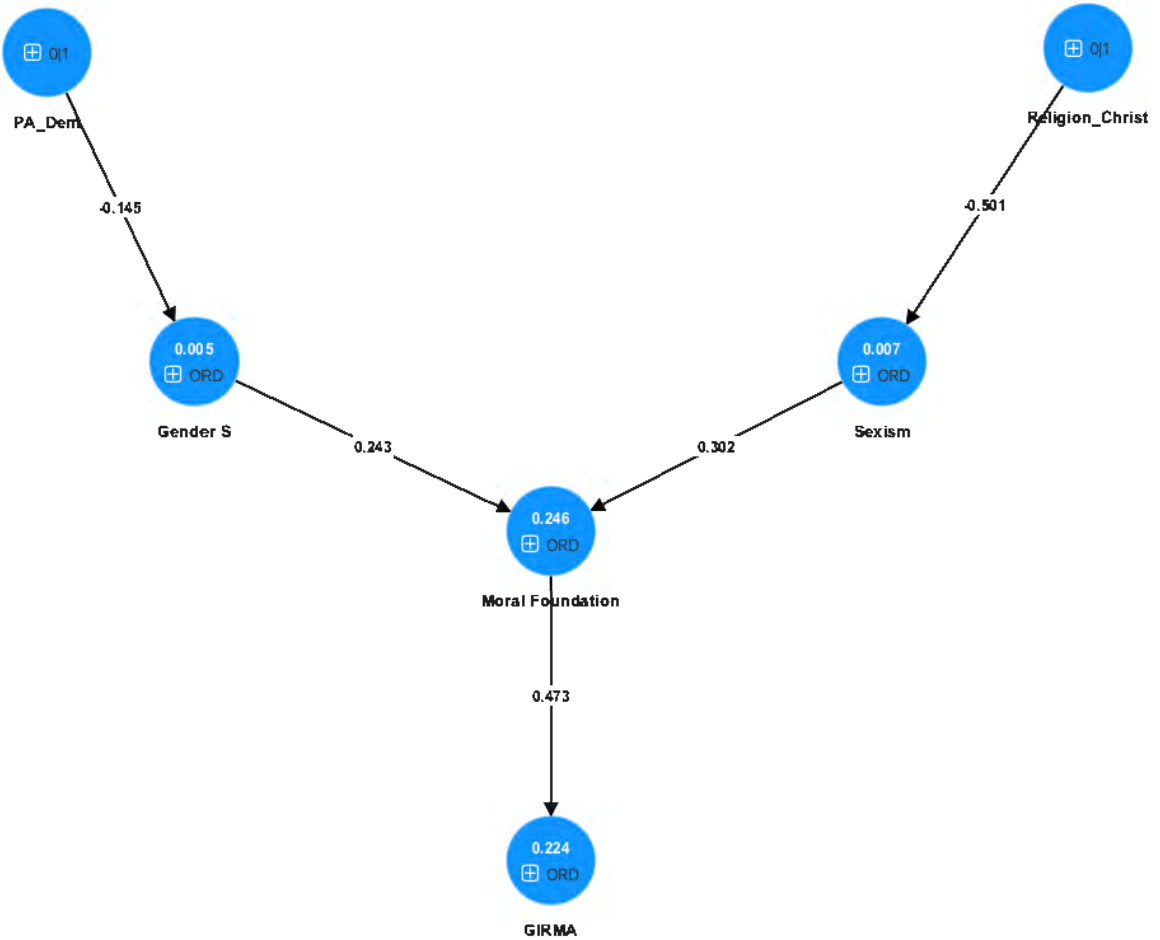


Figure 7: Model VII Rape Myth Acceptance Second-Order with Mediating Roles



Model VII is representing the correlations within the second-order of the structural equation model.

Table 15: Model VI Rape Myth Acceptance Second-Order Convergent Reliability and Validity

	Items	Loadings	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	AVE
Rape Myth Acceptance	GIRMA10	0.767	0.935	0.941	0.572
	GIRMA11	0.803			
	GIRMA12	0.778			
	GIRMA13	0.756			
	GIRMA14_A	0.758			
	GIRMA15	0.769			
	GIRMA17	0.763			
	GIRMA2	0.711			
	GIRMA5	0.768			
	GIRMA7	0.748			
	GIRMA8	0.726			
	GIRMA9	0.727			
Gender Stereotype	GA17	0.742	0.946	0.948	0.549
	GS1	0.715			
	GS10	0.782			
	GS11	0.707			
	GS13	0.744			
	GS14	0.72			
	GS15	0.789			
	GS16	0.725			
	GS20	0.745			

	GS23	0.707			
	GS4	0.744			
	GS5	0.725			
	GS6	0.762			
	GS8	0.735			
	GS9	0.769			
Sexism	AS1	0.739	0.848	0.882	0.554
	AS2	0.754			
	AS3	0.708			
	AS4	0.747			
	AS5	0.716			
	AS8	0.799			

In Table 15, the items represent the survey questions with their respective loadings, which show the strengths of the responses. According to Haire et al. (2017) a loading needs to be .7 to have the appropriate strength to increase the average variance extracted (AVE). The AVE needs to be at least .4 (Hair et al., 2017) to be significant. In addition, the Cronbach's alpha would need to yield at least a .5 to be sufficient for significance with a composite reliability of .6 (Hair et al., 2017). Thus, it can be concluded that for Table 16 all statistical requirements were met to maintain significance.

Table 16: Model VI Rape Myth Acceptance Second Order Discriminant HTMT

	Rape Myth Acceptance	Gender S	Sexism
Rape Myth Acceptance			
Gender Stereotype	0.857		
Sexism	0.755	0.731	

In Table 16, the HTMT needs to yield statistics for each column and row that is under 1.0 (Hair et al., 2017). If the statistic is greater than or equal to 1.0 then there is an issue between the two latent variables when computing the correlation and results in an error in discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2017). Discriminant validity measures whether the two latent variables are related. Thus, Table 16 indicated that there were no issues when considering discriminant validity between the latent variables as the statistics between the said variables are less than 1.0.

Table 17: Model VI Rape Myth Acceptance Second Order Discriminant Fornell-Lacker Criterion

	Rape Myth Acceptance	Gender S	Sexism
Rape Myth			
Acceptance	0.751		
Gender Stereotype	0.799	0.741	
Sexism	0.666	0.65	0.745

In Table 17, the Fornell-Lacker discriminant needs to yield statistics that are greater than the previous statistics in the column and row (Hair et al., 2017). The Fornell-Lacker technique to determine if there is discriminant validity is a popular tool for SEM and is an additional analysis that a person can run to ensure that the HTMT discriminant test is accurate and without multicollinearity issues (Hair et al., 2017). If the statistic is greater than the bolded statistic then there is an issue between the two latent variables when computing the correlation and results in an error in discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2017). Discriminant validity measures whether the two latent variables have a relationship. Thus, Table 17 indicated that there were no issues when considering discriminant validity between the latent variables.

Table 18: Model VI Rape Myth Acceptance Second Order Discriminant Correlates

	Rape Myth Acceptance	Gender Stereotype	Moral Foundation	Sexism
Rape Myth Acceptance	1			
Gender Stereotype	0.799	1		
Moral Foundation	0.473	0.439	1	
Sexism	0.666	0.65	0.46	1

In Table 18 correlates are indicated between variables. To have variables correlate means that one variable is affecting the other (Hair et al., 2017). Therefore, the correlation informs whether there is a positive or a negative relationship. For example, negative statistical correlation will have negative result, which means as x increases, y decreases. In addition, positive statistical correlations will yield positive results, which means as x increases, so does y . The statistical number itself will need to maintain a number close to 1.0 to demonstrate its strength. Thus, a statistic that is close to +1.0, or a -1.0 is strong and indicates there is a strong relationship between the two variables. Table 18 indicates that there were weak (.3), medium (.5) and strong (.7) relationships between variables.

Table 19: Model VI Rape Myth Acceptance Second Order Rape Myth Acceptance

	Original sample	Sample mean	Standard deviation	T statistics	P values
Gender S -> Moral Foundation	0.213	0.222	0.082	2.605	0.009*
Moral Foundation -> Rape Myth Acceptance	0.426	0.435	0.058	7.308	0**
Religion_Christ -> Sexism	-0.501	-0.501	0.561	0.893	0.372
Sexism -> Moral Foundation	-0.148	-0.151	0.125	1.184	0.236
PA_Dem -> Gender S	0.127	0.13	0.128	0.995	0.32
	0.3	0.302	0.1	2.993	0.003*

Significance $p > 0.05^*$, $p = 0.001^{**}$

In Table 19, each variable's relationship to another regarding the corresponding Model is indicated. The p value informs whether there is significance in relationships between variables. Therefore, the variables that were significant are labeled with either a * ($p = .05$) or ** ($p = .0001$).

Table 20: Model VI Rape Myth Acceptance Second Order VIF

	Rape Myth Acceptance	Gender Stereotype	Moral Foundation	Sexism
Rape Myth Acceptance				
Gender Stereotype			1.73	
Moral Foundation	1			
Sexism			1.73	

Table 20 demonstrates the VIF collinearity analysis for Model VI. Collinearity is to have a correlation between two variables (Hair et al., 2017). To have full collinearity the results would need be less than 3.3 (Hair et al., 2017). According to Table 21, all collinearity between the variables was adequate.

Table 21: Model VI Rape Myth Acceptance Second Order Hypothesis and Support

	Hypotheses for Model 1 After Adjustments	Results
H13	There exists a positive relationship between political affiliation and gender stereotypes.	Not Supported
H14	There exists a positive relationship between religion and sexism.	Supported
H15	There exist positive relationships between gender stereotypes and moral foundations.	Supported
H16	There exists a positive relationship between religion and moral foundations	Not Supported
H17	There exist positive relationships between moral foundations and RMA.	Supported

Table 21 represents the p value significance found regarding the relationship hypothesized at the beginning of the study. Thus, each hypothesis is written out for Model VI and instructs whether the results from the study's data support the hypotheses. For Table 21, three out of the five hypotheses were supported.

Model II Religious Pathway to Rape Myth Acceptance

In Model II, gender stereotypes were more closely examined. Specifically, this model offered the dynamics of gender stereotypes and sexism and the nature of both predictors' relationship with rape myth acceptance. Model II demonstrated that while both paths of sexism had a positive relationship with RMA, the more hostile had a stronger relationship.

Like Model I, the structural equation model results indicated that there was no support for a positive relationship between religion and gender stereotypes (Hypothesis 6). However, the data and results showed support for hypotheses 7 through 10. Thus, there was a positive relationship between gender stereotypes and benevolent sexism ($\alpha=.05$, $\beta=.46$, $p=.000$) and hostile sexism ($\alpha=.05$, $\beta=.631$, $p=.000$). In addition, there was a positive relationship between modern sexism and hostile sexism ($\alpha=.05$, $\beta=.356$, $p=.000$) and benevolent sexism ($\alpha=.05$, $\beta=.328$, $p=.000$). Last, there was a positive relationship between modern sexism and rape myth acceptance ($\alpha=.05$, $\beta=.541$, $p=.000$).

These results indicated that there was a relationship between gender stereotypes and sexism, as well as a connection between sexism and rape myth acceptance. Thus, individuals, regardless of their religion and political affiliation, tended to have gender stereotypical views and tended to also have sexist views, particularly modern and benevolent sexist views. In addition, those who tended to agree with modern sexism had a correlation with rape myth acceptance. Overall, Model II explains about 23% ($R^2=.228$) of Benevolent Sexism, approximately 42% ($R^2=.424$), of Hostile Sexism and 32% ($R^2=.321$) of Rape Myth Acceptance have a perceived importance of variance. The results for Model II are displayed in Tables 23 through 29.

Table 22: Model II Religious Pathway to Rape Myth Acceptance Convergent Reliability and Validity

	Items	Loadings	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	AVE
Ben Sexism					
	AS_Ben_10	0.775	0.609	0.793	0.56
	AS_Ben_11	0.728			
	AS_Ben_18	0.742			
Rape Myth Acceptance					
	GIRMA10	0.731	0.936	0.944	0.56 5
	GIRMA11	0.804			
	GIRMA12	0.77			
	GIRMA13	0.755			
	GIRMA14_				
	A	0.745			
	GIRMA15	0.76			
	GIRMA17	0.743			
	GIRMA2	0.747			
	GIRMA4	0.727			
	GIRMA5	0.765			
	GIRMA7	0.757			
	GIRMA8	0.742			
	GIRMA9	0.728			
Gender Stereotype					
	GS10	0.77	0.885	0.91	0.56 1
	GS11	0.748			

	GS13	0.753			
	GS14	0.815			
	GS16	0.757			
	GS18	0.755			
	GS23	0.78			
Hostile Sexism	AS_Hostile _1	0.731	0.805	0.865	0.56 1
	AS_Hostile _2	0.733			
	AS_Hostile _3	0.736			
	AS_Hostile _4	0.716			
	AS_Hostile _5	0.778			
Modern Sexism	MS11	0.748	0.668	0.819	0.60 2
	MS13	0.748			
	MS9	0.829			

In Table 22 the items represent the questions for the survey with the questions respective loadings. These demonstrate the strengths of the answers provided by the participants. According to Haire et al. (2017) a loading needs to be .7 to have the appropriate strength to increase the average variance extracted (AVE). The AVE needs

to be at least .4 (Hair et al., 2017) to be significant. In addition, the Cronbach's alpha would need to yield at least a .5 to be sufficient for significance with a composite reliability of .6 (Hair et al., 2017). Thus, it can be concluded that for Table 22 all statistical requirements were met to maintain significance.

Table 23: Model II Religious Pathway to Rape Myth Acceptance Discriminant HTMT

	Benevolent Sexism	Rape Myth Acceptance	Gender Stereotype	Hostile Sexism	Modern Sexism
Benevolent Sexism					
Rape Myth Acceptance	0.614				
Gender Stereotype	0.618	0.854			
Hostile Sexism	0.83	0.764	0.741		
Modern Sexism	0.865	0.68	0.693	0.761	

In Table 23, the HTMT needs to yield statistics for each column and row that is under 1.0 (Hair et al., 2017). If the statistic is greater than or equal to 1.0 then there is an issue between the two latent variables when computing the correlation and results in an error in discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2017). Discriminant validity measures whether the two latent variables are related or have a relationship. Thus, Table 23 indicated that there were no issues when considering discriminant validity between the latent variables given that the statistics between the said variables were less than 1.0.

*Table 24: Model II Religious Pathway to Rape Myth Acceptance Discriminant
Fornell-Lacker Criterion*

	Benevolent Sexism	Rape Myth Acceptance	Gender Stereotype	Hostile Sexism	Modern Sexism
Benevolent Sexism	0.749				
Rape Myth Acceptance	0.475	0.751			
Gender Stereotype	0.46	0.777	0.769		
Hostile Sexism	0.58	0.665	0.631	0.749	
Modern Sexism	0.556	0.541	0.536	0.559	0.776

In Table 24, the Fornell-Lacker discriminant needs to yield statistics that are greater than the previous statistics in the column and row (Hair et al., 2017). Thus, Table 24 indicated that there were no issues when considering discriminant validity between the latent variables.

Table 25: Model II Religious Pathway to Rape Myth Acceptance Correlates

	Benevolent Sexism	Rape Myth Acceptance	Gender Stereotype	Hostile Sexism	Modern Sexism
Benevolent Sexism	1				
Rape Myth Acceptance	0.475	1			
Gender Stereotype	0.46	0.777	1		
Hostile Sexism	0.58	0.665	0.631	1	
Modern Sexism	0.556	0.541	0.536	0.559	1

In Table 25 correlates are measured between variables. Thus, a statistic that is close to +1.0, or a -1.0 is strong and indicates there is a strong relationship between the two variables. Table 25 indicated that there were weak (.3), medium (.5) and strong (.7) relationships between variables.

Table 26: Model II Religious Pathway to Rape Myth Acceptance Relationships

	Original sample	Sample mean	Standard deviation	T statistics	P values
Ben Sexism -> Modern Sexism	0.35	0.351	0.066	5.262	0**
Gender Stereotype -> Ben Sexism	0.46	0.465	0.065	7.025	0**
Gender Stereotype -> Hostile Sexism	0.631	0.635	0.051	12.452	0**
Hostile Sexism -> Modern Sexism	0.356	0.359	0.066	5.358	0**
Modern Sexism -> Rape Myth Acceptance	0.541	0.546	0.051	10.648	0**
Religion_Christ -> Gender Stereotype	-0.323	-0.32	0.532	0.608	0.544

Significance p=0.05* p=0.001**

In Table 26, each variable's relationship to another regarding the corresponding Model is measured. The variables that were significant are labeled with either a * (p=.05) or ** (p=.0001).

Table 27: Model II Religious Pathway to Rape Myth Acceptance VIF

	Benevolent Sexism	Rape Myth Acceptance	Gender Stereotype	Hostile Sexism	Modern Sexism
Benevolent Sexism					1.506
Rape Myth Acceptance					
Gender Stereotype	1			1	
Hostile Sexism					1.506
Modern Sexism		1			

Table 27 demonstrates the VIF collinearity analysis for Model II. Collinearity is to have a correlation between two variables (Hair et al., 2017). To have full collinearity the results would need be less than 3.3 (Hair et al., 2017). According to Table 27, all collinearity between the variables was adequate.

Table 28: Model II Religious Pathway to Rape Myth Acceptance Hypothesis and Support

	Hypothesis	Results
H18	There exists a positive relationship between religion and gender stereotypes.	Not Supported
H19	There exists a positive relationship between gender stereotypes and benevolent sexism.	Supported
H20	There exists a positive relationship between gender stereotypes and hostile sexism.	Supported
H21	There exists a positive relationship between hostile/benevolent sexism and modern sexism.	Supported
H22	There exists a positive relationship between modern sexism and RMA.	Supported

Table 28 represents the p value significance found regarding the relationship hypothesized at the start of the study.

Thus, each hypothesis is written out for Model II and instructs whether the results from the study's data support the hypotheses. For Table 28, four out of the five hypotheses were supported.

Model III Activities and Fundamentalism Pathway to Rape Myth Acceptance

Model III examined religion and religiosity and the socialization of youth toward RMA using a structural equation model that was run in Smart-PLS 4.0. The findings indicated that Christianity scored highest on the religiosity measure, the Faith Activities scale, which captures religious devotion as evidenced by the extent of religious engagement and practices. Thus, hypotheses from 10 through 12b were supported by the data and results.

First, there was a positive relationship between faith activities and religious fundamentalism ($\alpha=.05$, $\beta=.313$, $p=.000$). This indicated that those who practiced their religion tended to have strong belief systems within their chosen religion. Second, there was a positive relationship between religious fundamentalism and gender stereotypes ($\alpha=.05$, $\beta=.279$, $p=.000$). Therefore, those who had a strong religious foundation, that is, views that were firmly grounded in their religious morals, tended to endorse gender stereotypes. Third, there was a positive relationship between religious foundation and both hostile sexism ($\alpha=.05$, $\beta=.443$, $p=.000$) and modern sexism ($\alpha=.05$, $\beta=.514$, $p=.000$). Thus, individuals who turned to their religious morals to dictate their behavior tended to have hostile and modern sexist views. Fourth, as was expected, there was a positive relationship between gender stereotypes and rape myth acceptance ($\alpha=.05$, $\beta=.579$, $p=.000$). Thus, those who tended to have gender stereotypical beliefs also tended to believe in rape myths. Last, there was a positive relationship between hostile ($\alpha=.05$, $\beta=.216$, $p=.000$), benevolent ($\alpha=.05$, $\beta=.032$, $p=.000$), and modern sexism and rape myth acceptance ($\alpha=.05$, $\beta=.087$, $p=.000$). Overall, the model explains about 30% ($R^2=.298$) of Benevolent Sexism, 23% ($R^2=.236$) of Hostile Sexism, 29% ($R^2=.292$) of Modern

Sexism, about 9% ($R^2 = .083$) of Religious Foundations, 25% ($R^2 = .252$) of sanctity, 2% ($R^2 = .002$) of sexism, 10% ($R^2 = .096$) of Gender Stereotypes and about 68% ($R^2 = .679$) of Rape Myth Acceptance have a perceived importance of variance. The results for Model III are displayed in Tables 30 through 36.

Table 29: Model III Activities and Fundamentalism Pathway to Rape Myth Acceptance Convergent Reliability and Validity

	Items	Loadings	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	AVE
Benevolent Sexism	AS10	0.716	0.609	0.793	0.561
	AS11	0.743			
	AS18	0.726			
Faith Activities	FA210	0.797	0.756	0.845	0.578
	FA25	0.76			
	FA27	0.744			
	FA28	0.739			
Rape Myth Acceptance	GIRMA10	0.763	0.936	0.944	0.656
	GIRMA11	0.808			
	GIRMA12	0.765			
	GIRMA13	0.756			
	GIRMA14_A	0.74			
	GIRMA15	0.762			
	GIRMA17	0.745			
	GIRMA2	0.732			
	GIRMA4	0.71			
	GIRMA5	0.765			
	GIRMA7	0.755			
	GIRMA8	0.746			
	GIRMA9	0.718			

Gender Stereotype

	GS1	0.7	0.885	0.91	0.591
	GS10	0.764			
	GS11	0.762			
	GS13	0.811			
	GS14	0.751			
	GS16	0.749			
	GS18	0.777			
	GS23	0.712			
Hostile Sexism					
	AS2	0.764	0.811	0.869	0.57
	AS3	0.719			
	AS4	0.738			
	AS5	0.756			
	AS8	0.796			
Modern Sexism					
	MA11	0.741	0.668	0.819	0.601
	MS13	0.762			
	MS9	0.821			
Religious Foundation					
	RF10	0.593	0.738	0.835	0.559
	RF3_A	0.743			
	RF5	0.738			
	RF7	0.748			
	RF9	0.763			

In Table 29, the items represent the survey questions which show the strengths and answers provided by the participants. According to Haire et al. (2017) a loading needs to be .7 to have the appropriate strength to increase the

average variance extracted (AVE). The AVE needs to be at least .4 (Hair et al., 2017) to be significant. In addition, the Cronbach's alpha would need to yield at least a .5 to be sufficient for significance with a composite reliability of .6 (Hair et al., 2017). Thus, it can be concluded that for Table 29 all statistical requirements were met to maintain significance.

Table 30: Model III Activities and Fundamentalism Pathway to Rape Myth Acceptance Discriminant HTMT

	Benevolent Sexism	Faith Activities	Rape Myth Acceptance	Gender Stereotypes	Hostile Sexism	Modern Sexism	Religious Foundations
Benevolent Sexism							
Faith Activities	0.385						
Rape Myth Acceptance	0.614	0.13					
Gender Stereotype	0.618	0.104	0.854				
Hostile Sexism	0.826	0.271	0.752	0.757			
Modern Sexism	0.865	0.411	0.68	0.693	0.788		
Religious Foundations	0.801	0.415	0.388	0.338	0.565	0.728	

In Table 30, the HTMT needs to yield statistics for each column and row that is under 1.0 (Hair et al., 2017). Discriminant validity measures whether the two latent variables are related or have a relationship. Thus, Table 30 indicated that there were no issues when considering discriminant validity between the latent variables given that the statistics between the said variables are less than 1.0.

Table 31: Model III Activities and Fundamentalism Pathway to Rape Myth Acceptance Discriminant Fornell-Lacker Criterion

	Benevolent Sexism	Faith Activities	Rape Myth Acceptance	Gender Stereotypes	Hostile Sexism	Modern Sexism	Religious Foundations
Benevolent Sexism	0.749						
Faith Activities	0.261	0.76					
Rape Myth Acceptance	0.469	0.076	0.752				
Gender Stereotype	0.455	0.078	0.779	0.769			
Hostile Sexism	0.578	0.215	0.657	0.642	0.755		
Modern Sexism	0.555	0.295	0.539	0.533	0.581	0.775	
Religious Foundations	0.538	0.313	0.328	0.279	0.443	0.514	0.748

In Table 31, the Fornell-Lacker discriminant needs to yield statistics greater than the previous statistics in the column and row (Hair et al., 2017). The Fornell-Lacker technique is to determine if there is discriminant validity. Discriminant validity measures whether the two latent variables have a relationship. Thus, Table 31 indicated that there were no issues when considering discriminant validity between the latent variables.

Table 32: Model III Activities and Fundamentalism Pathway to Rape Myth Acceptance Correlates

	Benevolent Sexism	Faith Activities	Rape Myth Acceptance	Gender Stereotype	Hostile Sexism	Modern Sexism	Religious Foundations
Benevolent Sexism	1						
Faith Activities	0.261	1					
Rape Myth Acceptance	0.469	0.076	1				
Gender Stereotype	0.455	0.078	0.779	1			
Hostile Sexism	0.578	0.215	0.657	0.642	1		
Modern Sexism	0.555	0.295	0.539	0.533	0.581	1	
Religious Foundations	0.538	0.313	0.328	0.279	0.443	0.514	1

In Table 32 indicated that there were weak (.3), medium (.5) and strong (.7) relationships between variables.

Table 33: Model III Activities and Fundamentalism Pathway to Rape Myth Acceptance Relationships

	Original sample	Sample mean	Standard deviation	T statistics	P values
Ben Sexism -> Rape Myth Acceptance	0.032	0.032	0.053	0.605	0.545
Faith Activities -> Religious Foundations	0.313	0.323	0.059	5.349	0**
Gender Stereotype -> Rape Myth Acceptance	0.579	0.583	0.054	10.7	0**
Hostile Sexism -> Rape Myth Acceptance	0.216	0.217	0.064	3.384	0.001**
Modern Sexism -> Rape Myth Acceptance	0.087	0.084	0.049	1.758	0.079
Religious Foundations -> Ben Sexism	0.538	0.545	0.053	10.112	0**
Religious Foundations -> Gender Stereotype	0.279	0.283	0.071	3.896	0**
Religious Foundations -> Hostile Sexism	0.443	0.448	0.064	6.974	0**
Religious Foundations -> Modern Sexism	0.514	0.518	0.058	8.911	0**

Significance $p=0.05$ *, $p=0.001$ **

In Table 33, each variable's relationship to another regarding the corresponding Model are indicated. The variables that were significant were labeled with either a * ($p=.05$) or ** ($p=.0001$).

Table 34: Model III Activities and Fundamentalism Pathway to Rape Myth Acceptance VIF

	Benevolent Sexism	Faith Activities	Rape Myth Acceptance	Gender Stereotype	Hostile Sexism	Modern Sexism	Religious Foundation
Benevolent Sexism			1.69				
Faith Activities							1
Rape Myth Acceptance							
Gender Stereotype			1.827				
Hostile Sexism			2.183				
Modern Sexism			1.786				
Religious Foundation	1			1	1	1	

Table 34 demonstrates the VIF collinearity analysis for Model III. Collinearity is to have a correlation between two variables (Hair et al., 2017). To have full collinearity the results would need be less than 3.3 (Hair et al., 2017). According to Table 34, all collinearity between the variables was adequate.

Table 35: Model III Activities and Fundamentalism Pathway to Rape Myth Acceptance Hypothesis

	Hypothesis	Results
H10	There exists a positive relationship between faith activities (religiosity) and religious foundationalism.	Supported
H11a	There exist positive relationships between religious foundationalism and gender stereotypes.	Supported
H11b	There exist positive relationships between religious foundationalism and benevolent sexism	Supported
H11c	There exist positive relationships between religious foundationalism and hostile sexism.	Supported
H11e	There exist positive relationships between religious foundationalism and modern sexism.	Supported
H12a	There exist positive relationships between gender stereotypes and RMA.	Supported
H12b	There exist positive relationships between hostile sexism, and RMA.	Supported
H12c	There exist positive relationships between benevolent sexism, and RMA.	Not Supported
H12d	There exist positive relationships between modern sexism, and RMA.	Not Supported

Table 35 represents the p value significance that is found regarding the relationship hypothesized at the beginning of the study. Thus, each hypothesis is written out for Model III and instructs whether the results from the study's data support the hypotheses. For Table 35, seven out of the nine hypotheses were supported.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

This study was a quantitative examination of the relationship between religion, religiosity, political affiliation, gender stereotypes, sexism, and rape myth acceptance. It utilized primary data collected by surveying youth in Texas via Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk). Of the 289 participants who completed the survey, 161 (55.7%) were females and 127 (43.9%) were males. Among the participants, 94.8% identified as White, 97.2% as Christian, and 67.4 % as Democrat.

Model V Rape Myth Acceptance Second Order and Model VI Political Affiliation and Religious Pathway to Rape Myth Acceptance Combined

Model V Rape Myth Acceptance Second Order and VI Political Affiliation and Religious Pathway to Rape Myth Acceptance Combined was focused on testing the moral foundation's theory within numerous political and religious affiliations. Thus, the theory is meant to shed light on the morals that people have attached to their political affiliation (Barnett et al., 2018; Clifford et al., 2015; Reynolds et al., 2020) and religion (Finlay & Walther, 2003; Newport, 2012; Sapienza & Guiso, 2006). For example, the Republican party values traditional teachings that parallel the Christian belief system. On the other hand, those who are more aligned with the Democratic party tend to promote acceptance of varying lifestyles of beliefs, regarding their sexual orientation, religion, culture, and race. Although these two political parties claim to portray the same Judeo-Christian moral foundations driven by their traditional Christian beliefs, the results of the current study suggest otherwise.

To depict these moral foundations within the connection to religion and political affiliation, previous research concluded that those who were more conservative and identified as Christian tended to have higher levels of RMA when compared to those who were more liberal and did not identify as Christian (Barnett et al., 2018; Clifford et al., 2015; Newport, 2012; Reynolds et al., 2020). Specifically, Rosewood and Hammond (2023) found that individuals who tended to believe in RMA were at a higher risk of blaming the victim than the offender due to the individual's common nature to sympathize with those more culturally like them. Therefore, they perceived that offender deserved less punishment (Bongiorno et al., 2016; Hayes et al., 2013). Also, previous research found that political values tended to be rationalized and then justified through foundations that bonded one person to another through for example, loyalty/betrayal, authority/subversion, and sanctity/degradation. In contrast, individual foundations further separate person, for example, through care/harm and fairness/cheating. Thus, conservatives tend to place significant value on moral foundations that tend to connect people. These moral foundations tend to allow those to perceive results as a stable and familiar behavior, opposed to emotional sensitivity (Barnett et al., 2018; Reynolds, 2020).

According to Model V, there was no relationship between Republican Christians ($\alpha = .05, p = .522$) and moral foundations and Democratic Christians ($\alpha = .05, p = .335$) and gender stereotypes. In addition, Model V examined whether Christians tended to maintain a heightened combination of hostile and benevolent sexist beliefs. However, the results indicated that Christians in the current study did not maintain these sexist beliefs ($\alpha = .05, p = .478$). On the other hand, Model VI demonstrated significance when examining the relationship between moral foundations and RMA, with a positive

relationship ($\alpha = .05$, $p = .000$) and sexism and moral foundations ($\alpha = .05$, $p = .000$).

Within this conclusion, it is essential to remember there is a significant gap within the current study's participants when it comes to religion and political affiliation—for example, most participants identified as Christian (97.2%) and Democrats (67.4%). Therefore, results may vary if future studies secure a more diverse religion and political affiliations sample.

Model II Religious Pathway to Rape Myth Acceptance

Model II examined groups that hold gender stereotypes. Specifically, Model II offered the dynamics of the sexism and how the nature of the sexism predicted rape myth acceptance. It was expected that while both paths of sexism would have a positive relationship with RMA, the more hostile sexism would have a stronger relationship. However, the results of the current study demonstrated that both sexist beliefs maintained a similar significance to one another ($\alpha = .05$, $p = .000$).

Previous research concluded that religion was a foundation that individuals in the United States tended to lean on when developing their sense of right and wrong (Newport, 2021). Specifically, religion tends to help shape people's mindset, political ideations, belief systems, and daily norms (Newport, 2021). Similarly, religion tends to provide the concepts that persons would need to feel secure in behaviors and ideations. For instance, if a woman or a girl wears too *revealing* clothing, then it is assumed that it is her fault if a man or boy advances sexual behavior towards her (Aghasaleh, 2018). This belief is one of many that reinforces rape myth acceptance through gender stereotypes.

Although Model II results do show support that there were positive relationships between the different forms of sexism, that is, hostile, benevolent, and modern, and rape

myth acceptance, there was not a positive relationship between the Christian religion and gender stereotype ($\alpha=.05$, $p=.544$). Thus, if a positive relationship does not exist between the Christianity and gender stereotypes, then Christianity may not be truly relevant in the sexism and rape myth acceptance. The current study yielded this result possibly due to a lack of variation in participants who identified as Christian (94.8%).

Model III Activities and Fundamentalism Pathway to Rape Myth Acceptance

Model III's main goal was to examine religiosity and its role in religion and the socialization of youth toward RMA. The expected action was that findings would indicate that Christians would score highest on the religiosity measure, the Faith Activities scale, which captures religious devotion as evidenced by the extent of religious engagement and practices. Previous research has demonstrated that religiosity is a person's dedication and activeness in their religion (Neff, 2006). The dedication and activeness are displayed through church involvement and teachings to others outside the congregation. For instance, a person who has significant loyalty to a church may attend most of the church events and feel a need to spread the church's gospel. In addition, fundamentalism is the understanding that the belief one has in a higher power is the only correct belief to have. Thus, the believers' faith is so significant that they are dogmatic about the Biblical theories outlined within their religion and will not accept criticism nor listen to outside knowledge about their religion (Pareek & Dhanda, 2022). One way to measure religiosity within an individual is through Altemeyer and Hunsberegger's (1992) Fundamentalism Scale. This scale links one's religiosity to a sense of duty and commitment to the religion and local church.

Other research has concluded that as fundamentalism increased, so did sexist and stereotypical beliefs as set by the religion's Biblical references (Hannover et al., 2018; Pareek & Dhanda, 2022). This study was able to confirm this by demonstrating that as positive relationships increased with religious fundamentalism ($\alpha=.05$, $p=.000$), so did positive relationships with hostile sexism ($\alpha=.05$, $p=.000$), modern sexism ($\alpha=.05$, $p=.000$) and gender stereotypes ($\alpha=.05$, $p=.000$). When examining the World Value Survey, Adamczyk (2013) found that the more people associated with their religious fundamentalism, the more they believed in gender inequality. In other words, those who voluntarily bound themselves to their religion were more likely to display beliefs and attitudes of hostile, benevolent, and modern sexism, as well as gender stereotypes that were outlined in the Christian Bible. Therefore, as religious foundations increase, their sexist and gender-stereotypical views may increase as well.

Limitations of the Study

First, the limitations of this study are those typical of structural equation modeling. These include the extent to which assumptions of normality are violated and the possible omission of significant variables (Tomarken & Waller, 2005). Assumptions of normality include that the variables are measured without error, that the relationships between independent and the dependent variables are linear, that errors are normally distributed and not correlated with independent variables, that there is a one-way causal, additive flow in the model, and the variance of the residuals for all independent variable values are constant (Mertler & Vannatta, 2010). Nevertheless, this study is an essential start to examining significant effects and more subtle effects between the variables in the three proposed models.

Second, while a sample of 289 participants was adequate for this effect, Smart-PLS intended the sample to be 500 participants for a more informative finding. Hereby, most participants identified as Christian (97.2 %) and Democrat (67.4%). The current study expected more participants to identify with religions such as Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Agnostic, and Atheist. In addition, it was expected that more individuals would identify with other political affiliations like Republican and Independent parties. Due to this limitation, the data were not able to provide a richer narrative of how people in the United States with different backgrounds in religion and politics view rape myths.

Third, the current study's survey was posted in MTurk, which may also be a limitation due to the website requiring persons to have an account with MTurk for participation to be granted for studies. For this reason, a more diverse sample may have been achieved if other resources were utilized to draw in participants.

Lastly, the current study intended to include participants who identified as nonbinary within the scope of gender. The participants in the study however primarily identified as female (55.7%) or male (43.9%). Thus, the participants within the study did not identify as nonbinary, limiting the scope of gender within the sample.

Future Research

First, the current study examined the potential relationship between religion, political affiliations, and rape myth acceptance. Previous research has demonstrated that there was a positive link between religion, political affiliation, and rape myth acceptance (RAINN, 2023; Jenkins, 2016; Page, 2008; Monson et al., 2000). However, the current study cast a broader net of inclusion when considering rape myth acceptance. For

instance, the current study provided a questionnaire that examined gender-inclusive rape myth acceptance while controlling for sexism and gender stereotypes. For future research, one could attempt to collect data on a more diverse group of religious individuals and individuals with a broader range of associations with political affiliation.

Second, future research could include a larger, more diverse sample for comparison in the results. Also, future research could attempt to collect more nonbinary participants or persons who identify outside of the binary of female and male gender in terms of gender. As previous research has demonstrated (Alaggia & Wang, 2020; Bach et al., 2021; Dworkin et al., 2023; Dworkin et al., 2021; Heath & Sperry, 2021; RAINN, 2023), those who do not identify as female nor male still experience sexual assault and may have ties to rape myth acceptance. It is essential to include broad individual beliefs and experiences with studies to attempt to view the phenomenon in its entirety instead of narrow glimpses.

Last, the current study ran a second order in Model VI after a SEM analysis was ran for Model I. Model VI's second order highlighted latent variables within thesis constructs of the moral foundations. Thus, future research could run a post hoc test after running the second order to examine which moral foundations are important in the overall analysis. Depicting which moral foundations are most important within the research may be informative on which moral constructs have a stronger relationship with the dependent variables of rape myth acceptance.

Conclusion

The objective of the study was to determine if a relationship existed between rape myth acceptance, religion, and political affiliation. First, findings indicated that there

were positive relationships between sexism, gender stereotypes, and rape myth acceptance. Therefore, in this study, as a person had an increase in sexist views and tended to believe in gender stereotypes, the more likely that a person was to have rape myth acceptance. These results confirm previous research that demonstrates a connection between rape myths and benevolent, hostile, and modern sexism (Haggard et al., 2018; Viki & Abrams, 2002; Yamawaki & Tschanz, 2005), as well as gender stereotypes (Glick & Fiske, 2012; Jozkowski et al., 2013). Although previous research indicated that those who identified as Republican often held stronger rape myth acceptance compared to Democrats (Conroy, 2019; NRP, 2019), the current study was not able to confirm this difference between religion, political affiliations and rape myth acceptance given the lack of diversity within the sample (Christians 97.2 % and Democrats 67.4%).

Last, previous research indicated that those who identified as Christians tended to hold women and girls responsible if they were assaulted sexually by another due to the Bible instructing them to have a higher sexual moral ground (Glick & Fiske, 2012; Jozkowski & Peterson, 2013). However, the current study did not indicate that participants who identified as Christian held these rape myth acceptance and religious belief systems. Although previous research found that conservative beliefs were often linked to Republican mindsets, his study's results indicated that there may be a shift in thinking today due to the current religious and political climate. The results reflected too narrow a demographic or also possible, more young adults are becoming less affiliated with their parent's religious and political belief systems and are attempting to educate themselves (Dyck et al., 2010; Holbein & Hillygus, 2020; Kinnaman & Hawkins, 2011; Peterson et al., 2020). In the latter case, the young adult generation may embrace more

accepting behavior beliefs that are different from ideas that would align with RMA (Aghasaleh, 2018; Conroy, 2019; NRP, 2019; Ganim, 2014; Jozkowski & Peterson, 2013; Maltby et al., 2010; Valenti, 2010). This is an encouraging sign of progress- of fewer social victimization in the future.

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APPENDIX**Demographics****Sex**

- 1=Female
- 2=Male
- 3= Nonbinary
- 4= Do not wish to disclose

Age

- 18
- 19
- 20
- 21
- 22
- 23
- 24

Race

- 1= Black
- 2= White
- 3= Asian
- 4= Latino/ Latina
- 4= Other

Religion

What is your religion?

- 1=Christianity
- 2=Jewish
- 3=Hindu
- 4=Muslim
- 5=Buddhist
- 6=Other
- 7=Agnostic
- 8=Atheist

Political Affiliation

With which political party do you identify the most?

- 1=Democrat
- 2=Republican
- 3=Independent

4=Other

Faith Activities in the Home Scale- Short Version

For each item (1-5) below, please indicate:

The frequency your family is involved in these various activities.

Frequency Scale

1=never or not applicable

2= monthly/ a few times a month

3= about weekly

4= about daily

5= more than daily

How important that item is to your family's religious life.

Importance Scale

1= not important or not applicable

2= somewhat important

3= important

4= very important

5= extremely important

1. Family FAITH Activities
2. Family prayer (family together other than at meals)
3. Family reading of scripture or other religious texts
4. Family singing or playing religious music/instruments
5. Family religious gatherings/activities/celebrations
6. Family use of religious media (e.g., videos, radio, TV)
7. Family religious conversations at home
8. Saying/singing a blessing/grace/prayer at family meals
9. Parents praying with child or listening to her/his prayers
10. Couple prayer (husband and wife praying together)

Modern Sexism Scale

Please indicate to which extent you agree with the following statements:

- 1=You **strongly disagree** with the statement.
- 2= You **slightly disagree** with the statement.
- 3= You **feel exactly and precisely neutral** about the statement.
- 4= You **slightly agree** with the statement.
- 5=You **very strongly agree** with the statement.

1. Women are generally not as smart as men
2. I would be equally as comfortable having a woman or a man as a boss
3. It is more important to encourage boys than to encourage gurls to participate in athletics
4. Women are just as capable of thinking logically as men
5. When both parents are employed and their child gets sick at school, the school should call the mother rather than the father
6. Women often miss out on good jobs due to sexual discrimination
7. It is rare to see women treated in a sexist manner on television
8. Society has reached the point where women and men have equal opportunities for achievement
9. It is easy to understand the anger of women's groups in America
10. Over the past few years, the government and news media have been showing more concern about the treatment of women than is warranted by women's actual experiences
11. Discrimination against women is no longer a problem in the United States
12. On average, people in our society treat husbands and wives equally
13. It is easy to understand why women's groups are still concerned about societal limitations of women's opportunities

Religious Fundamentalism Scale

- 1=You **strongly disagree** with the statement.
 2= You **slightly disagree** with the statement.
 3= You **feel exactly and precisely neutral** about the statement.
 4= You **slightly agree** with the statement.
 5=You **very strongly agree** with the statement.

1. God has given humanity a complete, unfailing guide to happiness and salvation, which must be totally followed.
2. No single book of religious teachings contains all the intrinsic, fundamental truths about life.
3. The basic cause of evil in this world is Satan, who is still constantly and ferociously fighting against God.
4. It is more important to be a good person than to believe in God and the right religion.
5. There is a particular set of religious teachings in this world that are so true, you can't go any "deeper" because they are the basic, bedrock message that God has given humanity.
6. When you get right down to it, there are basically only two kinds of people in the world: the Righteous, who will be rewarded by God, and the rest, who will not.
7. Scriptures may contain general truths, but they should **not** be considered completely, literally true from beginning to end.
8. To lead the best, most meaningful life, one must belong to the one, fundamentally true religion.
9. "Satan" is just the name people give to their own bad impulses. There really is *no such thing* as a diabolical "Prince of Darkness" who tempts us.
10. Whenever science and sacred scripture conflict, *science* is probably right.
11. The fundamentals of God's religion should never be tampered with, or compromised with others' beliefs.
12. *All* of the religions in the world have flaws and wrong teachings. There is *no* perfectly true, right religion.

Moral Foundations Questionnaire

Part 1. When you decide whether something is right or wrong, to what extent are the following considerations relevant to your thinking? Please rate each statement using this scale:

- 1= not very relevant
- 2= slightly relevant
- 3= somewhat relevant
- 4= very relevant
- 5= extremely relevant (This is one of the most important factors when judge right and wrong)

1. Whether or not someone suffered emotionally
2. Whether or not some people were treated differently than others
3. Whether or not someone's action showed love for his or her country
4. Whether or not someone showed a lack of respect for authority
5. Whether or not someone violated standards of purity and decency
6. Whether or not someone was good at math
7. Whether or not someone cared for someone weak or vulnerable
8. Whether or not someone acted unfairly
9. Whether or not someone did something to betray his or her group
10. Whether or not someone conformed to the traditions of society
11. Whether or not someone did something disgusting
12. Whether or not someone was cruel
13. Whether or not someone was denied his or her rights
14. Whether or not someone showed a lack of loyalty
15. Whether or not an action caused chaos or disorder
16. Whether or not someone acted in a way that God would approve of

Part 2. Please read the following sentences and indicate your agreement or disagreement:

- 1= Strongly disagree
- 2= Slightly disagree
- 3= Neutral
- 4= Slightly agree
- 5= Strongly agree

17. Compassion for those who are suffering is the most crucial virtue.
18. When the government makes laws, the number one principle should be ensuring that everyone is treated fairly.
19. I am proud of my country's history.

20. Respect for authority is something all children need to learn.
21. People should not do things that are disgusting, even if no one is harmed.
22. It is better to do good than to do bad.
23. One of the worst things a person could do is hurt a defenseless animal.
24. Justice is the most important requirement for a society.
25. People should be loyal to their family members, even when they have done something wrong.
26. Men and women each have different roles to play in society.
27. I would call some acts wrong on the grounds that they are unnatural.
28. It can never be right to kill a human being.
29. I think it's morally wrong that rich children inherit a lot of money while poor children inherit nothing.
30. It is more important to be a team player than to express oneself.
31. If I were a soldier and disagreed with my commanding officer's orders, I would obey anyway because that is my duty.
32. Chastity is an important and valuable virtue.

Gender Stereotypes Scale

Please indicate to which extent you agree with the following statements:

- 1= Strongly disagree
- 2=Slightly disagree
- 3= Neutral
- 4= Slightly agree
- 5= Strongly agree

1. Women should not spend money without husband's approval.
2. Virginity is more important for a woman than for a man.
3. Men have more socialization skills,
4. Transgenders have no emotional maturity.
5. It is not fair for a woman to spend money for her parents without getting permission from her husband.
6. Husbands have the right to often force wives to have sex with them even if they are not interested.
7. Men are better at making financial decisions.
8. Transgenders have AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.
9. Women should not laugh louder.
10. A young girl should not be given as much freedom as boys enjoy.
11. Boys need sports activities for their physical and psychological development more than girls.
12. There are only two groups of gender- male and female.
13. It is wrong for a woman to go out after midnight.
14. Long hair for women and short hair for men are the appropriate hairstyles.
15. Women are not as capable of taking risks as men are.
16. A transgender woman can't rear a child like a mother.
17. A woman should not attempt to take up all kinds of typically male tasks.
18. Women should cook and do housework.
19. Men are mentally stronger than women.
20. Transgenders cannot lead a normal life.
21. Women are responsible for raising children.
22. Men are ready to take any risk.
23. Husbands should be more educated than their wives.

The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory

Please indicate to which extent you agree with the following statements:

- 1= Strongly disagree
- 2=Slightly disagree
- 3= Neutral
- 4= Slightly agree
- 5= Strongly agree

1. Women exaggerate problems at work
2. Women are too easily offended
3. Most women interpret innocent remarks as sexist
4. When women lose fairly, they claim discrimination
5. Women seek special favors under guise of equality
6. Feminist are making reasonable demands
7. Feminists are not seeks more power than power than men
8. Women seek power by gaining control over men
9. Few women fail to appreciate all men do for them
10. A good woman should be set on a pedestal
11. Women should be cherished and protected by men
12. In a disaster, women need not to be rescued first
13. Women have a superior moral sensibility
14. Women have a quality of purity few men possess
15. Women have a more refined sense of culture, taste
16. Every man ought to have a woman he adores
17. Men are complete without women
18. Despite accomplishment, men are incomplete with women
19. People are often happy without heterosexual romance

The Modern Sexism Scale

Please indicate to which extent you agree with the following statements:

- 1= Strongly disagree
- 2=Slightly disagree
- 3= Neutral
- 4= Slightly agree
- 5= Strongly agree

1. Women are generally not as smart as men
2. I would be equally as comfortable having a woman or a man as a boss
3. It is more important to encourage boys than to encourage gurls to participate in athletics
4. Women are just as capable of thinking logically as men
5. When both parents are employed and their child gets sick at school, the school should call the mother rather than the father
6. Women often miss out on good jobs due to sexual discrimination
7. It is rare to see women treated in a sexist manner on television
8. Society has reached the point where women and men have equal opportunities for achievement
9. It is easy to understand the anger of women's groups in America
10. Over the past few years, the government and news media have been showing more concern about the treatment of women than is warranted by women's actual experiences
11. Discrimination against women is no longer a problem in the United States
12. On average, people in our society treat husbands and wives equally
13. It is easy to understand why women's groups are still concerned about societal limitations of women's opportunities

Gender Inclusive Rape Myth Acceptance Scale

Please indicate to which extent you agree with the following statements:

- 1= Strongly disagree
- 2=Slightly disagree
- 3= Neutral
- 4= Slightly agree
- 5= Strongly agree

1. If a woman's boss demands she have sex with him and she complies, it's not rape
2. Only gay and bisexual men deal with rape
3. Real men can defend themselves against being raped
4. If a man becomes physiologically aroused while being raped, he must actually enjoy it
5. If both people are drunk, it can't really be rape
6. Rape usually happens when a man is sexually frustrated
7. Someone who is transgender would probably lie about being raped
8. People who don't strictly identify as men or women rarely experience rape
9. A lot of what is called "rape" today is just a misunderstanding
10. When transgender people are raped, it's not serious
11. If someone is raped and is transgender it probably doesn't affect them very much
12. If a transgender person is raped after someone finds out they're transgender, they are partly to blame for not identifying themselves as transgender sooner
13. Adult men do not experience rape
14. Real rape leaves some kind of physical mark
15. Someone who is transgender is probably more likely to commit rape
16. If a gay man is raped by another man, it won't impact him
17. It's only rape if a woman is penetrated by a man
18. If a woman makes the first sexual advance, she is consenting to another sexual activity

Danielle Elizabeth Wetuski

700 University Drive, Prairie View, Texas 77446
Ddobyanski1@pvamu.edu

CURRICULUM VITA**EDUCATION**

- Doctorate, Juvenile Justice, Prairie View A&M University, Prairie View, Texas, 2024
- Masters, General Psychology, Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, Texas, 2018
- Bachelors, Psychology, Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, Texas, 2016

EXPERIENCE

- Blinn College
Faculty Psychology Professor
Professing for Statistics and General Psychology
- Prairie View A&M University
Research Assistant/ Graduate Professor
Conducting Research
- Blinn College
Blinn Academic Adviser
Teaching GED Courses
- Lone Star College
Adjunct Psychology Instructor
Teaching Psychology Courses

PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS AND PUBLICATIONS

- “Force Feeding in Mauritania”
- “An Examination of the Relation between Religiosity and Decision Making”
- “Religious Orientation and Moral Foundations”