EFFECT OF PERPETRATOR AND VICTIM ETHNICITY IN PERCEPTION OF SEXUAL ASSAULT: IS IT STEREOTYPING?

by

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Abstract

Previous research examining the role of ethnicity in rape perception has primarily found that African-American perpetrators and victims are perceived more negatively than their Euro-Caucasian equivalents. These ethnic effects have largely been attributed to the hypersexual stereotype of African-Americans. This study is the first to test the stereotyping mechanism by comparing the perception of Euro-Caucasian perpetrator and victim to those of a hypo-sexualized ethnic group, the Chinese. 787 undergraduate students read and evaluated a vignette depicting sexual assault where the ethnicity of the perpetrator and victim were manipulated to be either Chinese or Euro-Caucasian. Our results indicated that Chinese and Euro-Caucasian victims were not viewed differently. Chinese participants also did not judge the Chinese and Euro-Caucasian perpetrator dissimilarly. In contrast, Euro-Caucasian participants deemed the Chinese perpetrator as more guilty than the Euro-Caucasian perpetrator when both were depicted as committing the exact same sexual assault. This finding is in stark contrast to what the stereotyping mechanism predicted and is instead consistent with another phenomenon: in-group bias. It appears that unfair treatment in the context of sexual assault does not solely affect visible minorities that are hypersexually stereotyped and cannot be buffered by benign sexual stereotypes. Future research in sexual assault perception should be encouraged by this study to explore outside of the stereotyping explanatory model for additional causes of ethnic effects on rape perception.
Preface

This study was designed by me, with supervision from Dr. Boris Gorzalka. I implemented and coordinated the study. Data collection was conducted by my research assistants and I.

This project was approved by the UBC Behavioural Research Ethics Board. Certificate number: H08-01518.
# Table of Contents

Abstract................................................................................................................................. ii

Preface................................................................................................................................. iii

Table of Contents .................................................................................................................. iv

List of Figures ....................................................................................................................... vi

Acknowledgements .............................................................................................................. vii

Dedication ............................................................................................................................. viii

1. Introduction ....................................................................................................................... 1
   1.1 The nature of sexual assault ......................................................................................... 1
   1.2 Extraevidential factors involved in sexual assault perception .................................... 2
   1.3 The role of ethnicity in sexual assault perception ...................................................... 3
       1.3.1 Perpetrator Ethnicity ......................................................................................... 3
       1.3.2 Victim Ethnicity ............................................................................................... 5
   1.4 Stereotyping: the predominant explanation for the effect of ethnicity in sexual assault perception ........................................................................................................ 7
   1.5 Testing the stereotyping mechanism in sexual assault perception .......................... 9
   1.6 Hypotheses .................................................................................................................. 11
       1.6.1 Primary Hypotheses ..................................................................................... 11
       1.6.2 Secondary Hypotheses .................................................................................. 11

2. Method .............................................................................................................................. 13
   2.1 Participants ................................................................................................................. 13
   2.2 Stimulus materials .................................................................................................... 14
   2.3 Measures .................................................................................................................... 15
       2.3.1 Demographics ............................................................................................... 15
       2.3.2 Manipulation Check ...................................................................................... 16
       2.3.3 Assessment of perpetrator culpability .......................................................... 16
       2.3.4 Assessment of victim attitude ....................................................................... 18
   2.4 Procedure .................................................................................................................. 19

3. Results ............................................................................................................................. 21
   3.1 Overview of statistical analyses .............................................................................. 21
   3.2 Assumptions testing ................................................................................................. 21
   3.3 MANOVA results ..................................................................................................... 22
   3.4 ANOVA results ......................................................................................................... 23
       3.4.1 Assumptions testing ..................................................................................... 23
List of Figures

Figure 3.1 Interaction effect between participant gender and participant ethnicity for perpetrator culpability ................................................................. 24

Figure 3.2 Interaction effect between participant ethnicity and perpetrator ethnicity for perpetrator culpability. ................................................................. 25

Figure 3.3 Interaction effect between participant ethnicity and participant ethnicity for attitudes toward victim. ................................................................. 26
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Dedication

Dedicated to the courageous sexual assault survivors all over the world
1. Introduction

1.1 The nature of sexual assault

Sexual assault is a crime of epic proportions. In what is considered one of the most comprehensive and representative rape studies to date, Koss (1985) reported that 27.5% of American female college students had experienced an act that met the legal definitions of completed or attempted rape in the last 12 months. More recent studies focusing solely on acquaintance rape occurring on college campuses have reported incidences from 18% to 21% (Brener, McMahon, & Warren, 1999; Sanders & Moore, 1999; Gidycz et al., 2001). Similar incidence rates have been reported off campus (Calhoun & Atkeson, 1991). In Canada, the latest report released by Statistics Canada (2011) in 2010 revealed a 5% increase in the incidence of reported sexual assault, in contrast to the declines observed in most types of crimes.

Rape not only affects many, it affects deeply. The aftermath of rape is devastating for many victims. Compared to non-victims, rape victims are at a higher risk of developing major depression (Burnam et al., 1998; Koss, Bailey, Herrera, & Lichter, 2003), dysthmia (Dickinson, Gruy, Dickinson, & Candib, 1999), Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (Dickinson, deGruy, Dickinson, & Candib, 1998; Saunders, Villeponteaux, Lipovsky, Kilpatrick, & Veronen, 1992), sexual dysfunctions (Ellis, Calhoun, & Atkeson, 1980; Miller, Williams, & Bernstein, 1982) and poor self-esteem (Murphy et al., 1988). Despite its gravity, rape is an underreported crime (Koss, 1992; Martin, Warfield, & Braen, 1983). According to the self-reported victimization data from the most recent General Social Survey in Canada, approximately 90% of sexual assaults were never brought to the attention of the police (Perreault & Brennan, 2010). Such reluctance to
report is problematic, leading to greater difficulty in bringing rapists to justice and underestimation of the incidence of rape (Post, Mezey, Maxwell, & Wibert, 2002).

Inaccurate perceptions of rape and rape victims have been found to hinder both rape recovery and reporting (Holzman, 1996; Mazelan, 1980; Neville & Pugh, 1997; Wyatt, 1992). Although the nature of rape has been delineated by research and defined by the law, perception of rape remains vulnerable to factors external to the rape itself.

1.2 Extraevidential factors involved in sexual assault perception

There is a considerable body of research examining the relationship between the effects of victim and/or perpetrator characteristics on sexual assault perception. In 1973, Jones and Aronson published the first study of this kind. In their study, participants consisting predominantly of college students were randomly assigned to read one of several versions of a vignette depicting rape. The different versions diverged only with respect to the virginity and marital status of the victim: never married/virgin, married/non-virgin and divorced/non-virgin. After reading the rape depiction, participants rated the level of blame they believed the victim and perpetrator each deserved. Blame ratings across different vignette versions were then compared to one another. In this study, Jones and Aronson (1973) found that participants attributed more blame to the victim when she was depicted as married or a virgin than if she were a divorcee. These results ignited a succession of studies with the aim of examining other victim and perpetrator characteristics. These studies typically have followed the methodology originally employed by Jones and Aronson (1973).

With respect to victim characteristics, research thus far has found that the victim is blamed more when depicted as dressing provocatively (Whatley, 2005; Workman & Freeburg, 1999), as male (Davies, Rogers, & Whitelegg, 2009), as gay (Gerber, Cronin, &
Steigman, 2004) and as physically attractive (Calhoun, Selby, Cann, & Keller, 1978; McCaul, Veltum, Boyechko, & Crawford, 1990). Research has also identified numerous characteristics that shape perpetrator perception. Specifically, perpetrators are found more culpable for the assault when depicted as physically larger (Ryckman, Graham, Thorton, Gold, & Lindner, 1998), as physically unattractive (Bagby, Parker, Rector, & Kalembe, 1994; Erian, Lin, Patel, Neal, & Geiselman, 1998), as of lower socioeconomic status (Black & Gold, 2008), and as motivated by violence, rather than sex (Mitchell, Angelone, Kohlberger, & Hirschman, 2009).

1.3 The role of ethnicity in sexual assault perception

A significant portion of studies investigating the effect of perpetrator and victim characteristics on sexual assault perception has focused on ethnicity. Both victim and perpetrator ethnicity have been found to play important roles.

1.3.1 Perpetrator Ethnicity

Studies of the effect of perpetrator ethnicity on sexual assault perception have predominantly focused on comparisons between Euro-Caucasian and African-American perpetrators (Bagby, Parker, Rector, & Kalembe, 1994; Bullock, 1961; Donovan, 2007; Feild, 1979; Johnson, 1957; Foley, Evancic, Karnik, King, & Parks, 1995; LaFree, 1980a; Pfeifer & Ogloff, 1991; Rector, Bagby, & Nicholson, 1993; Ugwuegbu, 1979; Varelas & Foley, 1998; Willis, 1992; Wolfgang & Riedel, 1975). These studies have all been conducted in the United States, except for two from Canada (Bagby, Parker, Rector, & Kalembe, 1994; Rector, Bagby, & Nicholson, 1993). Four studies examined archival data obtained from prison, police, prosecution and court records and found that in general African-American perpetrators were more likely to be given the death penalty (Johnson, 1957) and when their victim was Euro-Caucasian, they were also more likely to receive more serious charges and have their cases filed as felonies, compared to Euro-
Caucasian perpetrators (LaFree, 1980a; Wolfgang & Riedel, 1975). Additionally, Bullock (1961) found that with respect to inter-racial rape, African-American perpetrators were blamed more than Euro-Caucasian perpetrators. Findings from these archival studies have to be considered with caution as they are quite old and thus may not generalize to the present.

Studies that manipulated perpetrator ethnicity either utilized the vignette design first employed by Jones and Aronson (1973) (Donovan, 2007; Foley, Evancic, Karnik, King, & Parks, 1995; Varelas & Foley, 1998) or set up a mock jury design either by asking participants to view a videotape or read a transcript of a sexual assault trial (Feild, 1979; Pfeifer & Ogloff, 1991; Rector, Bagby, & Nicholson, 1993; Ugwuegbu, 1979; Willis, 1992). All of these experiments assessed sexual assault perception by written questionnaires, except for one mock jury study where, to better simulate trial procedures, participants first individually decided on an ‘innocent’ or ‘guilty’ vote and then deliberated with eleven other participants to reach a final group verdict (Ugwuegbu, 1979). Participants of these studies were either solely or predominantly Euro-Caucasian.

Overall, these studies have found that when the perpetrator is portrayed as African-American instead of Caucasian, he is viewed more negatively. Specifically, the African-American perpetrator is more likely to be judged as guilty (Donovan, 2007; Pfeifer & Ogloff, 1991; Rector, Bagby, & Nicholson, 1993; Ugwuegbu, 1979; Varelas & Foley, 1998,) and sentenced for a longer prison term (Feild, 1979). The degree to which the African-American perpetrator was perceived more negatively was moderated by participant gender (Donovan, 2007), victim ethnicity (Donovan, 2007; Feild, 1979), presence of judicial instructions (Rector, Bagby, & Nicholson, 1993) and strength of evidence (Ugwuegbu, 1979) so that it was more apparent when the participant was male (Donovan, 2007), judicial instructions were absent
(Rector, Bagby, & Nicholson, 1993) and the evidence against the perpetrator was tenuous (Ugwuegbu, 1979). Divergent results were observed with respect to victim ethnicity with Feild (1979), Wolfgang and Riedel (1975) and Ugwuegbu (1979) finding the perception of African-American perpetrator more negatively when the victim was depicted as Euro-Caucasian but the opposite trend was observed by Donovan (2007) and Pfeifer and Ogloff (1991). In addition to influencing perception of the perpetrator, Varelas and Foley (1998) found that perpetrator ethnicity affected how the victim is viewed. When the perpetrator was African-American, instead of Euro-Caucasian, participants were more likely to think the victim should report the incident to authorities and not be held responsible for the assault. In contrast, three studies found no effect of perpetrator ethnicity on perpetrator or victim perception (Bagby Parker, Rector, & Kalemba, 1994; Foley et al., 1995; Willis, 1992).

In addition to this body of literature that compares the perception of African-American and Euro-Caucasian perpetrators, single studies have been conducted to evaluate how perpetrators of other ethnic minorities are perceived. Using a mock jury design, Pfeifer and Ogloff (2003) observed in their study that French and Aboriginal Canadian perpetrators were found guiltier than their English–speaking Canadian counterparts. Alternatively, no difference in perception emerged when perpetrators of Latino and Caucasian ethnicity were compared in a study by Jimenez and Abreu (2003).

1.3.2 Victim Ethnicity

All of the investigations on the role of perpetrator ethnicity in sexual assault perception simultaneously examined victim ethnicity by similarly manipulating the stimulus material (Donovan, 2007; Feild, 1979; Foley et al., 1995; Pfeifer & Ogloff, 1991; Rector, Bagby, & Nicholson, 1993; Ugwuegbu, 1979; Varelas & Foley, 1998; Willis, 1992). As a result, most of
the research on victim ethnicity and sexual assault perception focuses on comparing African-American and Euro-Caucasian victim perception. One study that solely examined the effect of victim ethnicity also compared between these two ethnicities (Miller, Moeller, Kaufman, Divasto, & Christy, 1978). This study, much like the others, was conducted in the United States and used a mock jury design.

Together, these experiments converge on the finding that African-American victims are judged unfairly, compared to Euro-Caucasian victims, which parallels the overall conclusion of the perpetrator perception research. Specifically, when portrayed as African-American, the victim is more likely to be perceived as promiscuous (Donovan, 2007), dishonest, accountable for the assault (Willis, 1992) as well as less likely to be considered a genuine rape victim and advised to report her assault to authorities (Foley et al., 1995). The extent to which African-American victims are deemed more negatively than their Euro-Caucasian counterparts seems to depend on participant gender, participant ethnicity and perpetrator race so that it was more apparent when the participant is male (Donovan, 2007), Euro-Caucasian (Miller et al., 1978) and the perpetrator is Euro-Caucasian (Willis, 1992; Donovan, 2007). The effect of victim ethnicity is also evident in perpetrator perception so that when the victim is described as African-American, the perpetrator is found less culpable (Foley et al., 1995; Pfeifer & Ogloff, 1991; Ugwuegbu, 1979), given a lighter sentence (Feild, 1979) and his actions are viewed as more acceptable (Foley et al., 1995). In contrast to these findings, Rector and colleagues (1993) did not find victim ethnicity to influence victim or perpetrator perception.

In addition to these studies where the victim ethnicity was manipulated, LaFree (1980b) conducted the only archival study exploring the effect of victim ethnicity and found comparable results. When LaFree (1980b) examined the likelihood of guilty pleas and verdicts for 124 rape
cases filed in criminal court of a large United States city, he found that African-American victims were less likely to have their complaints come to trial and result in conviction.

Similar to the literature on perpetrator perception, research comparing victims of other ethnic minorities to Euro-Caucasian victims remain scant. Jimenez and Abreu (2003) conducted the only study to date that evaluates the perception of Latina and Euro-Caucasian victims and found that Euro-Caucasian women showed greater sympathy for the rape victim than Latina women only when the victim was described as Euro-Caucasian in the vignette. Two studies have investigated the perception of French-Canadian and English-Canadian victims. Bagby and Rector (1992) found that when the victim was French-Canadian rather than English-Canadian, the English-Canadian perpetrator was more likely to be found guilty. In a study by Pfeifer and Ogloff (2003), where both French-Canadian and Aboriginal-Canadian victims were compared with an English-Canadian victim, participants were more likely to find the perpetrator accountable if the victim was portrayed as French- or English-Canadian, as opposed to Native-Canadian.

1.4 Stereotyping: the predominant explanation for the effect of ethnicity in sexual assault perception

Although various hypotheses have been put forth to explain the documented ethnic effect in sexual assault perception, ethnic stereotypes is by far the most favored. Stereotypes are defined as beliefs about the characteristics and behaviors of members of certain groups. They can also be theories about how and why certain attributes go together in a given group of people (Hilton & von Hippel, 1996). It is important to note that stereotypes are not necessarily negative in nature, despite their colloquial usage (Hilton & von Hippel, 1996; Sommers & Norton, 2008). Stereotyping is a well-documented phenomenon and has been extensively studied in many niches of social psychology research. It has consistently been found to be a key influence on human
thinking and behavior, with effects ranging from the benign, like the elderly stereotype slowing
down walking speed (Bargh, Chen, & Burrows, 1996) to the alarming, like the criminal
 stereotype used to justify the unofficial policy and practice of racial profiling by law enforcement
officers (Welch, 2007). Stereotyping not only affects how individuals perceive others but also
how they perceive themselves, as evident by the growing literature on stereotype threat (Nguyen
& Ryan, 2008).

Given the pervasive effect of stereotyping, it is not surprising that the effect of ethnicity
in sexual assault perception has been attributed to it. Most researchers in this area believe that
unfair biases exhibited towards African-American victims and perpetrators are the product of
negative stereotypes regarding their sexuality (Donovan, 2007; Feild, 1979; Foley et al, 1995;
Willis, 1992). Common stereotypes portray African-American individuals as excessively sexual
compared to Euro-Caucasian individuals (Cowan & Campbell, 1995; Sapp, Farrell, Johnson, &
Hitchcock, 1999).

Specifically, African-American males have been stereotyped to be genitally over-
endowed, animalistic in sexual appetite, and sexual predators of Euro-Caucasian women
(Collins, 1990; Wyatt, 1992). The origin of this stereotype can be traced back to slavery when it
was used to control sexual relations between African-American men and Euro-Caucasian women
(Davis, 1983). Such hypersexual stereotyping of African-American men is postulated to have
produced the harsher perception of African-American perpetrators.

The Jezebel stereotype, which is often used to depict African-American women (Collins,
2000; Donovan & Williams, 2002), conjures the image of a sensuous, lustful, hypersexual and
promiscuous woman (Donovan & Williams, 2002; McNair & Neville, 1996). African-American
women mythically are “unrapeable” because of their wanton, chronically promiscuous nature (White, Strube, & Fisher, 1998, p. 159). This stereotype has a longstanding history in North America. During slavery, the Jezebel stereotype was used as justification for the sexual atrocities forced on African-American women. Today, the Jezebel stereotype is still present in the portrayal of African women, evidenced in movies, music lyrics, magazines and pornography (Collins, 2000; Donovan & Williams, 2002). This stereotype is thought to cause the negative bias against African-American victims, as studies have reliably demonstrated that perceived victim promiscuity increases victim-blaming. For example, engaging in sexually provocative behavior, having an active sexual history, going to the perpetrator’s home, and wearing revealing clothing have been found to increase blame attributed to rape victims (Kanekar & Kolsawalla, 1981; LaFree, Reskin, & Visher, 1985; Schult & Schneider, 1991).

The stereotyping mechanism has also been applied to explain the prejudiced view towards victims of other ethnic minorities. For instance, Jimenez and Abreu (2003) believed that stereotyping of Latina women as sexually passionate and flirtatious resulted in Euro-Caucasian female participants being less sympathetic with Latina rape victims.

1.5 Testing the stereotyping mechanism in sexual assault perception

Although previous findings of ethnic effect in sexual assault perception have largely been attributed to stereotyping, this explanatory framework has not been directly tested. According to the stereotyping explanation, an opposite trend of results should appear when a minority ethnic group that is hyposexually stereotyped is compared with their Euro-Caucasian counterparts in the context of sexual assault. That is, the minority ethnic group would be predicted to be viewed more positively. The aim of this study is to test this hypothesis. In order to do so, I compared the perception of Euro-Caucasian perpetrator and victim with Chinese perpetrator and victim, as
Chinese individuals, contrary to the previously studied minority ethnic groups, are hyposexually stereotyped.

During the early nineteenth century, the yellow peril stereotype distorted the Chinese to be “a horde of depraved, uncivilized heathens who threatened to undermine the American way of life” (Suzuki, 2002, p. 21). At this time Chinese women became stereotyped as sexually seductive temptresses (Mok, 1998) and Chinese men as rapists of Euro-Caucasian women (Sun, 2003). However, these stereotypes have changed dramatically. In the 1960’s, the media constructed the model minority stereotype (Lee, 1996), characterizing the Chinese as diligent, intelligent, self-sufficient, academically and professionally successful and law-abiding citizens relatively free from personal problems (Lee, Wong, & Alvarez, 2009; Taylor & Stern, 1997; Wu, 2002). This stereotype is arguably the most pervasive and dominant regarding the Chinese people today (Kawai, 2005; Wong, Owen, Tran, Collins, & Higgins, 2012). Several studies have demonstrated that compared with other ethnic groups, East Asians, including the Chinese, are perceived to be intelligent, achievement-oriented, hardworking and serious about work (Gilbert, Carr-Ruffino, Ivancevich, & Lownes-Jackson, 2003; Jackson, Lewandowski, Ingram, & Hodge, 1997). Although deceptively flattering on the surface, the model minority stereotype is not entirely positive as it contains a subtext of docility and passivity (Kawai, 2005; Okihiro, 1994). After the introduction of the model minority stereotype, the sexual stereotypes of the Chinese transformed accordingly. Currently, the Chinese are stereotyped to be a hyposexual people (Eglash, 2002). Specifically, Chinese men are typified as nerdy, frail, effeminate and without adequate sexual drive (Chen, 1999; Eglash, 2002; Holtzman, 2000; Lee, 1996; Moy, 1993) and Chinese women are characterized as sexually passive, shy, and quiet (Mok, 1998; Shah, 2003; Sun, 2003).
1.6 Hypotheses

1.6.1 Primary Hypotheses

In this study, we asked Chinese and Euro-Caucasian undergraduate students to read and evaluate a vignette depicting acquaintance rape in which the perpetrator and victim ethnicity were manipulated to be either Chinese or Euro-Caucasian. Given the sexuality of Chinese individuals is stereotyped in the opposite direction as that of African-American individuals, we predicted Chinese perpetrator and victim would be perceived more positively than their Euro-Caucasian counterparts. Specifically, we hypothesized that: (1) when the perpetrator is portrayed as Chinese, instead of Euro-Caucasian, he would be held less accountable for his actions and (2) when the victim is portrayed as Chinese, instead of Euro-Caucasian, she would be perceived more positively.

1.6.2 Secondary Hypotheses

As research has consistently demonstrated, perception of sexual assault is subject to the influence of observer characteristics. Sex of the perceiver has consistently been found to influence attitudes toward both the victim and perpetrator. Almost all studies have documented that, compared to men, women assign less blame and exhibit more positive attitudes toward the rape victim (e.g. Clark & Stermac, 2011; Grubb & Harrower, 2008; White & Yamawaki, 2009) as well as attribute more responsibility and hold more negative attitudes toward the perpetrator (e.g. Basow & Minieri, 2011; Clark & Stermac, 2011; Hammond, Berry, & Rodriguez, 2011). Given this general convergence in previous literature, (3) we hypothesize that female participants will perceive the perpetrator more negatively and the victim more positively than male participants.

In addition to observer sex, observer ethnicity has also been found to affect sexual assault perception. Research comparing East-Asian and Euro-Caucasian individuals has found that East-
Asians tend to view the perpetrator more positively and the victim more negatively (Kennedy & Gorzalka, 2002; Lee, Pomeroy, Yoo, & Rheinboldt, 2005; Mori, Bernat, Glenn, Selle, & Zarate, 1995). Accordingly, (4) we hypothesize such differences in perpetrator and victim perception between the Chinese and Euro-Caucasian participants.
2. Method

2.1 Participants

In total, 1821 Canadian undergraduate students participated in this study. To improve interpretation clarity, only responses from Euro-Caucasian and Chinese participants were analyzed. 661 participants that identified themselves as being of other ethnicities were not included in the data analyses. Additionally, four participants were excluded due to incorrect responses to the manipulation check and 277 participants were excluded due to missing data. Furthermore, in order to create a balanced MANOVA design, we randomly dropped participants, using a random number generator, from the larger cells until the ratio of the largest to smallest cell size was within a ratio of 1.5 (Leech, Barrett, & Morgan, 2005). A total of 96 participants were dropped.

The final sample comprised of 787 participants, of which 49.7% were Chinese (n = 391) and 50.3% were Euro-Caucasian (n = 396). Most participants, at 52.7%, were born in Canada, followed by 12.3% born in China and 9.7% born in Hong Kong. The remaining 25.2% of participants were born in 27 different countries and regions. With respect to length of residency in Canada, the study participants varied widely from 0.13 years to 43 years (M = 15.40, SD = 7.59). Furthermore, there were more women in our sample with 448 (57%) women and 338 (43%) men. Participant age spanned from 18 to 45 years, with a mean of 21.14 years (SD = 3.2). Length of formal education ranged from 12 to 23 years (M = 14.87, SD = 1.55). Moreover, the mean annual household income among the participants was $98 276.76 (SD = $123 300).

Overall, participants rated their English comprehension ability as excellent with a mean score of 4.78 (SD = 0.53) on a measure ranging from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent). Finally, participant sexual orientation was assessed by the Kinsey Scale (Kinsey, Pomeroy, & Martin, 1948). Using this
seven-point scale, 67% of participants identified themselves as exclusively heterosexual and 3% as exclusively homosexual. The remaining 30% declared their sexual orientation as falling somewhere were in between

2.2 Stimulus materials

Based on the African-American/Euro-Caucasian sexual assault vignette developed by Varelas and Foley (1998), four versions of a sexual assault vignette were generated for this study: (a) Chinese perpetrator and victim, (b) Chinese perpetrator and Euro-Caucasian victim, (c) Euro-Caucasian perpetrator and victim, and (d) Euro-Caucasian perpetrator and Chinese victim. All four versions were identical except the names and physical depictions of the involved parties were systematically varied to manipulate race. The vignette read as follows:

Lingming/Linda, a Linguistics major, is a Chinese/Caucasian female of average height and weight. She has long black/blonde hair and dark brown/light blue eyes. She likes to be involved in many school activities, one of which is vice-president for the Linguistics Students’ Association. Lingming/Linda was walking back to her dorm from class one afternoon when she bumped into Shane/Szeyang. Shane/Szeyang, also a Linguistics major, is a Caucasian/Chinese male of average height and built. He has short blonde/black hair and deep green/dark brown eyes. He is also very involved with this university and has planned many events for the student body. Lingming/Linda recognized Shane/Szeyang from the Linguistics Student’s Association ice-breaker last week and started talking to him. They had a great conversation and found out that they had a lot in common. They were even living in the same dorm building, just a floor away from each other. Shane/Szeyang and Lingming/Linda decided to walk back to the dorm together since they were both going the same way. When they arrived at Lingming’s/Linda’s door, Lingming/Linda invited Shane/Szeyang in so they could continue talking. After a few
hours of talking and laughing together, Lingming/Linda popped in a movie on her laptop and they started watching the movie together on her bed. Soon after the movie started, Lingming/Linda and Shane/Szeyang both leaned in for a kiss, which led to a long make-out session and heavy petting through the clothes. At this point, Shane/Szeyang started taking off Lingming’s/Linda’s dress. Lingming/Linda asked Shane/Szeyang to stop, gently at first, then vigorously while pushing his hands away. Shane/Szeyang, however, continued. At the end of their encounter, Shane/Szeyang forced Lingming/Linda to have sex with him.

We used the vignette by Varelas and Foley (1998) as a template for our vignette to facilitate comparison across studies. Whatley (1996) proposed that one possible cause for discrepant findings in sexual assault perception research is the inconsistency of the vignettes used by researchers. For example, Bolt and Caswell (1981) used a vignette where the assault occurred late at night in a wooded park; Tetreault and Barnett (1987) used a vignette where the victim was assaulted in her basement apartment; and Wiener and Vodanovich (1986) used a vignette where the victim was assaulted in a deserted stairwell. Since it was unfeasible to model our vignette after all the distinct vignettes used in previous research, we chose the one by Varelas and Foley (1998) as our template as it has been similarly used by recent studies (e.g. Jimenez & Abreu, 2003) and the article is commonly cited in the literature.

2.3 Measures

2.3.1 Demographics

The demographics section (see Appendix A) enquired about participant sex, age, ethnicity, country of birth, educational level, household income, and sexual orientation.
2.3.2 Manipulation Check

To test if participants accurately recognized the ethnicity of the victim and perpetrator in the vignette, a manipulation check was included. It entailed six questions regarding the two vignette characters: their ethnicity, their major in university, how they met, and to where they walked. See Appendix B for the manipulation check.

2.3.3 Assessment of perpetrator culpability

Participant empathy and attributions of responsibility towards the perpetrator was measured using the Rape Empathy Scale (RES) constructed by Deitz, Blackwell, Daley and Bentley (1982). The RES is a 19-item instrument composed of paired statements reflecting empathy or blame with either a victim or perpetrator. The following is an example RES item: “A. In a court of law, I feel that the rapist must be held accountable for his behavior during the rape. B. In a court of law, I feel that the rape victim must be held accountable for her behavior during the rape.” Participants were asked to circle the statement they agreed with more and to indicate on a 7-point, Likert-type scale the degree to which they agree with that statement over the other. A higher RES score indicates stronger empathy and less blame for the perpetrator.

Deitz and colleagues (1982) reported that RES possessed acceptable internal consistency with coefficient alpha for five samples of undergraduates at Colorado State University (total N = 769 males and 716 females) ranging from 0.80 and 0.86. Coefficient alpha varied from 0.86 and 0.89 for two samples of prospective jurors in Larimer County, Colorado (total N = 202 females and 174 males). Deitz and colleagues (1982) also collected validity data that demonstrated the RES differentiated between male and female empathy toward rape victims and rapists, between women who have experienced attempted or completed rape and those who have not, and between participants who imposed a harsh or lenient sentence for the defendant in a hypothetical
rape case. In addition, Deitz and colleagues (1982) noted that jurors who scored lower on the RES expressed less support for the instalment of a marital rape law in Colorado and for the Women’s Movement, compared to jurors with higher RES scores. Moreover, RES scores correlated ($r = 0.28$ to $0.43$) with scores on the Attitudes Toward Women Scale (Spence, Helmreich, & Stapp, 1973) and not ($r = 0.08$ for males and $-0.10$ for females) with scores on the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (Crowne & Marlowe, 1964). Together, these findings indicate that the RES possesses acceptable reliability, convergent validity, discriminant validity and predictive validity.

RES was modified for the purpose of this study so that the perpetrator’s name was inserted in the scale where the word “rapist” or “man” would normally appear. For example, the RES item “A. If I were a member of the jury in a rape trial, I would probably be more likely to believe the woman’s testimony than the man’s, since it takes a lot of courage on the woman’s part to accuse the man of rape. B. If I were a member of the jury in a rape trial, I would probably be more likely to believe the man’s testimony than the woman’s, since rape is a charge that is difficult to defend against, even if the man is innocent.” was adapted to “A. If I were a member of the jury in a rape trial, I would probably be more likely to believe Linda’s testimony than Szeyang’s, since it takes a lot of courage on Linda’s part to accuse Szeyang of rape. B. If I were a member of the jury in a rape trial, I would probably be more likely to believe Szeyang’s testimony than Linda’s, since rape is a charge that is difficult to defend against, even if Szeyang is innocent.” Moreover, three items concerning content that were not applicable to the sexual assault vignette were omitted from the questionnaire. An example of an excluded item is: “A. I can understand a wife's humiliation and anger if her husband forced her to have sexual relations with him. B. A husband has every right to determine when sexual relations with his wife occur,
even if it means forcing her to have sex with him.” See Appendix C for the amended RES used in this study. Similar scale modifications were performed in previous research examining sexual assault perception. For example, Jimenez and Abreu (2003) also modified the RES in their study comparing Latino and Euro-Caucasian victim and perpetrator. They obtained a coefficient alpha of .82 for their adapted RES, which is comparable to the coefficient alphas obtained by Deitz, Blackwell, Daley, and Bentley (1982). Our revised RES scale had a comparable Cronbach’s alpha of .84.

2.3.4 Assessment of victim attitude

Participants’ overall attitude toward the victim was gauged using the Attitudes Toward Rape Victims Scale (ARVS) created by Ward (1988), which taps into victim responsibility, credibility, denigration and trivialization. The ARVS is a 25-item scale composed of statements to which respondents are instructed to rate their degree of agreement on a 5-point scale. A higher ARVS score indicates more negative attitudes toward the rape victim. The following is an example ARVS item: “A raped woman is usually an innocent victim.”

Ward (1988) reported that the scale possessed acceptable internal consistency with a coefficient alpha of 0.83 for a sample of undergraduate students attending National University of Singapore ($N = 212$ females and 199 males). It also had adequate test-retest reliability ($r = 0.80$) for another sample of undergraduate students from National University of Singapore ($N = 26$ females and 22 males). For the scale’s construct validity, Ward (1988) demonstrated that ARVS differentiated between female and male attitudes toward rape victims and between crisis counsellors’ and police officers’ attitudes in the direction consistent with that previously found by Field (1978). Furthermore, AVRS scores correlated with the following scales: Adversarial Sexual Beliefs ($r = 0.40$), Acceptance of Interpersonal Violence ($r = 0.26$) and Attitudes Toward
Women ($r = -0.60$). Notably, ARVS is so far the only scale that has been applied cross-culturally in the United States, Singapore, Hong Kong and Australia, demonstrating convincing ecological validity (Lee & Cheung, 1991; Ward, 1988; Xenos & Smith, 2001). Cross-cultural validity is especially pertinent for this study as the sample will comprise Euro-Caucasian and Chinese students.

For the purpose of this study, the ARVS was amended in the same way as the RES. Namely, the victim’s name was inserted in the scale where the word “victim” or “woman” would normally appear and items irrelevant to the sexual assault vignette were omitted. Six items in total were excluded. An example of an omitted item is “Intoxicated women are usually willing to have sexual relations.” The Cronbach’s alpha obtained for our revised ARVS was .86. See Appendix D for the modified ARVS used in this study.

### 2.4 Procedure

Participant recruitment was conducted at the University of British Columbia through the Psychology Department’s online Human Subject Pool system that connected studies in active recruitment with undergraduate students interested in participating in research for course credit. To ensure the study’s research aim remained unknown to participants, it was entitled “Perception of a sexual encounter” in the Human Subject Pool system and described without any mention of sexual assault. Study procedures were described to entail reading a vignette depicting a sexual encounter and answering questions regarding it. Participants were also informed of the three inclusion criteria for participation: fluency in English, age 18 or older, and comfort with sexual material.

Students who were interested in participating in this study received a questionnaire package and completed it on their own. All participants were randomly assigned to one of the
four sexual assault vignette conditions. Participants were assured of the confidentiality of their responses and their right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Upon completion, participants returned the questionnaires by placing them in a sealed box. They were then debriefed and awarded course credit in exchange for their participation. No identifying information was collected from the participants at any point in the procedure. All procedures were approved by the UBC Behavioral Research Ethics Board. Participant recruitment commenced in 2008 and ended in 2011.
3. Results

3.1 Overview of statistical analyses

Participants were required to answer at least 80% of the items in each questionnaire (i.e. 15 items for ARVS and 12 items for RES) in order to be included in the data analyses. Based on this inclusion criterion, 276 participants were excluded. One additional participant was excluded due to missing data with respect to gender. For those participants that were included in the analyses, missing value for a particular item was replaced with their mean for the respective measure.

All data analyses were performed using SPSS 17.0. The study’s primary hypotheses were examined using a 2 x 2 x 2 x 2 multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVA) with participant sex, participant ethnicity (Chinese, Euro-Caucasian), perpetrator ethnicity (Chinese, Euro-Caucasian) and victim ethnicity (Chinese, Euro-Caucasian) as independent variables. ARVS and RES scores were the dependent variables.

Statistically significant MANOVA main and interactions effects were followed up with univariate ANOVAs. Since the experiment-wise type I error control provided by the omnibus MANOVA test does not extend to subsequent univariate tests, α for each ANOVA was adjusted to α = .035, to yield a more conservative family-wise error rate while retaining adequate statistical power (R. Hakstian, personal communication, January-February, 2012). Statistically significant main and interactions effects at the univariate ANOVA level were further examined using independent sample t-tests, with α also set at .035.

3.2 Assumptions testing

The assumptions of MANOVA include: 1.) independence of observations 2.) multivariate normality, 3.) homogeneity of variance/covariance matrices (Field, 2005; Leech, Barrett, & Morgan, 2005). The first assumption was satisfied by the experimental design where participants
were recruited independently and instructed to complete their questionnaires individually. With respect to the second and third assumptions, the performed MANOVA was robust to violations of either as we randomly dropped participants from the larger cells, using a random number generator, to ensure that the analyses had cells of nearly equal sizes, (i.e. \( n \) of the largest cell is no more than about 1.5 times the \( n \) of the smallest cell) (Leech, Barrett, & Morgan, 2005).

Although not included as an assumption of MANOVA, the examined dependent variables are expected to be related conceptually and correlated with another at a low to moderate level (Leech, Barrett, & Morgan, 2005). With regard to our study, the first criterion is satisfied as ARVS and RES examine two associated constructs: rape victim attitude and perpetrator culpability, respectively (Ward, 1988; Deitz et al., 1984). However, the second criterion was not met as ARVS and RES scores were too highly correlated in our sample, \( r = .76, p < .001 \). Despite their large correlation, both scales were still included as separate variables instead of as one combined measure since the aim of this study is to examine both perception of the victim and perpetrator. As a result, there is a risk of multicollinearity and our results should be interpreted in light of this.

3.3 MANOVA results

The MANOVA yielded four statistically significant multivariate effects: 1) a main effect for participant sex, Wilk’s \( \lambda = .97, F(2, 769) = 13.44, p < .001 \), multivariate \( \eta^2 = .18 \), 2) a main effect for participant ethnicity, Wilk’s \( \lambda = .77, F(2, 769) = 112.74, p < .001 \), multivariate \( \eta^2 = .48 \). These main effects were qualified by 3) an interaction between participant sex and participant ethnicity, Wilk’s \( \lambda = .98, F(2, 769) = 6.23, p = .002 \), multivariate \( \eta^2 = .13 \) and 4) an interaction between perpetrator ethnicity and participant ethnicity, Wilk’s \( \lambda = .99, F(2, 769) = 3.61, p = .028 \), multivariate \( \eta^2 = .09 \).
3.4 ANOVA results

3.4.1 Assumptions testing

The assumptions of ANOVA include: 1.) independence of observations 2.) univariate normality, 3.) homogeneity of variance. The first assumption was satisfied by the experimental design as previously described. The other two assumptions were tested using Q-Q plots and the Levene's test, respectively. Although Q-Q plots indicated a slight deviation from normality with a slight negative skew, ANOVA is robust to slight deviations from normality. The homogeneity of variance assumption was satisfied for the RES scores, $F(15, 770) = 1.136, p = .319$, but violated for the ARVS scores, $F(15, 770) = 2.707, p < .001$. Thus, unequal variance t-tests were used to follow up on any statistically significant main and interaction effects for ARVS.

3.4.2 Perpetrator culpability

With respect to perpetrator culpability as assessed by RES, follow-up ANOVA revealed a significant main effect for participant sex, $F(1, 770) = 23.75, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .030$ and for participant ethnicity, $F(1, 770) = 63.38, p < .001, \eta^2_p = 0.076$. These effects were qualified by an interaction between participant sex and participant ethnicity interaction, $F(1, 770) = 11.81, p = .001, \eta^2_p = 0.007$. Simple effects analyses revealed that of the Euro-Caucasian participants, the women ($M = 2.47, SD = 0.80$), held the perpetrator more culpable than the men ($M = 2.99, SD = 0.911$), $t(394) = 6.09, p < .001, d = 0.61$ (see Figure 1). However, for the Chinese participants, the men ($M = 3.30, SD = 0.91$) and women ($M = 3.21, SD = 0.96$) did not differ in degree of blame towards the perpetrator, $t(388) = 0.91, p = .36$. 
The main effect of participant ethnicity was also qualified by an interaction between participant ethnicity and perpetrator ethnicity, $F(1, 770) = 7.21, p = .007, \eta^2_p = 0.009$. Simple effects analyses indicated that among the Euro-Caucasian participants, more responsibility was attributed to the Chinese perpetrator ($M = 2.59, SD = 0.86$) than to the Euro-Caucasian perpetrator ($M = 2.79, SD = 0.90$), $t(394) = 2.17, p = .03, d = 0.22$ (see Figure 2). However, the Chinese participants did not differ in the amount of culpability assigned to the Chinese and Euro-Caucasian perpetrators, $t(389) = -1.48, p = .14, d = -0.15$. 
3.4.3 Attitudes toward the victim

In terms of attitudes towards the victim, as gauged by ARVS, follow-up ANOVA indicated a significant main effect of participant sex, $F(1, 770) = 22.52, p < .001, \eta^2_p = 0.028$. This was qualified by an interaction between participant sex and participant ethnicity, $F(1, 770) = 9.25, p = .002, \eta^2_p = 0.012$. Levene’s test indicated unequal variances, $F(1, 394) = 12.42, p < .001$) in Euro-Caucasian participants, so degrees of freedom were adjusted from 394 to 315. Unequal variance t-tests revealed that for Euro-Caucasian participants, the men ($M = 1.27, SD = 0.55$) held more negative attitudes toward the victim than the women ($M = 0.97, SD = 0.45$), $t(315) = 5.75, p < .001, d = 0.65$ (see Figure 3). Among the Chinese participants, Levene’s test indicated equal variances, $F(1, 388) = 0.22, p = .64$), the men ($M = 1.73, SD = 0.58$) and women ($M = 1.66, SD = 0.58$) did not differ in their attitudes toward the victim, $t(388) = 1.10, p = .27, d = 0.11$. 

Figure 3.2 Significant participant ethnicity × perpetrator ethnicity interaction for perpetrator culpability.
Figure 3.3 Significant participant ethnicity × perpetrator ethnicity interaction for attitudes toward victim.
4. Discussion

4.1 Effect of observer gender and ethnicity

With respect to observer gender, we predicted female participants would exhibit more positive attitudes toward the victim and more blame toward the perpetrator. For observer ethnicity, we predicted Chinese participants would hold the perpetrator less accountable and perceive the victim more negatively. However, to our surprise we found an interaction between observer gender and ethnicity for both perpetrator and victim perception. Follow-up analyses on these interactions revealed that the predicted gender effects were only present among Euro-Caucasian, and not Chinese participants. That is, Euro-Caucasian women blamed the perpetrator more and viewed the victim more positively than Euro-Caucasian men, while Chinese men and women did not differ in their perception of the perpetrator or victim.

Given that one major caveat of past research on observer gender is that it primarily looked at Euro-Caucasian participants (e.g. Basow & Mineri, 2011; Davies, Rogers, & Whitelegg, 2009; Hammond, Berry, & Rodriguez, 2011), one possible explanation of our results is that the purported pervasive gender effect in sexual assault perception may primarily be an Euro-Caucasian phenomenon and does not translate to other cultures. Our study is the first to examine the effect of gender among Chinese individuals. The absence of gender effect among Chinese participants in this study may highlight the importance of cross-cultural research for determining the scope of a phenomenon.

Research on perceived victim similarity and victim-blaming may inform why this study did not observe the typical gender effects among Chinese participants. Within the current literature on sexual assault perception, which is predominantly based on Euro-Caucasian participants, one common hypothesis put forth to explain the gender effects is that women see
themselves as more similar to the victim. This similarity in turn increases identification and empathy with the victim and thus decreases blame (Krebs, 1975). A host of studies have demonstrated the negative relationship between perceived similarity and victim-blaming (Bell, Kuriloff, & Lottes, 1994; Grubb & Harrower, 2009; Thornton et al., 1988;). The most frequently cited study was conducted by Fulero and DeLara (1976) and asked undergraduate psychology students to read a vignette depicting sexual assault and answer subsequent questions measuring attribution of blame. Three different vignettes were used to manipulate the level of similarity between the victim and participant: the victim was described as either a 20 year old student (high similarity), 50 year old housewife (low similarity), or without any additional information other than a name. Fulero and DeLara (1976) found that women who rated themselves as similar to the victim assigned the least responsibility and those who rated themselves as dissimilar assigned the most. Male participants fell in the middle of these two ends of the spectrum. Additional research has shown that perceived similarity does not necessarily have to stem from overlap in demographics such as age, but can arise from shared attitudes (Thornton et al., 1988).

Applying this body of literature to our study results, it is possible that the disparity in gender effects between Euro-Caucasian and Chinese participants is due to differences in victim similarity between female participants of the two ethnicities. Prior to the assault, the victim was described as inviting a newly acquainted man to her room and engaging in consensual sexual activity (e.g. manual stimulation) with him, which is less likely to be a behavior that the Chinese women would engage in or approve of, given the relative sexual conservatism among Chinese women (Meston, Trapnell, & Gorzalka, 1996; Meston, Trapnell, & Gorzalka, 1998). As a result, the Chinese women in this study may have thought of the victim as fairly dissimilar from themselves, despite their similarity in gender. This may have increased their victim-blaming
tendency and in turn lessened the responsibility assigned to the perpetrator, both to levels similar to the Chinese men’s.

**4.2 Perception of the perpetrator**

Based on the stereotyping mechanism and the hypossexual stereotype of Chinese individuals (Eglash, 2002), we hypothesized that the Chinese perpetrator would be blamed less than his Euro-Caucasian counterpart. We found no support for this hypothesis. Specifically, we observed no effect of perpetrator ethnicity on perception among Chinese participants. Also, in stark contrast to our prediction, Euro-Caucasian participants were found to hold the perpetrator more culpable when he was depicted as Chinese instead of Euro-Caucasian. Stereotyping cannot adequately account for this result.

A better explanation of our finding is in-group bias, defined as the predisposition to confer affinity and special treatment to one’s in-group and negative feelings and unfair treatment to the out-groups (Chatman & von Hippel, 2001). The in-group bias explanation suggests that Euro-Caucasian participants in this study perceived the Euro-Caucasian perpetrator as an in-group member and therefore assigned him less blame, compared to his Chinese counterpart. In-group bias can also account for the absence of perpetrator ethnicity effect among Chinese participants. Given that the Chinese participants were university students and fluent in English, it is likely that they are more acculturated to the mainstream Euro-Caucasian/Western culture than Chinese individuals in the general population. Such acculturation may have led the Chinese participants to make a lesser differentiation of the Euro-Caucasian and Chinese perpetrator into out-group and in-group members and thus judge them similarly.

Not only can in-group bias explain the results of the present study, it can serve as an alternative mechanism for previous findings on ethnicity effects in sexual assault perception.
Perhaps African-American victim and perpetrator were mostly found to be judged more negatively than their Euro-Caucasian counterparts because the participants, who were predominantly or solely Euro-Caucasian in these studies, were exhibiting in-group bias.

Prior to this study, there lacked empirical evidence on how Chinese perpetrators of rape may be perceived in our society. Given that the Chinese is the largest and fastest-growing visible ethnic minority in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2001), such information is especially pertinent. Our finding that more guilt was assigned to a Chinese perpetrator of the same sexual assault as a Euro-Caucasian perpetrator has implications for forensic and legal settings. According to this study, we can expect Chinese perpetrators on trial for sexual assault may be unjustly evaluated by Euro-Caucasian jurors and judges. It appears that unfair treatment in the context of sexual assault does not solely affect those ethnicities that are hypersexually stereotyped and cannot be buffered by benign sexual stereotypes. Results of this study calls for more explicit judicial instructions provided to jurors, which can help reduce the sway of personal biases in the deliberation process (Pfeifer & Ogloff, 1991; Rector & Bagby, 1997).

4.3 Perception of the victim

Our hypothesis regarding the effect of victim ethnicity, like that for the effect of perpetrator ethnicity, was based on the stereotyping explanation and the hyposexual stereotype of Chinese individuals (Eglash, 2002). Specifically, we predicted that attitudes toward the victim would be more positive if she was portrayed as Chinese instead of Euro-Caucasian. However, we found no effect of victim ethnicity.

A closer inspection of the ARVS scores indicates that one possible cause of the null victim ethnicity effect is floor effect. The mean ARVS scores for the four experimental conditions had a restricted range as they all congregated at the lower end of the scale, indicating
that attitudes toward the victim were overall very positive. This likely interfered with our ability to detect differences between conditions and it is possible that we would find divergences in victim attitude if the floor of the scale had not been limited (Kazdin, 1999). RES scores, on the other hand, did not show patterns of a floor or ceiling effect.

One possible reason why we found such positive victim perception is that the study participants were particularly high in liberalism, a trait correlated with positive attitudes toward rape victims (Anderson, Cooper, & Okamura, 1997; Kahlor & Morrison, 2007; Lambert & Raichle, 2000). First, participants in this study comprised university students, who generally have been found to hold more liberal attitudes than the general population (Hastie, 2007; Pascarella, & Terenzini, 1991). In addition, UBC university students may even be more liberal compared to the average university students as they live in a metropolitan city on the coast, where they are likely subject to liberally-inclined social influences (Cutler & Jenkins, 2000; Rentfrow, 2010). From this particularly liberal pool of university students, our study may have recruited the most liberal ones as it was advertised as a study on sexuality (Dunne et al., 1997).

Another reason why we may not have found a victim ethnicity effect is the extraordinary degree of ethnic diversity within the UBC student body. Unlike many other North American universities, the UBC student body is not predominantly Euro-Caucasian. Specifically, the latest statistics released by UBC reported that only 37.8% of first-year students in 2009 were Euro-Caucasian and Chinese was the largest ethnic group at 38.0% (Pendleton, 2010).

Bearing in the mind the multiculturalism of UBC campus, the participants in our study likely have had particularly frequent contact with other ethnicities. Decades of social psychology research would predict that such extensive inter-ethnic contact has effectively reduced their bias against other ethnic groups (Allport, 1954, Page-Gould, Mendoza-Denton, & Tropp, 2008),
especially since conditions that maximize prejudice reduction, such as informal interactions (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2000; Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005) and cooperative learning (Blanchard, Weigel, & Cook, 1975; Johnson & Johnson, 2000) are likely present on university campuses. Thus, compared to the general population, our study participants may have possessed significantly less bias against other ethnicities and judged both the Chinese and Euro-Caucasian victims relatively fairly. An effect of victim ethnicity may be found if this study were to be replicated at more ethnically homogenous or segregated locations.

4.4 Limitations

Results from the present study should be interpreted with the following limitations in mind. First, since this study only examined the perception of Chinese and Euro-Caucasian participants, it sheds little light on how individuals of other ethnicities perceive victims and perpetrators depicted as Chinese or Euro-Caucasian. Also, as previously described, this study was conducted at the University of British Columbia, a university situated in a metropolitan city on the West Coast and unique in its degree of cultural diversity. These characteristics of UBC suggest that the participants in this study may have particularly liberal attitudes and more previous contact with individuals of other ethnic minorities, which have been linked with more accurate perception of sexual assault and less inter-ethnic bias, respectively. As a result, findings of this study may not generalize to the population of Chinese and Euro-Caucasian individuals living in North America. It is conceivable that in places where there is less liberalism and multiculturalism, the effects of perpetrator and victim ethnicity are more pronounced.

Furthermore, it is important to note that our study examined the perception of acquaintance sexual assault, the most common type (Koss, 1990; Koss, Dinero, Seibel, & Cox, 1988), and thus the results may not generalize to stranger sexual assault. As previous research
has found differences in how these two types of sexual assault are perceived (Frese, Moya, & Megias, 2004; Whatley, 1996), we anticipate different results would arise if one were to compare Chinese and Euro-Caucasian individuals involved in stranger sexual assault. The results we obtained may also be unique to the nature of the acquaintance sexual assault depicted in the vignette (i.e. occurring on campus between students) and may not generalize to other scenarios of acquaintance sexual assault, with different physical settings or order of events.

Lastly, this study utilized a paper-and-pencil questionnaire to assess perception of sexual assault. This design is unlikely the best approximation to real-life situations of sexual assault perception or judgement, such as that made by jurors in the courtroom. Thus, the external validity of the results is uncertain. In addition, since no standardized scales are available for assessing perception of a specific victim or perpetrator, we used modified versions of standardized scales that gauge general attitudes toward perpetrators and victims. The degree to which our modifications altered the reliability and validity of the scales is unknown, although the Cronbach’s alphas obtained for our sample are encouraging.

4.5 Future Directions

Future research can build on this study by testing participants randomly sampled from the general population. Results derived as such will be more generalizable and unaffected by self-selection bias. Moreover, future studies employing designs that more closely resemble real-world sexual assault perception situations, such as a mock jury set-up, can provide better assurance of external validity and assess whether our findings are robust to methodological variations. To follow up on the explanations we put forward to explain the observed interaction between observer ethnicity and gender, future studies can examine whether victim identification varies for Chinese and Euro-Caucasian women. Research examining the effect of observer gender in other
ethnic groups would also be informative for delineating the cultural constraints of this phenomenon. Lastly, it would be interesting to see whether manipulation of the degree of in-group bias and stereotyping through priming would lead to subsequent differences in sexual assault perception. This design would directly pit the two explanations against each other to assess which fares better.

If future studies do converge on the results found in this study, it should encourage researchers to explore outside of the stereotyping explanatory model for additional causes of ethnic effects in rape perception.
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Appendices

Appendix A: Demographics section

1. Sex: Male       Female

2. Age: _________________

3. Ethnicity (e.g. Chinese, Caucasian): ________________________________

4. Country of Birth: ________________________________

5. Number of Years Living in Canada: ________________________________

6. Number of Years of Formal Education (counting from grade 1): __________

7. Annual Household Income: ________________________________

8. English Language Reading/Comprehension Ability (please circle):

   1    2    3    4    5

   Poor (Difficulty Reading/ Comprehending Written English)
   Fair (Some Difficulties Reading/ Comprehending Written English)
   Excellent (No Difficulties Reading/ Comprehending Written English)

9. Sexual Orientation (please circle):

   0    1    2    3    4    5    6

   Exclusively Heterosexual
   Bisexual
   Exclusively Homosexual
Appendix B: Manipulation check

Please answer the following questions on the vignette you have just read:

1. What is Lingming’s major: ______________________________
2. What is Shane’s major: _______________________________
3. What is Lingming’s ethnicity: _________________________
4. What is Shane’s ethnicity: ___________________________
5. Where does Lingming know Shane from: ________________
6. Where did Lingming and Shane walk to: ________________
Appendix C: Modified Rape Empathy Scale

Below are 19 pairs of statements concerning Shane/Szeyang, Lingming/Linda and the incident that happened at the end of their encounter. Please choose the statement from each pair that you prefer and agree with more by circling the corresponding letter ‘a’ or ‘b’. Also, beside each statement you chose, please indicate the degree to which you prefer and agree with your chosen statement over the other by circling a number from 1 to 7.

Use the following key to help guide your answers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No preference</td>
<td>Strong preference for one statement</td>
<td>Strong preference for the other</td>
<td>preference for my statement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. a) I feel that what Shane/Szeyang did at the end of the encounter is an unjustifiable act under any circumstances.  
   or  
   b) I feel that what Shane/Szeyang did at the end of the encounter is a justifiable act under certain circumstances.  

2. a) In deciding the matter of guilt or innocence in this rape case, it is more important to know about the past sexual activity of Lingming/Linda than the past sexual activity of Shane/Szeyang.  
   or  
   b) It is more important to know about the past sexual activity of Shane/Szeyang than the past sexual activity of the Lingming/Linda in deciding the matter of guilt or innocence in this rape case.  

3. a) In general, I feel that the incident at the end of the encounter between Lingming/Linda and Shane/Szeyang was provoked by Lingming/Linda.  
   or  
   b) In general, I feel that the incident at the end of the encounter between Lingming/Linda and Shane/Szeyang was not provoked by Lingming/Linda.  

4. a) I would find it easier to imagine how Shane/Szeyang might feel during the incident at the end of the encounter than how Lingming/Linda might feel.
b) I would find it easier to imagine how Lingming/Linda might feel during the incident at the end of the encounter than how Shane/Szeyang might feel.

5. a) Under certain circumstances, I can understand why Shane/Szeyang would use force to obtain sexual relations with Lingming/Linda.

or

b) I cannot understand why Shane/Szeyang would use force to obtain sexual relations with Lingming/Linda under any circumstances.

6. a) In a court of law, I feel that Shane/Szeyang must be held accountable for his behavior at the end of the encounter.

or

b) In a court of law, I feel that Lingming/Linda must be held accountable for her behavior at the end of the encounter.

7. a) I would find it easier to empathize with the shame and humiliation Shane/Szeyang might feel during a trial for rape than with the feelings Lingming/Linda might have during the trial.

or

b) I would find it easier to empathize with the shame and humiliation Lingming/Linda might feel during a trial to prove rape than with the feelings Shane/Szeyang might have during the trial.

8. a) I believe that Lingming/Linda secretly wanted the incident at the end of the encounter to happen

or

b) I don't believe that Lingming/Linda secretly wanted the incident at the end of the encounter to happen

9. a) In deciding whether a rape has occurred or not, the burden of proof should rest with Lingming/Linda, who must prove that a rape has actually occurred.

or

b) In deciding whether a rape has occurred or not, the burden of proof should rest with Shane/Szeyang, who must prove that a rape has not actually occurred.

10. a) I believe that it is impossible for Lingming/Linda to enjoy the incident at the end of the encounter.

or

b) I believe that it is possible for Lingming/Linda to enjoy the incident at the end of the encounter, whether she admits
it or not.

11. a) I can really empathize with the helplessness Shane/Szeyang might feel during the incident at the end of the encounter, since he's at the mercy of forces beyond his control.

or

b) I can really empathize with the helplessness Lingming/Linda might have felt during the incident at the end of the encounter when all of her attempts to resist Shane/Szeyang have failed.

12. a) After the incident at the end of the encounter, I think Lingming/Linda would suffer more emotional torment in dealing with the police than Shane/Szeyang would.

or

b) After the incident at the end of the encounter, I think Shane/Szeyang would suffer more emotional torment in dealing with the police than Lingming/Linda would.

13. a) I feel it is impossible for Shane/Szeyang to rape Lingming/Linda unless she is willing.

or

b) I feel it is possible for Shane/Szeyang to rape Lingming/Linda against her will.

14. a) If a rape trial were publicized in the press, I feel Lingming/Linda would suffer more emotional trauma from the publicity than Shane/Szeyang.

or

b) If a rape trial were publicized in the press, I feel the Shane/Szeyang would suffer more emotional trauma from the publicity than the Lingming/Linda.

15. a) If I were a member of the jury in a rape trial, I would probably be more likely to believe Lingming/Linda's testimony than Shane/Szeyang's, since it takes a lot of courage on Lingming/Linda's part to accuse Shane/Szeyang of rape.

or

b) If I were a member of the jury in a rape trial, I would probably be more likely to believe Shane/Szeyang's testimony than Lingming/Linda's, since rape is a charge that is difficult to defend against, even if Shane/Szeyang is innocent.
Appendix D: Modified Attitudes towards Rape Victims Scale

The following are statements concerning Lingming, the female character in the vignette. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement by circling the corresponding number to the right.

Use the following key to help guide your answers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly</td>
<td>Strongly</td>
<td>Mildly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Lingming/Linda is a less desirable woman after the incident at the end of the encounter.  
   - 0 1 2 3 4

2. The extent of Lingming/Linda’s resistance of Shane/Szeyang at the end of the encounter should be the major factor in determining if a rape has occurred.  
   - 0 1 2 3 4

3. Lingming/Linda is an innocent victim.  
   - 0 1 2 3 4

4. Lingming/Linda would claim rape to protect her reputation.  
   - 0 1 2 3 4

5. Lingming/Linda is less likely to be raped than “bad” girls.  
   - 0 1 2 3 4

6. If Lingming/Linda have had prior sexual relationships, she should not complain about rape.  
   - 0 1 2 3 4

7. Lingming/Linda did not provoke the incident at the end of the encounter by her appearance or behavior.  
   - 0 1 2 3 4

8. If Lingming/Linda is intoxicated she is probably willing to have sexual relations.  
   - 0 1 2 3 4

9. The incident at the end of the encounter did Lingming/Linda good.  
   - 0 1 2 3 4

10. Even if Lingming/Linda feels guilty about engaging in premarital sex, she is still not likely to falsely claim rape.  
    - 0 1 2 3 4

11. Lingming/Linda secretly wanted the incident at the end of the encounter to happen.  
    - 0 1 2 3 4
12. Shane/Szeyang, not Lingming/Linda, is responsible for what happened at the end of the encounter.

13. If Lingming/Linda goes out alone at night, she puts herself in a position to be raped.

14. Lingming/Linda would claim rape if she consented to sexual relations but changed her mind afterwards.

15. If Lingming/Linda made accusations of rape directed at Shane/Szeyang after the incident at the end of the encounter, they should be viewed with suspicion.

16. Lingming/Linda should not blame herself for what happened at the end of the encounter.

17. Lingming/Linda could have successfully resisted Shane/Szeyang at the end of the encounter if she really tried.

18. If Lingming/Linda was a sexually experienced woman she would not really be damaged by what happened at the end of her encounter with Shane/Szeyang.

19. Lingming/Linda deserved what happened to her at the end of the encounter.