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"Feeling my Sister's Pain": Perceived Victim Suffering Moderates the Impact of Sexualized Music Videos on Fijian Women's Responses to Men's Intimate Partner Violence against Women

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Abstract

To better understand how sexualized music videos affect women's responses to intimate partner violence (IPV), we examined the role of individual variability in perceived victim pain and perceived victim culpability in moderating and mediating (respectively) the priming effects of sexual music videos on women. Female Fijian college students (n = 243) were randomly assigned to one of three viewing conditions: stereotyped sexual music videos, non-stereotyped/non-sexual music videos, or neutral videos. All participants then read a portrayal of a male-toward-female IPV episode and their perceptions of the female victim and male perpetrator were assessed. Only women who minimized the victim's pain were adversely affected by exposure to the stereotyped sexual videos. Specifically, for women who perceived low victim pain, those in the stereotyped video condition perceived the victim as more culpable and reported greater perpetrator-directed favorable responding than those in the other two conditions. For these women who perceived low victim pain, perceptions of victim culpability mediated the impact of video type on perpetrator-favorable responding. The findings help us better understand susceptibility to the negative impact of stereotypical sexual videos and highlight areas, such as emphasizing the suffering of victims and reducing myths about victim culpability, which may be worthy of particular emphasis in interventions.

Keywords: Sexualized media; intimate partner violence; domestic violence; Fijian women

"Feeling my Sister's Pain": Perceived Victim Suffering Moderates the Impact of Sexualized Music Videos on Fijian Women's Responses to Men's Intimate Partner Violence against Women

There is significant evidence that the portrayals of women in many forms of contemporary media tend to be extremely sexualized (American Psychological Association, 2007; Gill, 2008; Pacilli et al., 2017; Zurbriggen & Roberts, 2013). Further, Becker (2004) contends that young women in many cultures are at particular risk for problematic outcomes from media exposure because they are challenged by conflicting cultural demands to maintain some degree of an achievement trajectory and by the requirements of female roles such as prioritizing romantic relationships (which the media typically reinforces; Collins, 2011; Dill & Thill, 2007; Johnson, 1995).

Given that sexualized media may reinforce pejorative gender stereotypes, any deleterious impact of exposure to this particular form of media may be amplified for women in strongly patriarchal societies such as the Pacific Island of Fiji. The Global Gender Gap Index is a measure of women's disadvantage compared to men in four key areas; health, education, the economy, and politics. Fiji's ranking on the Global Gender Gap Index has historically been low and is falling, from 108th of 145 countries in 2010 to 121st in 2015, indicating significant and worsening gender inequality (World Economic Forum, 2015, 2010). In addition, according to a national survey by the Fiji Women's Crisis Center (FWCC, 2013), 69% of women in the Fiji Islands have reported being subjected to one or more forms of control and 28% have experienced four or more forms of control by their intimate partners. For example, 39% of women asked their husbands permission before seeking healthcare and 57% of Fijian women report they need to ensure their husbands are aware of their location at all times (FWCC, 2013). A central aim of the present study was to examine the impact of sexualized media exposure in the realm of intimate partner

violence which is a topic of particular relevance in the Fijian population where the rate of such violence is relatively high.

We define intimate partner violence (IPV) as the physical, sexual, or psychological harm perpetrated by a current or former partner or spouse. An examination of intimate partner violence in Fiji is relevant because according to national survey data, 64% of women who have ever been in an intimate relationship experienced physical violence and 58% of ever-partnered women experienced emotional violence (i.e., psychological abuse) from a husband or intimate partner in their lifetime (Swami, 2016). By comparison, a national survey by Smith et al. (2015) reported that 25% of ever-partnered women in the United States will experience such violence in their lifetime. Despite data demonstrating the extremely high likelihood that women in Fiji and the Pacific Region may become victims or third parties to intimate partner violence, there has been minimal empirical research focused on factors that might influence perceptions of such violence.

The present study addressed this issue by examining the extent to which media exposure type (i.e., sexual videos emphasizing female bodies, neutral, or non-sexual music videos) will influence Fijian women's responses toward the male perpetrator (i.e., empathic feelings, perceived harmful intent, moral outrage toward him) in a case of domestic violence. There was also an exploration of the moderating role of perceived victim suffering (i.e., pain) and the mediating role of perceived victim culpability. We would expect that women who are relatively desensitized to the harmful aspects of intimate partner violence may be more susceptible to the negative effects of exposure to stereotyped sexual videos and, in light of the high prevalence of intimate partner violence in Fiji, it may be expected that a relatively high percentage of Fiji women have become somewhat desensitized to such violence.

Third-Party Responding

Why is it important to examine factors that might influence women's "third party" (i.e., women who are aware of the incident but not directly involved in it) responding to the victims and perpetrators of intimate partner violence? A recent report, entitled "Linking the chain: The role of friends and family in tackling domestic abuse" (Parker, 2015), revealed that a significant proportion of female victims of intimate partner violence was more likely to confide in female friends and family rather than legal authorities. Further, Klein (2014) also suggests that third party friends and relatives can create an environment that either emboldens or discourages a female victim to directly address the abusive relationship by leaving and/or filing charges.

More generally, Gracia and Herrero (2007) suggest that a third party's strong beliefs regarding the inappropriate and aversive nature of a perpetrator's action tends to create a climate of social intolerance toward domestic violence. Such a climate can affect many aspects of the ways in which people respond and potentially whether they perpetrate such violence, as well as, for example, the judgments they may make as members of a jury in intimate partner violence or similar cases. Indeed, the responses assessed in the current study, including empathy, perceived harmful intent, and moral outrage have been shown to play a role in legal responding in cases involving various forms of assault (Archer et al., 1979; Chin, 2012; Hart & Albarracin, 2011). Moreover, such responses may influence the extent to which third parties engage more informal methods of social control over domestic violence (e.g., publicly condemning the behavior as wrong; directly telling the perpetrator that they are wrong).

Sexualized Media Effects

Priming theory suggests that an individual's judgments and perceptions are driven by the cognitive accessibility to various constructs and schemas (Berkowitz, 1984; Jo & Berkowitz, 1994). Stimuli such as sexualized media content can activate certain constructs (e.g., female

objectification; misogynous thoughts) and individuals will tend to draw upon these constructs when making subsequent perceptions and judgments (i.e., biased processing). In fact, Doornwaard and colleagues (2014) contend that exposure to sexualized media tends to make sexually relevant information or experiences more salient, which can cause ambiguous cues in the environment to be interpreted in a sexual manner which, in turn, shape attitudes and behaviors. Early tests of this theoretical perspective involved examining the effects of exposure to objectifying pornography and non-consenting pornography on gender-based violence response among men (for reviews see Malamuth et al., 2000; Malamuth, 2018; Oddone-Paolucci et al., 2017). In research more relevant to the current examination, there has also been empirical interest in whether exposure to non-pornographic and nonviolent sexual media images might influence the subsequent responses of women (see Ward, 2016 for a review). In further research in this field, media researchers have given considerable attention to the deleterious consequences of exposure to video games with sexualized images of women (Beck et al., 2012; Beck & Rose, 2018). Dill and colleagues (2008) found that short-term exposure to stereotypical video game depictions of women was related to sexual harassment judgments but not rape myth acceptance. However, long-term exposure to video game violence predicted greater tolerance of sexual harassment and greater rape myth acceptance.

More recently, in a sample of male and female participants, Burnay and colleagues (2019) analyzed the consequences of sexualized video game content on online sexual harassment directed at female targets. They found that sexual harassment levels toward a female partner was higher for participants who played the game with sexualized female characters than for participants who played the same game with non-sexualized female characters, and this effect emerged for both male and female participants. Further, Gramazio et al. (2018) explored the

impact of exposure to sexualized images of women in highly accessible print media (i.e., newspapers). The authors had participants read a fictitious newspaper article that described a workplace sexual harassment episode with a picture of the victim wearing either sexualized or non-sexualized clothing. Consistent with the central expectations, participants showed lower willingness to help the sexualized relative to the non-sexualized victim. In similar research, Reichl and colleagues (2018) were interested in examining whether latent sexism (i.e., content considered sexist by media critics but not laypersons) in print advertisement might influence acceptance of gender-based violence. Participants exposed to latent sexism ads showed greater acceptance of a sexual assault than did those in the no sexism and in the overt sexism ad conditions. Thus, the extant research suggests that even less overt manifestations of sexism can have a (sometimes greater) impact on the viewers' gender-based attitudes.

An examination of music videos seems particularly important because of the evidence that, by the age of 15, adolescents have spent a disproportionate amount of time listening to music relative to any other medium (Roberts & Foehr, 2004). Content-analytic research has shown that 71.7% of music videos by 51 female artists contained some form of sexual objectification of the artists themselves or of other female characters (Aubrey & Frisby, 2011). For example, women in music videos are consistently depicted in more sexually submissive positions relative to men, and the sexual exploitation, objectification, and degradation of women in music videos appears to be a longstanding phenomenon (Gow, 1996; see also Conrad et al., 2009; Sommers-Flanagan et al., 1993).

Moreover, rap music and rap music videos tend to be replete with several forms of misogyny, such as the sexual objectification of women, that legitimize gender-based violence while providing positive depictions of prostitution and pimping (Weitzer & Kubrin, 2009). In

early research that assessed whether exposure to music videos might influence gender-based violence responses, Johnson (1995) demonstrated that female adolescents who viewed sexualized videos were more likely to accept teen dating violence than those who did not view such videos. Burgess and Burpo (2012) found that, in a case involving date rape, exposure to highly sexualized/objectified music videos resulted in women being more likely to rate the female victim as more responsible for the rape than those in the low-objectified condition. Finally, Ouystel and colleagues (2014) showed that exposure to sexual music videos was positively associated with requesting a "sexting" message (i.e., text with sexual visual or written elements) among men and women.

Moderating and Mediating Factors

Media researchers have also identified a number of factors that might moderate and mediate the impact of exposure to sexualized media on responses toward women. In an early assessment of moderators, Kistler and Lee (2009) found that the effects of exposure to sexualized music videos on subsequent responses of male participants was moderated by the degree of video sexual content (i.e., extent that the video contained sexual themes and sexual imagery). Conversely, such content had minimal impact on women. Ferguson (2012) explored whether the characteristics of the female television characters (i.e., subordinate vs. strong) might moderate the impact of exposure to sexualized media. Men who watched sexually violent media had more negative attitudes toward women than those who watched control videos. However, this effect was limited to media that depicted the woman as subordinate. Further, Karsay and Matthes (2016) found that, relative to exposure to low sexually objectifying videos, exposure to high sexual objectifying videos was more likely to result in the female participants sexually objectifying themselves.

The mediational properties of a myriad array of variables have also been examined in the sexualized media literature. For example, Wright and Tokunaga (2016) found that the incidence of exposure to all forms of media (i.e., lifestyle magazines, reality TV programs, and pornography) predicted more objectified cognitions about women which, in turn, predicted stronger attitudes supportive of violence against women. In further television-related research, Galdi et al. (2013) exposed men to TV clips that portrayed women as sexual objects or in professional roles. Participants in the sexual objects condition reported greater proclivity to engage in sexual coercion and manifested more gender-harassing behavior than those in the professional condition. Further, the impact of media type on gender-based violence responses was mediated by conformity to masculine gender norms. Finally, in their assessment of the consequences of exposure to sexualized depictions of women in newspapers, Gramazio et al. (2018) found the impact of such exposure on willingness to help a sexual harassment victim was mediated by attributions of lower morality and blame toward to the victim.

Victim Pain and Victim Blame

Interestingly, research focused on the impact of exposure to violent pornography on gender-based violence responses has clearly shown that men who were relatively predisposed for aggression toward women based on other risk factors were significantly affected by such exposure (Malamuth & Check, 1985; Malamuth, Hald, & Koss, 2012). Specifically, these risk factors included possessing calloused attitudes about violence against women, beliefs in rape myths, hostility toward women, and associating sexual arousal with overpowering women. On the other hand, the bulk of the research on factors that moderate the non-pornographic and nonviolent sexualized media has focused on the impact of contextual factors such as the nature of the videos (Karsay & Matthes, 2016; Kistler & Lee, 2009) or characteristics of female

television characters (Ferguson, 2012). There has been minimal empirical exploration of individual differences of observers that might suppress or accentuate the influence of such sexualized media on responses associated with violence against women.

For the current study, we assessed whether the impact of exposure to sexualized media would be moderated by individual differences in the propensity for women to perceive victim suffering (i.e., pain). Importantly, for third party observers, the degree to which the viewer may believe that victims are actually harmed by the perpetrated violence may function as a filter or guide to their negative responses toward the perpetrator (Austin, Walster, & Utne, 1976; Feigenson, Park, & Salovey, 1997; Phares & Wilson, 1972; Walster, 1966). Why would evidence of pain affect third party judgments pertaining to violence against women? Relevant research (Thornhill & Thornhill, 1990a, 1990b) indicates that female victims of violence who show more visible signs of physical suffering and/or damage are less likely to be perceived as contributing to the assault**.** This effect likely occurs as a function of objectification, whereby the less one perceives pain (or other emotional responding) by the victim, the greater the potential for objectification, which in turn facilitates the shift of blame from the perpetrator to the victim (Wright & Tokunaga, 2016). Importantly, there is some evidence that there are also individual differences in third party perceptions of the extent that a rape victim suffered (Willis, 1992; Muehlenhard & MacNaughton, 1988).

We propose that individual differences in the extent that third party observers perceive that the victim suffered pain from an intimate partner's violent attack can moderate the impact of exposure to sexualized media on responses to violence against women. Specifically, those individuals who have perceived that the victim suffered extensive pain should not be influenced by contextual factors such as exposure to sexualized media. Their responses should be driven by

their reactions to the victim's pain and suffering. On the other hand, those who perceived minimal victim suffering should be more susceptible to the influence of contextual factors. For these individuals, and consistent with previous research (Burgess & Burpo, 2012), exposure to sexualized music videos should lead to greater positive perpetrator responding than exposure to nonsexual music videos. The expected pattern of results is consistent with both theoretical and research-based accounts that contrast person-related variables, such as attitudes and traits, with the influence of situational factors (e.g., Bem & Allen, 1974; Bowers, 1973; Epstein & O'Brien, 1985). When a person-related variable is especially salient or important to an individual, then the influence of the situational factors (i.e., sexualized music videos) is necessarily attenuated (e.g., Cheek, 1982; Zuckerman et al., 1988; Zuckerman et al., 1989).

One relevant issue involves what factors might underlie expected positive responding toward the perpetrator in the sexualized video condition for those who perceive minimal victim suffering. Perceived victim culpability tends to be negatively associated with punitive responding toward a harm-doer (Bell, Kuriloff, & Lottes, 1994; Brems & Wagner, 1994). Thus, we expected that exposure to sexual music videos would facilitate a blame-the-victim approach. Specifically, culpability responses for observers who perceived high victim pain were not expected to vary as a function of music type. Conversely, for participants who perceived low victim pain, those in the sexual music condition should perceive greater victim culpability than those in the non-sexual condition. Increased perceived victim culpability was expected to, in turn, increase the likelihood that participants would report more positive responding toward the perpetrator.

The Present Study

Female participants were exposed to 30 minutes of various sexual, neutral, or non-sexual music videos. Subsequently, they read a passage depicting an incident of domestic violence in

which a woman is the victim and a man is the perpetrator. After reading the written passage (which could parallel what third party observers might read in a news story or from an online media account), participants reported their perceptions of the extent that the victim suffered pain, attributions of victim culpability, and the degree of favorable responding toward the perpetrator. The study involved a 3 (video type: sexual, nonsexual, neutral) x perceived victim pain (continuous variable) design, with video type serving as the main independent variable and perceived victim pain as the moderator.

We forwarded three hypotheses. (a) The impact of video type on perceived victim culpability will be moderated by perceived victim pain (Hypothesis 1). Specifically, among women who perceive low victim pain, participants in the sexual video condition should report greater perceived victim culpability than participants in the neutral and non-sexual video conditions. In contrast, among those who perceive high victim pain, there should be no impact of video type on perceived victim culpability. (b) The impact of video type on perpetrator favorable responding should be moderated by perceived victim pain (Hypothesis 2). Specifically, among those perceiving low victim pain, participants in the sexual video condition should report greater favorable perpetrator responding than those in neutral and non-sexual video conditions. In contrast, among women who perceive high victim pain, there should be no impact of video type on perpetrator-favorable responding. (c) A moderated-mediation analysis should reveal that the impact of video type on perpetrator favorability responding should be mediated by perceived victim culpability for the low perceived pain participants but not the high perceived pain participants (Hypothesis 3).

Method

Participants

Fully 243 female students from The University of the South Pacific (Suva, Fiji) participated in the present study. Students from the university come largely from Fiji and the surrounding Pacific nations (e.g., Tonga, Samoa, Solomon Islands). Their ages ranged from 18 to 37 (M = 21.16, SD = 3.23). Because The University of the South Pacific does not have a dedicated pool of participants (i.e., subject pool) to conduct experimental research, participants were recruited through student organizations/ societies via blanket email requests to all society members. For the current study, per recruitment emails, which provided the time and location for the session, participants were asked to meet in a large auditorium to view the videos, and admission was closed after the requisite number of participants arrived. The procedure was reviewed and approved by the institutional review board for The University of Fiji for compliance with standards for the ethical treatment of human participants. Participants were compensated for their time with $10.

Procedure

Participants were told that psychologists were very interested in their views on a number of media, social, and life issues. Specifically, they were informed that "First, you will be viewing and rating video materials. Then, we will be asking you a number of questions regarding the videos and your 'Life and Societal Impressions.'" In the *sexual video condition*, participants viewed eight videos which were chosen because they had included some or all of the following: (a) sexual themes and lyrics, (b) scantily dressed women, and (c) women who danced provocatively around men. Examples of the songs included were by popular singers Nikki Minaj "Anaconda," Rita Ora ft. Chris Brown's "Body on Me," and Jennifer Lopez ft. Iggy Azalea's "Booty." In the *non-sexual video condition*, participants viewed eight videos that did not involve any of the sexual themes or images cited in the sexual video condition. Examples of these songs

were also by popular singers and included Adele's "Rolling in the Deep," Wiz Khalifa ft. Charlie Puth's "See You Again," and Taylor Swift and Ed Sheeran's "Everything Has Changed." Finally, in the *neutral condition*, participants viewed a video focused on ocean life.

The sexual and non-sexual conditions also contained one sentence following the IPV description indicating that the victim stated that she preferred open relationships or there was no-information on relationship preference. This variable was randomly assigned within the sexual and non-sexual video conditions. It was later determined that this variable, which was being piloted for future research on norm violation, was problematic and not a viable manipulation in its current form because it was not clear whether any impact would be due to a perceived norm violation or negative feelings toward the victim (i.e., "she is a cheater"). Thus, data for this variable are not reported here or elsewhere. Importantly, the findings associated with the current tested hypotheses do not change significantly when this norm-violator manipulation is entered as a covariate.

Consistent with the instructions, participants rated the videos on the extent they enjoyed it and whether they would purchase it (distractor ratings). They were then given a passage to read entitled "Life and Society Impressions" with a subheading of "Relationship Issues." They then read a passage involving Dawn and Robert who were described as third-year college students who had been dating for a year. Dawn was described as being an engineering major, having good grades, and spending a lot of time studying.

Dawn told Robert that "being the first female engineer in a major engineering company was her goal." Robert informed Dawn that he was a bit lonely and she should be a "good girlfriend" and spend more time with him. The next section followed:

One evening, Dawn arrived home late. Before she opened the door completely,

> Robert grabbed her by the arm and pulled her into the house. "Sometimes I just don't understand the things that you do!" shouted Ron. "You are just never here for me! I am so stressed right now." She tried to explain but before she could utter two words, his hand whipped across her face sending a crack of skin contacting skin echoing across the house. She attempted to explain again, but this time hails of punches reached her face and her abdomen. As she fell to the ground in a crouching position, he kicked her in the stomach and shouted, "Look what you made me do! This is all your fault!"

Measures

Participants then responded to two items which assessed whether they felt that Dawn experienced emotional and physical pain from the incident, rating on a response scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The items were average to create a perceived victim pain score (Spearman-Brown = .76—the Spearman Brown reliability coefficient is recommended for two-item scales; Eisinga et al., 2013). They then responded to four items which assessed, on a 5 point Likert scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*), their perception of whether: (a) Dawn was responsible for the incident; (b) Dawn did "not" behave as a good girlfriend by studying so much; (c) Dawn deserved blame for the incident; and (d) Dawn deserved what happened to her. The items were summed and averaged ($\alpha = .75$) to create a perceived victim culpability score such that higher scores connote stronger culpability.

Participants then completed five items measuring their "empathic responding for Robert" on a 1 (*not very much*) to 7 (*extremely*) Likert-type scales (see Batson 1991; Batson, Chang, Orr, & Rowland, 2002). Specifically, they rated their experiences of sympathy, compassion, warmth, soft-heartedness, and being moved toward Robert. They then reported perceptions of Robert's

"perceived harmful intent" by responding to an item that stated: "Robert did not mean to harm Dawn—he was just a little upset" (1-strongly disagree, 7-strongly agree). Finally, reduced perpetrator-directed moral outrage was assessed by participants reporting the extent that the Robert's actions elicited "anger" and "disgust" (1-not very much, 7-very much) toward the victim. The responses to these two items, which are typically employed to depict moral outrage (see Ashburn-Nardo, 2016) were reverse-scored. The five empathy items, the harmful intent item, and the two moral outrage items were averaged to create a perpetrator favorability score ($\alpha = .81$). Five participants did not complete the perpetrator favorability items. However, these individuals did complete all other measures so they were retained for those analyses. All participants were debriefed and paid after completing the questionnaire.

Manipulation Checks

An additional 20 women who were recruited from the same university as the participants rated the sexual (10 raters) and non-sexual (10 raters) videos to serve as a manipulation check on video content. Perceived sexual content was assessed by averaging raters' responses, from 1-small extent to 7-great extent, to two questions, $r(18) = .91$, $p < .001$. The exact questions that were averaged together were: (a) "To what extent did the videos contain sexual lyrics?" and (b) "To what extent did the videos contain sexual images?" Female sexual objectification was assessed by averaging responses to two items (i.e., a question and a statement) that assessed the extent that the women in the videos were portrayed as sexual objects and two other items assessed the extent that the videos focused on women's body parts. The two items focused on sexual objects were: a) "To what extent did the videos portray women as 'sexual objects'?" (1-small extent, 7-great extent) and (b) "The women in the videos were not portrayed as sexual objects (1-strongly disagree, 5-strongly agree), with the latter item reverse-scored. The two

items focused on body parts were: (a) "To what extent did the videos focus on the 'body parts' (i.e., breasts, buttocks, etc.) of women?" (1-small extent, 7-great extent) and (b) "The videos did not place much focus on women's bodies" (1-strongly disagree, 5-strongly agree), with the latter item reverse-scored. Across the four items, Cronbach's alpha equaled .91.

Perceived video quality was assessed by participants' responses to the question: "To what extent were the videos of good quality?" (1-small extent, 7-great extent). Video liking was assessed by participants' responses to a question: "To what extent did you like the videos?" (1-small extent, 7-great extent). Perceived violent content was assessed by participants' responses to the question: "To what extent did the videos contain any violence?" (1-small extent, 7-great extent). The latter item was assessed by a second set of 20 raters due to a request from anonymous reviewers to ensure that the videos did not vary as a function of violent content. It is noted that the neutral condition was not included in the manipulation check data for practical reasons because most of the questions would not have applied to videos on ocean life.

Analysis Plan

In order to establish the independence of video type effects from the moderating variable (i.e., Perceived Victim Pain), an ANOVA was employed, followed by pairwise comparisons. The interpretation of subsequent analyses is facilitated by the independence of these variables. Standard regression analysis was employed to determine the extent that perceived victim pain was a significant predictor of the relevant dependent variables.

In order to evaluate Hypothesis 1, addressing whether the effect of video type (IV) on perceived victim culpability is moderated by perceived victim pain (i.e., an interaction between the IV and the continuous moderator), PROCESS 3.0 Model 1 was run (Hayes, 2013). PROCESS is a software application that executes path analysis–based moderation and mediation

analysis using ordinary least squares (OLS) regression. The macro also allows probes of the interactions at one standard deviation below and one standard deviation above the mean. Perceived victim pain scores were centered at their mean (Aiken & West, 1991).

PROCESS 3.0 Model 1 was also employed to evaluate Hypothesis 2, addressing whether the effect of video type (IV) on perpetrator favorability ratings is moderated by perceived victim pain. Finally, in order to address our third hypothesis examining whether the effect of video type on perpetrator favorability is mediated by perceived victim culpability as a function of perceived victim pain (i.e., a moderated-mediation analysis), PROCESS Macro 3.0 Model 7 was employed (Hayes, 2013).

Results

Manipulation Checks

The findings revealed that video type was manipulated successfully. Specifically, the raters perceived: (a) the sexual videos (M = 6.40, SD = .64) as having more sexual content than the non-sexual videos (M = 2.10 , SD = 1.02), t(18)= 11.40, p < .001, η_p^2 = .87, 95% CI [3.50, 5.09] and (b) greater female sexual objectification in the sexual videos (M = 5.30, SD = .57) relative to the non-sexual videos (M = 2.10 , SD = .74), t(18) = 10.81, p < .001, η_p^2 = .86, 95% CI [2.57, 3.82]. In contrast the raters (a) did not perceive any differences in the quality of the sexual videos (M = 6.00, SD = .47) relative to the non-sexual videos (M = 6.31, SD = .67), t(18) = 1.15, p =.264, η_p^2 = .07, 95% CI [-.84, .24]; (b) did not report any differences in how much they liked the sexual videos (M = 5.02, SD = .81) relative to the non-sexual videos (M = 5.80, SD = 1.22), t(18) = 1.71, p = .104, η_p^2 = .14, 95% CI [-.1.78, .18]; and (c) did not report any differences in perceived degree of violence in the sexual videos (M = 2.13, SD = .74) relative to the non-sexual videos (M = 1.80, SD = .63), t(18)= .97, p = .344, η_p^2 = .05, 95% CI [-.29, .89].

Video Type and Perceived Victim Pain

The main effect of video type on perceived victim pain did not reach significance, $F(2, 240) = 1.20$, $p = .303$, $\eta_p^2 = .10$. Additionally, pairwise comparisons revealed that (a) pain perceptions for those in the sexual video condition ($M = 4.20$, $SD = .88$) and non-sexual condition ($M = 4.40$, $SD = .93$) were not significantly different ($p = .200$), 95% CI [-.47, .10]; (b) pain perceptions for those in the sexual video condition and those in the neutral condition ($M = 4.41$, $SD = .91$) were not significantly different ($p = .161$), 95% CI [-.48, .08]; and (c) pain perceptions for those in the non-sexual video condition and neutral condition were not significantly different ($p = .94$), 95% CI [-.29, .27]. Thus, it can be concluded that the measured individual difference variable of perceived victim pain (the moderator) was statistically independent of the experimental manipulation for video type (the primary independent variable).

Video Type Effects

The effect of video type reached significance for perceived victim culpability, $F(2, 240) = 6.39$, $p = .002$, $\eta_p^2 = .05$. Those in the sexual video condition ($M = 2.28$, $SD = .94$) reported greater perceived victim culpability than those in the nonsexual condition ($M = 1.82$, $SD = .80$, $p = .001$, 95% CI [.18, .72] and those in the neutral condition ($M = 1.89$, $SD = .84$, $p = .005$), 95% CI [.11, .64]. Culpability responses between those in the non-sexual and neutral condition were not significantly different ($p = .590$), 95% CI [-.34, .19]. The effect of video type for perpetrator favorability responding did not reach significance, $F(2, 235) = 2.76$, $p = .066$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$.

Perceived Victim Pain Effects

Perceived victim pain was a significant predictor of perceived victim culpability, $R^2 = .06$, $F(1, 241) = 15.50$, $p < .001$, $B = -.25$, 95% CI [-.358, -.119], and perpetrator favorability, $R^2 = .09$, $F(1, 236) = 23.51$, $p < .001$, $B = -.30$, 95% CI [-.541, -.229]. Greater perceived victim pain

was associated with less perceived victim culpability and less perpetrator favorability. Table 1 provides the descriptive statistics and correlations for victim culpability, victim pain, and perpetrator favorability ratings.

Victim Culpability as a Function of Perceived Pain

Consistent with Hypothesis 1, the omnibus interaction between video type (IV) and perceived victim pain (moderator) reached significance for perceived victim culpability, $\Delta R^2 = .031$, $F(2, 237) = 4.35$, $p = .014$, $B = -.26$, 95% CI [-.55, .01]. In more direct support of the Hypothesis 1, a probe of the interaction revealed that at one standard deviation below the mean for perceived victim pain (i.e., -1 *SD*, low perceived pain), those in the sexual video condition reported greater perceived victim culpability than those in the neutral condition ($B = -.55$, $t = -3.01$, $p = .003$) and those in the non-sexual video condition,($B = .80$, $t = 4.2$, $p < .001$). In contrast, at one standard deviation above the mean (i.e., +1 *SD*, high perceived pain), those in the sexual video condition did not report any differences in perceived victim culpability relative to those in the neutral condition ($B = -.13$, $t = -.81$, $p = .418$) and those in the non-sexual video condition ($B = .11$, $t = .66$, $p = .507$).

Furthermore, a separate Video Type x Physical Pain ($p = .011$) interaction analysis revealed the same pattern as the reported, combined pain measure. The interaction effect with Emotional Pain ($p = .064$) was similar in pattern but was not statistically significant.

There was no difference between those in the non-sexual condition and neutral condition (at low or high perceived pain) for perceived victim culpability. (*Note*: Although the pain ratings are somewhat skewed, the presented analyses provide reasonably accurate estimates even with non-normal data. Moreover, an analysis of the residuals indicates that they do not deviate from normality.)

Perpetrator Favorability as a Function of Perceived Victim Pain

Consistent with Hypothesis 2, the omnibus interaction between video type (IV) and the perceived victim pain (moderator) reached significance for perpetrator favorability, $\Delta R^2 = .025$, $F(2, 232) = 3.33$, $p = .038$, $B = -.25$, 95% CI [-.63, .12]. In more direct support of Hypothesis 2, a probe of the interaction revealed that at one standard deviation below the mean for perceived victim pain (i.e., -1 *SD*, low perceived pain), women in the sexual video condition reported greater perpetrator favoritism than those in the neutral condition (B =- .52, t = -2.17, p = .031) and those in the non-sexual video condition (B = .76, t = 3.01, p =.003). In contrast, at one standard deviation above the mean (i.e., +1 *SD*, high perceived pain), those in the sexual video condition did not report any differences in perpetrator favoritism relative to those in the neutral condition (B = -.11, t = -.52, p = .597) and those in the non-sexual video condition (B = =-.05, t = -.24, p = .806).

Video Type x Emotional Pain (p =.016) interaction revealed the same pattern as the combined emotional pain and physical pain measure. The interaction with Physical Pain (p =.067) was similar in pattern but was not statistically significant.

There was no difference between those in the non-sexual condition and neutral condition (at low or high perceived pain) for perpetrator favoritism.

Moderated-Mediational Effects

To test whether the moderated-mediation effect from Hypothesis 3 actually occurred, PROCESS Macro 3.3 Model 7 was run for the analysis. In full support of this hypothesis, perceived victim culpability did mediate the impact of video type on perpetrator favorability for low perceived pain participants (i.e., at the 16th percentile, 95% CI [.2868, 1.3655]; see Figure 1a), However, such perceived victim culpability did not play a mediational role for participants

who perceived high victim pain (i.e., at the 84th percentile, 95% CI [-.0164, .2722]; see Figure 1b]). For Model 7, Hayes and Montoya (2017) recommend probing at percentiles (e.g., 16th, 50th, and 84th) to guarantee that the probed points are always within the observed range of the data.

Discussion

The present study demonstrated that, among a sample of Fijian women, favorable responding toward a male perpetrator of violence against a female intimate partner was influenced by an interplay between contextual factors (i.e., sexualized music video exposure) and individual differences across observers (i.e., perceived victim pain and culpability) in moderating and mediating the priming effects of sexual music videos. The findings extend the sexualized music video literature because the bulk of the previous work in this area has focused on rape-related responses among participants in Western developed nations. Although the incidence of male-to-female intimate partner violence is significant in the Pacific Region and Fiji in particular (Swami, 2016), there has been minimal empirical assessment of factors that influence societal responses to such violence. Thus, the current study addressed this empirical gap by demonstrating that exposure to sexualized media and perceived victim pain interact to influence Fijian women's third party IPV perceptions, marking one of the few studies to examine respondents from this developing part of the world where woman experience considerable disadvantages relative to men in most aspects of life. Moreover, because a majority of Fijian women will experience physical violence and/or psychological abuse at the hands of an intimate partner in their lifetimes (Swami, 2016), our study elevates the importance of understanding how other women will react to such instances of aggression.

The current research provides some insights into the possible mechanisms that underlie

the observed effects. Specifically, research suggests that as female victims show more visible signs of suffering, they are less likely to be blamed for the assault (Thornhill & Thornhill, 1990a, 1990b). Highlighting the emotional suffering of the female victim could simultaneously make it more difficult to objectify her or her experience as well as make it easier to appropriately blame the perpetrator (Wright & Tokunaga, 2016). Our research illustrates that although situational factors (video exposure) can contribute to this process, so too do individual differences in the perceptions of the victim's suffering (see also Willis, 1992; Muehlenhard & MacNaughton, 1988). This finding is in keeping with a recent study illustrating that victim behavior was more relevant than perpetrator behavior when arriving at judgments of guilt in a sexual assault case (Franiuk, Luca, & Robinson, 2019).

Practice Implications

The current findings extend the research literature by identifying factors that both moderate and mediate the impact of the exposure to sexualized videos on subsequent responses to intimate partner violence, providing some implications for practitioners. First, the findings extend the literature on intimate partner violence attitudes by providing a direct exploration of the role of perceived victim pain, a presumed indicator of the extent to which viewers perceive serious negative consequences of such violence. Specifically, greater perceptions of victim pain served to "inoculate" third party women observers from the impact of contextual factors such as sexualized music videos. One practical implication of this inoculation effect is the suggestion that intervention strategies could sensitize the public to the aversive nature of intimate partner violence by emphasizing the emotional and physical pain of the victim. This could occur by simply reporting in greater detail (e.g., in news stories) the aversive experiences and consequences for of the victim, and experimental research could be employed to investigate this

as a possible causative factor.

Second, the current study extended research on intimate partner violence by exploring factors that might influence perpetrator-directed responses which include negative emotional responding (i.e., moral outrage), positive emotional responding (i.e., empathy for the perpetrator), and harm-related attributions (i.e., perceived harmful intent). An exploration of these particular responses is relevant because they have been shown to play a role in punitive legal responding in cases involving various forms of assault (Archer et al., 1979; Chin, 2012; Hart & Albarracin, 2011). For example, it is very possible that third parties will engage in more "informal" forms of intimate partner-related social control (i.e., publicly condemning the behavior as wrong, directly telling the perpetrator that they are wrong), which are always important initial steps before formal types of social control (e.g., the more aggressive prosecution of perpetrators of domestic violence by the court system) can proliferate. A number of researchers have demonstrated that an examination of the public's perceptions is extremely important because third parties can send clear signals to both the victim and perpetrator regarding the inappropriate nature of intimate partner violence (Klein, 2014; Parker, 2015). In this way, interventionists such as therapists, counselors, activists and even policymakers may help reform the involved parties, their immediate social support system, and the public's responses to IPV, which in turn could result in a lower incidence as well as higher rates of appropriate interventions when IPV does occur.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

A number of limitations are noted that might undermine the generalizability of our findings. First, the participants in the current study were limited to Fijian women, and as such the findings may not generalize to male respondents or to a Western population from a more

developed country. Second, because the video exposure occurred in groups (participants for each condition were in a large auditorium), it is unclear whether the presence of others and a more anonymous context would have an appreciable impact on the observed effects. Follow-up studies would need to employ an individual exposure method to address this issue directly. Third, the selected videos may have differed on some unmeasured and therefore uncontrolled variables that may have influenced responses, such as the male-to-female ratio of the actors in the videos, the race/ethnicity of artists and actors, known history of IPV by the artists, previous exposure to these videos, or even the incidence of children in the videos.

Fourth, the current study was limited to intimate partner violence involving a female victim and a male perpetrator. It is reasonable to consider whether the present findings would emerge in scenarios in which the man is the victim and the woman is the perpetrator or when victims and perpetrators share the same sex/gender. Fifth, our manipulation checks illustrated that the likability ratings were modestly lower (although not statistically significant) for the sexual relative to the non-sexual videos. Because the small sample in the manipulation check analysis would limit the power to detect a significant effect, it creates a potential confound for lower likability, rather than more sexual content, driving some of the findings. Although both effect sizes are reasonably robust, the effect size for likability was much smaller relative to the effect size for sexual content ($\eta_p^2 = .14$ and $\eta_p^2 = .87$, respectively). When considered in conjunction with the ambiguous conceptual link between video likability and victim pain to produce an interaction, it is unlikely that the findings could be attributed to likability.

Sixth, it is reasonable to question whether the manipulation (video exposure) impacted the perceived pain ratings because these ratings occurred after the experimental manipulation. In other research contexts, it is sometimes appropriate to assess the individual difference measures

in advance of the manipulation (i.e., creating independence methodologically). However, in the present case, that was not possible because the pain ratings were specific to the scenario of interest. Instead, in the current experiment, statistical analyses were used to indicate that the video exposure did not influence the perceived emotional or physical pain experienced by the victim (i.e., music video content did not have a direct/main effect on victim perceptions). However, perceived pain did moderate the impact of video exposure on victim culpability and the favorability ratings of the perpetrator. Thus, although we demonstrated the statistical independence of these measured variables, the current findings do not eliminate the possibility of real-world desensitization to victim pain that can occur as a result of more long-term, accumulated, exposure effects of sexualized music videos (Linz, Donnerstein, & Penrod, 1988). Given that such video content has been readily available for more than two decades (see Gow, 1996), it is reasonable to assume that both acute reactions and more chronic effects from sexualized music video exposure may represent distinct but also additive effects.

In the current research, victim pain was a combination of one-item assessments of physical and emotional pain, which were highly correlated values, and separate analyses of each item yielded mixed effects. It is possible that a more thorough and distinct assessment of physical and emotional pain may have revealed construct-specific findings. In fact, perceptions regarding the emotional and physical pain of IPV victims have been mixed in the literature, as victims have indicated that IPV-related psychological/emotional injuries are comparable to physical injuries, as well as describing psychological/emotional injuries as worse than their physical counterparts because the consequences from emotional abuse may last longer (e.g., Candela, 2016; Libal & Parekh, 2009; Stark, 2007).

Recent research focused on sexualized media has shown that exposure to such media can

facilitate misogynistic beliefs (van Oosten et al., 2015) and increase the likelihood that women will endorse engaging in token resistance (i.e., the notion that women say "no" to sex when they actually mean "yes") to male sexually aggressive behavior (Rodenhizer & Edwards, 2019). Future studies in the Pacific Region that both control for risk factors (i.e., gender role endorsement, hyper-femininity) and explore the extent that endorsement of such stereotypical beliefs and/or token resistance might, in turn, influence intimate partner violence acceptance would certainly extend research on sexualized media. Although the current findings demonstrated that the impact of music video was moderated by individual differences in perceived victim pain, it would also be interesting to assess whether other individual differences (e.g., self-esteem, gender identification) might have a similar moderating influence.

Finally, there is growing evidence that women will tend to suppress agentic and/or intellectual pursuits in the context of romantic relationships. For example, Pereira (2012) found that female adolescents tend to play down their intelligence and academic performance in order to reduce the likelihood that they may intimidate young men. Most recently, Bursztyn et al. (2017) found that three-quarters of single female MBA students reported avoiding "career-enhancing" activities (i.e., class participation, reporting that they required high salaries, willingness to work long hours) because they felt that such actions would make them appear too intellectual and reduce the opportunity to attract single men. Future research could explore the extent that exposure to sexualized music videos might facilitate such "intellectual suppression" among women.

Conclusions

A number of researchers have contended that greater attention should be given to exploring factors that might influence the climate of societal tolerance toward intimate partner

violence (Gracia & Herrero, 2007). Societal *in*tolerance is undoubtedly impacted by lowering the incidence of IPV (i.e., making it less commonplace), improving the existence and enforcement of laws to control the perpetrators of such behavior, and emboldening victims and those in whom they confide to speak out, condemn, and take formal action against such behavior. Although we are not suggesting that sexualized music videos of the type researched here in and of themselves or in isolation are a major cause of intimate partner violence or even third-party judgments of such violence, it is the case that the confluence conceptualization we have emphasized here highlights the potential importance of such a contributing factor. The current conceptualization emphasizes that violence cannot be explained by any single or even a small number of factors, but by a confluence of multiple interacting risk factors (Malamuth & Hald, 2017). The present findings demonstrated that an easily accessible and frequently used type of media (i.e., sexualized music video) is one of several ingredients that can significantly increase both favorable responding toward the intimate partner who perpetrates the violence and negative responding toward the victim. This pattern of results provides further evidence of the insidious impact of media that is replete with pejorative and stereotypical depictions of women that in confluence with other multiple risk factors may contribute to the tolerance and occurrence of domestic and other types of violence against women.

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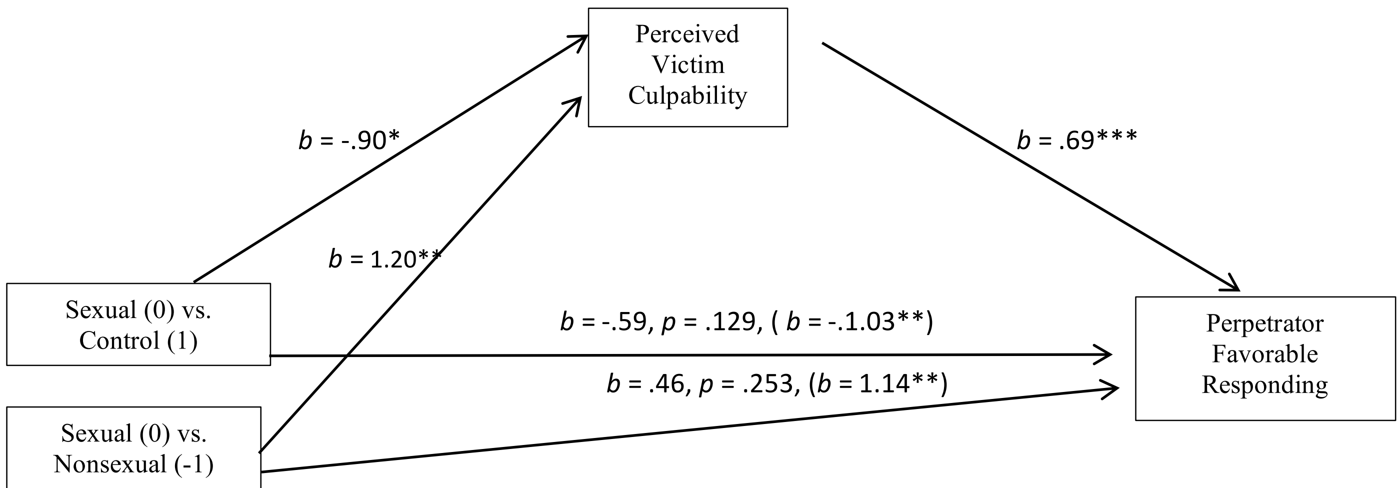
Table 1

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Between the Major Study Variables

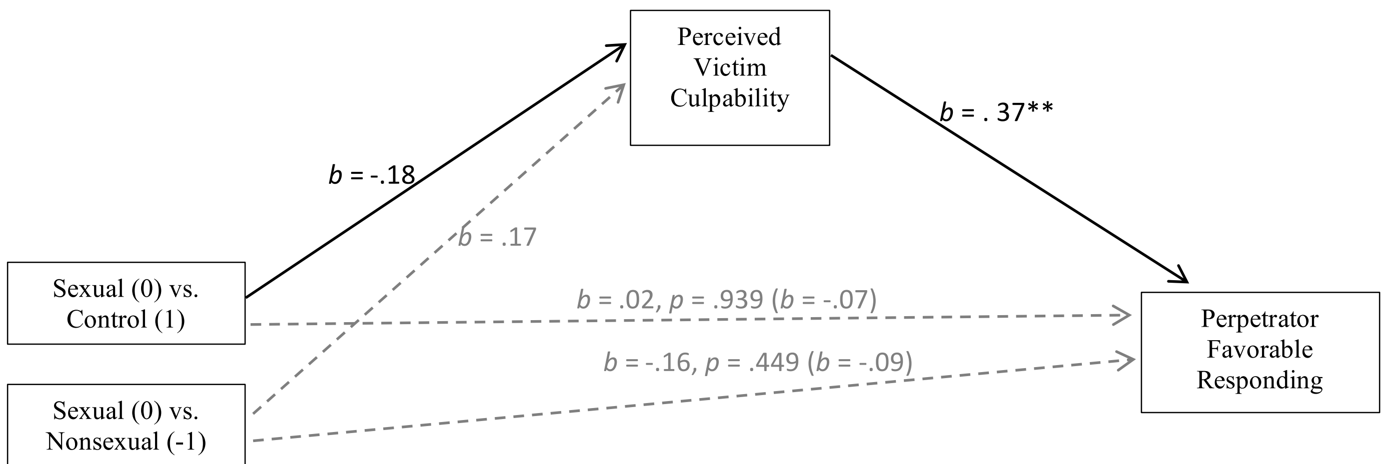
		Correlations	
Variables	*M* (*SD*)	Victim Culpability	Perpetrator Favorability
Victim Culpability	2.00 (0.89)	--	
Perpetrator Favorability	2.53 (1.17)	.59**	--
Victim Pain	4.34 (0.91)	-.25**	-.30**

Note. $n = 243$.

** $p < .01$.



(a) Low Perceived Victim Pain (Indirect Effect = .69, 95% CI [.29, 1.37])



(b) High Perceived Victim Pain (Indirect Effect = .07, 95% CI [-.02, .27])

Figure 1. Moderated-Mediation model testing the indirect effects of video type on perpetrator favorable responding through perceived victim culpability when perceived victim pain is (a) low (at the 16th percentile) and (b) high (at the 84th percentile). The total effects are shown in parenthesis and the direct effects (after controlling for perceived victim culpability) are shown without parenthesis. *b* indicates the unstandardized coefficients. Solid black lines represent significance at the $p = .05$ level whereas dashed grey lines represent nonsignificant effects.
$^*p < .05$. $^{**}p < .01$. $^{***}p < .001$.