

**Attitudes towards Physical and Psychological Aggression between Intimate Partners:
A Factorial Vignette Analysis**

by

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A thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
Auburn University
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the Degree of
Master of Science

Auburn, Alabama
August 4, 2012

Keywords: Interpersonal Relationships, Intimate Partner Violence, Attitudes
Physical Aggression, Psychological Aggression, Vignette Methodology

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Abstract

Existing literature supports an association between attitudes toward violence and the perpetration of violent behavior (Carr & VanDeusen, 2002; Falchikov, 1996; Lichter & McCloskey, 2004). To further our understanding of these attitudes, the current study examined the way in which individuals make judgments of mutually perpetrated psychological and physical acts within intimate relationships. A vignette methodology was used to examine various participant and contextual factors in tandem, which expanded upon Carlson's (1999) prior work by using less severe forms of physical aggression and psychological aggression, as well as reciprocal violence, in the vignettes. Our results suggest that participant gender and measures of social desirability account for some of the variability in attitudes towards reciprocal IPV. However, several aspects of the vignettes also influenced an individual's attitudes, which included gender of the perpetrator, prior history of IPV in the relationship, perpetrator's use of alcohol, and perceived severity of the acts of physical and psychological aggression. We also found that the perceived similarity, in terms of level of aggressiveness, between reciprocal acts of violence was also relevant, but this effect was moderated by gender of the instigating partner.

Acknowledgements

This thesis would not have been possible without the encouragement and support of the people around me, to only some of whom it is possible to give particular mention here.

Above all, I want to thank my husband, Scott, for his unconditional love, encouragement, and patience with the (seemingly) never-ending journey of graduate school. Thank you for driving three hours to and from work each day for two years so we didn't have to live apart, and for always lightening the load. I love and appreciate you infinitely. I want to thank Dr. Richard Mattson, my advisor and fellow music aficionado, who has provided me with intellectual guidance, encouraged me when I felt too overwhelmed to continue, and has consistently been a source of support. To my parents, other family, and friends: I am so thankful to have you all in my life. Thank you for putting up with the scarcity of my phone calls and visits, and feigning interest when I explain my research. I am so thankful for all the unconditional support and love you've given me the past three years; it means the world to me.

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Introduction

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a substantial public health issue within the United States, with 5.3 million reported incidents of IPV against women each year and 3.2 million against men. Moreover, IPV has many serious psychological consequences; including posttraumatic stress disorder, depression, substance abuse, and suicidal behaviors (Caetano & Cunradi, 2003; Campbell, 2002; Coker et al., 2002; Hines & Malley Morrison, 2001; Kaslow et al., 1998, 2010; Koss et al., 2003; Mechanic, 2004). Considered together, the prevalence of IPV and its deleterious consequences underscore the need for research that identifies its causes, clarifies factors that may help ameliorate its consequences, and raises the importance of this topic to the attention of the public at large.

Why Study Attitudes towards IPV Perpetration?

Research supports an association between attitudes toward violence and the perpetration of violent behavior. In the foregoing sections we review the literature on (a) violence supportive attitudes and IPV perpetration, as well as (b) the societal costs of violence supportive attitudes.

Violence supportive attitudes and IPV perpetration. Studies indicate that accepting attitudes towards IPV is one of the strongest predictors of its perpetration. Indeed, the prevalence of violence in intimate relationships is higher among couples where one or both partners express tolerant attitudes towards violence (Carr & VanDeusen, 2002; Falchikov, 1996; Lichter & McCloskey, 2004; Riggs & O'Leary, 1996; Slep, Cascardi, Avery-Leaf, & O'Leary, 2001). In addition, men who ascribe to more traditional, rigid and hetero-normative gender role attitudes are more likely to engage in IPV (Murnen, Wright, & Kaluzny, 2002; O'Neil & Harway, 1997).

Furthermore, research suggests a substantial portion of batterer intervention programs (BIP), which attempt to change attitudes and beliefs that reinforce violent behaviors, reduce rates of violence in intimate relationships, at least in the short-term (Edleson & Tolman, 1992; Eisikovits & Edleson, 1989; Gondolf & Hanneken, 1987; Tolman & Bennett, 1990). As such, a greater understanding of attitudes towards violence may be critical in developing prevention strategies targeting the reduction of IPV, and also may enhance theoretical models on the underlying causes of physical and psychological aggression in intimate relationships.

The societal costs of violence supportive attitudes. In addition to the attitudes of those perpetrating IPV, attitudes within a societal and community context are also important. Individuals who are not directly experiencing or perpetrating violence may still become involved in cases of IPV (e.g., mental health professionals), and the attributions they make about the causes and contributing factors involved may have important clinical and legal implications. For example, beliefs held by mental health professionals about the contributing factors of IPV may influence the treatment they provide for victims and perpetrators of domestic violence (Nayak, Byrne, Martin, & Abraham, 2003). Furthermore, the existence of violence-supportive beliefs within a community may lead to less empathetic and supportive reactions towards victims of violence. Indeed, research by Pavlou and Knowles (2001) indicates that individuals who make negative attributions about or blame victims of violence also are less likely to say that they would report the incident to the police, yet more likely to recommend lenient or no penalties for the offender.

More tolerant attitudes towards IPV at the social and cultural level may also create major obstacles for public policies addressing these behaviors and their consequences. For example, if the sexual orientation of an IPV victim mitigates ratings of the violent act's seriousness,

government officials may be slow to protect these individuals or categorize acts towards members of sexual minority groups as violent. Identifying how individuals assign blame to victims of IPV, as well as evaluate the seriousness of or justification for certain violent acts, also has implications for litigation. For example, a trial attorney knowing which factors to “point out” to imply fault or blame for the occurrence of a certain act can have serious implications for judgments and sentencing (Kopper, 1996; Krahe, Temkin, & Bieneck, 2007; L’Armand & Pepitone, 1982). Although it is important to target the attitudes towards those individuals directly experiencing incidents of IPV, it is arguably more pressing to examine pervasive, societal viewpoints towards violence to achieve widespread change (Fabiano et. al, 2003; Flood & Pease, 2009; Salazar & Cook, 2006).

Factors Shown to Affect Judgments of IPV

Individuals’ evaluations and judgments of IPV have been shown to vary across multiple contextual and dispositional factors. In an effort to understand how observers attribute responsibility to the partners involved in IPV, researchers have identified various factors that influence attributions; such as gender of the perpetrator (Arias and Johnson, 1989; Rouse, Breen, & Howell, 1988), victim behavior (Leigh & Aramburu, 1994; Witte, Schroeder, and Lohr, 2006), and alcohol use (Lane & Knowles, 2000). The context in which most violent acts occur within intimate relationships is often extremely complex; many possible individual and contextual factors may yield partial or incomplete answers when examined in isolation. In addition, although many studies have focused on the various types of violence in which intimate dyads engage, fewer studies have looked at individuals’ attributions of blame in these interactions, as well as what constitutes abusive behavior within an interaction.

However, a study done by Carlson (1999) used an innovative methodology to

simultaneously identify participant characteristics (e.g., gender and history of violence) and specific situational factors that influenced judgments about the violent or abusive nature of particular aggressive behaviors (e.g., alcohol use and provocation). Her methodology included vignettes depicting violent interactions between intimate dyads. These vignettes varied on a number of different factors, including provocation of violence (by the victim), gender of the perpetrator, history of violence in the relationship, and severity of the aggressive act. After presenting the participants with these vignettes, they were asked to make social judgments on separate continuous scales about how violent and how abusive they considered the act to be. The results of the study indicated that the perceived severity of the aggressive acts had a direct effect on perceived abusiveness; the more severe acts of aggression were more likely to be perceived as aggressive. In addition, the victim's gender and sexual orientation were significant predictors of abusiveness ratings; the depiction of female and gay or lesbian victims yielded higher judgments of abusiveness. Injurious outcomes, even those not requiring medical attention, and any history of violence in the relationship – including just one prior incident – significantly increased abusiveness ratings. In terms of participant characteristics, the gender of the participant significantly predicted abusiveness ratings: Male participants were less likely to label the depicted incidents as abusive as female participants.

The current study seeks to replicate and extend Carlson's (1999) findings in a number of ways. First, we included less severe forms of physical aggression. The violent nature of the acts used within Carlson's study may have masked many of the contextual effects of the modeled variables. More specifically, because she only included severe forms of physical aggression, the acts may have overshadowed the effects of situational factors; such as provocation of violence, which may be significant determinants of attitudes for more minor acts of aggression. Second,

we included reciprocal acts of violence because the research suggests a substantial portion of IPV takes place within this context (Hines & Douglas, 2010; Olsen, 2002). Carlson's study, while it included both male and female perpetrators of violence, employed vignettes with one victim and perpetrator (i.e., one act of violence). Third, we included acts of psychological aggression within the vignettes. Presently including psychological aggression may significantly contribute to the literature on this relatively understudied type of IPV, as well as help parse out many of the effects that were potentially overshadowed in Carlson's study due to the severe physicality of the violent acts used. I address each of these extensions in more detail within the following sections.

Nature of the acts used. The nature of the violent acts upon which the vignettes varied may have limited the results of Carlson's (1999) study. Carlson chose the violent acts for her study from the Conflict Tactics Scale-2 (CTS-2; Straus et. al, 1996), which ranged from "throws an ashtray" to "fires gun at". After participants read the vignettes containing an act of violence between a perpetrator and a victim, they were asked to make 2 judgment ratings: "(1) To what extent would you consider this behavior violent?" and (2) "To what extent would you consider this behavior abusive?" Her results indicated that the participants' abuse and violence ratings were highly correlated ($r = .85$), and the frequency distributions indicated that 88% of the violence ratings and 89% of the abuse ratings were at or above the midpoint of the 10-point Likert-type scale. These findings indicate that the respondents perceived all the acts in the study as severely violent, and that severe violence and abuse are fairly synonymous constructs at high levels of severity.

Although the terms "abuse" and "violence" are often used interchangeably in the context of IPV, the concepts are potentially distinct and may require separate examination. Abusive acts

are not necessarily physically violent. For example, psychological abuse within couples – defined as verbal aggression, dominant behaviors, intimidation, and jealous behaviors – also can be used instead of physical violence in order to exercise control and dominance over a partner (Hamel, 2007, 2009; Olsen, 2004). The results of her participant ratings indicate that the acts chosen for her study were viewed as relatively severe; and, perhaps because of this, participants were unable to make a distinction between the terms “violence” and “abuse.” For example, firing a gun at a partner is such a severe form of violence that distinguishing between abusiveness and violence becomes unnecessary.

As an additional potential consequence, the effects of some of the other variables included in the study may have been masked and much of the variability may have been accounted for by the acts themselves. Perhaps if less violent acts had been used, or more severe forms of psychological aggression had been included in the vignettes, other contextual factors may have emerged as significant determinants of participants’ attitudes. For example, Carlson’s (1999) study indicated that provocation, in terms of interacting in a variety of ways with a former lover, was unrelated to participant abusiveness ratings. However, this finding is not entirely surprising, given that all the acts of violence depicted within the vignettes were relatively severe in comparison with the acts of provocation; that is, the discrepancy between the act of provocation and the act of retaliation seems rather large. If the acts of retaliatory violence were viewed as less severe (i.e., psychological aggression or acts that occur more frequently in couples), situational factors may account for more of the variance in participant abusiveness ratings.

Reciprocal violence. In addition to the relative severity of all the acts chosen for the study, many of the violent acts represented are fairly uncommon relative to other types of

aggression in intimate relationships. Most of the current literature on IPV has been conducted with abused women and supports the assumption that IPV is primarily perpetrated by men against females. However, a growing body of literature suggests that IPV is often perpetrated by both partners within intimate relationships (Archer, 2000; Brush, 1990; Straus & Gelles, 1995). This type of violence – termed here as reciprocal violence – comprises the mutual perpetration of violence by both members of an intimate dyad. This definition does not assume, however, that the frequency or the severity of the violence is equal or similar between partners, only that it is mutually expressed.

Various studies have estimated the prevalence rate of reciprocal violence in intimate relationships to be between 25% and 50% (Hines & Douglas, 2010; Olsen, 2002). Currently, there is limited research on attitudes towards reciprocal violence, despite that this type of violence is reported to occur frequently between intimate partners. Incorporating acts that would be classified as reciprocal into the vignettes may help identify factors relevant to attitudes towards more frequent forms of IPV, which will in turn increase the generalizability (and potentially clinical utility) of the research findings. In addition, by framing the acts of IPV within a mutually violent context, it will allow for an examination of attitudes towards acts of retaliatory violence and how individuals make judgments about this more commonly occurring phenomenon.

Psychological aggression. Although the prevalence rates and consequences of physical violence in intimate relationships have been thoroughly examined in the literature, fewer studies have focused on the prevalence rates of psychological aggression in couples, despite the long- and short-term deleterious effects of this type of IPV (e.g., Arias & Pape, 1999; Coker et al., 2002; Haj-Yahia, 1999; Sackett & Saunders, 1999; Straight, Harper, & Arias, 2003; Taft et al.,

2006). Similarly, even fewer studies have addressed people's perceptions of and attitudes towards psychological aggression. Studies that have examined the link between the use of physical and psychological aggression in intimate relationships consistently show that the two are highly correlated (e.g., Hines & Saudino, 2003; Murphy & O'Leary, 1989; Stets, 1990). Although the two forms of violence differ in content, they are similar in function. Both psychological and physical aggression can be used to exert power and control over a partner within an intimate relationship (Finkelhor, 1983; O'Leary & Jouriles, 1993; Tolman, 1992). Furthermore, research has indicated that psychological aggression in many cases predates physical aggression. For instance, psychological abuse occurring at 18 months of marriage has been shown to predict physical aggression in the marriage 1 year later (O'Leary, Malone, & Tyree, 1994), suggesting that intervention strategies targeting incidences of psychological aggression may ultimately reduce or prevent future acts of physical aggression. In addition to the similarities in function, both psychological and physical aggression lead to many of the same negative long-term consequences for men and women. A study by Vivian and Langhinrichsen-Rohling (1994) found that both men and women rated the impact of receiving psychological abuse equally negatively, and reported similar levels of depressive symptoms. A more recent longitudinal study by Hill and colleagues examined long-term health consequences of psychological aggression, reciprocal violence (i.e., less severe forms of physical aggression), and sexual coercion (Hill, Schroeder, Bradley, Kaplan, & Angel, 2009). They found that forms of psychological aggression predicted increases in psychological distress, whereas minor physical assault and sexual coercion predicted increases in externalizing symptoms (i.e., alcohol intoxication). Similarly, a study done by Taft et al. (2006) demonstrated that psychological aggression victimization was associated with greater psychological distress, anxiety, and physical

health symptoms beyond the effects of physical aggression. Their results also showed that psychological aggression victimization was also uniquely associated with higher levels of depression for women.

In summary, Carlson's (1999) study, although it thoroughly addressed attitudes toward acts of physical violence, doesn't include acts of psychological abuse. Currently, there is limited research to suggest how individuals view and make judgments about acts of psychological aggression. Given what we know about the similarities between physical and psychological aggression, in terms of function and outcome, there is reason to suspect that the significant effects of situational factors in measuring attitudes towards physical aggression will also transfer to acts of psychological aggression.

Current Study

Carlson's (1999) findings coincide with the growing evidence on the impact of various dispositional and situational factors in making attributions towards IPV. In the present study, we extended her findings in a variety of ways. First, our vignettes included less severe forms of physical aggression. The severe violent nature of the acts used within Carlson's study may have masked many of the contextual effects of the modeled variables. We currently hypothesized that additional situational factors (i.e., presence of alcohol, dating history) would emerge as significant predictors at lower levels of aggression. Second, we included mutually-violent dyads within our vignettes in order to increase the generalizability of Carlson's research findings. Indeed, the evidence suggests that this type of violence occurs frequently in intimate dyads (Hines & Douglas, 2010; Olsen, 2002). Third, this study expanded on Carlson's findings by varying the nature of the violent acts used in vignettes to include psychological aggression. The inclusion of psychological aggression within Carlson's study may have significantly contributed

to the existing literature on this type of IPV, as well as helped to parse out many of the effects that may have been minimized due to the severity of the violent acts used. By expanding on the research in these ways, we hypothesized certain factors may emerge as significant due to the limited severity and variability of the violent acts. In addition, because the violence is mutually perpetrated within the current study, the individuals within the current dyad occupied both the role of the victim and the perpetrator. Thus, two additional independent variables are added to the analysis: The instigating aggressive act and the aggressive act done in retaliation. We posed the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: The individual and situational factors that predicted ratings of abusiveness in Carlson's (1999) study using more severe forms of violence should replicate in the current study using less severe forms of violence. Consistent with Carlson's findings and other prior research, there will be a main effect for certain individual factors (e.g., gender of the participant; Arias & Johnson, 1989; Locke & Richman, 1999; Merten & Williams, 2009) and situational factors (e.g., gender of the instigator; Rouse, Breen, & Howell, 1988). We hypothesized that acts of aggression instigated by women will be less likely to be labeled as abusive as the same acts instigated by men. Also, we predicted that female respondents will be more likely to label aggressive acts as more aggressive than will male respondents.

Hypothesis 2: There will be a significant interaction between discrepancy of the two aggressive acts of retaliation and instigation and the contextual variables; we hypothesize that the contextual factors will have the greatest impact on evaluations of the behaviors when the discrepancy between instigation and retaliation is low. In other words, acceptability and the evaluation of abuse will be more sensitive to the contextual factors

under a condition of lower perceived discrepancy between the severity of the two acts.

Method

Participants

Three hundred and fifty-four participants initiated the study and, of those, 33 participants were excluded from data analysis because they (a) were multivariate outliers, and/or (b) failed to complete one or all of the study measures (e.g., the CTS) and/or (c) responded in a random fashion (i.e., random letters, rather than actual responses). The final sample included 321 undergraduates enrolled in Introductory to Psychology courses. Questionnaire sessions were conducted through an anonymous online format that participants could access on any internet-connected computer. Participants were compensated with documentation of their participation on Sona-Systems, which then could be used for extra credit in their undergraduate psychology courses. This documentation of participation was not connected to the participants' responses. Participants received 1 hour of extra credit for participating in the questionnaire session.

Participants ranged in age from 19 to 29, with a mean age in years of 20.5 ($SD = 1.54$). Fifteen percent were freshmen, 32% were sophomores, 27% were juniors, and 26% were seniors. Similar to other surveys on dating violence, female students were overrepresented; constituting 74% of respondents (as compared to 49% on campus). The majority of the sample identified as single (41%) or as being in a serious dating relationship (46%). A smaller percentage identified as being in a casual dating relationship (11%) or married (2%). Of those individuals in an intimate relationship (seriously dating, casually dating, or married), 11.5% reported cohabitating with their partner.

Measures

Demographic questionnaire. The demographic questionnaire consisted of a number of category variables; such as age, gender, religion, ethnicity, education level, and work status. Also, a number of relationship-specific variables were included in the demographic questionnaire, such as relationship length and the living arrangement with their partner.

The Crowne-Marlowe Social Desirability Scale. The Crowne-Marlowe Social Desirability Scale (CMSDS; Crowne and Marlowe, 1960) was designed to measure the tendency of individuals to project favorable images of themselves during social interaction. For the current study, the scale was utilized to statistically control for the tendency of individuals to respond in a socially desirable manner towards socially undesirable actions. This measure contains 33 true-false items that describe both acceptable but improbable behaviors, as well as those deemed unacceptable but probable. The CMSDS has a reliability factor of .86-.89 and demonstrates satisfactory construct validity and high inter-item correlations ($r = 0.73$ or higher; Crown & Marlowe, 1964). Higher scores on the CMSDS indicate higher levels of socially desirable responding. Scores on the CMSDS presently ranged from 34 to 65, and yielded a mean of 47.97 ($SD = 5.23$); $\alpha = .77$.

The Conflict Tactics Scale-Revised. The Conflict Tactics Scale-Revised (CTS2; Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, & Sugarman, 1996) was designed to measure the various types of behaviors used to solve conflicts between intimate partners. It consists of 39 item pairs, asking respondents to report how many times in a given time period they or their partner engaged in a particular behaviors during relationship conflicts. This revised version includes four subscales

that assess different types of tactics (negotiation, psychological aggression, physical assault, and sexual coercion), as well as a physical injury subscale that addresses the impact of violence. For the current study, we utilized 13 item pairs from the psychological aggression and physical assault subscales, each of which comprised minor and severe subcomponents. These items were used in two ways.

First, items were used as the violent acts in the vignettes presented to participants, and were selected on the basis of pilot data. Specifically, participants engaged in a Q-sort task of aggressive acts taken from the psychological aggression and physical assault subscales of the CTS and CTS2 scales. Based on these data, the items selected appeared to best encompass the full range of severity (from more minor to more severe) and there was a considerable amount of variability in individual attitudes towards them (in terms of ratings of severity). It seemed reasonable to select items based on higher variability in attitudes, as those items in which attitudes were more uniform (e.g., shot with a gun) may have been less influenced by contextual factors.

Second, these same CTS2 items were administered to participants in order to assess their individual histories with these acts. We collected this data to later evaluate whether or not a personal history with these behaviors would influence attitudes and, thus, should be statistically controlled. Twenty-nine percent of participants endorsed perpetrating some form of psychological aggression at least once in their relationship within the past year. Similarly, 28% of participants endorsed sustaining some type of psychological aggression at least once in a dating relationship within the past year. Eleven percent of participants endorsed perpetrating physical aggression against a dating partner at least once during the past year; 9% of participants endorsed sustaining some type of physical aggression at least once in a dating relationship within

the past year. Items demonstrated good internal reliability within this sample using Cronbach's alpha; the reliability coefficient for the sample was .91.

For the data analyses, participant responses were classified into four categories: Those who (1) infrequently or (2) frequently inflicted aggression (psychological or physical) within the past year (0 to 5 times and 6 to 20 times, respectively), and those who (3) infrequently and (4) frequently sustained aggression (psychological or physical) within the past year (0 to 5 times and 6 to 20 times, respectively). This approach is similar to Carlson's (1999) methodology: Participant responses on the CTS were classified into infrequent and frequent infliction of and sustaining IPV.

Vignette questionnaire. Participants were required to read a hypothetical scenario (i.e., vignette) of approximately 60-70 words depicting an act of aggression between a heterosexual couple. Seven independent variables were employed within the vignettes. *Relationship type* consisted of two levels; casually dating and seriously dating. *History of abuse* in the relationship included two levels; no violence occurring within the relationship or violence occurring several times within the relationship. *Alcohol consumption* had four levels; neither individual drinking, only the instigator drinking, only the retaliator drinking, and both individuals drinking. *Gender of the instigator* and *gender of the retaliator* each had two levels (i.e., male or female). However, as the vignettes were constructed in a way to only be representative of heterosexual relationships, these variables were linearly dependent and were therefore condensed into a single index representing whether or not the instigator was male.

After reading the vignettes, participants completed a short questionnaire. Items within the questionnaire pertained to *instigator responsibility* [i.e., How responsible do you think (instigator's name) was for (retaliator's) behavior] and *retaliator justifiability*, ([i.e., Do you

think (retaliator's name)'s behavior was a justifiable response to (instigator's name)'s behavior?]. Participants were asked to rank these items using a Likert-type scale; responses ranged from 1 (*Not at all responsible/justifiable*) to 11 (*Very responsible/justifiable*). Participants were also asked to rank the similarity of the two acts of IPV on a Likert-type scale. Responses ranged from 1 (*Not at all similar*) to 11 (*Very Similar*). For reference, a sample vignette is located in the Appendix. The two measures of instigator responsibility and retaliator justifiability were determined to be fairly positively correlated ($r = .40, p < .001$).

For both ratings of responsibility and justifiability, the scores ranged from 1 to 11. The mean rating for the responsibility scale was 8.52 ($SD = 2.69$); whereas the mean rating for the justifiability scale was 5.54 ($SD = 3.46$). Ratings of similarity also ranged from 1 to 11 and yielded a mean of 6.35 ($SD = 3.43$). Note that our criterion measures differed somewhat from those in Carlson's (1999) study, which required participants to rate the extent that they found acts "abusive" or "violent". The evaluation of how violent an act was, which implies some level of physicality, seemed less appropriate for acts of psychological aggression. More importantly, the research focus was on the way in which individuals attribute causality and blame for reciprocal aggression, making attitudes about responsibility and justifiability the more appropriate criteria.

Procedure

The study was conducted entirely online. Participants accessed the study through the Sona-Systems website. The study survey was created utilizing Qualtrics online survey software (Qualtrics Labs Inc., Provo, UT). Once on the website, participants were informed about the study, possible benefits and detriments of participation, and given the contact information of the researchers. Participants were reminded that they could elect to discontinue the study at any point without risk of retribution or loss of extra credit. To proceed to the study, participants

indicated that they had read the information letter and were at least 19 years of age. Once consent had been given by selecting the “Yes” option and clicking the “Next” button, the participants were presented with the study measures. At the conclusions of the study, a debriefing screen indicated the purpose of the study, as well as a screen for therapist referrals in the event that participation in the study had caused any psychological distress.

Planned Analyses

The multilevel model for change. Multilevel modeling was used to test our hypotheses. MLM will be discussed briefly here; but, for a fuller explication, see Singer and Willett (2003). Multilevel modeling is an extension of hierarchical linear regression that allows for the analysis of “nested” data. Nested data occurs when cases are grouped within higher order units, such as repeated observations within participants. In the current design, responses to vignettes are nested within individuals, with each individual receiving 10 vignettes. Because an individual’s responses across the vignettes are likely to be more similar to each other than they are to another participant’s drawn at random; these responses are said to be non-independent. Non-independence across cases is a violation of an assumption of regression analysis that has marked consequences for significance testing (Kenny, 1995). However, MLM adjusts for the biasing effects of correlated errors (Hayes, 2006).

Another advantage of MLM is that it can parse out variance across the different levels for analysis. In effect, a regression equation is run separately for each individual (e.g., responses to vignettes [Y] for individual i are regressed onto the individual’s values for some set of predictors [X]). When no predictors are entered into the model (i.e., intercepts only), the constant in the equation represents the average value of the criterion (e.g., ratings of perpetrator responsibility/instigator justifiability) across all of the vignettes for a given individual. The

remaining variability in each person's response set – deviations from the individual's average response– represents unexplained or residual variance. This variability is referred to as individual level or level-1 variance.

There is another level of residual error termed level-2 variance. Essentially, parameter estimates (e.g., intercepts) for each individual regression model are aggregated and allow for two kinds of effects; namely, fixed effects and random effects. A fixed effect is a population average effect across individuals. For example, in an intercepts only model, the fixed effect for the constant is the grand mean of all of the individual intercepts. As the grand mean is unlikely to characterize all individual cases in terms of intercept (or any other parameter), there is often unexplained variance (i.e., error variance) around the fixed effect estimates. That is, each individual intercept is likely to vary around the grand mean intercept. The level-2 residuals therefore represent the unaccounted for variance in the fixed effects, and are referred to as “random effects.” These coefficients can be tested to determine if the amount of variance around the fixed effect is significantly different than 0. If it is different than 0, then the interpretation is that the fixed effect (i.e., population average) does not explain all of the variability in the individual estimates. Unexplained level-1 or level-2 error variance justifies the addition of predictor variables at each level. Note that the only parameters in the model set to vary randomly were the intercepts for each criterion. That is, only an individual's average rating across cases was allowed to vary around the grand mean; effects for all other model parameters (e.g., vignette characteristics) were fixed.

Results

Model Analysis

Model specification. We tested a two-level model in which responses were nested within individuals. Each of the levels that define the factorial object set will be expressed as binary (dummy) variables (see Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003) and will be used as independent variables in the regression equation of the judgments of instigator responsibility and retaliator justifiability. Preliminary models analyzed the fixed effects for the intercepts to quantify individual differences in ratings in the absence of predictor variables. Subsequent models added participant and contextual predictors in order to account for additional variance in responsibility and justifiability ratings.

We adapted SPSS syntax provided by Kenny et al. (2006) to specify a two-intercept model (also see, Raudenbush, Brennan, & Barnett, 1995). The two intercepts in the model represent each of the criterion measures. Each predictor was effectively added twice to the model – once for each criterion. The reason for including both criteria in the same model was because average ratings of responsibility and justifiability were likely to be correlated across individuals. As such, adding the covariance between the criterion as a random effect was likely the more accurate model; it assumes that an individual's average ratings for instigator responsibility and retaliator justifiability not only vary randomly around their respective fixed intercepts, but that these random effects are related. Model testing proceeded in a series of steps.

Model A. An unconditional means model – including only intercept terms (i.e., no predictors added to the model) for the dependent variables (instigator responsibility and retaliator

justifiability) – was conducted to provide a baseline against which to evaluate subsequent models. The fixed effects for the intercepts indicated that that the grand mean ratings of instigator responsibility and retaliator justifiability were significantly different from 0 ($b = 8.52, t = 72.94, p < .001$ and $b = 5.54, t = 41.72, p < .001$, respectively). The random effects indicated that individuals' mean responsibility and justifiability ratings varied significantly around their respective grand mean (Wald $Z = 11.15, p < .001$ and Wald $Z = 11.50, p < .001$, respectively); and the covariance between outcome ratings across outcome type was also significant (Wald $Z = 6.67, p < .001$). In addition, there was significant level-1 variability across cases within individuals (Wald $Z = 53.63, p < .001$); indicating that ratings for each vignette deviated from the average rating across individuals. Taken together, there was significant unexplained variability in the criteria that justified the inclusion of additional predictors.

Model B. The second model examined respondent characteristics (sex, age, having inflicted or sustained violence in current or past dating relationships, scores on the CMSDS). These represent level-2 variables – they do not vary across vignettes and so cannot explain level-1 residual error (i.e., within subject variation in ratings across vignettes). However, they may account for why individual parameter estimates (e.g., intercept) vary around the fixed effects. The results indicated age and past history of IPV in current or past relationships were not significant predictors (and both were subsequently dropped from the model). Participant sex was predictive of differences in IPV ratings (although not differentially across outcome type). Women were less likely than men to rate the instigator as responsible and also less likely to rate the retaliator as justified for their respective acts of IPV ($t = -2.09, p < .05$). We also found that higher scores on the CMSDS were predictive of lower ratings for retaliator justifiability ($t = -3.12, p < .05$), but not responsibility ($t = -3.12, ns$).

Model C. We then entered the level-1 contextual predictors: Gender of the instigator (female instigated = 0, male instigated = 1), relationship type (casually dating = 0, seriously dating = 1), history of aggression (0 = no history of aggression, 1 = violence occurring several times in the past), instigator intoxication (0 = instigator not intoxicated, 1 = instigator intoxicated), and both intoxicated (0 = neither individual drinking, 1 = both individuals drinking).

Estimates of fixed effects demonstrated that male-instigated IPV was predictive of higher responsibility ratings ($t = 4.58, p < .001$). In addition, male-instigated violence was predictive of higher justifiability ratings for the acts of retaliation ($t = 15.76, p < .001$). In other words, when males initiated an act of IPV against a female, acts of IPV done in retaliation by a female were seen as significantly more justified. In addition, history of aggression within the relationship also predicted higher ratings of instigator responsibility ($t = 2.77, p < .05$) and levels of retaliator justifiability ($t = 2.69, p < .05$). That is, participants who viewed vignettes where an instigator previously perpetrated aggression against their dating partner were more likely to rate the instigator as responsible for the retaliator's behavior; as well as rate the retaliator as more justified in their response against the instigator. Presence of alcohol significantly predicted participant ratings of responsibility and justifiability, but only when the instigator alone consumed alcohol. That is, the presence of alcohol consumption by only the instigator within the vignettes was predictive of higher responsibility ratings ($t = 3.14, p < .05$) and higher justifiability ratings for the acts of retaliation ($t = 2.49, p < .05$).

Model D. We then added to the model the discrepancy of the violent acts (using participant ratings of similarity between the two acts of aggression) within the vignettes. The results indicated that perceived similarity between the two acts of aggression was predictive of

higher levels of instigator responsibility ($t = 6.25, p = .001$) and higher levels of retaliator justifiability ($t = 13.63, p = .001$). In other words, the more similar the participant viewed the acts of aggression within the vignettes, the more likely they were to view the instigator as more responsible and rate the retaliator as more justified in their response.

Next, we tested the interaction between discrepancy of the violent acts and perceived responsibility and justifiability ratings. It was hypothesized that there would be a significant interaction between discrepancy of the two aggressive acts and the contextual variables, and that the contextual factors would have the greatest impact on evaluations of the behaviors when the discrepancy between instigation and retaliation is low.

However, a significant interaction was found with only one contextual factor; namely, gender of the instigator. The results indicated that when the discrepancy between the act of instigation and retaliation was low (i.e., high perceived similarity), ratings of instigator responsibility (Figure 1) and retaliator justifiability (Figure 2) didn't vary as a function of instigator gender. However, under conditions of high discrepancy (i.e., low perceived similarity), instigator responsibility and retaliator justifiability ratings varied as a function of gender. When the discrepancy was high, female-instigation was associated with lower ratings of instigator responsibility and retaliator justifiability ($t = -4.17, p < .001$; $t = -8.78, p < .001$, respectively). That is, when men retaliated to female instigation with highly discrepant (i.e., more severe) aggressive acts, women were held less responsible (i.e., lower responsibility ratings) for the retaliation and the men's behavior was viewed as less justified. However, when women retaliated with more severe aggression to men's instigation, (a) the men were not viewed as any less responsible for this outcome, and (b) the women were not viewed as any less justified in

their responses. The estimates for each parameter in the final model (Model D) are presented in Table 1.

Discussion

A plethora of research demonstrates the negative physical and psychological effects of IPV (Caetano & Cunradi, 2003; Campbell, 2002; Coker et al., 2002; Hines & Malley Morrison, 2001; Kaslow et al., 1998, 2010; Koss et al., 2003; Mechanic, 2004). Despite the abundance of literature on the prevalence rates and negative consequences of IPV, studies examining attitudes toward IPV in dating relationships have been limited. Indeed, Smith et al. (2005) reported that “[o]nly a handful of studies has examined college students’ attitudes toward violence in intimate relationships” (p. 445), with researchers focusing mainly on “prevalence and severity of IPV and, only secondarily, on attitudes toward violence” (p. 446). However, attitudes towards IPV is one of the strongest predictors of violence (Carr & VanDeusen, 2002; Falchikov, 1996; Lichter & McCloskey, 2004; Riggs & O’Leary, 1996; Slep, Cascardi, Avery-Leaf, & O’Leary, 2001), making the dearth of research on this important topic somewhat surprising. However, the goal of the current study was to help address this gap in the literature. Specifically, it examined the way in which individuals make judgments of mutually perpetrated psychological and physical acts within intimate relationships. Using a vignette methodology, this study expanded on Carlson’s (1999) work by using less severe and reciprocal forms of physical and psychological aggression.

Consistent with Carlson’s (1999) results, we found that male instigators of violence were viewed more negatively than female instigators of violence (i.e., male instigators were seen as more responsible for their acts of violence, and acts of violence done in retaliation were rated as more justifiable). These results are also consistent with prior research that shows male-instigated aggression is judged more severely than female-instigated aggression, even controlling for the

specific aggressive acts themselves (Buzawa & Buzawa, 1990; Brown, 2004; Marshall, 1992; Rouse et al, 1988). Despite the picture of IPV documented within the empirical literature, which points to the high prevalence rates of female-instigated aggression (Archer, 2000, 2002; Brown, 2004; Laroche, 2005) and the negative consequences men face in its wake (Cascardi et al., 1992; Felson & Cares, 2005; Hines & Malley-Morrison, 2001; Mattson, O'Farrell, Monson, Panuzio, & Taft, 2010); male victimization appears not to be taken seriously. This may be due, in part, to a cultural belief that men should be able to defend themselves. Indeed, there is research indicating that male victims of IPV are treated less seriously than female victims (Buzawa, 1992; Henning & Renauer, 2005). However, by continuing to illuminate the issue of female-perpetrated IPV, and underscoring its negative physical and psychological effects, perhaps public opinion of male victimization will begin to shift.

We also replicated Carlson's (1999) finding that specifying a history of relationship violence in the vignette significantly increased ratings of instigator responsibility and retaliator justifiability. Although research on this effect is somewhat limited to Carlson's and the present findings, there is prior research demonstrating somewhat discrepant findings. For example, in examining psychologists' conceptualizations of male-perpetrated IPV between heterosexual couples, Wandrei and Rupert (2000) found that greater responsibility was attributed to the victim of IPV when she had a previous history of being abused by a partner, as compared with no history of victimization. By contrast, our findings seem to suggest the opposite: Individuals, in judging acts of IPV that were considered to be chronic, made negative attributions about the *instigator* which, in turn, led to higher levels of instigator responsibility and retaliator justifiability. One possible reason for the discrepancy in findings is that psychologists may view the same contextual information in different ways. For example, in looking for patterns to

formulate case conceptualizations, the participants may have been more inclined to focus on the ways in which the victim's personality, disposition, or habitual behavior contributed to the consistency in IPV over time (or potentially viewed the aggression as emerging from an interactive dyadic system). In any case, future research should continue to investigate the ways in which individuals use a reported history of violence (either individually or mutually perpetrated) in dating relationships to evaluate current instances of IPV.

The current study and Carlson's (1999) findings also seem to suggest that participants' past direct experiences with IPV in dating relationships are not predictive of judgments of aggression. However, it is plausible that other issues with these data may have underscored a Type II error. For example, in the current study, the number of individuals who endorsed frequently experiencing dating violence within the past year (either inflicting or sustaining) was fairly low. Perhaps the effects of past experiences with IPV on judgments of dating aggression may have emerged using a sample of individuals who endorsed a history of more frequently occurring IPV. Nevertheless, both Carlson's study and the present investigation measured judgments of aggression differently and in a different sample, providing some evidence of converging operations.

Some of our findings were inconsistent with those of Carlson (1999). For example, Carlson found that, for male participants, the presence of alcohol was a significant predictor for abusiveness ratings, but not for female participants. In our study, the presence of alcohol significantly predicted participant ratings of responsibility and justifiability across participant gender, but only when the instigator alone consumed alcohol. Due to the fact that we separated the consumption of alcohol out across participants (as opposed to generally stating that alcohol was present), we may have been able to parse out some effect otherwise missed by Carlson.

Note, however, that the existing research examining perceived culpability of intoxicated aggression is mixed. Although some of the literature seems to suggest that individuals tend to judge an incident as less severe when alcohol is involved (Richardson and Campbell, 1980, 1982; Stormo et al, 1997; Tryggvesson, 2004), other studies suggest that intoxication of the perpetrator is correlated with increased ratings of blame in violent scenarios (Aramburu and Leigh, 1991; Loza and Clements, 1991; Wild et al., 1998). Our results seem to suggest that participants discredited the role that alcohol played in the perpetration of violence when both individuals were drinking, indicating some level of shared responsibility on the behalf of the intoxicated retaliator.

Additionally, our effects for gender of the participant were also somewhat different from Carlson's (1999) findings. Although we found that participant sex was predictive of differences in IPV ratings (although not differentially across outcome type), our results indicate that (a) women were less likely than men to rate the instigator as responsible and, also, (b) less likely to rate the retaliator as justifiable for their respective acts. Carlson's results indicated that female participants rated acts of aggression as more abusive than male participants. However, it should be noted that the dependent variables across the two studies are somewhat different; ratings of abusiveness about a particular act of IPV may not completely capture the same effect as asking individuals to rate the responsibility of the instigator perpetrating the act (or asking about the justifiability of the retaliator's response to the initial act). Future research should continue to examine the effects of gender in judgments of IPV.

Due to the extension of our design, our findings necessarily differed in a number of ways from Carlson's (1999). First, we added a measure of social desirability to the model, in order to account for possible response bias. Notably, we found a nuanced association between socially

desirable responding and the outcome variables. In particular, higher scores on the CMSDS were predictive of lower ratings for retaliator justifiability, but not responsibility. That is, participants scoring high on a measure of social desirability were less likely to say that the retaliator was justified in their actions. When thinking about socially desirable responses, it seems less socially desirable to say that someone was “justified” to use violence; whereas indicating responsibility in a scenario where both people are inflicting violence perhaps seemed less relevant to the concept of social desirability. Although studies examining attitudes towards IPV and socially desirable responding are scarce, Saunders and Size (1986) found that higher scores on the CMSDS were associated with lower ratings on a scale measuring the view that violence is justified in response to marital infidelity. It seems as though the concepts of retaliator justifiability and instigator responsibility are two distinct measures; the issue of justifiability seems to map onto the construct of moral judgment, whereas indicating responsibility in a scenario where both individuals are engaging in violence may be viewed as more objective (and therefore less susceptible to the response bias of social desirability).

Second, unlike Carlson’s (1999) study, our model included multiple acts of IPV, with individuals within the vignettes serving as either the instigator or the retaliator. This added dimension allowed us to investigate the discrepancy (or perceived similarity) between the two acts of aggression in order to determine its effects on judgments of responsibility and justifiability. We found a significant interaction between perceived similarity of the aggressive acts and gender of the instigator. Specifically, when the discrepancy was high, women were held less responsible for instigating the retaliator’s behavior, which was also viewed as less justified. These results seem to correspond with the previous findings that male-instigated aggression is viewed more negatively than female aggression (Buzawa & Buzawa, 1990; Brown, 2004;

Marshall, 1992; Rouse et al, 1988). In the current study, females initiating more severe acts of violence seem to be perceived less severely than males instigating less severe forms of violence. Importantly, this dismissal of female-perpetrated aggression is harmful in a number of ways. The research suggests that female-perpetrated IPV is becoming more prevalent in intimate relationships (Catalano, 2007; Hines & Douglas, 2010; Straus, 1995; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000); this escalation, combined with dismissive attitudes towards female-perpetrated aggression and the current reluctance of men to seek assistance as victims of IPV (Coker, Derrick, Lumpkin, Alrich, & Oldendick, 2000), may lead to a scarcity of resources for a population in need.

Limitations and Future Directions

Our study's findings should be considered alongside some of its limitations. First, our sample was predominately female, which may have implications for the generalizability of our findings. Additionally, our sample was fairly constrained in terms of age. Specifically, our sample range was from 19-29, with the majority of our sample being freshmen and sophomores in college. Our relatively younger sample may have contributed to why we didn't replicate Carlson's (1999) findings for participant age (her study found age to be predictive of judgments of aggression). Second, our study contained only vignettes in which a history of violence perpetrated by the instigator was present; we did not indicate a past history of reciprocal violence. This inclusion of reciprocal aggression may have allowed for additional (or fewer) factors to emerge as predictive of judgments of aggression, especially given the fact that mutual use of alcohol seemed to predict lower responsibility ratings for the instigator. Other limitations to note: (a) We excluded several potentially relevant dimensions (and levels within dimensions) due to practical constraints. (b) Likewise, we did not examine potentially relevant interactions

between the contextual factors (also for practical reasons). (c) Vignettes were not about real people and were described in writing; and so that which impinges on attitudes in this context may not mirror that which occurs in relevant naturalistic settings (e.g., courtrooms, news reports, etc.).

Future research examining the way in which individuals make judgments of IPV should continue to take into account reciprocal violence and acts of psychological aggression. The research examining attitudes towards reciprocal violence and psychological aggression is limited, despite the growing prevalence of both these types of IPV in intimate relationships (Archer, 2000; Brinkerhoff & Lupri, 1988; Fiebert, 2004; Williams and Frieze, 2005). Furthermore, both reciprocal IPV and psychological aggression are associated with an increased risk for mental health problems such as depression and anxiety (Hill, Schroeder, Bradley, Kaplan, & Angel, 2009; Próspero & Kim, 2008). In addition, the research examining attitudes towards IPV within the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) population should be expanded. A growing body of literature suggests that IPV occurs within same-sex relationships at rates comparable to heterosexual populations (Alexander, 2002; Burke et al., 2002; McClennen, 2005; Pitt, 2000). Furthermore, members of the LGBT community who experience IPV face a number of unique challenges, such as further victimization due to discrimination and limited legal rights (Elliot, 1996; McClennen et al., 2002; Potoczniak et al., 2003).

Conclusion

Overall, this study, as well as Carlson's (1999), adds to the growing body of literature that suggests participant and contextual factors are predictive of attitudes towards IPV. Specifically, our results suggest that participant gender, measures of social desirability, gender, history of aggression, alcohol use, and perceived severity of the aggressive acts are all factors influencing

attitudes towards reciprocal IPV, both physical and psychological in nature. The existence of violence-supportive attitudes has been shown to correlate with greater rates of perpetration (Carr & VanDeusen, 2002; Falchikov, 1996; Lichter & McCloskey, 2004; Riggs & O'Leary, 1996; Slep, Cascardi, Avery-Leaf, & O'Leary, 2001) and less support and empathy to victims of violence (Pavlou and Knowles, 2001). Further research on attitudes towards psychological and physical aggression in intimate relationships is necessary in order to enhance theoretical models on the underlying causes of IPV and to further illustrate costs of violence-supportive attitudes.

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Table 1. Results for the multilevel models examining the effects of participant and contextual factors on judgments of aggression

Dimension	Instigator Responsibility		Retaliator Justifiability	
	<i>Estimate</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Estimate</i>	<i>SE</i>
Estimates of Fixed Effects				
A: Age	-.09	.09	-.01	.11
B: Sex	-.43	.27	-.59	.30
C: CMDS Score	-.04	.02	-.08**	.03
D: Infliction of Violence	.25	.44	-.57	.50
E: Sustained Violence	-.20	.44	.24	.49
F: Gender of Instigator	.37**	.08	1.28**	.08
G: Relationship type	.06	.08	-.12	.08
H: History of Aggression	.21*	.08	.22*	.08
I: One Drink	.31*	.10	.26*	.10
J: Both Drink	-.19	.10	.15	.10
K: Similar	.08**	.01	.17**	.01
L: Gender Instigator*Similar	-.10**	.02	-.20**	.02
M: Relationship type*Similar	.02	.02	.05	.02
N: History of Aggression*Similar	-.03	.02	-.03	.02
O: One Drink*Similar	.02	.03	-.03	.03
P: Both Drink*Similar	.01	.03	-.02	.03
	<i>Estimate</i>	<i>SE</i>		
Estimates of Covariance Parameters				
Residual	5.12**	.10		
Responsibility Intercepts	3.85**	.35		
Justifiability Intercepts	5.15**	.45		
Covariance	2.00**	.30		

Note. $N = 321$. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .001$

Figure 1. *Judgments of instigator responsibility as moderated by similarity*

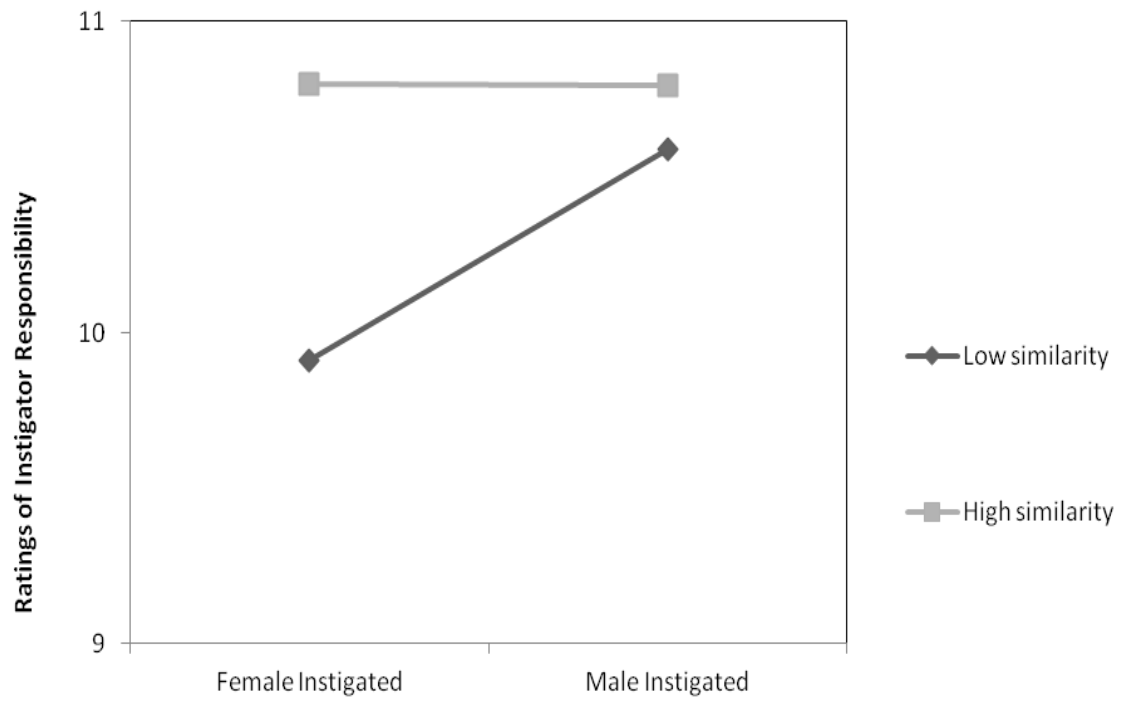
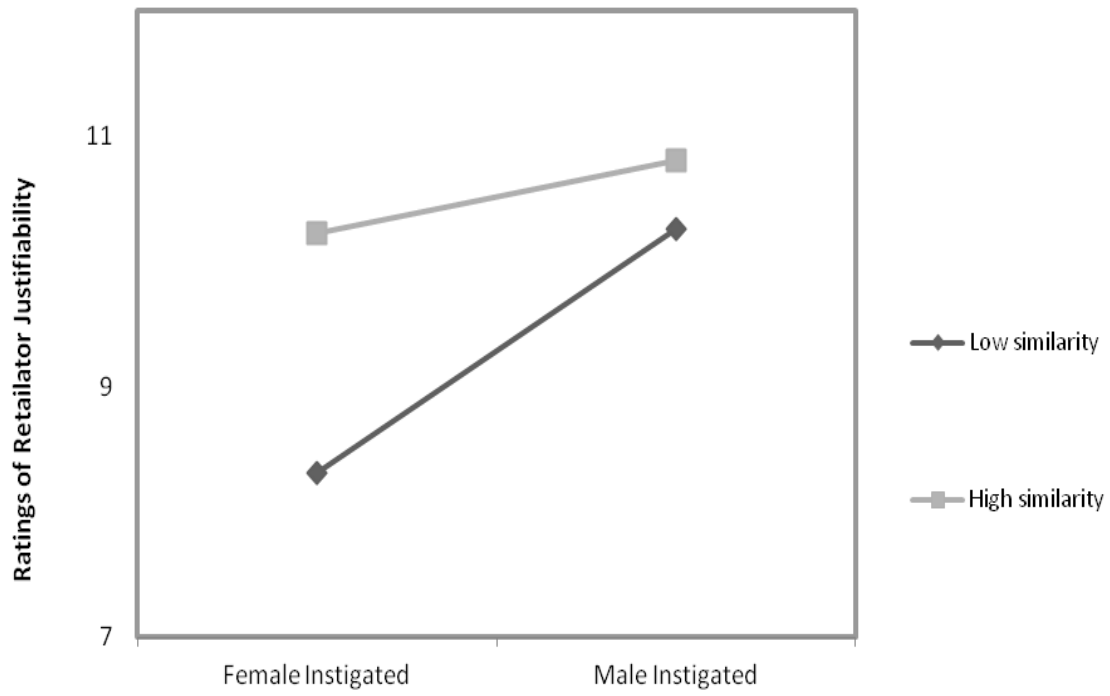


Figure 2. *Judgments of retaliator justifiability as moderated by similarity*



Appendix
Questionnaire Items Included in the Analysis

Demographics Form

Age (type your answer in the following box)
_____years

Sex

- Male
- Female
- Other

Ethnicity

- European Origin/White
- African American/Black/African Origin
- Latino/Latina/Hispanic
- Asian American/Asian Origin/Pacific Islander
- Other, specify: _____

Class

- Freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior
- Other, specify: _____

Student Status

- Full-time
- Part-time

Work Status

- Full time
- Part time
- Not working

Relationship Status

- Single
- In a casual relationship
- In serious relationship
- Married
- Separated
- Divorced
- Widowed

(If in a relationship) Are you currently cohabitating with your partner?

- Yes
- No

(If in a relationship) How long have you been with your current partner?

- 1-3 months
- 4-6 months
- 7-9 months
- 10-12 months
- 1-3 years
- 4-6 years
- Other, please specify _____

Religious affiliation

- Catholicism
- Protestant
- Eastern Orthodox
- Hindu
- Islam
- Judaism
- Other, specify _____
- None

The Crown-Marlowe Social Desirability Scale

Listed below are a number of statements concerning personal attitudes and traits. Read each item and decide whether the statement is true or false as it pertains to you personally.

1. Before voting I thoroughly investigate the qualifications of all the candidates. T F
2. I never hesitate to go out of my way to help someone in trouble. T F
3. It is sometimes hard for me to go on with my work if I am not encouraged. T F
4. I have never intensely disliked anyone. T F
5. On occasion I have had doubts about my ability to succeed in life. T F
6. I sometimes feel resentful when I don't get my way. T F
7. I am always careful about my manner of dress. T F
8. My table manners at home are as good as when I eat out in a restaurant. T F
9. If I could get into a movie without paying and be sure I was not seen, I would probably do it. T F
10. On a few occasions, I have given up doing something because I thought too little of my ability. T F
11. I like to gossip at times. T F
12. There have been times when I felt like rebelling against people in authority even though I knew they were right. T F
13. No matter who I'm talking to, I'm always a good listener. T F
14. I can remember "playing sick" to get out of something. T F
15. There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone. T F
16. I'm always willing to admit it when I make a mistake. T F
17. I always try to practice what I preach. T F
18. I don't find it particularly difficult to get along with loud mouthed, obnoxious people. T F
19. I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget. T F

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 20. When I don't know something I don't at all mind admitting it. | T | F |
| 21. I am always courteous, even to people who are disagreeable. | T | F |
| 22. At times I have really insisted on having things my own way. | T | F |
| 23. There have been occasions when I felt like smashing things. | T | F |
| 24. I would never think of letting someone else be punished for my wrongdoings. | T | F |
| 25. I never resent being asked to return a favor. | T | F |
| 26. I have never been irked when people expressed ideas very different from my own. | T | F |
| 27. I never make a long trip without checking the safety of my car. | T | F |
| 28. There have been times when I was quite jealous of the good fortune of others. | T | F |
| 29. I have almost never felt the urge to tell someone off. | T | F |
| 30. I am sometimes irritated by people who ask favors of me. | T | F |
| 31. I have never felt that I was punished without cause. | T | F |
| 32. I sometimes think when people have a misfortune they only got what they deserved. | T | F |
| 33. I have never deliberately said something that hurt someone's feelings. | T | F |

The Conflict Tactics Scale-Revised

RELATIONSHIP BEHAVIORS

No matter how well a couple gets along, there are times when they disagree, get annoyed with the other person, want different things from each other, or just have spats or fights because they are in a bad mood, are tired, or for some other reason. Couples also have many different ways of trying to settle their differences. This is a list of things that might happen when you have differences. Please indicate how many times you did each of these things in the PAST YEAR, and how many times your partner did them in the past year. If you or your partner did not do one of these things in the past year, but it happened before that, please choose "Not in the past year, but it did happen before."

How often did this happen?

- 1 = Once in the past year
- 2 = Twice in the past year
- 3 = 3-5 times in the past year
- 4 = 6-10 times in the past year

- 5 = 11-20 times in the past year
- 6 = More than 20 times in the past year
- 7 = Not in the past year, but it did happen
- 0 = This has never happened before

1. **I insulted or swore at my partner.**
2. **My partner did this to me.**
3. I threw something at my partner that could hurt.
4. My partner did this to me.
5. **I twisted my partner's arm or hair.**
6. **My partner did this to me.**
7. I pushed or shoved my partner.
8. My partner did this to me.
9. **I called my partner fat or ugly.**
10. **My partner called me fat or ugly.**
11. I destroyed something belonging to my partner.
12. My partner did this to me.
13. **I shouted or yelled at my partner.**
14. **My partner did this to me.**
15. I grabbed my partner.
16. My partner did this to me.
17. **I stomped out of the room or house or yard during a disagreement.**
18. **My partner did this to me.**
19. I slapped my partner.
20. My partner did this to me.
21. **I accused my partner of being a lousy lover.**
22. **My partner accused me of this.**
23. I did something to spite my partner.
24. My partner did this to me.
25. **I threatened to hit or throw something at my partner.**
26. **My partner did this to me.**

