

Oral Defense Announcement

University of Missouri – St. Louis Graduate School

An oral examination in defense of the dissertation for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy in Clinical-Community Psychology

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M.A. in Clinical Psychology, May, 2018, University of Missouri-St. Louis
B.S. in Psychology, May, 2014, University of Florida

What's Religion Got to Do with It?: Differing Religiosity Domains' Association with College Students' Sexual Consent During First-Time Intercourse

Date: May 4th, 2022
Time: 3:00pm – 5:00pm CST
Place: Remote

Abstract

Within the U.S., 36% of women and 17% of men report experiencing sexual assault (Smith et al., 2017). The absence of sexual consent is often regarded as a defining component of sexual assault (Beres, 2014); thus, a potential area to examine to decrease rates of perpetration and victimization. To date, there has been a lack of research on contextual factors that are likely related to sexual consent, with a general focus on external consent (i.e., verbal/behavioral indicators; Muehlenhard et al., 2016). The present study examined the role of a contextual factor, religiosity, on sexual consent processes during the context of first-time sexual intercourse. Participants were 979 undergraduate college students from three universities who participated in a larger study designed to examine first-time intercourse (FTI) experiences. Canonical correlation analysis was used to examine the relation between multidimensional constructs of religiosity and sexual consent during first intercourse. Multiple dimensions of religiosity included (1) intrapersonal religious commitment, (2) interpersonal religious commitment, and (3) religious fundamentalism. The multiple dimensions of sexual consent included 6 domains of internal and external consent: (1) direct nonverbal behavior, (2) passive behaviors, (3) communication/initiator behaviors, (4) safety/comfort, (5) agreement/wantedness, and (6) readiness signals. This study hypothesized that fundamentalism would be associated with sexual consent over and above intrapersonal religious commitment and interpersonal religious commitment. This study explored assigned sex as a moderating factor in the relation between domains of religiosity and sexual consent. Intrapersonal religious commitment, interpersonal religious commitment, and religious fundamentalism were not found to be a significant factor in the canonical correlation with sexual consent processes. No support was found for the hypotheses that fundamentalism would be associated with sexual consent processes, over and above intrapersonal religious commitment and interpersonal religious commitment. Some support for assigned sex as a moderator was found. For men, higher religiosity was associated with lower levels of external consent processes. Findings suggest, for men, that religiosity may be a risk factor for less consent communication, and therefore more negative sexual outcomes. Results of the present study highlight the complexity of sexual consent and the need to continue to examine other contextual factors.

Defense of Dissertation Committee

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