

SENSE OF ENTITLEMENT AS A LINK BETWEEN THE INFLUENCE OF INDULGENT AND INCONSISTENT PARENTING ON THE PERPETRATION OF SEXUAL COERCION

by

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(Under the Direction of Leslie Gordon Simons)

ABSTRACT

The current study examines the impact of family of origin factors such as warmth and hostility between parents, inconsistent parenting, and overparenting during childhood on the perpetration of sexual coercion during emerging adulthood while examining feelings of entitlement as a possible mediator. Data from 711 undergraduate students were analyzed separately by gender using structural equation modeling. Results show that warmth and hostility between parents is significantly related to parenting behaviors (i.e., overparenting and inconsistent parenting) and that hostility between parents is associated with the perpetration of sexual coercion by the offspring in emerging adulthood for males. Also, findings suggest that while overparenting and inconsistent parenting during childhood is not directly associated with the perpetration of sexual coercion during emerging adulthood, they are strongly related to feelings of entitlement, which in turn was found to be associated with the perpetration of sexual coercion for males.

INDEX WORDS: Emerging adults, Sexual Coercion, Parenting, Family of Origin, Overparenting, Inconsistent Parenting, Hostility between Parents

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Sexual coercion is a major concern on college campuses and has been a widely studied topic in social sciences in recent years. Researchers have studied a variety of factors that influence both perpetration and victimization of sexual coercion and rape including personality, family of origin, beliefs, and behaviors, in order to determine more specific intervention strategies to reduce the number of unwanted sexual encounters.

The influence of the family of origin is one of the primary explanatory factors addressed in the research on sexual coercion. Specifically, two factors that have been widely researched are parenting and parents' marital quality. Research has overwhelmingly found parenting behaviors are related to numerous outcomes for children and that this influence continues to explain more variance in offspring's outcomes throughout adolescence and into emerging adulthood than any other factors (Simons, Simons, & Wallace, 2004). This study seeks to examine the influence of the certain parenting behaviors (e.g., overparenting and interparental inconsistency) on the likelihood of the perpetration of sexual coercion in emerging adulthood, and to identify possible mediators in that relationship. Further, I will also examine the extent to which parenting and sexual coercion are influenced by the quality of parents' romantic relationship.

Statement of Purpose

Previous research has linked family of origin experiences, including the quality of parents' marriage and parenting, to both the perpetration and victimization of sexual coercion. Research on marital quality has shown that the parent's romantic relationship is a powerful role

model for offspring's own future romantic relationships (Conger, Cui, Bryant, & Elder 2000; Bryant & Conger 2002). For example, a child that observes aggressive interparental conflict is more likely to be aggressive and violent during conflict in their own relationships (Loukas, Fitzgerald, Zucker, & von Eye, 2001; Simons et al., 2012a), and this can include sexually coercive behavior. While parental harshness and warmth have been found to be associated with the perpetration of sexual coercion (e.g., Simons, Burt, Simons, 2008, Simons et al., 2012b), the effects of other parenting behaviors have not been examined. The present study will examine the relationship between overparenting and inconsistent parenting and the perpetration of sexual coercion. Also, while previous research has examined attitudes and beliefs of those who perpetrate sexual coercion, this research is far from exhaustive (e.g. Hartwick, Desmarais, & Hennig, 2007; Simons et al., 2012). The present study will examine the extent to which one specific characteristic of the perpetrator, feelings of entitlement, mediate the relationship between family of origin factors, including warmth and hostility between parents and parenting behaviors, and sexually coercive behaviors.

Contribution of this Study

While the importance of parenting on offspring behavior is well-established, including the influence of harsh parenting on the perpetration of sexual coercion, what is less well known is the extent to which overparenting and inconsistent parenting exert influences on the perpetration of sexual coercion and what factors may partially or fully explain this relationship. The present study attempts to address this gap in the literature by examining these specific parenting behaviors and their influence on the likelihood that their adult offspring will perpetrate sexual coercion. Also, this study will examine the influence of caregivers' romantic relationship quality on overparenting, inconsistent parenting, feelings of entitlement, and the perpetration of

sexual coercion. Furthermore, this study will examine the extent to which the effect of parenting on the perpetration of sexual coercion is mediated by a sense of entitlement. To my knowledge, no previous studies have examined the relationships between overparenting, inconsistent parenting, and the perpetration of sexual coercion. These research questions will be addressed using cross-sectional, self-report data from a large sample of undergraduate students.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sexual Coercion

Researchers have found sexual coercion to be a significant problem on college campuses across the United States. Various studies about sexual behavior on college campuses have demonstrated high rates of both verbal and physical coercion. In previous studies, nearly half of males have reported engaging in the perpetration of some form of sexual coercion (Simons et al., 2008; Simons et al, 2012a). Female victims report experiencing similar rates of sexual coercion. For example, 30-50% of female college students report having experienced some type of sexual coercion by a partner, (Hines, 2007; Forbes & Adam-Curtis, 2001; Simons et al., 2008), and approximately 10-20% have been forced to engage in sexual intercourse (Brener, McMahon, Warren, & Douglas, 1999; Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000; Resnick, Kilpatrick, Dansky, Saunders, & Best, 1993; Simons et al., 2012). With these high rates of sexual coercion on college campuses, it is a topic of great concern to researchers and policy makers.

One reason that sexual coercion is of such high concern are the many negative physical and psychological effects associated with being a victim of sexual coercion. Numerous studies have examined the negative effects of sexual coercion, rape, or other sexual victimization on the victim including psychological effects (e.g., self-blame, psychological distress, feeling self-conscious, embarrassment, fear, trouble sleeping, absenteeism, anxiety, post-traumatic stress, suicidal thoughts, alcohol and substance use, and depression as well as lower social adjustment, self-esteem, and sexual functioning) (AAUW, 2001; Rosenthal, 1997; U.S. Merit Systems

Protection Board, 1995; Messman-Moore, Coates, Gaffey, & Johnson, 2008; Resick, 1993) and physical effects (e.g., unwanted pregnancy, STIs). Another concern is the possibility that those who perpetrate sexual coercion may continue to do so in the future, possibly with escalation to more violent or threatening tactics, including marital violence (Murphy & O'Leary, 1989; Simons, Burt, & Simons, 2008). Previous studies also reveal that sexual coercion exists on a continuum. The perpetrator often begins with less threatening strategies such as coaxing or plying the date with alcohol and gradually escalates to more aggressive uses of force such as threatening the victim verbally or physically forcing the victim to comply when the less threatening strategies fail (Felson, 1993, 2002; Simons, Burt, & Simons, 2008). Perpetrators may begin the cycle of sexual coercion early in their dating experiences which may lead to more violent, threatening tactics in other dating relationships and marriage (Simons et al., 2008). While numerous variables associated with both victimization and perpetration of sexual coercion have been found in previous research, the current study will examine the family of origin experiences, such as warmth and hostility between parents and parenting styles, that are associated with the perpetration of sexual coercion. Further, I will examine the extent to which narcissism or a sense of entitlement serves to mediate the relationship between parenting and sexually coercive behavior.

Narcissism & Entitlement

Narcissism is a set of characteristics, both emotional and motivational, that includes a preoccupation with the way one is viewed by others (Raskin et al., 1991). Narcissistic individuals have a sense of entitlement, are exploitative with others, lack empathy, believe that they are more important than others, are preoccupied with fantasies of unlimited success, believe that they are special, desire excessive admiration from others, are arrogant or haughty, and are

often envious of others or believe that others are envious of them, (American Psychiatric Association [APA], 1994).

Narcissism has been associated with several problem behaviors in youth and adults in various research studies such as aggression, including sexual aggression (Champion, 2003), white collar crime, and low self-esteem, and internalizing symptoms such as depression and anxiety (Barry, Frick, & Killian, 2003; Washburn, McMahon, King, Reinecke, & Silver, 2004; Bushman & Baumeister, 1998; Raskin & Terry, 1988). Narcissism has also been linked to problems in romantic relationships including a lack of empathy for others (Watson, Grisham, Trotter, & Biderman, 1984) and hostility in the face of failure (Watson, Grisham, Trotter, & Biderman, 1984) or rejection (Twenge & Campbell, 2003).

Entitlement is considered one major aspect of narcissism. Researchers have found entitlement to be an unhealthy personality trait that can lead to greed, aggression, a lack of forgiveness (Campbell et al. 2004), hostility, and deceit (Raskin and Terry 1988). A sense of entitlement is associated with the attitude that one deserves more than others.

Previous research has discovered numerous problem behaviors associated with entitlement including problems in romantic relationships. The lack of empathy and feelings of entitlement may lead an individual to believe that they deserve sex when they want it, without considering the wants and needs of the other person. Research has shown that when entitled individuals do not receive what they want, they may become hostile or violent, which may include coercing or forcing a partner into sexual behavior.

In fact, one study found that narcissism is very likely to lead to sexual coercion, especially date rape, among college students (Bushman, Bonacci, van Dijk, & Baumeister, 2003). Individuals with narcissistic personality may feel entitled to sex when they want it,

without considering the feelings of others. This is because sexual coercion involves a lack of concern about the preferences of one's partner, a concern with only what the perpetrator desires, self-centeredness, and a lack of concern with social norms or rules. Thus, in the present study, I expect that the relationship between parenting and sexually coercive behavior will be partially or full mediated by a sense of entitlement.

Family of Origin Experiences

Research studies have examined numerous family of origin experiences, including some parenting behaviors and interparental conflict, that may be associated with externalizing problems on the part of offspring such as the perpetration of sexual coercion. This review of the literature focuses on warmth and hostility between parents, overparenting, inconsistent parenting, and how these family of origin experiences are associated with feelings of entitlement and the perpetration of sexual coercion.

The Influence of Parenting on the Perpetration of Sexual Coercion. Numerous studies have examined the influence of harsh parenting on various negative youth outcomes. For example, research has established that harsh parenting is associated with the perpetration of dating violence and sexual coercion by males in adolescence and emerging adulthood (Patterson, Reid, & Dishion, 1992; Simons et al., 2008; 2012a; 2012b). This is especially the case when the parenting is characterized by high levels of physical punishment or hostility.

Overparenting. While previous research has examined the link between harsh parenting and sexual coercion, few other parenting behaviors have been considered. Overparenting has been a concern of popular media and research for the past decade. Although it has been more of a concern in recent years, it is not a new concept. Adler (1964b) stated:

“When we speak of a pampered child we do not simply mean a child who is loved and caressed, but rather a child whose parents are always hovering over it, who assumes all

responsibilities for it, who take away from the child the burden of fulfilling any of the tasks and functions it could fulfill” (p. 89).

Overparenting usually occurs when the parent is ostensibly determined to create a successful, happy life for their child without taking into consideration the developmental needs of the child. It has been found that overparenting generally meets the needs of the parent, without taking the true needs of the child into consideration (Peterson & Hann, 1999). Also, research has shown that overparenting generally occurs when there are other problems in the family system such as low quality parent-child communication, excessive family enmeshment, and permissive parenting (Segrin, Woszidlo, Givertz, Bauer, Murphy, 2012).

Kaplan (1985) and Grunwald and McAbee (1985) have described four ways to overparent offspring. First is overindulgence, which has been described as giving a person everything that they wish for consistently without requesting reciprocal effort. According to Adler (1938/1964a), overindulgence teaches a child only to take, but not to give, which can lead to numerous negative outcomes such as egotism, feelings of entitlement, and exploitativeness. Grunwald and McAbee (1985) found that overindulged children are generally materialistic, manipulative, and tyrannical. Further, overindulgence by parents, particularly during adolescence, has been shown to lead to negative outcomes in adulthood such as maladaptive narcissism (Cramer, 2011).

The second overparenting style described by Grunwald and McAbee (1985) is overpermissiveness. This approach is described as permitting the child to do anything they desire no matter how their choices affect or ignore the rights of others. According to Grunwald and McAbee (1985), overpermissiveness can lead a child to be unconcerned for the rights of others or the social rules in place.

Third is the overdomineering parent who makes all the decisions for the child. With this type of parenting style, the child may be overly-dependent on their parent and may rebel when they get older (Grunwald & McAbee, 1985). Alternatively, it may be that because this type of over-involvement by parents includes doing things for the child that s/he could do for him or herself. This type of parenting could lead to a sense of entitlement on the part of the offspring.

The final style of overparenting identified by Grunwald & McAbee (1985) is overprotection. This is characterized by the parent constantly evaluating the dangers in the environment and running interference or pointing them out to their child. Overprotection has also been found to possibly lead to narcissism in that by constantly protecting the child or preventing the child from experiencing the consequences of his/her own actions, the child can come to believe that they are special and deserve special treatment and to become self-centered (Capron, 2004) or entitled.

Many researchers have found numerous negative outcomes for children who are overparented, especially during adolescence. Youth who are overparented often feel privileged, come to expect everything they want, and expect that every problem will be solved for them (Segrin, Woszidlo, Givertz, Bauer, Murphy, 2012). Overparenting has also been linked to problems with emotion under-regulation and internalizing problems including anxiety, depression, withdrawal, insecurity, and frustration for adolescents (Bayer, Sanson, & Hemphill, 2006; Gar & Hudson, 2008; Fischer, Forthun, Pidcock, & Dowd, 2007; Segrin, Woszidlo, Givertz, Bauer, Murphy, 2012).

As originally suggested by Adler (1938/1964a), overparenting teaches a child only to take, but not to give, which can lead to numerous negative outcomes such as egotism, feelings of entitlement, and exploitation of others. Youth who have been overparented come to expect to

get whatever they want, which may spill over into their dating relationships. If the individual expects sex, he or she may use coercive or aggressive measures to get what they want from a partner since they have learned that their own desires are paramount, what others want is not their concern and they expect others to facilitate their wishes.

Inconsistent Parenting

While individual parenting behaviors by all caregivers is important to a child's development, the interparental relationship, described as the coordinating of a mother and father's parenting efforts, also has an important influence on child outcomes. Consistency, including interparental consistency has been described as a central component of child outcomes and family functioning (Feinberg, 2003; McHale, Kuersten-Hogan, Lauretti, & Rasmussen, 2000; Teubert & Pinquart, 2010) among, married, divorced (Kamp Dush, Kotila, & Schoppe-Sullivan, 2011), unmarried (Hohmann-Marriott, 2011) and foster parents (Linares, Rhodes, & Montalto, 2010).

Inconsistent parenting can have significant effects on a variety of child outcomes such as externalizing behavior problems (e.g., aggression, oppositional behavior) and internalizing symptoms (e.g., depression, self-blame, low self-esteem, and anxiety) (Chen & Johnston, 2012; Jenkins & Smith, 1991; Jouriles et al., 1991; Snyder et al., 1988; Teubert and Pinquart, 2010). When parental dissimilarities lead to inconsistencies in responding to children, parents may bring the child into the disagreement by forming an alliance with the child, going behind the other parent's back to allow the child to do something that the other parent may disagree with, or disciplining the child in a different way than previously agreed upon between the parents. This phenomenon is called triangulation and has been found to lead to internalizing symptoms for the offspring such as self-blame (Teubert & Pinquart, 2010). However, one study found that when

parents who disagree about some child-rearing practices but consistently discipline the child, do not allow the child to see contradictions, and do not let misbehaviors go unhandled, these disagreements was not associated with negative child outcomes (Chen & Johnston, 2012). Thus it appears to be the case that disagreements about parenting are largely problematic only when the child is aware of the lack of consistency.

Inconsistent parenting has been shown to lead the child to question the boundaries and expectations that are in place for his or her behavior (Rossman & Rea, 2005). Whether parental inconsistency involves the failure of both parents to reliably follow through with consequences for rule violations or uneven application of the rules and consequences by one parent compared to the other, the child learns that he or she can push the boundaries and have a higher chance of not receiving consequences for his or her actions. The child may also be able to coerce his or her parent into giving them what they want, since the parent's previous behavior has shown the child that "no" is not always the final answer. In adolescence and emerging adulthood, this could lead to the belief that he or she does not have to take "no" for an answer and that they can coerce others, such as romantic partners, into doing things they do not want to do. This could include sexual coercion of a partner, the most clear example of a situation in which it is supposed to always be the case that "no means no." Instead, a coercive style of interaction was learned from their parents who taught the adolescent that "no doesn't always mean no."

Patterson and colleagues (1992) describes a coercion model in which the parent reacts differently for each problem behavior from their child. Sometimes the parent might let the child get away with the negative behavior while other times the parent may be explosive and punish the child harshly for negative behavior. This inconsistency, in turn, teaches the child to "punish" the parent by escalating his or her behavior further into aggressive behavior or tantrums. As the

cycle continues, the behaviors of both the parent and child can escalate into extreme, coercive interchanges. This type of inconsistency and reinforcement of negative behavior can teach the offspring that escalating his or her behavior to aggression, he or she will get what he or she wants. With a romantic partner, the offspring may escalate his or her behavior to the perpetration of sexual coercion.

Inconsistent parenting often occurs because of child-rearing disagreements which can have an effect on other family processes. Child-rearing disagreements have been found to be a mediator between interparental relationship quality and child outcomes (Sturges-Apple, Davies, & Cummings, 2006). For example, when there are child-rearing disagreements where the female caregiver attempts to limit the father's involvement in the caregiving this can lead to poor interparental consistency and can hinder father involvement and the strength of the parental alliance (Futris & Schoppe-Sullivan, 2007).

Warmth and Hostility between Parents

Numerous studies have found that conflict between parents can spill over into other parts of the family system, such as quality of parenting (Almeida, Wethington, & Chandler, 1999; Davies, Harold, Goeke-Morey, & Cummings, 2002; Bradford, Vaughn, Barber, 2008). High levels of conflict with a romantic partner can cause parents to feel emotionally drained and may prevent them from responding to their children as needed (Fincham et al., 1994). Parents with high levels of marital conflict have shown decreased warmth, support, behavioral control, and monitoring and more criticism and corporal punishment with their children (Conger and Associates, 1994; Krishnakumar & Buehler, 2000). Also, poor interparental relationship quality is associated with poor parenting practices such as harsh and inconsistent parenting (Segrin,

Woszidlo, Givertz, Bauer, Murphy, 2012; Almeida, Wethington, & Chandler, 1999; Davies, Harold, Goeke-Morey, & Cummings, 2002; Bradford, Vaughn, Barber, 2008).

Additionally, previous studies have found that conflict between parents has a significant impact on adolescent adjustment, development, and internalizing and externalizing behavior problems (Buehler, Lange, & Franck, 2007; El-Sheikh, Buckhalt, Mize, & Acebo, 2006). Those children who are exposed to interparental conflict have been shown to have increased levels of difficulty in other relationships including those with siblings, peers, and romantic partners (Kinsfogel & Grych, 2004; Parke et al., 2001; Steinberg, Davilla, & Fincham, 2006; Stocker & Richmond, 2007). Various studies have found that interparental conflict is related to higher levels of conflict in their offspring's marital relationship (Amato & Booth, 2001; Conger, Cui, Bryant, & Elder, 2000) and those whose parents used verbal and physical aggression toward each other often use the same conflict styles in their own relationships (Ehrensaft et al., 2003; Martin, 1990; Reese-Weber & Bartle-Haring, 1998). Adolescents who observed frequent hostility between their parents often experience other negative outcomes in their own romantic relationships, such as an increased expectation of higher levels of conflict (Davies, Myers, Cummings, & Heindel, 1999; Fosco, DeBoard, & Grych, 2007; Grych & Fincham, 1990; Crick & Dodge, 1994), higher levels of aggression, and a belief that aggression is acceptable in romantic relationships (Kinsfogel & Grych, 2004; Linder & Collins, 2005; Reitzel-Jaffe & Wolfe, 2001). It can be hypothesized that children whose parents showed high levels of hostility toward each other would come to develop a hostile working model of relationships.

Offspring who observe high amounts of hostility between their parents, and who may suffer neglect or insufficient parenting because of this hostility, may feel that they deserve better later in life. For example, Bishop and Lane (2002) stated, "In problematic entitlement the person

believes that he or she has the right to special privileges due to having endured some unusual, unjust suffering.” Also, parents who have high levels of hostile conflict and aggression in their romantic relationship often do not show empathy toward their partner and may demonstrate narcissism and entitlement themselves, which their offspring can observe and learn from.

Parents who have high levels of hostility between them have many disagreements, including that they often do not agree on child-raising decisions (e.g., whether or not their child can go out with friends, what age they can date, etc.), and may go behind each other’s backs to please their child, who may be more likely to get what they want from at least one parent. If the child is more likely to be indulged by at least one parent, they may learn that they will always get what they want in one way or another (i.e., feelings of entitlement). General feelings of entitlement may be associated with feelings of entitlement sexually as well, which could create a higher chance of being sexually coercive to get what they want sexually.

On the other hand, it would be expected that parents who are warm toward each other, even during everyday conflict, would have offspring would be more likely to also be warm in their own romantic relationships. Adolescents who observe continual warmth between their parents would learn that it is normal to treat those you love with warmth, kindness, and respect and it would be expected that they would be less likely to perpetrate sexual coercion with a partner.

Theoretical Framework: Social Learning Theory

When describing social learning theory, Bandura (1977) states that individuals do not simply learn from their own behavior but also by observing the behavior expressed and the consequences received for those behaviors by others. Individuals can learn by directly observing another individual act out a particular behavior, having a verbal model where an individual tells

another individual how to behave, or by observing a behavior symbolically, such as with a fictional character in a book or television show (Bandura, 1977). Previous research has suggested that social learning theory often explains the links between family of origin experiences and individual behavior due to the idea that children learn from observation and interaction with their parents. For example, research using observational data of couples' interactions has demonstrated that parents' relationship quality was associated with offspring's own relationship quality with a romantic partner (Conger, Cui, Bryant, & Elder 2000; Bryant & Conger 2002). Therefore, it would be expected that an adolescent whose parents were warm toward each other would learn that using warmth and respect is normal in romantic relationships.

While learning from the observation of others is often beneficial (Bandura, 1977), it can also lead to negative outcomes if the behaviors observed are problematic and do not receive obvious negative consequences. If offspring observe their parent's aggressive conflict, research has shown that they are more likely to be aggressive and violent during conflict in their own relationships (Loukas, Fitzgerald, Zucker, & von Eye, 2001; Simons et al., 2012a).

Social learning principles also explain why poor parenting is associated with many negative outcomes for offspring. For example, harsh parenting teaches the child that physical coercion can be used to effectively change behavior of another person (Patterson, Reid, & Dishion, 1992; Simons et al., 2008; Simons et al., 2012). Therefore, a child that has been punished using harsh physical discipline has learned that hitting is not only an acceptable behavior, but can be used to physically coerce another person to do something which s/he does not wish to do. This type of behavior on the part of parents provides a model of relationships for offspring that includes physical violence as a legitimate strategy.

This study uses social learning theory to generate hypotheses about the ways in which the study variables are related to each other. It is likely the case that the same social learning processes are operating with regard to the lessons learned from being parented in an inconsistent or overinvested way. I expect that children who are overparented learn that they can take or do anything they want, they deserve or are entitled to what they want, and their desires take precedence over the desires of others. Thus, when faced with frustrating behavior from another person, including a sex partner, such individuals would be expected to use coercive behaviors to attain their goal.

Children who experience inconsistent parenting may learn that they can get what they want by being coercive or manipulative due to the fact that either or both parents often gives in to their child's wants if the child persists long enough. When an adolescent learns that being persistent and demanding pays off, it is expected that such strategies would translate into coercive measures being employed with a partner when one person wants sex and the other does not. This may be the case because the perpetrator has no basis for accepting no as a final answer and/or because the perpetrator is merely used to escalating his/her behavior until s/he gets what s/he wants.

Social learning theory also states that cognitions during observational learning are important to the learning process (Bandura, 1977). What the child thinks about the behavior is important to how the behavior is learned, including the type of reinforcement they receive. For example, if the child knows that one parent is more lenient about rules than the other and convinces one parent to give them what they want, they will receive positive reinforcement, and repeat that behavior, which can create a cycle that can lead to feelings of entitlement. Once the child has learned to have these feelings of entitlement, he or she may use these learned tactics in

other relationships, such as romantic relationships. They may have learned that they are entitled to whatever they want, including sex, and coerce a romantic partner into unwanted sexual behavior. Thus, I expect that a sense of entitlement will partially explain the relationship between parenting and the perpetration of sexual coercion.

Hypotheses and Model to be Tested

Based on the social learning theory and findings from the reviewed research, I have developed five hypotheses:

1. I hypothesize that hostility between parents will be associated with higher rates inconsistent parenting and lower rates of overparenting.
2. I hypothesize that hostility between parents will be positively related to feelings of entitlement and the perpetration of sexual coercion.
3. I hypothesize that warmth between parents will be negatively related to the perpetration of sexual coercion.
4. I hypothesize that poor parenting practices (overparenting and inconsistent parenting) will be positively related to the perpetration of sexual coercion.
5. I hypothesize that the relationship between poor parenting and the perpetration of sexual coercion will be partially or completely mediated by feelings of entitlement.

The theoretical model is below:

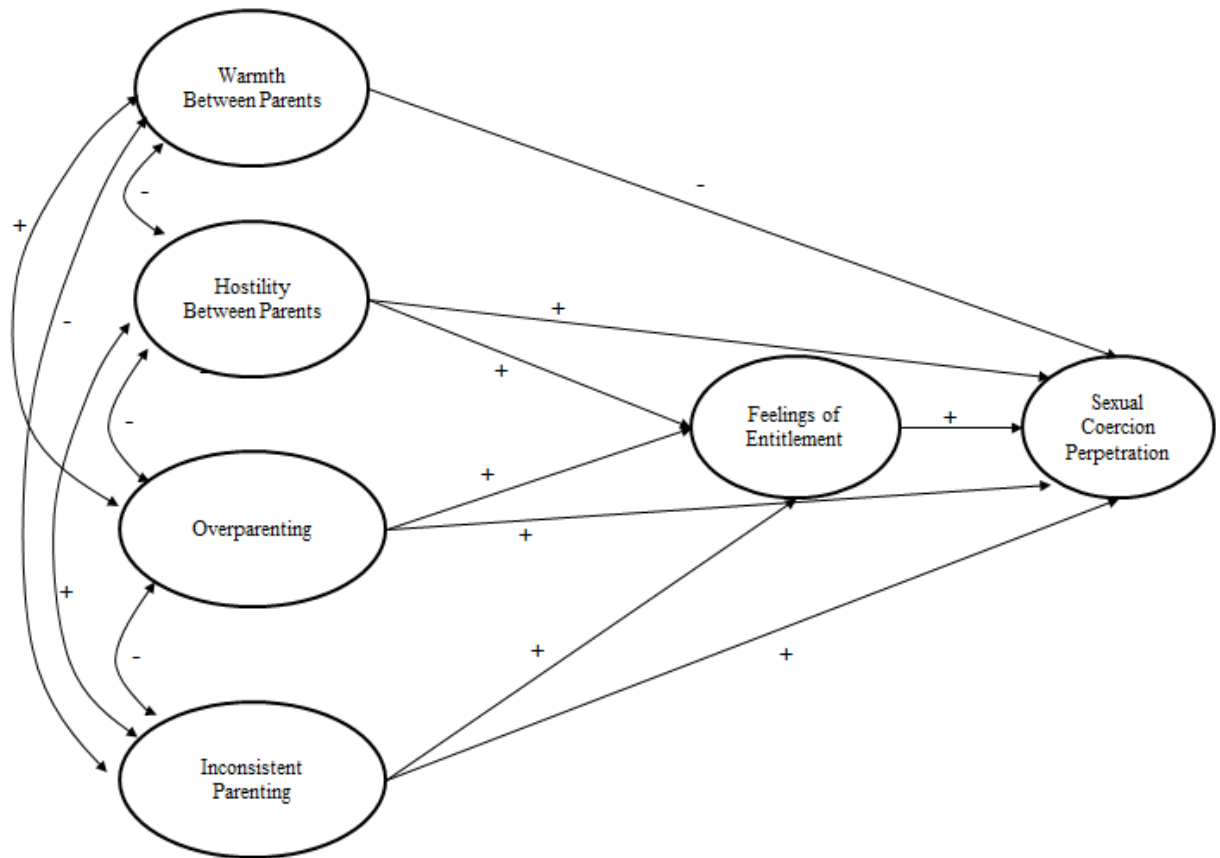


Figure 1. Tested Model

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

Sampling and Procedure

Data were collected from undergraduate students at a large, state, public university in the southeastern United States during the 2012-2013 academic year. Questions focused on family of origin experiences, relationship experiences, attitudes and behaviors concerning sex, marriage, and delinquent behavior. Approval was granted by the university's Institutional Review Board prior to collection of any data. Study participants were recruited from large-enrollment sections of sociology and family studies courses. Students were told that questions were personal and that they could discontinue the survey at any time without fear of penalty. Participation was voluntary and there were no identifying markers on the survey. Students were given five extra credit points for the class in which they took the survey. Students who opted not to participate were given an option of an alternate assignment that was designed to take the same amount of effort and were given the same number of extra credit points. Pencil and paper surveys were administered, and due to the sensitive nature of the survey, the survey was proctored like an exam. Participants were made aware that the aggregate data from the surveys could be used for presentations and manuscripts. Participation was nearly 100%. Missing data was handled through listwise deletion yielding a final N of 711 (326 men and 385 women), which is indicative of roughly 1% of data missing from the full sample. After handling data using listwise deletion, the final sample consisted of 711 (326 men and 385 women).

Approximately 82.2% of the participants were White, 6.7% were African American, and the remaining 11.1% were Hispanic/Latino, Asian/Pacific Islander, or Other. Approximately 72% of the participants indicated that their parents were still married. Median family income was between \$100,000 and \$125,000.

Measures

All of the following scales were formed by summing the items. This approach was used because it provides greater variance than would be the case if mean scores were used.

Hostility between Parents. The measure for hostility between parents was adapted from the hostility subscale of the instruments used in the Iowa Youth and Families Project (Conger, Elder, Lorenz, Simons, & Whitbeck, 1992; Conger & Elder, 1994).

This 4-item scale asked respondents to think about times when they were growing up and living at home and rate how often their parents or caregivers, “criticize each other’s ideas,” “shout or yell at each other because they were mad,” “hit, push, shove, or grab each other,” and “insult or swear at each other.” Response categories were: 4=*always*, 3=*fairly often*, 2=*about half the time*, 1=*not too often*, and 0=*never*. These items were summed to create the hostility scale. A high score indicated high hostility while a low score indicated low hostility. Possible scores ranged from 0 to 16. The Cronbach alpha for this scale was $\alpha=.78$ for males and $\alpha=.79$ for females.

Warmth between Parents. The measure for warmth between parents was adapted from the warmth subscale of the instruments used in the Iowa Youth and Families Project (Conger, Elder, Lorenz, Simons, & Whitbeck, 1992; Conger & Elder, 1994).

This 4-item scale asked respondents to think about times when they were growing up and living at home and rate how often their parents or caregivers, “listened carefully to each other’s

point of view,” “acted loving and affectionate toward one another,” “had a good laugh with each other about something that was funny,” and “said ‘I love you’ to each other.” Response categories were: 4=*always*, 3=*fairly often*, 2=*about half the time*, 1=*not too often*, and 0=*never*.

These items were summed to create the warmth scale. A high score indicated high warmth while a low score indicated low warmth. Possible scores ranged from 0 to 16. The Cronbach alpha for this scale was $\alpha=.81$ for males and $\alpha=.86$ for females.

Overparenting. The measure for overparenting was adapted from a scale developed by Bredehoft, Mennicke, Potter, & Clarke, 1998. This 10-item scale assessed overparenting by asking respondents to rate their parents’ behavior toward them during the previous 6 months. Respondents were instructed to, “Please answer the following questions about your mom or female caregiver. During the past 6 months, how often has she...” and included items such as, “bought you things you *want* even if you don’t necessarily *need* them,” “given you some extra money when your bank account has been overdrawn or you are running low on cash,” “helped you find solutions to problems you may be having with friends, a dating partner, a professor, or employer,” “called you to remind you to wake up in time for class, work, or other obligations,” and “done things for you that you are capable of doing for yourself (laundry, grocery shopping, etc.).” The same questions were asked of their father or male caregiver. The respondents were asked to rate the accuracy of each statement using a 5-point scale: 0=*never*, 1=*fairly often*, 2=*about half the time*, 3=*not too often*, and 4=*never*. Possible scores ranged from 0 to 40. The Cronbach alpha for this scale was $\alpha=.82$ for males and $\alpha=.83$ for females.

Inconsistent Parenting. The measure for inconsistent parenting was adapted from the Coparenting Inconsistency Scale (Margolin, Gordis, & John, 2001). This 3-item scale assessed parental inconsistency by asking respondents to think back to their time living at home and

respond to three items: “My parents/caregivers supported each other’s decisions about disciplining me,” “Sometimes one parent/caregiver would give me permission to do something after the other parent/caregiver said no,” and “My parents/caregivers had two different standards, or sets of expectations for my behavior.” Respondents were asked to rate how much they agreed or disagreed with these statements: 1=*Strongly Disagree*, 2=*Disagree*, 3=*Neither Agree nor Disagree*, 4=*Agree*, 5=*Strongly Agree*. The first item was reverse coded and summed with the other two items to create the scale. The higher the rating, the more inconsistency was present in the coparenting relationship. Possible scores ranged from 5 to 15 and had a Cronbach alpha of $\alpha=.65$ for males and $\alpha=.75$ for females.

Entitlement. The measure for entitlement was adapted from the Psychological Entitlement Scale (Campbell, Bonacci, Shelton, Exline, & Bushman, 2004). This 9-item scale assessed the feelings of entitlement of the respondent by asking them to reflect on the items and rate how each reflected their beliefs. Items included, “I honestly feel I’m just more deserving than others,” “I feel entitled to more of everything,” and “I demand the best because I’m worth it.” Respondents were asked to rate their beliefs on a 5-item scale: 1=*I strongly agree*, 2=*I agree somewhat*, 3=*I neither agree nor disagree*, 4=*I disagree somewhat*, and 5=*I strongly disagree*. One item, “I do not necessarily deserve special treatment,” was reverse coded and summed with the other items to create the scale. A higher score was associated with more feelings of entitlement. Possible scores ranged from 9 to 45 and had a Cronbach alpha of $\alpha=.83$ for males and $\alpha=.83$ for females.

Sexual Coercion. The measure for the perpetration of sexual coercion was adapted from the Tyler, Hoyt, & Whitbeck (1998). This 6-item scale assessed whether or not the respondent had perpetrated sexual coercion, and the most extreme behavior that they had sexually coerced.

Items included, “I got my date drunk or stoned,” “I threatened to terminate the relationship,” “I said things to make the other person feel guilty (i.e., ‘If you really cared about me...’),” “I tried to turn my date on by touching him/her, even though he/she wasn’t interested,” “I made false promises about the future of the relationship,” and “I physically held my date down.”

Respondents were asked to rate the most extreme behavior they had done by using these tactics:

0=*Not Applicable*, 1=*Breast Touching*, 2=*Genital Touching*, 3=*Oral Sex*, and 4=*Sexual*

Intercourse. These items were summed to form a sexual coercion perpetration scale that was treated as a continuous variable. Possible scores ranged from 0 to 24. The Cronbach alpha for this scale was $\alpha=.78$ for males and $\alpha=.58$ for females.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

The final sample consisted of 711 (326 men and 385 women) undergraduate participants. 43.3% of males reported having perpetrated at least one type of sexual coercion. Oral sex and sexual intercourse with an unwilling partner were the most common outcomes reported to result from the coercive behavior. Fifteen percent of males reported getting their date drunk or stoned to have sexual intercourse against her will, 9.3% achieved intercourse by trying to turn her on with touching, 8.3% obtained intercourse by making false promises about the future of the relationship, and 3.1% of males reported forcibly raping their date. The perpetration of sexual coercion by women was relatively rare and the types of coercive behaviors exhibited by women are far less severe than those reported by the men. The most common strategy used by women with a male partner was trying to turn him on by touching even if he was not interested. This behavior was reported by 10% of women. These rates of sexual coercion by men and women are similar to those found in other studies using college samples (Simons et al, 2008; Simons et al., 2012b). See Table 1 for a complete frequency distribution by the severity of the perpetration.

Table 1. Frequency of Sexual Coercion Perpetration

	Not Applicable	Breast Touching	Genital Touching	Oral Sex	Sexual Intercourse
I got my date drunk or stoned.	M 236 (72.6%) F 358 (93.2%)	M 7 (2.2%) F 5 (1.3%)	M 17 (5.2%) F 4 (1.0%)	M 16 (4.9%) F 0 (0%)	M 49 (15.1%) F 17 (4.4%)
I threatened to terminate the relationship.	M 299 (91.7%) F 380 (99.0%)	M 3 (0.9%) F 1 (0.3%)	M 5 (1.5%) F 1 (0.3%)	M 9 (2.8%) F 1 (0.3%)	M 10 (3.1%) F 1 (0.3%)
I said things to make the other person feel guilty (i.e., “If you really cared about me...”).	M 285 (87.4%) F 369 (96.1%)	M 6 (1.8%) F 1 (0.3%)	M 8 (2.5%) F 2 (0.5%)	M 13 (4.0%) F 1 (0.3%)	M 14 (4.3%) F 11 (2.9%)
I tried to turn my date on my touching him/her even though he/she wasn’t interested.	M 235 (73.0%) F 346 (90.1%)	M 17 (5.3%) F 6 (1.6%)	M 22 (6.8%) F 10 (2.6%)	M 18 (5.6%) F 6 (1.6%)	M 30 (9.3%) F 16 (4.2%)
I made false promises about the future of the relationship.	M 276 (84.7%) F 375 (97.9%)	M 10 (3.1%) F 1 (0.3%)	M 4 (1.2%) F 0 (0.0%)	M 9 (2.8%) F 3 (0.8%)	M 27 (8.3%) F 4 (1.0%)
I physically held my date down.	M 294 (90.7%) F 378 (99.2%)	M 8 (2.5%) F 1 (0.3%)	M 6 (1.9%) F 0 (0.0%)	M 6 (1.6%) F 0 (0.0%)	M 10 (3.1%) F 2 (0.5%)

The correlation matrix for all studied variables is demonstrated in Table 2. The correlations for males are below the diagonal. Variables were generally correlated in the expected directions and most of the correlations were significant, with a few exceptions. Specifically, neither parenting behavior was related to sexual coercion. However, both inconsistent parenting and overparenting are significantly related to feelings of entitlement and entitlement was significantly related to sexual coercion. Therefore, it is the case that inconsistent parenting and overparenting are linked to the perpetration of sexual coercion by offspring’s sense of entitlement.

Table 2. Sexual Coercion Perpetration for Males and Females

	Warmth Between Parents	Hostility Between Parents	Overparenting	Inconsistent Parenting	Entitlement	Sexual Coercion
Warmth Between Parents	1	-.565**	.303**	-.480**	-.069	.006
Hostility Between Parents	-.371**	1	-.176**	.545**	.131*	.088
Overparenting	.288**	-.023	1	-.197**	.110*	.064
Inconsistent Parenting	-.311**	.461**	.017	1	.102	.096
Entitlement	-.075	.210**	.126*	.202**	1	.079
Sexual Coercion	-.007	.188**	.024	.099	.276**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Note: Values below the diagonal are for males and values above the diagonal are for females.

The correlations for females are above the diagonal. Many are not correlated as expected, either due to low magnitude or the wrong direction. This is likely due to the low incidence of the perpetration of sexual coercion by females. Because of the lack of variance on the dependent variable, females are omitted from further analysis. Indeed, attempts to conduct analysis using SEM resulted in an error message indicating that statistics could not be computed.

Data Analysis

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used to analyze the data using MPlus. SEM was selected as the analytic approach because it allows the entire model to be tested and taken into account, bringing a more holistic perspective to the analysis (Kline, 2011) and it allows for various tests of model fit, which is not possible with regression analysis. The model was evaluated using three model fit indices including the comparative fit index (CFI), the root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA), and the chi-squared test. Each of these tests evaluates the goodness-of-fit of the model in different ways and has advantages and limitations (Wickrama, Conger, Wallace, and Elder, 2003). There are many measures of goodness-of-fit,

but CFI, RMSEA, and Chi-squared are the most commonly used. The most useful measure is considered to be CFI, which tests the model by assuming that all other correlations are zero (Kenny, Kashy, & Cook, 2006). CFI measures fit relatively by comparing the model with, or relative to, the null model to test whether or not the proposed model is a better fit than the null model (Kenny et al., 2006). A CFI value closer to 1.0 indicates a better-fitting model.

A chi-squared test will also be used to test the model's goodness-of-fit. The chi-squared test compares the observed covariance matrix and the estimated covariance matrix. Although chi-squared is the basis for all other fit indices, there are some limitations to using only the chi-squared test. The chi-squared test can be misrepresentative of the goodness-of-fit due to its reliance on sample size. The larger the sample size (i.e., $n > 400$), the greater the likelihood that the chi-squared will be statistically significant, indicating a poor-fitting model, even if this is not the case (Kenny et al., 2006). The present study's sample size for each model should not affect the chi-squared test due to the fact that the model has a sample size of less than 400. That being said, the p-value for the chi-squared test should be interpreted carefully. A chi-squared p-value over 0.05 indicates a good model fit (Carmines & McIver, 1981).

The third goodness-of-fit test being used in this study is RMSEA. RMSEA measures goodness-of-fit without being affected by sample size, but does correct for model complexity. This test does take into account the number of parameters in the model. For RMSEA, a value of 0.05 indicates a good model fit while a RMSEA value of 0.08 indicates errors in approximation (Yoder, 1998; Joreskog & Sorbom, 1981). An RMSEA value of zero indicates best fit.

Due to the strengths and limitations of each, all three (CFI, RMSEA, and Chi-Squared) were used to test the goodness-of-fit of the model.

Direct Effects

Figure 2 shows the results of the SEM analysis. Bootstrapping was used in the analysis as well to check the stability of the results. Results indicate that warmth between parents is negatively related to hostility between parents though it is strongly associated with both an increased likelihood of overparenting and a decreased likelihood of inconsistent parenting. This means that the more warm and supportive parents are toward each other, the less hostile and aggressive they are toward each other. Further, parents who have a high degree of warmth in their romantic relationship are more likely to engage in overparenting but less likely to engage in inconsistent parenting of sons. This was consistent with expectations.

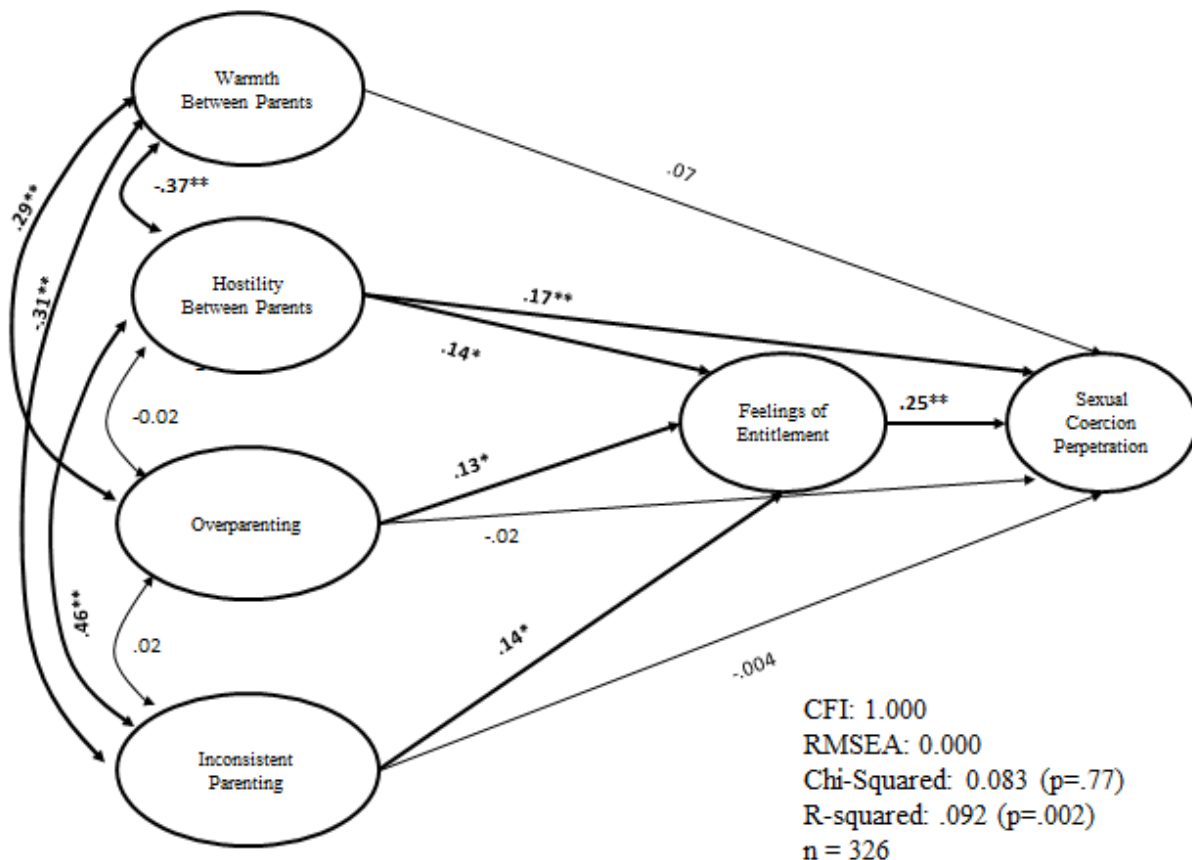


Figure 2. Model for male perpetration of sexual coercion

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

On the other hand, while hostility between parents was not significantly related to overparenting, it was positively correlated with inconsistent parenting. Therefore, overparenting was not influenced by parents' hostile relationship, the higher the level of hostility that parents display toward each other, or the higher the level of parental inconsistency they displayed with their sons. Further, hostility between parents was found to be significantly associated with sons' feelings of entitlement (.13, $p < .05$) as well as their perpetration of sexual coercion (.17, $p < .01$). In other words, the more hostile parents are toward each other, the greater the likelihood that sons develop a sense of entitlement and the higher the risk of their perpetration of sexual coercion with a partner. These findings are consistent with the hypothesized model which explains the expectation that hostility between parents would be associated with the perpetration of sexual coercion.

While neither overparenting nor inconsistent parenting were directly related to sons' perpetration of sexual coercion ($-.02$, $p > .05$ and $-.004$, $p > .05$, respectively), both approaches to parenting were positively associated with feelings of entitlement (.13, $p < .05$ and .14, $p < .05$, respectively). This shows that, as expected, when parents engage in higher levels of overparenting or inconsistency with their sons, the sons are more likely to develop a sense of entitlement.

Feelings of entitlement were positively related to the perpetration of sexual coercion (.25, $p < .01$). Therefore, an increased sense of entitlement among men is associated with a greater risk for engaging in coercive behavior with a sex partner. Though neither parenting behavior was directly related to men's perpetration of sexual coercion, the significant relationships between parenting and sense of entitlement and, in turn, sense of entitlement and perpetration of sexual coercion, suggest that feelings of entitlement could serve as a link between poor parenting

practices (i.e., overparenting and inconsistent parenting) and the perpetration of sexual coercion. Males who are the recipients of such parenting may be more likely to develop feelings of entitlement which is, in turn, associated with an increase in the perpetration of sexual coercion during emerging adulthood. This pattern is consistent with study hypotheses that poor parenting would be associated with feelings of entitlement and that feeling of entitlement would be associated with the perpetration of sexual coercion.

Indirect Effects

The significance of indirect effects were also tested. Figure 3 demonstrates, as expected, that significant indirect effects were found for several paths. Specifically, there was a significant indirect path from inconsistent parenting to sexual coercion through feelings of entitlement (.07, $p < .05$), as well as a significant indirect path from overparenting to sexual coercion through feelings of entitlement (.02, $p < .05$). This corroborates the suggestion that men who are either overparented or inconsistently parented are more likely to develop feelings of entitlement which is, in turn, associated with an increase sexually coercive behavior with a partner.

In addition to the significant direct path from hostility between parents to the perpetration of sexual coercion, a significant indirect relationship was also found through feelings of entitlement (.06, $p < .05$). This provides additional evidence that increased hostility between parents is associated with an increased sense of entitlement in sons, which, again, is related to sexually coercive behavior with a partner.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to address gaps in the literature by examining the relationship between warmth and hostility between parents, inconsistent parenting, and overparenting during the offspring's time at home and perpetration of sexual coercion during emerging adulthood. Feelings of entitlement were posited to explain the link between the independent and dependent variables. This quality is characterized by such attitudes as an exploitative approach to interactions with others, a lack of empathy, and the belief that they are more special and important than others (American Psychiatric Association [APA], 1994). Feeling entitled was expected to be associated with being treated as special due to overparenting or by having a coercive interactional approach learned by engaging with hostile, inconsistent parents. Further, individuals who have an attitude of entitlement in their relationships with others were expected to use this approach with intimate partners as a strategy to obtain sex. The study's hypotheses were guided by social learning theory.

Specifically, it was hypothesized that hostility between parents would be associated with lower rates of overparenting and higher rates of inconsistent parenting, increased feelings of entitlement, and more perpetration of sexual coercion. Further, it was hypothesized that overparenting and inconsistent parenting would be positively related to the perpetration of sexual coercion and that this relationship would be partially or completely mediated by feelings of entitlement. These hypotheses were examined using a sample of 326 undergraduate men, 43.3% of whom reported engaging in at least one sexually coercive behavior. Men were most likely to

use alcohol, touching, lying about the future relationship to achieve intercourse. These behaviors each occurred at rates of 9-15% while 3% of men indicated that they had held down and forced intercourse with an unwilling partner. These rates are similar to those reported in previous studies that have utilized undergraduate samples (Simons et al, 2008; Simons et al., 2012b).

As expected, warmth between parents was negatively associated with their level of hostility toward one another. Further, results indicate that warmth between parents is not related to the perpetration of sexual coercion or a sense of entitlement,

On the other hand, there was a strong, positive relationship between hostility between parents and sons' feelings of entitlement and their perpetration of sexual coercion. These results are consistent with previous research, which indicate that observing hostility between parents during childhood may predict hostile behavior, lack of empathy for others, and the perpetration of sexual coercion during the emerging adulthood of the offspring (Kinsfogel & Grych, 2004; Linder & Collins, 2005; Reitzel-Jaffe & Wolfe, 2001; Bishop & Lane, 2002). Parents who have high hostility in their relationship are less likely to meet the needs of their children. Adolescents and emerging adults who are neglected or underparented during their time living at home may come to believe that they deserve better later in life which has been shown to lead to a problematic sense of entitlement (Bishop & Lane, 2002). It may be that adolescents whose parents have high hostility in their romantic relationship are more likely to be neglected, which in turn, can lead to the make up for the lack of warm parenting during their childhood. This can also lead to feelings of entitlement (Bishop & Lane, 2002).

As expected, hostility between parents was found to have a strong, negative relationship with overparenting, and a strong, positive relationship with inconsistent parenting. These results indicate that parents who are hostile toward each other are less likely to overparent their son, but

are more likely to be inconsistent with him. It is likely that parents who are hostile and aggressive in their relationship have high levels of relational conflict. Past research has shown that marital conflict is related to poor parenting practices. For instance, parents with high levels of marital conflict have shown decreased warmth, support, behavioral control, and monitoring and more criticism and corporal punishment with their children (Conger and Associates, 1994; Krishnakumar & Buehler, 2000). Such parents may not be focused on or able to engage in consistent parenting. Also, parents who are hostile toward each other may disagree about many things, including child-rearing practices, and therefore are not on the same page with each other when it comes to expectations for the child or the consequences to be imposed when the child violates those expectations. Parents who are generally happy and cooperative with each other are more likely to agree on various areas of family life, including parenting. The negative correlations for warmth between parents and parental inconsistency in the present study support this contention.

Overparenting, by contrast, likely involves a high degree of indulgence and nurturance as well as an intense focus on the preferences and desires of the offspring. Parents who are generally hostile are unlikely to possess the traits that would promote such an approach to parenting. This is consistent with the pattern of findings in the present study. However, given that overparenting is an undesirable approach to parenting, it would not be accurate to conclude that marital hostility promotes positive parenting in this instance. Rather it appears that while hostility is generally associated with poor parenting, overparenting is not an aspect of poor parenting that results from marital hostility.

On the other hand, parents who are warm toward each other were found to be more likely to overparent their sons. If a parent's romantic relationship is low in conflict and characterized

by positive, warm interactions, they may have more time and emotional energy to focus on their child, and therefore may be more likely to engage in behaviors consistent with overparenting. Further, individuals who are generally warm and nurturing toward others may be motivated to do whatever is necessary to meet the desires and preferences of those close to them, particularly their offspring. Therefore, while overparenting by warm parents could be motivated by a genuine desire to please their offspring, they may be inadvertently engaging in a set of behaviors that is associated with a variety of negative outcomes. The present study examined the extent to which overparenting was associated with sons' perpetration of sexual coercion. Results did not support this hypothesis.

Further, in contrast with expectations, inconsistent parenting was not directly associated with men's perpetration of sexual coercion. Past research has shown that inconsistent parenting has been shown to lead the child to question the boundaries and expectations that are in place for his or her behavior (Rossman & Rea, 2005). The child may also be able to coerce his or her parent into giving them what they want, since the parent's previous behavior has reinforced the idea that "no" does not always mean "no." Based on Patterson's (1992) coercion model, it was expected that this could include sexual coercion of a partner, the most clear example of a situation in which it is supposed to always be the case that "no means no." Results did not support this hypothesis.

While neither overparenting nor inconsistent parenting were, directly related to the perpetration of sexual coercion, both approaches to parenting were associated with sons' feelings of entitlement. Individuals who have this quality believe they deserve special treatment, their wants and desires trump those of others, and they lack empathy toward others. Past research has shown that a sense of entitlement is associated with the perpetration of sexual coercion. Results

from the present study are consistent with this pattern. An indirect path was found from inconsistent parenting to the perpetration of sexual coercion through feelings of entitlement. Although the parenting behaviors examined in the current study do not demonstrate that there is a direct relationship with sexual coercion to be mediated by a sense of entitlement, sense of entitlement links overparenting and inconsistent parenting to sexual coercion. Tests of the indirect paths show this relationship to be significant. Thus, parents should avoid these approaches to parenting because they contribute to the development of sons' sense of self that can be extremely detrimental in their approach to relationships with others, including intimate partners.

However, as expected, feelings of entitlement were found to be associated with the perpetration of sexual coercion. These results suggest that while overparenting and inconsistent parenting are not directly associated with the perpetration of sexual coercion, these parenting behaviors are related to feelings of entitlement, which in turn, are associated with the perpetration of sexual coercion. Therefore, feelings of entitlement may be a link between poor parenting practices (i.e., overparenting and inconsistent parenting) and the perpetration of sexual coercion. This idea was also observed when testing the indirect paths from poor parenting to the perpetration of sexual coercion through feelings of entitlement. Male offspring who are inconsistently parented and/or overparented during adolescence, and who also develop feelings of entitlement, may be more likely to perpetrate sexual coercion during emerging adulthood. Further research should be conducted to examine why this might be the case and why some offspring develop feelings of entitlement from being inconsistently and overparented while some do not.

These findings seem to support Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory. Adolescents who observe hostility between their parents during childhood may learn that hostility and aggression in romantic relationships is normal and therefore may be more likely to behave aggressively in their own romantic relationships. However, modeling does not fully explain the relationship between hostility between parents and the perpetration of sexual coercion in emerging adulthood. Further research should explore other possible mediators that account for the impact of interparental conflict on perpetration of sexual coercion or other forms of intimate partner violence.

Adolescents who are overparented may learn, from interactions with their parents, that they are special and deserve what they want, which may lead to feelings of entitlement. Those who are inconsistently parented may learn that "no" does not always mean "no" and that they can escalate their behavior, even to aggression and coercion, to get what they want (Patterson, et al., 1992). Those who believe that they are entitled to what they want, may learn that they should have what they want in all situations, even when a dating partner does not want to participate in a sexual activity. Those who feel entitled are more likely to behave aggressively to get what they want, including sex (Watson, Grisham, Trotter, & Biderman, 1984; Twenge & Campbell, 2003).

Despite significant findings, there are a few limitations to be addressed. First, this is a cross-sectional study which means that it is not possible to definitely establish causal priority. Questions were worded such that respondents were asked to respond to items about parents' relationship quality and parenting during the time that they were growing up and lived at home while questions about sense of entitlement and sexual coercive behaviors were addressed for the preceding year. Findings from the present study need to be replicated with longitudinal research.

Second, the present study utilized retrospective data. Given the issue of recall bias, future research would benefit from a prospective study design. Further, the inconsistent parenting measure measured only interparental inconsistency or a lack of consistency between parents regarding decisions about their offspring. Future research would benefit from the assessment of intraparental consistency, or the extent to which parents relate to their offspring and apply rules as well as consequences for rule violations in a consistent fashion. Intraparental inconsistency has been identified in other research that examines youth problem behaviors and the same may be true for engaging in sexually coercive behavior with an unwilling partner. Given that our sample consisted of middle to upper-middle class college students, there is some question regarding the generalizability of our findings. Thus, there is a need for replication of our findings using data from a more diverse sample, including minorities, low- and middle-income families, and emerging adults who are not attending college.

Taking these limitations into consideration, this study has identified a link between overparenting and inconsistent parenting and the perpetration of sexual coercion. These variables were previously unexamined and show that family of origin experiences play a role in cognitions about what one deserves and how that person behaves in order to get what they feel they deserve.

There are numerous implications for practice and education. Specifically, healthy marriage and relationship education programs can emphasize that hostility and aggression in the romantic relationship can have consequences intergenerationally. These programs can point out that hostility does not only harm the romantic relationship, but it can influence their offspring's future relationships as well. Also, parent educators can emphasize the harm that overparenting and inconsistent parenting can lead to. Even though many parents who overparent their

offspring are often simply trying to be good parents, they often do not see the harm that they may be causing in teaching their offspring to have unrealistic and unhealthy expectations. Parents who are inconsistent with their offspring are often teaching their child to escalate their behavior in order to get what they want, even if this is not the intent. Parent educators can emphasize that while it may seem harmless to make their child happy, they may be teaching their child that they can use coercive behavior to get what they want. Clinicians can use this information in their practice, especially with couples experiencing hostility and aggression in their relationship, individuals who have feelings of entitlement, and those who perpetrate sexual coercion. In sum, clinicians and educators should be aware that some parenting practices, which some parents view as positive, can cause harm to their child's future.

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APPENDIX: STUDY QUESTIONS

Warmth Between Parents $\alpha=.81$ for males; $\alpha=.86$ for females N=4	
Item 12	When they interacted with each other, how often did your parents....Listen carefully to each other's point of view?
Item 15	When they interacted with each other, how often did your parents....Act loving and affectionate toward one another?
Item 16	When they interacted with each other, how often did your parents....Have a good laugh with each other about something that was funny?
Item 19	When they interacted with each other, how often did your parents....Say "I love you" to each other?
Hostility Between Parents $\alpha=.78$ for males; $\alpha=.79$ for females N=4	
Item 13	When they interacted with each other, how often did your parents....Criticize each other's ideas?
Item 14	When they interacted with each other, how often did your parents.... Shout or yell at each other because they were mad?
Item 17	When they interacted with each other, how often did your parents....Hit, push, shove, or grab each other?
Item 18	When they interacted with each other, how often did your parents....Insult or swear at each other?

Overparenting $\alpha=.82$ for males; $\alpha=.83$ for females N=10	
<i>Mother/Female Caregiver</i>	
Item 27	During the past 6 months, how often has she.....Helped you find solutions to problems you may be having with friends, a dating partner, a professor, or employer?
Item 28	During the past 6 months, how often has she.....Bought you something you <i>want</i> even if you don't necessarily <i>need</i> them?
Item 29	During the past 6 months, how often has she.....Given you some extra money when your bank account has been overdrawn or you are running low on cash?
Item 30	During the past 6 months, how often has she.....Called you to remind you to wake up for class, work, or other obligations
Item 31	During the past 6 months, how often has she.....Done things for you that you are capable of doing for yourself (laundry, grocery shopping, etc.)?
<i>Father/Male Caregiver</i>	
Item 32	During the past 6 months, how often has he.....Helped you find solutions to problems you may be having with friends, a dating partner, a professor, or employer?
Item 33	During the past 6 months, how often has he.....Bought you something you <i>want</i> even if you don't necessarily <i>need</i> them?
Item 34	During the past 6 months, how often has he.....Given you some extra money when your bank account has been overdrawn or you are running low on cash?
Item 35	During the past 6 months, how often has he.....Called you to remind you to wake up for class, work, or other obligations
Item 36	During the past 6 months, how often has he.....Done things for you that you are capable of doing for yourself (laundry, grocery shopping, etc.)?

Inconsistent Parenting $\alpha=.65$ for males; $\alpha=.75$ for females N=3	
Item 47	When I was growing up at home.....My parents/caregivers supported each other's decisions about disciplining me.
Item 48	When I was growing up at home.....Sometimes one parent/caregiver would give me permission to do something that the other parent/caregiver said no.
Item 49	When I was growing up at home.....My parents/caregivers had two different standards, or sets of expectations, for my behavior.

Feelings of Entitlement $\alpha=.83$ for males; $\alpha=.83$ for females N=9	
Item 54	I honestly feel I'm just more deserving than others.
Item 55	Great things should come to me.
Item 56	If I were on the Titanic, I would deserve the <i>first</i> lifeboat!
Item 57	I demand the best because I'm worth it.
Item 58	I do not necessarily deserve special treatment.
Item 59	I deserve more things in my life.
Item 60	People like me deserve an extra break now and then.
Item 61	Things should go my way.
Item 62	I feel entitled to more of everything.

Sexual Coercion Perpetration $\alpha=.78$ for males; $\alpha=.58$ for females N=6	
Item 77	I got my date drunk or stoned.
Item 78	I threatened to terminate the relationship
Item 79	I said things to make the other person feel guilty (i.e., "If you really cared about me...")
Item 80	I tried to turn my date on by touching him/her even though he/she wasn't interested.
Item 81	I made false promises about the future of the relationship.
Item 82	I physically held my date down.