

ABSTRACT

CAN'T SAY NO AND WON'T TAKE NO: GENDER SOCIALIZATION, ENTITLEMENT, AND SEXUAL COERCION

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Sexual coercion is a significant problem often connected to rigid and restrictive gender roles. The current project seeks to expand on the current literature on sexual coercion perpetration and victimization using entitlement beliefs as a critical explanatory factor when connecting coercive experiences with gender role ideology. Entitlement was examined as a mediator between conformity to masculine gender roles and sexual coercion perpetration among men and women and between conformity to feminine roles and sexual coercion victimization among men and women. These models were tested in a sample of undergraduate students and MTurk workers. An experimental paradigm was also tested, examining whether priming participants with sexist ideology has an effect on their perception of a vignette involving sexual coercion. Findings suggest important relationships between gender role conformity, entitlement, and experiences with sexual coercion. Additionally, entitlement appears to play a role in perception of a sexually coercive incident. The results of this dissertation have meaningful clinical and research implications. Future research could continue to examine how gender socialization impacts the development of entitled beliefs and how this, in turn, may influence experiences with sexual coercion. In particular, the findings of this dissertation indicate the importance of examining perpetration and victimization across genders. Clinically, the current findings indicate the potential harm of strong adherence to gender roles in the context of the perception of or experiences with sexual coercion.