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GENDER EFFECTS OF COMMUNICATOR AND
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IN RELATIONSHIP VIOLENCE PREVENTION
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GENDER EFFECTS OF COMMUNICATOR AND RECIPIENT
IN RELATIONSHIP VIOLENCE PREVENTION MESSAGES

By

Kaoutar Tbatou

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ABSTRACT

GENDER EFFECTS OF COMMUNICATOR AND RECIPIENT IN RELATIONSHIP VIOLENCE PREVENTION MESSAGES

By

Kaoutar Tbatou

This study examined main and interaction effects of communicator (voice-over) and recipient's genders on the response to relationship violence prevention public service announcements (PSA). Message response refers to source credibility, emotional response, cognitive response, attitude toward the issue, attitude toward the communicator and attitude toward the PSA, and behavioral intention. Participants (N=223) took an online survey measuring their response to two versions of a relationship violence prevention PSA. Each version included either a male or female voice-over. The results suggest that the gender of the communicator significantly affects perceived source credibility, such that the female communicator was perceived as more credible than the male communicator. The gender of the recipient has a significant impact on only one aspect of emotional response, fear, and on attitude toward the issue of relationship violence. In both cases, female recipients had higher degree of fear and a more positive attitude $_{issue}$ than males did. No communicator's or recipient's gender impacts were found on behavioral intention. Also, no gender interaction effects were found on any response variable.

The topic requires further examination, but the findings have a set of academic and professional implications. Future research recommendations are also discussed.

DEDICATION

Al hamdu lillah.

To my loving family and friends.

I never would have reached my goals without your unwavering trust and support.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION

1.1 – Background
1.1.1. Relationship violence as a serious social issue

Intimate relationship violence is one of the oldest social phenomena. For centuries, both social and legal systems considered it a social taboo and a private matter. Until the 19th century for example, husbands in Britain were allowed by law to batter their wives – an act that was labeled as "lawful correction" (Hunt & Martin, 2001). However, interest from the media, in addition to governmental and non-governmental organizations has grown considerably since the middle of the 20th century – an advance in which women's' movements played a considerable role (Huang & Gunn, 2001).

Since then, thousands of relationship violence cases have been reported every year, in many countries around the world. In the United States alone, the US Department of State estimates a yearly average of 4.8 million women experiencing physical assaults and rapes from intimate partners (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). However, although relationship violence cases are increasingly reported, and despite the growing public awareness of it, the issue of relationship violence still persists, and even seems to get more complicated and increasingly difficult to eradicate (Crowell, 1996).

Relationship violence has considerable consequences on individuals as well as societies. On the individual level, the harm could be physical (e.g., injuries and bruises) or psychological (e.g., depression, low self-esteem), and can affect both the social and professional lives of victims as well as perpetrators.

The emerging importance of relationship violence has translated globally into governmental and non-governmental advocacy, policy-making and communication efforts. Among many objectives, these efforts aimed at raising awareness about relationship violence and changing the behaviors of both perpetrators and victims. Other efforts aimed to increase the involvement of the community by trying to change the passive behavior of bystanders – people who are aware of a violent relationship but do not try to stop it or help those involve in it.

There are many examples of large-reaching campaigns about the issue of relationship violence. In the United States, the National Coalition against Domestic Violence has maintained the tradition of organizing a yearly awareness month since 1987. Activities organized during those awareness months have aimed to sensitize the public about the issue, support and guide victims, but also bring together advocates to share experiences and ideas about their efforts to eradicate relationship violence.

On the global scale, Amnesty International launched in 2004 an international campaign labeled "Stop Violence against Women". Its objectives were to break the silence around different forms of violence faced by women both inside and outside households. As part of this campaign, Amnesty International supported the advance of anti-violence legislation in many countries including the US.

Efforts like the ones described above fall within the category of *professional* endeavors that thankfully have been able to make a difference. But besides professional interest, a considerable amount of *academic efforts* have been devoted to the issue of relationship violence. This interest takes the shape of academic research

and experimental studies (See reviews by e.g., Gelles & Conte, 1990; Pirog-Good & Strets, 1989; and Johnson & Ferraro, 2000).

But as will be discussed in section 1.1.3 of this introduction, the issue of relationship violence did not receive equal degrees of attention from all academic disciplines. In fact, an important core of psychology and sociology research scrutinized the issue of relationship violence. However, the academic field of communication research still needs to devote more attention to the issue because such research can help design effective relationship violence prevention campaigns.

Before discussing the scarcity of communication academic interest in relationship violence, let us first briefly define the concept of relationship violence as it is used in the present research.

1.1.2. Definition of relationship violence

The present study adopts the term "intimate relationship violence", shortened as "relationship violence" or "violence". The definition adopted is the one provided by the US Department of Justice, describing intimate relationship violence as "homicides, rapes, robberies and assault committed by intimates [including] current or former spouses, boyfriends or girlfriends, including same-sex relationships" (US Department of Justice, 2007).

It would be worth noting that the perpetrator of relationship violence could be either male or female. However, the present research adopts the perspective where females are victims and males are perpetrators. This perspective is reflected in the public service announcement (PSA) used as a stimulus in the study. Choosing to portray a female victim and a male perpetrator is based on the statistical evidence that

within an intimate violent relationship, females have six times higher chances than males of being the victims (US Department of Justice, 2007).

After defining the concept of relationship violence as it is used in the present study, the next section explains that relationship violence deserves more attention from communication research because this type of research can increase the effectiveness of prevention communication campaigns.

1.1.3. The need for communication research on relationship violence

Research about relationship violence was mainly conducted in the fields of sociology, psychology and public health. Reviews of research on relationship violence and related topics like "family abuse", report that previous investigations were mainly conducted from sociological or psychological perspectives (e.g., Gelles & Conte, 1990, Pirog-Good & Strets, 1989, and Johnson & Ferraro, 2000).

Nevertheless, despite this attention from sociology and psychology research, other academic disciplines have attributed lower levels of attention to the issue of relationship violence. The field of communication research is one of them. The result is a need for communication research that focuses on relationship violence.

It is important to address this need because communication research can increase the effectiveness of pro-social messages aiming to reduce relationship violence. This is the advantage from which other social issues have benefited like driving behavior (e.g., Murry, Jr. et al., 1993; Treise et al., 1999; Wolburg, 2001) and substance abuse(e.g., see a review of 60 years of research by Crano & Burgoon, 2001). The aim of the present study therefore is to contribute to the core of communication research that specifically focuses on relationship violence.

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After explaining the need for communication research that specifically focuses on relationship violence, the next section of this introduction presents an overview on the present thesis. It explains the objectives of the study, defines the concept of message response in details, and presents the study's general research question.

1.2. An overview of the thesis

1.2.1. Purpose of the study and general research question

The present study examines the effect of communicator and recipient's genders on the response to relationship violence prevention PSA's. The findings have the ambition to shed the light on how the genders of the communicator and the recipient could affect source credibility, emotional response, cognitive response, attitudes and behavioral intention. The findings aim to provide useful guidelines for future health campaigns targeted at relationship-violence bystanders, with the aim of increasing the effectiveness of such campaigns.

Therefore, the general research question that the present study aims to answer is:

How do communicator and recipient's genders affect the recipients' message response to relationship violence prevention public service announcements (PSA's)?

1.2.2. Theoretical framework

As the chapter of Theoretical Framework (chapter III) explains, the expected main effects of gender on message response are based on the findings of previous research that will be reviewed in the first section of chapter III. Additionally, the same chapter provides two theoretical grounds for the interaction effects between the gender of the

communicator and that of the recipient. These two theoretical grounds are the match-up hypothesis (Kahle & Homer, 1985) and gender schema theory (Bem, 1981).

Many studies have examined the communicator and recipient genders and their main influence on message response. As an example, many studies demonstrated that either the gender of communicator or that of the recipient could affect perceived source credibility (e.g., Markham, 1988), emotional response (e.g., Levine & Zimmerman, 1996), cognitive response (e.g., Darley & Smith, 1995), attitudes (e.g., Lori & Pradeep, 2003) and behavioral intention (e.g., Nysveen, Pedersen & Thorbjornsen, 2005).

Additionally, the gender-sensitivity of the message and its gender-salience produces more chances that the interaction between the communicator and recipients' gender would affect message response. In fact, Kempf and Palan (2006) maintain that message response is more likely to be influenced by gender when gender is salient to the content of the message.

1.2.3. Overview of the study design

The present study was conducted using a 2 between (male or female communicator) X 2 between (male or female recipient) factorial design. The study tests the participants' response to two versions of a relationship violence prevention PSA where the voice-over is male in one version and female in the other. Participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions, depending on whether their genders match or mismatch with that of the communicator. The participants were undergraduate Michigan State University students who participated in return for extra-credit.

Defining message response:

In the present study, message response refers to five dependent variables: source credibility, cognitive response, emotional response, attitudes and behavioral intention. The choice of these five variables as message response variables is based on two reasons. First, these variables appear recurrently in message-response and information-response models. One example is the dual mediation model of advertising response (Mitchel & Olson, 1981). This model incorporates two of the five message response variables tested by the present study: cognitive response and attitudes.

Second, the five variables in fact constitute sequence of stages that the message recipient goes through, starting with exposure to the message and ending with behavioral intention or behavior itself. Upon exposure to the message, the recipient has a certain degree of perceived source credibility that affects the rest of the response variables including cognitive and emotional responses, attitudes and behavioral intention. Also, within the same response sequence, each of the variables exerts influence on the other.

As a side note, it would be worth mentioning that despite the aforementioned influence that happens among the five response variables, the present study examines all of them as dependent variables. There are two reasons to explain this choice. First, the focus of the present study is the effect of gender on all these five variables, and not the effects that happen between the variables. Second, the order in which the influence takes place between variables is still debated among scholars. For example, some believe that it is attitude that influences behavior (e.g., Lavidge & Steiner, 1961), while

others believe that the opposite could also happen (Palda, 1966). Therefore, the present study considers all the five response variables as dependent variables.

Going back to the importance of including the five response variables in the present study, more reasons are available to explain the importance of each one of them. First, source credibility is important because it impacts persuasion (Harmon & Coney, 1982). On the other hand, source credibility is also influenced by various variables. Some of these variables are psychographic like the recipients' initial opinion prior to exposure to the message (Sternthal et al., 1978). Some other variables are demographic like age and, of bigger relevance to the present study, gender (e.g., Oakley, 2000).

Second, emotional response is important because emotions play an important role in shaping the response to persuasive messages (Dillard & Peck, 2000) as well as the subsequent behavioral intention (e.g., Thoits, 1989). Also, according to previous research, emotional response is influenced by gender (e.g., Levine & Zimmerman, 1996). Therefore, the present study explores whether the participants' emotional response to the relationship violence prevention PSA varies according to the recipient's gender, the communicator's gender, and their interaction.

Third, cognitive response is important because it is also shown to influence attitudes (e.g., Mitchell & Olson, 1981), that in turn influence subsequent behavior. Also, just like source credibility and emotional response, cognitive response is impacted by gender (e.g., Darley & Smith, 1995) and is therefore included as a dependent variable.

Fourth, in addition to source credibility, emotional response, and cognitive response, this study also measures attitudes as message response variables. In fact, three types of attitudes are measured: Attitude toward the message itself (attitude $_{PSA}$); attitude toward the social issue (attitude $_{issue}$); and attitude toward the communicator (attitude $_{voice-over}$).

It is important to measure attitudes for two reasons. First, gender was found to influence attitudes (e.g., Lori & Pradeep, 2003; Byrne, 1961). Second, attitudes shape the subsequent behavior of message recipients (e.g., Dillard & Peck, 2000). Since the PSA used in the present study is primarily a persuasion message that aims to change bystanders' passive behavior, it follows that it is important to measure their attitudes.

Fifth, measuring behavioral intention is important because it is the precursor of actual behavior (Parker et al., 1992). Again, previous research found that behavioral intention can be affected by gender (e.g., Nysveen, Pedersen & Thorbjornsen, 2005) which makes it important to measure this response variable within the context of relationship violence prevention PSA's.

After defining the concept of message response and explaining the rationale behind the choice of each of the five response variables, the next section provides details about the purpose of the present study and the general research question.

1.2.4. Significance of the study

The present study is an important endeavor for five reasons. First, the issue of relationship violence is serious and persistent. Second it is important to focus on voice-over as a communicator because voice-overs are very frequently used in PSA's

and ads, but still have not received much empirical research attention. Third, research about bystander behavior is important because the community can play an important role in eradicating social phenomena like relationship violence. Fourth the focus on the response of college-aged students is important because, like adults, this age category is also under the risk of relationship violence. Fifth, PSA's as a stimulus deserve research attention because they are a central tool for pro-social campaigns.

The importance of research about relationship violence

Relationship violence has reached alarming levels of spread and frequency, both at the global and local levels, and therefore deserves the attention of research because it can increase the effectiveness of relationship violence prevention campaigns. For example, The World Health Organization (WHO) identified relationship violence in 2002 as the most frequent of all violence forms that women face in the world, including rape and sexual assault. In the United Stated, a yearly average of about 4 million women experience assault by an intimate partner (American Psychological Association, 1996). More details regarding the importance if this issue are discussed in Chapter II – Background, but these statistics can probably already shed light on the significance of a communication-focused study that deals with relationship violence.

The importance of research focused on PSA voice-overs

In this study, the communicator is the PSA voice-over. Also called an off-camera commentator or narrator, a voice-over is defined as an announcer who is not on camera but whom the audience listens to while watching the visual action on a video (Imber, 2000).

Research focus on voice-overs is important for three main reasons. First voice-overs are very frequently used in commercial ads and social-related PSA's. However, not many studies have examined audience response to the voice-overs. In fact, even when previous studies examined the effects of communicator-recipient gender, the communicator used in those studies either delivered the message in written form (e.g., Bochner & Insko, 1966), or was an individual whom the participants saw on screen (e.g., Caballero & Pride, 1984) or in person during the experiments (e.g., Berscheid, 1966). When in some studies the communicator was an audio voice, the message was not an ad or PSA, but rather a long lecture or a speech (e.g., Wood, Gorenflo & Santer, 1994). Therefore, the present study may be among the first to examine the effect of communicator-recipient similarity, using a voice-over as the communicator.

Since an important portion of PSA's do use voice-overs, it would be interesting to examine response to the message delivered by a voice-over. This can help future PSA and ad designers make the right choice of voice actors.

Second, testing message response when the communicator is a voice-over is fundamentally different from testing it when the communicator is an individual who can be seen or interacted with by the participants. For example, many previous source credibility experiments allowed the participants to see the communicator, either on screen or directly in the same location (e.g., Berscheid, 1966; Woodside & Davenport, 1978). Other source credibility studies provided the participants with information about the communicator like their biography or picture for example (e.g., Caballero & Pride, 1984). While this design was adequate for the purposes of those studies, it also

implies a risk of confounding elements such as physical attractiveness, body language or even dress style.

In real life however, we are daily exposed to a considerable number of ads or PSA's while we do not know much about the person who is speaking as the voice-over. One of the few things we can know however is the gender of the voice-over. Accordingly, this study tries to test response to the PSA within conditions that are similar to the audience's usual exposure to PSA's. The only thing that will be known about the voice-over is gender that can be inferred from the voice itself.

Third, from a PSA production point of view, the choice of a voice-over is one of the important arrangements that PSA and ad designers have to make. Choosing the right voice-over is important because it is the "voice" that represents the brand or advocated behavior. This may be as important as the "image" of a message or a brand. Accordingly, the degree to which a voice-over is likeable or convincing may make a big difference in the audience's response to the message. Therefore, studies like the present one can inform PSA and ad designers during the process of voice-actors' choice.

The importance of research about bystander behavior

The PSA used as a stimulus in the present study targets relationship violence bystanders. Therefore, the third argument that explains the significance of the present study is related to the decision to focus on bystanders as the message recipients.

Public and academic interest in bystander behavior started in the mid-sixties after the shocking homicide of a New York City resident, Kitty Genovese. Genovese was murdered in her parking lot within sight and/or hearing of dozens of neighbors, but no

one came to her rescue. The incident triggered the interest of psychology and sociology researchers who tried to understand the factors that would motivate bystanders to provide help in a distress situation (Laner & Benin, 2001).

Within the context of relationship violence, understanding how to change bystanders' passive attitude is of great importance. Unlike the victim and the perpetrator, bystanders can play a significant role in decreasing the spread of relationship violence because they have a relatively objective stance towards the violence situation. In such a situation, the perpetrator and victim are subjective because they are highly involved in the issue. This usually delays or completely prevents their action towards change. On the one hand, the perpetrator would not try to change the situation because he is afraid of legal punishment, wants to maintain control over the victim, or is simply not aware that his behavior has psychological causes that can be treated. On the other hand, the victim would not react out of fear, financial dependence, or if she is unaware of the ways she could get help. This justifies the importance of changing bystanders' attitude from passive into active in order to help the victim, the perpetrator, or both of them.

In fact, bystanders' participation in eradicating this social phenomenon is probably indispensible. By choosing either a passive or active behavior, bystanders can contribute either to the perpetuation or the reduction of this social phenomenon across generations (Gracia & Herrero, 2006). It is therefore important to conduct communication-focused research that examines ways to change their attitudes and behaviors regarding relationship violence.

The importance of research about college students as PSA targets

The importance of the present research can also be explained from a fourth perspective: the age category of the target audience of the PSA used as a stimulus. The participants of the present survey study are college students, and there are at least two reasons why this age category deserves attention from research.

First, the age category of college students is at the mid-section between childhood and adulthood. The issue of relationship violence could be partly solved on the short run by designing campaigns targeted at current violent couples, who are adults in most cases. But it is also important to solve the issue of relationship violence in the long run by preventing it from propagating in future generations. Therefore, it would be beneficial to make young people aware of the issue and involved in solving it as early as college-age.

The second reason why focusing on college students is important is that college students are themselves under the risk of being involved in relationship violence, just like adults are. In fact, the issue of relationship violence is faced across races, social strata and ages (e.g., Wilt & Olson, 1996).

It is generally difficult to obtain precise statistics about on-campus relationship violence due to the "confidential" nature of the problem. But some studies have revealed alarming numbers. For example, a study conducted in 1981 among college students revealed that about 60 % of them had personally known someone who had been involved in relationship violence (Makepeace, 1981). The same study showed that almost 1 in 4 of the surveyed students had personally experienced a violent relationship. In 1998, a report from the US Department of Justice stated that women aged 16-24 experience the highest rate of relationship violence. More recently, Hall

Smith et al. (2003) conducted a longitudinal study and concluded that women who were physically assaulted during adolescence were at greater risk for re-victimization during college years than those who have not.

Therefore, because the college-age category is exposed to the risk of relationship violence and because it can play a role in reducing the occurrence of violence in future generations, it is important to empirically examine the response of college-aged students to relationship violence prevention PSA's.

The importance of research focused on testing PSA's

Finally, the significance of the present study can also be illustrated by explaining the importance of communication research that focuses on the response to PSA's.

It is important to study bystander response to PSA's because PSA's are one of the major tools in social marketing and health communication campaigns. It is through the use of tools like PSA's that bystanders can be made aware that their attitudes and behavior concerning relationship violence can make a big difference. For example, a PSA can let bystanders know exactly what to do to help reduce relationship violence. An active bystander could save a couple by directing them to psychological counseling, or even save a life by reporting a relationship violence case.

In sum, the present study aims to investigate the main and interaction effects of communicator and recipient genders on persuasive messages within the context of relationship violence PSA's targeting bystanders. It examines how the genders of the message communicator (PSA voice-over) and message recipients (study participants) individually affect message response, but also how they interact and whether the match or mismatch of genders affects the audience response to the PSA. What is

meant by message response is the participant's perceived source credibility, emotional response, cognitive response, attitudes and behavioral change.

The findings of this study aim to respond to a need for communication research geared toward the improvement of anti-relationship-violence campaigns that target bystanders. Additionally, this study aims to contribute to other research areas like "bystander behavior" and "gender similarity" and its effects on message response.

The next section, the last of this chapter, maps out the chapters of the present thesis and reviews their content.

1.2.5. Organization of the thesis

The present thesis is made up of six chapters. After the Introduction (chapter I), the background of the present study is discussed in chapter II.

Chapter III explains the theoretical framework of this study, and presents the hypotheses and research questions. Chapter IV, Method, describes the study design and procedure, and provides details about the study participants, the stimulus, the stimulus pretest, the variables and their measures as well as the analysis strategy.

The results of the present study are presented in chapter V, and discussed in Chapter VI. Chapter VI also discusses the limitations of the present study, provides suggestions for future research, and explains the study's practical and academic implications.

CHAPTER II – BACKGROUND

Relationship violence is a social issue faced across generations, races and social strata (Hotaling & Sugarman, 1986). The present chapter claims that relationship violence is a serious social phenomenon, a claim based on many facts. First, relationship violence exists all over the world and takes many forms including physical, psychological and verbal. Second, violence has multiple physical, psychological and socioeconomic causes and effects on individuals as well as society. Also, based on a literature review, this chapter also shows that relationship violence has not received as much attention from communication research as it did from psychology and sociology research. The chapter therefore suggests that it deserves more attention from communication research because such attention is key to more effective relationship violence prevention campaigns.

2.1. Relationship violence as a serious social issue

2.1.1. Forms, causes and effects

Defining relationship violence: Numerous researchers and theorists have defined relationship violence in publications pertaining to disciplines as diverse as sociology, law, health and psychology (Rothenberg, 2002). But across the literature, there is no consensus about a unified term to describe this social phenomenon. Among other labels, relationship violence was described as "family violence", "family abuse", "close-relationship abuse", and "spousal abuse. In some publications, two or more of these labels are used interchangeably (e.g., Gelles, 1976; Burgess & Draper, 1989),

while in others, differences are pointed out. For example, Gelles and Conte (1990) argue that the term "family violence" is broader than violence in the couple, which they also call "courtship" or "marital violence". They explain that the term "family abuse" is broad because family abuse could also enclose child abuse and elderly abuse.

For the purposes of the present research, relationship violence is defined as "homicides, rapes, robberies and assault committed by intimates [including] current or former spouses, boyfriends or girlfriends, including same-sex relationships" (US Department of Justice, 2007). Additionally, the present study's conceptual definition of relationship violence acknowledges that this phenomenon could take physical as well as psychological forms. Examples of physical violence are battering and hitting; psychological violence includes threats, insults and stalking. Sexual abuse is also another form of relationship violence that creates physical as well as psychological repercussions. In fact, some researchers believe that sexual abuse in one of the most common forms of relationship violence (Ellsberg, Heise, Pena, Agurto, & Winkvist, 2001).

Concerning its parties, relationship violence could involve men or women, whether their relationship is heterosexual or homosexual (Waldner-Haugrud & Gratch, 1997). Also, the perpetrator of relationship violence could either be male or female (National Coalition against Domestic Violence, 2009). However, statistical evidence suggests that women have much higher risks than men of being the victims of relationship violence (Saunders, 1986) Also, research suggests that the most severe

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forms of violence are perpetrated by males rather than females, and that in many cases females resort to violence as a form of self defense (Makepeace, 1983).

Relationship violence takes place regardless of age, race or social strata. In a study covering college students on a national scale, White and Koss (1991) report that 32% of the surveyed women experienced sexual violence at least once in their lives. These reported violence experiences spanned from age 14 to college age. Concerning the prevalence of violence across cultures and races, Heise, Ellsberg and Gottemoeller (1999) conducted a review of surveys from 36 countries. The review revealed that 10 to 50% of women who previously were in an intimate relationship have been victims of relationship violence.

Causes of relationship violence: A considerable amount of psychological and sociological research was conducted to explain the factors behind relationship violence. The factors leading to relationship violence belong to various categories including psychological, social, and socioeconomic.

One of the most common psychological causes mentioned by researchers is previous experience with violence during childhood. Such experiences include either witnessing violence in the household, or being a victim of violence as a child (e.g., Hotaling & Sugarman, 1987) and could lead to future violent behavior during adulthood.

Another psychological factor is the perpetrator's desire to maintain economic and/or relational control over the victim (Telch & Lindquist, 1984). This desire leads to excessive use of power, in addition to the manipulation of the partner as well as children (Buel, 2002).

Research also confirmed other factors like substance abuse (Hotaling & Sugarman, 1986) and alcohol abuse (Bennett, 1995). Substance and alcohol abuse could increase the frequency and severity of the perpetrator's violent behavior. On the other hand, when substance and alcohol abuse are combined with psychological disorders, they could become a reason for repeated victimization (Hotaling & Sugarman, 1986).

The victim could also contribute to the perpetuation of the violence situation by remaining silent and not seeking help or by not leaving the relationship. The victims' silence also has psychological causes including fear (Mitchell & Hodson, 1983), shame (Olson et al., 1996) or lack of trust in health care providers who may be a potential source of help (Buel, 2002). Some victims are also overpowered by a feeling of guilt, caused by their belief that the failure of their relationship is their own fault (Buel, 2002). When the victim is a woman, this situation of helplessness and acceptance is called the "battered woman syndrome" (Walker, 1984). Walker explains that repeated victimization of women makes them develop a learned habit of accepting and submitting.

In addition to psychological factors, research also attributed relationship violence to social factors. These include gender roles for example. Although there is no consensus about this claim, some researchers suggest that women who were socialized to accept male dominance are under bigger risks of being victims of relationship violence than women who were not (Hotaling & Sugarman, 1986). Traditional sex role expectations are yet another social factor that many researchers identified as a cause of relationship violence (e.g., Telch & Lindquist, 1984). Additionally, relationship violence may also be caused by socio-economic factors. In fact, the

victims' inability to speak up may be caused by financial dependence on the abusive partner (Gelles, 1976).

Effects of relationship violence: Relationship violence has considerable consequences on individuals as well as society. At the individual level, both the victim and the perpetrator are affected. The perpetrator faces legal liabilities, as well as health-related and socioeconomic effects. Health related effects on the batterer include self-inflicted injuries and psychological distress. Socioeconomic consequences include decreased levels of concentration and productivity at work or even the loss of employment (Gerlock, 1999).

On the other hand, effects faced by the victim can take either physical or psychological forms. Physical consequences of relationship violence span from bruises to serious or lethal injuries. Whitman and McKnight (1985) collected data from three American hospitals as part of a study about head injuries and deaths caused by those injuries. Their study revealed that 30% of the identified cases happened within an intimate relationship. Out of the total head injuries identified by the study, 15% were caused by a spouse, 14% by a boyfriend, and 1% by a girlfriend.

Physical effects of relationship violence on female victims could go further than external injuries. For example, female victims of relationship violence are more likely than other women to suffer reproductive health problems like unwanted pregnancies, vaginal and cervical infections and bleeding during pregnancy and low birth weight after delivery (Curry, Perrin, & Wall, 1998). Substance abuse could also be a physical consequence due to the psychological instability that is caused by abuse.

In addition to physical consequences, victims of relationship violence suffer longer lasting psychological impact (Berry, 1998). Psychological impacts include mental disorders and depression (Heise et al., 1999), as well as low self-esteem and high levels of psychological distress (e.g., Cascardi & O'Leary, 1992; Levendosky & Graham-Bermann, 2001). Victims of relationship violence also end up with a low perception of their ability to control their own lives and the violence situation in which they are involved (Umberson, Anderson, Glick & Shapiro, 1998).

The physical and psychological impact on the victim bring along social and professional consequences. Even when physical outcomes are not lethal or physically impeding, violence is reported to have professional repercussions such as delays and absence in work places in addition to the loss of concentration, self confidence and motivation.

At a larger scale, the effects of relationship violence worsen in the presence of children. Children who are exposed to relationship violence have high risks of suffering social, emotional and academic consequences (e.g., see reviews by Jaffe, Wolfe & Wilson, 1990; Holden, Geffner & Jouriles, 1998). In addition to these immediate effects, research also warns from intergenerational transmission of violence that perpetuates this social issue from one generation to another (Gelles & Conte, 1990)

2.1.2. Action about relationship violence

In the United States, different types of interpersonal violence, including relationship violence have been tackled with different approaches. These include

reactive measures like punishment, but also preventive measures like education (Whitman,1988).

Reactive measures: Security and justice systems have designed many reactive measures to punish relationship violence cases. Opinions diverge about the efficiency of these measures. An 18-month field experiment conducted by the Minneapolis Police Department compared the effects of three responses to relationship violence incidents: *i)* arresting the perpetrator, *ii)* expulsing the perpetrator from the household for 24 hours and *iii)* trying to restore order (Berk, Campbell, Klup, & Western, 1992). The experiment showed that arrest was the most effective measure to avoid future violence by the same perpetrator.

However, other studies showed that the efficiency of arrest depends on many factors, including the personal traits of the arrested perpetuator. If the perpetuator is not attached to his community, he may see the arrest as a challenge that validates his self-worth, and therefore recommit even more violent acts (Sherman, Smith, Schmidt, & Rogan, 1992). Similarly, another study by Pate and Hamilton (1992) revealed that arrest deters violence perpetrators only when they are employed. When they are not employed, arrest increases the perpetrators' tendency to commit subsequent abuses.

Preventive measures: Besides reactive measures, research underlines the importance of early prevention of relationship violence. Hall Smith, White and Holland (2003) conducted a 4-year longitudinal study among two classes of female college students. They found that women who experienced physical or sexual violence in high school were at higher risk of being re-victimized in college than those who have not. Also, during college years, women who were sexually or physically

assaulted during any year were at higher risk of being assaulted during subsequent years than those who were not.

One of the main preventive measures recommended by researchers is education (Whitman, 1988). Education efforts could target victims, perpetrators, bystanders and health care providers. Victims' education can help them recognize the signs of violence before it takes place. Since research identified a number of patterns distinguishing potential or current batterers (e.g., Hotaling & Sugarman, 1986), education may allow potential victims to recognize the patterns of abusers and avoid falling victims of violence. Education can also inform victims on what to do in case the violence happened, in order to avoid re-victimization.

On the other hand, perpetrators' education can help them understand the psychological and/or social triggers behind their violent behavior. Education can also inform them of the consequences of violent behavior and lead them to seek the psychological and/or legal help that they need in order to reduce the severity or frequency of their violence acts. Many of these educational programs have been proven useful. For example, Safe Dates Program was launched in public schools in North Carolina and aimed to raise the awareness of adolescents of the issue of relationship violence. Four years after the program was launched, an evaluation study was conducted in order to assess the four-year program's effects on dating violence perpetrators (Foshee et al., 2004). The results indicated that, in comparison with a control group, the program's participants reported significantly less perpetration and less victimization over the four years of the program.

Additionally, bystanders' education can be crucial in making communities more sensitive to any social issue and increasing their willingness to embrace the desirable behavior (Banyard, Plante, & Moynihan, 2004). Research shows that the degree to which a particular community is aware of an issue can significantly affect its readiness to change attitudes and behaviors regarding it (Grimley, Prochaska, Velicer, Blais, & DiClemente, 1994). This means that the degree of awareness within a particular community can affect the degree of effectiveness of pro-social messages (Banyard, Plante, & Moynihan, 2004).

Finally, health care providers also need training in order to help reduce relationship violence. Educating heath care providers is important because of two reasons. On the one hand, violence victims are usually reluctant to talk to their health care providers about their situation out of fear, shame or luck of trust that they can help (Buel, 2002). On the other hand, physicians are prevented by many factors from properly helping violence victims. These factors include time constraints, the absence of training on dealing with such a sensitive issue, fear of offending the victim and a sense of inability to treat the violence case (Olson et al., 1996). Therefore, medical care providers need to be trained to recognize the signs, to encourage the victims as well as perpetrators to talk about their situation, and to provide helpful guidance.

2.2. The need for communication research on relationship violence

The issue of relationship violence has attracted both professional and academic interest in the shape of governmental and non-governmental advocacy and policy-making efforts, as well as communication campaigns. These professional efforts aim

to eradicate the problem of relationship violence. A*cademic* interest on the other hand takes the shape of academic and experimental research.

Research about relationship violence was mainly conducted in the fields of sociology, psychology and public health. Reviews of research on relationship violence and related topics like "family abuse", report that previous investigations were mainly conducted from sociological or psychological perspectives. Their primary aim was to understand the reasons behind relationship violence or its effects on the victims, perpetrators, children or society (for reviews, see e.g., Gelles & Conte, 1990; Pirog-Good & Strets, 1989; Johnson & Ferraro, 2000).

Additionally, a simple search of the phrase "relationship violence" in academic databases shows the predominance of sociology journals (e.g. *Family Relations, Journal of Marriage and the Family*), legal publications (e.g. *Law and Human Behavior),* health publications (e.g. *The American Journal of Public Health),* and psychology journals (e.g. *Current Directions in Psychological Science).*

However, despite the considerable attention that the academic disciplines of sociology and psychology gave to relationship violence, there is a need for more attention from other disciplines like communication research that can inform future prevention campaigns. This has created a need for communication-focused research on relationship violence. It is important to address this need because such research can boost the effectiveness of the messages, that constitute the core of relationship violence prevention campaigns. It is true that an increasing number of communication campaigns have been devoted to relationship violence, but this can be categorized as a *professional* interest. Such a professional interest is apparently not matched by a

similar degree of *academic* interest from fields like communication, health communication and social marketing research.

In fact, a few social issues are most frequently scrutinized by research that aims at improving communication campaigns. Relationship violence is not one of them. For instance, a considerable core of research was conducted about ways to best design effective campaigns about driving behavior (e.g., Murry, Jr. et al., 1993; Treise et al., 1999; Wolburg, 2001) and addictive substance abuse (e.g., see a review of 60 years of research by Crano & Burgoon, 2001). However, research offering guidelines from a communication perspective on how to increase the effectiveness of relationship violence campaigns is hardly available.

One might argue that studies not necessarily need to focus on every single social issue, since the guidelines provided by previous studies can apply to more than one issue. For example, someone who adheres to this opinion could maintain that research findings that confirmed the effectiveness of guilt appeals in changing adolescents' hazardous driving behavior could also be useful for campaigns dealing with substance abuse or relationship violence. This could be correct, but not all the time because every social issue, including relationship violence, has particular characteristics. Paying attention to those characteristics can help campaign designers create effective campaigns.

The characteristics that differentiate relationship violence from other issue can be discussed on two levels. The first level pertains to the issue itself. Unlike many other social issues like substance abuse, relationship violence is a highly gender-sensitive issue. This is due to the fact that, within the context of heterosexual relationships,

relationship violence usually involves a man and a woman where the woman is in most cases the victim (US Department of Justice, 2007). In fact, anthropological research argues that relationship violence is primarily gender-based due to systems of belief that legitimize male's control over female behavior through the use of violence (Ascensio, 1999).

The characteristic of gender-sensitivity creates the need for communication research that helps design effective campaigns aiming to eradicate relationship violence. In fact, many scholars have insisted that the intrinsic characteristics of the issue affect the content of the message, which in turn affects the response to the message. For example, Kempf and Palan (2006) maintain that the message recipients are more likely to be influenced by a communicator of their own sex when gender is salient to the content of the message. Since gender is salient to the issue of relationship violence, it follows that the gender of the communicator or the recipient may have an impact on message response.

Besides, there is a second level of characteristics differentiating social issues from each other pertaining to the campaigns that are designed to eradicate each social issue. Let us keep the example of relationship violence in comparison with substance abuse. One difference between the campaigns aiming to eradicate each of these two issues is related to the target audience.

On the one hand, anti-substance abuse campaigns usually target the substance users themselves. To borrow Bagozzi and Moore's words (1994), the messages used in such campaigns can be described as "help-self" messages, because they call on the users themselves to change their own behavior and limit their substance use.

On the other hand, relationship violence prevention campaigns could have one of many target audiences. The target audience could either be the perpetrator, the victim or bystanders. Therefore, to put it in Bagozzi and Moore's words (1994), a relationship violence prevention message would be either help-self, help-other, or a mixture of both.

One conclusion that may be reached here is that when social issues are different, campaign messages are different. Therefore, there are no standard guidelines that campaign designers could use to eradicate any type social issue. On the contrary, in order for the campaign to be successful, campaign designers may have to use different guidelines for every social issue, and every type of audience. Therefore, it is the role of communication research to find out which guidelines would work best for relationship violence prevention messages targeting bystanders for example. This is the aim of the present study.

To recapitulate, this section discussed the need for more communication research that focuses on relationship violence. It also illustrated the importance to conduct research that specifically focuses on relationship violence bystanders, instead of relying on previous studies that examined other social issues. This was explained by the fact that each social issue has particular characteristics that make it deserve special attention from communication research.

Two characteristics differentiate relationship violence from other social issues. Were put forward: its gender-sensitivity and the fact that the target audience could either be the victim, the perpetrator or bystanders. This makes it necessary to look

closely at this issue and conduct research that would better inform relationship violence prevention PSA's.

Keeping in mind the gender-sensitivity of the issue of relationship violence, this study investigates how the genders of the communicator and the recipient affect the audience's response to relationship violence prevention PSA's. What message response refers to is the recipients' perceived source credibility, as well as their emotional and cognitive responses to the message (PSA), their attitudes toward the issue, the communicator and the message, as well as their behavioral intention.

The next chapter explores the theoretical framework of the present study and puts forward a series of hypothesis and research questions.

CHAPTER III – THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The present chapter includes three sections. The first reviews previous literature about the main effects of communicators and recipients' genders on message response. Message response in the present study refers to emotional and cognitive responses, attitudes toward the issue, the communicator and the message, as well as behavioral intention.

The second section discusses the match-up hypothesis (e.g., Kahle & Homer, 1985), one of the two theoretical frameworks of the present study. This hypothesis is used in this study to highlight the importance of gender match-up between the message communicator and recipient, when the message is gender-salient. Since the study uses a relationship violence prevention PSA as the stimulus, the message of the PSA can be described as gender-salient. Therefore, gender match or mismatch between the PSA communicator (voice-over) and recipient (study participants) may have an effect on message response.

The third section reviews literature about the gender schema theory (Bem, 1981). This theory is also used in this study to support the hypothesis that gender match-up between the communicator and the recipient is important, when gender is salient to the message. In fact, gender schema theory claims that gender-salient information or situations can activate in the minds of individuals what Bem (1981) calls a "gender schema". A gender schema is a set of cognitive constructs that individuals acquire since early childhood. When triggered, the gender schema makes individuals evaluate

situations and messages based on gender. This gender-based judgment may occur in the present study since the anti-relationship PSA is gender-salient.

The chapter ends with a section presenting the hypotheses and research questions that the present study investigates.

3.1. Communicator and recipient genders: Main effects on message response

3.1.1. Effects of the communicator's gender on message response

The communicator's gender is one factor that was shown to influence message response. This influence was demonstrated on many aspects of message response. The present section reviews literature showing that the communicator's gender does affect source credibility, cognitive response, attitudes and behavioral intention.

Source credibility:

Previous studies examined many dimensions of source credibility. Examples are "expertise" and "personal attractiveness" (Kenton, 1989), reliability/trustworthiness (e.g., Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953), physical attractiveness (e.g., Chaiken, 1979), and dynamism (e.g., Kenton, 1989).

Nevertheless, the present study adopts two dimensions of source credibility: trustworthiness and expertise (Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953). There are two reasons for choosing these two dimensions. First, trustworthiness and expertise are the most recurrent dimensions used to measure source credibility (e.g., Kenton 1989). Second, within the context of this study, the communicator is a PSA voice-over. It follows that the PSA audience cannot base its perceived source credibility on the voice-over's physical appearance or personal characteristics.

Many researchers have examined the effect of the communicator's gender on source credibility. Results indicated that male communicators are perceived to be more credible than female communicators in many situations. This hypothesis was confirmed on various dimensions of source credibility, even when the content of the message was exactly the same (e.g., Newcombe & Arnkoff, 1979; Markham, 1988). In Newcombe and Arnkoff's study (1979), the results were attributed to the difference in speech styles between female and male communicators. Differences in speech style in turn affected the recipients' attitudes towards the communicators. In Markham's study (1988), the difference in source credibility was attributed to sex-role stereotypes that cause males to be perceived to have higher levels of expertise than females in various situations.

Additionally, Oakley (2000) found that the expertise of the speaker is perceived higher when the speaker is male than when she is female. The article provides various explanations including gender-role stereotypes and gender difference in speech style.

Cognitive response:

According to the cognitive response theory (Greenwald, 1968), what determines the degree of influence of a message is not learning the content of the message, but rather the recipients' *thoughts* about the message, i.e. their cognitive response to it (Petty, Brinol, & Priester, 2009). Following this conceptual definition, cognitive response in the present study refers to the thoughts that the participants gnerate during and after watching the PSA.

The gender of the communicator was also found to affect cognitive response. Gallois and Callan (1986) examined how communicator and recipient genders impact

the processing of messages. The study strongly supported the hypothesis that female communicators would be more accurately understood than male communicators. This was confirmed in three different conditions where the message was audiovisual (picture and sound), visual (picture only) or audio (sound only).

The same study also examined how cognitive response (called message decoding in that study) differs depending on gender and message type. The study used positive, negative and neutral messages. The results showed that female communicators were more accurately understood than male communicators in the majority of conditions. Among other factors, the results were explained based on the difference between the vocal and physical cues used by male and female communicators.

Accordingly, this last finding would suggest that the recipients' response to the PSA in the present study would be more positive when the communicator is female. However, given the review in the previous section where source credibility was higher for male than female communicators, and knowing that source credibility affects cognitive response, the effect of communicator's gender on cognitive response will be left open and expressed as a research question.

Attitudes

Another dimension of message response that is affected by the communicator's gender is attitudes. The present study examines three types of attitudes: attitude toward the message itself (attitude $_{PSA}$), attitude toward the social issue (attitude $_{issue}$) and attitude toward the communicator (attitude $_{voice-over}$). More specifically, the aim is to examine whether the genders of the communicator and the recipient have any effects on the participants' attitude $_{PSA}$, attitude $_{issue}$, and attitude $_{voice-over}$.

Research showed that the communicator's gender can influence different types of attitudes. For example, a study conducted by Debevec and Lyer (1986) concluded that the communicator's gender can act as a cue that shapes the recipients' perceived gender image of a product. This gender image influences the recipients' attitude toward the product. This, nevertheless, happened in the study only when the product already had a gender image, as opposed to neutral products.

Specifically, the effect found by Debevec and Lyer's study (1986) was that attitude toward the product as well as purchase intention, were higher when the gender of the communicator was opposed with the gender image of the product. In other words, the participants had a better attitude and higher purchase intention when a male communicator advertised a female-perceived product, and vice versa. Debevec and Lyer explain these findings by the fact that individuals are increasingly sensitive to stereotypical gender roles, and are more inclined to accept contemporary gender portrayals in ads. Therefore, the mismatch between the communicator's gender and the product's gender image represented a "progressive role portrayal", creating a better attitude and higher purchase intention.

This last finding may seem contradictory with the rationale of the present study, but this is not the case. In fact, tn the present study, the message is gender-salient, but does not have any specific gender-image. It is true that females are most frequently the victims and males are most frequently the perpetrators of relationship violence (Saunders, 1986). But this does not negate two facts. First, the issue of relationship violence can affect both genders (Makepeace, 1983). Second, both genders need to take part in eradicating it (Flood, 2006). Consequently, the issue of relationship

violence is gender-sensitive and gender-salient, but an exclusively female or male image cannot be attached to it.

Additionally, despite the aforementioned findings by Debevec and Lyer's study (1986), the existence of an effect of the communicator's gender on attitude was all together refuted by other studies. For instance, Freiden (1984) found that consumers' attitudes generated by advertising are significantly affected by the type of spokesperson and the age of the audience, but not the gender of the spokesperson.

Therefore, given the lack on unanimous findings about the effects of the communicator's gender on attitudes, these effects will be expressed in research questions.

Behavioral intention:

According to the theory of reasoned action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), behavioral intention is a direct precursor of behavior change. Although many studies argue that behavioral intention does not necessarily lead to actual behavior (e.g., Miniard, Obermiller and Thomas, 1983), others argue that it can accurately predict actual behavior (e.g., reviews by Ajzen, 1991; Sheppard, Hartwick & Warshaw, 1988). In fact, a meta-analysis by Webb and Sheeran (2006) shows that a medium to large change in behavioral intention leads to a small to medium change in actual behavior.

In the present study, behavioral intention refers to the recipients' intention to act as active bystanders of relationship violence by seeking and sharing information about the issue, but also provide help to the couples who are involved in violent relationships.

The gender of the communicator is one of the factors that have been found to affect behavioral intention. For instance, many studies have supported the idea that male communicators have a higher ability than female communicators to produce behavioral compliance with their advocated message (Eagly, 1983).

However, other researchers maintain that the gender of the communicator is not the main reason behind compliance. The other explanations provided include social norms (Milgram, 1974) gender stereotypes (Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974), and personality differences (Buss, 1981). Therefore, due to these conflicting findings, the present study does not hypothesize the impact of the communicator's gender on behavioral intention, but rather formulates a research question about it.

After reviewing literature about the main effects of the communicator's gender on message response, the next section reviews literature about the main effects of the recipient's gender.

3.1.2. Effects of the recipients' gender on message response

Just like the communicator's gender can affect various aspects of message response, so does the message recipient's gender. This section reviews literature on communicator's gender effects on various aspects of message response, including source credibility, emotional response and attitudes.

Source credibility:

Most source credibility literature examined the effect of gender on source credibility with focus on the communicator's gender rather than the recipient's gender. One of the few investigations that mentioned the effect of recipients' gender on their perceived source credibility was conducted by Kenton (1989). This study found that

even female recipients tend to underestimate female communicators and overestimate male communicators on some aspects of source credibility like expertise. This sometimes pushes female communicators to act or look more masculine in order to gain more credibility.

Given the lack of sufficient previous findings on the effect of the recipient's gender on source credibility, this effect is left open as a research question.

Emotional response

A large portion of psychology literature supports the idea that males and females differ in their degree of emotionality, despite the opposing opinions of some researchers like Eagly (1978). A PSA test conducted by Levine and Zimmerman (1996) revealed that female viewers felt stronger emotions than male viewers when they were exposed to a youth violence PSA. Also, research to a large extent confirms that women experience stronger emotions than men, or tend to express their emotions more openly compared with men (see the review of LaFrance & Banaji, 1992).

Attitudes:

The gender of message recipients plays a role in shaping attitude $_{issue}$. For instance, Smith (1984) maintains that there is a difference between women and men both in the way they use violence, and the degree to which they approve of violence. He explains this difference by a mix of biological and social causes that make men more inclined to choose forceful options, while women tend to choose middle options. According to Smith, this statement applies to various types of violence across various social conditions. These include "foreign affairs, social control and law enforcement, and interpersonal relations."

Additionally, another finding of bigger relevance to the present study confirms that gender particularly affects attitude $_{issue}$ towards relationship violence. A study by Locke and Richman (1999) concluded that compared with men, women show a stronger sympathy with the violence victim, and rank the issue higher in terms of seriousness.

Concerning Attitude toward the PSA, previous research found mixed differences between female and male recipients. Struckman-Johnson, Gilliland, Struckman-Johnson and North (1990) examined the effect of gender on the response to fear-arousing condom use PSA's. They concluded that males had a more positive attitude toward the PSA than females did, by rating it as more effective.

Fleming and Petty (1997, as cited in Maio & Olson, 2000) found that both gender and gender identity have an impact on attitude toward the message. Their experiment revealed that both male and female message recipients had a more positive attitude toward messages when messages matched than when they did not match their gender identity.

Behavioral intention:

Finally, behavioral intention is yet another message response affected by the communicator's gender. Researchers have identified gender as a moderator of behavioral intention (e.g., Nysveen, Pedersen & Thorbjornsen, 2005). In this study, the direction of males and females' behavioral intention differed according to the nature of the message and of the task.

Other researchers pointed out gender differences in the degree of influenceability by persuasive messages. Although Eagly (1978) rejected the hypothesis that females

are more likely to adhere to advocated behaviors than males, others confirmed it. For example, Sistrunk and McDavid (1971) found that females tend to conform to assigned behaviors more than males. They attributed the differences to the nature of the task or the situation, rather than the traditionally-believed effect of gender roles.

Because of the inconsistency of findings about the role of recipient's gender in shaping behavioral intention, this effect is examined trough a research question.

After reviewing literature about the main effects of communicators and recipients' genders on message response, it would be interesting to examine whether the interaction of these genders affects message response. More specifically, the interaction effect concerns what happens when the genders of the communicator and the recipients match or mismatch, and how this affects message response. The two following sections present the theoretical framework behind examining gender match/mismatch. The framework is based on the match-up hypothesis (e.g., Kahle & Homer, 1985) and gender schema theory (Bem, 1981).

3.2. The match-up hypothesis

One of the theoretical grounds of the present study is the match-up hypothesis (e.g., Kahle & Homer, 1985). This hypothesis was traditionally used in advertising and posits that the endorsers of a particular product are more effective when there is a "match" or a "fit" between the endorser and the product. This "fit" happens through a particular match-up factor that makes the endorser appropriate for the product that they endorse. For example, the ad of a sports product would be more credible if the endorser is a sports professional, rather than an ordinary model or a celebrity who

excels in a field different than sports. This match-up makes the endorser more effective (Kamins, 1990; Till & Busler, 2000).

The match-up hypothesis is relevant to the preset study because in addition to the main effects of communicator and recipient genders on message response, the present study aims to examine the interaction of the communicator's and recipient's genders. More specifically, the aim is to investigate whether message response is affected when the genders of the communicator and the recipient match or mismatch.

The match-up hypothesis originally underlined the importance of matching factors between the *communicator* (endorser) and the *product* they endorse. Therefore, by using the match-up hypothesis, the present study suggests expending the hypothesis to underline the importance of gender match-up between the *communicator* and the *recipient*.

In order to illustrate this extension, the next sub-section explains some of the main mechanisms behind the match-up hypothesis: congruence and gender as a match-up factor. The subsequent sub-section explains that gender is important as a match-up factor because the message in this study is gender-salient.

3.2.1. Congruence: a main match-up mechanism

One of the main theoretical concepts explaining the match-up hypothesis is the mechanism of congruence. Within the context of the match-up hypothesis, congruence happens when there is a match between the product and the endorser on a particular characteristic. This characteristic is labeled by many researchers as "the match up factor" (e.g., Till & Busler, 2000).

Traditionally, congruence in relation with the match-up hypothesis was based on the factor of beauty (Kamins, 1990). For example, the use of attractive models to advertise beauty-related products was found to positively affect attitude toward the ad (Baker & Churchill, 1977). Such findings changed the previously held assumption that any physically attractive endorser would be effective, no matter how well they match with the product that they endorse (Kamins, 1990).

3.2.2. Can gender be a match-up factor?

Considering gender as a match-up factor is important within the context of the present study because the stimulus is a gender-salient message. Although physical attractiveness has been traditionally examined as the main match-up factor, previous research also found gender to be a factor that creates congruence between the product and its endorsers. For example, even before the "match-up hypothesis" was given this label, a study by Kanungo and Pang (1973) concluded that there is a need for "fittingness" between the model used in the ad and the perceived "gender" of the product. The models they used were either a female, or a male, or a female and male couple. Among the products they used were a car (perceived as male) and a sofa (perceived as female). The study measured the participants' attitude toward the product. The results were compared with a control condition where no models were used. Among the study's findings, the car advertisement featuring a male model produced positive attitudes among both male and female participants. The sofa advertisement on the other hand elicited positive attitudes among male participants when the model was female and negative attitudes among male participants when the model was male.

The fact that gender can be a match-up factor supports the rationale behind the extension of the match-up hypothesis suggested in the present study. This extension suggests focusing on gender as a matching factor between the communicator and the recipient rather than the communicator and the product. The extension is explained in the next section.

3.2.3. The match-up hypothesis within the present study

The present study suggests extending the concept of match-up to cover the communicator and the recipient, instead of the communicator and the product. There are two reasons behind this suggested extension. First, the act of communication involves more than just the communicator (endorser) and the object of the communication (product). In addition to the communicator and the message object, the message *recipient* is also one important party within the communication process. Therefore, the match-up between the communicator and the recipient also deserves research attention.

In fact, just like many studies supported the importance of matching factors between the communicator and the product, many others supported the importance of matching factors between the communicator and the recipient. For example, Ryan and Giles (1982) examined the effect of matching ethnic origins between the communicator and the recipient. They found that listener attitudes toward both the message and the communicator are better when the listeners perceive that their own ethnic origins matched those of the communicator.

Therefore, by suggesting the extension of the match-up hypothesis, the present study maintains the core principle of this hypothesis, but changes one of the two

involved components of the communication act. The core principle it maintains is that depending on the context of the communication, there are match-up factors that can make the communication more effective.

The change suggested in this study, however, involves one of the two components of the message act. Instead of focusing on how the *communicator* matches the *content* of the message, the present study focuses on the effect of the match-up between the communicator and the recipient.

The second reason for suggesting the expansion of the match-up hypothesis is the lack of unanimous results concerning the role of the match-up in increasing the effectiveness of the message (e.g., Kamins, 1990). As reviewed in the previous section, research only partially showed that the match-up between the communicator and the product can favorably impact message response.

To sum up, the match up hypothesis is the first theoretical ground of the present study because the hypothesis can explain why individuals respond to messages differently depending on whether there is a match/mismatch between the communicator and the recipient. The second theoretical ground that explains the importance of gender match-up in a gender-salient message is the gender schema theory (Bem, 1981). This theory is discussed in the next section.

3.3. Gender schema theory: the role of gender schema in message response

The present section draws on the gender schema theory (Bem, 1981) to provide theoretical support to the importance of gender match-up between the communicator and the recipient when the message is gender-salient. This is of high relevance to the

present study because gender is salient to the relationship violence prevention PSA used as a stimulus.

According to Bem's gender schema theory (1981), an individual can be described as gender schematic when they have a general tendency to process information based on gender-related associations. These gender-related associations serve as a "map" internalized by individuals since childhood, and used to process gender-related information. It is this "map" that Bem calls a gender schema. For example, the gender schema according to Bem (1981) would make sex-typed individuals (feminine females and masculine males) tend to recall words and concepts in clusters that are consistent with their socially assigned gender role.

Gender schema is acquired since childhood and shaped by cultural and social expectations about the attributes of masculinity and femininity (Bem, 1981). Gender schemata therefore can be present in the mind of any individual. However, it is the degree of activation of this schema that differs from one individual to another.

Gender schema is activated when the individual is faced with a situation or a message where gender is salient (Freedman, 1992). In fact, gender schema is just one of many cognitive schemata internalized by human beings since early childhood. These schemata serve as cognitive structures that help individuals organize and process incoming information, evaluate information about the self and others, as well as later recall of information. These various schemata are triggered depending on the type of situations or messages that the individual has to process or evaluate.

When gender schema is activated, it guides the individual's cognitive processing to encode and organize information in terms of gender. This encoding and

organization happens according to the "rules" of the gender schema that are based on the socially instilled distinction between maleness and femaleness. This way, such individuals evaluate information based on the cultural definition of what it means to be a "male" or "female" (Bem, 1981).

This suggests that gender schema theory seems relevant to the present study because the participants of this study are exposed to a gender-salient message. Therefore this theory can explain the mechanism through which gender becomes a factor affecting message response. Since the study participants are asked to watch a relationship violence prevention PSA, the gender salience of the message may trigger the gender schemata in their minds. This may cause gender to affect the recipients' response to the message.

Keeping in mind that gender is suggested in the present study as a match-up factor between the communicator and the recipient, it is expected that gender match or mismatch between the communicator and the recipient may give way to different message responses

3.4. Hypotheses and research questions

As discussed in this chapter, the present study builds its theoretical framework on three bases. The first is previous findings about the main effects of gender on message response. The second is the match-up hypothesis (e.g., Kahle & Homer, 1985). The third is gender schema theory (Bem, 1981). This chapter also justified the potential impact of gender on message response by the fact that the present study uses a gender salient message.

Based on the theoretical rationale, the present study puts forward the following hypotheses and research questions:

3.4.1. Main effects: hypotheses and research questions

Gender of the communicator:

H 1: The male communicator will be perceived as more credible than the female communicator.

H2: The male communicator will produce a stronger emotional response than the female communicator.

The literature review showed inconsistent findings about the main effects of the communicator's gender on cognitive response, attitudes and behavioral intention. Therefore, these effects are examined through the following research questions:

RQ1: What impact does the communicator's gender have on the recipients' cognitive response to the relationship violence prevention PSA?

RQ2: What impact does the gender of the communicator have on attitude $_{issue}$, Attitude $_{voice-over}$, and attitude $_{PSA}$ in the context of relationship violence prevention PSA?

RQ3: What impact does the gender of the communicator have on the recipients' behavioral intention to provide help or seek information about relationship violence?

Gender of the recipient:

H3: Female recipients will have a stronger emotional response to the PSA's than male recipients.

H4: Female recipients will have a more positive attitude $_{issue}$ than male recipients.

Most previous studies focused on the effects of the communicator's gender rather than the recipient's gender effects on source credibility, cognitive response, attitude $_{PSA}$ and attitude $_{voice-over}$ and attitude toward the communicator. Therefore, the impact of the recipient's gender is examined through the following research questions:

RQ4: What impact does the gender of the recipient have on source credibility?

RQ5: What impact does the gender of the recipient have on cognitive response?

RQ6: What impact does the recipient's gender have on attitude $_{PSA}$?

RQ7: What impact does the recipient's gender have on attitude $_{voice-over}$?

The literature review revealed inconsistent findings concerning the effect of the recipient's gender on behavioral intention. Therefore, the following research question is put forward:

RQ8: What impact does the recipient's gender have on the recipients' behavioral intention to provide help or seek information about relationship violence?

3.4.2. Interaction effects: hypotheses

H5: Perceived source credibility will be higher when the genders of the communicator and the recipient match, compared to when they do not match.

H6: Emotional response will be weaker when the genders of the communicator and the recipient match, compared to when they do not match.

H7: Cognitive response will be higher when the genders of the communicator and the recipient match, compared to when they do not match.

H8: Attitudes will be more positive when the genders of the communicator and the recipient match, compared to when they do not match.

H9: The recipient's behavioral intention to provide help or seek information about relationship violence will be higher when the genders of the communicator and the recipient match, compared to when they do not match.

The next chapter explains the method through which these hypotheses will be tested.

CHAPTER IV – METHOD

4.1. Study design:

The present study was conducted using a 2 between (male or female communicator) X 2 between (Male or female recipient) factorial design. This design is appropriate for two reasons. First, the study involves two independent variables: gender of the communicator and gender of the recipient. Second, the study measures both the main and interaction effects of gender on message response. Additionally, a between subjects design is appropriate because the analysis involves comparing the responses of four distinct groups of participants.

4.2. Sample

The participants were undergraduate students from four advertising classes at MSU. In agreement with their professors, participants received extra-credit for participation. A total of 243 students completed the survey, including 139 participants (57.2%) who watched the male version of the PSA, and 104 (42.8%) who watched the female version of the PSA. Twenty responses were eliminated from the data either because of their inaccurate recall of the gender of the communicator or their self-reported duplicate participation. The remaining number of participants was 223.

Among the participants, 33.2% were males and 66.8% females. Knowing that each participant watched either the male voice-over or the female voice-over version of the PSA, the participants who watched the male voice-over version included 20.7% males and 38.3% females. Those who watched the female voice-over version included

12.6% males and 28.4% females. (See Table 1 for a crosstabulation of communicator and recipients' genders).

The participants belonged to different races including White/Caucasian (77.1%), Asian (11.2%), African American (6.7%), Multiracial (2.2%), Hispanic or Latino (1.3%) and other races (1.3%). Their age ranged between 18 and 28, with an average of 20 years old.

4.3. Procedure:

Two online surveys were hosted on SurveyGizmo.com and used for data collection. Each one of the two surveys included a Youtube link to one of two different versions of the relationship violence prevention PSA used as a stimulus. The voice-over was male in one version and female in the other. Youtube was chosen to host the PSA's because it is one of the most popular video sharing websites. This would make it easy for the study participants to locate and watch the video without getting distracted by unfamiliar website features.

Each one of the participants was randomly assigned to watch only one of the two PSA versions. Randomization was based on the last digit of each participant's student ID number. According to the university's enrollment office, student ID numbers are assigned randomly to the students when they enroll in the university. In the email sent to the students, they were asked to click the first link (the survey with the male PSA version) if their ID number ends with an odd digit, and to click on the second link (the survey with the female PSA version) if their ID number ends with an even digit.

The survey was made of three parts. The first part asked demographic questions about the participants, in addition to questions measuring gender identity, familiarity

with the issue of relationship violence and prior involvement with the issue. The second part included PSA the link leading to the assigned PSA. In the third and last part, the participants were asked to report their response to the PSA.

In the end of each survey, the students were redirected to a separate online survey used to collect the student's names in order to award them extra credit. Collecting the names in an independent survey, separately from the data, was meant to guarantee the unanimity of the participants.

Since four undergraduate classes participated in the survey, duplication of participants had to be avoided. Participants who belong to more than one of the four classes were asked not to take the survey twice. Instead, they were invited to take it only the first time when they receive the invitation email. In case they received the participation invitation again, they were asked not to respond to the survey and to simply report their names in order to get the extra-credit.

The survey, stimulus and procedure of the present study were reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Michigan State University (IRB # X10-120). The board found that this study meets the criteria for the protection of human subjects, and therefore deemed it exempt. The consent form approved by IRB is available in appendix C.

4.4. Stimuli

The PSA's last 30 seconds each and were produced in a professional studio using professional equipment provided by government access channel HOM TV. The PSA features a male actor and female actress who graduated from Michigan State

University with a minor in theatre. The female and male voice-overs were played by two HOM TV anchors.

The PSA shows a scene of physical and psychological violence between a man (perpetrator) and a woman (victim). The man shakes the woman violently and abuses her verbally and then slaps her face. The woman looks terrified, cries and begs him not to hurt her. The man scolds her ordering her to stop crying. Between the short, an on-screen script reads "Relationship violence should never remain a secret".

The PSA's end with a voice-over (communicator) that is female in one version of the PSA and male in the other. The voice-over addresses the viewers saying "Once you know about it, it's no longer just their business. They need your help". This is followed by a superscript addressing the viewers: "You can help them before their time runs out". Then the phone number of MSU Safe Place is provided on screen (See the storyboard of the PSA in appendix B).

The only sounds heard in the PSA are those of the victim and the perpetrator as well as the voice-over. No music was included in order to avoid any confounding peripheral cues (Park & Young, 1989). Also, one aim of using a voice-over instead of an on-screen communicator was to avoid the confounding effect of physical likeability that could impact the participants' response to the PSA's (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

4.5. Pretest

The pretest aimed to answer four main questions: a) whether viewers could accurately recall the gender of the PSA communicator, b) whether the message was accurately understood by the viewers, c) whether the viewers could correctly identify

the intended audience as potential relationship violence bystanders, and d) whether the viewers themselves felt targeted by the PSA's as potential bystanders.

A total of 10 MSU students took part in the pretest, 40% males and 60% females. Six students (60%) watched the male version of the PSA, 4 (40%) watched the female version. The pretest participants were randomly assigned to one of the two PSA versions. The participants watched the PSA's individually then were asked to take a pen-and-paper survey.

Concerning the recall of the communicator's gender, it was important to find that most viewers recalled it correctly because the rationale of the present study is based on both the genders of the communicator and the recipient, and part of it is based on how these genders interact. The pretest showed that 80% of pretest participants recalled the gender of the voice-over accurately.

As for the comprehension of the message, 80% of participants provided a very accurate explanation about the message, stating that it expresses the seriousness of relationship violence and invites the community to take part in reducing it. The remaining 20% of participants provided general pro-social interpretations of the message like "stop relationship violence", but did not state that it aimed to call on bystanders' positive action.

All pretest participants correctly identified the audience to be bystanders, although only one of them used the term "bystanders", while the others used terms like "community" or "witnesses". Nevertheless, 60% of viewers did not feel personally targeted as potential bystanders, while 40% did.

Overall, the results of the pretest indicated that the message and intended audience were clearly conveyed through the PSA's. The results also indicated that the genders of the communicators were recalled in a generally accurate manner. This meant that the PSA's could be used as they are for the main study, as no major modifications were required based on the pretested results.

4.6. Variables and measures

The next sections provide details about the independent, dependent and control variables. The sections describe how each one of them was measured and how scale variables were constructed. For scale variable, factor analyses and reliability test results are also provided (The survey wording of each variable is provided in appendix A).

4.6.1. Independent variables:

The present study aims to examine the main and interaction effects of communicator and recipient genders on message response. Accordingly, the two independent variables measured in this study are: the gender of the communicator and the gender of the recipient.

4.6.2. Dependent variables:

i) Source credibility:

Measure: Source credibility was measured using Hovland's Yale Communication Model (1953). This model measures source credibility based on two dimensions: "trustworthiness" and "expertise". The procedure is derived from studies conducted by Sternthal et al. (1978) and Harmon and Coney (1982). In order to measure the participants' perception of the communicator's trustworthiness and expertise, four

seven-point semantic differential scales were used, ranging from -3 to 3. The items are "not trustworthy/ trustworthy" and "bad / good" under trustworthiness, and "not expert in the issue / expert in the issue" and "not experienced / experienced" under expertise.

Factor analysis and Reliability: Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted using the Principal Components Analysis (PCA) extraction method, with eigenvalue criteria of >1. The EFA showed clearly one factor with 67.5% of total variance explained (communalities ranging from .78 to .85). Therefore, the four items were averaged to construct the variable of source credibility.

The factor loadings of each of the four items were as follows: .62 for "not trustworthy/ trustworthy"; .72 for "bad / good"; .72 for "not expert in the issue / expert in the issue" and .62 for "not experienced / experienced".

In order to assess the internal consistency of the source credibility scale, a reliability analysis was conducted. The Cronbach's alpha was .83. This reliability score is judged good to excellent (e.g., George & Mallery, 2003; Leech, Barrett & Morgan, 2008). (M= .18, SD= 1.09). (The results of factor analyses are reported in table 2)

ii) *Emotional response:*

Measure: The variable of emotional response includes three underlying variables: Fear, anger and guilt. The survey question measuring emotional response included nine items on a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from not at all (= -3) to very much (= 3). These included afraid, fearful and scared (under fear); angry, annoyed, irritated, and aggravated (under anger); and guilty and ashamed (under guilt). The scales of

fear and anger were used by Shen and Dillard (2007). The scale of guilt was used by Dillard and Peck (2000).

Factor analysis and Reliability: Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted using the Principal Components Analysis (PCA) extraction method, with eigenvalue criteria of >1. The EFA showed that the first three factors accounted for the strongest levels of variance. The factor "afraid" accounted for 53.6% of the total variance (factor loading = .93), "fearful" accounted for 19.73% of the variance (factor loading = .92), and "scared" accounted for 14% of the variance (factor loading = .93). The factors' communalities ranged from .94 to .95. These three items were therefore averaged into one separate variable labeled "Fear".

The EFA analysis showed a second cluster containing four components: "Angry" accounted for 4.53% of the total variance (factor loading = .7), "annoyed" accounted for 3.15% of the total variance (factor loading = .89), "irritated" accounted for 2.17% of the total variance (factor loading = .91), and "aggravated" accounted for 1.46% of total variance (factor loading = .81). The communalities of the four items ranged from .73 to .87. Based on these results, the four factors were averaged into one variable labeled "anger".

Finally, the EFA revealed a third cluster of factors that included two components: "Guilty" accounted for .72% of total variance (factor loading = .93) and "ashamed" accounted for .06% of total variance (factor loading = .89). The communalities of the two items ranged from .89 to .91. These two factors were averaged into one variable labeled "guilt".

Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients indicated a high internal consistency of the three constructed emotional response variables: α =.97 for fear (M= -.35, SD= 1.68), α =.89 for anger (M= .60, SD= 1.37), and α =.89 for guilt (M= -1.25, SD=1.62).

iii) Cognitive response:

Measure: Cognitive response measure was based on the Thought-Listing Procedure of Petty and Cacioppo (1979). After viewing the PSA, respondents were asked to generate up to 10 thoughts that crossed their minds while watching it.

After data collection, the thoughts were coded by 2 independent coders, both blind to the study's conditions. The coders coded each thought into one of the following three categories: "This thought opposes the behavior advocated by the PSA" (coded as -1) ; "This though is neutral or irrelevant to the behavior advocated by the PSA" (coded as 0); and "This thought supports the behavior advocated by the PSA" (coded as 1). Intercoder reliability was measured using Perreault and Leigh's Index (1989) (P/L Index). The intercoder reliability coefficient was .80. Any discrepancies were resolved by discussion.

Because the stimulus is a pro-social PSA, the cognitive responses retained for analysis were the positive thoughts expressed by the participants. This refers to the thoughts that support the advocated behavior. The count technique was used in order to construct the cognitive response variable. (M= 3.63, SD= 3.19).

iv) Attitudes:

Attitude toward the issue

Measure: The participants were asked to express their attitude toward the issue of relationship violence. Attitude $_{issue}$ was measured using a seven-point semantic

differential scale that ranged from -3 to 3 and included four items. These items are trivial / serious, unimportant / important, not worth much concern / worth a lot of concern, and irrelevant / relevant. This scale was used by Dillard and Peck (2000).

Factor analysis and Reliability: The EFA showed clearly one factor with 85.20% of total variance explained (communalities ranged from .83 to .86). Therefore, the four items were averaged into one variable: Attitude $_{issue}$. (M= .28, SD= 1.50).

The factor loadings of the four items were as follows: .93 for "trivial / serious", .92 for "unimportant / important", .93 for "not worth much concern / worth a lot of concern", and .91 for "irrelevant / relevant".

The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient also indicated a high internal consistency (α =.93). This reliability coefficient is deemed excellent (e.g., George & Mallery, 2003; Leech, Barrett & Morgan, 2008).

Attitude toward the communicator

Measure: In the present study, the communicator is the PSA voiceover. The participants' attitude toward the voice-over was measured using the scale of Stern, Mullenix, Dyson and Wilsonl (1999). This scale was used in an experiment to measure attitudes towards a tape recorded voice. This makes it closer to the present study where the communicator is a voice-over.

Participants were asked to "evaluate the speaker in this PSA" on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from -3 to 3. The scale included 8 items chosen from the scale of Stern, Mullenix, Dyson and Wilsonl (1999): not competent/ competent, not honest/honest, not assertive/ assertive, not informed/informed, evasive / straightforward, not qualified/qualified, not sincere/ sincere, and meek/forceful.

Factor analysis and Reliability: The EFA showed clearly one factor with 53.61% of total variance explained (communalities ranging from .35 to .64). Therefore, the 8 items were averaged to construct the variable of attitude $_{voice-over}$. (M= .80, SD= .93).

The factor loadings of each of the items were as follows: .75 for "not competent/ competent", .79 for "not honest/honest", .66 for "not assertive/ assertive", .80 for "not informed/informed", .73 for "evasive / straightforward", .75 for "not qualified/qualified", .72 for "not sincere/ sincere", and .59 for "meek/forceful".

The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of α =.87also indicated a high internal consistency. This reliability coefficient is judged as good to excellent (e.g., George & Mallery, 2003; Leech, Barrett & Morgan, 2008).

Attitude toward the PSA:

Measure: In order to measure the participants' attitude $_{PSA}$, a seven-point semantic differential scale was used. This scale was previously used by Dillard and Ye (2008). This scale included 8 items ranging from -3 to 3. The eight items accounted for the two dimensions of perceived PSA effectiveness as suggested by Dillard and Ye (2008): *impact* (4 items) and *attributes* (4 items). The scale includes the following items: persuasive/not persuasive, effective/not effective, convincing/not convincing, compelling/not compelling (impact), reasonable/not reasonable, logical/not logical, rational/not rational, and true to life/not true to life (attributes).

Factor analysis and Reliability: The EFA showed that the first two factors accounted for the strongest levels of variance: 58.75% and 18.58% of the variance explained respectively. Therefore, the first cluster of factors was averaged into one variable: attitude $_{PSA}$ (communalities ranging from .80 to .86). The items

corresponding to this cluster are: "Not persuasive / persuasive" (factor loading = .87), "not effective/ effective" (factor loading = .89), "not convincing / convincing" (factor loading = .84) and "not completing / compelling" (factor loading = .9).

Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of α =.934 indicated a high internal consistency of the constructed variable (M= 2.33, SD= .97).

v) Behavioral intention:

Measure: On a seven-point Likert scale, respondents reported how likely or unlikely they are to perform a number of acts that indicate positive behavioral intention concerning relationship violence. These acts indicate their willingness to actively help relationship violence victims or perpetrators, or seek or spread information about relationship violence. The scale includes six items. Examples are "how likely are you to provide help to relationship violence victims?" and "How likely are you to seek information on how to help reduce relationship violence". The participants' answers ranged from "not at all likely" (= -3) to "very likely" (= 3). This scale was previously used by Bagozzi and Moore (1994). The wording was modified in order to fit the context of relationship violence.

Factor analysis and Reliability: The EFA showed clearly one factor with 57.88% of total variance explained (communalities ranging from .33 to .78). Therefore, the six items were averaged to construct the variable of behavioral intention (M= -.71, SD= 1.31). The factor loadings of the six items were .58, .64, .88, .87, .77 and . 75 respectively.

The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient also indicated a high internal consistency (α =.84). This reliability coefficient is judged as good to excellent (e.g., George & Mallery, 2003; Leech, Barrett & Morgan, 2008).

4.6.3. Control variables:

The study includes five control variables: a) identification with PSA characters, b) prior involvement in relationship violence, c) empathy with the victim, d) gender identity, and e) familiarity with the issue. The next sections briefly present the rationale behind choosing each one of the control variables, as well as their measures. Factor analysis and reliability test results are reported for the scale variables: empathy, gender identity and familiarity with the issue. The sections also report the results of one-way ANOVA tests and correlation tests conducted in order to choose the control variables that are useful while testing each hypothesis or research question. The list of control variables and the dependent variables that they affect is provided in table 3. The results of the one-way ANOVA analyses that determined the choice of nominal covariates are reported in tables 4 to 6. The results of correlations that determined the choice of scale covariates are reported in table 7.

a) Identification with PSA characters

Rationale: Identification is a mechanism that happens when the viewer "puts himself in the place of a character and momentarily feels that what is happening to that character is happening to himself" (Maccoby & Wilson, 1957). In this process, the viewer assumes the emotions felt by the character he identifies with, and shares the same emotions. For example, if the character is in danger, the viewer would feel fear (Maccoby & Wilson, 1957).

In the present survey study, the PSA shows a male perpetrator and a female victim. When male and female participants watch the PSA, some of them may identify with one of the PSA characters. This may affect their response to the message.

It is important to include identification as a control variable because research shows that it can affect the five dependent variables measured in this study: source credibility (e.g., Basil, 1996), emotional response, cognitive response (e.g., Zillmann et al., 1996), attitudes (e.g., Kelman, 1958) and behavioral intention (e.g., Ansager, Austin & Pinkleton, 2001).

Measure: The respondents were asked to report their perceived similarity with and likeability of the two PSA characters: the victim and the perpetrator. Answers to these questions were collected using dichotomous (yes or no) items. This measure was used by Maccoby and Wilson (1957).

The use of identification as a control variable: Identification is made up of two variables: likeability of characters and perceived similarity with characters. The one-way ANOVA results for likeability showed that it had a significant impact on two emotional response variables, including fear (F (2, 219) =3.61, p < .05) and anger (F (2, 219) =3.64, p < .05), in addition to a significant impact on attitude $_{issue}$ (F (2, 219) =12.39, p < .01) and attitude $_{PSA}$ (F (2, 219) =4.67, p < .05).

Likability did not have a significant impact on the rest of the variables. Therefore, it was used as a covariate only in the analysis of gender effects on fear, anger, attitude $_{issue}$ and perceived PSA persuasiveness.

Concerning the second identification variable, perceived similarity with the PSA characters, the one-way ANOVA showed that it had a significant impact only on one emotional response variable : fear (F (2, 219) =5.03, p < .01). The impact of perceived similarity on the rest of the variables was not statistically significant. Therefore, perceived similarity was used as a covariate only while analyzing the effects of gender on fear.

b) Prior involvement in relationship violence:

Rationale: Participants could have prior involvement with relationship violence as witnesses, victims or perpetrators. It is important to measure prior experience as a control variable because it can increase the participants' issue involvement. This was found to enhance cognitive responses, that in turn can either increase or decrease persuasion (Petty & Cacioppo, 1979). Additionally, Ramon and Severance (1970) found that issue involvement (they labeled ego-involvement), affects attitude change, source credibility, and message evaluation. It is therefore important to control for prior involvement in relationship violence in order to avoid any confounding effects on dependent variables.

Measure: This variable was measured using a dichotomous (yes or no) question. The question asked the participants whether they know anybody (including themselves) who was involved in a violent relationship.

The use of prior involvement as a control variable: The one-way ANOVA indicated that prior personal or acquaintance involvement had a significant impact on guilt (F (1, 220) = 8.21, p < .01) and on behavioral intention (F (1, 220) = 5.07, p <

.05). Accordingly, this variable was used as a control variable when the hypothesis concerning guilt and behavioral intention was analyzed.

c) Empathy

Rationale: Empathy is usually considered an emotional response variable (e.g., Batson et al., 1981). However, the present study uses empathy as a control variable, and this decision is based on the following reasons. Because the topic of the PSA is relationship violence, and because the PSA shows a scene of violence against a victim, empathy can influence the recipients' other responses. This happens because empathy makes PSA viewers understand the feelings of the characters that they watch and even assume their roles (Mehrabian & Epstein, 1972). This in turn affects their responses to the PSA.

This assumption was supported when one-way ANOVA analyses were conducted in order to check whether empathy has significant impacts on the response variables. The ANOVA showed that all dependent variables were significantly impacted by empathy. Therefore, given this effect and given the type of PSA message used in the present study, I decided to use empathy as a control variable in order to avoid spurious results.

Measure: Empathy was measured using four statements that were provided in the survey and respondents were asked to rate their agreement with them on a seven-point scale (-3 = not at all agree; 3 = strongly agree). This scale was used by Bagozzi and Moore (1994).

Factor analysis and Reliability: The EFA showed clearly one factor with 73.8% of total variance explained (communalities ranging from .55 to .83). Therefore, the

four items were averaged to construct the variable of empathy (M= -.77, SD=1.54). The factor loadings of the four items were .88, .91, .88 and .74 respectively.

Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient also indicated a high internal consistency (α =.87).

The use of empathy as a control variable: Since empathy is a scale variable, Pearson's correlation was used in order to determine whether it has significant relationship with any of the dependent variable. The results showed that empathy is significantly correlated with all dependent variables. Therefore, it was included as a control variable while testing all hypothesis and research questions. (Table 7 summarizes the correlation indexes of scale covariates with the corresponding dependent variables).

d) Gender identity:

Rationale: Because response within this study will be based on gender, it would be important to take into account the participants' gender identity – that is how feminine or masculine they perceive themselves to be. In fact, psychologists believe that varying degrees of femininity and masculinity exist within every one of us (Gill et al. 1987, quoted in Palan 2001). This could affect the degree of identification felt by every individual participant, and therefore act as a confounding variable that impacts the participants' response to the PSA.

Measure: Gender identity was measured using a scale of 8 items chosen from Bem's gender identity scale (1981). These items were used by many researchers including Burke and Tully (1977).

On a seven-point Likert scale (-3 to 3), each participant was asked to rate how much each item applies to themselves, being men or women. The scale included the following eight items: Emotional / unemotional, Timid / bold, Masculine / feminine, soft / hard, powerful / powerless, loud / quiet, aggressive / nonaggressive, and sensitive / insensitive.

Factor analysis and Reliability: The EFA showed that the first two factors accounted for the majority of the total variance with respectively 35.9% and 23% of the total variance explained (communalities ranging from .53 to .64). The EFA revealed that four items out of eight had a high loading, and therefore were averaged to construct the gender identity variable (M= .19, SD= .72). The corresponding question items are "timid/bold" (factor loading = .80), "powerful/ powerless" (factor loading = .70), loud / quiet" (factor loading = .82), and aggressive / nonaggressive (factor loading = .72).

The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient also indicated a high internal consistency (α =.77).

The use of gender identity as a control variable: Pearson's correlation showed that gender identity was significantly correlated with only one dependent variable: fear. Therefore, gender identity was used as a covariate only while testing the hypotheses and research questions related to fear.

e) Familiarity with the issue:

Rationale: Prior knowledge about the issue could bias the response to it. Since the participants are MSU students, some of them might have attended the series of awareness workshops organized on campus by MSU Safe Place and the Sexual

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Assault Program. They also may have received information about the issue of relationship violence from other communication or educational sources.

If they were previously exposed to any awareness or educational messages about relationship violence, some of the participants may easily identify positive bystander behavior as the pro-social behavior. Being aware of the pro-social nature of a message can affect response to it. In fact, Dillard and Ye (2008) maintain that when message recipients are aware that the message is recommending a pro-social behavior, they are more likely to perceive higher effects on themselves than on others. This is what they call a reverse third-person effect. This effect may bias survey responses concerning emotional response, cognitive response, attitudes and behavioral intention.

Measure: This variable was measured using a scale measuring two items: familiarity and knowledge. The participants reported the degree of their familiarity and knowledge of the issue on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from -3 to 3.

Factor analysis and Reliability: The EFA showed clearly one factor with 88.72% of total variance explained (communalities = .887 for both factors). Therefore, the two items were averaged to construct one variable: Familiarity with the issue of relationship violence (M= -.04, SD=1.42). The factor loadings were .94 for both items. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient was α =.87, reflecting a good to excellent internal consistency.

The use of familiarity as a control variable: Pearson's correlation test showed that familiarity with the issue was significantly correlated with anger, attitude $_{issue}$ and behavioral intention. It was therefore used while testing hypotheses and research questions related to these three variables.

4.7. Analysis strategy:

To examine the main and interaction effects of gender on the five dependent variables, a series of Univariate Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Univariate Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted. The ANCOVAs allowed integrating both the dependent variables of interest and the covariates. When the analysis yielded statistically significant impacts, the means were analyzed in order to determine the direction of the effect. The analytic tool used for this study is SPSS and results were tested at a level of significance of p value less than .05.

CHAPTER V - RESULTS

5.1. Descriptive statistics:

The results of this study showed many differences between the message responses of male and female recipients, depending on whether the communicator was female or male. Not all these differences were statistically significant. Nevertheless, the following section reports all significant as well as non-significant differences in order to provide a sense of the direction of each message response depending on the genders of the communicator and the recipients.

First, concerning source credibility, the female communicator was significantly perceived as more credible than the male communicator. The female communicator was perceived as more credible both by male recipients (M=.57 for the female communicator Vs. M=-.08 for the male communicator) and by female recipients (M=.40 for the female communicator Vs M=.05 for the male communicator). (Table 8 provides the means and standard deviations of dependent variables by gender).

Second, emotional response includes the three variables of fear, anger and guilt. Female recipients expressed more fear than males, both when the communicator was a female (M= -.21 for females Vs. M= -.51 for males) and when the communicator was a male (M= -.1 for females Vs. M= -.89 for males). This difference between female and male reported fear was statistically significant.

Additionally, female recipients expressed more anger than males only when the communicator was a male (M= .67 for female recipients Vs. M = .64 for male

recipients) compared with when the communicator was female (M= .51 for female

recipients Vs. M = .57 for male recipients). As for guilt, female recipients reported

more guilt compared with male recipients, both when the communicator was male

(M= 1.14 for female recipients Vs. M = -1.58 for male recipients) and when the

communicator was female (M= -1.45 for female recipients Vs. M = -1.23 for male

recipients).

Third, concerning cognitive response, the recipients reported more positive

thoughts in total than negative or neutral thoughts. The average reported positive

thoughts was about 3.5 compared with .77 on average for negative thoughts and 2.25

on average of neutral thoughts.

Fourth, differences were also noticed between female and male recipients when it

came to attitudes. Female recipients expressed a significantly higher attitude $_{issue}$ than

male recipients, both when the communicator was male (M=2.52 for females Vs.

M=1.83 for males) and when the communicator was female (M=2.62 for females Vs.

M=1.91 for males). Attitude $_{PSA}$ was clearly different between female and male

recipients when the communicator was male (M=.36 for females vs. M=.06 for males).

However, attitude $_{PSA}$ was almost the same between female and male recipients when

the communicator was female (M=.333 for females vs. M=.339 for males).

As for attitude $_{voice-over}$, the male communicator generated a higher attitude $_{voice-over}$ from female recipients (M=.91) than from male recipients (M=.6). On the other

hand the female communicator generated almost the same degree of attitude voice-over

from both female recipients (M=.8) and male recipients (M=.81).

Finally, the behavioral intention reported by both female and male recipients was

generally low. When the communicator was male, female recipients expressed a

slightly higher behavioral intention than males did (M=-.73 for females Vs. M=-.74

for males). When the communicator was female, female recipients expressed a lower

behavioral intention than males did (M=-.67 for females Vs. M=-.64 for males). (See

table 8 for the means by genders).

5.2. Hypotheses and research questions testing:

5.2.1. Testing the main effects:

5.2.1.1. Effects of the communicator's gender:

In what follows, I report the results of the analyses conducted to test the main

effects of the communicator's gender on message response. Table 9 summarizes the

results of two-way ANOVAs and Table 10 summarizes the results of ANCOVAs of

gender's effects on all dependent variables.

Source credibility

**H 1: The male communicator will be perceived as more credible than the
female communicator.**

This hypothesis was tested using a two-way ANOVA as well as an analysis of

covariance (ANCOVA).

The two-way ANOVA showed that the communicator's gender had a significant

impact on source credibility (F $(1, 218)$ = 10.19, p < $.01$). However, while the

hypothesis predicted that the male communicator will be perceived as more credible

than the female communicator, the means revealed an opposite-direction effect. It was the female communicator who was perceived to be more credible than the male communicator, by both male and female participants (table 8). Therefore, hypothesis 1 was not supported.

The ANCOVA confirmed that the gender of the communicator has a significant effect on source credibility (F $(1, 217)$ = 12.39, p < .01). Also, the direction of the effect was opposite to what the hypothesis predicted. Both male and female participants perceived the female communicator to be more credible than the male communicator (table 8). Therefore hypothesis 1 was not supported.

Emotional response

H2: The male communicator will produce a stronger emotional response than the female communicator.

The ANOVAs showed that the communicator's gender had no significant effect on fear (F $(1, 218)$ = .34, p > .05), no significant effect on anger (F $(1, 218)$ = .32, p > .05) and no significant effect on guilt (F $(1, 218)$ = .47, p > .05).

A series of ANCOVAs was also conducted in order to test this hypothesis. The covariates included to test the effect on fear were empathy with the victim, likeability of the PSA characters, perceived similarity with PSA characters, and gender identity. The covariates used to test the effect on anger were empathy with the victim, likeability of the PSA characters and familiarity with the issue of relationship violence. The covariates used in testing the effect on guilt were empathy with the victim and prior involvement in relationship violence.

The ANCOVAs confirmed that the gender of the communicator had no significant effect on fear (F (1, 214) = 1.51, p > .05), no significant effect on anger (F (1, 215) = .15, p > .05), and no significant effect on guilt (F (1, 216) = 1.10, p > .05). This means that the recipients' emotional response would not be significantly different, whether the communicator was male or female. Therefore, hypothesis H2 was not supported.

Cognitive response

RQ1: What impact does the communicator's gender have on the recipients' cognitive response to the relationship violence prevention PSA?

The two-way ANOVA revealed no significant impact (F (1, 218) = 1.34, p > .05). The ANCOVA was conducted using empathy as a covariate, and also revealed no significant impact of the communicator's gender on cognitive response (F (1,217) = 2.07, p > .05). This means that the recipients' cognitive response would not be significantly different depending on whether the PSA voice-over was male or female.

Attitudes

RQ2: What impact does the gender of the communicator have on attitude issue, attitude voice-over, and attitude PSA in the context of relationship violence prevention PSA's?

First, the two-way ANOVA revealed that the gender of the communicator had no significant effect neither on attitude issue (F (1, 218) = .44, p > .05), nor on attitude voice-over (F (1, 218) = .11, p > .05), nor on attitude PSA (F (1, 218) = .31, p > .05).

Concerning the ANCOVA, the covariates included in analyzing the effect on attitude issue were empathy with PSA characters and familiarity with the issue; the

covariate included in analyzing the effect on attitude $_{\text{voice-over}}$ was empathy; and the covariates included in analyzing attitude $_{\text{PSA}}$ were empathy and the likeability of PSA characters.

The ANCOVAs confirmed that there is no significant effect for the communicator's gender on any of the three attitude variables (F (1, 215) = .30, p <.05), (F (1, 217) = .19, p > .05) and (F (1, 216) = 1.02, p > .05) respectively. Therefore, all three attitudes would not be significantly different depending on whether the PSA voice-over is male or female.

Behavioral intention

RQ3: What impact does the gender of the communicator have on the recipients' behavioral intention to provide help or seek information about relationship violence?

The ANOVA showed no significant effect of the communicator's gender on the participant's behavioral intention (F (1, 218) = .18, p > .05). Concerning the ANCOVA, the covariates included were empathy and prior involvement in relationship violence. The ANCOVA also showed no significant effect of the communicator's gender on behavioral intention (F (1,215) = .51, p > .05), suggesting that the recipients' behavioral intention would not significantly change depending on whether the PSA voice-over is male or female.

5.2.1.2. Effects of the recipient's gender:

In what follows, I report the results of the hypotheses and research questions concerning the main effects of the recipient's gender on message response. Table 9

summarizes the results of two-way ANOVA tests and table 10 summarizes the results of ANCOVA tests.

Source credibility

RQ4: What impact does the gender of the recipient have on source credibility?

The two-way ANOVA showed that there was no significant impact of the recipient's gender on source credibility (F (1, 218 = .01), p > .05). Similarly, the ANCOVA confirmed the null finding (F (1, 217) = .01, p > .05), suggesting that the degree of the communicator's perceived credibility would not significantly change depending on the gender of the recipient.

Emotional response

H3: Female recipients will have a stronger emotional response to the PSA's than male recipients.

Two-way ANOVAs showed no significant effect neither on anger (F (1, 218) = .006, p > .05) or on guilt (F (1, 218) = 1.15, p > .05). However, the effect on fear was statistically significant (F (1, 218) = 4.99, p < .05), such that females felt higher degrees of fear than males, both when the communicators were male and female.

Similarly, the ANCOVAs showed no significant effect of the recipients' gender on anger (F (1, 215) = .13, p > .05) and guilt (F (1, 216) = 1.07, p > .05). However, it showed a significant effect on the emotion of fear (F (1, 214) = 7.15, p < .05). The direction of the effects was also the same as the one revealed by the two-way ANOVA: female recipients expressed more fear than males. Therefore, hypothesis H3

was partly supported, suggesting that only fear, but not anger or guilt, changes

significantly depending on whether the PSA recipient is male or female.

Cognitive response

RQ5: What impact does the gender of the recipient have on cognitive response?

The two-way ANOVA revealed no significant impact of the recipient's gender on

cognitive response ($F_{(1, 208)} = 2.19$, $p > .05$). Similarly, the ANCOVA confirmed the

null finding ($F_{(1,217)} = 3.07$, $p > .05$). This suggests that whether the recipient is

male or female, the cognitive response to the PSA would not be significantly different.

Attitudes

H4: Female recipients will have a more positive attitude $_{issue}$ than male recipients.

The two-way ANOVA showed a significant impact of the recipient's gender on

attitude $_{issue}$ ($F_{(1, 218)} = 26.91$, $p < .01$), such that female recipients reported a higher

attitude toward the importance of the issue of relationship violence compared with

male recipients.

The ANCOVA confirmed the null finding ($F_{(1, 215)} = 29.44$, $p < .01$), and the

direction of the effect was the same. Therefore, hypothesis H4 was supported.

RQ6: What impact does the recipient's gender have on attitude $_{PSA}$?

The two-way ANOVA showed that the recipient's gender had no significant

impact on attitude $_{PSA}$ ($F_{(1, 218)} = .43$, $p > .05$). Similarly, the ANCOVA showed no

significant impact on attitude $_{PSA}$ ($F_{(1, 216)} = .32$, $p > .05$). This suggests that the

recipients' attitude toward the PSA would not significantly change depending of their gender.

RQ7: What impact does the recipient's gender have on attitude voice-over?

The two-way ANOVA showed that the recipient's gender had no significant impact on attitude toward voice-over $(F (1, 218) = 1.25, p > .05)$. This result corresponds with the ANCOVA showing no significant effect of the recipient's gender on attitude voice-over $(F (1, 217) = 1.49, p > .05)$. This also suggests that the recipients' attitude toward the voice-over would not significantly change, whether they are male or female.

Behavioral intention

RQ8: What impact does the recipient's gender have on the recipients' intention to positively participate in reducing the spread of relationship violence?

The two-way ANOVA revealed no significant effect of the recipient's gender on the recipients' gender on their intention to behave as positive bystander and contribute to the reduction of relationship violence $(F (1, 218) = .002, p > .05)$. Similarly the ANCOVA revealed no significant effect on behavioral intention $(F (1, 215) = .01, p > .05)$, suggesting that the recipients' attitude toward the PSA would not be significantly different, whether they are male or female.

5.2.2. Testing the interaction effects:

In what follows, I report the results of the hypotheses concerning the effect of the interaction between the communicator and recipient's genders on message response. Table 9 summarizes the results of two-way ANOVAs and Table10 summarizes the results of ANCOVAs.

Source credibility

H5: Perceived source credibility will be higher when the genders of the communicator and the recipient match, compared with when they do not match.

The ANOVA showed no significant impact of the gender interaction on source credibility (F (1, 218) = .94, p > .05). Similarly, the ANCOVA revealed no significant impact (F (1, 217) = .71, p > .05). Therefore, this hypothesis was not supported. This suggests that the perceived credibility of the communicator would not be significantly different, whether the genders of the communicator and the recipient match or mismatch.

Emotional response

H6: Emotional response will be weaker when the genders of the communicator and the recipient match, compared to when they do not match.

The two-way ANOVA showed no significant impact of gender interaction on fear (F (1, 218) = 1.00, p > .05), anger (F (1, 218) = .04, p > .05) and guilt (F (1, 218) = .63, p > .05). Similarly, the ANCOVAs revealed no significant impact of the genders interaction on either one of the emotions, including fear (F (1, 214) = .27, p > .05), anger (F (1, 215) = .01, p > .05) and guilt (F (1, 216) = .92, p > .05). Therefore, hypothesis H6 was not supported, suggesting that the recipients' emotional response would not be significantly different, whether their genders matched or mismatched with that of the communicator.

Cognitive response

H7: Cognitive response will be higher when the genders of the communicator and the recipient match, compared to when they do not match.

The two-way ANOVA conducted to test the gender interaction effect on cognitive response revealed no significant impact (F (1, 218) = .70, p > .05). The ANCOVA confirmed the null finding (F (1,217) = 1.41, p > .05). Therefore, hypothesis H7 was not supported, suggesting that the recipients' cognitive response to the PSA would not be significantly different, whether their genders matched or mismatched with that of the communicator.

Attitudes

H8: Attitudes will be more positive when the genders of the communicator and the recipient match, compared to when they do not match.

The two-way ANOVA showed that that the interaction of the communicator and recipient's genders had no significant impact on attitude $_{issue}$ (F (1, 218) = .003, p > .05), no significant impact on attitude $_{voice-over}$ (F (1, 218) = 1.33, p > .05), and no significant impact on attitude $_{PSA}$ (F (1, 218) = .47, p > .05).

The ANCOVAs also showed that the gender interaction had no significant impact on attitude $_{issue}$ (F (1, 215) = .22, p > .05), no significant impact on attitude $_{voice-over}$ (F (1, 217) = 1.10, p > .05), and no significant impact on attitude $_{PSA}$ (F (1, 216) = .25, p > .05). Therefore, hypothesis H8 was not supported, suggesting that the three attitudes would not be significantly different depending on whether the genders of the communicator and the recipient match or mismatch.

Behavioral intention

H9: Behavioral intention to provide help or seek information about relationship violence will be higher when the genders of the communicator and the recipient match, compared to when they do not match.

Finally, the two-way ANOVA showed no significant impact of the interaction of the communicator and recipient's genders on behavioral intention (F $(1, 218)$ = .006, p > .05). The ANCOVA confirmed the null finding (F $(1, 215)$ = .76, p > .05). Therefore, hypothesis H9 was not supported either, suggesting that the recipients' behavioral intention would not be significantly different depending on whether the genders of the communicator and the recipient match or mismatch.

After presenting the results of hypotheses and research questions testing, the next chapter discusses the finding, as well as the limitations, implications and future research recommendations.

CHAPTER VI – DISCUSSION

6.1. Overview of the findings

The present study investigated the main and interaction effects of gender on the response to relationship violence prevention PSA's. Message response refers to source credibility, emotional response, cognitive response, attitudes toward the issue of relationship violence, toward the communicator and the PSA, and behavioral intention.

The study yielded three significant findings. First, the gender of the communicator (PSA voice-over) has a significant impact only on source credibility, but not on emotional response, cognitive response, attitudes and behavioral intention. Particularly, the results indicate that the female communicator has been perceived to be more credible than the male communicator both by male and female recipients. In fact, among the participants who watched the female version PSA, male recipients reported a higher perceived source credibility than female recipients.

Second, the study found that the gender of the message recipients affects only one aspect of emotional response: fear. Particularly, female recipients reported higher degrees of fear than the male recipients. The message recipient's gender did not have any significant effects on other aspects of emotional response, including anger and guilt.

Third, the study found that the gender of the recipients significantly affects attitude toward the issue, such that females had a higher attitude issue than males. The gender

of the recipients did not affect any other type of attitudes, including attitude $_{voice-over}$

and attitude $_{PSA}$, nor did it significantly affect behavioral intention.

Concerning the interaction effects of the communicator and recipients' genders,

the results showed no significant effect on any of the response variables. This

indicates that the response to a relationship violence prevention PSA would not

significantly differ whether the genders of the communicator and the recipient

matched or mismatch.

6.2. Discussion

6.2.1. Discussing the significant findings:

The effects of communicator's gender on source credibility

The present study found that the female communicator was perceived to be more

credible than the male communicator. While this supports previous findings that the

gender of the communicator does affect source credibility, it opposes the usually-

found direction of gender's effect. In fact, the bulk of previous source credibility

research found that male communicators tend to be perceived more credible than

female communicators (e.g., Newcombe & Arnkoff, 1979; Markham, 1988). The

present study found the opposite.

Many factors could be approached to explain this finding, but some of them have

been refuted by the method of the present study, namely through the use of control

variables. First, one of those factors could be empathy with the victim. Since the study

stimulus (the PSA) depicts a female victim and a male perpetrator, one may consider

empathy with the female victim as a factor that must have spurred a higher perceived

credibility in favor of the female communicator. However, because of the significant

impact that empathy had on source credibility, it was used in the present study as control variable. The results were still in favor of the female communicator in terms of sourse credibility.

Second, one may think of identification with the female victim as a factor that worked in favor of the female communicator. But this may not be the case either. In fact, previous research about identification showed that audiences tend to identify with characters that are perceived as good or exhibiting positive behavior rather than those who are perceived as bad or exhibiting negative behavior. This process is called wishful identification (Feilitzen & Linné, 1975).

Following this logic, we would expect the participants to identify with the female victim rather than the male perpetrator. This was true in the present study where two aspects of identification were measured: perceived similarity with the characters and likeability of the characters. More participants expressed likeability toward the victim (26.9%) rather than the perpetrator (3.6%), and more perceived similarity with the victim (14.3%) rather than the perpetrator (2.3%).

However, those who did report identification with either the victim or the perpetrator represented only 30.5% and 16.6% of the participants respectively. On the other hand, most participants did not identify at all with any of the two PSA characters. While 69.1% answered that they did not like any of the two characters, 83% answered that they did not perceive themselves to be similar to either of the two characters. The reason may be that even the victim's behavior was not perceived as "good". The fact that she does not fight back may have created an impression of submissiveness or weakness.

Consequently, since most participants did not express identification with any of the two characters, both identification variables – likeability and perceived similarity - did not have a significant effect on source credibility. This means that identification could not have significantly biased source credibility in favor of the female communicator.

One potential explanation for the superior credibility of the female communicator would be the topic itself of the PSA. Because the PSA deals with relationship violence, and because women are more often the victims of relationship violence, the study participants may have felt more credibility toward the female than male communicator. This effect may have been boosted by the significant positive correlation between attitude toward the issue of relationship violence and source credibility (.19).

Another explanation that the present study did not measure is the mental association that the participants may have established between the male actor (perpetrator) and the male voice-over. This probably explains why female respondents, but also male respondents had a negative attitude toward the male communicator (M = .6 and SD = .87 for male participants; M = .91 and SD = .93 for females).

The effect of recipient's gender on fear

The results indicated that the gender of the recipient significantly affects the degree of fear elicited by the PSA, especially among female recipients who reported higher degrees of fear compared with male recipients. As is the case with source

credibility, identification with the victim or empathy could have been potential factors to explain this finding, but this may not be the case.

The reason why empathy and identification may not have caused the significant impact of gender on fear is that they both were used as control variables. First, the effect of the recipients' gender on emotional response (including fear) was tested using a factorial ANOVA. The effects turned out to be significant only on fear. Second, the same effect was tested again but this time using an ANCOVA test, including both empathy and likeability as control variables. The result remained the same such that gender had a significant effect only on fear. Consequently, it may be concluded that neither empathy nor identification played a role in creating the effect of gender on the emotional response of fear.

One explanation for the result would be the significant impact of the recipient's gender on attitude $_{issue}$, which in turn has a significant positive correlation with fear. In fact, the present study found that the gender of the recipients had a significant impact on attitude $_{issue}$, such that females had a positive attitude toward the issue than males did. This means that females, more than males, perceived the issue of relationship violence as important and worthy of concern. Since there was a significant positive correlation between attitude toward the issue and fear (.181), this can probably explain why the gender of the recipient significantly impacted the emotional response of fear, and why it was females who reported more fear than males.

The finding that it was females who expressed more fear than males may also be explained by previous findings that females either feel stronger emotions compared

with males, or tend to be more expressive than males when it comes to emotions (see the review of LaFrance & Banaji, 1992).

The effect of recipient's gender on attitude toward the issue

The recipient's gender was found to significantly affect attitude $_{issue}$, such that females perceived the issue to be important and worthy of concern more than males did. One explanation for this finding could be the gender-sensitivity of the issue (Ascensio, 1999). This gender-sensitivity makes it logical that the gender of the recipient may impact their attitude toward the issue.

Concerning the direction of the effect, where females had a more positive attitude toward the issue of relationship violence than males, this could be explained by the gender-sensitivity of the issue, but also the fact that females are usually the victims of relationship violence. This widespread fact and belief could have made females hold a higher attitude concerning the importance of the issue of relationship violence.

6.2.2. Discussing the null findings

The results showed a lack of significant gender influence on emotions like anger and guilt, as well as attitude $_{voice-over}$ and attitude $_{PSA}$ and behavioral intention. Many arguments could be suggested to explain these null findings. They include a) mediating effects between some variables, b) the nature of the communicator (voice-over), c) sample size and sample attributes, d) the technical evaluation of the PSA, and e) audience characteristics.

a) Mediating effects

The present study treated all message response variables as dependent variables, including source credibility, emotional response, cognitive response, attitudes and

behavioral intention. Treating them all as dependent variables aims to keep the focus on the influence of gender on all the response variables, rather than the influence of the variables on each other. However, previous research demonstrated that there are mediating effects that take place between the response messages themselves. Not taking these mediating effects into consideration in the present study may have affected the results.

One example of previous findings about mediating effects is that cognitive response mediates the relationship between advertising and attitudes toward the brand (e.g., Mitchell & Olson, 1981; Wright, 1973). Also, emotional response mediates the relationship between message content and the attitudes of message recipients toward the message or brand (e.g., Holbrook & Batra, 1987). Kim, Allen and Kardes (1996) also identified mediating effects of affective and cognitive processes on the effects of advertising on attitudes toward the brand.

These previous findings therefore suggest that the relationship between gender and the response variables measured in the present study may not be direct. It rather involves mediating processes that may affect the results. While the findings of the present study constitute a preliminary effort toward understanding the effect of gender on message response within the context of relationship violence PSA's, it would be recommended to take the mediating effects into consideration in future research.

b) The nature of the PSA communicator:

One reason for the insignificant effects of gender on attitude toward the communicator may be the fact that the communicator is a voice-over. The fact that the recipients did not physically see or interact with the communicator, or the fact that

they did not listen to the communicator for a long-enough duration may have weakened the degree of response.

In fact, in most previous studies where attitude toward the communicator was examined, the communicator was either a person who directly talked with the participants (Woodside & Davenport, 1974) or someone they saw on screen, or a combination of on-screen and audio communication (e.g., Kelman & Eagly, 1965). This implies that the ability to see and sometimes personally interact with the communicator may create stronger attitudes communicator.

It is true that in some previous experiments the communicator was just heard on tape (e.g., Whittler, 1991). However, these experiments made the participants listen to interviews (e.g., Kelman, 1958) or speeches (e.g., Stern, Mullenix, Dyson & Wilson, 1999), the length of which may have allowed the recipients to form an attitude toward the communicator. Conversely, the voice-over used in the present study speaks only in the end of the 30-second PSA. Therefore, the brief exposure to the communicator's message may have weakened the degree of generated response.

c) Sample considerations

Two factors related to the study sample may have affected the strength or direction of the findings. First, the sample size was limited. Although the survey was sent to a total of 525 students, 243 responses were received, and only 223 participations were finally used for the data analysis. The number of participants dropped for many reasons including some students' decision not to participate (participation was voluntary), incomplete surveys, or duplicate participations.

Additionally, the analysis of the present study required dividing the participants into four cells, thus creating a less-than-desired number of participants in each cell, such that the number in each cell ranged from 85 at the high end down to only 28. In fact, although there are no rules concerning the ideal sample size, researchers usually use 50 to 100 participants in each cell (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006).

Also, since the present study involves five dependent variables, some researchers would recommend using about 100 participants for every dependent variable (Gorsuch, 1983, as cited in Wimmer & Sominick, 2006). Consequently, the effects may have been weaker than desired, which may explain why many findings were null.

Second, the skewness of some results toward female participants may have been due to the inequality of the cells both in terms of size and gender. In fact, because the two conditions (male and female communicator) were randomly assigned to male and female participants, some cells ended up receiving more participants than the others. Thus, for the female communicator condition, the cell of females included 63 participants (28.4% of total participants), while the cell of males included only 28 participants (12.6%). Similarly for the male communicator condition, the cell of females included 85 participants (38.3%) while the cell of males included only 46 participants (20.7%).

d) PSA technical evaluation

At least three dependent variables may have been affected by the audience's evaluation of the quality of the PSA's production. In fact, although the present study measured attitude $_{PSA}$, this scale focused on perceived persuasiveness, rather than what the recipients thought about the quality of the PSA or how much they liked or

disliked it. Also, some researchers have drawn a distinction between perceived effectiveness of a PSA (measured in the present study) and the liking of a message (Dillard & Peck, 2000). PSA evaluation, based on the liking of the PSA, could also be able to affect message response. For example, a positive ad evaluation was found to positively impact behavioral intention (e.g., Mackenzie & Spreng, 1992).

In order to get a sense of what the participants of the present study thought about the quality of the PSA, it would be interesting to read through the thoughts generated for the cognitive response variable. In fact, one of the categories used for coding the thoughts generated by participants was "irrelevant or neutral thoughts". Since this study focuses on the thoughts that supported the advocated behavior, all the thoughts that included an evaluation of the PSA's technical production were coded as "neutral or irrelevant".

At this stage, assumption cannot be statistically based on the content of those thoughts. Nevertheless, reading through the thoughts could suggest that the participants' evaluation of the PSA may have affected their response to it. Examples of those thoughts are "the black and white made it seem much more intense", "the black and white was effective", or "the lighting is really weird". Comments were also made about the actors. Examples are "Male was a bad actor" or "need better acting". A qualitative analysis of the cognitive response thoughts may reveal more precise trends of how the participants' evaluation of the PSA production may have affected message response.

e) Community considerations

One last explanation for the absence of significant effects on most message response

variables, including behavioral intention, can be the degree of the participants' readiness to positively respond to such pro-social messages about relationship violence. Research showed that communities do not always have the same degree of responsiveness to messages that call them to change their social behaviors and beliefs (Banyatd, Plante & Moynihan, 2004).

Edwards et al. (2000) constructed a community-readiness model, suggesting that the effectiveness of prevention strategies, including pro-social messages, depends on the level of the community's awareness of the issue. The more aware the community the more ready it will be to listen to the message, and to actively respond to it and deal with it (Banyard, Plante & Moynian, 2004).

In fact, this model may explain the low levels of behavioral intention in the present study, since the measured familiarity and prior involvement with the issue were also low. First, the participants had a low level of familiarity with the issue of relationship violence. Their average familiarity was negative (M= -.14) with a standard deviation of 1.61. Second, when asked whether they had ever received a help request from a relationship violence victim or perpetrator, 91% of the participants answered "no". When asked whether they had ever interfered to help solve a relationship violence situation, 72.6% answered "no". Third, when asked whether they had received any training related to relationship violence, 68.2% of the participants answered "no". This, according to the community-readiness model (Edwards et al., 2000) indicates that this cohort of students will need higher levels of awareness before they can have a stronger response to relationship violence PSA's.

6.3. Limitations of the study

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Despite its potential theoretical and professional contributions, the present study

has a number of limitations that need to be addressed by future research. First, in this

study, source credibility, emotional response, cognitive response, attitudes and

behavioral intention are all treated as dependent variables. However, previous research

used source credibility, emotional response and cognitive response as mediators (e.g.,

Mitchell & Olson, 1981; Wright, 1973). This may have affected the way the variables

interfered and therefore affected the results.

Second, some potentially confounding factors were not taken into consideration

because the survey was conducted online. One example of these elements is the mood

of the audience at the time of the survey response, which was shown to affect

evaluation and information processing (Bagozzi, Gopinath & Nyer, 1999). Future

research could attempt to control for this variable.

Third, this study measured behavioral intention, but not behavioral change itself.

A measured degree of behavioral intention does not necessarily mean that the behavior

change will happen in reality (Kelman, 1958). Some researchers also concluded that

attitudinal changes often last only a couple of months (Brecklin & Ford, 2001).

Fourth, a number of issues related to the study sample constitute other limitations

that could be avoided by future research. These issues include the less-than desired

number of participants (N=223), the inequality of cell sizes (the smallest included 28

and the biggest 85 participants), as well as the lack of gender balance in the sample

(148 females versus only 75 males).

Finally, since the PSA used in this study was produced by students, the production

quality may be another limitation to consider. Negative evaluations of the PSA by

participants may have affected their response to the message itself. Future studies may avoid this limitation by using more professionally advanced videos.

Also, although the PSA of the present study was pretested, the focus was on detecting accurate recall of the gender of the voice-over and the comprehension of the message. Future research may improve this aspect by including PSA evaluation questions in the pretest. This may allow the researchers to improve the PSA before conducting the study.

6.4. Suggestions for future research

Based on the limitation that I have just discussed, I put forward the following suggestions for future research. First, since the present study did not treat response variables as mediators, future research could take the present endeavor further by considering the mediation effects of those variables.

Second, given the difference between behavioral intention and actual behavior, and that the PSA used in the present study will be aired on government access channel HOM TV, it would be interesting to conduct a subsequent study in cooperation with MSU Safe Place in order to check the existence of any real changes that might have resulted from watching the PSA on TV. The behavioral change to be measured is whether viewers have responded to the message of the PSA by being active bystanders in case they knew of any relationship violence case.

Third, other potential research paths could be of interest. The main finding in the present study is the significant impact of the communicator's gender on source credibility, and that the female communicator was perceived as more credible than the male communicator. This indicates that while designing relationship violence PSA's,

it is important to consider the gender of the voice-over. Nevertheless, it would be interesting to examine whether this finding applies solely to relationship violence PSA's or to other PSA's treating other gender sensitive issues like abortion or gender-based discrimination. Therefore, future studies could check whether female communicators will still be more credible than the male when the message is gender sensitive.

Also, in relation with this source credibility finding, future research could further examine the effects of communicator's gender on message response by comparing the response to gender-salient messages (both male and female-oriented messages) with the response to gender-neutral messages.

Finally, another potential alley in relation with this finding is to consider whether the results remain the same when the communicator is a direct speaker or writer, rather than a voice-over. In fact, previous studies that examined gender and source credibility used a communicator who is a direct speaker or debater, either present in the same room or seen on TV.

6.5. Implications

6.5.1. Practical implications

The findings suggest a set of guidelines for relationship violence prevention PSA's. First, this study confirms that it is important to take into account the specific characteristics of each particular pro-social issue while designing PSA's about it. In the context of the present study, the main characteristic of the issue of relationship violence is gender sensitivity and gender-salience of the messages. It seems that these

characteristics have made the female communicator gain more credibility than the male communicator.

Since most previous source credibility research found that, in many contexts, male communicators have more credibility than female communicators, the finding of the present study emphasizes the effect of the nature of the message itself on source credibility. Therefore, future anti-relationship PSA's may be more effective if the communicator is female than if the communicator is male. This implication is important because within the context of persuasive messages, choosing the right communicator can be crucial to the success of the message (e.g.,Sternthal, Dholakia & Leavitt, 1978; Harmon & Coney, 1982).

Second, this study found that the recipient's gender affects attitude $_{issue}$, such that females have a higher attitude toward the issue of relationship violence than males. This means that females, more than males, perceive the issue of relationship violence to be important and deserves concern.

However, since most relationship violence perpetrators are males, this indicates the need to orient future awareness efforts toward male audiences. The aim is to increase their attitude toward the issue, and therefore make them more responsive to relationship violence prevention campaigns. In fact, some researchers have supported the importance of targeting men in order to decrease the spread of relationship violence (Flood, 2006).

Third, the findings suggest another implication concerning the use of fear appeals in relationship violence prevention PSA's. The present study found that the recipient's gender significantly affects fear, such that females expressed more fear than males.

This may suggest that fear appeal might be more effective in addressing female audiences than male audiences. This may be useful for future campaigns that primarily target female audiences. Examples are those addressed to female victims of relationship violence aiming to encourage then to speak up, or even those dealing with other health issues like breast cancer, encouraging women to make early medical check-ups.

6.5.1. Theoretical implications

The present study aims to contribute to many fields of research. First, the findings contribute to source credibility literature, by stating that female communicator can be more credible than male communicators in the context of relationship violence PSA's. This challenges the general belief that male communicators are more credible than female communicators across contexts.

Second, the findings of this study contribute to the literature of bystander behavior (see Howard & Crano, 1974; Laner & Benin, 2001 for reviews of previous research). As stated in the discussion section, the findings suggest that the response generated by this PSA did not prompt recipients to express a high intention to behave as active bystanders. Among other implications, this means that a high attitude $_{issue}$ does not necessarily lead to a positive behavioral intention.

Finally, the findings also contribute to the literature of emotional appeals and their effects on persuasion. On the one hand, the findings suggest that strong fear does not necessarily mean that behavioral intention will be high. This contributes to the findings of various previous studies about whether fear appeals can make a message more persuasive. While some researchers report a negative relationship between the

degree of fear and persuasion (e.g., Janis & Feshbach, 1953; Snider, 1962 as cited in Sternthal & Craig, 1974), others found that fear and persuasion have a positive relationship (e.g., Dabbs & Leventhal, 1966; Kornzweig, 1967).

On the other hand, the null findings about anger and guilt suggest that gender is probably not the only variable that researchers need to focus on while trying to identify the variables that affect emotional response. In fact, the null finding concerning gender effects of anger and guilt seems to contribute to the inconsistent findings about gender differences in emotional response. Fisher and Dubé (2005) report that in only half the studies that examined gender differences in emotional response, females and males report the same degree of intensity of many emotions including as anger and guilt.

CONCLUSION

In sum, relationship violence is an alarming social issue that deserves attention from various academic fields including communication research. Communication research about relationship violence is important because it can contribute to the effectiveness of relationship violence prevention campaigns.

The present study contributes to the communication research aiming to improve PSA's targeting relationship violence bystanders. More specifically, this study examines the effects of the communicator's and recipient's genders on message response. Message response refers to source credibility, emotional response, cognitive response, attitudes and behavioral intention.

The study found three main findings. First, the gender of the communicator has a significant effect on source credibility, such that the female communicator was perceived to be more credible than the male communicator. Second, the recipient's gender has a significant effect on only one aspect of emotional response – fear – but not other aspects like anger and guilt. Female recipients expressed higher degrees of fear than male recipients. Third, the recipients' gender also has a significant impact on only one aspect of attitudes – attitude $_{issue}$ – but not on attitude $_{voice-over}$ or attitude $_{PSA}$. Female recipients expressed higher attitudes toward the issue of relationship violence than male communicators.

The findings of this study have many theoretical implications. One of these implications is the contribution to the literatures of source credibility, since the finding

challenges the previously established beliefs in favor of male communicators. Second, the findings also contribute to the literature of bystander behavior, since the study stimulus was a PSA targeting potential relationship violence bystanders. Third, the findings also contribute to the literature of emotional appeals, both by confirming the effect of the recipient's gender on fear, and by refuting gender effects on anger and guilt.

The main practical implications suggest that it is important for future PSA designers to consider the gender salience of their message while choosing the PSA voice-over. The implications also suggest that PSA designers need to know the characteristics of their audience and design the PSA's accordingly. There are two reasons behind this implication. First, the gender of the PSA recipients affects their attitudes toward the issue of the PSA, and therefore may affect their subsequent behavior. Second, the gender of the recipients also affects some emotional responses like fear. This in turn may have an impact on the response to the PSA's.

Table 1

Crosstabulation of Communicator and Recipients' Genders

			Sex		
---	---	---	Male	Female	Total
Communicator	Male	Count	46	85	131
		% of Total	20.7%	38.3%	59.0%
	Female	Count	28	63	91
		% of Total	12.6%	28.4%	41.0%
Total		Count	74	148	222
		% of Total	33.3%	66.7%	100.0%

Table 2

EFA of Scale Dependent Variables

	Source credibility	Fear	Anger	Guilt	Communality
Not expert / expert	.78				.62
Not experienced / experienced	.84				.72
Not trustworthy/ trustworthy	.85				.72
Bad / good	.79				.62
Afraid: Not at all / very much		.97			.95
Fearful: Not at all / very much		.98			.96
Scared: Not at all / very much		.97			.95
Angry: Not at all / very much			.82		.67
Annoyed: Not at all / very much			.85		.72
Irritated: Not at all / very much			.92		.85
Aggravated: Not at all / very much			.89		.79
Guilty: Not at all / very much				.95	.90
Ashamed: Not at all / very much				.95	.90
Eigenvalues	2.69	2.87	3.04	1.80	
% of variance explained	67.40	95.78	76.10	90.17	
α for scale	.83	.98	.89	.89	

(Table 2 continues)

(Table 2 continued)

	Attitude issue	Attitude voice-over	Attitude PSA	Communality
Trivial / serious	.92			.86
Unimportant / important	.92			.84
Not worth much concern / worth a lot of concern	.92			.86
Irrelevant / relevant	.91			.83
Not competent / competent		.75		.57
Not honest / honest		.79		.63
Not assertive / assertive		.66		.43
Not informed / informed		.80		.64
Evasive / Straightforward		.73		.53
Not qualified / qualified		.75		.57
Not sincere / sincere		.72		.52
Meek / Forceful		.59		.35
Not persuasive / persuasive			.91	.83
Not effective / effective			.93	.86
Not convincing / convincing			.89	.80
Not compelling / compelling			.91	.83
Eigenvalues	3.40	4.28	3.34	
% of variance explained	85.20	53.61	83.58	
α for scale	.93	.87	.93	

(Table 2 continues)

(Table 2 continued)

	Behavioral intention	Communality
Likelihood to provide help to relationship violence victims (not at all likely / very likely)	.58	.33
Likelihood to provide help to relationship violence perpetrators (not at all likely / very likely)	.64	.41
Likelihood to seek information about relationship violence in general (not at all likely / very likely)	.85	.78
Likelihood to seek information on how to help reduce relationship violence (not at all likely / very likely)	.87	.76
Likelihood to share video with friends and family (not at all likely / very likely)	.77	.60
Likelihood to call the number shown in the video (not at all likely / very likely)	.75	.57
Eigenvalue	3.47	
% of variance explained	57.88	
α for scale	.84	

Table 3

Table 3

List of Covariates and Affected Dependent Variables

Covariate	Corresponding dependent variable
Perceived likeability of PSA characters (Identification 1)	Fear (emotional response 1)
	Anger (emotional response 2)
	Attitude issue
	Attitude PSA
Perceived similarity with PSA characters (Identification 2)	Fear (emotional response 1)
Empathy with the victim	Source credibility
	Fear (emotional response 1)
	Anger (emotional response 2)
	Guilt (emotional response 3)
	Attitude issue
	Attitude voice-over
	Attitude PSA
	Behavioral intention
Gender identity	Fear
Familiarity with the issue of relationship violence	Attitude issue
	Anger (emotional response 2)
	Behavioral intention

Table 4

One -Way Analysis of Variance for Effects of Likeability on Fear, Anger and Attitude issue

Variable and source	df	SS	MS	F
Fear				
Between Groups	2	20.10	10.05	3.61*
Within Groups	219	609.25	2.78	
Anger				
Between Groups	2	13.52	6.76	3.64*
Within Groups	219	405.99	1.85	
Attitude issue				
Between Groups	2	21.27	10.63	1.04***
Within Groups	219	187.95	.85	

* p < .05.   ** p< .01.   *** p< .001

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Table 5

One-Way Analysis of Variance for Effects of Perceived Similarity on Fear

Variable and source	Df	SS	MS	F
Fear				
Between Groups	2	27.64	13.82	5.03**
Within Groups	219	601.71	2.74	

**p<.01.

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Table 6

One-Way Analysis of Variance for Effects of Prior Involvement in Relationship

Violence on Guilt and Behavioral Intention

Variable and source	df	SS	MS	F
Guilt				
Between Groups	1	21.12	21.12	8.21**
Within Groups	220	565.74	2.57	
Behavioral intention				
Between Groups	1	8.64	8.64	.025*
Within Groups	220	374.43	1.70	

*p < .05. **p < .01.

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Table 7

Correlations of Major Variables (pooled sample)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1	1.00											
2	.24**	1.00										
3	.14*	.46**	1.00									
4	.04	.43**	.28**	1.00								
5	.31**	.41**	.27**	.12	1.00							
6	.19**	.18**	.21**	.01	.25**	1.00						
7	.71**	.12	.12	.00	.15*	.66**	1.00					
8	.40**	.39**	.22**	.14*	.28**	.17**	.43**	1.00				
9	.31**	.41**	.27**	.12	.36**	.18**	.25**	.37**	1.00			
10	.34**	.76**	.43**	.37**	.43**	.15*	.27**	.54**	.65**	1.00		
11	-.04	-.18**	-.05	-.03	-.00	.02	.01	-.06	-.00	-.02	1.00	
12	.05	.11	.16*	.04	.05	.27**	.04	.08	.20**	.18**	-.03	1.00

Note.

Variable names: 1. source credibility, 2. fear, 3. anger, 4. guilt, 5. cognitive response, 6. attitude issue, 7. attitude voice-over, 8. attitude PSA, 9. behavioral intention, 10. empathy, 11. gender identity, 12. familiarity with the issue of relationship violence.

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Table 8

Correlations of Major Variables (Male Participants)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1	1.00											
2	.33**	1.00										
3	.23*	.47**	1.00									
4	.18	.50**	.12	1.00								
5	.36**	.54**	.39**	.10	1.00							
6	.35**	.22	.35**	-.02	.37**	1.00						
7	.78**	.12	.14	-.04	.29*	.43**	1.00					
8	.28*	.30**	.28**	.04	.28*	.26*	.30**	1.00				
9	.37**	.62**	.29*	.41**	.43**	.26*	.30**	.46**	1.00			
10	.29*	.68**	.36**	.35**	.47**	.30**	.21	.53**	.77**	1.00		
11	-.04	-.09	.16	-.17	-.09	-.03	.07	-.09	-.11	-.08	1.00	
12	-.31**	.26*	.32**	-.30**	.20	-.43**	.16	.28*	.34**	.44**	-.17	1.00

Note.
Variable names: 1. source credibility, 2. fear, 3. anger, 4. guilt, 5. cognitive response, 6. attitude issue, 7. attitude voice-over, 8. attitude PSA, 9. behavioral intention, 10. empathy, 11. gender identity, 12. familiarity with the issue of relationship violence.

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Table 9

Correlations of Major Variables (Female participants)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1	1.00											
2	.20**	1.00										
3	.10	.47**	1.00									
4	-.01	.39**	.35	1.00								
5	.29**	.33**	.22	.12	1.00							
6	.09	.04	.14	-.01	.13	1.00						
7	.68**	.11	.11	.00	.07	.12	1.00					
8	.46**	.42**	.19*	.18*	.28**	.10	.48**	1.00				
9	.28**	.36**	.38**	.25**	.32**	.14	.22**	.32**	1.00			
10	.36**	.68**	.46**	.38**	.42**	.06	.31**	.55**	.58**	1.00		
11	-.04	-.20*	-.02	.02	.03	.13	.01	-.04	-.03	.00	1.00	
12	-.07	.02	.08	-.08	-.03	.13	-.01	-.02	.13	.04	.02	1.00

Note.

Variable names: 1. source credibility, 2. fear, 3. anger, 4. guilt, 5. cognitive response, 6. attitude issue, 7. attitude voice-over, 8. attitude PSA, 9. behavioral intention, 10. empathy, 11. gender identity, 12. familiarity with the issue of relationship violence.

Table 10

Means and Standard Deviations of Dependent Variables by Gender

Variable	Communicator	Recipient	Range		M	SD
			Minimum	Maximum		
Source credibility	Male	Male	-3.00	2.50	-.08	1.11
		Female	-3.00	2.75	.05	1.15
	Female	Male	-1.25	3.00	.57	.89
		Female	-3.00	3.00	.40	.99
Fear (emotional response 1)	Male	Male	-3.00	3.00	-.89	1.57
		Female	-3.00	3.00	-.10	1.80
	Female	Male	-3.00	3.00	-.51	1.65
		Female	-3.00	3.00	-.21	1.55
Anger (emotional response 2)	Male	Male	-3.00	3.00	.64	1.26
		Female	-3.00	3.00	.67	1.44
	Female	Male	-3.00	3.00	.57	1.43
		Female	-3.00	3.00	.51	1.36
Guilt (emotional response 3)	Male	Male	-3.00	2.00	-1.58	1.41
		Female	-3.00	3.00	-1.14	1.78
	Female	Male	-3.00	3.00	-1.23	1.55
		Female	-3.00	3.00	-1.16	1.60

(Table 10 continued)

| Variable | Communicator | Recipient | Range | | M | SD |
			Minimum	Maximum		
Cognitive response	Male	Male	.00	9.00	3.17	3.39
		Female	.00	9.00	3.47	3.14
	Female	Male	.00	10.00	3.32	3.18
		Female	.00	9.00	4.39	3.05
Attitude issue	Male	Male	-1.75	3.00	1.83	1.26
		Female	-.25	3.00	2.52	.73
	Female	Male	-.50	3.00	1.91	1.12
		Female	-.75	3.00	2.62	.72
Attitude voice-over	Male	Male	-2.00	2.62	.60	.87
		Female	-1.25	2.88	.91	.93
	Female	Male	-.50	2.62	.81	.88
		Female	-3.00	3.00	.80	.98

Table 10 continues

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(Table 10 continued)

Variable	Communicator	Recipient	Range Minimum	Range Maximum	M	SD
Attitude PSA	Male	Male	-3.00	2.75	.06	1.54
		Female	-3.00	3.00	.36	1.62
	Female	Male	-3.00	2.25	.33	1.31
		Female	-3.00	3.00	.33	1.40
Behavioral intention	Male	Male	-3.00	2.00	-.74	1.34
		Female	-3.00	3.00	-.73	1.24
	Female	Male	-3.00	3.00	-.64	1.55
		Female	-3.00	2.50	-.67	1.30

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Table 11

Analysis of Variance for Dependent Variables

Variable and Source	df	SS	MS	F
Source credibility				
Communicator's gender (A)	1	11.77	11.77	10.19**
Recipient's gender (B)	1	.015	.015	.01
A x B	1	1.09	1.09	.94
Fear				
Communicator's gender (A)	1	.95	.95	.34
Recipient's gender (B)	1	13.93	13.93	4.99*
A x B	1	2.80	2.80	1.00
Anger				
Communicator's gender (A)	1	.61	.61	.32
Recipient's gender (B)	1	.01	.01	.00
A x B	1	.09	.09	.04
Guilt				
Communicator's gender (A)	1	1.27	1.27	.479
Recipient's gender (B)	1	3.07	3.07	1.15
A x B	1	1.70	1.70	.63

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

(Table 11 continues)

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(Table 11 continued)

Variable and Source	df	SS	MS	F
Cognitive response				
Communicator's gender (A)	1	22.12	13.55	2.19
Recipient's gender (B)	1	13.55	22.12	1.34
A x B	1	7.12	7.12	.70
Attitude issue				
Communicator's gender (A)	1	.37	.37	.44
Recipient's gender (B)	1	22.80	22.80	26.91***
A x B	1	.00	.00	.00
Attitude voice-over				
Communicator's gender (A)	1	.10	.103	.11
Recipient's gender (B)	1	1.08	1.08	1.25
A x B	1	1.15	1.15	1.33
Attitude PSA				
Communicator's gender (A)	1	.70	.70	.31
Recipient's gender (B)	1	.99	.99	.43
A x B	1	1.07	1.07	.47
Behavioral intention				
Communicator's gender (A)	1	.31	.319	.67
Recipient's gender (B)	1	.00	.003	.96
A x B	1	.01	.011	.93

*** p>.001.

Table 12

Analysis of Covariance for Dependent Variables

	Df	SS	MS	F
Source credibility				
Empathy	1	31.89	31.89	31.49***
Communicator's gender (A)	1	12.54	12.54	12.39**
Recipient's gender (B)	1	.00	.00	.00
A x B	1	.72	.72	.71
Error	217	219.79	1.01	
Total	222	271.50		
Fear				
Empathy	1	272.14	272.14	191.96***
Likeability of PSA characters	1	7.32	7.32	5.16*
Perceived similarity	1	.07	.07	.05
Gender identity	1	10.46	10.46	7.38**
Communicator's gender (A)	1	2.14	2.14	1.51
Recipient's gender (B)	1	10.14	10.14	7.15**
A x B	1	.38	.38	.27
Error	214	303.38	1.41	
Total	222	657.00		

* p < .05. ** p< .01. *** p< .001.

(Table 12 continues)

(Table 12 continued)

	df	SS	MS	F
Anger				
Empathy	1	69.67	69.67	45.63***
Likeability of PSA characters	1	7.67	7.67	5.02*
Familiarity with the issue	1	3.11	3.11	2.04
Communicator's gender (A)	1	.23	.23	.15
Recipient's gender (B)	1	.20	.20	.13
A x B	1	.02	.02	.01
Error	215	328.21	1.52	
Total	222	501.31		
Guilt				
Empathy	1	74.65	74.65	33.29***
Prior involvement	1	14.30	14.30	6.38*
Communicator's gender (A)	1	1.10	1.10	.49
Recipient's gender (B)	1	2.39	2.39	1.07
A x B	1	2.08	2.08	.92
Error	216	484.36	2.24	
Total	222	935.00		

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .001$.

(Table 12 continues)

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(Table 12 continued)

	df	SS	MS	F
Cognitive response				
Empathy	1	442.42	442.42	54.59***
Communicator's gender (A)	1	16.79	16.79	2.07
Recipient's gender (B)	1	24.94	24.94	3.07
A x B	1	11.49	11.49	1.41
Error	217	1758.54	8.10	
Total	222	5215.00		
Attitude issue				
Empathy	1	3.29	3.29	4.28*
Likeability of PSA characters	1	3.22	3.22	4.20*
Familiarity with the issue	1	10.79	10.79	14.06***
Communicator's gender (A)	1	.30	.30	.39
Recipient's gender (B)	1	22.60	22.60	29.44***
A x B	1	.17	.17	.22
Error	215	165.07	.76	
Total	222	1419.06		

$p < .05.$ $p < .001.$

(Table 12 continues)

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(Table 12 continued)

	df	SS	MS	F
Attitude voice-over				
Empathy	1	14.82	14.82	18.41***
Communicator's gender (A)	1	.158	.15	.197
Recipient's gender (B)	1	1.20	1.20	1.49
A x B	1	.89	.89	1.10
Error	217	174.63	.80	
Total	222			
Attitude PSA				
Empathy	1	147.62	147.62	95.64***
Likeability of PSA characters	1	12.69	12.69	8.22**
Communicator's gender (A)	1	1.58	1.58	1.02
Recipient's gender (B)	1	.49	.49	.32
A x B	1	.39	.39	.25
Error	216	333.38	1.54	
Total	222	518.81		

**p< .01. ***p< .001.

(Table 12 continues)

(Table 12 continued)

Behavioral intention	df	SS	MS	F
Empathy	1	148.11	148.11	148.39***
Prior involvement	1	1.59	1.59	1.60
Familiarity with the issue	1	2.01	2.01	2.01
Communicator's gender (A)	1	.51	.51	.51
Recipient's gender (B)	1	.00	.00	.00
A x B	1	.08	.08	.08
Error	215	214.58	.99	
Total	222	495.05		

*** $\underline{p} < .001$.

Wording of the Survey Questions by Variables Used

Demographics:

I. THE FIRST SET OF QUESTIONS ASK ABOUT YOURSELF

1. What is your sex?   (Please choose from the drop box)
  1) Male
  2) Female

2. Which year are you in university?   (Please choose from the drop box)
  1) Sophomore
  2) Freshman
  3) Junior
  4) Senior

3. What was your age on your last birthday? _____ years old (e.g., __23__
years old)

**4. Which one of these racial groups BEST describes you? (CHOOSE ONLY ONE
     ANSWER) (Please choose from the drop box)**
  1) African American
  2) Hispanic or Latino
  3) Asian
  4) White/Caucasiasn
  5) Multi-racial
  6) Other (e.g., American Indian, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific
     Islander):

Gender identity

5. As a female/ male, you usually are...

		-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	
1)	Unemotional	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	Emotional
2)	Timid	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	Bold
3)	Masculine	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	Feminine
4)	Soft	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	Hard
5)	Powerless	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	Powerful
6)	Quiet	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	Loud
7)	Nonaggressive	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	Aggressive
8)	Insensitive	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	Sensitive

Prior involvement in relationship violence

8. Do you know any person (man or woman, including yourself) who has been involved in a violent intimate relationship?

    0) No

    1) Yes

9. Have you ever interfered to stop a relationship violence situation?

    0. No

    1. Yes

Familiarity with the issue of relationship violence:

12. What do you think you are with the issue of relationship violence?

1) Not at all familiar	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	Very familiar
2) Not at all Knowledgeable	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	Very Knowledgeable

Source credibility

15. Please evaluate the narrator you have just listened to, based on the following scale:

1) The narrator is NOT an expert	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	The narrator is an expert
2) The narrator is NOT experienced	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	The narrator is experienced
3) The narrator is NOT trustworthy	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	The narrator is trustworthy
4) The narrator is bad	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	The narrator is good

Attitude _{voice-over}

Attitude _{voice-over}

16. Please evaluate the narrator (voice-over) you have just listened to, based on the following scale:

1)	The narrator is NOT competent	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	The narrator is competent
2)	The narrator is NOT honest	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	The narrator is honest
3)	The narrator is NOT assertive	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	The narrator is assertive
4)	The narrator is NOT informed	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	The narrator is informed
5)	The narrator is evasive	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	The narrator is straightforward
6)	The narrator is NOT qualified	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	The narrator is qualified
7)	The narrator is NOT sincere	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	The narrator is sincere
8)	The narrator is meek	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	The narrator is forceful

Identification with PSA characters

17. Which of the two main characters did you like most?

      1) Man   2) Woman   0) none of the two

18. Which of the two main characters do you feel is most like you?

      1) Man   2) Woman   0) none of the two

Attitude _{PSA}

19. What do you think about the video? Please select the number that represents your answer:

1)	The video was NOT persuasive	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	The video was persuasive
2)	The video was NOT effective	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	The video was effective
3)	The video was NOT convincing	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	The video was convincing
4)	The video was NOT compelling	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	The video was compelling
5)	The video was NOT reasonable	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	The video was reasonable
6)	The video was NOT logical	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	The video was logical
7)	The video was NOT rational	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	The video was rational
8)	The video was NOT true to life	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	The video was true to life

Attitude issue:

21. What do you think about the issue of relationship violence?

		-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	
1)	Trivial	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	Serious
2)	Unimportant	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	Important
3)	Not worth much concern	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	Worth a lot of concern
4)	Irrelevant	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	Relevant

Emotional response:

22. What word would describe your emotional reaction to the video?

			-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	
1)	Afraid	Not at all	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	Very much
2)	Fearful	Not at all	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	Very much
3)	Scared	Not at all	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	Very much
4)	Angry	Not at all	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	Very much
5)	Annoyed	Not at all	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	Very much
6)	Irritated	Not at all	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	Very much
7)	Aggravated	Not at all	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	Very much
8)	Guilty	Not at all	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	Very much
9)	Ashamed	Not at all	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	Very much

Cognitive response
23. Please write up to 10 thoughts that crossed your mind while watching the PSA. Then for each thought, choose which statement describes it most

Empathy with the victim of relationship violence
24. To what degree do you agree with each of the following statements? Please indicate your degree of agreement, 1 being "do not agree at all", and 7 being "strongly agree"

1) I felt as though I was right there in the PSA experiencing what the woman was experiencing

Not at all   -3   -2   -1   0   1   2   3   Very much

2) As I watched the video, I could actually feel the fear the woman was experiencing

Not at all   -3   -2   -1   0   1   2   3   Very much

3) At the end, I felt the pain as if I was struck

Not at all   -3   -2   -1   0   1   2   3   Very much

4) The video ended to evoke within me a desire to offer help to the woman

Not at all   -3   -2   -1   0   1   2   3   Very much

Behavioral intention

25. After viewing this video and listening to the narrator's recommendation, how likely are you ...?

1) to provide help to relationship violence victims ?

Not at all likely   -3   -2   -1   0   1   2   3   Very likely

2) to provide help to relationship violence perpetrators?

Not at all likely   -3   -2   -1   0   1   2   3   Very likely

3) to seek information about relationship violence in general

Not at all likely   -3   -2   -1   0   1   2   3   Very likely

4) To seek information on how to help reduce relationship violence

Not at all likely   -3   -2   -1   0   1   2   3   Very likely

5) to share the video with your friends and family?

Not at all likely   -3   -2   -1   0   1   2   3   Very likely

6) to call the number shown in the video?

Not at all likely   -3   -2   -1   0   1   2   3   Very likely

Storyboard of the 30-second PSA

Video		Audio
Video		**Audio**

Perpetrator shakes the victim violently as she tries to break free from him, and begs him not to hurt her.		**Perpetrator**: I told you a hundred times how crazy this makes me! **Victim:** Let go, please! You're hurting me! **Perpetrator:** I'll show you what hurt feels like for what you've done!
On-screen graphic: "Relationship violence"	Relationship violence	
On-screen graphic: "Should never remain"	should never remain	

Perpetrator suddenly slaps the victim.

Sound of the slap.

On-screen graphic: "A secret"

a secret

Victim sitting on the floor, crying and trying to protect herself, as the perpetrator stands with a tight threatening fist.

Victim: (crying) please don't …

Voice-over: Once you know about it, it's no longer just their business

Perpetrator: (scolding the victim) I said stop crying!

On-screen graphic: "You can help them now before their time runs out".

You can help them

before their time runs out

Voice-over: They *need* your help.

On-screen graphic: "Call MSU Safe Place: 517-355-1100"

Call MSU Safe Place
517-355-1100

APPRENDIX C

IRB-Approved Consent Form

Title of Study: Message Evaluation Study (MES)

You are invited to participate in a research study on persuasive media message effectiveness. We ask that you read this form carefully. After reading this page, if you agree to take part in this study, please press "I agree". If you do not agree to take part, please press "cancel". Participation in this study is not an obligation and you will not incur any loss or risk if you decide not to participate.

Background Information:

You are being asked to participate in this study on this single occasion for extra credit in your class. This survey is about evaluating persuasive media messages and aims to examine whether these messages affect your beliefs and behaviors. You will be asked to watch a Public Service Announcement (PSA) about intimate relationship violence, and then answer a survey which will take 20 to 30 minutes to complete. You are not expected to participate in any treatments that would incur the risk of physical or mental injury during your participation in this study. Please note that you need to be 18 years or older to be eligible to participate in this study. If you do not wish to participate or if you are younger than 18, please press "cancel" below then talk with your instructor in class. Your instructor will give you an alternative task you can complete.

Benefits and Risk:

You are not expected to participate in any treatment that would incur the risk of physical or mental injury during your participation in this study.

The immediate benefit which participants are expected to yield by taking part in the study is extra-credit in the course during which this research has been presented. Also, the information you provide will be used for designing more effective media messages and advancing social scientific knowledge.

Confidentiality:

Your answers to this survey will be kept private. Your privacy will be protected to the maximum extent as allowable by law. No one will know what your answers were. You can feel free to answer each question based on your actual knowledge and behavior. The questions that ask about your background will be used only to

describe the types of students completing this survey. The information will not be used to find out your name. In the end of this survey, you will be asked to provide your last name in order to allow the instructor to award you the extra-credit. However, NO names will ever be reported as part of the results of this study.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Completing this survey is voluntary. You may choose not to participate, and you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Moreover, you can withdraw or refuse to answer any particular question without penalty.

Contacts and Questions:

You have the right to contact the investigators if you have any objections to or concerns with any aspect of this study. The contact information is as follows: Dr. Hye-Jin Paek (517-432-8377/ paekh@msu.edu), Kaoutar Tbatou (517-599-2452 / tbatouka@msu.edu).

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a study participant, or if you are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact—anonymously, if you wish—the Michigan State University Human Subject Protection Programs at Michigan State University, by phone: (517) 355-2180, fax: (517) 432-4503, email: irb@msu.edu, or regular mail: 202 Olds Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824.

Pressing "I agree" below and typing the date indicates your voluntary agreement to participate in this study.

(I agree)   **(Date)**

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