



“That Guy is Really Rapey”: A Novel Risk Perception and Response Task to Test Revictimization Risk

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References

INTRODUCTION

- Decades of research have sought to interrupt the well-established association between child abuse and later revictimization by examining how women perceive and respond to risk using written, audio, or video vignettes that ask, for example, when a man has gone too far in a dating scenario. These methods have led to mixed results and not yet translated to effective, long-term interventions (Messman-Moore & McConnell, 2018; Vladutiu et al., 2011)
- As such, researchers have called for more sophisticated measurement methods and which can be better applied to real-life situations. However, in-vivo exposure to potential RV risk factors is ethically difficult to observe.
- This study focused on developing an interactive chat room task given the potential to present participants with real-time scenarios that are higher in external validity.

METHODS

Participants

- Undergraduate women ($N = 17$), age 18-28 ($M = 20.21$, $SD = 2.23$), 79% White; who endorsed at least one incidence of emotional abuse ($N = 14$), physical abuse ($N = 10$), sexual abuse ($N = 6$), neglect ($N = 5$) or witnessing DV ($N = 3$).

Measures

- *Reactions to Research Participation Questionnaire* (RRPQ, Newman et al., 2001): a 23-item self-report measure assessing participation in research. Personal Benefits, Global Evaluation, and Participation measure benefits to research participation and Emotional Reactions, & Perceived Drawbacks measure costs to research participation.

Online Social Skills Task

- An interactive online chat room task was created, adapted from Dillon and Bushman (2015):
 - Two students are chatting as if in real time and tasked to solve a math problem, which rapidly devolves into the male student becoming increasingly sexually aggressive towards the female student.
 - The participant observes the conversation and has the option to “flag” (red, orange or green) statements sent in the chat and to provide comments for each flag. Once selected, a flag can be changed for 10 seconds, after which it is fixed. Every feedback is timestamped.
 - Participants first practice with an “ice-breaker” to familiarize themselves with the environment.

green flag is a sign that something good is happening e.g. “great job getting the ball rolling!”

yellow flag is a sign you want to say something but you’re not sure yet which category it falls into or it may not fall in either e.g. “Try to move on”

red flag is a sign that something not good is happening e.g. “Disrespectful!”

Procedure

- Part of a larger study examining risk for revictimization in college aged women. Participants received class credit for participating in a study advertised as a “building social skills on online platforms”.
- Women who endorsed experiencing interpersonal violence were invited to complete an additional task for more credit.
- Participants believed they had been randomly assigned to being the “social skills coach” and two other students were completing the study at the same time.
- Participants are told that the other students will see their flags in real time, whereas comments would be submitted to them at the end.
- Participants believed they would meet the other two students at the end for debriefing

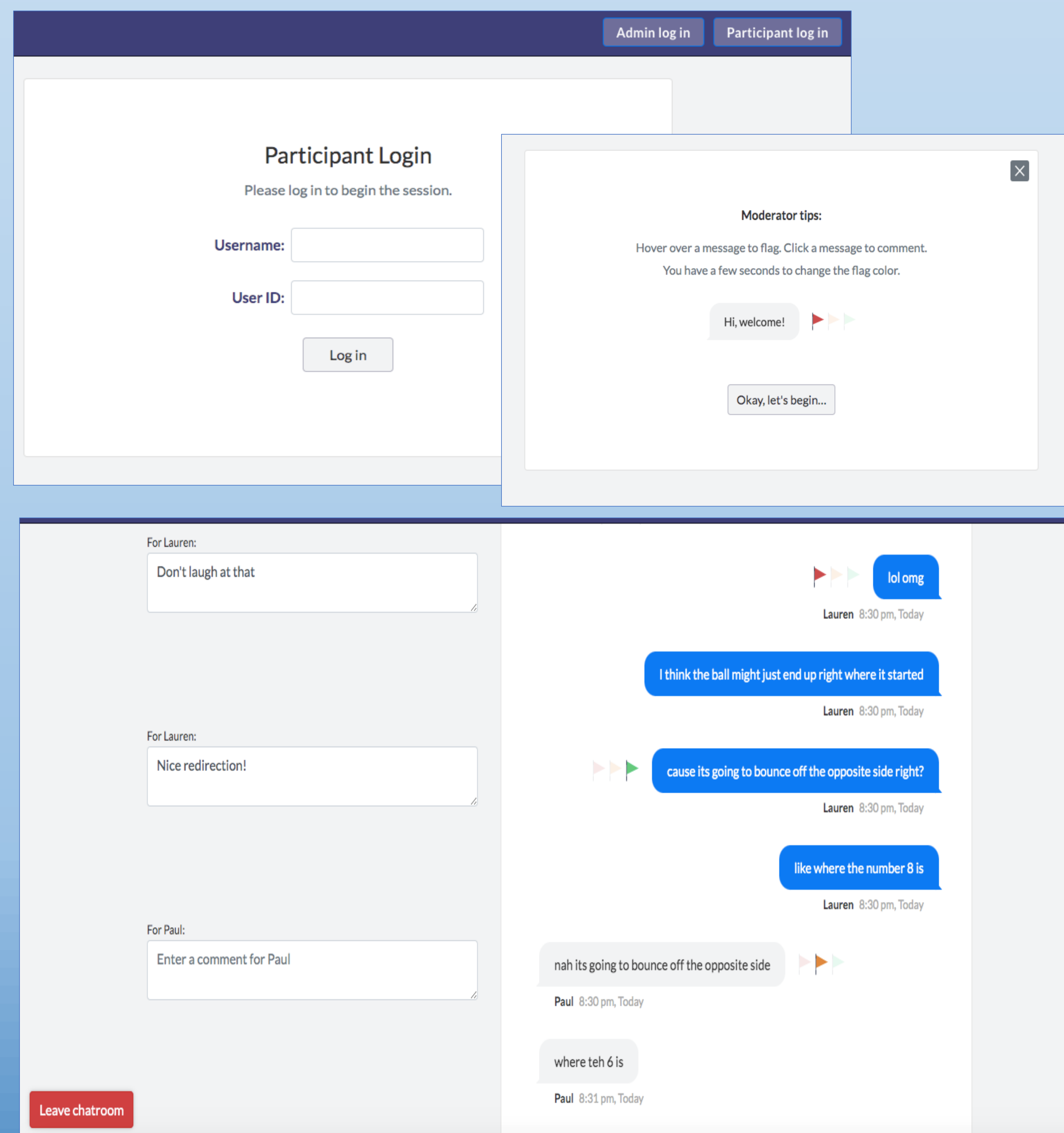


Figure 1. Screenshots from the interactive chat room task

RESULTS

Task

- All participants reported believing the task was real, approximately half ($N = 9$) expressing doubt as “Paul” increasingly escalated.
- All “red-flagged” Paul more frequently than they did Lauren and all labeled Paul’s behavior as inappropriate. Qualitatively, preliminary observations show that participants varied in how severely they perceived Paul (e.g. ranging from “stop flirting” to “you’re being rapey”).
- Participants varied in how they perceived Lauren. Preliminary observations show that she was “flagged” in one of three ways:
 - Victim blaming, e.g. “You were going along with this a couple of minutes ago”
 - Assertiveness needs, e.g. “Do not apologize, stand up for yourself!”
 - Emotional validation, e.g. “I am so sorry you had to go through that”

RRPQ

- Benefit-to-cost ratios were calculated to analyze the benefits of participating in the research relative to the costs (DePrince & Chu, 2008). Paired sample t-tests were conducted, comparing the positive scale scores to the negative scale scores.

| RRPQ SCALE | Mean | t |
|--|-------|---------|
| Global Evaluation - Emotional Reaction | 2.29 | 9.44*** |
| Participation - Emotional Reaction | 1.95 | 7.68*** |
| Personal Benefit- Emotional Reaction | 1.07 | 3.11** |
| Global Evaluation - Drawbacks | 0.84 | 4.64*** |
| Participation - Drawbacks | 0.50 | 3.93** |
| Personal Benefit - Drawbacks | -0.38 | -1.68 |

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

DISCUSSION

This novel task offers a way to assess for risk recognition that addresses some of the barriers to external validity in sexual abuse and revictimization research. Preliminary observations demonstrated that participants believed the scenario to be real, that participants varied in their recognition and response to risk and the RRPQ showed the benefit to cost ratio of participating was positive and thus that the benefits of participating in the research significantly outweighed the costs. Future studies should consider using this task with larger and more diverse samples.