

Social Influence and Moral Judgements in a Social Media Context



*This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the Honours degree of Bachelor
of Psychological Science (Honours)*

School of Psychology

Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences

University of Adelaide

September 2023

Word Count: 6968

Table of Contents

List of Figures.....	4
List of Tables	5
Abstract.....	6
Declaration.....	7
Contributor Roles	8
Social Influence and Moral Judgements in the Social Media Context	11
Rape Myths and Stereotypes	11
Social Conformity and Blame Attribution	13
Social Media and Informational Conformity	15
Current Study	17
Hypotheses	17
Method	19
Participants	19
Design.....	19
Materials.....	20
Victim Blame.....	20
Conformity Scale.....	21
The Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale – Subtle Form.....	21
Procedure.....	21
Analyses	22
Results	23
Attention and Manipulation Checks.....	23
Outliers	24
Hypothesis 1: Scenario Ambiguity, Comment Format, and Victim Blame.....	25
Hypothesis 2: Social Conformity and Victim Blame.....	26
Hypothesis 3: Social Conformity and Rape Myth Acceptance.....	28
Discussion.....	28
Scenario Ambiguity, Comment Format, and Victim Blame	28

Social Conformity and Victim Blame31

Social Conformity and Rape Myth Acceptance33

Limitations and Future Research.....34

References37

Appendix A47

List of Figures

Figure 1. *Estimated Marginal Means of Blame Scores: Comment Format and Ambiguity*

.....26

List of Tables

Table 1. *Means and Standard Deviations for Blame Scores Across Ambiguity Conditions and Comments Formats*

.....25

Table 2. *Correlations Between Victim Blame Assignment Scores and Social Conformity Scores for Blaming Conditions*

.....27

Abstract

Social conformity and rape stereotypes have been studied independently of one another in relation to victim blame in rape trials, but the interaction between the two has remained unexplored. Furthermore, there is limited literature on the impact of online conforming behaviour on victim blame. The current study investigated whether rape ambiguity and online conformity interacted to impact victim blame, and whether social conformity was associated with blame assignment and rape myth acceptance. Participants ($N = 156$) read two vignettes, formatted as Facebook posts with attached comments that detailed rape cases. The comment format was the between-subjects variable (no comments, victim blaming comments, perpetrator blaming comments), while rape scenario ambiguity was the within-subjects variable (ambiguous, unambiguous). Participants answered questions about victim blame, social conformity, and rape myth acceptance. The findings indicated that victim blame was higher for ambiguous rape scenarios than unambiguous rape scenarios, regardless of comment format. Social conformity scores positively correlated with rape myth acceptance scores. Furthermore, social conformity scores positively correlated with victim blame scores where the case details were more ambiguous and comments supported victim blame. Contrary to predictions, there was no significant correlation between victim blame scores and social conformity scores where the case was ambiguous and comments supported perpetrator blame. The findings suggest conformist individuals may be more inclined to blame victims for ambiguous rape cases when the majority opinion is victim blaming. These findings highlight the importance of acknowledging the potential impact of online conformity on victim blame, where jurors may endorse rape myths.

Keywords: rape myths, social conformity, social media, victim blame

Declaration

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any University, and, to the best of my knowledge, this thesis contains no material previously published except where due reference is made. I give permission for the digital version of this thesis to be made available on the web, via the University of Adelaide's digital thesis repository, the Library Search and through web search engines, unless permission has been granted by the School to restrict access for a period of time.

Contributor Roles

Role	Role Description	Student	Supervisor
Conceptualisation	Ideas; formulation or evolution of overarching research goals and aims.	X	X
Methodology	Development or design of methodology; creation of models.	X	
Project Administration	Management and coordination responsibility for the research activity planning and execution.	X	X
Supervision	Oversight and leadership responsibility for the research activity planning and execution, including mentorship external to the core team.		X
Resources	Provision of study materials, laboratory samples, instrumentation, computing resources, or other analysis tools.		
Software	Programming, software development; designing computer programs' implementation of the computer		

	code and supporting algorithms; testing of existing code.		
Investigation	Conducting research – specifically performing experiments, or data/evidence collection.	X	
Validation	Verification of the overall replication/reproducibility of results/experiments.	X	X
Data Curation	Management activities to annotate (produce metadata), scrub data and maintain research data (including software code, where it is necessary for interpreting the data itself), for initial use and later re-use.		
Formal Analysis	Application of statistical, mathematical, computational, or other formal techniques to analyse or synthesis study data.	X	
Visualisation	Visualisation/data presentation of the results.	X	
Writing- Original Draft	Specifically writing the initial draft.	X	

Writing- Review & Editing	Critical review, commentary of original draft.	X	X
---------------------------	--	---	---

Social Influence and Moral Judgements in the Social Media Context

A large proportion of Australian adults report experiencing sexual violence in adulthood (22% of women, 6.1% of men; Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021), however it is estimated that only 12-20% of sexual violence incidents are reported to authorities (Daly & Bouhours, 2010). Further, Daly and Bouhours (2010) indicated that rape cases that are reported to authorities have a high attrition rate, with around a third of reported rapes proceeding to prosecution, and around 13% resulting in conviction. It is evident that reform is needed in the criminal justice system to reduce attrition rates for rape cases. While attrition can occur at any stage in the criminal justice process (i.e., during police investigation, court proceedings; Daly & Bouhours, 2010), research into the impact of victim-blaming indicated that biases held by jurors have an impact at the court stage (i.e., resulting in defendant acquittal; Klein & Yamamoto, 2020). Victim blame in rape cases is often underpinned by rape myths, which entail false beliefs about what constitutes a legitimate non-consensual sexual encounter (Burt, 1980). When rape case details subvert these rape myths, juries are more likely to acquit the defendant compared to rape cases that adhere to rape myths (Lee et al., 2023).

Rape Myths and Stereotypes

False and prejudicial beliefs about what characteristics of a sexual encounter constitute a legitimate rape (i.e., rape myths) have resulted in the establishment of a 'real' rape stereotype (Burt, 1980). When characteristics of a rape case subvert the 'real' rape stereotype, the legitimacy of the accusation is considered more ambiguous (Ellison & Munro, 2013). Previous research suggests that victim blame is positively associated with a variety of rape myths relating to victim characteristics (i.e., victim attractiveness (Maeder et al., 2015); and victim race (Belknap, 2010)). Similarly, incautious victim behaviour during the assault has been associated with greater victim blame. For example, victims who are perceived to be

more promiscuous (Gramazio et al., 2018; Pugh et al., 2016) tend to be blamed more readily for their victimisation. Similarly, the degree to which victims are intoxicated, or resist their perpetrator, can play a role in victim blame, given the inconsistency with what is seen as a 'real' rape (De la Torre Laso & Rodríguez-Díaz, 2022; Hansen et al. 2019; Lee et al., 2023). Acquaintance rape has been shown to positively correlate with victim blame, and contrasts with lower correlations found for stranger rape (Belknap, 2010; Ellison & Munro, 2013; Gravelin, 2016; Hine & Murphy, 2017). Further, victim behaviour post-assault has been shown to impact victim blame, especially in instances where the victim did not initially protest (Quilter et al., 2023), and where there were delays in reporting the assault to authorities (Fraser et al., 2022; Hine & Murphy, 2017; Quilter et al., 2023; Smith & Skinner, 2017). Similarly, post-assault contact with the perpetrator (Breen & Boyce, 2021; Idisis & Edoute, 2017) and revictimization (Sommer et al., 2016) have been shown to influence victim blame estimates. The resulting 'real' rape stereotype typically consists of a violent assault, perpetrated by a stranger, where the victim resists vehemently, and reports the crime promptly. Perhaps not surprisingly, research has indicated that jurors attribute higher victim blame when the rape case details are inconsistent with this 'real' rape stereotype (Lee et al., 2023).

Rape myths are often referred to in court proceedings, and may be used to discredit the victim (Temkin et al., 2016). Smith and Skinner (2017) noted that attorneys draw jurors' attention to information in the victim's narrative that contradicts the 'real' rape stereotype. Although Smith and Skinner (2017) noted that both the prosecution and defence acknowledge the existence of rape myths, seemingly indicating they are to be avoided, they also noted that attorneys regularly revisit these myths as part of their case presentation. In light of these findings, it appears likely that rape cases that subvert the 'real' rape stereotype (i.e., through presentation of ambiguous case details) will include higher levels of victim blame, especially

when compared with rape cases that adhere to the 'real' rape stereotype (i.e., unambiguous case details).

Social Conformity and Blame Attribution

Jurors' individual (victim and perpetrator) blame assignment tends to fluctuate across the duration of the court proceedings (Thomas, 2020), with most jurors reporting a change in verdict decision preference at least once throughout the trial (Waters & Hans, 2009). Waters and Hans (2009) found that approximately 20% of jurors reported only forming a verdict decision preference during jury deliberation. One explanation for changes in verdict decision preference at the jury deliberation stage is social conformity. Social conformity entails changing one's attitudes and behaviours towards an issue to correspond with the group majority (Levine, 2007).

Nadler and McDonnell (2012) described two forms of blame in the criminal justice system: legal blame, which entails the objective blameworthiness of the defendant based on their intention to harm and the resulting harm caused (i.e., intellective components), and psychological blame, which entails the intuitive judgement of blameworthiness based on the defendant's moral character (i.e., judgemental components). Psychological blame often extends to the victim, with juries unconsciously distributing blameworthiness between the defendant and victim (Alicke, 1992). Psychological processes of blame interact with the legal processes of blame (Nadler & McDonnell, 2012), such that blame accounts for intellective components (i.e., objective facts of the case) that may be underpinned by a judgemental component (i.e., jurors rely on subjective judgements of morality to inform their perception of objective liability; Kaplan & Miller, 1987). Kaplan and Miller (1987) indicated that opinions on intellective issues are susceptible to informational conformity (i.e., the need to be correct); while research has indicated that individuals would assign higher victim blame to align with victim blaming group opinions, such as anti-complainant pretrial publicity (Belyea

& Blais, 2023) and lack of social support for the victim (Anderson & Lyons, 2005), the role of informational conformity in victim blame for rape cases has not been directly investigated. It seems plausible to suggest that, when presented with a group opinion that blames either the perpetrator or victim, social conformity will correlate with victim blame.

Furthermore, the association between social conformity and victim blame might be influenced by situational ambiguity, which has been extensively researched in relation to informational conformity (see, e.g., Crutchfield, 1955; Hertz & Wiese, 2016; Levine, 2007; Levitan & Verhulst, 2016; Lewin, 1944). Early research by Lewin (1944) and Crutchfield (1955) found that conformity increased in ambiguous situations, with individuals conforming if the correct response was unclear. Similarly, Levine (2007) indicated that individuals conformed where they believed other group members were more accurate. This effect has been identified as being particularly strong as ambiguity increases. For example, Hertz and Wiese (2016) indicated that more ambiguous tasks resulted in participants being progressively less certain of the accuracy of their opinion.

The association between ambiguity and informational conformity has also been established in the context of rape cases. For example, Brown and Testa (2007) found that rape cases with ambiguous case details were perceived as less believable, which resulted in participants turning to other participants for an indication of how to respond. Furthermore, Ellison and Munro (2013) found that, when presented with rape cases that contradicted rape stereotypes, participants described the cases as “less clear-cut” and “a lot harder” than stereotypical rape cases (p. 300). When rape case details are ambiguous, there is a likelihood that jurors’ blame assignment will be impacted by social conformity; it is reasonable to predict that associations between social conformity and victim blame will be stronger when the rape case details are ambiguous.

Additionally, previous research suggests that individuals' acceptance of rape myths and stereotypes may be associated with conformist tendencies, such that highly conformist individuals are more likely to accept rape myths (see Aronowitz et al., 2012; Hornsey et al., 2003). For instance, Aronowitz et al. (2012) found that participants who were well-informed about the distinction between consent and non-consent were less likely to conform with attitudes shared by peers about rape myths, and had lower rape myth acceptance scores. Similarly, Hornsey et al. (2003) found that individuals with strong moral attitudes were less likely to conform privately, and more likely to publicly oppose the majority opinion. Given the observed resistance to attitude change for individuals with low rape myth acceptance (Aronowitz et al., 2012), as well as the connection between conformity and moral attitudes (Hornsey et al., 2003), it seems plausible to suggest that rape myth acceptance will positively correlate with self-reported social conformity scores.

Social Media and Informational Conformity

Historically, conformity in juror decision-making was limited primarily to direct contact with other jurors during the jury deliberation process (see Hoffmeister, 2021). However, the rise of social media presents a new platform for social interaction, with the potential for individuals to conform to others' attitudes and behaviours based solely on online communication. For example, Klein and Yamamoto (2020) examined the connection between behaviour on social media and victim blame for rape cases, and found that online interactions significantly influenced victim blame estimates. Research has begun to indicate that conformity in an online context is possible. For example, Rosander and Eriksson (2012) found that over 50% of participants conformed at least once in an online context. Furthermore, Laporte et al. (2010) indicated that conformity to subjective opinions was high in the online context, while Lisciandra et al. (2013) found that participants demonstrated significant online conformity for moral and social issues. The connection between online

social conformity, opinion-formation, and moral judgements suggests that individuals may be susceptible to changing their opinions on moral issues in light of other social media users' opinions. In the context of blame assignment for rape cases, this might be demonstrated in individuals' adjustments to their blame assignment between the victim and perpetrator, to reflect the majority opinion shared on social media.

A number of criminal trials have been aborted due to social media use by jurors, with instances of jurors researching the defendant and victim on social media (Australasian Legal Information Institute, 2016; Thackray, 2014), and publicly commenting on the trial proceedings on social media (Hills, 2013). There is the potential for researching and discussing the case online to result in conformity to others' opinions. For instance, Wijenayake et al. (2021) investigated the impact of social media comments on perceptions of trustworthiness for news articles, and found that when participants were uncertain of the trustworthiness of the article, comments which challenged the news article's legitimacy were likely to prompt the participant to report the article as fake news. Colliander (2019) also investigated the impact of social media comments on perceived trustworthiness of news articles, and found that when comments criticised the news article, participants were more likely to perceive the news article negatively. Considering these findings, it seems logical to predict that exposure to social media comments, which blame either the perpetrator or the victim, could impact attributions of victim blame. Social media posts with victim blaming comments are likely to result in greater victim blame (with perpetrator blaming comments predicted to result in lower victim blame). Furthermore, given that situation ambiguity has previously been observed to increase informational conformity (see Crutchfield, 1955; Lewin, 1944), it seems plausible to predict that the comment format will interact with ambiguity, such that victims would be assigned the most blame when both the case details are ambiguous (i.e., subvert rape myths) and the comments are victim blaming. As such, the

present study aimed to determine whether online conformity plays a role in victim blame, and whether ambiguity (i.e., inconsistency with rape myths) impacts conformity.

Current Study

The current study aimed to determine whether exposure to blame-assigning social media comments alters individuals' blame attribution for rape cases. Further, the study aimed to explore how exposure to ambiguous rape case details on social media impacts victim blame; victim blame was compared between different levels of rape scenario ambiguity and different comment formats. The interaction between ambiguity and comment format on victim blame was examined. Furthermore, the relationship between social conformity and victim blame was investigated, with consideration given to the role of ambiguity in the strength of this relationship. Lastly, the relationship between social conformity and rape myth acceptance was also investigated.

To address the study aims, a mixed experimental vignette design was employed. Participants viewed two vignettes relating to rape cases, with rape scenario ambiguity (ambiguous, unambiguous) as the within-subjects independent variable, and social media comment format (no comments, victim blaming comments, perpetrator blaming comments) as the between-subjects independent variable. Participants allocated blame between the victim and perpetrator of the rape using a sliding scale (1 = Perpetrator fully to blame, 7 = Victim fully to blame); the dependent variable was the victim blame assignment scores. Participants completed measures of rape myth acceptance and self-reported social conformity, which were measured for the purposes of correlational analyses.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1:

- a. It was predicted that victim blame scores would be higher where the scenario details were ambiguous when compared with where the details were unambiguous.
- b. Moreover, it was predicted that victim blame scores would be higher where participants viewed victim blaming comments, compared with where participants viewed either no comments or perpetrator blaming comments. Furthermore, it was predicted that victim blame scores would be lower where participants viewed perpetrator blaming comments when compared with where participants viewed no comments.
- c. Additionally, it was predicted that comment format would interact with scenario ambiguity, such that victims would be assigned the most blame when both the case details were ambiguous (i.e., subvert rape myths) and the comments were victim blaming.

Hypothesis 2:

- a. It was predicted that social conformity scores would be correlated with victim blame scores.
- b. Furthermore, it was predicted that there would be stronger correlations between social conformity and victim blame for the scenarios with ambiguous case details when compared with unambiguous case details.

Hypothesis 3:

It was predicted that rape myth acceptance scores would be positively correlated with social conformity scores.

Method

Participants

A sample of undergraduate psychology students aged 18 years and older was sourced through the University of Adelaide's Research Participation System ($N = 153$). These students participated in exchange for course credit. Additionally, a further paid sample (\$3.60/15 minutes; $N = 19$) of Australian residents aged 18 years and older completed the study through Prolific, an online survey platform. In total, 16 participants were excluded for incomplete responses or completing the survey materials multiple times, with 156 participants retained in the final dataset. For the 12 participants who completed the study more than once (as identified by their Research Participation ID), the first response was retained; any additional responses were excluded from analyses to minimise potential effects of response bias due to participants' familiarity with the survey materials.

The majority (84%) of participants were aged 18-24 years ($N = 131$), with the remaining participants (16%) aged 25 years or older ($N = 25$). Approximately two thirds (68%) of participants identified as female ($N = 106$), with the remainder identifying as male (31%; $N = 49$), and transgender male (1%; $N = 1$).

Design

A 2 (Scenario Ambiguity: Ambiguous, Unambiguous) \times 3 (Comment Format: No Comments, Victim Blaming Comments, Perpetrator Blaming Comments) mixed design was employed, with scenario ambiguity as a within-subjects variable, and comment format as a between-subjects variable. Victim blame was measured as the dependent variable at both levels of ambiguity. Additionally, conformity and rape myth acceptance were measured for all participants.

Materials

An online survey was created specifically for this study (see Appendix A). Two vignettes were created by compiling real, publicly available news articles reporting rape cases. The vignettes were formatted as Facebook posts from a fictional South Australian news channel, including a summary of the rape case details. Three versions of the vignettes were created, which manipulated comment format: no attached comments; 14 victim blaming comments; or 13 perpetrator blaming comments. The comment wording explicitly assigned blame to either the victim or perpetrator, and modelled common rape myths detailed in the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale – Subtle Form (Thelan & Meadows, 2022). The vignettes also demonstrated a unanimous opinion, given unanimity has been associated with increased conformity (Asch, 1955). Comments were adapted from publicly available Facebook posts concerning sexual assault. The profile pictures and usernames of the Facebook users were redacted to maintain anonymity.

Each participant was randomly allocated to one of the three vignettes (no comment, victim blaming comments, perpetrator blaming comments) and viewed two levels of ambiguity (ambiguous, unambiguous). For the ambiguous vignette, the details of the rape did not conform to rape stereotypes (i.e., the offence was dated, occurred within a marriage, was not initially reported, and the victim was intoxicated; Burt, 1980). For the unambiguous scenario, the details of the rape conformed to rape stereotypes (i.e., the perpetrator was a stranger, the victim resisted forcibly, and the crime was reported promptly; Burt, 1980).

Victim Blame

The victim blame assignment scores were generated by adapting the scale from Harrison et al.'s Victim Blame Index (2008) which required participants to indicate whether the victim was fully to blame for a rape. The adapted scale in the present study included perpetrator blame as well as victim blame, and was a unidimensional 7-point sliding scale for

blame assignment, such that 1 = Perpetrator fully to blame, 7 = Victim fully to blame.

Participants were asked to use the scale to assign blame for the rape after each vignette to decide whether the victim or perpetrator was entirely to blame for the incident.

Conformity Scale

Mehrabian and Stefl's (1995) Conformity Scale consists of 11 items relating to conformist behaviours. Participants were asked to indicate their agreement with the statements using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree). As recommended by the original authors, items 2, 7, 9 and 11 were reverse scored prior to the reliability analysis in the present study. The scale had acceptable internal consistency, $\alpha = .76$, consistent with the internal consistency reported by Mehrabian and Stefl (1995), $\alpha = .77$.

The Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale – Subtle Form

Thelan and Meadows' (2022) Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale – Subtle Form consists of 22 items relating to rape myths, with respondents indicating their agreement with statements on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree). As in the original research, items 1, 13, and 17 were reverse coded prior to reliability analysis for the present study. The scale had good internal consistency, $\alpha = .86$, consistent with the internal consistency reported in the original research, $\alpha = .93$.

Procedure

The study received ethics approval from the University of Adelaide's Human Research Ethics Committee (Approval No. [REDACTED]). Participants accessed the study online on the Qualtrics survey platform. Upon providing informed consent, participants completed a demographics questionnaire. All eligible participants were randomly assigned to one of three comment format conditions (No Comments, Victim Blaming Comments, Perpetrator Blaming Comments).

In each condition, participants were presented with two rape case vignettes (Ambiguous, Unambiguous). The order of vignette presentation was counterbalanced to minimise order effects. After each vignette, participants were asked to indicate the degree to which the perpetrator and victim were to blame for the rape using the Victim Blame scale, generating a victim blame assignment score for each vignette. All participants then completed the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale – Subtle Form (Thelan and Meadows, 2022), followed by Mehrabian and Steff's Conformity Scale (1995).

Analyses

An *a priori* power analysis for an analysis of variance (ANOVA) with three groups was conducted on RStudio using a significance level of $\alpha = .05$, power = .8, and a moderate Cohen's $f = .25$. It was calculated that 52 participants would be required per group ($N = 156$); the achieved sample size ($N = 156$) satisfied the minimum sample size required for adequate power. Data analyses were carried out on IBM SPSS Statistics 27. The Shapiro-Wilk normality test was employed to test normality for social conformity scores, rape myth acceptance scores, and victim blame assignment scores. The results indicated that social conformity scores were normally distributed ($W = .991, p = .390$), but all other variables departed from normality (rape myth acceptance, $W = .950, p < .001$; ambiguous victim blame scores, $W = .589, p < .001$; unambiguous victim blame scores, $W = .315, p < .001$). However, Öztuna et al. (2006) noted that the Shapiro-Wilk test frequently identifies minor departures from normality as statistically significant in studies with large samples. Furthermore, Pallant (2020) suggested that an ANOVA is fairly robust to the violation of normality, especially with large sample sizes. As such, the parametric mixed between-within subjects ANOVA was conducted to investigate main effects and an interaction between scenario ambiguity and comment format on victim blame assignment scores (Hypotheses 1a, 1b, 1c). To account for departures in normality, both parametric and non-parametric correlational analyses were

conducted for social conformity scores, rape myth acceptance scores, and victim blame assignment scores (Hypotheses 2a, 2b, and 3). The parametric and non-parametric correlational analyses were consistent, so parametric results are reported for this study.

Results

Attention and Manipulation Checks

Instructed response items (IRIs) were employed as attention checks after each scenario to identify any participants who may not have attended appropriately to the case scenarios (see, e.g., Gummer et al., 2021). Participants were instructed to select ‘Strongly agree’ on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = ‘Strongly disagree’, 5 = ‘Strongly agree’) to show that they had been paying attention. The majority of participants (91.6%; $N = 143$) correctly answered the attention checks, suggesting that most participants were displaying effortful responses and attentiveness to the survey materials, and reducing the risk of measurement error. To confirm that excluding participants who failed the IRIs had no significant impact on results, the hypotheses were re-analysed excluding participants who failed both attention checks ($N = 13$). The removal of these participants did not alter the results or the interpretation of the results meaningfully. As a result, all the reported analyses used the original data, with those participants who failed the attention checks included.

A factual manipulation check (FMC) was included to determine whether participants accurately interpreted the scenarios (see, e.g., Kane & Barabas, 2019). Participants were asked whether the details of the crime were clear (1 = Yes, 2 = No, 3 = Unsure) after each vignette. The majority of participants (65.4%; $N = 102$) correctly identified the scenario as ambiguous and unambiguous. However, a sizeable number of participants answered either one or both checks incorrectly (34.6%; $N = 54$). This failure may be the result of poor question design; FMCs should include a factually correct response, however the wording of

this question may have been interpreted subjectively by some participants. A decision was made to retain all data, including participants who failed the manipulation check for both scenarios, as it was conceivable that the question wording was not sufficiently clear (i.e., participants may have interpreted clarity subjectively, rather than factually as intended; Kane & Barabas, 2019).

A second manipulation check indicated participants generally correctly interpreted the comments as supportive of the victim (Perpetrator Blaming Comments condition, $N = 53$) or the perpetrator (Victim Blaming Comments condition, $N = 54$) using a 3-point Likert scale (1 = Yes, 2 = No, 3 = Unsure). The majority of participants in the Perpetrator Blaming Comments condition answered correctly (98.1%; $N = 52$). In the Victim Blaming Comments condition, 77.8% ($N = 42$) of participants answered correctly. The hypotheses were re-analysed with participants who failed both vignettes ($N = 13$) excluded; no significant differences in results were found, therefore reported analyses used the original data, with those participants who failed the manipulation checks included.

Outliers

To ensure that possible violations of normality would not affect the result, outliers were assessed. A total of 3 outliers for rape myth acceptance and self-reported social conformity were identified using boxplots. A further 22 outliers were identified for victim blame assignment scores using boxplots. However, a decision was made that the outliers were not the result of measurement error or mistakes in data entry; as such, the variance can be attributed to natural differences in the sample, and it was reasonable to retain the outliers for data analyses.

Hypothesis 1: Scenario Ambiguity, Comment Format, and Victim Blame

To investigate whether victim blame attribution scores varied between comment formats and levels of ambiguity, a 2 (Scenario Ambiguity: Ambiguous, Unambiguous) \times 3 (Comment Format: No Comments, Victim Blaming Comments, Perpetrator Blaming Comments) mixed between-within subjects analysis of variance was conducted. Descriptive statistics are reported in Table 1.

Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations for Blame Scores Across Ambiguity Conditions and Comments Formats

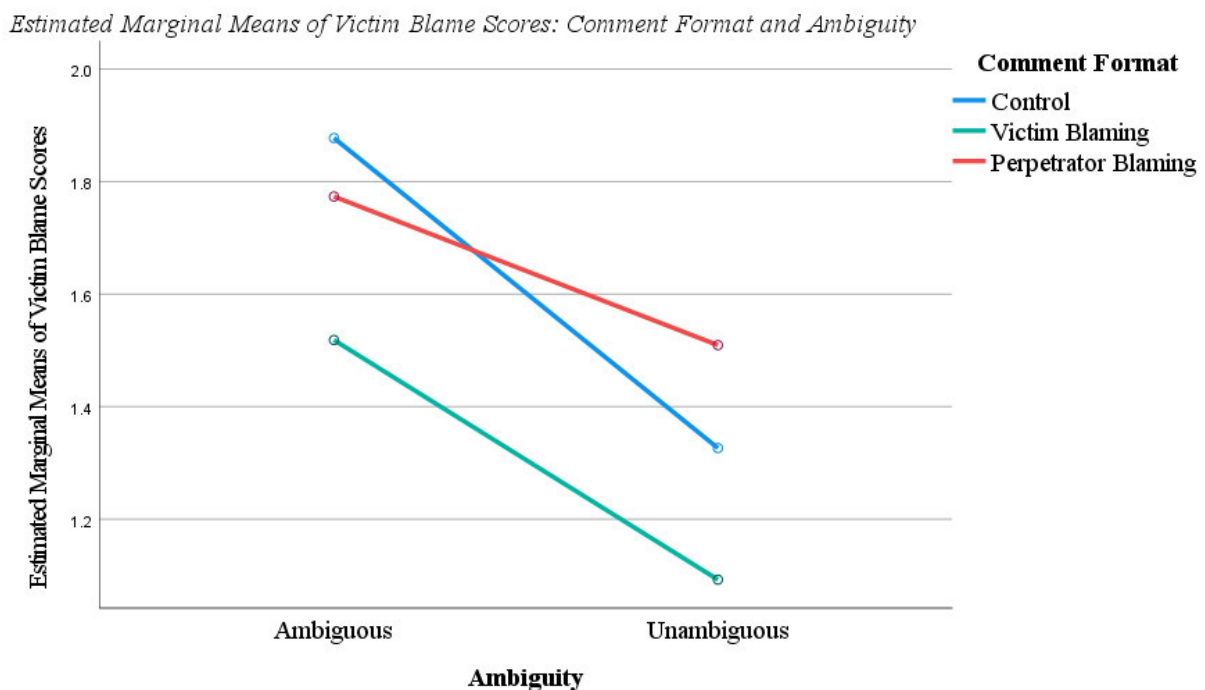
Variable	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Ambiguous			
No Comments	49	1.88	1.50
Victim Blaming Comments	54	1.52	1.01
Perpetrator Blaming Comments	53	1.77	1.59
Total	156	1.72	1.38
Unambiguous			
No Comments	49	1.33	1.16
Victim Blaming Comments	54	1.09	0.35
Perpetrator Blaming Comments	53	1.51	1.41
Total	156	1.31	1.08

As anticipated, there was a significant difference for victim blame attributions based on the ambiguity of the case scenario, $F(1, 153) = 25.87, p < .001, \eta^2 = .15$. Post hoc analyses using Bonferroni adjustment indicated that victim blame scores were significantly

higher where case scenario details were ambiguous compared with where the details were unambiguous, 0.41 (95% CI [0.25, 0.57]), $p = .05$. Contrary to expectations, exposure to blame-assigning social media comments (Victim Blaming, Perpetrator Blaming) did not result in significant increases or decrease in victim blame scores; comment format did not significantly impact on victim blame attribution, $F(2, 153) = 1.42, p = .25, \eta^2 = .02$.

Additionally, and contrary to predictions, the interaction between comment format and ambiguity was not significant, $F(2, 153) = 1.03, p = .36, \eta^2 = .01$. See Figure 1 for estimated marginal means of victim blame scores between comment formats and within ambiguity levels. Taken together, the results suggested that Hypothesis 1 was only partially supported.

Figure 1



Hypothesis 2: Social Conformity and Victim Blame

To investigate whether victim blame attribution scores varied according to social conformity, a Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was explored for victim blame

scores from both the ambiguous case scenario and the unambiguous case scenario (see Table 2), where blaming comments were included in the case scenario.

Table 2

Correlations Between Victim Blame Assignment Scores and Social Conformity Scores for Blaming Conditions

Variable	1	2	3
Victim Blaming Comments			
1. Conformity	---		
2. Ambiguous	.29*	---	
3. Unambiguous	-.12	.29*	---
Perpetrator Blaming Comments			
1. Conformity	---		
2. Ambiguous	.11	---	
3. Unambiguous	.02	.77**	---

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

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

There was a significant weak correlation between victim blame attribution scores and social conformity scores in the ambiguous scenario with attached victim blaming comments, $r(54) = .29, p < .05, 95\% \text{ CI } [0.03, 0.52]$, with higher levels of conformity associated with higher victim blame attribution. However, in contrast to predictions, the relationship between victim blame and social conformity was non-significant in the ambiguous scenario where the

comment format was perpetrator blaming, $r(53) = .11, p = .423, 95\% \text{ CI} [-0.16, 0.37]$.

Therefore, Hypothesis 2 was partially supported.

Hypothesis 3: Social Conformity and Rape Myth Acceptance

A correlational analysis was conducted using a Pearson's product-moment coefficient to determine whether there was a positive relationship between rape myth acceptance scores and social conformity scores. This would reveal whether highly conformist individuals were more likely to accept rape myths. As predicted, there was weak positive correlation between rape myth acceptance and social conformity, $r(156) = .20, p < .01, 95\% \text{ CI} [0.04, 0.34]$, with high levels of rape myth acceptance associated with high levels of social conformity.

Therefore, Hypothesis 3 was supported.

Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to gain insight into the influence of rape ambiguity and blame-assigning social media comments on victim blame. Additional explorations of the relationships between social conformity, victim blame, and rape myth acceptance were also considered. There was partial support for the three hypotheses that were formulated to address the study aims.

Scenario Ambiguity, Comment Format, and Victim Blame

First, as predicted, there was a significant main effect for scenario ambiguity on victim blame, with ambiguous case details prompting higher victim blame scores than unambiguous case details. These findings are consistent with previous literature concerning rape scenario ambiguity and victim blame (see, e.g., Ellison & Munro, 2013; McKimmie et al., 2014; Lee et al., 2023). The present findings extend the previous knowledge to the social media context; it appears that even brief exposure to ambiguous case details on social media increases victim blame. That is, participants assigned higher victim blame in the ambiguous

scenario compared to the unambiguous scenario despite only receiving very basic details of the case.

Another important finding of the present study which contradicted predictions was that the social media comments did not appear to influence estimates of victim blame. Previous literature suggested that informational conformity is effective for social media comments (e.g., Colliander, 2019; Yang, 2008). In fact, Yang (2008) had suggested that social media comments bore more influence on participants' opinions than the content of news articles, however the current study seems to indicate the contrary; blame-assigning comments did not appear to impact participants' victim blame attributions. Although unexpected, there are possible reasons for such contradictory findings; first, the social media comments sourced for the present study's vignettes were deidentified, with profile pictures and usernames redacted. While deidentification ensured the protection of the Facebook users' confidentiality and privacy, it may also have reduced the likelihood of conformity. Social identity theory posits that group identity has a powerful impact on conformity (Tajfel & Turner, 2004), with previous research suggesting that a strong group identity resulted in increased conformity (Spears, 2021). One factor underpinning group identity is social categorization (Spears, 2021), whereupon individuals make a distinction between their in-group (i.e., group which one identifies with) and their out-group (i.e., group which one does not identify with). This distinction can be the result of clear cues, including physical attributes like ethnicity and sex (Oakes et al., 1994). Ušto et al. (2019) found that conformity to group opinions increased when other group members belonged to the same ethnic ingroup as the participants, compared to poorer conformity when group members belonged to different ethnic outgroups. By maintaining anonymity in the current study, the social media comment users were depersonalised; demographic attributes like ethnicity or gender that may be ascertained from profile pictures or usernames were suppressed, so ingroup/outgroup identification was

inhibited for participants. In turn, the development of a strong group identity may have been hindered, which might explain why participants did not conform to the social media comments with regards to blame attribution. Further research could determine whether study conditions that permit group identification and social categorisation may impact conformity to blame-assigning social media comments in the context of victim blame.

An additional explanation for the non-significant impact of social media comments on victim blame is the role of task importance. The victim blame assignment decision made by participants in the current study had no implications on real rape trial verdicts, so participants may have felt more comfortable expressing their dissent to blame-assigning narratives. Janis (1972) suggested that important decisions are more prone to social conformity than decisions of minimal consequence. This was supported by Baron et al. (1996), where participants who were told that their performance on a task was vital to revolutionary eyewitness testimony research were more likely to conform than participants who were told that they were part of a pilot study. While victim blame in court proceedings has real, meaningful consequences on jury decision-making (Klein & Yamamoto, 2020), it is plausible to suggest that participants in the present study did not feel pressure to conform to the social media comments due to the blame assignment task holding no importance in the real world. Given that this study was the first attempt at linking conformity to social media comments and victim blame, it was reasonable to use brief hypothetical vignettes. However, future research could expand on the complexity and real-world generalisability of conformity to social media comments.

Furthermore, and contrary to predictions, victim blame assignment scores across levels of scenario ambiguity were comparable between comment formats. These results contrast previous findings which had suggested that social media comments would be more influential on attitude change (i.e., conformity) when the situation was ambiguous. For instance, Wijenayake et al. (2021) found that participants were more likely to conform to

social media comments on attributions of trustworthiness for news articles when their legitimacy was unclear. One explanation for the results contradicting those reported by Wijenayake et al. (2021) relates to the operationalisation of situation ambiguity in the two studies. Wijenayake et al. (2021) required participants to report their prior knowledge of a subject, and found that those who reported less knowledge were more likely to conform to social media comments (i.e., the ‘correct’ attribution of trustworthiness was ambiguous for unfamiliar subject matter). Conversely, the present study operationalised situation ambiguity as rape case details that subverted commonly held rape stereotypes; participants’ knowledge of the rape myths underpinning ambiguous rape cases was not directly measured. Lee et al. (2023) indicated that one’s comprehension of rape is informed by powerful subconscious schemas for what constitutes as non-consensual; individuals with poor comprehension of the distinction between consent and non-consent were more likely to accept myths about ambiguous rape cases (Aronowitz et al., 2012). These findings, taken together with the significant main effect of scenario ambiguity on victim blame, suggest that it is possible that participants in the present study did not conform to social media comments based on scenario ambiguity because they already held deeply rooted schemas for non-consensual sex, with limited comprehension of rape myths underlying ambiguous rape cases. Therefore, irrespective of comment format, their decision to victim blame may have already been subconsciously made based solely on the ambiguous case details.

Social Conformity and Victim Blame

Another important finding that arose from the present study was the partial support for the predicted association between social conformity scores and victim blame, which was expected to be strengthened by ambiguous case details. As predicted, more conformist participants tended to align their victim blame estimates with the victim-blaming opinions detailed in the social media comments (i.e., high victim blame estimates) when the case

details were ambiguous. This finding is consistent with previous literature, in which the link between ambiguity and increased social conformity is well-established (e.g., Brown & Testa, 2007; Hertz & Wiese, 2016; Levitan & Verhulst, 2016). The current study extends knowledge of conformity to victim blame into the online context; people might assign blame to the victim based on victim-blaming opinions on social media when the rape case details are ambiguous. However, contrary to predictions, these findings did not extend to where perpetrator blaming comments were made. Given previous observations of heightened social conformity in ambiguous scenarios (e.g., Brown & Testa, 2007; Hertz & Wiese, 2016; Levitan & Verhulst, 2016), it was expected that there would be a negative correlation between social conformity scores and victim blame when the comments were perpetrator blaming and rape case details were ambiguous. One explanation for why highly conformist people did not conform to the perpetrator blaming comments (i.e., assign lower victim blame) when the case details were ambiguous could lie in the design of the victim blame assignment scale used in the current study. The unidimensional sliding scale required participants to assign blame between the perpetrator and victim, with the scale extremes indicating full blame for one party or the other (i.e., 1 = perpetrator fully to blame, 7 = victim fully to blame). By using this scale, a single score was generated to represent participants' blame assignment, facilitating the comparative analyses. However, Strömwall et al. (2013) suggested that when participants do not consider the case details as representative of non-consensual sex, they will not find it appropriate to assign blame; if a crime is not perceived to have been committed, then there is no blame to be assigned. The nature of the unidimensional scale used in the present study meant that blameworthiness was assumed. Furthermore, Strömwall et al. (2013) found that, when using separate scales for victim blame and perpetrator blame, participants would sometimes rate both the victim and perpetrator as fully to blame, suggesting that victim blame might be a different construct to perpetrator blame. As a result, the victim

blame assignment scores in the present study may not reflect participants' actual attributions of blame (or, as the case may be, lack thereof), and may explain why highly conformist participants did not tend to conform to perpetrator blaming comments in the ambiguous scenario. Much work is required to establish a full understanding of the relationship between social conformity and blame assignment; it would be useful to extend the findings of the current study by using separate scales of victim and perpetrator blame in future research.

Social Conformity and Rape Myth Acceptance

As predicted, the results indicate that as rape myth acceptance scores increased, social conformity scores also increased, with highly conformist individuals more likely to accept rape myths. These findings are consistent with previous findings from Aronowitz et al. (2012), who found that participants that were well-informed on issues of consent/non-consent were less likely to conform to peers' acceptance of rape myths, and had lower scores on the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance – Short Form scale (Payne et al., 1999, as cited in Aronowitz et al., 2012). The present study provides evidence for the direct association between rape myth acceptance and social conformity which was previously unexplored.

One explanation for these findings lies in the design of the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance – Subtle Form scale (Thelan & Meadows, 2022), which was used in the present study to measure rape myth acceptance. The scale required participants to indicate their agreement with statements framing rape myths. The statements were framed as rational and truthful (e.g., "Rape happens when a man's sex drive gets out of control.;" Thelan & Meadows, 2022), and required participants' moral judgement of what constitutes as a legitimate non-consensual encounter. This rational justification for decisions on moral issues may underpin highly conformist participants' propensity to accept rape myths. Kelly et al. (2017) investigated moral conformity in the online context, and found that conformity to moral judgements was higher when they were justified rationally, as opposed to emotionally.

It is plausible to suggest that highly conformist participants in the present study read the rape myth statements and, given the rational phrasing, tended to accept the myths more readily than less conformist individuals. In light of this, it is possible that highly conformist jurors might be more likely to accept the rape myths commonly alluded to by attorneys in court (Smith & Skinner, 2017). Given that rape myth acceptance has been associated with increased victim blame and defendant acquittal, these findings suggest that the presence of highly conformist jurors in rape trials may be cause for concern when it comes to fair and objective verdict decision-making.

Limitations and Future Research

The current study findings provide new insight into victim blaming biases in the social media context, and contribute to a growing body of literature concerning social conformity in jury decision-making. However, it is important to note that there are several limitations associated with the present study. One limitation concerns the impact of sample demographics on victim blame; the sample was primarily female (68%; $N = 106$), and previous research has indicated that victim blame is more prevalent in males (e.g., Pinciotti & Orcutt, 2021). Given that men tend to make up the majority of jurors in Australia (Warner et al., 2017), and that men have been found to be more conformist than women in the online context (Rosander & Eriksson, 2012), future research could determine the role of gender on conformity to social media comments in the context of rape ambiguity and victim blame. Similarly, sample demographics potentially impact the generalisability of the findings; Warner et al. (2017) reported that the mean age of jurors is 44.9 years old, however the majority of participants in the present study were aged 18-24 years old. Research by Adams-Price et al. (2004) indicated that victim blame tends to be lowest for individuals aged 18-34 years old compared to older adults (>35 years old); as such, it is possible that the research

findings are confounded by the low mean age range, and may not be generalisable to the typical Australian jury.

Another possible limitation relates to the length of exposure to blame-assigning social media comments. The participants were only briefly exposed to blame-assigning comments in the study's vignettes; Lyons et al. (2022) found that short exposure to prejudiced social media content did not significantly influence rape cognitions. Future research could explore how long-term exposure to blame-assigning social media content impacts conformity to blaming biases. It would also be interesting to investigate how the complexity of the comments impacts victim blame. For instance, the level of unanimity could be manipulated by including dissenting comments, which would be more reminiscent of real social media interactions.

In conclusion, the present study can be seen as the first step towards integrating conformity to social media comments, rape ambiguity, and victim blame, which have not been directly linked before. Despite the limitations, these findings may have several theoretical and practical implications. First, the present study reveals that brief exposure to ambiguous case details on social media can increase victim blame. Furthermore, conformist participants are more likely to accept rape myths, and more readily conform to victim blaming comments when presented with ambiguous case details compared to unambiguous case details. The implication of these findings is that ambiguous rape cases are potentially more susceptible to victim blame, with individuals more likely to conform to victim-blaming group members when presented with case details that subvert the 'real' rape stereotype. Importantly, the present study has extended the understanding of rape ambiguity on victim blame in the social media context. These findings could also have potential intervention implications. Educating jurors on rape myths (i.e., ambiguous rape characteristics) may reduce the likelihood of conformity to victim blaming biases. Judges could also encourage

open communication and acknowledgement of differing opinions in juries to minimise the likelihood of conformity to victim-blaming biases (Nemeth & Goncalo, 2005). Future research is necessary to determine the factors impacting conformity to blame-assigning comments, with consideration paid to how long-term exposure to blaming narratives on social media might impact conformity to victim blaming biases. It is hoped that the present research findings' contributions to victim blame literature will aid in minimising attrition rates for rape cases in Australia.

References

- Adams-Price, C. E., Dalton, W. T., & Sumrall, R. (2004). Victim blaming in young, middle-aged, and older adults: Variations on the severity effect. *Journal of Adult Development, 11*(4), 289-295. <https://doi.org/10.1023/B:JADE.0000044532.83720.74>
- Alicke, M. (1992). Culpable causation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 63*(3), 368-378. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.63.3.368>
- Anderson, I., & Lyons, A. (2005). The effect of victims' social support on attributions of blame in female and male rape. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 35*(7), 1400-1417. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1559-1816.2005.tb02176.x>
- Aronowitz, T., Lambert, C. A., & Davidoff, S. (2012). The role of rape myth acceptance in the social norms regarding sexual behavior among college students. *Journal of Community Health Nursing, 29*(3), 173-182. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07370016.2012.697852>
- Asch, S.E. (1955). Opinions and social pressure. *Scientific American, 193*(5), 31-35.
- Australasian Legal Information Institute (2016, June 22). *Registrar of the Supreme Court of South Australia v S; Registrar of the Supreme Court of South Australia v C*. <http://www6.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/viewdoc/au/cases/sa/SASC/2016/93.html#>
- Australian Bureau of Statistic. (2021). *Sexual Violence – Victimisation*. Australian Bureau of Statistics. <https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/sexual-violence-victimisation#cite-window2>
- Baron, R. S., Vandello, J. A., & Brunsman, B. (1996). The forgotten variable in conformity research: Impact of task importance on social influence. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 71*(5), 915-927. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.71.5.915>

- Belknap, J. (2010). Rape: Too hard to report and too easy to discredit victims. *Violence Against Women, 16*(12), 1335-1344. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801210387749>
- Belyea, L., & Blais, J. (2023). Effect of pretrial publicity via social media, mock juror sex, and rape myth acceptance on juror decisions in a mock sexual assault trial. *Psychology, Crime and Law, 29*(3), 280-302. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1068316X.2021.2018440>
- Breen, L. H., & Boyce, M. A. (2021). “Why Did She Talk to Him Again?” The Effects of the justice motive, relationship type, and degree of postassault contact on perceptions of sexual assault. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 36*(11-12), 5229-5249. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260518803609>
- Brown, A. L., & Testa, M. (2007). Social influences on judgments of rape victims: The role of the negative and positive social reactions of others. *Sex Roles, 58*, 490-500. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-007-9353-7>
- Burt, M. R. (1980). Cultural myths and supports for rape. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 38*(2), 217-230. <https://doi.org/10.1037//0022-3514.38.2.217>
- Colliander, J. (2019). “This is fake news”: Investigating the role of conformity to other users’ views when commenting on and spreading disinformation in social media. *Computers in Human Behavior, 97*, 202-215. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2019.03.032>
- Crutchfield, R. S. (1955). Conformity and Character. *American Psychologist, 10*(5), 191-198. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/h0040237>
- Daly, K., & Bouhours, B. (2010). Rape and attrition in the legal process: A comparative analysis of five countries. *Crime and Justice, 39*(1), 565-650. <https://doi.org/10.1086/653101>

De la Torre Laso, J., & Rodríguez-Díaz, J. M. (2022). The relationship between attribution of blame and the perception of resistance in relation to victims of sexual violence.

Frontiers in Psychology, 13, 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.868793>

Ellison, L., & Munro, V. E. (2013). Better the Devil you know? 'Real rape' stereotypes and the relevance of a previous relationship in (mock) juror deliberations. *The International Journal of Evidence and Proof, 17*(4), 299-322.

<https://doi.org/10.1350/ijep.2013.17.4.433>

Fraser, B. M., Pica, E., & Pozzulo, J. D. (2022). The effect of delayed reporting on mock-juror decision-making in the era of #MeToo. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 37*(13-14), NP11791 - NP11810. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260521997464>

Gramazio, S., Cadinu, M., Pagliaro, S., & Pacilli, M. G. (2018). Sexualization of sexual harassment victims reduces bystanders' help: The mediating role of attribution of immorality and blame. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 36*(13-14), 6073-6097.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260518816326>

Gravelin, C. R. (2016). *Assessing the Impact of Media on Blaming the Victim of Acquaintance Rape* (Order No. 10162965) [Doctoral dissertation, University of Kansas], ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.

Gummer, T., Roßmann, J., & Silber, H. (2021). Using instructed response items as attention checks in web surveys: Properties and implementation. *Sociological Methods and Research, 50*(1), 238-264. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0049124118769083>

Hansen, N. B., Hansen, N., Campbell, R., Elklit, A., Hansen, O. I., & Bramsen, R. H. (2019). Are rape cases closed because of rape stereotypes? Results from a Danish police district. *Nordic Psychology, 71*(1), 51-61.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/19012276.2018.1470552>

- Harrison, L. A., Howerton, D. M., Secarea, A. M., & Nguyen, C. Q. (2008). Effects of ingroup bias and gender role violations on acquaintance rape attributions. *Sex Roles, 59*, 713-725. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-008-9472-9>
- Hertz, N., & Wiese, E. (2016). Influence of agent type and task ambiguity on conformity in social decision making. *Proceedings of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society Annual Meeting, 60*(1), 313-317. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1541931213601071>
- Hills, B. (2013, May 12). Jury getting off their Facebooks. *Daily Telegraph*.
<https://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/jury-getting-off-their-facebooks/news-story/26e2549a7d9063ae9dae0e2a27683dce>
- Hine, B., & Murphy, A. (2017). The impact of victim-perpetrator relationship, reputation and initial point of resistance on officers' responsibility and authenticity ratings towards hypothetical rape cases. *Journal of Criminal Justice, 49*, 1-13.
<https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2017.01.001>
- Hoffmeister, T. (2021, October 20). Do unbiased jurors exist in an age of social media? *The Conversation*. <https://theconversation.com/do-unbiased-jurors-exist-in-an-age-of-social-media-169125>
- Hornsey, M. J., Majkut, L., Terry, D. J., & McKimmie, B. M. (2003). On being loud and proud: non-conformity and counter-conformity to group norms. *The British Journal of Social Psychology, 42*(3), 319-335. <https://doi.org/10.1348/014466603322438189>
- Idisis, Y., & Edoute, A. (2017). Attribution of blame to rape victims and offenders, and attribution of severity in rape cases: Non-therapists and survivor and offender therapists. *International Review of Victimology, 23*(3), 257-274.
<https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1177/0269758017711980>

- Janis, I. L. (1972). *Victims of groupthink: A psychological study of foreign-policy decisions and fiascoes*. Houghton Mifflin.
- Kane, J. V., & Barabas, J. (2019). No harm in checking: Using factual manipulation checks to assess attentiveness in experiments. *American Journal of Political Science*, 63(1), 234-249. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/45132473>
- Kaplan, M. F., & Miller, C. E. (1987). Group decision making and normative versus informational influence: Effects of type of issue and assigned decision rule. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 53(2), 306-313.
- Kelly, M., Ngo, L., Chituc, V., Huettel, S., & Sinnott-Armstrong, W. (2017). Moral conformity in online interactions: Rational justifications increase influence of peer opinions on moral judgments. *Social Influence*, 12(2-3), 57-68.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15534510.2017.1323007>
- Klein, C., & Yamamoto, S. (2020). Detecting victim blaming biases using social media. *Journal of Forensic Psychology Research and Practice*, 20(5), 436-450.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/24732850.2020.1763087>
- Laporte, L., van Nimwegen, C., & Uyttendaele, A. J. (2010). Do people say what they think: Social conformity behavior in varying degrees of online social presence. *Proceedings of the 6th Nordic Conference on Human-Computer Interaction: Extending Boundaries* (pp. 305-314). <https://doi.org/10.1145/1868914.1868951>
- Lee, H. D. H., McKimmie, B. M., Masser, B. M., & Tangen, J. M. (2023). Guided by the rape schema: The influence of event order on how jurors evaluate the victim's testimony in cases of rape. *Psychology, Crime & Law*, 29(1), 25-55.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1068316X.2021.1984483>

Levine, J. M. (2007). Conformity. In *Encyclopedia of Social Psychology*.

<https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412956253>

Levitan, L. C., & Verhulst, B. (2016). Conformity in groups: The effects of others' views on expressed attitudes and attitude change. *Political Behavior*, 38, 277-315.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-015-9312-x>

Lewin, K. (1944). The dynamics of group action. *Educational Leadership*, 1(4), 195-200.

Lisciandra, C., Postma-Nilsenová, M., & Colombo, M. (2013). Conformorality. A study on group conditioning of normative judgment. *Review of Philosophy and Psychology*, 4, 751-764. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13164-013-0161-4>

Lyons, M., Rowe, A., Waddington, R., & Brewer, G. (2022). Situational and dispositional factors in rape cognitions: The roles of social media and the Dark Triad traits. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 37(11-12), NP20345-NP10361.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260520985499>

Maeder, E. M., Yamamoto, S., & Saliba, P. (2015). The influence of defendant race and victim physical attractiveness on juror decision-making in a sexual assault trial. *Psychology, Crime and Law*, 21(1), 62-79.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/1068316X.2014.915325>

McKimmie, B. M., Masser, B. M., & Bongiorno, R. (2014). What counts as rape? The effect of offense prototypes, victim stereotypes, and participant gender on how the complainant and defendant are perceived. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 29(12), 2273-2303. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260513518843>

- Mehrabian, A., & Stefl, C. A. (1995). Basic temperament, components, of loneliness, shyness, and conformity. *Social Behavior and Personality*, 23, 253–264.
<https://doi.org/10.2224/sbp.1995.23.3.253>
- Nadler, J., & McDonnell, M. (2012). Moral character, motive, and the psychology of blame. *Cornell Law Review*, 97(2), 255-304.
- Nemeth, C., & Goncalo, J. A. (2005). Influence and persuasion in small groups. In T. Brock & M. Green (Eds.), *Persuasion: Psychological insights and perspectives* (2nd ed., pp. 171-194). Sage Publications.
- Oakes, P. J., Haslam, S. A., & Turner, J. C. (1994). *Stereotyping and Social Reality*. Blackwell.
- Öztuna, D., Elhan, A., & Tüccar, E. (2006). Investigation of four different normality tests in terms of type 1 error rate and power under different distributions. *Turkish Journal of Medical Sciences*, 36(3), 171-176.
- Pallant, J. (2020). *SPSS Survival Manual: A step by step guide to data analysis using IBM SPSS* (7th edn.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003117452>
- Payne, D. L., Lonsway, K. A., & Fitzgerald, L. F. (1999). Rape Myth Acceptance: Exploration of its structure and its measurement using the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 33(1), 27-68.
<https://doi.org/10.1006/jrpe.1998.2238>
- Pinciotti, C. M., & Orcutt, H. K. (2021). Understanding gender differences in rape victim blaming: The power of social influence and Just World Beliefs. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 36(1-2), 255-275. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260517725736>

- Pugh, B., Ningard, H., Ven, T. V., & Butler, L. (2016). Victim ambiguity: Bystander intervention and sexual assault in the college drinking scene. *Deviant Behavior, 37*(4), 401-418. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01639625.2015.1026777>
- Quilter, J., McNamara, L., & Porter, M. (2023). The most persistent rape myth? A qualitative study of 'delay' in complaint in Victorian rape trials. *Current Issues in Criminal Justice, 35*(1), 4-26. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10345329.2022.2090089>
- Rosander, M., & Eriksson, O. (2012). Conformity on the Internet – The role of task difficulty and gender differences. *Computers in Human Behavior, 28*(5), 1587-1595. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2012.03.023>
- Smith, O., & Skinner, T. (2017). How rape myths are used and challenged in rape and sexual assault trials. *Social and Legal Studies, 26*(4), 441-466. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0964663916680130>
- Sommer, S., Reynolds, J. J., & Kehn, A. (2016). Mock juror perceptions of rape victims: Impact of case characteristics and individual differences. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 31*(17), 2847-2866. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260515581907>
- Spears, R. (2021). Social influence and group identity. *Annual Review of Psychology, 72*, 367-390. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-070620-111818>
- Strömwall, L. A., Alfredsson, H., & Landström, S. (2013). Rape victim and perpetrator blame and the Just World hypothesis: The influence of victim gender and age. *Journal of Sexual Aggression, 19*(2), 207-217. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13552600.2012.683455>
- Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (2004). The social identity theory of intergroup behavior. In J. T. Jost & J. Sidanius (Eds.), *Political psychology: Key readings* (pp. 276–293). Psychology Press. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203505984-16>

- Temkin, J., Gray, J. M., & Barrett, J. (2016). Different functions of rape myth use in Court: Findings from a trial observation study. *Feminist Criminology*, 13(2), 205-226.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1557085116661627>
- Thackray, L. (2014, August 9). Juror could face jail after admitting to researching murder suspect on Facebook - forcing the Supreme Court to abandon trial. *Daily Mail Australia*. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2720537/Murder-trial-stopped-juror-admits-researching-suspect-victim-Facebook.html>
- Thelan, A. R. & Meadows, E. A. (2022). The Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale—Subtle Version: Using an adapted measure to understand the declining rates of Rape Myth Acceptance. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 37(19-20), 17807-17833.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/08862605211030013>
- Thomas, C. (2020). The 21st century jury: contempt, bias and the impact of jury service. *Criminal Law Review*, 11, 987-1011.
- Ušto, M., Drace, S., & Hadžiahmetović, N. (2019). Replication of the "Asch Effect" in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Evidence for the moderating role of group similarity in conformity. *Psychological Topics*, 28(3), 589-599. <https://doi.org/10.31820/pt.28.3.7>
- Warner, K., Davis, J., Spiranovic, C., Cockburn, H., & Freiberg, A. (2017). Measuring jurors' views on sentencing: Results from the second Australian jury sentencing study. *Punishment and Society*, 19(2), 180-202. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1462474516660697>
- Waters, N. L., & Hans, V. P. (2009). A jury of one: Opinion formation, conformity, and dissent on juries. *Journal of Empirical Legal Studies*, 6(3), 513-540.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1740-1461.2009.01152.x>

Wijenayake, S., Hettiachchi, D., Hosio, S., Kostakos, V., & Goncalves, J. (2021). Effect of conformity on perceived trustworthiness of news in social media. *IEEE Internet Computing*, 25(1), 12-19. <https://doi.org/10.1109/MIC.2020.3032410>

Yang, H. S. (2008). The effects of the opinion and quality of user postings on Internet news readers attitude toward the news issue. *Korean Journal of Journalism and Communication Studies*, 52(2), 254-281.

Appendix A

[Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form completed]

Demographics

How old are you?

- Under 18
- 18-24 years old
- 25-34 years old
- 35-44 years old
- 45-54 years old
- 55-64 years old
- 65+ years old

How do you describe yourself?

- Female
- Male
- Please specify _____

Is any language other than English spoken at home?

- Yes (please specify) _____
- No

Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?

- No
- Yes, Aboriginal
- Yes, Torres Strait Islander
- Yes, both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

What is your sexual orientation?

- Straight/heterosexual
- Gay, lesbian, or homosexual
- Bisexual
- Prefer not to say
- Other (please specify) _____

Participants were randomly allocated to one of three conditions: No Comments, Victim Blaming Comments, or Perpetrator Blaming Comments). In each condition, participants were presented with two vignettes, formatted as Facebook posts from a fictional South Australian news channel, which detailed rape cases going to trial. The scenario ambiguity was manipulated between the two vignettes, such that one vignette includes ambiguous rape case details and the other includes unambiguous rape case details. The order of presentation for the vignettes was counterbalanced.

[No Comments Condition: Ambiguous]

Please read the following Facebook post:



An 81-year-old South Australian man is set to stand trial for raping his wife over 50 years ago. The couple married in 1972, and Mr P allegedly raped her twice the following year. The victim said she was taken home to sleep off a night of heavy drinking and woke to find her husband having sex with her. The victim said she kept blacking out, and when her husband told her not to tell anyone she agreed. They divorced in 1981. But it was not until 2023 that Mr P was charged by SA authorities.



4.6k

38 Shares

Like

Share



Write a comment...



Please indicate the degree to which the perpetrator and victim are to blame for the rape.

1 = Perpetrator fully to blame

7 = Victim fully to blame

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

[Manipulation check 1]

The details of the crime were clear.

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

[Attention check]

Please select 'Strongly agree' to show you have been paying attention to the survey.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

[No Comments Condition: Unambiguous]

Please read the following Facebook post:



A 24-year-old man accused of the violent rape of a 20-year-old woman last week is set to stand trial. The woman was walking along North Terrace when a man grabbed her from behind and forced her onto the ground. She was then subjected to a sustained sexual assault, culminating in rape. She struggled and fought with him, eventually managing to get him to flee, and lay in silence before ringing her friends and police for help.



👍👎 4.6k

38 Shares

👍 Like

➦ Share



Write a comment...



Please indicate the degree to which the perpetrator and victim are to blame for the rape.

1 = Perpetrator fully to blame

7 = Victim fully to blame

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

[Manipulation check 1]

The details of the crime were clear.

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

[Attention check]

Please select 'Strongly agree' to show you have been paying attention to the survey.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

[Victim Blaming Condition: Ambiguous]

Please read the following Facebook post and attached comments.



An 81-year-old South Australian man is set to stand trial for raping his wife over 50 years ago. The couple married in 1971, and Mr P allegedly raped her twice the following year. The victim said she was taken home to sleep off a night of heavy drinking and woke to find her husband having sex with her. The victim said she kept blacking out, and when her husband told her not to tell anyone she agreed. They divorced in 1981. But it was not until 2023 that Mr P was charged by SA authorities.



4.6k 2.1k Comments 38 Shares

Like Comment Share

Before getting confused just remember that it was her choice to go to her husband's house after going out for work drinks. She could have just gone home but no she chose to go back to his house. If she does not remember it's because she was passed out after drinking so much then maybe she should ease off on the alcohol.

Like · Reply · 3h 488

Going to a work function and getting so drunk, that you are incapable of making good choices, or of looking out for your safety, is not a smart thing to do for anyone.

Like · Reply · 3h 169

how does anyone know that she just drank too much had consented drunken sex and passed out then embarrassingly was found the next day 😏

Like · Reply · 2h 67

If she had been sexually assaulted why didn't she go to a doctor asap thereafter? An examination could have been done.

Like · Reply · 3h 377



Please indicate the degree to which the perpetrator and victim are to blame for the rape.

1 = Perpetrator fully to blame

7= Victim fully to blame

1 2 3 4 5 6 7



[Manipulation check 1]

The details of the crime were clear.

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

[Manipulation check 2]

On the whole, the comments tended to be supportive of the perpetrator.

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

[Attention check]

Please select 'Strongly agree' to show you have been paying attention to the survey.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

[Victim Blaming Condition: Unambiguous]

Please read the following Facebook post and attached comments.



A 24-year-old man accused of the violent rape of a 20-year-old woman last week is set to stand trial. The woman was walking along North Terrace when the man grabbed her from behind and forced her onto the ground. She was then subjected to a sustained sexual assault, culminating in rape. She struggled and fought with him, eventually managing to get him to flee, and lay in silence before ringing her friends and police for help.



4.6k 2.1k Comments 38 Shares

Like Comment Share

Why on earth did this young lady walk through the city alone at night .This day and age you just can't .She has paid the price .

Like · Reply · 3h 488

Yes, what was she thinking walking home at that time of night especially when it's dark

Like · Reply · 3h 169

I feel verty sorry for here family But no way would i have walked through the city that time of night

Like · Reply · 2h 67

Terrible what's happened but to be fair it's not really safe for anyone to be walking alone in Adelaide

Like · Reply · 3h 377

[Manipulation check 1]

The details of the crime were clear.

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

[Manipulation check 2]

On the whole, the comments tended to be supportive of the perpetrator.

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

[Attention check]

Please select 'Strongly agree' to show you have been paying attention to the survey.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

[Perpetrator Blaming Condition: Ambiguous]

Please read the following Facebook post and attached comments



An 81-year old South Australian man is set to stand trial for raping his wife over 50 years ago. The couple married in 1972, and Mr P allegedly raped her twice the following year. The victim said she was taken home to sleep off a night of heavy drinking and woke to find her husband having sex with her. The victim said she kept blacking out, and when the husband told her not to tell anyone she agreed. They divorced in 1981. But it was not until 2023 that Mr P was charged by SA authorities



4.6k 2.1k Comments 38 Shares

Like Comment Share

who can you trust when you can't trust your husband. questions will need to be answered how this vile individual managed to avoid a police radar

488

Like · Reply · 3h

What a sad world we live in when you can't even trust your husband...

169

Like · Reply · 3h

Omg, husband's should be loving and caring to their wife's not to abuse them like they are some sort of trash.. Why would anyone do such thing.. You marry the girl and be with the girl to love and look after them and even protect them but raping her that is to below the belt

67

Like · Reply · 3h

Hope if the suspect gets charge they make an example of him! Thinking he clever and being able to do as he pleases

377

Like · Reply · 3h

[Manipulation check 1]

The details of the crime were clear.

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

[Manipulation check 2]

On the whole, the comments tended to be supportive of the victim.

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

[Attention check]

Please select 'Strongly agree' to show you have been paying attention to the survey.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

[Perpetrator Blaming Condition: Unambiguous]

Please read the following Facebook post and attached comments:



A 24-year-old man accused of the violent rape of a 20-year-old woman last week is set to stand trial. The woman was walking along North Terrace when a man grabbed her from behind and forced her onto the ground. She was then subjected to a sustained sexual assault, culminating in rape. She struggled and fought with him, eventually managing to get him to flee, and lay in silence before ringing her friends and police for help.



4.6k 2.1k Comments 38 Shares

Like Comment Share

█ Hope he gets locked up for life if he's pleaded guilty he knew exactly what he was doing when he raped her 😞 488
Like · Reply · 3h

█ Yep, hope he gets what he deserves in prison! He won't want to be alive in there lol 189
Like · Reply · 3h

█ He needs death sentence if it is him which everything seems to be pointing to 189
Like · Reply · 2h

█ Such a brave woman well done to her hope she gets the justice she deserves and he gets what he deserves 377
Like · Reply · 3h



Please indicate the degree to which the perpetrator and victim are to blame for the rape.

1 = Perpetrator fully to blame
1 2

3

4

5

7= Victim fully to blame
6 7



[Manipulation check 1]

The details of the crime were clear.

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

[Manipulation check 2]

On the whole, the comments tended to be supportive of the victim.

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

[Attention check]

Please select 'Strongly agree' to show you have been paying attention to the survey.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

[Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale – Subtle Version (Thelan & Meadows, 2022)]

Please read the following statements and indicate the extent to which you agree with them.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
If a woman is raped while she is drunk, she is not responsible for what happened.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When women go out wearing slutty clothes, they are asking for sexual advances from men.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If a woman goes home with a man after a party, it is her own fault if she has sex and does not want to.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If a woman sleeps around, eventually something bad is going to happen to her.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When women are raped, it is often because the way they said “no” was unclear.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If a woman starts making out, she should not be surprised if a man assumes she wants to have sex.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When men force women to have sex, it is usually because they cannot control their desire for sex.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Men do not usually intend to force sex on a woman, but sometimes they get too carried away.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rape happens when a man’s sex drive gets out of control.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If a man is drunk, he might rape someone accidentally.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If a man was drunk and did not realize what he was doing,	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

he cannot have committed rape.					
If both people are drunk when having sex, rape cannot happen.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A woman can be raped even if she does not physically resist.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If a woman does not physically fight back, she cannot really say she was raped.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual assault probably did not happen if the woman has no bruises or marks.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It is not really rape if the rapist does not use a weapon.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When a woman says “no” during sex and the man does not stop, she was raped.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometimes women who say they were raped agreed to have sex and then regret it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rape accusations can be used as a way of getting back at men.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Women who say they were raped sometimes led the man on and then had regrets.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Women who say they were sexually assaulted sometimes just have emotional problems.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Women who are caught cheating on their boyfriends or husbands sometimes claim they were raped.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

[Conformity Scale (Mehrabian & Stefl, 1995)]

Please read the following statements and indicate the extent to which you agree with them.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I often rely on, and act upon, the advice of others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would be the last one to change my opinion in a heated argument on a controversial topic.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Generally, I'd rather give in and go along for the sake of peace than struggle to have it my way.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I tend to follow family tradition in making political decisions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Basically, my friends are the ones who decide what we do together.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A charismatic and eloquent speaker can easily influence and change my ideas.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am more independent than conforming in my ways	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If someone is very persuasive, I tend to change my opinion and go along with them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I don't give in to others easily.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I tend to rely on others when I have to make an important decision quickly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I prefer to find my own way in life rather than find a group I can follow.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Thank you for your participation in this study.

Please contact Lifeline on 13 11 14 or Beyond Blue on 1300 22 4636 if you experience any discomfort from these questions. Furthermore, if you are a student, you may visit the free and confidential Student Life Counselling Support Service (phone 8313 5663 or visit ground floor of the Horace Lamb Building).