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Investigating how Authority and Advertising influence people's perspective on Victim Blaming.

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**ABSTRACT**

This study aims to investigate the interactions between advertisement perspective, advertisement authority and the belief in a just world on people’s tendency to blame victims rather than perpetrators. Using a three way between subjects design, 84 Manchester Metropolitan University students participate in two scales measuring just world belief and level of victim blaming and are exposed to 1 of 4 images of low or high authority figures representing victim blaming or non-victim blaming perspective within an advert. Results reveal that there is no significant three way interactions or two way but that a belief in a just world does significantly influence an individual’s level of victim blaming. Previous research is evaluated in relation the study’s results and limitations of methodology within the study are discussed as well as potential for further research.

<b>KEY WORDS:</b>	<b>VICIM BLAMING</b>	<b>AUTHORITY</b>	<b>ADVERTISING</b>	<b>JUST WORLD THEORY</b>	
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## Introduction

To begin, this paper will first look at victim blaming and the ways in which this attitude can be formed. Many influences of decision making and attitude formation will be discussed in terms of advertising and authority to later be considered as potential valuable influencing variables for the aim of this study.

Victim blaming occurs when an individual accuses a victim of being responsible for the incident they are involved in (Cook, 2010). Victims who receive blame can also experience secondary victimisation and are less likely to look for help afterward as well as feeling guilt, anxiety, and distrust (Cambell & Raja, 2005). Research surrounding victim blaming is mostly focused on what aspects of the victim and their situation increase the likelihood of an individual blaming them such as, whether the victim knew the perpetrator (Duran et al, 2010), whether the victim resisted the assault (Vidal-Fernández and Megías, 2014), whether the victim was considered to be attractive (Clarke and Lawson, 2009), and whether the victim was drunk (United et al, 2012), (Ferguson and Ireland, 2012). This Methodology manipulating the characteristics of the victim reveals how people create explanations or find excuses as to why the victim must be in some way responsible.

A just world Belief is when a person holds the attitude that everybody in the world gets what they deserve, with this attitude they are provided with a purpose and given the confidence to live life in the hands of fate (Montada and Lerner, 1998). Just world theory provides explanation for why victims are often blamed for unfortunate events which have happened to them. Montada and Lerner (1998) explain that when people who believe in a just world come across an innocent victim they are forced to confront a contradiction to their belief. They feel the need to provide an explanation as to why someone who is undeserving would also suffer. To solve this, they will either proceed to believe that at some point in the future the victim will be reimbursed for their suffering or, conclude that the victim was not innocent and blame the victim for their suffering (Lerner, 1980). Naifach (2001) studied just world belief and victim blaming in the Jury system and found that those scoring high on the just world belief scale would place responsibility on the victims for their involvement. It has also been found that victim blaming is not just an outcome of a person needing to defend their belief in a just world but in doing so, they strengthen their belief (Montada and Lerner, 1998).

Attitudes can be defined as evaluations people form based on information they have perceived and processed, in its basic form an attitude is an individual's belief on a given topic (Bohner and Wänke, 2002). There are two possible pathways used in the process of attitude formation, the peripheral or the central route as explained by the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). The peripheral route relies on information such as the information provider, where the central route relies on information that refers more to the actual message which is being portrayed. Chaiken (1980) provides evidence of how the central route is equivalent to systematic processing, requiring more effort from individuals and the peripheral route is equivalent to heuristic processing, which requires less effort from the individual.

The systematic information processing method essentially involves individuals processing and analysing all information in order to evaluate its relevance and importance in forming attitudes and beliefs (Chaiken et al. 1989). This method of processing can be seen in how adverts persuade people to purchase their products, such as posters being effective in influencing people to spend money (Breivik and Nysveen, 2005). Advertising companies use

details and portray messages which people will read and perceive and form judgements on, in order to decide whether they would invest in the product or not. Some factors which have been found to influence the effectiveness of advertising include the amount of exposure (Bornstein, 1989), exposure delay (Raghubir and Menon, 2005) and observers interest (Muehling and Laczniak, 1988).

Advertising doesn't always focus on selling product, sometimes adverts focus on selling an idea or a belief. For example, Illes et al. (2004) conducted an analysis on the effectiveness of advertising types and people's decisions making on referring themselves to radio-imaging. It was found that advertising from posters stimulated enough interest that people would research further into finding even more information. This link between advertising and influencing an individual's perspective brings to question whether advertising would influence an individual's judgements on blaming victims. According to the research above it would be expected that if an individual was exposed to an advert, such as a poster, which portrayed information about blaming a victim rather than a perpetrator then that individual could be influenced by the material and look for further information about victims being responsible for their assault.

Unfortunately, there is little to no research on the effects of advertising on the likelihood of individuals blaming victims however, advertisements and posters with a victim blaming focus do exist such as, a poster which Sanghani (2015) found provided by the Essex Police Department. The image had been withdrawn by the police due to multiple complaints of how it had portrayed the victims of rape/assault to be responsible for the incident. Due to the lack of research it cannot be statistically proven whether this poster would have influenced people to alter their attitudes and begin blaming victims but on the other hand, it does bring to question the influence of the authority providing the advertisement.

Authority influences an individual's attitude in a different way to advertising. Instead of persuasion, a person will alter their attitude dependent on how reliable they perceive the provider of the source of information to be such as, a higher authoritative figure. This influence is an example of heuristic processing as attitudes are formed through using the most readily available information the individual has for each given topic (Chen et al. 1999). This process represents the peripheral route of the ELM mentioned earlier within the paper. It focuses upon heuristics which are defined as constructs that an individual has learned through experience and has stored away for later referencing (Chen et al. 1999). People would have heuristics for how reliable a source of information would be and so in terms of authority, people would see the police as the provider of the given information and so assume, based on their heuristics and experiences that the information provided can be trusted and should in turn be considered as correct and agreed with.

Some factors which have been found to influence an individual's likelihood to obey include genetics (Ludeke et al. 2013), personality (Bègue et al. 2014) and the level of authority (Milgram, 1965). Looking further into Authority as an influencer, Pierre et al (2012) conducted a study whereby nurses' decision making choices were observed. It was found that nurses would reframe from objecting to decisions made by a doctor, a strong authoritative figure, even when a patient's health was at risk. This supports the notion that people trust a higher authority figures and will agree with their suggested perspective irrespective of the consequences. This choice to follow and obey the orders of an authoritative figure may be related to trust.

If someone's heuristic is to trust a high authoritative figure then they are likely to agree with any message that is portrayed by this figure. Stamatakis (2016) found that adolescents in Brazil were

more likely to disobey laws enforced by the police force when they perceived the police to untrustworthy and unreliable and the opposite was found for those who claimed that's they trusted the police. This would suggest that an individual's perspective on authority could potentially determine their likelihood to agree with or disagree with messages in which they portray.

Individuals form heuristics of higher authorities due to whether their experiences with them are positive or negative such as, receiving help and support from them (Stamatakis, 2016 ) or feeling judged and victimised by them.(Sleath and Bull, 2012).

Through the years, there has been a lack of victims reporting cases of rape and sexual offenses; especially reports to the justice system. In the year 2016 more people reported cases of rape to charitable resources such as Rape Crisis (Rape Crisis: England and Wales, 2018.) than to the police (Office for National Statistics, 2016.) Although in general, victims reporting cases of sexual offenses are on the rise the lack of reporting incidents to the justice system, results in less justice for the victims of these such offences. This study aims to investigate whether advertising from varied levels of authority can influence an individual's attitude towards blaming victims for what they have suffered and whether the individual's belief in a just world determines this allocation of blame any further.

### **Aims:**

To investigate whether there are significant influences of perspective, and authority in advertising, and a person's general level of prejudice on a person's attitude towards victim blaming.

### **Hypothesis:**

There will be significant interactions between the level of authority, the posters perspective and the participant's level of prejudice in terms of their attitude towards victim blaming.

### **Low Belief in a Just World Participants:**

The high authority advert will show higher victim blaming attitudes when the advert is victim blaming than when the advert is non-victim blaming. However, for the low authority adverts, there will be little to no differences between victim blaming and non-victim blaming adverts.

### **High Belief in a Just World Participants:**

Participants will score higher in victim blaming adverts than non- victim blaming adverts irrespective of the authority.

## **Method**

### **Design**

This study is a 2\*2\*2 between subjects factorial design and uses quantitative questionnaires. It has three independent variables, each with two conditions. (Level of Just World Belief; low or high, Level of authority; low or high, and Advert Perspective; Victim Blaming or Non Victim Blaming.) Due to these independent variables there will be eight groups of participants; Low belief, Low authority and victim blaming (group 1), low belief, low authority and non-victim blaming (group 2), low Belief, high authority and victim blaming (group 3), low belief, high authority and non-victim blaming (group4), high belief, low authority and victim blaming (group 5), high belief, low authority and non-victim blaming (group 6), high belief, high authority

and victim blaming (group 7), and finally high belief, high authority and non-victim blaming (group 8). The dependent variable of this study is the participants score from the victim blaming questionnaire which is based on a sexual assault scenario. The study uses Manchester Metropolitan Universities' participation pool and Qualtrics to find participants and collect data. This method of data collection occurs anywhere the participant can access the system and so does not put either the researcher or the participant in an uncomfortable situation. Ethical approval was given in order for this study to be conducted, this form can be found in Appendix 1.

## **Participants**

A sample of eighty-four students (Males N=14, Females N=68 and Other N=2) were recruited using an Opportunity sampling method. This method of sampling was chosen to gather participants as it is not very time consuming and allows the researcher to gather a large sample within a limited time. There will be eight groups of participants in this study, dependent on the image they will be shown within the survey. Wilson Van Voorhis and Morgan (2007) suggests that a minimum of seven and a maximum of fourteen participants per group is required in order to achieve moderately reliable and reliable sample sizes for an ANOVA. Taking this into consideration, a sample size between fifty-six and one hundred and twelve will be required for this study. Participants were required to be 18+ years of age in order to participate in this study due to the context of the scenario. The only form of identification participants have is an anonymous ID code they created before ending their participation. Participants were recruited using MMU's participation pool. No participants were contacted or recruited personally by the researcher therefore, there was no form of pressure for participation.

**Materials/Apparatus/Measures:** fully described

### **Global Belief in a Just World Scale (GBJWS)**

Global Belief in a Just World Scale (GBJWS), (Lipkus, 1991) shown in Appendix 2, was used to measure the participants belief in just world theory with a 5 point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree, 2= somewhat disagree, 3= neither agree nor disagree, 4= somewhat agree and 5= Strongly Agree.) High scores from this scale indicate strong belief in just world theory where low scores indicate a lack of belief in just world theory.

### **Sexual Assault Scenario.**

A scenario based on sexual assault was created for the purpose of this study, found in Appendix 3. The scenario consists of a woman (Lilly) waiting for a bus and a man (Callum) finding her attractive, due to the bus having no seating available both characters had to stand. During the bus ride Callum gets closer and closer to Lilly and she notices. At some point Callum leans down and touches Lilly's leg which makes her feel uncomfortable. The aim of the scenario was to be vague about blame and so also included essence of Lilly smiling out of politeness towards Callum. This could potentially be seen as an excuse for why Callum would touch her although she did not give consent or know him well enough for him to touch her in any way.

### **Advert Images**

To make the four images for the study, images were used from various resources. An image from Sanghani's (2015) article, about a Sussex police victim blaming poster, was used as the focal point of the images used within the study (Appendix 4). Logos are used to represent authority in the poster, the Police logo shown in Appendix 5, is used from National Officers Roll of honour (2013) to represent high authority and the charity logo (Appendix 6) is taken from a

fundraising site, Classy (2017) to represent low authority. These images will be presented as posters inspired by the Sussex police sexual assault prevention poster. (Sanghani, 2015.) The phrase used originally by the police discussed in Sanghani (2015), 'Which one of your mates is most vulnerable on a night out? - The one you leave behind.' appears to blame the friend rather than the supposed victim. As the scenario only includes the perpetrator and the victim of sexual assault it is not relevant to discuss a third party in the poster as there is not one mentioned within the scenario. In order for the two victim blaming images to compliment the scenario the phrase has been changed to say, 'Who is the most vulnerable on a night out? - the one who wanders off'. Two more images were made to represent non-victim blaming and so the phrase has been altered further to say 'Who is the most vulnerable on a night out? - The one they choose to hurt.' The four images used in the study can be found in Appendix 7. Participants will see one of four of these images and for a duration of only ten seconds. A time of exposure was chosen to control for participants looking further into the advertisement than others. Disabling the participants from being able to spend more time on the advertisement or skipping the advertisement results in everyone observing and obtaining a similar amount information from it. Ten seconds was chosen as a duration that is too long could have caused the participants to lose interest and too short of a duration could have prevented any information from being retrieved by the participants from the advertisement.

### **Image Questions**

Participants were told in advance that there would be questions based on the image they were shown, this was to reduce bias to make sure that people took notice of the image they were shown. An example of these questions can be found in Appendix 8.

### **Victim Blaming Scale.**

Participants were asked to rate statements, based on the scenario, on a 5 point Likert scale (1=strongly agree, 2= somewhat agree, 3= neither agree nor disagree, 4= somewhat disagree and 5=strongly disagree) determining how strongly participant's agree with the statements. The statements consisted of neutral statements, 'Lilly and Callum got on the same bus.' (Questions 2, 4, 7 and 8), victim blaming statements, 'If Lilly didn't wear a dress, Callum wouldn't have touched her leg.' (Questions 1, 5, 9 and 10) and non-victim blaming statements, 'Callum did not accidentally touch Lilly's leg (Questions 3 and 6), (see Appendix 9.) Ratings for victim blaming statements will be reversed, so scoring high overall will mean the participant has a victim blaming perceptiveness on the scenario. Scores for neutral statements do contribute to the participant's overall score, this only shows that the participant has read the scenario.

### **Procedure and Ethics**

Students were recruited through Manchester Metropolitan Universities' research participation pool where they were invited to participate in this study. (Appendix 10) Participants were then transferred to the study on Qualtrics through a link. The study was estimated to take approximately 30 minutes as a maximum time to complete the study. The questionnaire began by informing the participant of the studies aims, why it was being conducted, that it wasn't compulsory for them to take part in the study and were provided with resources to contact if they had any complaints or issues with or during the study (Appendix 11). A consent form was shown and provided important information such as the deadline for withdrawal and informing them of the measures taken to protect their identity to keep their participation anonymous. This form can be found in Appendix 12. All potential participants were unable to carry on with the study unless they agreed to participate, they could terminate the study at any point but would be unable to



proceed unless they wished to participate based on the information they had been provided with. Once fully informed consent had been given, participants were asked for their gender and given a brief overview of what they would experience within the study.

First they were shown the Global Belief in a Just World Scale where they were asked to rate how much they agreed with the statements provided. They were then asked to read a scenario before being informed they would be shown an image. They were told the image would remain on the screen for 10 seconds before they were moved on to answer questions based on this image, they were not informed that they would see only one of four different images. Finally participants were given the victim blaming questionnaire which was based on the scenario they had seen earlier on in the study. Again they were asked to rate how much they agree with the statements. Once they had finished rating they were then shown the debrief form (Appendix 13). This informed the participant that they had been deceived into thinking the study was based on just world beliefs and advertising in terms of memory, when in fact it had been focused on interactions between victim blaming, just world belief, advertising and authority. Participants were again informed of confidentiality, that they could still leave the study and reminded of the last day they could remove their participation as well as being provided with resources of support if they wished for any. Before the study ended they were provided with a screen where they were asked to enter details to create their unique anonymous personal code which would allow the researcher to identify their data if they wished to remove it from the study at a later date.

## Results

Questionnaire responses were retrieved from participants and entered into SPSS v. 24.0.

### Preparation

The data was checked for normality and met assumptions for the parametric test, 1 participant was identified as being more than 3 box-lengths from the box edge and 2 participants were found to be 1 box-lengths from the box edge, none of these outliers were removed due to the lack of change in significance to the study's findings. The Victim Blaming questionnaire consisted of 10 questions, 4 of which were reverse scored. (1, 5, 9 and 10) and 4 which were removed due to being neutral (2, 4, 7 and 8.) The reliability of this scale was found to be non-significant ( $\alpha > .07$ ) as assessed by Chronbach's alpha,  $\alpha = .551$ . The Global Belief in a Just World Scale provided a continuous scale however, in order to meet assumptions this independent variable needed to be a categorical variable. An average of each participant's scores were made and the median value of 2.71 was found in order to provide a split median for the variable. Belief group 1 (low belief in a just world)  $N = 40$  scored between 0- 2.71 and Belief group 2 (high belief in a just world)  $N = 44$  scored 2.71 and above. Victim blaming scores were normally distributed for all groups ( $p > .05$ ) as assessed by Shapiro-Wilk's test of normality and there was homogeneity of variances, as assessed by Levene's test for equality of variances,  $p = 4.19$ .

### Analysis:

A three-way Anova was used for analysis, all independent variable were between subjects, the belief in a just world scale (low belief, high belief), the advertisement perspective (victim blaming, non-victim blaming) and advertisement authority (low, high). The dependent variable for this study was the participant's victim blaming score. Descriptive statistics can be found in table 1.

Table 1

*Descriptive Statistics for belief in a just world, advert perspective and authority.*

GBJWS	Advert Perspective	Advert Authority	N	Mean (SD)	95% Confidence level	
					LB	UB
Low Belief	Victim Blaming	Low Authority	10	1.68 (0.40)	1.35	2.02
		High Authority	9	1.70 (0.41)	1.35	2.06
	Non-Victim Blaming	Low Authority	9	1.70 (0.48)	1.35	2.06
		High Authority	12	1.90 (0.54)	1.61	2.22
High Belief	Victim Blaming	Low Authority	11	2.27 (0.67)	1.95	2.59
		High Authority	12	2.15 (0.57)	1.85	2.46
	Non-Victim Blaming	Low Authority	12	1.94 (0.46)	1.64	2.25
		High Authority	9	2.20 (0.64)	1.85	2.56

A significant main effects of belief in a just world was found  $F(1,76)= 11.161$  ,  $p= .001$  ,  $\eta_p^2=.128$ . Individuals in the high belief group ( $M= 12.82$ ,  $SD= 3.47$ ) scored significantly higher on the victim blaming scale than individuals in the low belief group. ( $M= 10.58$ ,  $SD= 2.77$ ). There were no significant simple two-way interactions between advert perspective and advert authority,  $F(1, 76) = 1.488$ ,  $p= .226$ , Belief in a just world and advert perspective,  $F(1, 76) = 1.187$ ,  $p= .279$ , and belief in a just world and advert authority,  $F(1, 76)= .040$ ,  $p= .842$ . There was a non-significant three-way interaction between belief in a just world, advert authority and advert perspective,  $F(1, 76) = .158$ ,  $p= .692$ . See Appendix.14 for all SPSS output.

## Discussion

The results reveal that there is not a significant interaction between an advert's perspective, level of authority and an individual's belief in a just world in terms of victim blaming. Where there were also no evidence of two way interactions between the variables there was evidence for an individual's level of belief in a just world and their score on the victim blaming scale. These findings will be discussed further and evaluated in relation to previous research as well as considerations of limitations to methodology and potential for further research.

The only significant result from the analysis was a main effect, which revealed that individuals with high beliefs in a just world (groups one, two, three and four) scored higher on the victim blaming scale than those with low beliefs in a just world (groups five, six, seven and eight). This result supports previous research related to the just world belief and people blaming victims for their own suffering (Montada and Lerner, 1998). The scenario used as a reference for the victim blaming scale in this study included the characteristics of the victim and so complements the methods used by previous studies such as Duran et al (2010), and Vidal-Fernández and Megías (2014) who focus on the influence of the victims characteristics on the participant and whether it alters their likelihood to blame the victims or the perpetrators. A limitation of the method used within this study is that the scenario was created by the researcher and although it was given ethical approval by a supervisor it cannot be clear whether the scenario itself influences the participant.

The scale used to measure participants level of victim blaming in this study was created by the researcher and, when testing the reliability of the victim blaming scale a Cronbach's alpha of  $\alpha = .551$  was found. This non-significant result means that the findings from this study are also unreliable. When assessing the reliability, removing any statements wouldn't have made it more significant and so it was not relevant to do so. To improve the reliability of this scale there should have been more statements focussing on non-victim blaming, and victim blaming and less neutral statements. Overall once the four neutral statements had been removed during analysis, the scale was only measuring based on six questions (two non-victim blaming and four victim blaming statements), ideally there should have been more statements involved in the analysis to improve the Chronbach's score.

Another method to improve the reliability of the victim blaming scale is to increase the sample size so there is more data to analyse. Only Eighty-Two students participated in this study, although this is higher than the minimum of fifty-six required to achieve a moderately reliable sample size, it is twenty eight less participants than what is required for a sample size with strong reliability (Wilson Van Voorhis and Morgan, 2007). This sample size is not ideal to determine totally reliable results from, it is possible that with more time, time management and more resources, significant results and stonger reliability could have been achieved with more participation.

Hypothesis one proposed that low belief participants who see the high authority images will score higher on the victim blaming scale when the image perspective is victim blaming than if it is non-victim blaming. Also, that the participants will score lower on the victim blaming scale when they see a low authority advert with the perspective of victim blaming and non-victim blaming. Part one of this hypothesis expects that group three (low belief, high authority and victim blaming) would score higher on the victim blaming scale than group four (low belief, high authority and non-victim blaming), due to the perspective of the advert that group three saw was victim blaming and the authority providing the advert has high for both.

The results from this studies analysis were not significant but also, did not support the first section of hypothesis one, instead it presented that low belief participants who were shown the non-victim blaming advert provided by high authority scored higher on the victim blaming scale than low belief participants who saw the victim blaming advert provided by high authority. Previous research had suggested that individuals were likely to agree with the perspective of an advert if it is effective (Illes, 2004), (Breivik and Nysveen, 2005). However, since the findings of this study do not support this evidence, factors of advert effectiveness such as, exposure and observer interest, must be taken into consideration. Raghubir and Menon (2005) found that the longer time between seeing an advert and evaluating its information the less likely the participant would show a similar attitude as the perspective presented by the advert. In this study participants saw the advert and then answered three questions before they were given the task to evaluate the information the advert provided. This delay could have possibly influenced the participant's ability to recall the information provided by the advert and so would have been unable to apply it to their evaluations for the victim blaming scale.

Bornstein (1989) found a positive relationship between the time a stimulus was presented to participants and the likelihood they would show signs of agreeing with the stimulus shown. The results suggest that if an individual is not shown information for long enough then they are not likely to use the information to evaluate and form attitudes. During this study the images providing victim blaming and non-victim blaming attitudes were only revealed to the participants for ten seconds. Once the time was up they were taken to another screen where they could navigate to the next section. It is possible that the duration of which the advert had been exposed to the participants in this study was not long enough to have influenced the participant's attitude towards it. Perhaps if the advert was repeated a few times throughout the study with short durations of exposure, the participant may have gathered more information from it on each different occasion and so had more to consider and add to their evaluations for the victim blaming scale.

The second part of hypothesis one suggested that group one (low belief, low authority and victim blaming) and group two (low authority, low authority and victim blaming) would both score similarly on the victim blaming scale due to the lack of influence from the authority figure providing the advertisement (Milgram, 1965). Although they were not significant, the results from the analysis supported these findings that individuals are less likely to obey a low authority figure and so their attitudes are less likely to match that of the information they provide. A limitation to Milgram's (1965) electrocution study in relation to this study its authority influences are not directly related to advertising but instead to the direct orders given by person the participant had met. He did find that the influence of the level of authority differed between when the figure was stood with the participant while they gave a stranger an electric shock and when the figure left the room. Participants in both conditions were less likely to continue with electrocution when the figure had left but furthermore, participants who were instructed by the lower authority figure were more likely than those who were instructed by the higher authoritative figure to disobey the orders they had been given.

This finding of participants disobeying more when the authority figures leaves the room could possibly represent how in advertising the authoritative figure is not actually present to give the information. Also, the level of authority still influences people's attitude towards the information provided but the influence isn't as strong as when the figure is actually present. This evaluation provides insight as to why the results for authority in advertising were found to be non-significant for this study. As the advert was only a poster, the authoritative figure may not have been clear to the participants and so didn't influence their attitudes. A future consideration

would be to use a video advert whereby a police officer (high authority) and a volunteer/ survivor (low authority) say something which is victim blaming or non-victim blaming, this should increase the influence of level of authority as it would be clearer for the participant to distinguish the authority of the provider.

Hypothesis two suggested that high belief participants would score higher when the image they were shown was victim blaming than if it was non victim blaming for both high and low authority groups. From this it was expected that group five (high belief, low authority and victim blaming) would score higher than group six (high belief, low authority and non-victim blaming) and group seven (high belief, high authority and victim blaming) would score higher than group eight (high belief, high authority and non-victim blaming). Though the results were non-significant, they did reveal that group five's victim blaming scores were higher than group six's however, group eight's victim blaming scores were higher than group seven's.

The expectation that the advert's perspective would influence an individual's attitude comes from the findings in Illes et al. (2004) study of advertising and the use of radio-imagery. The results revealed that advertising in general was an effective way to provide information and alter people's attitudes towards radio-imaging, although some methods were more effective than others. The lack of authority within Illes et al. (2004) shows how the lack of authority level influence on advertising and how individuals can still cause alter their attitudes due to the information being solely based on the information provided. This is supported by the results resented by groups five and six.

On the other hand, Group seven and eight do not support the findings previously mentioned, instead they show that authority, particularly high authority, do influence whether information from an advert is used. These findings support Stamatakis (2016) and how the individual's personal perspective of the authority providing the information influences how they form their attitude. Similar to heuristics, if a person has experience of not trusting authority such as the police then they are not likely to trust a source which they have provided, possibly demonstrated by group seven's lack of agreeing with the information provided by the high authority. For future reference, attitudes towards the authority providing the information on the advert could be measured and the influences from the participant's experience of authority can be analysed and possibly even controlled for.

During data collection, participants were asked to report their gender. This studies participants are majority female, which is relatively representative of the population of psychology students however, due to the lack of male participation these findings cannot be generalised to both genders, with more time and more participants a four way ANOVA could have revealed interactions between gender, authority, advert perspective and believe in a just world on level of victim blaming.

While neither hypothesis one nor two were significantly proven by the results of this study it is clear that believing in a just world does make you more likely to blame the victim of sexual assault than the perpetrator. The results have been summarised in terms of the hypotheses and been explain with the help of previous research in advertising and authority. It is clear that further research is required in order to gain more insight into both advertisement perspectives and level of authority especially in terms of victim blaming due to the lack of research in these areas. With more understanding of how advertising and authority influence individual's attitudes, the more we can understand how advertisements from the police may or may not have the potential to either improve or worsen the situation of victimisation in society.

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