ABSTRACT

TITLE:	The Effect of Quotes from Authority on Victim Blaming Attitudes in Cases of Sexual Assault
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ABSTRACT: This study investigated how quotes from authority sources impacted college students' attribution of responsibility in sexual assault scenarios. Undergraduate students (N = 97) from a small liberal arts college in the Southwest read one of three quotes related to victim blaming: one that blames the victim for the situation, one against blaming the victim, and a neutral, unrelated quote. Next they read a scenario leading up to a sexual assault. Levels of victim blaming were measured using a modified version of the Attitudes toward Rape Victims Scale (Ward, 1988). The results indicated that authority quotes did not significantly affect participants' victim blaming attitudes. However, males reported higher victim blaming perceptions than females, which supported a secondary hypothesis about gender differences in victim blaming. The data shows that while some results were significant, authority sources may not be the best avenue to elicit differences in victim blaming attitudes. Future research should explore how rape myth education affects victim blaming attitudes and examine how to best reduce male perceptions of victim blaming.