www.sci-cult.com

JUST WORLD BELIEFS AND MEDIA INFLUENCE ON TRANSGENDER VICTIM BLAMING IN THAILAND

Boonyaporn Anaman[1*] and Yokfah Isaranon[2]

[1,2]*Faculty of Psychology, Chulalongkorn University, Boonyaporn.A@chula.ac.th, Yokfah.I@chula.ac.th*

Corresponding Author: Boonyaporn Anaman
(Boonyaporn.A@chula.ac.th)

ABSTRACT

Victim blaming, a biased perception that attributes responsibility to the victim, causes emotional harm and diverts attention from criminal acts. Therefore, examining the mechanisms underlying such bias could enhance understanding and lead to more effective strategies to reduce it. This study investigates psychological factors that may contribute to victim blaming, specifically toward transwomen, a marginalized group in Thai society. A correlational study was conducted using convenience sampling. One hundred and eighty six Thai male participants completed an online questionnaire comprising scales that measured belief in a just world, prejudice toward transwomen, rape myths in the media, and victim blaming. Results indicated that just world belief positively predicted victim blaming through the full mediating effects of prejudice against transwomen and rape myths in the media ($\beta1 = .05$, $p < .05$ and $\beta2 = .19$, $p < .01$ and β is the coefficient that describes the predictive ability of a variable.). Findings from this study shed light on the psychological mechanisms underlying victim blaming, particularly revealing that media representation and prejudice toward transwomen might be primary causes. This suggests that the ways in which transwomen are portrayed, as well as the framing of crime incidents in the media, can influence public perceptions and attitudes, leading to victim blaming.

KEYWORDS: Victim Blaming, Just World Belief, Rape Myth, Transgender Prejudice.

1. INTRODUCTION

Victim blaming is a common social response to incidents of violence, abuse, or crime particularly sexual violence. It is prevalent not only in Thailand but also throughout Southeast Asia and globally. This behavior reflects the concept of the "ideal victim," a social construct that defines the attributes considered appropriate or acceptable for someone to be viewed as a legitimate victim (Rayanil, 2022). When individuals deviate from this ideal—for example, by dressing provocatively, traveling alone at night, or possessing a non-normative sexual identity they are often subjected to societal judgment and discrimination. Such reactions serve to diminish the seriousness of the offense and may implicitly legitimize the perpetrator's actions. This social pattern is closely tied to the belief in a just world, a psychological tendency in which individuals assume that people get what they deserve and deserve what they get (Jaturapanich, 2014). In patriarchal societies, such as Thailand, this belief tends to be stronger among individuals in dominant social positions especially men who interpret fairness through the lens of their own unchallenged status.

The persistence of patriarchal norms in Thai society can be further understood through social learning theory, which posits that individuals acquire behaviors, norms, and values through observation and imitation of others, particularly authority figures and media representations. From early childhood, Thai boys and girls are often socialized into distinct gender roles through family expectations, educational practices, and cultural media. Male dominated behaviors such as dominance, control, and emotional restraint are frequently reinforced and rewarded, while traits associated with femininity are devalued or subordinated. These learned behaviors become normalized over time and are transmitted intergenerationally, thus perpetuating the gender hierarchy.

Additionally, the concept of in group and out group dynamics helps explain how patriarchal ideologies are maintained and defended. In the Thai context, men typically form the dominant in group, which is granted social legitimacy and authority. Those who conform to traditional gender roles are accepted within this group, while individuals particularly women or gender diverse people who challenge or deviate from these norms are positioned as part of the out group. This division reinforces discriminatory attitudes and victim-blaming behaviors, as those in the in group seek to preserve their social status and power by marginalizing those perceived as threats to the existing hierarchy.

Also, the media representations play a significant role in sustaining these beliefs. News coverage and entertainment content often perpetuate myths about rape and victimhood without providing critical educational context (Sacks, 2018). Common narratives include blaming the victim for "provoking" the incident, casting doubt on their credibility, or portraying perpetrators as lacking intent or self-control (Lonsway, 1994). These narratives contribute to the trivialization of sexual violence and discourage victims from speaking out, while also reinforcing societal tendencies to discredit or dismiss their experiences.

Just World Belief, "Believe in what they deserved." Just World Beliefs (JWBs) are part of an individual's cognitive bias in responding to situations that occur to themselves and others. These beliefs reflect the desire to believe that events that happen are reasonable and just (Jaturapanich, 2014). They can also be developed from Kohlberg's Moral Development Theory, where concepts of good and evil are socially defined through virtues, values, rules, and religion (Phantmanawin, 2007). In this context, morality serves as the foundation of justiceca universal standard accepted by most people (Kohlberg, 1976). When individuals follow the ethical guidelines defined by society, they are often categorized as "good" and deserving of positive outcomes. Conversely, when they behave outside or contrary to the moral framework of society, they are often categorized as "bad" and deserving of social punishment.

When classifying Just World Beliefs from the perspective of individuals facing negative events, according to Paulhus' concept, this belief can be categorized into three dimensions based on the development of the Multidimensional Just World Belief scale created by Lipkus. Personal Just World Belief, which reflects an individual's belief in the justice of events that happen to themselves and the expectation that they will receive justice due to their actions; Interpersonal Just World Belief, which is an individual's view of the justice of events that happen to others, characterized by the tendency to assess the actions of others and the outcomes they receive as just or reasonable; and Socio Political Just World Belief, which is an individual's belief in the justice of society as a whole, concerning social conditions, economy, or crimes occurring within that society. However, this study will focus solely on the interpersonal dimension of Just World Beliefs, as there is a demonstrated relationship between this dimension and negative attitudes and behaviors that

individuals are likely to express toward others, such as victim blaming and gender discrimination (Lipkus, 1991).

1.1. The Concept of Victim Blaming

Victim-blaming is a behavior in which individuals perceive that victims of crimes, violence, or abuse are partially at fault or responsible for the situations they face, or the belief that victims must have done something wrong or inappropriate, leading them to become victims (Gracia, 2014). This often focuses on the victim's clothing, behavior, the places they visit, and their lifestyle (Sukhdee, 2022). It manifests as blaming individuals for the misfortune or harmful events they have experienced (Haber, 2015).

Victim-blaming can be explained through Attribution Theory, a framework for inferring the causes of an individual's actions in various situations, which involves making connections or establishing relationships between specific events and the sources that led to those events (Heider, 1976). It is a cognitive process through which individuals perceive events, which may include the actions of others, their actions, and the results stemming from environmental factors (Shaw & Costanzo, 1982). When individuals observe events, they often infer that the cause lies within the person (Internal Attribution or Dispositional Attribution) rather than external factors (External Attribution). As a result, when individuals face negative events and are powerless to help themselves, observers or society may blame the victim for being partially responsible for those events or for not avoiding the harmful situation, leading to harm. In a Study Compiled and Summarized in the Book Why Women are Blamed for Everything?

1.2. Exposing the Culture of Victim-Blaming by Jessica Taylor in 2020, the Author Identified Three Main Areas of Victim-Blaming in Various Situations

1.2.1. Behavioral Blaming

This focuses on the victim's behavior before the harmful event occurs, such as the victim drinking alcohol, walking home alone, or using a dating app.

1.2.2. Characterological Blaming

This focuses on the victim's personality and characteristics, with the belief that due to their nature or behavior, they were more likely to experience a harmful event. For example, the victim may be seen as naïve, unintelligent, or sexually attractive.

1.2.3. Situational Blaming

This focuses on the situation the victim was in before the harmful event, such as attending an unsafe party, knowing that bad things typically happen in that location, or living in a dangerous, isolated neighborhood. In this study, the researcher adopts the framework for categorizing victim-blaming based on Taylor's 2020 literature review, which covers all three aspects of victim-blaming behavioral blaming, characterological blaming, and situational blaming. Develop a victim-blaming questionnaire using a vignette based format, with items that comprehensively cover all three dimensions as outlined in the conceptual framework.

1.3. Transgender Prejudice, the Subtle Form of Transphobia

Although today's society has become more open and accepting of diverse gender identities, as seen in the increasing roles of transgender individuals in various sectors such as business, media, and even politics, prejudice against transgender people or minority groups still persists. This is evident in forms of discrimination and the denial of certain rights that transgender people should be entitled to (Haider-Markel, 2017). While transphobia has been expressed less openly, prejudice against transgender individuals remains prevalent.

Transgender prejudice refers to the negative valuing, stereotyping, and discrimination against individuals who express a gender identity that does not conform to the societal norms in their environment (King, Winter & Webster, 2009). Most researchers use this term interchangeably with transphobia, which is a negative attitude towards transgender people (Hill & Willoughby, 2005). However, contemporary studies tend to differentiate the two terms due to the varying severity of how transgender individuals are treated (Davidson, 2014). Transphobia is characterized by exclusion, bullying, and discomfort in coexisting with transgender individuals in society. Some studies (Tebbe & Moragi, 2012; Hill, 2002) suggest that prejudice is not directed at the transgender identity itself but rather at the discomfort with recognizing someone's gender identity that does not align with the traditional binary notion of sex ingrained in society.

In Davidson's 2014 study, the dimensions of transgender prejudice were classified into two categories the emphasis on physical sex characteristics (sex essentiality) and discomfort. These behavioral expressions are key indicators of prejudice and represent the current societal trend of

reducing the intensity of overt anti transgender behaviors, where attitudes now mostly appear as opinions and lack support rather than being as harsh as they were in the past. In this study, the dimensions of transgender prejudice were categorized into two aspects based on Davidson's framework sex essentiality and discomfort.

1.4. How Media Shapes People with Rape Myth

In several studies on feminist concepts, it has been discussed that the belief in victim-blaming for experiencing sexual violence, rape, and sexual harassment in society stems from the acceptance of rape myths (McMahon, 2007). These myths often blame the victim for the crime, attributing it to the victim's clothing (Payne, 1999), behavior, or unclear resistance (O'Byrne, 2008). Rape myths are defined as beliefs, thoughts, or attitudes that involve blaming the victim, downplaying the severity of the crime, and minimizing the impact of the event on the victim (Payne, 1999). These misconceptions lead to a misunderstanding of sexual violence or rape, reinforcing biases and stereotypes against both the victim and the perpetrator (Burt, 1980), which may result in antagonism towards the victim. It also refers to attitudes and beliefs that are incorrectly spread, influencing misjudgments of sexual violence (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994), often in the form of statements like "the victim is lying," "the victim was asking for it," or "the victim wanted it," which attacks the rape victim. On the contrary, such myths may reduce the blame on the perpetrator, with statements like "the perpetrator didn't mean for it to happen," "the perpetrator couldn't control themselves due to temptation," or downplay the severity of the event, such as "it was just a minor incident" or "the victim wasn't hurt by it" (Bohner, 1998; Eyssel & Bohner, 2010; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994).

Although these beliefs are relatively few in number, the consequences of accepting rape myths significantly affect the victims of sexual violence, whether through victim-blaming or disbelief in the victim's account (Burt, 1980). This stems from beliefs propagated through socialization, with media and entertainment outlets playing a role in spreading these ideas, shaping public opinions on sexual violence (Soothill, 1991). Often, these outlets lead to victim-blaming or foster misunderstandings about non-consensual sexual violence (Soothill & Walby, 1991; Soothill, 2004). Examples include media reports of rape where perpetrators are depicted as mentally ill or unable to control themselves (Benedict, 1992), or

reporting on victims' behaviors that are easily judged by society, such as drinking alcohol, using drugs, dressing provocatively, or walking alone (Meyers, 1997). There is also the dissemination of pornographic media related to rape, contributing to erroneous understandings, like the victim is intentionally seductive, or that the victim resists initially but eventually consents.

Not only news media and pornography but also entertainment media that is widely accessible, such as television dramas and novels, frequently portray rape myths and sexual violence (Fund for the Development of Safe and Creative Media, 2021). Studies on sexual behaviors presented in these entertainment media often show repeated storylines about non-consensual sex, such as during intoxication, when one party is unconscious, or forced sex that ends with a romantic relationship. These portrayals romanticize sexual violence, diminish the psychological trauma faced by rape victims, and further propagate rape myths in society without proper regulation. In the 1999 Study by Payne, Lonsway, and Fitzgerald, they developed the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale to Understand the Components of Beliefs Related to Rape in Society. Later, it was further Developed into The Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Short Form (IRMA-SF) (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1999), retaining the Original Division into Seven Components

1. **The victim asked for it.** The belief that the victim provoked or did something to invite the sexual violence they experienced.
2. **It wasn't really rape.** The belief that the sexual violence that occurred was not a result of coercion or rape but was consensual.
3. **The perpetrator didn't mean to.** The belief that the sexual violence wasn't intentional on the part of the perpetrator but was beyond their control.
4. **The victim wanted it.** The belief that, deep down, the victim wanted the sexual violence or rape that occurred, or even had some emotional or physical response to the violence.
5. **The victim lied.** The belief that reports of sexual violence or rape by the victim are lies, fabricated for personal gain.
6. **Rape is a trivial event.** The belief that rape is a common, inconsequential event that doesn't have serious consequences for the victim.
7. **Rape is a deviant event.** The belief that perpetrators of sexual violence have some external characteristics, status, or behavior that make them unlikely to commit such a crime, thus suggesting that the event was an

anomaly.

The researcher, therefore, categorized the acceptance of rape myths presented in the media in this study into seven dimensions based on Lonsway's framework, as it is a widely referenced for categorizing these myths that frequently appear in various types of media (Ackerman, 2017) and continues to be cited this day. Based on literature review and prior studies (Furnham & Procter, 1989; Anderson, 1992; Glennon & Joseph, 1993; Karakus & Goregenli, 2011), the influence of the belief in a just world has been shown to manifest in the form of victim-blaming in numerous cases of sexual crimes. The relationship between this belief and victim-blaming behavior is further reinforced by other contributing factors, such as gender bias and the acceptance of rape myths. However, none of the forementioned studies have specifically examined victim-blaming in cases of sexual crimes involving transgender individuals within the Thai social context despite recent survey data indicating an increase in sexual harassment incidents targeting individuals with diverse gender identities.

Given this gap, the present study aims to explore the interplay between belief in a just world, bias against transgender people, and the acceptance of rape myths as perpetuated by media three conceptual frameworks closely associated with victim-blaming in sexual violence. This investigation seeks to understand how these beliefs operate within Thai society, which differs in certain sociocultural aspects from the Western contexts in which these theories were originally developed. Ultimately, the study hopes to raise awareness and promote critical reflection on victim-blaming, both among scholars and the wider public, to support more effective pathways for help seeking and trauma informed care for survivors.
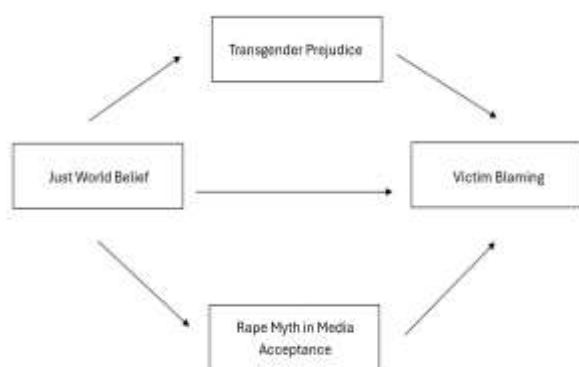

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study is a survey research project aimed at examining the influence of the belief in a just world on male victim-blaming of transgender women victims of sexual crimes. It investigates how biases against transgender people individuals and the rape myths presented in the media serve as mediating variables. The sample group consisted of 65 male participants was selected during the tool development phase to assess the quality of the instruments and to choose statements for use in the survey, which included a belief in a just world questionnaire, a transgender prejudice questionnaire, a rape myths acceptance in media questionnaire, and a victim-blaming questionnaire. The main study involved 186 participants from the male Thai demographic.

The sample size was determined using the G*Power program, based on an F-test under the statistical model of Linear Multiple Regression Fixed Model, R^2 deviation from zero. In this study, the researcher set the effect size at a medium level ($f^2 = 0.15$), with an alpha level of 0.05 and a power level of 0.95. The analysis yielded a minimum required sample size of 119 participants.

However, the researcher collected data from a total of 376 participants using an online questionnaire distributed via Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), and snowball sampling techniques. This approach was employed to reduce the risk of missing data and to enhance the statistical power of the study. After screening data completeness excluding cases where participants abandoned the questionnaire midway or completed less than half of the measurement instrument the final sample for the main analysis consisted of 186 participants.

The mediating variables transgender prejudice and rape myth in media acceptance were measured concurrently with the other variables. The order of measurement was as follows Just World Belief, followed by Transgender Prejudice, then Rape Myth in Media Acceptance, and finally the vignette scenario accompanied by the Victim-blaming questionnaire items.

2.1. The Development of Thai Version Questionnaire

In this research study, various scales were translated from the original English version into Thai, using the process of Back Translation. This method is used to develop scales for application in different linguistic contexts and requires experts to verify translation accuracy before the translated scales can be used for data collection. After the back translation process, the researcher applied the translated scales to collect data for further statistical testing.

The statistical testing of the sample group in the tool development phase revealed the following Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the 6-item Just World Belief Scale, the alpha coefficient was .672; for the 16-item Transgender Prejudice Scale, the alpha coefficient was 892; for the 20-item Rape Myths in Media Acceptance Scale, the alpha coefficient was .872; and for the 12-item Victim-blaming Scale, the alpha coefficient was 825.

2.2. Statistical Result

Data was collected from 186 males aged 18 to 55 years. **When classified by age groups, the sample was divided into five age ranges** Group 1 (ages 18 to 25) included 29 individuals (15.6%), Group 2 (ages 26 to 33) included 44 individuals (23.7%), Group 3 (ages 34 to 41) included 36 individuals (19.4%), Group 4 (ages 42 to 49) included 43 individuals (23.1%), and Group 5 (ages 50 to 55) included 34 individuals (18.3%). **When classified by education level, the sample was divided into four groups** Group 1 (below bachelor's degree) included 23 individuals (12.4%), Group 2 (bachelor's degree) included 120 individuals (64.5%), Group 3 (master's degree) included 40 individuals (21.5%), and Group 4 (doctoral degree) included 3 individuals (1.6%)

The analysis of the preliminary relationships among the four variables was carried out using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The variables included belief in a just world, bias against transgender individuals, acceptance of rape myths perpetuated by the media, and victim-blaming. Statistically significant correlations at the .01 level were identified between the variables. The correlation between belief in a just world and bias against transgender individuals was .251. The correlation between belief in a just world and acceptance of media perpetuated rape myths was .407. The correlation between belief in a just world and victim-blaming was .196.

The correlation between bias against transgender individuals and acceptance of media perpetuated rape myths was .485. The correlation between bias against transgender individuals and victim-blaming was .433. Lastly, the correlation between acceptance of media perpetuated rape myths and victim-blaming was .554. All variable pairs exhibited positive correlations, indicating that as one variable increases, the other variable tends to increase as well, as shown in the table.

Table 1: The Analysis of the Correlation Coefficients between the Variables.

Variable	JWB	TPS	RMIM	VB
JWB	1.000			
TPS	.251**	1.000		
RMIM	.407**	.485**	1.000	
VB	.196**	.433**	.554**	1.000

The analysis of the correlation coefficients between the variables to examine their preliminary relationships the previously mentioned results. The researcher then performed hypothesis testing by analyzing the interaction between the variables using the PROCESS command (Hayes, 2013), which revealed the following Belief in a just world had a statistically significant direct effect on transgender prejudice at a level of .25. It also had a direct effect on rape myth in media acceptance at a level of .41. However, no statistically significant direct effect of just world belief on victim-blaming was found. Bias against transgender individuals had a statistically significant effect on victim-blaming at a level of .22, as did the media rape myths, which influenced victim-blaming at a level of .46. An indirect effect of belief in a just world on victim-blaming was observed through transgender prejudice, with a value of .05, which was statistically significant at a level of less than .05. Additionally, an indirect effect of just world belief on victim-blaming through the acceptance of rape myths in media was found at a value of .19, which was statistically significant at a level of less than .01. This resulted in a total indirect effect of .24.

Table 2: Total Indirect Effect.

| Relationship	B	β	S.E.	P-value
JWB → TPS (r = .2484, R2 = .0617, LLCL = .1442, ULCL = .5319)	.34	.25	.0983	.0007
JWB → RMIM (r = .4069, R2 = .1656, LLCL = .3090, ULCL = .6136)	.46	.41	.0772	.0000
TPS → VB (t = 3.1368, LLCL = .0824, ULCL = .3619)	.22	.22	.0708	.0020
RMIM → VB (t = 6.2668, LLCL = .3870, ULCL = .7427)	.56	.46	.0901	.0000
JWB → VB (t = -.5934, LLCL = -.2368, ULCL = .1273)	-.06	-.04	.0923	.5537
JWB → TPS → VB (BootLLCL = 0271, BootULCL = .1155)	.08	.05	.0387	.0208
JWB → RMIM → VB (BootLLCL = .1072, BootULCL = .2734)	.26	.19	.0615	.0000
Total Indirect (BootLLCL = .1583, BootULCL = .3236)	.34	.24	.0423	-
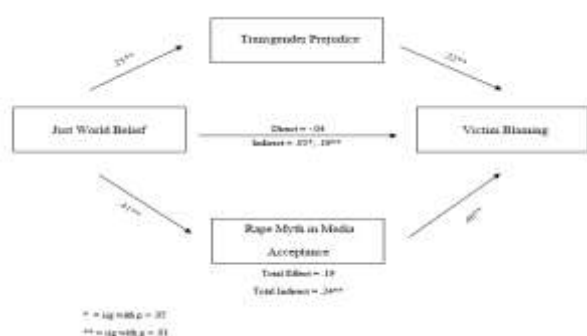
Figure 2: Hypothesis Testing Results.

Based on the hypothesis testing results, the findings indicate a fully mediated effect between belief in a just world and victim-blaming, with transgender prejudice and rape myth acceptance in media serving as mediating variables. Specifically, the study demonstrates that men who hold a strong belief in a just world alone may not necessarily be inclined to blame victims of sexual crimes, particularly in cases involving transgender women. However, when these individuals also exhibit prejudice against transgender people or accept rape myths—as conveyed through various forms of media—such beliefs can contribute to an increased tendency to engage in victim-blaming behavior. This effect is especially pronounced when the victim of sexual violence is a transgender woman.

3. CONCLUSION

Victim-blaming is the attribution of responsibility or fault to victims of violence for the circumstances that befall them, often based on the belief that they must have acted improperly or made poor decisions (Gracia, 2014). This notion is perpetuated by various societal beliefs, including religious doctrines, the just world hypothesis, and the concept of free will (Genschow, 2021). These beliefs can foster the perception that individuals are accountable for their own misfortunes, thereby reinforcing the ideal victim image and being influenced by media representations of daily life (Laura Niemie cited in Chaichon, 2022). Additionally, societal biases against transgender individuals exacerbate this phenomenon, leading to further scrutiny and blame for negative experiences based on their behavior, attire, or circumstances surrounding violent events. This victim-blaming is particularly detrimental to transgender victims of violence, such as sexual crimes, which exhibit higher victimization rates compared to other gender identities.

The present study corroborates existing research by demonstrating a full mediation effect

between belief in a just world and victim-blaming, with biases against transgender individuals and the acceptance of rape myths in media serving as mediating factors. The findings reveal that a high belief in a just world alone does not necessarily result in victim-blaming for sexual crimes, especially against transgender women. However, when coupled with biased attitudes towards transgender individuals or the endorsement of rape myths propagated by media, the likelihood of victim-blaming behaviors increases, particularly when the victim is a transgender woman.

3.1. Based on these Findings, the Researcher Proposes Two Main Areas for Practical Application

1. Addressing Rape Myth acceptance in Media Representations. Although rape myth acceptance in media is a belief based construct and has been less widely studied, it significantly affects victims of sexual violence. A common consequence is the public's tendency to disbelieve victims' testimonies (Burt, 1980) or to blame victims, as confirmed in this study. Historically and in the present day, news and entertainment media have played a major role in disseminating distorted representations of sexual violence, often shaping public attitudes (Soothill, 1991). Media narratives frequently frame stories in a way that encourages victim-blaming or misrepresent the nature of non-consensual sex (Soothill & Walby, 1991; Soothill, 2004). Entertainment content—such as television dramas and novels, which are often accessible to audiences of all ages regularly romanticizes rape or sexual violence by depicting it as a precursor to a romantic relationship. This distorts the reality of trauma, downplays the severity of psychological harm, and contributes to the perpetuation of rape myths in society (Safe and Creative Media Development Fund, 2021). Therefore, reducing victim-blaming through combating rape myth acceptance in media is a promising intervention. A study by Hudspith et al. (2021) proposed approaches to addressing rape myth acceptance through empathy based educational programs and bystander intervention models, which have shown to increase understanding of victims' suffering and reduce social acceptance of rape myths. These approaches may ultimately contribute to a decrease in victim-blaming attitudes in society.

2. Addressing Prejudice against Transgender individuals. Although Thai society is increasingly open to diverse gender identities as evidenced by the visibility of transgender individuals in business, media, and even politics prejudice against transgender people persists. This often manifests as discrimination and denial of equal rights that transgender individuals are entitled to (Haider-Markel, 2017). These forms of subtle and deep seated bias undermine their human rights and contribute to victim-blaming when transgender individuals experience violence. This study specifically found that prejudice against transgender individuals was directly linked to victim-blaming, further exacerbating the trauma of survivors and potentially deterring them from seeking help or receiving appropriate care and support. Reducing victim-blaming, therefore, may also involve increasing awareness and critical reflection on transphobia and societal prejudice against minority groups. Previous research has shown that humanizing approaches to education can reduce bias against transgender individuals by fostering empathy and deconstructing social stigma (Tompkins, 2015). These approaches emphasize understanding human differences and valuing all identities, which can reduce stereotyping and foster inclusive attitudes.

As such, developing educational programs based on humanizing and empathy driven frameworks may be a viable path toward reducing both prejudice and victim-blaming behavior in society.Limitations Previous studies have consistently demonstrated that gender influences belief in a just world, with males exhibiting higher levels of this belief compared to females. This disparity can be attributed to the patriarchal structure of society, wherein men are regarded as holding a superior status to women and sexual minorities, thereby fostering a perception among men that the world is fundamentally fair (Kestner, 2009). Such a perception diminishes the recognition of biases against out group individuals, especially transgender people. Moreover, males are more inclined to accept rape myths propagated by the media. These rape myths are linked to a diminished sense of self-restraint concerning sexual behaviors and male perpetrated rape (Chapleau & Oswald, 2013). Consequently, the higher the acceptance of rape myths, the greater the likelihood of engaging in sexually violent behavior (Basow & Minieri, 2011). Males who endorse these myths are more prone to exhibit violent sexual behaviors towards their partners and hold stereotypical attitudes towards rape victims compared to those who do not hold such beliefs (Loh & Luthra, 2005).

The present study examines the influence of various variables among male participants aged 18–55 who identify as cisgender men. Consequently, the findings may not be fully representative of the broader population and cannot be generalized to all demographic groups. This limitation may impact the applicability of the research results in developing interventions or addressing issues across a wider range of population groups. For future research, it is recommended to expand the sample size and include a more diverse range of participant groups to enable comparative analysis of the influences across different populations. This approach would facilitate the prioritization of intervention strategies and enhance awareness of behaviors that adversely affect the provision of support and recovery services for victims of violence within society.

In the present study, the victim-blaming questionnaire employed simulated scenarios to mitigate self-serving biases commonly associated with negative valence variables, and to elicit more engaged responses than those obtained through straightforward question formats. Nonetheless, during data collection, feedback indicated that some participants experienced discomfort when engaging with scenarios involving sexual violence, resulting in participant attrition and missing data in the victim-blaming section. Therefore, it is advisable for future studies to consider reducing the severity of the scenarios or incorporating more comprehensive pre survey warnings regarding potential psychological distress. Such measures would help minimize data loss by identifying and excluding participants who may be unprepared to engage with sensitive material from the outset.

REFERENCES

Baldwin-White, A., Thompson, M. S., & Gray, A. (2016). Pre- and postintervention factor analysis of the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale. Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma, 25(6), 636–651. https://doi.org/ 10.1080/10926771.2015.1107173

Basow, S. A., & Minieri, A. (2011). "You owe me": Effects of date cost, who pays, participant gender, and rape myth beliefs on perceptions of rape. Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 26(3), 479–497. https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260510363421

Bastian, B., & Haslam, N. (2006). Psychological essentialism and stereotype endorsement. Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 42(2), 228–235. https://doi.org/ 10.1016/j.jesp.2005.03.003

Benabou, R., & Tirole, J. (2006). Belief in a just world and redistributive politics. The Quarterly Journal of Economics, 121(2), 699–746. https://doi.org/ 10.1162/qjec.2006.121.2.699

Bieneck, S., & Krahé, B. (2011). Blaming the victim and exonerating the perpetrator in cases of rape and robbery: Is there a double standard? Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 26(9), 1785–1797. https://doi.org/ 10.1177/0886260510372945

Bohner, G., Eyssel, F., Pina, A., Siebler, F., & Viki, G. T. (2013). Rape myth acceptance: Cognitive, affective and behavioral effects of beliefs that blame the victim and exonerate the perpetrator. In Rape (pp. 17–45). Publisher. https://doi.org/ 10.4324/9781843927129

Bohner, G., Reinhard, M. A., Rutz, S., Sturm, S., Kerschbaum, B., & Effler, D. (1998). Rape myths as neutralizing cognitions: Evidence for a causal impact of anti-victim attitudes on men's self-reported likelihood of raping. European Journal of Social Psychology, 28(2), 257–268. https://doi.org/ 10.1002/(SICI)1099-0992(199803/04)28:2<257:AID-EJSP871>3.0.CO;2-1

Buddie, A. M., & Miller, A. G. (2001). Beyond rape myths: A more complex view of perceptions of rape victims. Sex Roles, 45, 139–160. https://doi.org/ 10.1023/A: 1013575209803

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

Campbell, R., Greeson, M. R., Fehler-Cabral, G., & Kennedy, A. C. (2015). Pathways to help: Adolescent sexual assault victims' disclosure and help-seeking experiences. Violence Against Women, 21(7), 824–847. https://doi.org/ 10.1177/1077801215584071

Carroll, L., Güss, D., Hutchinson, K. S., & Gauler, A. A. (2012). How do US students perceive trans persons? Sex Roles, 67, 516–527. https://doi.org/ 10.1007/s11199-012-0193-8

Chapleau, K. M., & Oswald, D. L. (2013). Status, threat, and stereotypes: Understanding the function of rape myth acceptance. Social Justice Research, 26, 18–41. https://doi.org/ 10.1007/s11211-013-0177-z

Cowan, G. (2000). Women's hostility toward women and rape and sexual harassment myths. Violence Against Women, 6(3), 238–246. https://doi.org/ 10.1177/10778010022181822

Dalbert, C. (1999). The world is more just for me than generally: About the personal belief in a just world scale's validity. Social Justice Research, 12, 79–98. https://doi.org/ 10.1023/A:1022091609047

Dalbert, C. (2009). Belief in a just world. In M. Leary & R. Hoyle (Eds.), Handbook of individual differences in social behavior (pp. 288–297). Guilford Press.

Dalbert, C., & Stoeber, J. (2005). The belief in a just world and distress at school. Social Psychology of Education, 8, 123–135. https://doi.org/ 10.1007/s11218-005-1835-2

Davidson, M. R. (2014). Development and validation of the transgender prejudice scale [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. University Name.

Davies, M., Rogers, P., & Bates, J. A. (2008). Blame toward male rape victims in a hypothetical sexual assault as a function of victim sexuality and degree of resistance. Journal of Homosexuality, 55(3), 533–544. https://doi.org/ 10.1080/00918360802345339

Davies, M., Rogers, P., & Whitelegg, L. (2009). Effects of victim gender, victim sexual orientation, victim response and respondent gender on judgements of blame in a hypothetical adolescent rape. Legal and Criminological Psychology, 14(2), 331–338. https://doi.org/ 10.1348/978185408X386030

Drabish, K., & Theeke, L. A. (2022). Health impact of stigma, discrimination, prejudice, and bias experienced by transgender people: A systematic review of quantitative studies. Issues in Mental Health Nursing, 43(2), 111–118. https://doi.org/ 10.1080/01612840.2021.1961330

Duangduen Phantmanawin. (2007). Sufficiency economy at individual level: Theory and research findings for the construction of psycho-behavioral indicators. NIDA Development Journal, 47(1), 27–79.

Dworkin, E. R., Brill, C. D., & Ullman, S. E. (2019). Social reactions to disclosure of interpersonal violence and psychopathology: A systematic review and meta-analysis. Clinical Psychology Review, 72, Article 101750. https://doi.org/ 10.1016/j.cpr.2019.101750

Eigenberg, H., & Garland, T. (2008). Victim blaming. In Controversies in Victimology (2nd ed., pp. 33–48). Publisher.

Epp, C. R., Maynard Moody, S., & Haider Markel, D. (2017). Beyond profiling: The institutional sources of racial disparities in policing. Public Administration Review, 77(2), 168–178. https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.12702

Feild, H. S. (1978). Attitudes toward rape: A comparative analysis of police, rapists, crisis counselors, and citizens. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 36(2), 156–179. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.36.2.156

Filipas, H. H., & Ullman, S. E. (2001). Social reactions to sexual assault victims from various support sources. Violence and Victims, 16(6), 673–692.

Flores, A. R., Langton, L., Meyer, I. H., & Romero, A. P. (2020). Victimization rates and traits of sexual and gender minorities in the United States: Results from the National Crime Victimization Survey, 2017. Science Advances, 6(40), eaba6910. https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.aba6910

Furnham, A. (2003). Belief in a just world: Research progress over the past decade. Personality and Individual Differences, 34(5), 795–817. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0191-8869(02)00072-7

Genschow, O., & Brass, M. (2022). Belief in free will relates to attributions of intentionality and judgments of responsibility. In Advances in experimental philosophy of free will and responsibility (pp. 13–26). Publisher. https://doi.org/ 10.5040/9781350188112.ch-001

George, W. H., & Martínez, L. J. (2002). Victim blaming in rape: Effects of victim and perpetrator race, type of rape, and participant racism. Psychology of Women Quarterly, 26(2), 110–119. https://doi.org/ 10.0000/107999099314324

Ghosh, S., & Walker, L. (2006). Sexuality: Gender identity, E Medicine.

Gracia, E. (2014). Intimate partner violence against women and victim-blaming attitudes among Europeans. Bulletin of the World Health Organization, 92, 380–381. https://doi.org/ 10.2471/BLT.13.131391

Grant, J. M., Mottet, L. A., Tanis, J. J., & Min, D. (2011). Transgender discrimination survey. National Center for Transgender Equality and National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

Grubb, A., & Harrower, J. (2008). Attribution of blame in cases of rape: An analysis of participant gender, type of rape and perceived similarity to the victim. Aggression and Violent Behavior, 13(5), 396–405. https://doi.org/ 10.1080/13552600802641649

Grubb, A., & Turner, E. (2012). Attribution of blame in rape cases: A review of the impact of rape myth acceptance, gender role conformity and substance use on victim blaming. Aggression and Violent Behavior, 17(5), 443–452. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2012.06.002

Hafer, C. L. (2000). Do innocent victims threaten the belief in a just world? Evidence from a modified Stroop task. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 79(2), 165–173. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.79.2.165

Hammock, G. S., & Richardson, D. R. (1993). Blaming drunk victims: Is it just world or sex role violation? Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 23(19), 1574–1586. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1559-1816.1993.tb01076.x

Hill, D. B., & Willoughby, B. L. (2005). The development and validation of the genderism and transphobia scale. Sex Roles, 53, 531–544. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-005-6306-7

Hudspith, L. F., Wager, N., Willmott, D., & Gallagher, B. (2023). Forty years of rape myth acceptance interventions: A systematic review of what works in naturalistic institutional settings and how this can be applied to educational guidance for jurors. Trauma, Violence, & Abuse, 24(2), 981–1000. https://doi.org/10.1177/15248380221108691

King, M. E., Winter, S., & Webster, B. (2009). Contact reduces transprejudice: A study on attitudes towards transgenderism and transgender civil rights in Hong Kong. International Journal of Sexual Health, 21(1), 17–34. https://doi.org/10.1080/19317610802622092

Kohlberg, L., & Hersh, R. H. (1977). Moral development: A review of the theory. Theory into Practice, 16(2), 53–59. https://doi.org/10.1080/00405847709542675

Lavoie, F., Jacob, M., Hardy, J., & Martin, G. (1989). Police attitudes in assigning responsibility for wife abuse. Journal of Family Violence, 4, 369–388. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00978583

Lerner, M. J., & Lerner, M. J. (1980). Who believes in a just world: Dimension or style? In M. J. Lerner & S. C.

Lerner (Eds.), The belief in a just world: A fundamental delusion (pp. 137–181). Plenum Press.

Lipkus, I. (1991). The construction and preliminary validation of a global belief in a just world scale and the exploratory analysis of the multidimensional belief in a just world scale. Personality and Individual Differences, 12(11), 1171–1178. https://doi.org/10.1016/0191-8869(91)90081-L

Lonsway, K. A., & Fitzgerald, L. F. (1994). Rape myths. Psychology of Women Quarterly, 18(2), 133–164. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-6402.1994.tb00448.x

Maes, J. (1998). Immanent justice and ultimate justice: Two ways of believing in justice. In G. Dalbert (Ed.), Responses to victimizations and belief in a just world (pp. 9–40). Plenum Press.

McMahon, S. (2007). Understanding community-specific rape myths: Exploring student athlete culture. Affilia, 22(4), 357–370. https://doi.org/10.1177/0886109907307344

Meyer, S. (2016). Still blaming the victim of intimate partner violence? Women's narratives of victim desistance and redemption when seeking support. Theoretical Criminology, 20(1), 75–90. https://doi.org/10.1177/1362480615616802

Moskowitz, G. B., & Li, P. (2011). Egalitarian goals trigger stereotype inhibition: A proactive form of stereotype control. Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 47(1), 103–116. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2010.07.017

Mulford, C., Lee, M. Y., & Sapp, S. C. (1996). Victim-blaming and society-blaming scales for social problems. Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 26(15), 1324–1336. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1559-1816.1996.tb01738.x

Nagoshi, J. L., Adams, K. A., Terrell, H. K., Hill, E. D., Brzuzy, S., & Nagoshi, C. T. (2008). Gender differences in correlates of homophobia and transphobia. Sex Roles, 59, 521–531. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-008-9440-4

Niemi, L., & Young, L. (2014). Blaming the victim in the case of rape. Psychological Inquiry, 25(2), 230–233. https://doi.org/10.1080/1047840X.2014.920406

O'Donohue, W. T., & Schewe, P. A. (Eds.). (2019). Handbook of sexual assault and sexual assault prevention. Springer International Publishing.

Oh, E., & Neville, H. (2004). Development and validation of the Korean rape myth acceptance scale. The Counseling Psychologist, 32(2), 301–331. https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000003261351

Oswald, F., Champion, A., Walton, K., & Pedersen, C. L. (2023). Revealing more than gender: Rigid gender-role beliefs and transphobia are related to engagement with fetal sex celebrations. Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity, 10(2), 304–318. https://doi.org/10.1037/sgd0000534

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

Rayanil, R. (2022). Victim blaming in sexual harassment. Faculty of Psychology. https://www.psy.chula.ac.th/th/feature-articles/article-victimblame

Rubin, Z., & Peplau, L. A. (1975). Who believes in a just world? Journal of Social Issues, 31(3), 65–89. https://doi.org/ 10.1111/j.1540-4560.1975.tb01022.x

Russell, K. J., & Hand, C. J. (2017). Rape myth acceptance, victim blame attribution and Just World Beliefs: A rapid evidence assessment. Aggression and Violent Behavior, 37, 153–160. https://doi.org/ 10.1016/j.avb.2017.10.008

Sacks, M., Ackerman, A. R., & Shlosberg, A. (2018). Rape myths in the media: A content analysis of local newspaper reporting in the United States. Deviant Behavior, 39(9), 1237–1246. https://doi.org/ 10.1080/01639625.2017.1410608

Schacter, H. L., Greenberg, S., & Juvonen, J. (2016). Who's to blame? The effects of victim disclosure on bystander reactions to cyberbullying. Computers in Human Behavior, 57, 115–121. https://doi.org/ 10.1016/j.chb.2015.11.018

Sheikh, S., & McNamara, M. E. (2014). Insights from self-blame and victim blaming. Psychological Inquiry, 25(2), 241–244. https://doi.org/10.1080/1047840X.2014.904138

Soothill, K., Harman, J., Francis, B., & Kirby, S. (2005). Rape and sexual assault: Crime, justice and society. Journal of Sexual Aggression, 11(1), 27–42. https://doi.org/10.1080/13552600500048707

Steblay, N. K. (1997). The effects of victim and perpetrator race on perceptions of rape: Review and meta-analysis. Psychology of Women Quarterly, 21(4), 475–495. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-6402.1997.tb00102.x

Ståhl, T., & Van Prooijen, J.-W. (2018). Belief in a just world: Review and implications for social justice research. Personality and Social Psychology Review, 22(2), 112–131. https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868317737672

Strickland, R., Marcus, D., & Stoever, T. (1994). Police officers' perceptions of rape victims: Gender role congruency and blame. Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 9(1), 42–52. https://doi.org/10.1177/088626094009001004

Swim, J. K., & Miller, D. L. (1999). Just world beliefs and prejudiced attitudes toward women and African Americans. Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 25(12), 1329–1342. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167299259002

Thompson, M. S., & Cracco, E. M. (2017). Victim-blaming, rape myth acceptance, and just world beliefs in sexual assault and domestic violence contexts. Violence and Gender, 4(2), 89–94. https://doi.org/10.1089/vio.2017.0012

Viki, G. T., & Abrams, D. (2002). A rose by any other name? Reducing the negative effects of labels on judgments of a rape allegation. Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 38(3), 315–322. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0022-1031(02)00004-7

Walker, I., & Shapiro, D. (2018). Psychological essentialism and prejudice: The perniciousness of genuine and counterfeit essentialist beliefs. Social and Personality Psychology Compass, 12(3), Article e12396. https://doi.org/10.1111/spc3.12396

Ward, T., & Beech, A. (2006). An integrated theory of sexual offending. Aggression and Violent Behavior, 11(1), 44–63. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2005.05.002

Woolf, C., & Maisto, S. A. (2008). The effects of victim and perpetrator alcohol use on victim blaming in sexual assault. Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs, 69(1), 125–133. https://doi.org/10.15288/jsad.2008.69.125

Yang, F., & Zhang, Q. (2022). Belief in a just world and psychological distress among victims of bullying: A systematic review and meta-analysis. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 19(13), Article 7813. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19137813