

ABSTRACT

THESIS: The Blame Game: Masculinity Threat's Role in Rape Blame

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The purpose of this study was to investigate how masculinity threat may enhance negative perceptions of rape victims (victim blame and token resistance) and also how masculinity contingency may play a role in these perceptions as well. Participants were randomly assigned to either receive a threat to masculinity or to receive no threat. Participants first completed a demographics section where they completed the Masculinity Contingency Scale (MCS) to assess for men's masculine identity. Participants then completed the Gender Knowledge Inventory (GKI) asking gender related information, after participants would receive false feedback regarding their performance on the GKI. This was where we gave them either threatening feedback (receive a low score) or did not threaten (received an average score). Participants were then asked to read a vignette describing an acquaintance rape situation and to rate their perceptions of victim blame and token resistance towards the rape victim in the vignette. Results indicated that masculinity threat had no effect on participant's scores of victim blame or token resistance. However, men who were high in masculinity contingency had significantly higher scores on both victim blame and token resistance when compared to men low in contingency. This study supports the idea that there are individual differences in men and how they react to threatening situations.