

# MOCK JURORS' JUDGMENTS ABOUT RECANTE CONFESSIONS

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*STATE OF MISSOURI V.  
REYNOLDS (1981)*



# FALSE CONFESSIONS

- **Wrongful convictions: The Innocence Project** ([www.innocenceproject.org](http://www.innocenceproject.org))
- **Jurors are often unable to distinguish between true and false confessions (Kassin, Meissner, & Norwick, 2005)**
- **Modern police interrogation tactics may elicit false confessions (Inbau et al., 2001)**
- **Corroboration inflation:** tendency for confessions to produce an illusion of support for other evidence (**Kassin, 2008**)

# RECALTED CONFESSIIONS

- **Recanted confession:** when an individual confesses to a crime, then revokes the confession at a later time
- **False confessors were four times more likely than true confessors to receive a prison sentence (Redlich, Kulish, & Steadman, 2011)**
- **Believability of a recanted confession depends on the reason provided for it (Henkel, 2008)**

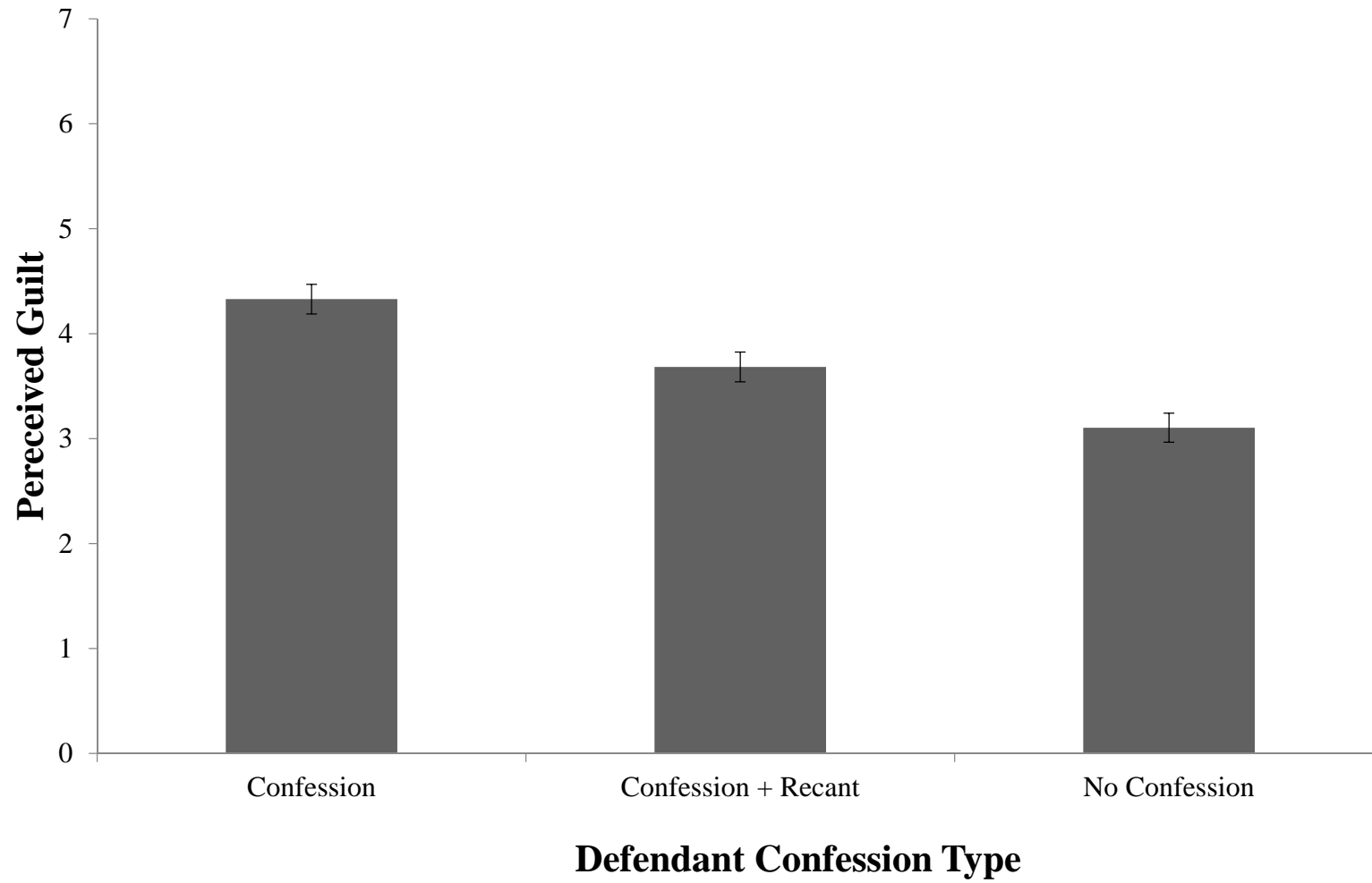
# QUESTIONS FOR THIS RESEARCH

- **How do mock jurors judge a case when the defendant confesses to the crime and later recants that confession?**
  - Do those judgments vary as a function of the severity of the crime?
- **Recanter judged more harshly? Recanter judged less harshly?**
  - When the crime is more severe, mock jurors would be less likely to believe the recant.

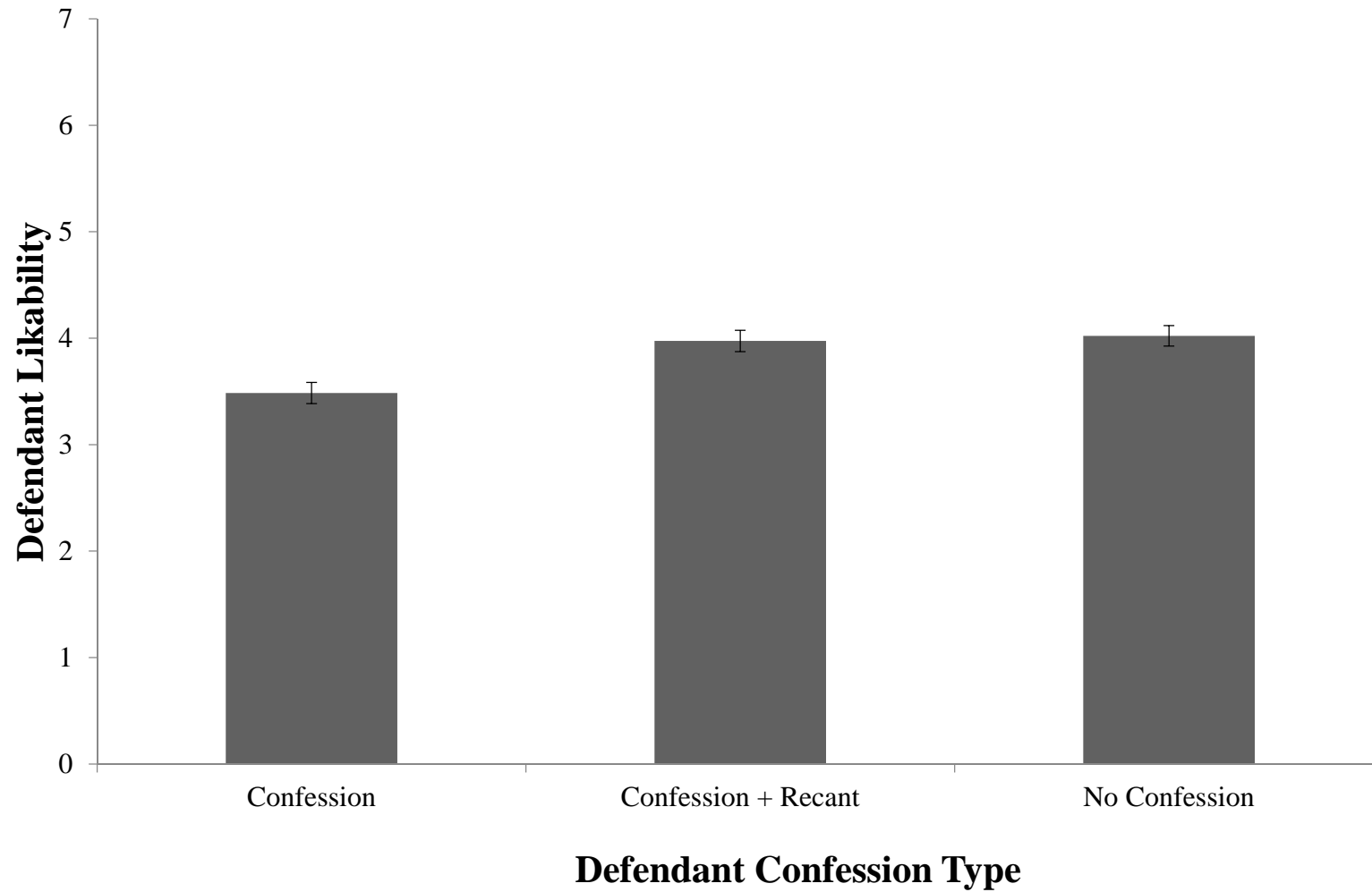
# METHOD

- **240 participants from Wofford College**
- **Variations in criminal case**
  - Sexual assault vs. burglary
  - No confession vs. confession vs. confession + recant
- **2 (crime severity) x 3 (confession evidence) between-groups factorial design**
- **Participants read case summary then completed questionnaire**

# GUILT

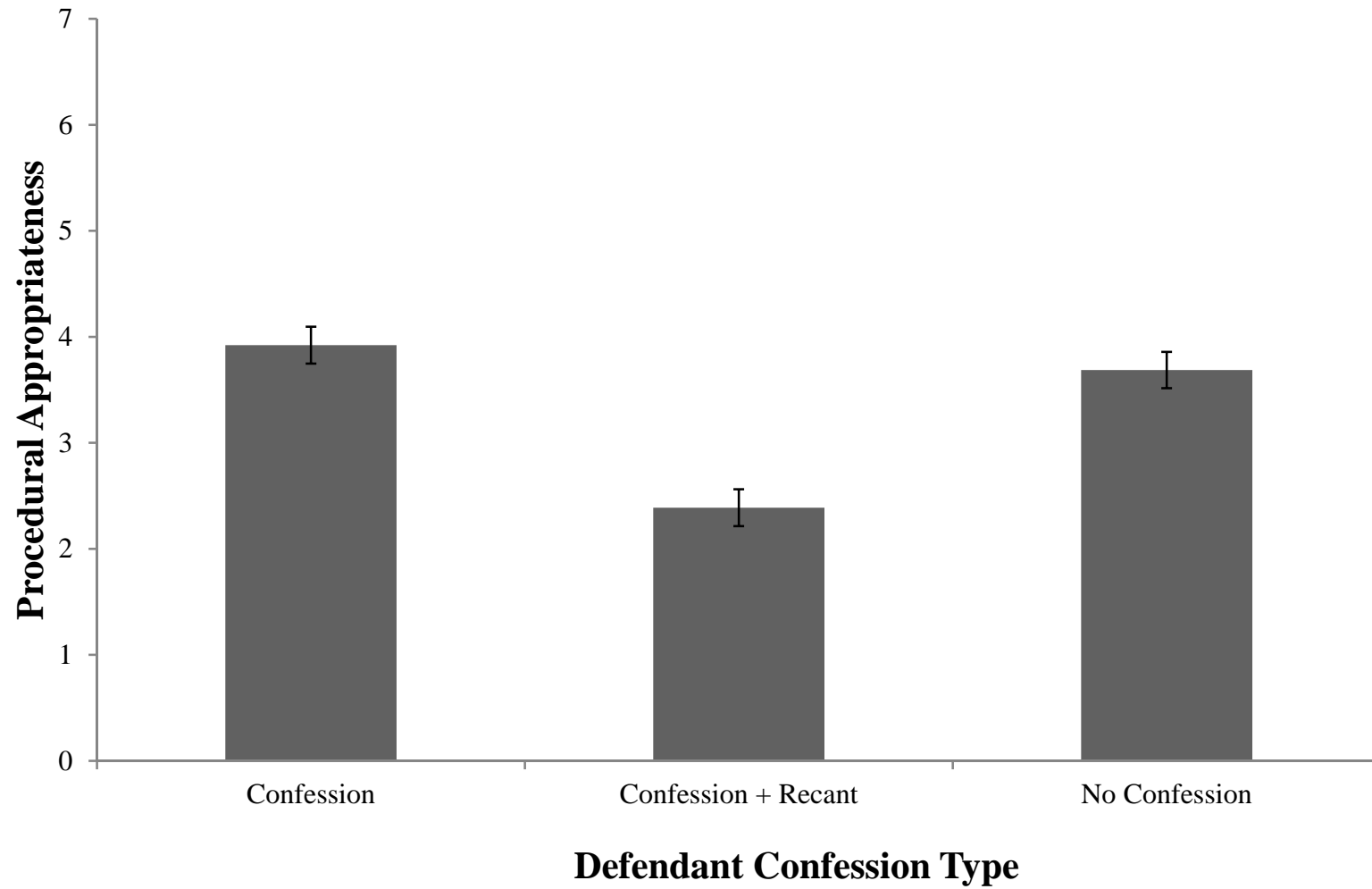


# LIKEABILITY

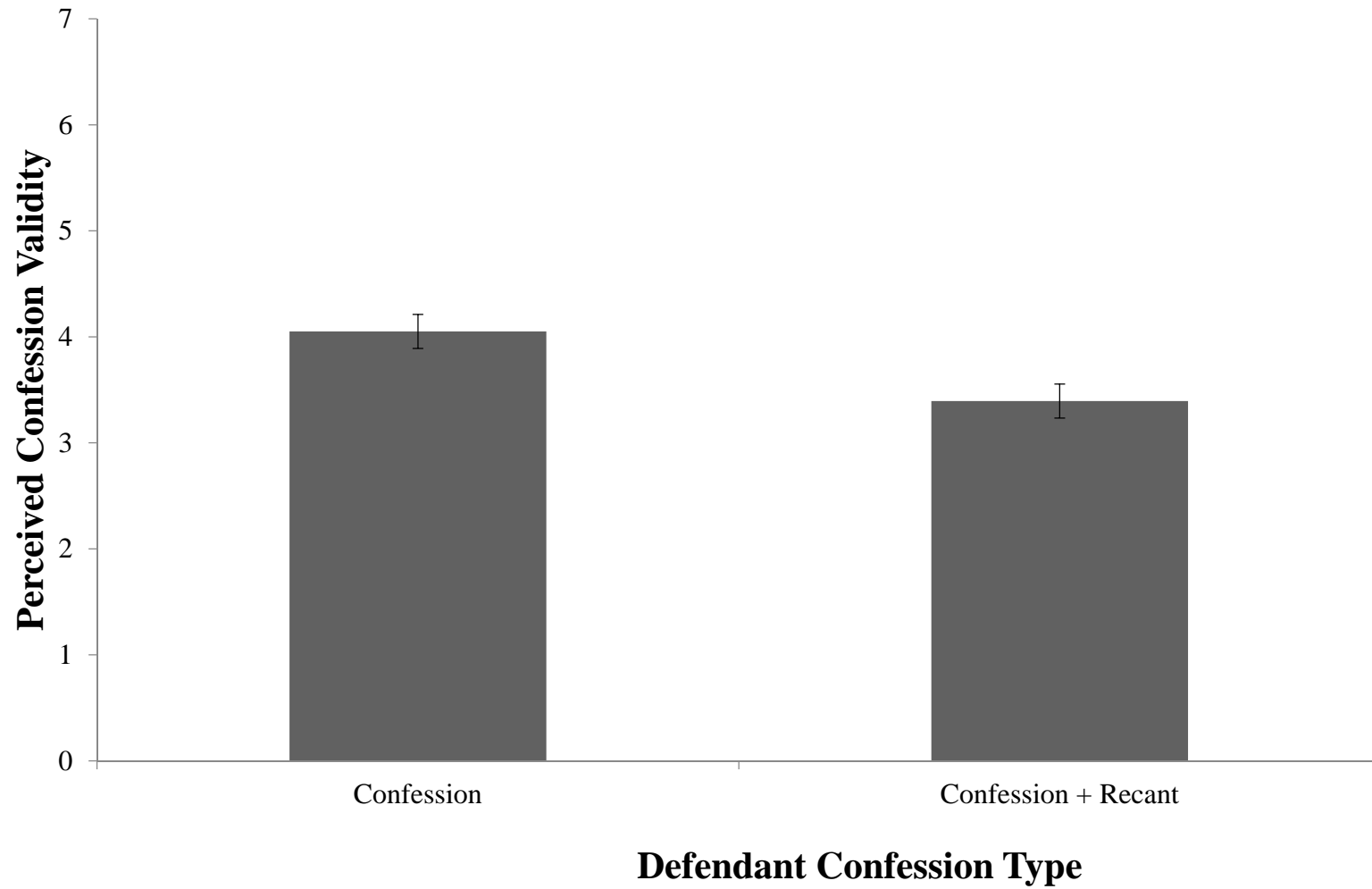




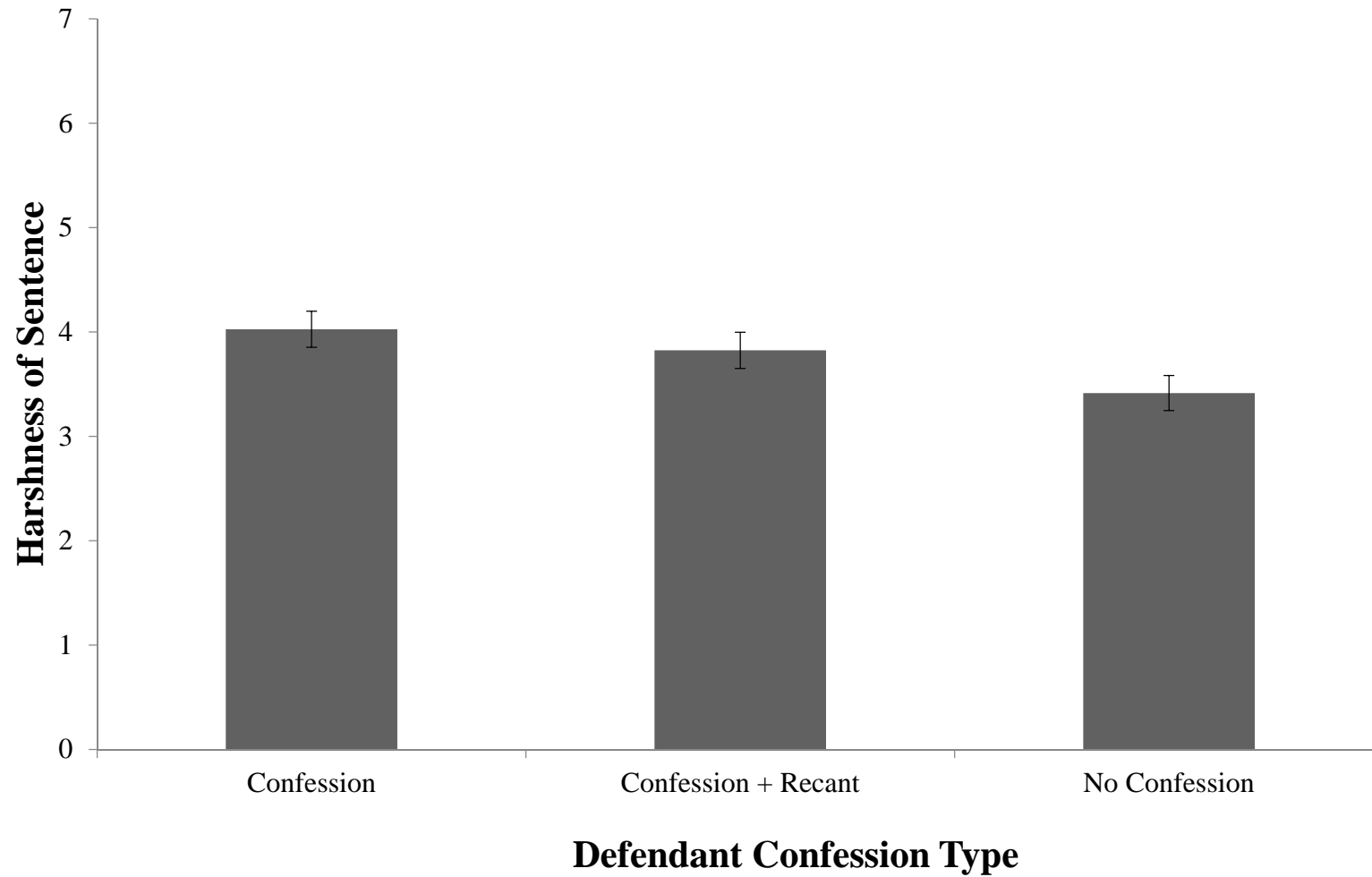
# APPROPRIATENESS



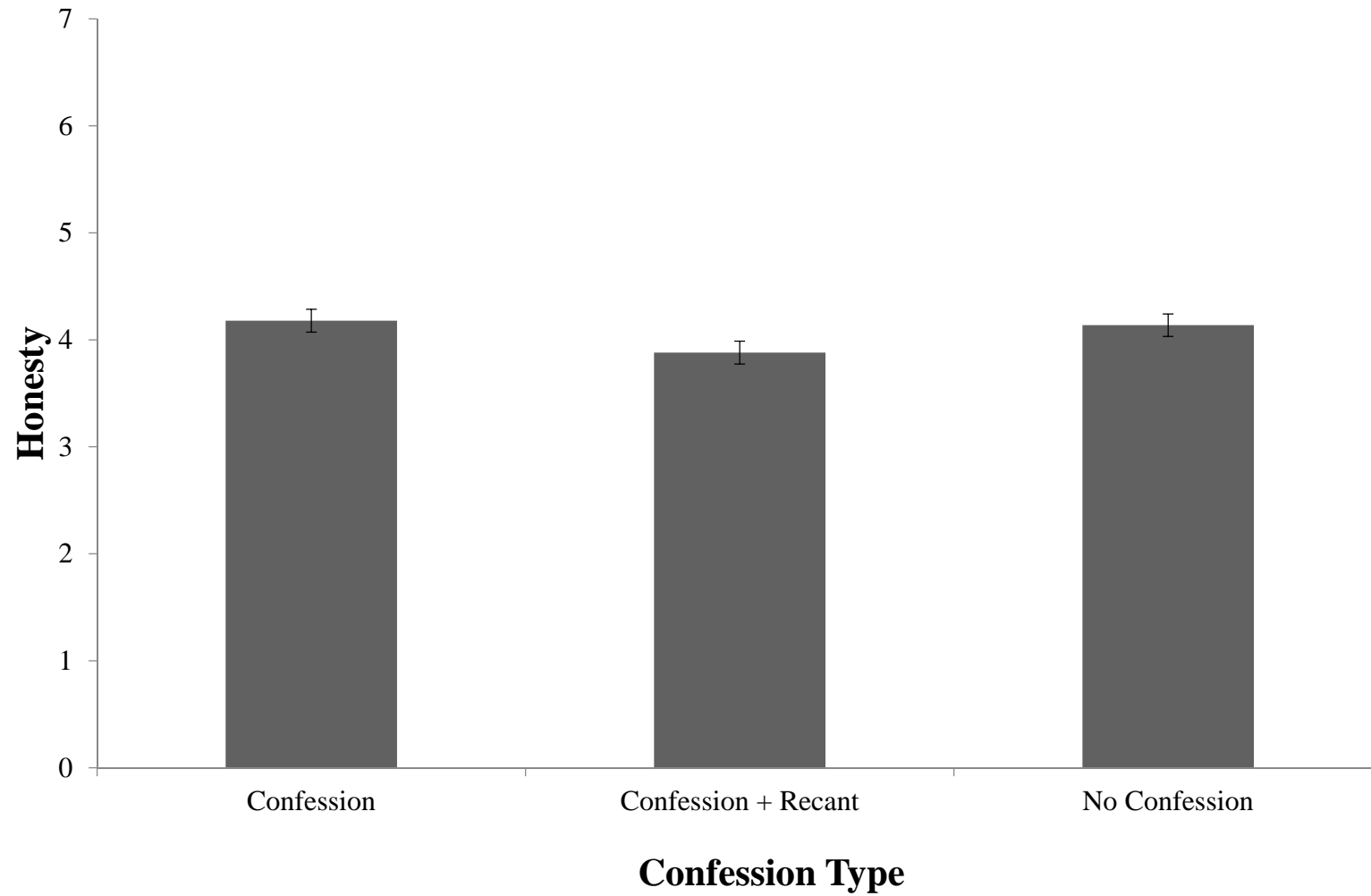
# VALIDITY



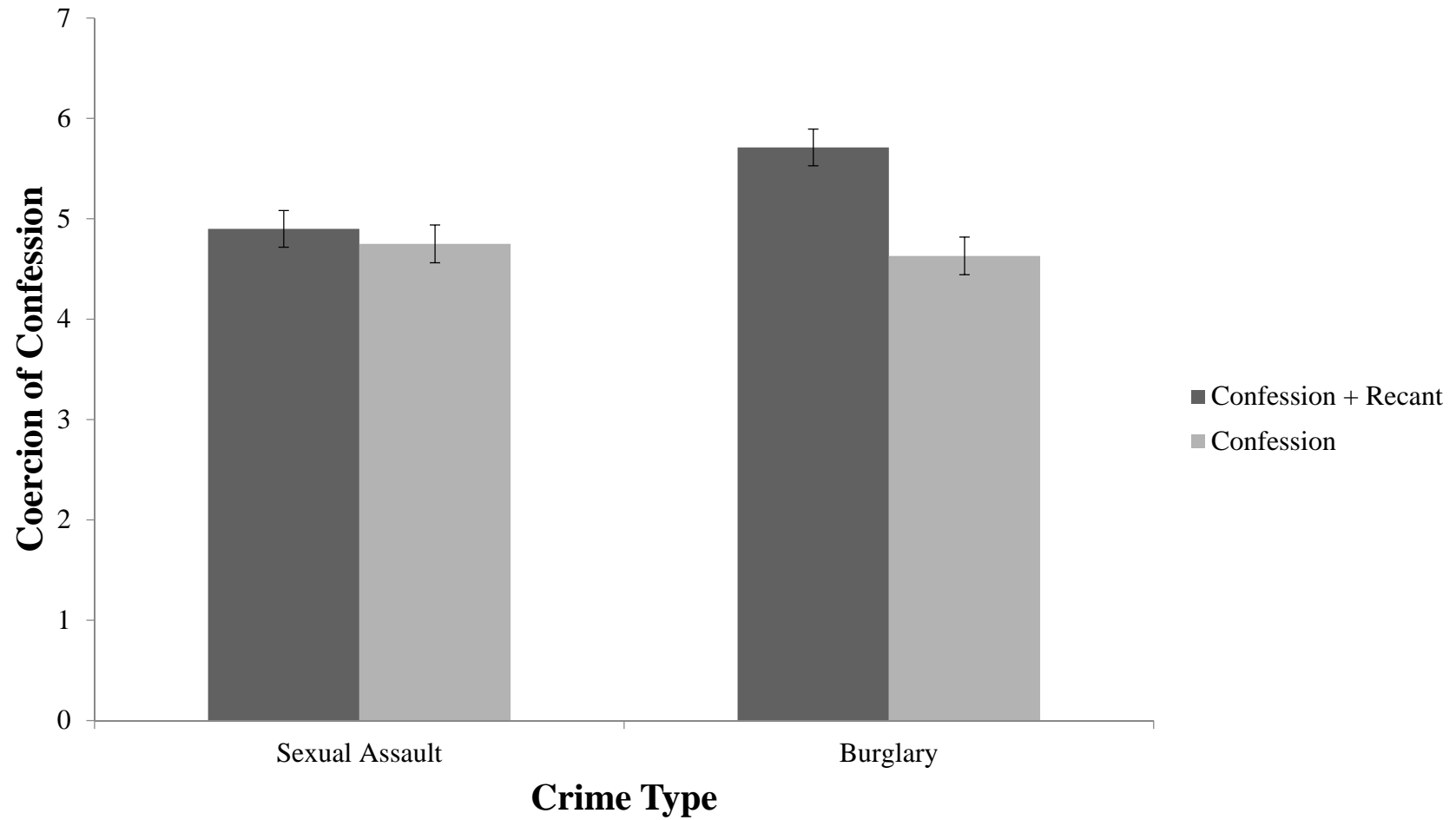
# SENTENCING



# HONESTY



# COERCION



# DISCUSSION

- **Sympathy shown on many measures except for final punishment**
- **Crime severity influenced perceived coerciveness of confession**
- **Implications of honesty**
- **Audio/Visual possibilities**

THANK YOU!

QUESTIONS?

