

The Relationship between Belief in a Just World and Victim Reporting, Self-Blame, and
Perpetrator Blame

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Abstract

This study examined belief in a just world (BJW), attributional style, perceptions of police, and approach/avoidance motivation in victims' likelihood of reporting their victimization to police, blaming themselves, and blaming the perpetrator in hypothetical scenarios. Participants completed measures of the Attributional Style Questionnaire, perceptions of police, and Behavioral Activation/Inhibition Systems. Participants were randomly assigned to one of two Stroop task conditions to manipulate BJW. The BJW Scale was given after the Stroop task as a manipulation check. Finally, participants read four victim scenarios and reported their reactions including likelihood of reporting to police, self-blame, and perpetrator-blame. The BJW manipulation was unsuccessful and did not predict any scenario reactions. However, the BJW Scale, internal and global attribution styles, having positive perceptions of police, and approach motivation were positively correlated with a greater likelihood of police reporting. Implications, limitations, and future directions are discussed.

Key words: Belief in a Just World (BJW), victimizations, victim reporting, ASQ, BIS/BAS, perceptions of police

The Relationship between Belief in a Just World and Victim Reporting, Self-Blame, and Perpetrator Blame

Crime, such as bullying, abuse, theft, and various others are a prominent scene in our society. Over one fifth of adolescents aged 12-18 were victims of bullying at school in 2017 (National Center for Education Statistics, n.d.). In addition, the number of overall violent crimes reported by victims on the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) has been on a steady incline from 2016 to 2018, reaching a total of 6,385,520 violent crimes in 2018 (Morgan & Oudekerk, 2019). Self-reported data is exclusive to people who voluntarily report their victimization on this survey, separate from actual police reports (Morgan & Oudekerk, 2019). Given these statistics, the chances of someone being a victim of bullying or a violent crime at some point in their lifetime is a plausible occurrence. However, on this National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) with 23.2 victimizations occurring per 1,000 people, only 9.9 victimizations per 1,000 were reported to police (Morgan & Oudekerk, 2019). A multitude of data is collected in this survey, such as completed, threatened, and attempted crimes, as well as gathered information on crimes reported and not reported to the police (Morgan & Oudekerk, 2019). Many people are experiencing victimization, but only a small percentage are reporting their victimization to the police. When crimes aren't reported, criminals are more likely to be out in society not receiving their just punishment, and police might not catch the offender; ultimately, lending the offender the ability to commit the crime again. Therefore, it's important to know more about factors involved in whether or not victims report their victimization.

Research has examined many factors a victim contemplates in the decision to contact the police or not, such as the emotions and initial reactions of the victim, the influence of family and friends (Greenberg & Beach, 2004), the victim's familiarity with the perpetrator, and the victim's

prior quality experience with police (Tyler & Fagan, 2008). Of interest in the present research are dispositional factors that relate to whether or not a victim is likely to report an offense.

Previous research has examined gender (Felson, Messner, Hoskin, Deane, 2006), fear (Reid, Kliewer, Shields, Goodman, Ray, & Wheat, 2011), anxiety proneness (Posick, 2014), emotional distress (Posick, 2014), and perceptions of legitimacy with police (Tyler & Fagan, 2008).

Both males and females are at risk for being victims of violent crimes. Females have a higher risk for sexual assault than males, but adolescent males are at a higher risk to be a part of more violent crimes as a way to show dominance against one another, with the majority of the incidents for males and females involving same-age acquaintances and non-familial members (Finkelhor & Asdigian, 1996). Gender is related to the rate of reporting one's own victimization. Self-report measures on a college campus yielded higher percentages of female than male reporting for non-disclosed or specified offender, which is when the victim did not define a specific transgressor (Hamby, 2016). The opposite is seen when the transgressor is identified as a partner, which yields higher male reporting (Hamby, 2016). To mend some of these inconsistencies in reporting, Hamby (2016) looked at another study to assess conditions when the transgressor (partner) was angry or provoked in a non-joking manner and hurt the victim. Instead, this study found that the victimization spurred by anger resulted in higher male reporting, whereas female reports were severely lowered. Overall, in the normal condition and the "not joking" condition, female reporting of victimizations were higher, almost doubling male reports in the "not joking" condition. Male reporting remained most stable, around 17%-20% reporting, whereas female reporting varied by condition with ranges from around 12% to 36% reporting of victimizations. Therefore, no one is immune to being victimized, whether or not

certain circumstances prompt an increase in likelihood for a certain gender to report their victimization.

Research has examined the role of emotions in reporting victimization. For example, fear and anxiety increase the likelihood of reporting victimizations (Posick, 2014). However, the direction of this effect is reversed if the victim knows the perpetrator of the crime (Felson et al., 2006). In these cases, fear of reprisal plays a role. Fear of reprisal is fear of the perpetrator harming the victim after the initial incident, due to the victim reporting them to the police (Felson et al., 2006). Therefore, if the victim knows the perpetrator, they may be more likely to see the perpetrator again and possibly face the consequences of the perpetrator getting revenge on the victim (Felson et al., 2006). This fear of reprisal can be intimidating for the victim, which enforces silence in the victim. In addition, the victim's emotional distress, referencing emotions like shock, anger, and depression, is significantly related to higher reporting rates by victims (Posick, 2014). Anger was the most common emotion expressed as a predictor for reporting (52.79%), and shock was the second highest predictor (23.89%) (Posick, 2014). Another study found a relationship between bystanders' expressed anger and the influence their reactions had on females' willingness to report (Greenberg, Wilson, Ruback, & Mills, 1979). This study examined the reporting rates of participants in an office whose work was stolen by a "thief" (confederate), who had written their name on the participant's work (Greenberg et al., 1979). Three conditions were set to vary levels of anger a confederate bystander would express to the participant, as well as varying pressures the bystander placed on the participant to take action or not (Greenberg et al., 1979). Overall, female participants in the high anger condition were more likely to report the thievery to the police than female participants in the low anger condition (Greenberg et al., 1979). This study concludes that bystanders' expressions, particularly their

perceived anger levels, influence the likelihood of victims' reporting their victimization of plagiarism to the police.

Usually, having positive prior experience with cops, such as if they were fair and helpful, enhances people's perceptions of the legitimacy of cops (Tyler & Fagan, 2008). More specifically, the prior experience with police itself is not conclusive in producing victimization reports, for it is more essential that people have witnessed cops engaging in fair procedures that lead to legitimate feelings about police and increase the likelihood for reporting (Tyler & Fagan, 2008). Perceptions of legitimacy refer to the public's view of police as trustworthy, having procedures and policies deemed just, and the ability to enforce these just rules and regulations (Tyler & Fagan, 2008). Therefore, those who have more confidence in police are more likely to report their victimization, which is an action victims can take to comply with the police force (Posick, 2014).

In sum, research on internal factors that lead victims to be more likely to report their victimization has shown that victims who are female, experience fear and anxiety (unless they know the perpetrator), experience emotional distress such as shock, anger, and depression, view the police as more fair, helpful, and trustworthy are more likely to report their victimization to the police (Tyler & Fagan, 2008; Posick, 2014).

Though many dispositional factors have been considered, research has not examined the role of the personality traits of Belief in a Just World (BJW), Attributional Style, and approach and avoidance orientation in victims' likelihood to report transgressions to the police.

Belief in a Just World

Belief in a just world (BJW) is defined as the belief that the events in one's life are fair and just (Dalbert, 1999). People high in BJW believe that people get what they deserve – good things happen to good people and bad things happen to bad people. BJW has been examined in the context of victimization. However, this research has focused on the role of bystanders' BJW - that is, whether or not other people blame a victim for his or her misfortunes. Research has shown that BJW predicts victim blaming (De Judicibus & McCabe, 2001; Kiecolt-Glaser, et al., 1987; Pargament & Hahn, 1986).

One study looked at participants' level of BJW and if this was related to the amount of fairness and distress felt by participants who read vignettes about someone who had a life-altering event occur (Lupfer, Doan, Houston, 1998). In one condition, participants were given the opportunity to assess what they believed was the cause of the presented outcome including the personality traits of the protagonist, situational or environmental factors, reasons beyond the control of the protagonist, religious beliefs, or if it was luck or fate that caused the proposed situation (Lupfer et al., 1998). In the other condition, participants were not given this opportunity. Then, participants rated their distress level and BJW (Lupfer et al., 1998). Overall, participants who had high BJW views were more likely to experience distress from both unfair and fair vignettes compared to participants low in BJW (Lupfer et al., 1998). In the condition where participants could assess the cause of the situation before reporting their level of distress, those with high BJW had significantly lower distress levels in comparison to participants who could not engage in causal analysis before reporting their distress levels (Lupfer et al., 1998). Allowing the participants to assess the cause of the scenarios, puts participants with high BJW at ease, so their BJW perceptions can remain intact.

In addition, innocent victims threaten people's just world beliefs. For example, in another study, participants examined video clips of supposed news segments depicting a 19-year old man who was assaulted and robbed. The man was innocent in his victimization. Participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions (retribution versus no retribution) - the perpetrator was either convicted, or fled the country and is highly unlikely to be found (Hafer, 2000). Next, participants completed a Stroop task containing words related to justice, context of story, physical harm, social/ bullying, and neutral words (Hafer, 2000). Results showed a significant latency in responding to justice-related words compared to neutral words (Hafer, 2000). Latencies were particularly apparent in the no retribution condition, since this threatens the main premise of BJW—that people get what they deserve. Therefore, it may be hard to explain why this robbery against the innocent victim is not redeemed in the no retribution condition, which would truly raise alarms for someone with BJW values.

Both the Lupfer et al. (1998) and the Hafer (2000) studies show that unfair scenarios threaten just world beliefs, as shown by slower reactions to justice-related (vs. neutral) words and more distress.

As mentioned, research on BJW in the context of victimization largely focuses on how bystanders' BJW relate to their perceptions of victims. Though no research has examined victims' BJW, scattered findings suggest that innocent victims may threaten their own just world beliefs. For example, innocent victims threaten people's belief in a just world particularly if the victim is an ingroup member. This study examined participant performance on a modified Stroop task when the victim was innocent, and if the victim was a member of their in-group - "Portuguese family", or their out-group - "Gypsy family" (Correia, Vala, & Aguiar, 2007). Participants watched a video involving a male child who lost both arms due to an electric shock

from a house under construction (Correia et al. 2007). The compensatory pay was well under the average range for what the family should have received from the electric company (Correia et al., 2007). Then, participants completed a Stroop task, which either contained 10 justice related words or 10 neutral words. The results showed that there was an effect in the in-group as expected, by participants answering slower in the justice-related Stroop condition in comparison to the neutral Stroop task. However, no significant effect was seen between Stroop tasks if the victim was not innocent (Correia et al., 2007). These results show that innocent victims threatened participants' BJW particularly when the victim was a member of the participants' in-group. With a strong effect seen when the victim was a member of the participant's in-group, this study begins to bridge the gap between the role of BJW in observers' judgements of victims and the role of BJW in victims' self-perceptions. If innocent victims threaten one's BJW— especially if they identify with the victim — perhaps increasing BJW in the present study will lead participants to blame themselves for their misfortunes, in turn, making them less likely to report victimizations to the police.

One study directly examined the relationship between BJW and self-blame. In this study, burn victims with greater just world beliefs were more likely to blame themselves for their accident than burn victims who did not endorse just world beliefs as strongly (Kiecolt-Glaser & Williams, 1987). In addition, burn victims with higher BJW were less likely to see the cause of the incident as due to chance and rated the accident leading to the burn as a more positive experience, when rating if the accident was the worst or best thing that has ever happened to them (Kiecolt-Glaser & Williams, 1987).

Attributional Style

Attributional Style refers to the habitual way, or chronic patterns, of how people explain the causes of events in their lives (Peterson, Semmel, Baeyer, Abramson, Metalsky, & Seligman, 1982). Explanatory style is assessed on three dimensions: internal/external, stable/unstable, and specific/global. Internal/external dimension refers to whether people interpret life events as due to oneself versus others, situations, environment, circumstances, etc. The stable/unstable dimension refers to whether people explain life events as consistent and reoccurring, or rare and unlikely to happen in the future. Lastly, specific/global refers to the interpretation of events affecting more than one area of one's life, or affecting multiple domains of one's life. How people tend to explain the causes of events in their lives on these three dimensions may be related to how people react to victimization.

Behavioral Activation/Inhibition Systems

Behavioral Activation/Inhibition Systems (BIS/BAS) is another personality measure that may explain how someone reacts to being victimized. Being a victim is correlated with low BAS and high BIS scores (Basharpoor, Molavi, Barahmand, & Mousavi, 2013). Inevitably, people low on BAS and high on BIS scores may be prone to being targeted, or face a transgression in the future (Basharpoor et al., 2013). However, a study has not examined the reporting rates of victims in relation to their BIS/ BAS scores.

The Present Study

This study examined belief in a just world (BJW), Attributional Style, perceptions of police, and approach/avoidance motivation in victims' likelihood of reporting their victimization to police, blaming themselves, and blaming the perpetrator in hypothetical scenarios. Participants completed measures of the Attributional Style Questionnaire, perceptions of police, and

Behavioral Activation/Inhibition Systems. I hypothesize that participants receiving the Belief in a Just World manipulation will be less likely to report, more likely to attribute self-blame, and less likely to blame the perpetrator. Then, participants who do not receive the Belief in a Just World manipulation – the control group, will be more likely to report, less likely to attribute self-blame, and more likely to blame the perpetrator. Participants were randomly assigned to one of two Stroop task conditions to manipulate BJW with justice-related words or non-justice related words. The BJW Scale was given after the Stroop task as a manipulation check. Finally, participants read four victim scenarios and reported their reactions, which include the likelihood of reporting to police, self-blame, and perpetrator-blame. The BJW manipulation was unsuccessful and did not predict any scenario reactions. However, the BJW Scale, Internal and Global Attributional Styles, having positive perceptions of police, and approach motivation were positively correlated with a greater likelihood of police reporting. Implications, limitations, and future directions are discussed.

Method

Participants

Participants were 60 students, staff, and community members at a private, small liberal arts college. 46 (78%) of the participants were female, 12 (20%) of the participants were male, and one (2%) participant was gender-fluid. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 52 years ($M_{\text{age}} = 21$). In regards to ethnicity, 31 (52%) were Caucasian, 2 (3%) were Asian, 17 (28%) were African American, 1 (2%) was Hispanic or Latino, and 9 (15%) were other/two or more races. An incentive for completing this experiment was complimentary candy.

Measures and Procedures

Permission to conduct the present research was obtained from the Institutional Review Board. Convenience sampling was used to recruit participants on the Hood College campus. Participants read and signed an informed consent form as acknowledgment that their participation in this study is anonymous, as well as to relay information about this study and its general purposes. Then, participants received a packet of questionnaires. First, participants completed a short demographic survey pertaining to ethnicity, sex, and age. Next, participants completed the Attributional Style Questionnaire (Semmel, Baeyer, Metalski, Seligman, 1982; Appendix A) which assesses participants' perceptions of the cause of the scenario, as well as how they would react to 12 scenarios on 7-point Likert scales. Overall, these questions are meant to assess the internal versus external, stable versus unstable, and global versus specific attributions participants make for events in their lives. Participants then answered 6 questions assessing their confidence in police, on 3-point Likert scales (1 = good, 2 = average, 3 = poor) (Cao, 2011). Questions assessed the extent to which participants believe their local police force does a good, average, or poor job of enforcing laws, being approachable and easy to talk to, and ensuring the safety of citizens, among others (See Appendix B for complete questionnaires). Finally, participants completed the BIS/BAS Questionnaire (Carver & White, 2013; Appendix C) which assesses the likelihood of whether or not a person will approach or avoid certain situations at hand. BIS equates to inhibiting behaviors, worry over failures and misfortunes, and avoiding punishments. BAS is described under three sub scales; BAS Reward – reward sensitive and seeking things one is good at, BAS Drive – motivational and goal-oriented, and BAS Fun – seeking pleasurable activities. There are 24 statements answered with 4-point Likert scales (1 = *very true for me*, 4 = *very false for me*).

Participants then completed a modified Stroop task in which they were presented with 10 words printed in varying colors. The participants were given verbal instructions to call out as quickly as possible the color the words were printed in, rather than read the word. Half of the participants were randomly assigned to an experimental condition in which they completed a Stroop task of justice-related words (e.g., equal, fair; Appendix D) in order to prime them with a Belief in a Just World. The other half of participants were randomly assigned the control condition in which they completed a Stroop task of non-justice-related words (e.g., telephone, grass; Appendix E).

After participants completed the Stroop task, they completed the Belief in a Just World scale (Lucas, Zhdanova, & Alexander, 2011; Appendix F). The Belief in a Just World scale acts as a manipulation check of the priming of a Belief in a Just World versus control conditions. Sample items include, “I feel that people usually receive the outcomes that they are due,” and “People usually use fair procedures in dealing with others.” Participants indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with each statement (1 = Strongly agree, 7 = strongly disagree). There are eight statements relating to perceptions of fairness with oneself, and eight identical statements in reference to fairness of others. In each sub scale for self and others, there are additional sub scales pertaining to Distributive Justice (DJ) and Procedural Justice (PJ). Four statements in each sub scale for self and others pertain to DJ - outcomes are fair to you/ others, while the other four pertain to PJ - rules/ processes are fair to you/ others.

Next, participants read and responded to four transgression scenarios (Appendix G). With each of these four scenarios, the participants imagined these incidents occurring directly to them, then reported how likely they would be to report that particular transgression to the police (1 = *very unlikely* to 5 = *very likely*), the extent to which they blame themselves (0 = *not at all* to 5 =

completely), the extent to which they believe they could have avoided the incident (0 = *not at all* to 5 = *completely*), the extent they are concerned with the question of who or what caused the incident (0 = *not at all* to 5 = *completely*), the extent to which they are concerned with the question, “Why did this have to happen to me?” (0 = *not at all* to 5 = *completely*), and the extent to which they blame the perpetrator (0 = *not at all* to 5 = *completely*). Upon completion of this experiment, participants received a debriefing form disclosing the full purpose of the experiment that provides information about Departmental Honors Presentations, and contact information for any questions or concerns.

Results

Descriptive statistics for all dispositional measures are shown in Table 1. Descriptive statistics for all scenario measures are shown in Table 2. Correlations among dispositional measures are shown in Table 3.

In regards to the manipulation check, a one-way ANOVA was run to test the effectiveness of the Stroop condition to yield high BJW perceptions in the experimental Stroop conditions and low BJW perspectives in the control Stroop task. Stroop condition was inputted as the independent variable (IV) while the BJW scale was inputted as the dependent variable (DV). BJW Total and Stroop Condition was not significantly related, $F(1, 57) = .14, p = 0.713$ ($r = -.37$). Stroop Condition 1 (experimental) had similar BJW scores ($M = 72.55, SD = 17.245$) compared to Stroop Condition 2 (control) ($M = 74.00, SD = 12.600$).

Then, a MANOVA was run to see if the manipulation (Stroop Condition) still yielded any significant relationships with the scenario outcomes. However, Stroop Condition was not

significantly related to the scenario outcomes in total, $F(6, 49) = .61, p = .723$; Wilk's $\eta^2 = .931$, partial $\eta^2 = .07$.

Since the BJW manipulation was not successful, subsequent analyses examine correlational relationships among personality dispositions and scenario reactions.

Greater police reporting across all four scenarios combined is significantly related to the sum of all Belief in a Just World scales ($r(57) = .27, p = .040$), as well as with BJW PJ Self ($r(57) = .27, p = .039$), and BJW PJ Others ($r(57) = .27, p = .040$). However, no other BJW sub scales were related to police reporting across all scenarios, blaming oneself across all scenarios, the concern with how the incident could have been avoided across all scenarios, the concern with who or what caused the incident across all scenarios, the concern with why the incident happened to them across all scenarios, or how much they blame the perpetrator across all scenarios.

Then, the personality traits yielded some significant correlations as well. Higher Internal Attributional style significantly relates to being more likely to report the transgression to the police across all scenarios ($r(57) = .29, p = .028$), more likely to be concerned with who or what caused the incident across all scenarios ($r(57) = .47, p < .001$), and greater blame of the perpetrator across all scenarios ($r(57) = .28, p = .036$). Internal Attribution Style is not related to blaming oneself across all scenarios ($r(57) = -.08, p = .564$), being concerned with why the incident happened to them ($r(57) = .26, p = .053$), or believing the transgression could have been avoided across all scenarios ($r(55) = .02, p = .900$).

Stable Attributional Style is not related to reporting the transgressions across all scenarios ($r(57) = -.19, p = .156$), blaming oneself across all scenarios ($r(57) = -.06, p = .639$), the incident

being avoidable across all scenarios ($r(55) = .00, p = .985$), the concern of who or what caused the incident across all scenarios ($r(57) = .05, p = .702$), why the incident happened to themselves across all scenarios ($r(57) = -.01, p = .934$), and blaming the perpetrator across all scenarios ($r(57) = -.12, p = .398$).

A high Global Attributional Style significantly relates to being more likely to report transgressions across all scenarios ($r(57) = .27, p = .041$) and being less likely to blame the perpetrator across all scenarios ($r(57) = -.29, p = .028$). Global Attribution Style is not related to blaming oneself across all scenarios ($r(57) = .04, p = .743$), the incident being avoided across all scenarios ($r(55) = .04, p = .794$), who or what caused the incident across all scenarios ($r(57) = .22, p = .098$), and why the incident happened to themselves across all scenarios ($r(57) = .00, p = .991$).

Having negative perceptions of police is marginally related to a lesser likelihood of reporting across all scenarios ($r(57) = -.26, p = .051$). It is not related to blaming oneself across all scenarios ($r(57) = -.02, p = .912$), how likely the incident was avoidable across all scenarios, who or what caused the incident across all scenarios, why the incident happened to themselves across all scenarios ($r(57) = .07, p = .616$), and blaming the perpetrator across all scenarios ($r(57) = -.07, p = .626$).

A high total score of BIS significantly relates to being more concerned with how avoidable the incident could have been across all scenarios ($r(55) = .29, p = .028$) and being more concerned with why the incident happened to themselves across all scenarios ($r(57) = .30, p = .023$). The total BIS score is not related to police reporting across all scenarios ($r(57) = -.04, p = .773$), blaming oneself across all scenarios ($r(57) = .25, p = .057$), who or what caused the

incident across all scenarios ($r(57) = .13, p = .324$), and blaming the perpetrator across all scenarios ($r(57) = -.06, p = .678$).

High BAS scores overall are significantly related to higher reports to the police across all scenarios ($r(57) = .28, p = .033$), lower rates of blaming oneself across all scenarios ($r(57) = -.34, p = .008$), higher concern for who and what caused the incident across all scenarios ($r(57) = .42, p = .001$), and higher perpetrator blame across all scenarios ($r(57) = .34, p = .009$). The total BAS scales does not relate to the concern of how avoidable the incident is across all scenarios ($r(55) = -.16, p = .222$) and the concern for why the transgression occurred to themselves across all scenarios ($r(57) = .15, p = .272$).

A higher BAS Drive is significantly related to being less likely to blame oneself across all scenarios ($r(57) = -.31, p = .018$) and being more likely to be concerned with who or what caused the incident across all scenarios ($r(57) = .30, p = .023$). BAS Drive is not related to reporting to police across all scenarios, being concerned with the how avoidable the incident could be across all scenarios, why the incident happened to themselves across all scenarios, and blaming the perpetrator across all scenarios.

A high BAS Reward is significantly related to being more likely to report a transgression to the police across all scenarios ($r(57) = .27, p = .041$), being less likely to blame oneself across all scenarios ($r(57) = -.34, p = .008$), being more likely to be concerned with who or what caused the incident across all scenarios ($r(57) = .38, p = .003$), and being more likely to blame the perpetrator across all scenarios ($r(57) = .31, p = .017$). BAS Reward is not related to being concerned with how avoidable the incident is across all scenarios and being concerned with why the incident happened to themselves across all scenarios.

BAS Fun is not related to reporting transgressions to the police across all scenarios, blaming oneself across all scenarios, believing the transgression is avoidable across all scenarios, being concerned with who or what caused the incident across all scenarios, the concern for why the incident occurred to themselves across all scenarios, and blaming the perpetrator across all scenarios.

Discussion

Overall, I hypothesized that participants receiving the BJW manipulation (justice-related Stroop list) would be less likely to report the transgressions to the police, more likely to attribute self-blame, and less likely to blame the perpetrator across all four scenarios. Unfortunately, the results made it evident that the manipulation did not work. Therefore, the experimental Stroop condition did not yield higher BJW perspectives in participants compared to the neutral Stroop condition. Since the manipulation was not effective, the BJW Scale – used to test the effectiveness of the Stroop conditions, was repurposed to analyze correlations with the various personality measures among victims' responses to the four transgressions.

The results show that there is a significant relationship between higher PJ for Belief in a Just World and a greater likelihood of reporting transgressions to the police. There is a significant relationship between high internal attribution style and more police reporting, a greater concern for who or what caused the incident, and greater perpetrator blame. There is a significant relationship between high global attribution style and greater police reporting, and low perpetrator blame. Poor perceptions of police is marginally related to less police reporting. High BIS scores are related to a greater concern for whether the incident could be avoided and a greater concern for why the incidents occurred to themselves. High BAS scores overall are significantly related to higher police reporting, less self-blame, more concern for who or what

caused the incident, and more perpetrator blame. Also, high BAS Drive is significantly related to being less likely to blame oneself and a greater concern for who or what caused the incident. High BAS Reward is significantly related to many of the scenario outcomes, such as greater police reporting, lesser blaming oneself, more concern for who or what caused the incident, and more perpetrator blame across all scenarios. Even though this is correlational data, the main focus was on how participants would respond across all scenarios in the particular areas of police reporting, blaming oneself, and blaming the perpetrator.

First, having a high Belief in a Just World is significantly related to greater police reporting. People are more likely to report transgressions against themselves if they have a strong Belief in a Just World — the belief that good things happen to honest and moral people, and bad things happen to bad or immoral people. This idea seems to contradict the normative idea of Belief in a Just World. If people believe in a just world, then they would accept what happens to themselves, since the situations that transpire and happen to them would likely be a result of what they deserve. So, they would not feel the need to report a transgression against them, since they would perceive it as something that was bound to happen to them, or that they were deserving of this treatment in an equal and fair society.

However, this finding only contradicts BJW if participants blamed themselves for the transgression. If participants blamed the perpetrator for the transgression, this finding aligns with BJW. If participants believe the perpetrator is to blame and that bad things happen to bad people, then they should be more likely to report the transgression to the police so the perpetrator gets what he deserves. As shown by Hafer (2000), guilty perpetrators who go unpunished threaten just world beliefs. Reporting the transgression to the police increases the likelihood that the guilty perpetrator will be apprehended and punished.

Since people with a high BJW were more likely to report transgressions in this study, then maybe the transgressions were too ambiguous or indirect. So, participants may not have seen the transgressions presented in the study as a direct attack or threat to themselves. Because the incidents were random and not attached to the participant's identity, it may have been unlikely for participants to blame themselves for the event. Indeed, this is reflected by the findings. Participants' average rating of self-blame across all four scenarios was 1.5 on a 6-point scale (0 = not at all, 5 = completely), whereas participants' average rating of perpetrator blame across all four scenarios was 4.2 on the identical 6-point scale. In conjunction with high levels of BJW, the context omitted from the scenarios did not allow participants to make sense or reason with the causes of the scenarios, further threatening their Belief in a Just World ideology. This threat to one's BJW ties into how the Lupfer et al. (1998) article described distress among patients who were unable to attribute casual analysis before reporting their distress levels felt by reading unfair scenarios. Therefore, distress could be an indicator to struggling and unsteadily holding onto one's BJW view.

This theory – high BJW would decrease police reports, increase self-blame, and decrease perpetrator blame, aligns with the results of high police reporting across all scenarios significantly related to high BJW PJ Self and Others. Procedural Justice (PJ) deals with the idea that one's self or others are usually faced with rules and processes that are fair (Lucas, Zhdanova, & Alexander, 2011). Since the transgressions listed in the scenarios of this study were ambiguous without context tied to the transgressions, a random act would seem unfair; ultimately, warranting a police report. Participants may want to report the transgressions because of the disconnect of what they deserve and what was transcribed in the scenarios.

Secondly, higher Internal Attributional Style is significantly related to greater police reporting. Therefore, if participants are more likely to believe that the transgressions described in this study occurred because of themselves and internal qualities, then they are more likely to report. This may seem contradictory at first. However, participants who tend to make internal attributions for events in their lives also believe more strongly that their outcomes are due to their actions. So, they may be more likely to believe that reporting the incident to the police will make it more likely that the perpetrator is caught and the damage is repaired.

This relationship could also be due to the ambiguity of the transgressions described in the study. So, the missing context of the scenarios may make it challenging for the participants to attach the cause of the scenarios to themselves. Indeed, results showed that even participants with high Internal Attribution Style were more likely to blame the perpetrator for the transgression.

Furthermore, participants who have a high Internal Attributional Style were also significantly related to being more concerned with who or what caused the incidents described in the scenarios. Pessimistic individuals (who use internal, stable, and global domains to explain life events) are more likely to be distressed when faced with challenges and adapt maladaptive coping mechanisms, as opposed to optimistic individuals (who use opposing domains) (Peterson & Steen, 2002). Therefore, this internal component of pessimistic individuals could be reflective of the participants in this study. Their heightened distress levels could be rooted in their concern for how the incidents transpired, and overall worry about the incidents could manifest.

Third, higher Global Attributional Style is significantly related to higher reporting rates and less perpetrator blame across all scenarios. Participants with high global attribution style are more likely to transcend their effects from these scenarios across multiple domains of their lives.

For example, participants might think that being attacked by a perpetrator in various manners might affect their ability to trust people in their lives, or might contribute to failure in academics and personal relationships. Since people with a Global Attributional Style are likely to see the victimization as impacting many areas of their lives, this may make them amplify their view of the victimization, in return, making them more likely to report it to the police. The infiltration and expansions these victimizations undertake in the participants' lives will likely lead to magnified emotions. It is proven that emotional distress increases rate of reporting victimizations to the police (Felson et al., 2006; Posick, 2014). In addition, the maladaptive patterns and depressed outlook pessimistic individuals tend to exhibit in many life settings have also proved to increase victimization reports to police (Felson et al., 2006; Posick, 2014).

Next, poor perceptions of police is marginally related to a lesser likelihood of reporting across all scenarios ($r = -.255$, $p = .051$). Assumably, if people do not trust the competency and legitimacy of their local police force to enforce and uphold societal rules, then there develops a distrust of the police and an inability to rely on them to resolve their issues (Tyler & Fagan, 2008). Therefore, it makes sense that the more people believe the police are incompetent to uphold fair laws, the more people will believe that going to the police will not help them. Furthermore, a drawback of this study is the small numbers of subjects. To acquire better significant relationships of police perception, which is only marginally significant in the current study, future studies could sample a larger group of people. Also, they could add another set of questions relating to police officers in general, not just the local police force. In addition, this questionnaire of police perceptions could be given after the Belief in a Just World manipulation or after reading the transgression scenarios, which might yield stronger results between the experimental and control conditions.

In addition, a high BIS total score is significantly related to being more concerned with how avoidable the incident could have been across all scenarios. Since BIS pertains to inhibiting behaviors, the inactivity in finding retribution or stopping the progression of transgressions against the participants can bring about the concern for how avoidable the transgressions could have been. The majority of the BIS-related questions deal with worry and fear in daily life, as well as in abnormal circumstances. If people are habitually concerned and worried throughout their life, then they would more likely be concerned with fearful situations and situational factors surrounding them. Since participants high in inhibitory behaviors are the ones to feel higher concern for how avoidable transgressions are, then they likely feel high anxiety and fear in situations over which they have minimal control. For example, a person who is likely to inhibit behaviors will most likely choose to take a passive stance in the face of an attack, which allows the transgressor to continue their unlawful act. This is particularly concerning when victims in prior literature, as well as those likely to be targeted, are reporting high BIS scores (Basharpour et al., 2013). This explains the amplification of overall concern for how avoidable these incidents are, since people with these restraining and passive behaviors are likely to be victims again. So, the concern for avoiding a victimization in the future is essential to ponder and act upon, to ensure one's future safety. On the other hand, if participants felt like they put forth their best efforts to prevent or halt the transgressions, then participants would probably not feel worried. They would likely feel satisfied in their efforts to control the situation and less regretful, since they know they played an active role in keeping themselves out of harms way. In addition, participants high in BIS are also significantly more concerned with why the incident happened to themselves across all scenarios. If participants are more likely to inhibit behaviors, such as not provoking a proposed perpetrator and not fighting back in a physical confrontation, then they

might be concerned with why the transgression had to happen to them. If they did nothing to provoke, anger, or upset the perpetrator, then why would they be the ones chosen to be targeted?

Last of the personality sub scales, higher BAS overall totals were related to significantly higher reporting rates to police across all scenarios. The overall BAS scales correspond to activation, which is the role of approaching circumstances and situations in life. Therefore, participants will be likely to report transgressions against them, since this requires taking an active response in approaching the situation upfront. Since participants know they would play an active role in any victimization, they might have trouble coming to terms with the victimization itself, believing it to be incomprehensible. How could it occur if they are would have done anything in their power to prevent a transgression from occurring, or at least halted the perpetrator from fully carrying out their transgression? This defeat felt by the participants may evoke anger, which is a known factor in increasing victim reporting rates (Felson et al., 2006; Posick, 2014). There is also a significantly higher likelihood of being concerned for who or what caused the incidents across all scenarios in relation to high BAS scores. By reporting to the police, participants would likely be concerned with the cause of the scenarios, since people likely report a transgression as a means for seeking out the person to blame and wanting retribution. Even though little is known about BIS/BAS factors in relation to victim reporting, evidence shows that real victims score low on BAS (Basharpoor et al., 2013). Therefore, participants in this study could have this nagging concern for the cause of the scenarios, since they are not in the cohort of people likely to be victimized. In this case, participants probably have not been victims in the past, so they are unsure of how these transgressions originated and transpired. Continually, high BAS scorers are significantly related to being less likely to blame themselves and significantly more likely to blame the perpetrator across all scenarios. Acting in opposition of the

transgression to relieve themselves of the threatening situation would make them feel confident and in control. So, any misfortunes brought upon by the scenarios would have transpired in spite of their forceful action or nature. The perpetrator would then be likely to blame, since the perpetrator is the one who is fighting in opposition to the participants' goals and actions.

Also, high BAS Drive is significantly related to less self-blame across all scenarios. High BAS Drive relates to participants' answers in the BIS/BAS questionnaire about taking charge in achieving what they want. The active role high BAS Drive participants take may lead to less self-blame, since they try to control their situations and fight for themselves. In opposition to BIS that focuses on inhibitory actions, BAS Drive address the transgressions by actively approaching and confronting the situation. Therefore, if participants feel like they did all they could do to aid themselves, then they may be less likely to blame themselves when situations go awry. In addition, high BAS Drive is significantly related to being more concerned with who or what caused the incident across all scenarios. Since these participants are less likely to blame themselves, they may be more likely to want to make sense of the situation and figure out why it did occur, and who is to blame.

Next, high BAS Reward is significantly related to being more likely to report a transgression to the police across all scenarios. BAS Reward questions on the BIS/BAS questionnaire refer to an excitement for achieving desired goals and items, as well as a push to seek out those desired items. Therefore, seeking out desired items may be disrupted and threatened by undesired situations, such as those described in the scenarios of this study. This may be why reporting transgressions to police is greater for those participants high on BAS Reward. Furthermore, it is rewarding to catch the bad guy, which serves as a determining factor for reporting the incidents. Also, these participants are significantly more likely to be concerned

with who or what caused the incident across all scenarios. Participants with high BAS Reward scores are likely to be excited, energized, and greatly affected by good things that happen to them. As a result, any disruption to the positive events in a participant's life could leave them miffed and searching for answers, amidst the concerning situations they are presented with. Participants high in BAS Reward are also more likely to blame the perpetrator and less likely to blame themselves. These responses go hand in hand, since rewarding activities are linked to what the participants are good at. So, participants would focus on other alternatives and people for what went wrong.

The Stroop manipulation did not yield any significant relationships among Belief in a Just World and its many sub scales (BJW Self, BJW Others, BJW PJ and DJ Self, BJW PJ and DJ Others). A disadvantage of the study could be the nature of the manipulation. A Stroop task requires a list of words, with each word printed in a different color. The participants are instructed to read off all the colors they see and pay little attention to the words. Since participants did not pay direct attention to the list of justice or non-justice related words, the manipulation may not have been strong enough to have an effect on participants. The subliminal message of justice was not strong enough to affect participants view of the world.

In sum, high dispositional BJW was related to greater police reporting. In particular, high Procedural Justice appeared to be the main component of the BJW scale (Self and Others) that yielded a significant correlation to greater police reporting. The main focus in this study is BJW, as well as the relationship of the personality measures with the scenario outcomes, with particular attention on victim reporting, self-blame, and perpetrator blame. Internal Attributional Style, high Global Attributional style, good perceptions of police, high BAS Reward, and high BAS overall scores were related to a greater likelihood of reporting victimization to the police.

High BAS Drive, high BAS Reward, and high BAS scores in total are related to less self-blame. Lastly, Internal Attributional Style, high BAS Reward, and BAS scores overall are related to greater perpetrator blame, whereas Global Attributional Style is related to less perpetrator blame. Overall, perceptions of fairness and equality through multiple domains of personality measures is what may lead someone to report to the police, as the trend in the data suggests. Then, less self-blame and greater perpetrator blame is likely to occur when people play an active role, to take control of their circumstances. Therefore, if people perceive the world as just and act according to their beliefs to contribute to a just world, then people are more likely to report to the police when a situation goes awry, and may clear their conscious of the situation by placing blame on the perpetrator.

Future studies could alter the format of the study to impose a stronger manipulation. For example, instead of using a Stroop task, participants could just be randomly assigned to read over a list of justice or non-justice related words for a predetermined amount of time. This way, participants are purposefully paying attention to the list and are mindful and aware of the true context of the words. Hopefully, this condition would produce a more drastic change in results from one condition to the other. Or, participants could even be randomly assigned to different time lengths in addition to the type of word lists they receive, to see if the amount of time they consciously participated in reading the list could yield significant results.

Furthermore, future studies could not just list transgressions, but supplement a paragraph of context to eliminate the ambiguity issues present in the internal and global attributional style results. Also, participants could be given scenarios that truly focus on the Procedural Justice (PJ) aspect of BJW, since this high PJ component was consistent in yielding significant results with greater police reporting. Procedural Justice is also a point of interest for assessing police

legitimacy (Tyler & Fagan, 2008, p. 241). Overall, PJ is strongly linked to victims' perceptions of the world and how they choose to respond to the multitude of circumstances presented in life. In addition, future studies could use a mix of transgressions – some that are clearly attributable to the participant, others to the perpetrator, and others that could be attributed to either.

Also, future studies could focus on a virtual reality situation to place participants in a mock scenario, so the transgressions would take place in reality and adhere more closely to emotional effects of the participants. This could be an effective method, as long as the technology was available, and this virtual reality simulation or confederate demonstration in real life would pass the guidelines of the IRB. These methods would manifest a stronger effect than just purely imagining a list or transcribed transgressions were occurring to each participant personally, as this study did.

In addition, the recorded times it took each participant to read the listed words on the stroop task were not analyzed. If the justice-related Stroop task yielded longer times than the neutral Stroop task, then there would be a reason to believe the manipulation had some effect on participants' BJW, which may not have been strong enough to present themselves when analyzed solely with the stroop condition.

Also, not only would a larger sample size improve the results of police perceptions, but it could strengthen the overall analyses.

In a way, the likelihood of inhibiting or approaching certain situations in life can be reasonably linked to the automatic fight, flight, or freeze response. BIS and BAS scores are key indicators for how participants would react to a victimization. Participants in this study who scored high on BAS were significantly related to being more likely to report their victimizations

to the police, but this significant relationship was not present with participants who scored high on BIS. It is particularly alarming that people who score high on BIS are likely to fall prey to additional victimizations (Basharpour et al., 2013). Therefore, reporting to the police is essential, especially for people with high inhibition or “freeze” tendencies. In addition, future studies could collect data on personality traits of victims who do not report, to see if people with high BIS scores make up the vast majority of non-reporters. Then, tailoring the education and outreach to these non-reporters is pertinent to entice them to report current and future transgressions. Then, not only will justice be served for the victims, but distributing retribution to the perpetrator could aim to reduce further offenses. More data on fight or flight response needs to be studied and tested in comparison to victimizations, to expand upon the current understanding of victims’ responses.

In conclusion, only the correlational data of personality measures yielded significant results. My hypothesis that participants in the high BJW condition (justice-related Stroop condition) would be less likely to report the transgressions to the police, more likely to blame themselves, and less likely to blame the perpetrator than participants in the low BJW condition (neutral Stroop task) was not supported. Therefore, no causal relationships were found in this study. However, overall, the personality of the participants was related to how they responded to the transgression scenarios. People who have stronger dispositional just world beliefs are likely to make internal and global attributions, have more positive perceptions of police, and are more motivated to approach rewards are more likely to report personal transgressions to the police.

It is pertinent to identify certain personality dispositions, perceptions in life, and states of minds that are related to certain responses to victimizations. Consequently, if people are more aware of how they respond, it can help them to practice and prepare to respond to a future

victimization productively. This way, they can practice responses that may not come naturally to them, but are ways to best equip themselves with the best survival techniques. Also, with the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) stating significantly low reporting rates for victimizations, it is essential to know how to incentivize the public and educate them with effective methods on the importance of reporting, to hopefully reduce the amount of future victimizations. If victims report to the police, it lends the opportunity to find and punish the perpetrator, diminishing their chances to reoffend.

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Tables

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Dispositional Measures							
		Scale	# of Items	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
BJW Scale Total		1-7	16	43	103	73.29	14.95
	Procedural Justice - Self	1-7	4	6	28	19.53	4.77
	Procedural Justice - Others	1-7	4	5	27	15.98	5.42
	Distributive Justice - Self	1-7	4	12	28	20.08	4.11
	Distributive Justice - Others	1-7	4	8	28	17.59	4.92
Attributional Style		--	--	--	--	--	--
	Internal/External	1-7	12	34	76	58.96	7.32
	Stable/Unstable	1-7	12	39	75	59.46	7.61
	Global/Specific	1-7	12	27	78	57.67	10.8
BIS total		1-4	7	8	28	21.85	4.81
BAS total		1-4	13	26	50	41.17	5.05
	BAS Drive	1-4	4	5	16	11.38	2.55
	BAS Reward	1-4	5	6	20	17.82	2.28
	BAS Fun	1-4	4	5	16	11.97	2.28
Perceptions of Police		1-3	6	6	18	12.04	3.04

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Scenario Measures

	Scale	Scenario 1		Scenario 2		Scenario 3		Scenario 4		All Scenarios	
	Range	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
How likely are you to report this incident to the police?	1-5	4.71	0.81	1.92	1.37	4.48	0.96	4.43	1.08	15.64	2.48
How much do you blame yourself for this incident?	0-5	1.46	1.37	1.19	1.55	0.93	1.35	1.65	1.61	5.16	4.36
To what extent do you believe you could have avoided the incident?	0-5	2.19	1.53	1.27	1.48	1.95	1.61	2.17	1.65	7.46	4.41
How concerned are you with the question of who, or what, cause the incident?	0-5	4.05	1.35	2.59	1.86	4.05	1.34	3.92	1.45	14.55	4.23
How concerned are you with the question, "Why did this have to happen to me?"	0-5	3.27	1.63	2.56	1.88	3.55	1.62	3.42	1.60	12.64	5.56
How much do you blame the perpetrator for this incident?	0-5	4.22	0.98	4.03	1.26	4.45	1.01	4.45	0.85	17.11	3.12

Table 3. Correlations Among BJW, Attributional Style, BIS/BAS, and Perceptions of Police

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. BJW Scale Total	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
2. BJW Procedural Justice - Self	.72*	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
3. BJW Procedural Justice - Others	.84*	.45*	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
4. BJW Distributive Justice - Self	.73*	.52*	.37*	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
5. BJW Distributive Justice - Others	.80*	.28*	.70*	.45*	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
6. Internal/External Attribution Style	.17 ns	.13 ns	.17 ns	-.04 ns	.23 ns	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
7. Stable/Unstable Attribution Style	-.01 ns	-.16 ns	.06 ns	-.06 ns	.15 ns	.24 ns	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
8. Global/Specific Attribution Style	-.06 ns	-.01 ns	.01 ns	-.11 ns	-.09 ns	.20 ns	.44*	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
9. BIS	-.25 ns	-.08 ns	-.26*	-.19 ns	-.20 ns	-.02 ns	.01 ns	.15 ns	--	--	--	--	--	--
10. BAS Total	.20 ns	.28*	.16 ns	.13 ns	.05 ns	.35*	.04 ns	.20 ns	-.15 ns	--	--	--	--	--
11. BAS - Drive	.31*	.11 ns	.29*	.20 ns	.33*	.26 ns	.14 ns	.08 ns	-.45*	.71*	--	--	--	--
12. BAS - Reward	.29*	.44*	.13 ns	.27*	.10 ns	.36*	-.06 ns	.26 ns	.12 ns	.74*	.27*	--	--	--
13. BAS - Fun	-.19 ns	.07 ns	-.10 ns	-.22 ns	-.36*	.11 ns	-.03 ns	.09 ns	.05 ns	.69*	.18 ns	.34*	--	--
14. Perceptions of Police	-.26* ns	-.22 ns	-.20 ns	-.19 ns	-.21 ns	-.02 ns	-.11 ns	-.13 ns	-.02 ns	.03 ns	-.02 ns	-.06 ns	.16 ns	--

Appendices

Appendix A:

Attribution Style Questionnaire

Please try to vividly imagine yourself in the situations that follow. If such a situation happened to you, what would you feel would have caused it? While events may have many causes, we want you to pick only one—the *major* cause if this event happened to *you*. Please write this cause in the blank provided after each event. Next we want you to answer some questions about the *cause* and a final question about the *situation*. To summarize, we want you to:

1. Read each situation and vividly imagine it happening to you.
2. Decide what you feel would be the *major* cause of the situation if it happened to you.
3. Write one cause in the blank provided.
4. Answer three questions about the *cause*.
5. Answer one question about the *situation*.
6. Go on to the next situation.

- 1) You met a friend who compliments you on your appearance.
 - a. Write down the one major cause _____
 - b. Is the cause of your friend's compliment due to something about you or to something about other people or circumstances? (Circle one number)

Totally due to other people or circumstances	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Totally due to me
---	---------------------------	----------------------
 - c. In the future when I receive a compliment, will this cause again be present? (Circle one number)

Will never again be present	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Will always be present
--------------------------------	---------------------------	---------------------------
 - d. Is the cause something that just influences receiving a compliment or does it always influence other areas of your life? (Circle one number)

Influences just this particular situation	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Influences all situations in my life
--	---------------------------	---
 - e. How important would this situation be if it happened to you? (Circle one number)

Not at all important	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Extremely Important
-------------------------	---------------------------	------------------------
- 2) You have been looking for a job unsuccessfully for some time.

- a. Write down the one major cause _____
- b. Is the cause of unsuccessful job search due to something about you or to something about other people or circumstances? (Circle one number)
- | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|--|--|-------------|
| Totally due to other | | | | | | | | | | | | Totally due |
| people or circumstances | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | | | to me |
- c. In the future when looking for a job, will this cause again be present? (Circle one number)
- | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|--|--|-------------|
| Will never again | | | | | | | | | | | | Will always |
| be present | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | | | be present |
- d. Is the cause something that just influences looking for a job or does it always influence other areas of your life? (Circle one number)
- | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|--|--|---------------------------|
| Influences just this | | | | | | | | | | | | Influences all situations |
| particular situation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | | | in my life |
- e. How important would this situation be if it happened to you? (Circle one number)
- | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|--|--|-----------|
| Not at all | | | | | | | | | | | | Extremely |
| important | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | | | Important |

3. You become very rich.

- a. Write down the one major cause _____
- b. Is the cause of you becoming rich due to something about you or to something about other people or circumstances? (Circle one number)
- | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|--|--|-------------|
| Totally due to other | | | | | | | | | | | | Totally due |
| people or circumstances | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | | | to me |
- c. In the future when dealing with my finances/ income, will this cause again be present? (Circle one number)
- | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|--|--|-------------|
| Will never again | | | | | | | | | | | | Will always |
| be present | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | | | be present |
- d. Is the cause something that just influences my finances/ income or does it always influence other areas of your life? (Circle one number)
- | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|--|--|---------------------------|
| Influences just this | | | | | | | | | | | | Influences all situations |
| particular situation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | | | in my life |
- e. How important would this situation be if it happened to you? (Circle one number)
- | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|--|--|-----------|
| Not at all | | | | | | | | | | | | Extremely |
| important | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | | | Important |

4. A friend comes to you with a problem and you don't try to help.

- a. Write down the one major cause _____
- b. Is the cause of you not trying to help due to something about you or to something about other people or circumstances? (Circle one number)
- | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|-------------|
| Totally due to other | | | | | | | | | | Totally due |
| people or circumstances | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | to me |
- c. In the future when a friend comes to me with a problem, will this cause again be present? (Circle one number)
- | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|-------------|
| Will never again | | | | | | | | | | Will always |
| be present | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | be present |
- d. Is the cause something that just influences my friend relationships or does it always influence other areas of your life? (Circle one number)
- | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|---------------------------|
| Influences just this | | | | | | | | | | Influences all situations |
| particular situation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | in my life |
- e. How important would this situation be if it happened to you? (Circle one number)
- | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|-----------|
| Not at all | | | | | | | | | | Extremely |
| important | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | Important |

5. You give an important talk in front of a group and the audience reacts negatively.

- a. Write down the one major cause _____
- b. Is the cause of the audience reacting negatively due to something about you or to something about other people or circumstances? (Circle one number)
- | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|-------------|
| Totally due to other | | | | | | | | | | Totally due |
| people or circumstances | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | to me |
- c. In the future when I give a talk in front of a group, will this cause again be present? (Circle one number)
- | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|-------------|
| Will never again | | | | | | | | | | Will always |
| be present | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | be present |
- d. Is the cause something that just influences my public speaking or does it always influence other areas of your life? (Circle one number)
- | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|---------------------------|
| Influences just this | | | | | | | | | | Influences all situations |
| particular situation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | in my life |
- e. How important would this situation be if it happened to you? (Circle one number)
- | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|-----------|
| Not at all | | | | | | | | | | Extremely |
| important | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | Important |

6. You do a project that is highly praised.

- a. Write down the one major cause _____
- b. Is the cause of the praise due to something about you or to something about other people or circumstances? (Circle one number)
- | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|--|--|-------------|
| Totally due to other | | | | | | | | | | | | Totally due |
| people or circumstances | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | | | to me |
- c. In the future when I do a project, will this cause again be present? (Circle one number)
- | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|--|--|-------------|
| Will never again | | | | | | | | | | | | Will always |
| be present | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | | | be present |
- d. Is the cause something that just influences my project or does it always influence other areas of your life? (Circle one number)
- | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|--|--|---------------------------|
| Influences just this | | | | | | | | | | | | Influences all situations |
| particular situation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | | | in my life |
- e. How important would this situation be if it happened to you? (Circle one number)
- | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|--|--|-----------|
| Not at all | | | | | | | | | | | | Extremely |
| important | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | | | Important |

7. You meet a friend who acts hostilely towards you.

- a. Write down the one major cause _____
- b. Is the cause of the hostility due to something about you or to something about other people or circumstances? (Circle one number)
- | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|--|--|-------------|
| Totally due to other | | | | | | | | | | | | Totally due |
| people or circumstances | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | | | to me |
- c. In the future when a friend acts hostile towards you, will this cause again be present? (Circle one number)
- | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|--|--|-------------|
| Will never again | | | | | | | | | | | | Will always |
| be present | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | | | be present |
- d. Is the cause something that just influences how hostile your friend acts towards you or does it always influence other areas of your life? (Circle one number)
- | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|--|--|---------------------------|
| Influences just this | | | | | | | | | | | | Influences all situations |
| particular situation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | | | in my life |
- e. How important would this situation be if it happened to you? (Circle one number)
- | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|--|--|-----------|
| Not at all | | | | | | | | | | | | Extremely |
| important | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | | | Important |

8. You can't get all the work done that others expect of you.

- a. Write down the one major cause _____
- b. Is the cause of you not meeting their expectations due to something about you or to something about other people or circumstances? (Circle one number)
- | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|-------------|
| Totally due to other | | | | | | | | | | Totally due |
| people or circumstances | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | to me |
- c. In the future when your work doesn't meet expectations, will this cause again be present? (Circle one number)
- | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|-------------|
| Will never again | | | | | | | | | | Will always |
| be present | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | be present |
- d. Is the cause something that just influences my work or does it always influence other areas of your life? (Circle one number)
- | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|---------------------------|
| Influences just this | | | | | | | | | | Influences all situations |
| particular situation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | in my life |
- e. How important would this situation be if it happened to you? (Circle one number)
- | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|-----------|
| Not at all | | | | | | | | | | Extremely |
| important | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | Important |

9. Your spouse (boyfriend/ girlfriend) has been treating you more lovingly.

- a. Write down the one major cause _____
- b. Is the cause of your spouse's loving treatment due to something about you or to something about other people or circumstances? (Circle one number)
- | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|-------------|
| Totally due to other | | | | | | | | | | Totally due |
| people or circumstances | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | to me |
- c. In the future when your spouse treats you lovingly, will this cause again be present? (Circle one number)
- | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|-------------|
| Will never again | | | | | | | | | | Will always |
| be present | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | be present |
- d. Is the cause something that just influences my spouse or does it always influence other areas of your life? (Circle one number)
- | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|---------------------------|
| Influences just this | | | | | | | | | | Influences all situations |
| particular situation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | in my life |
- e. How important would this situation be if it happened to you? (Circle one number)
- | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|-----------|
| Not at all | | | | | | | | | | Extremely |
| important | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | Important |

10. You apply for a position that you want very badly (ex: important job, graduate school admission, etc.,) and you get it.

- a. Write down the one major cause _____
- b. Is the cause of you obtaining the position due to something about you or to something about other people or circumstances? (Circle one number)

Totally due to other										Totally due
people or circumstances	1	2	3	4	5	6	7			to me
- c. In the future when you apply for a position, will this cause again be present? (Circle one number)

Will never again										Will always
be present	1	2	3	4	5	6	7			be present
- d. Is the cause something that just influences my application for a position or does it always influence other areas of your life? (Circle one number)

Influences just this										Influences all situations
particular situation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7			in my life
- e. How important would this situation be if it happened to you? (Circle one number)

Not at all										Extremely
important	1	2	3	4	5	6	7			Important

11. You go out on a date and it goes badly.

- a. Write down the one major cause _____
- b. Is the cause of your date going badly due to something about you or to something about other people or circumstances? (Circle one number)

Totally due to other										Totally due
people or circumstances	1	2	3	4	5	6	7			to me
- c. In the future when you go on a date, will this cause again be present? (Circle one number)

Will never again										Will always
be present	1	2	3	4	5	6	7			be present
- d. Is the cause something that just influences my dates or does it always influence other areas of your life? (Circle one number)

Influences just this										Influences all situations
particular situation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7			in my life
- e. How important would this situation be if it happened to you? (Circle one number)

Not at all										Extremely
important	1	2	3	4	5	6	7			Important

12. You get a raise.

- a. Write down the one major cause _____
- b. Is the cause of your raise due to something about you or to something about other people or circumstances? (Circle one number)
- | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|--|--|-------------|
| Totally due to other | | | | | | | | | | | | Totally due |
| people or circumstances | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | | | to me |
- c. In the future when you get a raise, will this cause again be present? (Circle one number)
- | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|--|--|-------------|
| Will never again | | | | | | | | | | | | Will always |
| be present | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | | | be present |
- d. Is the cause something that just influences my raise or does it always influence other areas of your life? (Circle one number)
- | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|--|--|---------------------------|
| Influences just this | | | | | | | | | | | | Influences all situations |
| particular situation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | | | in my life |
- e. How important would this situation be if it happened to you? (Circle one number)
- | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|--|--|-----------|
| Not at all | | | | | | | | | | | | Extremely |
| important | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | | | Important |

Appendix B:Police Questionnaire

Do you think that your local police force does a (1-good, 2-average, 3-poor) job of . .

(Circle one)

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| (a) enforcing the laws | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| (b) promptly responding to calls | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| (c) being approachable and easy to talk to | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| (d) supplying information to reduce crime | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| (e) ensuring the safety of the citizens | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| (f) treating people fairly | 1 | 2 | 3 |

Liqun Cao. (2011). Visible Minorities and Confidence in the Police. Canadian Journal of Criminology & Criminal Justice, 53(1), 1–26. <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=57439658&site=ehost-live>

Appendix C:BIS/BAS questionnaire

(Carver, C. S., & White, T. L. (1994). Behavioral inhibition, behavioral activation, and affective responses to impending reward and punishment: The BIS/BAS Scales. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 67(2), 319–333.)

Each item of this questionnaire is a statement that a person may either agree with or disagree with. For each item, indicate how much you agree or disagree with what the item says. Please respond to all the items; do not leave any blank. Choose only one response to each statement. Please be as accurate and honest as you can be.

Respond to each item as if it were the only item. That is, don't worry about being "consistent" in your responses. Choose from the following four response options:

1 = very true for me

2 = somewhat true for me

3 = somewhat false for me

4 = very false for me

(Write in your answer at the end of each statement)

1. A person's family is the most important thing in life. ____
2. Even if something bad is about to happen to me, I rarely experience fear or nervousness. ____
3. I go out of my way to get things I want. ____
4. When I'm doing well at something I love to keep at it. ____
5. I'm always willing to try something new if I think it will be fun. ____
6. How I dress is important to me. ____
7. When I get something I want, I feel excited and energized. ____
8. Criticism or scolding hurts me quite a bit. ____
9. When I want something I usually go all-out to get it. ____
10. I will often do things for no other reason than that they might be fun. ____
11. It's hard for me to find the time to do things such as get a haircut. ____
12. If I see a chance to get something I want I move on it right away. ____

13. I feel pretty worried or upset when I think or know somebody is angry at me. ____
14. When I see an opportunity for something I like I get excited right away. ____
15. I often act on the spur of the moment. ____
16. If I think something unpleasant is going to happen I usually get pretty "worked up." ____
17. I often wonder why people act the way they do. ____
18. When good things happen to me, it affects me strongly. ____
19. I feel worried when I think I have done poorly at something important. ____
20. I crave excitement and new sensations. ____
21. When I go after something I use a "no holds barred" approach. ____
22. I have very few fears compared to my friends. ____
23. It would excite me to win a contest. ____
24. I worry about making mistakes. ____

Appendix D:

Experimental Stroop Task of Justice Related Words

Fair

Equal

Deserved

Judge

Right

Ethical

Truthful

Legal

Honest

Reasonable

Appendix E:

Neutral Stroop Task of Non-Justice Related Words

Phone

Grass

Car

Hair

Clothes

Picture

Computer

Window

Coffee

Backpack

Appendix F:**Belief in a Just World Questionnaire**

The following questions pertain to fairness.

In this first set of questions we are interested in your perceptions of fairness with respect to OTHERS. Please mark your level of agreement using the 7-point scale shown below.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

Your Rating	Statement
	1. I feel that people generally earn the rewards and punishments that they get in this world.
	2. People usually receive the outcomes that they deserve.
	3. People generally deserve the things that they are accorded.
	4. I feel that people usually receive the outcomes that they are due.
	5. People usually use fair procedures in dealing with others.
	6. I feel that people generally use methods that are fair in their evaluations of others.
	7. Regardless of the specific outcomes they receive, people are subjected to fair procedures.
	8. People are generally subjected to processes that are fair.

In this next set of questions we are interested in your perceptions of fairness with respect to YOURSELF. Please mark your level of agreement using the 7-point scale shown below.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

Your Rating	Statement
	1. I feel that I generally earn the rewards and punishments that I get in this world.
	2. I usually receive the outcomes that I deserve.
	3. I generally deserve the things that I am accorded.
	4. I feel that I usually receive the outcomes that I am due.
	5. People usually use fair procedures in dealing with me.
	6. I feel that people generally use methods that are fair in their evaluations of me.
	7. Regardless of the specific outcomes I receive, I am subjected to fair procedures.
	8. I am generally subjected to processes that are fair.

Appendix G

Imagine that you were in the following situation:

1. You came home one day to find your house rummaged through and all your electronics and valuable items missing.
2. A peer in class passes notes to you constantly saying hurtful things, like "You are ugly."
3. While walking to class late at night, someone came up behind you and started attacking you by throwing punches at you and slapping you in the face.
4. Your credit card was hacked and your balance left in the bank is —\$200

For #1:

You came home one day to find your house rummaged through and all your electronics and valuable items missing.

1. How likely are you to report this incident to the police?

(Circle one)

- | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1- Very unlikely, | 2- slightly unlikely, | 3- Neither likely nor unlikely, |
| 4- Slightly likely, | 5- very likely | |

(Circle a number based on the following): 0 – not at all, 1 – a little , 2 – moderate amount, 3 – neutral, 4 – a lot, 5 – completely

1. How much do you blame yourself for this incident? 0 1 2 3 4 5
2. To what extent do you believe you could have avoided the incident? 0 1 2 3 4 5
3. How concerned are you with the question of who, or what, cause the incident? 0 1 2 3 4 5
4. How concerned are you with the question, "Why did this have to happen to me?" 0 1 2 3 4 5

(Hart, T., Hanks, R., Bogner, J. A., Millis, S., & Esselman, P. (2007). Blame attribution in intentional and unintentional traumatic brain injury: Longitudinal changes and impact on subjective well-being. *Rehabilitation Psychology*, 52(2), 152–161.

<http://taurus.hood.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=pdh&AN=2007-06505-004&site=ehost-live>)

1. How much do you blame the perpetrator for this incident?

(circle one)

0 – not at all, 1 – a little, 2 – moderate amount, 3 – neutral, 4 – a lot, 5 – completely

For #2:

A peer in class passes notes to you constantly saying hurtful things, like “You are ugly.”

1. How likely are you to report this incident to the police?

(Circle one)

1- Very unlikely, 2- slightly unlikely, 3- Neither likely nor unlikely,
4- Slightly likely, 5- very likely

(Circle a number based on the following): 0 – not at all, 1 – a little, 2 – moderate amount, 3 – neutral, 4 – a lot, 5 – completely

1. How much do you blame yourself for this incident? 0 1 2 3 4 5

2. To what extent do you believe you could have avoided the incident? 0 1 2 3 4 5

3. How concerned are you with the question of who, or what, cause the incident? 0 1 2 3 4 5

4. How concerned are you with the question, “Why did this have to happen to me?” 0 1 2 3 4 5

(Hart, T., Hanks, R., Bogner, J. A., Millis, S., & Esselman, P. (2007). Blame attribution in intentional and unintentional traumatic brain injury: Longitudinal changes and impact on subjective well-being. *Rehabilitation Psychology*, 52(2), 152–161.

<http://taurus.hood.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=pdh&AN=2007-06505-004&site=ehost-live>)

1. How much do you blame the perpetrator for this incident?

(circle one)

0 – not at all, 1 – a little, 2 – moderate amount, 3 – neutral, 4 – a lot, 5 – completely

For #3:

While walking to class late at night, someone came up behind you and started attacking you by throwing punches at you and slapping you in the face.

1. How likely are you to report this incident to the police?

(Circle one)

1-Very unlikely,
4- Slightly likely,

2- slightly unlikely,
5- very likely

3- Neither likely nor unlikely,

(Circle a number based on the following): 0 – not at all, 1 – a little , 2 – moderate amount, 3 – neutral, 4 – a lot, 5 – completely

1. How much do you blame yourself for this incident? 0 1 2 3 4 5

2. To what extent do you believe you could have avoided the incident? 0 1 2 3 4 5

3. How concerned are you with the question of who, or what, cause the incident? 0 1 2 3 4 5

4. How concerned are you with the question, “Why did this have to happen to me?” 0 1 2 3 4 5

(Hart, T., Hanks, R., Bogner, J. A., Millis, S., & Esselman, P. (2007). Blame attribution in intentional and unintentional traumatic brain injury: Longitudinal changes and impact on subjective well-being. *Rehabilitation Psychology*, 52(2), 152–161.

<http://taurus.hood.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=pdh&AN=2007-06505-004&site=ehost-live>)

1. How much do you blame the perpetrator for this incident?

(circle one)

0 – not at all, 1 – a little , 2 – moderate amount, 3 – neutral, 4 – a lot, 5 – completely

For #4:

Your credit card was hacked and your balance left in the bank is —\$200

1. How likely are you to report this incident to the police?

(Circle one)

1-Very unlikely,
4- Slightly likely,

2- slightly unlikely,
5- very likely

3- Neither likely nor unlikely,

(Circle a number based on the following): 0 – not at all, 1 – a little , 2 – moderate amount, 3 – neutral, 4 – a lot, 5 – completely

1. How much do you blame yourself for this incident? 0 1 2 3 4 5

2. To what extent do you believe you could have avoided the incident? 0 1 2 3 4 5

3. How concerned are you with the question of who, or what, cause the incident? 0 1 2 3 4 5

4. How concerned are you with the question, “Why did this have to happen to me?” 0 1 2 3 4 5

(Hart, T., Hanks, R., Bogner, J. A., Millis, S., & Esselman, P. (2007). Blame attribution in intentional and unintentional traumatic brain injury: Longitudinal changes and impact on subjective well-being. *Rehabilitation Psychology*, 52(2), 152–161.

<http://taurus.hood.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=pdh&AN=2007-06505-004&site=ehost-live>)

1. How much do you blame the perpetrator for this incident?

(circle one)

0 – not at all, 1 – a little , 2 – moderate amount, 3 – neutral, 4 – a lot, 5 – completely
