

The Role of Uncertainty and the Just-World Belief in Victim-Blaming

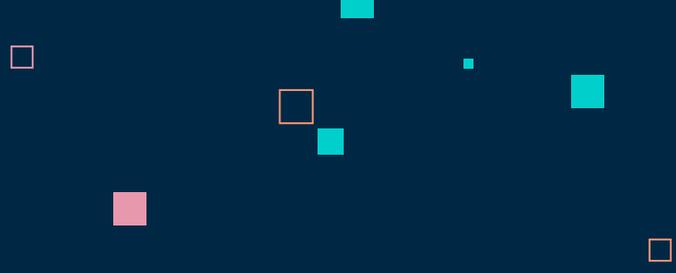
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Just World Theory (JWT)

- JWT is the belief in a just world, good people are rewarded while bad people are punished (Furham, 2003)
- VB increases when a person's belief in JWT is threatened (Furnham & Procter, 1992)



Aims of the study



1 Investigating if and how 3rd party observers attribute **blame** and responsibility to victims

2 Examining if JWT **predicts** victim blaming and if it differs based on different contexts

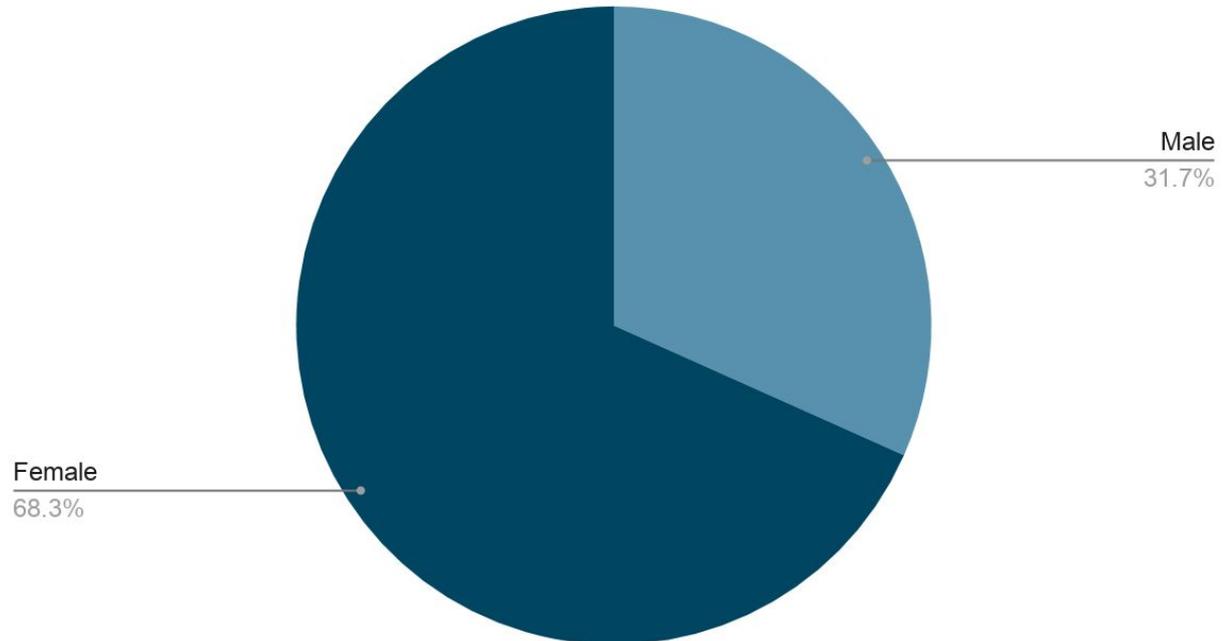


Methods

60

Northeastern
University
students

Participant Breakdown





Event outcome unknown



Perpetrator was apprehended



Perpetrator was not apprehended



7-Point Likert Scale

Participants were asked 5 questions about the emotions felt toward victim (Davis 1983)

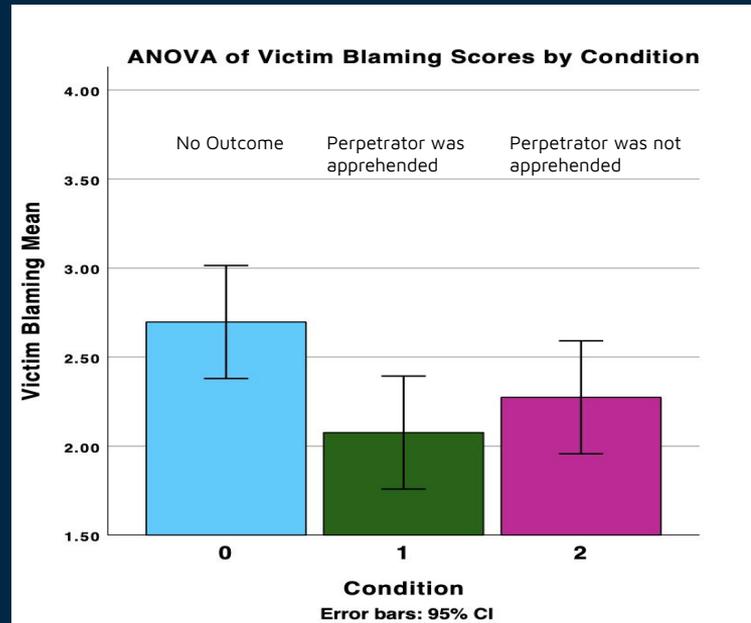
Just World Theory

Participants answered JWT questionnaire at the end to be used in analysis (Lipkus 1991)

Results

Participants were more likely to blame the victim given **no information about the outcome of the event** or when **the perpetrator got away**.



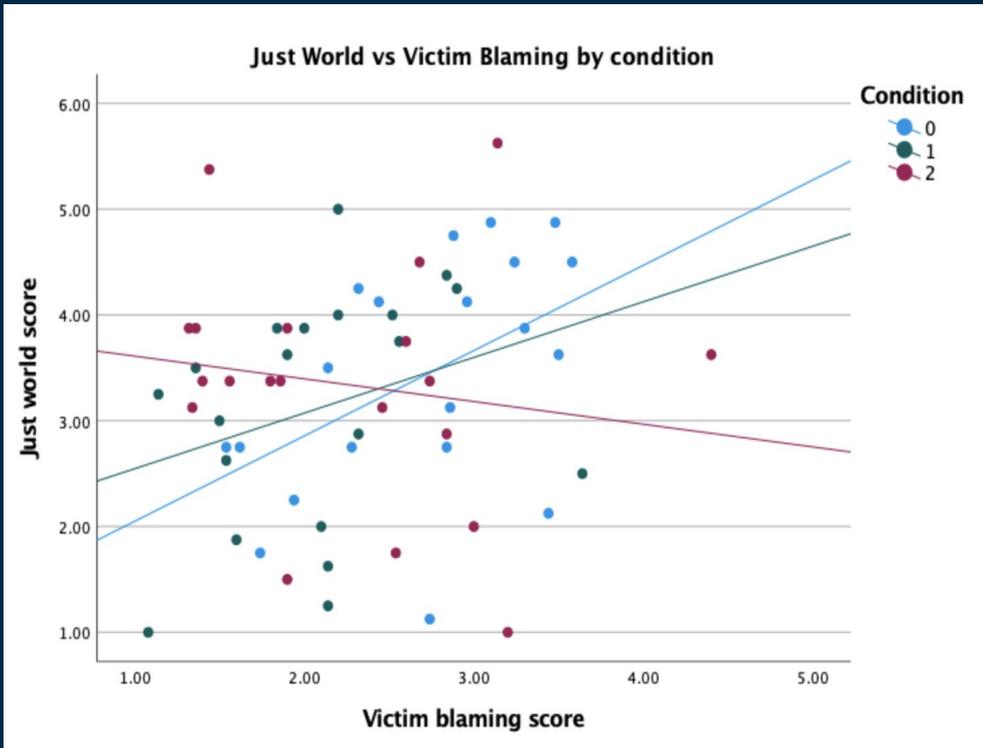


The average Victim-Blaming score:

No outcome > Perpetrator was not apprehended > Perpetrator was apprehended

The statistical difference among three conditions was significant, $F(2, 59) = 4.007$, p

$= 0.024$



No Outcome

Perpetrator was apprehended

Perpetrator was not apprehended

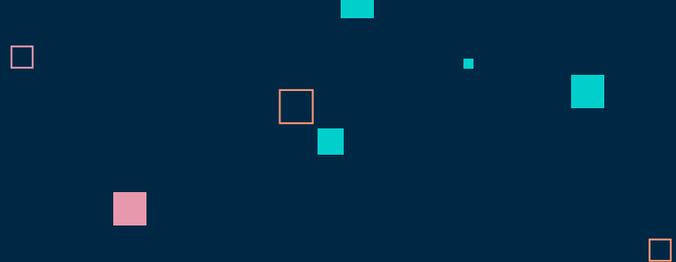
When the outcome of the event is **unclear** or when **the perpetrator was caught**, victims were prone to be blamed more when participants had a higher JWT score.

The regression was significant only in condition where **the outcome is unclear**, $R^2 = 0.23$, $F(1,18) = 5.398$, $p = 0.03$

Conclusion

Under control condition where **the event outcome is unclear**, victim blaming increased. There exists an uncertainty component where people have no idea where to put their blames. Under the same condition, when people **hold a stronger belief in justice**, the effect of victim blaming becomes even stronger.

Future Directions



What is the relationship between uncertainty factor and VB / JWT?

How to define uncertainty in scenarios where the outcome is unclear?

Is uncertainty is a component of JWT or is it a mediator between JWT and VB?

How does social role, gender, appearance, etc. affect judgement under condition where the event outcome is unclear?



Acknowledgement

We would like to thank the Affective and Brain Sciences Lab at Northeastern University for its endless support and guidance.



THANK
YOU

The background is a dark blue field filled with a sparse, abstract pattern of geometric shapes. It includes small squares in shades of pink, orange, and cyan, as well as thin white vertical lines of varying lengths. The word "Questions?" is centered in a large, white, sans-serif font.

Questions?

References

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