

**WHY DO WE BLAME THE VICTIM: PERSONALITY TRAITS AND THE JUST
WORLD THEORY**

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Abstract

This thesis contributed to the literature base regarding victim blaming by exploring the impact that a belief in a just world (BJW) and the Big Five personality traits have on victim blaming. An empirical study investigated whether there is a difference in victim blame levels towards a victim of cyberstalking who has a high level of online personal disclosure in comparison to a low level of online personal disclosure. Whilst this did not yield a significant difference, significant correlations were found between general BJW, personal BJW, the Big Five personality traits, and victim blaming. Those scoring higher on general BJW were more likely to blame the victim, whilst those scoring higher on agreeableness and openness to experience were less likely to blame the victim. A systematic review further explored the relationship between general BJW and personal BJW and the Big Five personality traits. Personal BJW was found to be predominantly positively correlated with openness to experience, conscientiousness, extroversion, and agreeableness, whilst it was predominantly negatively correlated with neuroticism. General BJW was found to be predominantly positively correlated with conscientiousness, extroversion, and agreeableness, whilst it was predominantly negatively correlated with neuroticism and openness to experience. A single case study is then presented, summarising the assessment and formulation process of a convicted offender displaying victim blaming attitudes. The case study explored his victim blaming attitudes using the BJW theory. Finally, a critique of the Perceptions of Victim Blame – Revised scale (PVBS-R; Cramer et al., 2013) is presented, examining its psychometric properties and clinical utility. The thesis emphasises the importance of considering BJW and the Big Five personality traits and the impact that they have on victim blaming attitudes.

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Chapter One: Introduction

The introduction to victim blaming entails understanding the phenomenon where victims in many ways are held partially or wholly responsible for the offences which have been committed against them (Ryan, 1976). Victim blaming shifts the focus away from the perpetrators and holds the victims accountable for what has happened to them. Victim blaming is problematic within society and can be found to occur in different contexts such as sexual assault cases, domestic violence, harassment, and cybercrimes. Victim blaming has multiple negative consequences such as perpetuating harmful stereotypes, undermining the experience of victims, and also limiting victims' ability to seek justice and support.

What is Victim Blaming?

Victim blaming is a phenomenon where victims of crimes are fully or partially blamed for their misfortunes (Ryan, 1976). Victims of crimes are held responsible or accountable for the crimes that have been committed against them. Victims can be blamed for a variety of different reasons, these can be split into behavioural, characterological, and situational blame (Janoff-Bulman, 1979; Taylor, 2020). Behavioural blame suggests that the victim behaved in a way that warranted the crime being committed against them, for example, children who resisted sexual abuse were less likely to be blamed, whilst children who were perceived as encouraging the abuse were more likely to be blamed (Broussard et al., 1991). Characterological blame suggests that the victim's character or personality was responsible for the crime being committed against them, for example, victims of revenge porn who were perceived as more promiscuous were also perceived as more blameworthy (Mckinlay & Lavis, 2020). When blame cannot be attributed to the victim themselves, then factors about the situation that the victim was in can be blamed. These different types of victim blaming can occur simultaneously, however, they all minimise the actions of the perpetrator of the crime.

Victim blaming can occur in various contexts and impacts victims of a number of different crimes. For example, those who have experienced sexual assault may

fall victim to rape myths (Burt, 1980), where a false set of beliefs and stereotypes are used by people to shift responsibility from the perpetrator to the victim of the sexual assault. Rape myths often suggest that victims provoke their own victimisation through their behaviours, clothing, or choices, such as consuming alcohol or engaging in flirtatious behaviour. Additionally, rape myths maintain the idea that false accusations of rape are common, and that “real” rape is always violent and committed by strangers. Where blame is not placed on the victim, the perpetrator’s actions are excused by suggesting that they “could not help themselves” or that they are “not the type to commit such offence” (Franiuk, 2008). Minority groups can also be subject to victim blaming attitudes. They can be blamed for the discrimination that they face, with suggestions that they need to change their behaviour or integrate better into the dominant culture, thereby ignoring systemic issues or racism and prejudice. For example, Linhares et al. (2023) found that black victims were blamed more than white victims, additionally, black women were more reluctant to report their sexual victimisation due to the perceived lack of support.

Not only does victim blaming occur from non-victims towards victims, but victims can also blame themselves for crimes, known as self-blame. Self-blame is the process in which someone attributes blame to themselves, defined by two of the aforementioned categories: behavioural self-blame and characterological self-blame (Janoff-Bulman, 1979). Behavioural self-blame is the attribution of blame to self, based upon a person’s own behaviour or action, with the function of leading people to consider how different behaviours or actions could have protected them or stop an event from happening. Characterological blame on the other hand is the attribution of blame to self, based upon a person’s own internal character or personality. This type of blame can lead a person to believe that there is something wrong with them internally which resulted in the event happening (Janoff-Bulman, 1979).

Despite the plethora of research into victim blaming, it still remains an issue in the current day. Research into victim blaming has been completed within multiple countries and cultures, indicating that it is a universal concern (Beddows, 2022). Moreover, with the development of technology and social media platforms, new opportunities for victim blaming have developed, making it easier to display and

be exposed to negative attitudes and responses to victims (Killean, McAlinden & Dowds, 2022).

What is the Impact of Victim Blaming?

Victim blaming can have many negative consequences on both society and the victim themselves. When victims feel blamed for their victimisation, they are more likely to be isolated from their support networks and thus makes it harder for them to rebuild parts of their lives which have been impacted by the incident that they are victim of (Beddows, 2022). Additionally, victim blaming can limit how much a person can talk about their experiences and access support, it can also have an impact on access to medical and healthcare services, which in turn exacerbates health issues (Ullman, 1999).

Victim blaming can increase a person's level of self-blame, this has included questioning themselves, over-analysing themselves, and not feeling in control (Eaton, 2019). Victims who believe that they are blamed for what has happened to them may experience heightened levels of shame, embarrassment, anger, anxiety, and depression (Fox & Cook, 2011). Feeling blamed has also been found to increase post-traumatic symptoms, anxiety, and depression (Fox & Cook, 2011), as well as leading to feelings of helplessness and powerlessness. On a societal level, perceptions of victim blaming may have an impact on the priority assigned to a case and the provision of services and resources (Fox & Cook, 2011). Additionally, where victims of crime do not feel that they are able to report their experiences, this can impact the understanding around the prevalence and impacts of crime (Sleath & Bull, 2010).

Why does Victim Blaming occur?

There is no one universal theory or understanding as to why victim blaming occurs, however, there is a multitude of factors which impact victim blaming attitudes. Gender has been identified as an impacting factor in victim blaming, where research suggests that males are more likely to blame victims (Grubb & Harrower, 2008). Other research suggests that when a victim is male, they are more likely to be blamed (Strömwall et al., 2013). Assumptions and stereotypes relating to race, ethnicity, and cultural background may also influence the attitudes towards victims, particularly victims of sexual violence (Wyatt, 1992). Societal beliefs may

also impact victim blaming, for example societies that place a strong emphasis on individuals or personal responsibility may be more likely to engage in victim blaming, as it would be expected that they could have prevented their victimisation if they had made different choices. On the other hand, societies that prioritise collective responsibility and social support may be less likely to engage with victim blaming, as they recognise the broader societal factors that contribute to victimisation.

There are a number of different theories that attempt to explain victim blaming, encompassing theories using cognitive processes to place blame on victims, and also consideration of wider cultural and societal circumstances which enable victim blaming. Arguably, victim blaming is a complex phenomenon and therefore can be understood as arising from both psychological and sociocultural factors. Cognitive theories of victim blaming typically frame victim blaming as the result of cognitive processes that a person uses to make sense of the world (Ward, 1995). They typically posit that a person's beliefs about the world, the attitudes that are held towards these beliefs and the attribution of causality for certain events all influence how a victim is viewed. Some of the most prominent and researched cognitive victim blaming theories will now be discussed.

Defensive Attribution Hypothesis

Attribution theories relate to the way in which people attempt to explain the causes of events or behaviours (Weiner, 1972). One theory in relation to victim blaming is the Defensive Attribution Hypothesis (DAH; Shaver, 1970). This postulates that the level of blame placed on a victim is impacted by the observer's perceived similarities and identification with the victim. The theory suggests that when the observer perceives themselves to be more similar to the victim e.g., the same sex or ethnicity, then the less blame they will attribute to the victim (Grubb & Harrower, 2008). When a person feels that they are in danger, then in order to protect themselves they develop internal defence mechanisms (Shaver, 1970). By using stereotypes and judgments about another person, this allows a person to believe that they would make better choices and therefore are more protected from victimisation (Grubb & Harrower, 2008).

The DAH suggests that by victim blaming, this allows a person to feel a sense of control, whilst also protecting themselves from adversity or blame for adversity. The DAH enables people to view events with predictability, rather than occurring at random, where it links positive outcomes to positive traits within themselves and also negative outcomes with negative traits, particularly in relation to others (Weiner, 1972). The DAH acknowledges that bad things occur, however, it minimises how much a person believes that it could happen to them, and the extent to which blame would be placed with them for the event occurring (Shaver, 1970).

Research supports this theory where respondents are more likely to assign a lower degree of blame to victims or offenders if they are presented with similar characteristics as the observer, such as gender and race (Herzog, 2008). For example, this theory may explain why males are more blaming of female victims and less blaming of male perpetrators, as they perceive themselves to be more similar to males and therefore adopt a narrative that protects them (Luginbuhl & Mullin, 1981).

There are however limitations of the DAH; it fails to account for individual differences or attitudes (Grubb & Horrower, 2008). Intention has also been suggested to play a role in victim blaming (Alicke, 2000), and the DAH fails to take into account the intention of the victim, for example, a victim may be blamed for their behaviour, however, the intent of the behaviour is not taken into account.

Culpable Control Model

The Culpable Control Model (CCM) does however consider the role of intention within victim blaming (Alicke, 2000). Within the framework of the CCM, the attribution of blame is influenced by two central concepts: control and culpability. Control can be understood as personal control and perceived control. The CCM differs from other blame theories, whereby it conceptualises criteria such as intention, causation, and foresight in terms of personal control. The greater the perceived control the more likely a person will be held responsible for their actions (Alicke, 2000), with this perception being influenced by situational factors and cognitive biases. Culpability refers to the moral judgements that are made regarding a person's actions and the consequences, encompassing the morality of

the actions taken. Where actions are perceived to be morally wrong or careless, this can result in more blame being attributed to the victim.

Within crime and victimisation, the CMM suggests that a victim is blamed based on the perceptions of their control over a situation and moral judgements about their actions (Pauwels, 2002). Blame might be attributed to a victim of sexual assault based on the perceived control over their environment and actions e.g., alcohol consumption, as well as moral judgements e.g., about their promiscuity, thus taking away from the culpability of the perpetrator. If applied to victims of cybercrime, blame might be attributed more to those where there is a perceived lack of knowledge around technology e.g., sharing personal information, and also moral judgements about engaging in risky online behaviour.

There are however weaknesses to the CMM, as with other cognitive models of blame, the CMM focusses on individual actions and intentions, neglecting wider systemic factors that contribute to negative outcomes. Additionally, the CMM primarily addresses negative outcomes and assignment of blame, therefore omitting how positive outcomes are attributed or how responsibility is assigned in those cases (Alicke, 2000).

The Just World Theory

One of the more predominant theories of victim blaming is the Belief in a Just World theory (BJW; Lerner, 1980). A BJW theorises that people hold the belief that good things happen to good people, and bad things happen to bad people, therefore everyone gets what they deserve. The belief has many protective functions, for example serving as a buffer against the realities of life, where bad things can happen to anybody at any time, without any reason or logic (Furnham, 2003). This belief allows people to face the world as if it is a stable and orderly place (Dalbert, 1999). By believing in a just world, a person can be reassured that if they live a good life then bad things are unlikely to happen to them. When an event threatens a person's BJW then they will attribute responsibility to the victim or situation so that they can reinterpret the event as just or fair, therefore balancing out their BJW (Furnham, 2003). When a victim appears to be innocent, the BJW theory suggests that the observer will engage in higher levels of victim derogation to be able to restore their BJW. Those who have a higher BJW have

been found to be more religious and more authoritarian than those with lower BJW (Rubin & Peplau, 1975). Higher believers were also more likely to admire political leaders and to have negative attitudes towards underprivileged groups (Rubin & Peplau, 1975).

Belief in a Just World: Personal and General

Research suggests that a BJW should be split into two parts: a BJW for the self, and a BJW in general (Lerner & Miller, 1978). Personal BJW refers to the extent in which a person believes that they themselves have what they deserve, whilst general BJW refers to the extent to which people believe that people in general get what they deserve (Alves & Correia, 2010). The two have been found to have different outcomes. For example, personal BJW has been found to be a better predictor of psychological well-being (Dalbert, 1999), whereas general BJW has been found to be a better predictor of attitudes towards victims, particularly the derogation of them (Bègue & Bastounis, 2003). Overall, research has found that people have a higher personal BJW compared to a general BJW (Dalbert, 1999). This highlights the importance of testing BJW in two separate constructs.

Belief in a Just World and Criminality

BJW has been found to serve important adaptive functions and be influential for offenders in the criminal justice system. Otto and Dalbert (2005) found that offenders who had a higher BJW believed that their criminal proceedings were more just, which resulted in higher levels of guilt. Higher believers were also more likely to be confident that they could achieve their personal goals and therefore had better prospects for rehabilitation. Finally, offenders who had a higher personal BJW displayed less deviant behaviour and were more able to control their feelings of anger. These findings show that believing in a just world can have important consequences for offenders.

Belief in a Just World and Personality

Given the impact that a BJW can have on a person's psychological well-being and for offenders in the criminal justice system, it is important to further understand the relationship BJW has with other aspects of personality. One of the most widely used and accepted models of personality is the Big Five model of personality (Costa & McCrae, 1992), this suggests that individuals differ in traits of openness

to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. Openness includes imagination, creativity, and insight; conscientiousness includes thoughtfulness, good impulse control, and goal directed behaviours; extraversion refers to the amount of emotional expressiveness, and sociability; agreeableness refers to trust, altruism, and kindness; and finally, neuroticism refers to emotional instability, moodiness, and stress. This model has been found to be stable across cultures and time (McCrae & Costa, 1997). There is research to suggest that there are relationships between BJW and these Big Five personality traits. For example, higher levels of BJW have been associated with lower levels of neuroticism and higher levels of extraversion and agreeableness (Nudelman, 2013).

It is important to note that not all victims are blamed equally, nor is there one understanding as to why victims are blamed for their circumstances. However, what can be suggested is that victim blaming is wider than a process that occurs between two people e.g., victim and non-victim, and that victim blaming is an interplay of factors on psychological and sociological factors. To some extent, the Just World theory has been explored as to the psychological and sociological factors that can impact the belief in it. Whilst it is acknowledged that other victim blaming theories exist, the BJW has a significant role in social psychology and understanding blame and has received extensive empirical support. Therefore, this thesis will focus on the Just World theory, building upon its growing body of literature.

Overview of Thesis

Aims and Rationale

The impacts of victim blaming are significant and wide. Victim blaming can undermine the credibility and experience of those who have faced any victimisation, with negative physical, psychological, and practical consequences. Blaming the victim can perpetuate a culture of silence and discourage individuals from reporting incidents for fear of the negative consequences, such as not being believed, or some portion of blame being attributed to them. Whilst there is extensive research regarding the impact of victim blaming attitudes in relation to the victim's characteristics, there is less research exploring the traits of those who victim blame. This thesis aims to draw and expand upon the existing research and literature regarding victim blaming and factors which impact levels of victim

blaming. It is hoped that the findings of this thesis will be able to highlight factors which impact victim blaming, which can be used to inform organisations, specifically within the Criminal Justice System, to have an awareness of such attitudes. By raising awareness of potential victim blaming biases, this can help to reduce the damaging effects of victim blaming, and actively work towards a system that is safe and supportive to victims. The way in which this thesis aims to do this is with a specific focus on two broad areas: personality traits and BJW. Personality traits, including the Big Five traits, are universal with every individual having a personality which will differ. The BJW theory is one of the most widely accepted and used ways of understanding victim blaming attitudes. By exploring the impact of personality traits and BJW on victim blaming attitudes, it is hoped that the findings of this thesis can highlight peoples own personal victim blaming attitudes, and thus reduces these.

Research Questions

This thesis aims to explore the following broad research question:

- 1) Do victim blaming attitudes exist within victims of cyberstalking?
- 2) How do personality traits and BJW impact levels of victim blaming?
- 3) What are the links between personality traits and BJW? And how do these relate to victim blaming?
- 4) How can victim blaming be measured?

Chapter Summary

The thesis had an original focus on victim blaming within cyber stalking, forming one of the main bodies within the empirical study in Chapter Two. It also investigated if a BJW and the Big Five personality traits had an impact on victim blaming. The study did not find any significant victim blaming attitudes within cyberstalking; however, it did highlight significant and interesting theoretical correlations between a BJW and personality traits. These correlations were further explored in Chapter Three, and measures of victim blaming were further explored in Chapter Five.

Taking forward some of the findings from the empirical study, Chapter Three presents a systematic review of the current literature regarding a BJW and the Big Five personality traits. An extensive search was undertaken of the existing

literature and the data was analysed. Within this systematic review, the BJW was separated into a personal BJW and a general BJW, and the relationship with each Big Five personality trait was examined.

Chapter Four is a single-case study of an offender convicted of attempted murder who displays victim blaming attitudes towards his victim, his mother, for the violence he perpetrated towards her. His victim blaming attitudes are attempted to be explained through the BJW theory. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, any intervention could not be undertaken, however, the case study considers the impact of victim blaming for offenders and the interventions that can target victim blaming attitudes.

In Chapter Five, this thesis explores and critically evaluates the Perceptions of Victim Blame – Revised scale (PVBS-R; Cramer et al., 2013), a psychometric measuring levels of blame on 3 subscales: unreliability, recklessness, and malice. This psychometric was used in the empirical study in Chapter Two and was planned to be used in the case study in Chapter Four. Whilst the author was exploring victim blaming psychometrics it was highlighted that there is a lack of measurements available for non-specific crimes e.g., developed to measure blame in a specific crime. The psychometrics strengths and weaknesses are analysed.

The final chapter provides an overview of the findings presented throughout the chapters. Chapter Six draws together relevant findings from the previous four chapters to provide further understanding of victim blaming and the influence of BJW and the Big Five personality traits. The chapter considers limitations, recommendations for future research and implications for practice.

Chapter Two: Victim Blaming in Cyberstalking; Does it exist and what effect do Personality types and a Belief in Just World have?

Abstract

Victim blaming is an area that has been extensively researched, however to date there is little research into the levels of victim blaming towards cyberstalking victims. This research aimed to investigate how personal disclosure of online information impacted levels of victim blaming, as well as the impact that the Big Five personality characteristics and a belief in a just world (BJW) had on levels of blame. Participants were exposed to either a high personal disclosure profile or a low personal disclosure profile and were then asked to read a cyberstalking vignette. Results found that the level of online personal disclosure did not significantly impact the level of blame attributed to the victim. Those who had a higher general BJW were more likely to attribute blame on the unreliability blame subscale. Those scoring higher on agreeableness were less likely to blame the victim on the unreliability blame and malice blame subscales, whilst those scoring higher in openness to experience were less likely to blame the victim on the malice blame and recklessness blame subscales. The findings indicate that personality traits and BJW can have an impact on the level of blame attributed to victims of cyberstalking, therefore these should be considered in criminal proceedings and in offering support to victims. Future research is needed to further explore blame towards cyberstalking victims and explore other moderating and mediating factors of this relationship such as the severity of the incident.

Links of this primary study with other chapters

This research project has influenced this thesis in several ways. The study's original main focus was on victim blaming within cyber stalking and how a belief in a just world (BJW) and personality traits impacted victim blaming. The study highlighted however that there were significant correlations between BJW and personality traits, which were further explored in the systematic review in Chapter Three. Additionally, the psychometric used in this study, the Perceptions of Victim Blame Scale - Revised (PVBS-R; Cramer et al., 2013), highlighted some of the underlying constructs within victim blaming, namely intent. The study yielded different correlations between victim blaming and BJW and personality traits, based upon the perceptions of intent of harm. This was further explored in the psychometric critique in Chapter Five.

Introduction

Cyberstalking

The challenges and issues with cyberstalking, facilitated by the growth of the internet, raises concern for society. Whilst the internet has fostered positive outcomes for its four billion users, such as accumulating social capital and global communication, its infinite size and capabilities it has also raised challenges such as fake news sharing, online fraud, as well as cyberstalking (Kaur et al., 2020).

Cyberstalking generally refers to the use of the internet, email or another electronic communication device that is used to create a criminal level of harassment and intimidation in one or more victims (Pittaro, 2007). Cyberstalking is on a spectrum where it can range from a non-threatening email to a threat made from a stalker to a victim. The overlap of cyberstalking with traditional stalking, where about 26% of victims experience both forms of harassment, underscores the evolving nature of stalking in the digital age (Short et al., 2014). The differentiation between traditional stalking and cyberstalking is that cyber stalkers rely on the use of the internet and other electronic communications to harass, intimidate, and threaten their victim, thus highlighting the need to take a holistic approach to these distinct yet interrelated issues (Pittaro, 2007).

The psychological impact of cyberstalking is an important area that warrants attention. The negative consequences of cyberstalking on victims' mental health include anxiety, depression, fear, shame, embarrassment, and thoughts of self-harm and suicide (Stevens et al., 2020). Moreover, cyberstalking has also impacted professional and educational domains. When cyberstalking has occurred within a workplace or place of education, some people felt the desire to leave their job and felt that their experience had impacted their work or assignments (Cassidy et al., 2014; Faucher et al., 2014). In one study, 16% of cyberstalking victims had sought professional help due to the negative impact that cyberstalking had on them (Dreßing et al., 2014). Thus, raising the question about the broader societal implications of cyberstalking, and the need for effective interventions.

A lack of adequate support and understanding for cyberstalking victims, as found by research, has been found to have detrimental consequences. Research has

found that victims of cyberstalking often experience a lack of support and understanding of what they have experienced (Short et al., 2014; Worsley et al., 2017). Instances where law enforcement dismisses concerns or lacks awareness of appropriate services contribute to a sense of victim disempowerment and exacerbate the consequences of cyberstalking (Worsley et al., 2017). Cyberstalking crimes, similar to stalking, are characterised by control being exerted over the victim by the perpetrator. If the victim also feels a lack of support, then the aforementioned consequences of cyberstalking will only be exacerbated. If a victim is further disempowered by the lack of support and understanding that they are receiving, then the cyber stalker can become more empowered and enables them to continue cyberstalking (Short et al., 2014).

Blaming victims for their experiences, a phenomenon observed not only in cyberstalking but also in cases of rape, sexual assault, and family violence, highlights societal attitudes that require further examination (Suarez & Gadalla, 2010; Henning et al., 2005). Qualitative studies have investigated the experience of cyberstalking victims, with some victims reporting that they themselves have been blamed or held responsible for their experiences. When seeking support from law enforcement some people reported that they had been told that it was their fault for having put the information online (Short et al., 2014; Worsley et al., 2017). This experience only disempowered victims more, and paradoxically, made victims feel that their perpetrator had been empowered. Holding victims accountable for their own circumstances and so therefore attributing blame and guilt to them has long been a phenomenon.

Online personal disclosure has been found to have an impact on the levels of blame that are attributed to the victim. For example, high online personal disclosures have been found to elicit negative judgements from others and have been labelled as attention-seeking behaviours (Forest & Wood, 2012). The current literature suggests that victims of cyberbullying who have high levels of personal disclosure are perceived to be more deserving of the cyberbullying that they have experienced (Schacter et al., 2016; Weber et al., 2013). It has also been found that as blame attribution increases, the likelihood of social support decreases (Weber et al., 2013).

Anderson (2014) has suggested that blame is made up of culpability and consequences. Culpability refers to the intent or motivation of an act, and more generally a person's tendency to cause harm. Culpability is also related to the idea of foresight and negligence, for example, harm resulting from negligence will be blamed more harshly than identical harm not arising from negligence (Hermand et al., 2001). Consequences on the other hand refers to the physical and psychological consequences that might may result from a crime. Intent influences blame in a number of ways, those who are perceived as having negative desires and plans to harm others, are blamed more than those who have caused harm accidentally (Ames & Fiske, 2013). Intentional actions can be comprised of two main components: intention of action and intention of outcome (Alicke, 2000). The intention of outcome relates to the extent in which a person behaved knowingly, purposefully, and without external constraint. Intention of outcome relates to the extent to which a person understands the consequences of their behaviour and whether the outcomes were desired or foreseen (Rogers et al., 2019). Blame is typically reduced when the negative outcome of an event is unforeseen or unexpected (Rogers et al., 2019).

Just World Belief

As discussed in Chapter One, one explanation of victim blaming is the belief in a just world (BJW), a measurable theoretical construct from the BJW theory, where people believe that the world is a just place and so, therefore, people get what they deserve (Lerner, 1980). The BJW can be applied to a variety of different situations such as domestic violence and sexual assaults e.g., if the world is a just place then there has to be a justifiable reason as to why a person would perpetrate an aggressive act, excusing or reducing the level of responsibility attributed to the perpetrator e.g., "he was violent towards her because she did something to provoke it" (Valor-Segura et al., 2011). However, this raises questions about the potential for BJW to inadvertently contribute to victim blaming by downplaying the accountability of those who commit harm. Situations in which 'good' people suffer 'bad' outcomes threaten a person's perception of a just world, therefore it is predicted that people respond by altering their view of the victim so that the victim becomes more deserving of their fate. By holding a BJW this allows people to feel a sense of safety as they believe that they have control over their own actions and behaviours, thus making the world around them more predictable and

manageable (Hayes et al., 2013). The literature suggests a distinction between personal BJW and general BJW, with some studies proposing that individuals tend to perceive the world as more just for themselves than for others (Dalbert, 1999; Lipkus et al., 1996). Notably, those with a higher personal BJW have been associated with enhanced feelings of well-being, self-esteem, and overall improved mood (Dalbert, 1999; Lipkus et al., 1996).

Social perceptions are significantly influenced by an individual's BJW. It has been found that those with a higher BJW will attribute more blame to the victim and view the actions of a perpetrator as less blameworthy (Strömwall, 2013). However, when seemingly 'good' people become victims, cognitive dissonance may arise. When these conflicting feelings occur, it is postulated that people attempt to reinforce their BJW in different ways and thus dispel the perceived injustices. The first way of reinforcement is by reinterpreting the victim's fate so that it is perceived to be desirable, resulting in the victim becoming a better person. The second is that the victims' fate is attributed to something that they did or failed to do, thus putting them to blame. The third is reinterpreting the characteristics of the victim so that due to a personal quality, they deserve their fate (Lerner, 1980; Scott et al., 2014). In summary, the BJW may serve as a coping mechanism to maintain a sense of order and justice in the face of incongruent experiences.

Just World Belief and Stalking

In examining the relationship between the Belief in a Just World (BJW) and stalking, previous research, particularly by Scott et al. (2014), has explored its impact on attributions of blame in general stalking incidents. This work identified three key factors influencing victim responsibility: the victim's behaviour, the perpetrator's behaviour, and the presentation of the situation. These findings align with the principles of the BJW hypothesis, shedding light on how individuals perceive and attribute blame in stalking scenarios.

Moreover, investigations into the impact of personal disclosure in cyberbullying incidents have extended the understanding of blame attribution. In cases where victims disclosed more objective personal information, such as phone numbers or addresses, they tended to face greater blame for being bullied. Consequently, they

were less likely to receive social support from bystanders (Weber et al., 2013; Schacter et al., 2016). Whilst existing literature has explored BJW in the broader context of stalking and cyberbullying, there appears to be a gap in research specifically investigating blame attribution using the BJW theory in the realm of cyberstalking. This gap forms one of the rationales for the current study, aiming to contribute new insight into the attributed blame in cyberstalking incidents.

Personality and Victimization

The "Big Five" model, proposed by Costa and McCrae (1992), comprises five broad personality traits — Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness — reflecting individual differences in thoughts, feelings, and behaviours. These traits significantly influence how individuals perceive and interact with the world, ultimately shaping their behaviours. For example, individuals who score highly on conscientiousness and openness are more likely to perceive the world as safe, whereas those scoring higher on neuroticism are more likely to identify situations as unsafe (Jonason & Sherman, 2020). It has also been found that those scoring higher in agreeableness and conscientiousness are more likely to score higher in empathy (Melchers et al., 2016). This demonstrates differences in how individuals who score high in the Big Five personality traits perceive other individuals and social situations in different ways. This indicates that personality traits may impact how a person interprets cyberstalking scenarios and may impact the way they perceive the victim.

Research in the domain of cybercrime victim support has explored certain personality factors, including empathy, extraversion, and self-efficacy, and their role in influencing individuals to support victims. Empathy and extraversion have been identified as key traits motivating intervention in cyberbullying incidents, with higher scores correlating with a greater likelihood of intervention (Freis and Gurung, 2013). Those who scored high on agreeableness were found to be the most likely to help victims of bullying (Graziano et al., 2007). This implies that certain personality traits may drive supportive behaviours in the context of cybercrimes.

However, there remains a gap in understanding how the broader Big Five personality traits may contribute to perceptions of victim blaming in cyberstalking

scenarios. By building on existing knowledge, this research aims to enhance the understanding of how these personality traits shape individuals' interpretations of cyberstalking incidents and influence their perceptions of the victims involved.

Aims and Rationale

Whilst the literature has researched the negative impacts that cyberstalking has on its victims and the impact of victim blaming, to the author's knowledge there has been no research into what influences why people might blame cyberstalking victims. The study aims to explore whether the level of personal disclosure impacts the level of blame that is attributed to a victim, with the hope that the outcome can provide psychoeducation for both victims of cyberstalking, but also professionals working with victims of cyberstalking to be conscious about their own victim blaming attitudes. The study also aims to explore the impact of a person's personality type and the extent to which they believe in a just world on victim blaming attitudes. Similarly, it is hoped that the results will highlight important findings that can be used to make people aware of their own potential biases in victim blaming attitudes.

Hypothesis

The following hypotheses will be tested:

- People are more likely to attribute more blame to the victim when the victim has publicly exposed personal information in comparison to publicly exposing no personal information.
- People who have a higher personal and general BJW will attribute more blame to the victim than those with a lower personal and general BJW.
- A person's personality traits will have an impact on the amount of blame they attribute to the victim.

Methods

Ethical Approval

Ethical Approval was applied for and obtained from The University of Nottingham (Reference number 281-1904). Please see Appendix A.

Participants

An a priori analysis was conducted using G*Power to calculate the number of participants required. It was calculated that in order to detect a medium effect size ($f^2 = .5$) with a total of seven predictors and a power of .95, a sample size of 52 would be required (Cohen, 1988). Despite this, a larger sample size was used, the first reason for this was to increase the robustness of later statistical testing, additionally a larger sample size was used to increase the robustness of the statistical testing and findings in the face of any violation of assumptions. By having a larger sample size, any potential outliers are more identifiable, the findings are more generalisable, and the assumptions for parametric assumptions could be met.

317 people completed the study, 226 (71.3%) were female, 88 (27.8%) were male, and 3 (.9%) identified as 'Other'. All participants were aged 16 – 69 years old, with a mean age of 29.22 ($SD = 11.61$). Of all participants, 227 (71.6%) were White, 44 (13.9%) were Asian, 10 (3.2%) were Black, 17 (5.4%) were Mixed, and 15 (4.7%) were 'Other' including Hispanic, Latino, Slavic and Middle Eastern. 127 (40.1%) said that they use the internet all day, 183 (57.7%) said that they used the internet multiple times a day, 1 (.3%) reported that they used the internet once a day, and 3 (.9%) reported use of multiple times a week, no participant reported that they use the internet at any less frequency.

Materials

The online study began by asking participants to read the information sheet (Appendix B) and then consent to being part of the study (Appendix C). The study also consisted of the following:

50-item International Personality Item Pool – Five Factor Model (IPIP-FFM; Goldberg, 1992; Appendix D) – Participants were asked to complete the personality scale, answering 50 questions about themselves. Scores were measured on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = *disagree* to 5 = *agree*. The scale measures 5 personality factors; extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability (reverse of neuroticism), and openness to experience. Each personality factor was scored by summing 10 of the answers to sum to a total out of 40. Higher scores indicated that a person was more like that personality trait. This scale has been found to have good internal consistency and convergent validity (Gow et al., 2005).

Procedural and Distributive Just World Belief Scale (Lucas et al., 2007; Appendix E) – Participants were asked to complete this scale to measure their BJW. The scale includes 16-items measuring personal BJW (e.g., People usually use fair procedures in dealing with me) and for general BJW (e.g., People usually receive the outcomes that they deserve). Participants rated each item on a 7-point scale from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*. Justice in general was calculated by averaging scores 1-8, and personal justice was calculated by averaging scores 9-16. Higher scores indicated a higher BJW. The general BJW subscale yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .91, and the personal BJW scale yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .93. This scale has shown good construct, convergent, and divergent validity (Lucas et al., 2007; Lucas et al., 2011)

Profile: Two profiles were made where the amount of information about the character 'Chloe' was manipulated. The 'open' profile had a high level of personal disclosure and displayed a character photograph and the name 'Chloe'. It also included other demographic information such as Chloe's date of birth, address, email address, and mobile number. In comparison, the 'closed' profile had a low level of personal disclosure, and only showed the same character photograph and name 'Chloe' with no additional information. All information was fictional and did not relate to a real person, in addition, the photo had been digitally made therefore did not reflect a true person. Participants self-selected which profile they were assigned to by either choosing the letter 'C' or 'D', this would allocate them to either an 'open' profile or a 'closed' profile.

Scenario: Participants were shown the same short scenario (219 words) which was constructed based upon the first cyberstalking case prosecuted in California (See Miller & Maharaj, 1999). The scenario was based upon the character 'Chloe' that they had seen in the open or closed profile.

"Chloe had been monitoring a live internet "friends" chat room, when she decided to participate in a group discussion. After speaking with multiple individuals, one male asked Chloe to speak with her on a one to one basis within the chat room. Chloe agreed to this, and they began a private conversation. During discussion Chloe's new friend began to say that he was attracted to her and would like to

meet in person. Whilst Chloe was flattered, she declined this offer due to concern of how she would be perceived in a face- to-face situation.

Over the next few days Chloe checked her emails and found emails of a sexual nature which she found uncomfortable and so deleted them.

Chloe then began to have people knocking on the front door to her house stating that they "wanted to make her fantasies come true" and that they were there to rape her. Upon further investigation Chloe found that her name, address, email address, and home number had been placed on various internet sites. They were placed on an advert with messages such as "I'm into rape fantasy" and "I want to be taken by force". It was later discovered that the new male friend from the chat room had been posting the adverts and disclosing Chloe's information to others."

Perceptions of Victim Blame Scale - Revised (PVBS-R; Cramer et al., 2013; Appendix F) – The amount of blame assigned to the victim was measured using the Perceptions of Victim Blame Scale - Revised. Participants are asked to rate a victim on 13 characteristics, measured on a seven-point Likert scale. This is a generic scale that can be applied to any scenario, therefore in this study, participants were asked to rate this scale based upon the vignette that they had read about 'Chloe'. The scale consisted of three subscales, these were malice (9 items e.g., blameless/blameworthy and fault/faultless), recklessness (2 items e.g., careful/careless), and unreliability (2 items e.g., reliable/unreliable). Researchers have argued that the role of intention influences the level of blame, and the subscales reflect this (Scanlon, 2008; Cramer et al., 2013). Unreliability reflects low perceived intent to harm, recklessness reflects low to moderate perceived intent to harm, and malice refers to high and overt intention to harm. Items 1,3, 5, 7, 8, and 9 were reversed scored. Higher scores indicated that more blame was placed on the victim. The malice subscale yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .94, the recklessness subscale yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .84, and the unreliability subscale yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .87. This scale has shown to have good internal consistencies and good construct and convergent validity (Cramer et al., 2013).

A debrief page was also included at the end of the questionnaire (Appendix G).

Design

The study had a between participant's design where participants were allocated to either an 'open' profile or a 'closed' profile. The main dependent variable is the measure of victim blame.

Procedure

The online study was shared on various social media pages e.g., Facebook and Reddit. It was also posted on participant recruitment websites such as www.surverycircle.com. Once the participant had clicked on the study link, they were taken to an information page describing the broad aims of the study, how their information would be used, and contact details. Participants were then asked to consent to participating in the study. Participants then completed demographic information about themselves, the IPIP-FFM and the BJW scale. Following this, participants were asked to randomly pick the letter 'C' or 'D', which would take them to either an 'open' or 'closed' profile. After agreeing that they had studied the profile, all participants then read the same vignette. Finally, participants were asked to complete the PVBS-R, before being taken to a debrief page.

Results

Statistical Assumptions and Data Cleaning

Prior to conducting any analyses, the data were screened for parametric assumptions. One participant had missing data where they had not fully consented, therefore they were deleted from the sample, this left 316 participants for the analysis.

An assessment for outliers was conducted using the box plot method (Williamson et al., 1989) on all variables, this indicated several potential outliers, however as no cases were flagged as extreme outliers (± 3.00 ; Field, 2013), all participants were kept in the subsequent analysis. There was linearity as assessed by partial regression plots and a plot of studentised residuals against the predicted values. There was independence of residuals, as assessed by a Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.92 for the malice subscale, 1.89 for the recklessness subscale and 1.87 for the unreliability subscale. A visual inspection of the studentised residuals and unstandardised predicted value plot showed approximate homoscedasticity. There was no evidence of multicollinearity, as assessed by tolerance values greater than

0.1. For the recklessness and unreliability subscale there were no studentised deleted residuals greater than ± 3.00 standard deviations. The malice subscale showed 5 cases above the ± 3.00 , however due to this being less than 5% of the sample size, these participants were kept in subsequent analysis. There were no leverage values greater than .2 and value for Cook's distance above 1. The assumption of normality was met, as assessed by no value on Skew or Kurtosis being ± 1.96 (George & Mallery, 2010).

Data Analysis

Hypothesis One:

- People are more likely to attribute more blame to the victim when they have publicly exposed personal information (open condition) in comparison to publicly exposing no personal information (closed condition).

Table 1. *Mean and Standard Deviation between Open and Closed Conditions*

	Open (N=157)		Closed (N=159)	
	M	SD	M	SD
Total Blame	36.00	15.37	35.17	18.99
Blame Malice	22.18	12.23	21.81	14.41
Blame Recklessness	7.54	3.42	6.94	3.38
Blame Unreliability	6.28	2.57	6.43	3.32

An independent samples t-test was used to determine whether there was a statistical difference between levels of blame between the open and closed conditions. When comparing total blame between the open and closed condition, there was no significant difference found $t(314) = .43, p = .67$. For the blame malice subscale, it was found that there was no significant difference between the open condition ($M = 22.18, SD = 12.23$) and the closed condition ($M = 21.81, SD = 14.41$), $t(314) = .25, p = .804$. For the blame recklessness subscale, it was found that there was no significant difference between the open condition ($M = 7.54, SD = 3.42$) and the closed condition ($M = 6.94, SD = 3.38$), $t(314) = 1.58, p = .115$. For the blame unreliability subscale, it was found that there was no significant difference between the open condition ($M = 6.28, SD = 2.57$) and the closed condition ($M = 6.43, SD = 3.32$), $t(297.22) = -.44, p = .659$. Table 1 displays the mean and standard deviations of the total blame and the 3 blame

subscales. Based on these t-tests it was found that there was no significant difference in blame between the open and closed profile on any of the blame levels, therefore for the subsequent analysis this variable was merged, and the following analysis was carried out on the 316 participants together. Table 2 outlines the means and standard deviations of the total blame and 3 blame subscales, based on gender and age of the newly merged total variables.

Further statistical testing was undertaken to determine whether there were any impacting factors on levels of blame. An independent sample t-test was used to determine if there was a significant difference in levels of blame between males and females. It was found that gender did not significantly impact attribution of blame for total blame ($t(311) = -1.23, p = .21$), blame malice ($t(311) = -1.66, p = .10$), blame recklessness ($t(311) = .01, p = .10$), and blame unreliability ($t(311) = .06, p = .96$). Additionally, age was considered as a possible impacting factor, however a one way ANOVA yielded non-significant results for total blame ($F(4, 311) = .40, p = .81$), blame malice ($F(4, 311) = .67, p = .62$), blame recklessness ($F(4, 311) = .55, p = .70$), and blame unreliability ($F(4, 311) = .61, p = .65$).

Table 2. Mean and Standard Deviations of Gender and Age

		Total Blame			Blame Malice		Blame Recklessness		Blame Unreliability	
		N	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Gender	Female	225	34.8	17.94	21.20	13.64	7.23	3.50	6.37	3.10
	Male	88	37.56	15.46	23.97	12.53	7.23	3.36	6.35	2.61
	Other	3	36.33	15.50	23.33	12.50	8.00	.00	5.00	3.00
Age	18-30	226	35.35	17.06	21.57	13.31	7.29	3.39	6.48	2.96
	31-50	55	36.60	19.20	23.07	14.61	7.29	3.70	6.24	3.00
	51-70	28	33.82	15.85	21.46	11.52	6.79	3.35	5.57	3.10
	Missing	7	42.29	14.27	29.14	10.65	6.86	1.57	6.29	2.43

Hypotheses Two and Three:

- People who have a higher personal and general BJW will attribute more blame to the victim than those with a lower personal and general BJW.
- A person's personality traits will have an impact on the amount of blame they attribute to the victim.

Correlations:

Pearson's correlations were conducted to identify relationships between types of blame, personality traits and BJW. Several significant relationships were identified demonstrating small to large strength, based on Cohen's (2013) standards, and results are presented in Table 3. General BJW correlated positively with blame unreliability, indicating those with a higher general BJW were more likely to blame the victim on the unreliability subscale. Agreeableness correlated negatively with blame unreliability. Personal BJW, extraversion, conscientiousness, and emotional stability did not significantly correlate with any of the three blame levels. Agreeableness and Openness to experience were both negatively correlated with blame malice, indicating that those who scored higher in those traits were less likely to blame the victim on the malice subscale. Openness to experience correlated negatively with blame recklessness.

Table 3. *Correlation Matrix for Blame, Personality Traits, and Just World Belief*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Blame Malice	-									
2. Blame Recklessness	.42**	-								
3. Blame Unreliability	.62**	.58**	-							
4. General BJW	.63	-.002	.11*	-						
5. Personal BJW	-.003	-.03	.03	.65**	-					
6. Extraversion	.02	-.05	.002	-.07	.01	-				
7. Agreeableness	-.21**	-.10	-.15**	-.12*	.12*	.24**	-			
8. Conscientiousness	-.03	.03	.01	.21**	.25**	.04	.22**	-		
9. Emotional Stability	.06	.07	.06	.21**	.19**	.17**	-.03	.34**	-	
10. Openness to Experience	-.17**	-.13*	-.10	.13*	-.06	.13*	.33**	.17**	.08	-

*Displaying the correlation coefficients. * = denotes significance.*

** $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$*

Regressions

A standard multiple regression was used to assess the ability for 7 independent measures (extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, openness to experience, personal BJW and general BJW) to predict levels of blame on 3 levels (malice, recklessness and unreliability).

Blame Malice

The first regression indicated that the R^2 for the overall model was 6.6% with an adjusted R^2 of 4.5%. The multiple regression model significantly predicted blame malice, $F(7, 308) = 3.10$, $p < .01$. Agreeableness and Openness to Experience added statistically significantly to the prediction, $p < .05$. All other variables did

not contribute significantly to the model. Regression coefficients and standard errors can be found in Table 4.

Table 4. Multiple Regression results for Blame Malice

Blame Malice	<i>B</i>	95% CI for <i>B</i>		<i>SE B</i>	β	R^2	ΔR^2
		<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>				
Model						.07**	.05**
Constant	35.83**	25.11	46.55	5.45			
Extraversion	.12	-.05	-.05	.09	.08		
Agreeableness	-.37**	-.61	-.61	.13	-.19**		
Conscientiousness	.02	-.24	-.24	.13	.01		
Emotional Stability	.07	-.13	-.13	.10	.04		
Openness to Experience	-.26*	-.51	-.51	1.3	-.12*		
General BJW	.40	-1.29	-1.29	.89	.04		
Personal BJW	-.27	-2.09	-2.09	.93	-.02		

Note. Model = "Enter" method in SPSS Statistics; *B* = unstandardised regression coefficient; CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit; *SE B* = standard error of coefficient; β = standardised coefficient; R^2 = coefficient of determination; ΔR^2 = adjusted R^2 * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Blame Recklessness

The second regression indicated that the R^2 for the overall model was 3.3% with an adjusted R^2 of 1.1%. The multiple regression model did not significantly predict blame recklessness, $F(7, 308) = 1.5$, $p = .17$. Regression coefficients and standard errors can be found in Table 5.

Table 5. *Multiple Regression results for Blame Recklessness*

Blame Recklessness	<i>B</i>	95% CI for <i>B</i>		<i>SE B</i>	β	R^2	ΔR^2
		<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>				
Model						.03	.01
Constant	9.83	7.05	12.61	1.41			
Extraversion	-.02	-.06	.03	.02	-.04		
Agreeableness	-.03	-.10	.03	.03	.06		
Conscientiousness	.03	-.04	.09	.03	.05		
Emotional Stability	.04	-.02	.09	.03	.09		
Openness to Experience	-.07*	-.13	-.001	.03	-.12*		
General BJW	-.11	-.55	.33	.22	-.04		
Personal BJW	-.09	-.57	.38	.24	-.03		

Note. Model = "Enter" method in SPSS Statistics; *B* = unstandardised regression coefficient; CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit; *SE B* = standard error of coefficient; β = standardised coefficient; R^2 = coefficient of determination; ΔR^2 = adjusted R^2 * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Blame Unreliability

The third regression indicated that the R^2 for the overall model was 3.7% with an adjusted R^2 of 1.5%. The multiple regression model did not significantly predict blame unreliability, $F(7, 308) = 1.68$, $p = .11$. Regression coefficients and standard errors can be found in Table 6.

Table 6. *Multiple Regression results for Blame Unreliability*

Blame Unreliability	<i>B</i>	95% CI for <i>B</i>		<i>SE B</i>	β	R^2	ΔR^2
		<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>				
Model						.04	.02
Constant	7.47	5.05	9.89	1.23			
Extraversion	.01	-.03	.05	.02	.04		
Agreeableness	-.06*	-.11	-.001	.03	-.13*		
Conscientiousness	.01	-.05	.07	.03	.03		
Emotional Stability	.01	-.04	.05	.02	.02		
Openness to Experience	-.03	-.08	.03	.03	-.06		
General BJW	.25	-.13	6.4	.19	.10		
Personal BJW	-.09	-.49	3.3	.21	-.03		

Note. Model = "Enter" method in SPSS Statistics; *B* = unstandardised regression coefficient; CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit; *SE B* = standard error of coefficient; β = standardised coefficient; R^2 = coefficient of determination; ΔR^2 = adjusted R^2 * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Discussion

The current study aimed to assess whether blame exists towards victims of cyberstalking, hypothesising that when someone shared a lot of personal information online, that they would be blamed more than someone who shared minimal information. Blame was assessed on 3 subscales, assessing how malicious, reckless and unreliable the victim was perceived to be, based upon the cyberstalking scenario provided. The study also assessed factors that might impact why someone blames victims of cyberstalking, specifically looking at the BJW theory and personality traits.

Victim Blaming in Cyberstalking Victims

The results showed that there was no difference in levels of blame between the two conditions, suggesting that the level of personal information revealed online, did not significantly impact the level of blame attributed to the victim. Therefore, the first hypothesis is rejected. Levels of blame did not significantly differ on any of the 3 blame subscales: malice, unreliability, or recklessness. In relation to cyberbullying, these findings contradict the current research which suggests that

people who post more personal information are more deserving of being bullied (Schacter et al., 2016; Weber et al., 2013). It is possible that in this study, the physical element of the vignette impacted the perceived blame. Worsley et al. (2017) found that police were unwilling to help cyberstalking victims when there was no physical threat, suggesting that cyberstalking was viewed as less serious than physical stalking. Therefore, the physical element of the vignette might have changed the perception of severity, and thus impacted levels of blame.

Just World Theory and Victim Blaming

The current study did not find that personal or general BJW had a significant relationship with the malice or recklessness subscales. Scanlon (2008) discussed the role of intent in attribution to blame and the role that this plays in levels of victim blaming. The PVBS-R's three subscales; unreliability, recklessness, and malice all differ in their role of intention. The unreliability subscale is related to low perceived intent to harm, the recklessness subscale is related to low to moderate perceived intent to harm, and finally, the malice subscale is related to high and overt intention to harm (Cramer et al., 2013). It is possible that the results did not yield a significant result as the participants did not perceive the victim to be intentionally harmful. As outlined in the introduction, the intent of a person's actions has a great influence on the level of blame that is attributed to them in particular culpability. If participants did not believe that the cyberstalking victim have the foresight into the harmful consequences towards her, nor did she understand the consequences of her actions in either condition, then this may have reduced the level of blame attributed towards her. In line with the BJW theory, it is possible that participants did not view the victim's behaviour as intending harm and so therefore did not blame her for the consequences of her actions.

Although not found to be a significant contributor in any of the multiple regression analyses, initial correlations highlighted that the blame unreliability subscale had a significant positive correlation with the general BJW subscale. This suggests that as general BJW increased e.g., the belief that people get what they deserve, people perceived the victim to be more unreliable and undependable. This supports the research of Nadler (2012) who found that when a person is perceived to be more unreliable, they are blamed more harshly than those who are perceived

as reliable. Therefore, in the context of the current study, those who believe that others get what they deserve are more likely to blame a cyberstalking victim when they perceive them as unreliable.

Personality Traits and Victim Blaming

The initial correlation analysis showed that agreeableness and openness to experience were both found to be significant predictors of one of the blame subscales. When someone was more agreeable, they were less likely to blame the victim on the malice and unreliability subscale. When someone was more open to experiences, they were less likely to blame the victim on the malice and recklessness subscales.

Those who score higher on agreeableness are more likely to be nurturing, caring, and provide emotional support (Ehsan & Bahramizadeh, 2011). It has also been noted that agreeable people prefer more socially adaptive modes of conflict resolution and attempt to maintain positive relations with others (Jensen-Campbell & Graziano, 2001). In relation to victim blaming, it can therefore be understood that those who are more agreeable are more likely to develop positive perceptions and attributions of people's behaviours, including when behaviours are negative (Jensen-Campbell & Graziano, 2001). Therefore, agreeable people are less likely to blame victims of crime, and in this study, cyberstalking, as they are more likely to want to view the victim in a positive light, therefore not attributing blame to them or viewing them as malicious or unreliable.

Similarly, to agreeableness, those who scored higher on openness to experience were less likely to blame the victim. Research has suggested that those who score higher on openness to experience think that they can achieve more when co-operating with others (Morawetz et al., 2014). Therefore, it is possible that within this study, those who scored higher in openness to experience wanted to align themselves more with the victim, therefore blaming them less in order to feel more positive. Additionally, those who score higher on openness to experience are more likely to align themselves with liberal ideas and values (Xu et al., 2021). Research has found that liberal people are less likely to blame victims and express feelings of sympathy (Williams, 1984). Therefore, this finding falls in line with the

current literature, where those scoring higher in openness to experience were less likely to blame cyberstalking victims on the malice and recklessness subscales.

Just World Belief and Personality Traits

It is worth noting that the correlations between personality traits and BJW found in this study supports findings within the current literature. The current study found a positive relationship between personal and general BJW and emotional stability, indicating the more emotionally stable a person is, the more they believe in a just world. This supports the current literature which suggests that a BJW acts as a buffer against negative events that occur in life, thus can lead to a decrease in anxiety and pressure (Nudelman, 2013), however caution should be taken as this implies causation, it is also possible that emotional stability causes a higher BJW. Conscientiousness was found to have a positive correlation with personal and general BJW, indicating that the more conscientious a person is, the more they believe in a just world. This falls in line with Wolfradt and Dalbert (2003) who found that those with a strong BJW also had a tendency for conscientiousness, this was particularly evident for women, who made up a large amount of the current study sample. Agreeableness was found to negatively correlate with a general BJW, but positively correlate with a personal BJW. Agreeableness relates to caring for others and has associations with empathy, therefore those scoring higher in agreeableness are less likely to believe in a just world and blame the victim. On the contrary however, agreeableness in relation to self, yielded a positive relationship, this could be understood by those with a high BJW being concerned with their own fate. Agreeableness has been suggested to invite similar reactions from others, and so making the world a safe and predictable environment (Nudelman, 2013). This suggests that the direction of the relationship between BJW and agreeableness varies dependent upon different contexts and situations.

Implications

This research could inform practice regarding personal disclosure on public platforms and how this impacts victim blaming. However, due to the absence of significant differences in levels of blame within the open and closed profile in addition to the contrasting results of other research, it may be fair to conclude that this area requires further exploration. The current study did however offer

some contributions to the field of victim blaming in cyberstalking. Cyberstalking has been associated with negative outcomes e.g., fear and physical attack, and the blaming of cyberstalking victims has only exacerbated these negative consequences. The current study has found particular personality traits that reduce the blame attributed to the victim, and these personality traits should be given considerations when thinking about support for cyberstalking victims and within criminal proceedings e.g., from investigating police to court proceedings. It is possible that testing for particular personality traits could be beneficial for assigning people to specific roles, or at least be considered when assigning roles to consider the impact of personality type and victim blaming on the role that they are completing. Additionally, those who had a higher general BJW were more likely to blame the victim on the unreliability subscale. Given these findings, it might be essential to inform authorities and educate them to make them aware that their own and others' personality styles and BJW can impact the way that victims are perceived, and subsequently, treated in cyberstalking incidences.

It would be unrealistic to change every individual's personality type or BJW however there are ways in which these can be managed. Psychoeducation or training could be provided to those within the Criminal Justice System e.g., Jury members or victim liaison officers, to highlight the impact that personality traits and a BJW can have on the attitudes that people hold towards victims. By making people aware of their own potential unconscious biases, this in turn can help reduce victim blaming attitudes and judgements that may be placed on them. By reducing victim blaming attitudes within the Criminal Justice System, this can make it a safer space for victims to report their experiences, whether this be for victims of cyberstalking specifically, or for any other type of victim of crime.

Limitations and Direction for Future Research

Despite the findings of the study, there are some limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. Most of the participants in this study were female, meaning that generalisability to society is limited. Research has also found that females are typically less likely to attribute blame to victims, whilst males are more likely to attribute blame to victims (Grubb & Turner, 2012). This means that the levels of blame from male participants may be stronger than what has been found in the current study.

Additionally, the gender of the victim might have had an impact on the level of blame attributed to the victim. Within the literature on blame in sexual assaults, there is conflicting suggestions about the impact that victim gender has on blame levels (Van der Bruggen & Grubb, 2014). Therefore, results may have been different if the victim had been male. Although females have been found to experience more cyberstalking as opposed to males (Dreßing et al., 2014), future research could explore the impact of gender on victim blaming levels.

Although the vignette had been based upon a real life crime, it is possible that the use of a vignette impacted participant responses as it cannot be wholly determined how participants would respond in the real world. One criticism of using vignettes is that the results are not always applicable to outside of the experimental setting, and so therefore increasing experimental realism can enhance the generalisability of the study (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014). Audio and video elements should be utilised in future research to increase generalisability, by using these modes in the experimental study this can make the participants feel more immersed in the targets and situations.

The severity of an incident has been found to impact levels of blame in cyberbullying incidences, where the higher the perceived severity of an incident, the less a person will attribute blame to the victim (Koehler & Weber, 2018). In the current study, the cyberstalking incident led to a physical interaction for the victim, thus possibly impacting the perceived severity of the incident. Additionally, the current study did not explore participant's views on the perceived impact of the cyberstalking incident on the victim. It might be possible that victim blaming increases when it is perceived that there are few consequences for the victim. Future research could measure the participant's perceived severity of the incident and the perceived impact the incident has had on the victim, to explore whether these are mediating factors of blame.

This study found interesting correlations between the Big Five personality traits and victim blaming in cyberstalking incidences. Future research could look further into different personality structures for example the dark triad (narcissism, machiavellianism, and psychopathy; Paulhus & Williams, 2002) which have

previously been found to be associated with victim blaming (Scott et al., 2020). One interesting finding from this study was that the more a person had a general BJW, the more they perceived the participants to be blame worthy on the unreliability subscale. Future research could further explore the relationship between perceived unreliability and blaming the victim using the BJW theory.

Conclusion

The present study adds to the growing field of research into cyberstalking and victim blaming. Although no significant result was found in relation to victim blaming levels and personal disclosure, there were significant findings around personality traits, namely agreeableness and openness, BJW, namely in relation to others, and how this impacts levels of victim blaming, on three levels, malice, recklessness, and unreliability. The current study highlighted how those who scored higher on agreeableness were less likely to blame the victim on the unworthy and malice subscales, whilst those scoring higher on the openness scale were less likely to blame the victim on the malice and recklessness subscales. Additionally, those who had a higher general BJW, were more likely to blame the victim on the unreliable scale. The current findings highlight the importance of how personality traits and BJW impact the way that victims of cyberstalking are perceived. As technology continues to develop, cyberstalking rates will likely continue to rise, and so therefore the public's perception and response to the victims of these crimes needs to be carefully considered in order to ensure that the negative impacts of this crime are not further exacerbated.

Chapter Three: The relationship between Belief in a Just World and Personality Traits: A Systematic Review

Abstract

A belief in a just world (BJW) has an impact on the level of blame placed with victims, as well as how one perceives themselves. Current research suggests that personality types can impact a BJW, therefore this systematic review examines existing evidence of the relationship between BJW and personality types. Studies were identified by a systematic search of five databases, the reference lists of relevant articles were manually screened, and contact with experts was made. Pre-defined inclusion and exclusion criteria were used to identify relevant studies and the quality of the included studies was assessed. A total of 16 studies were included in the final review. A narrative synthesis highlighted significant correlations between a personal and general BJW and the Big Five personality traits (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism). Personal BJW was found to have a positive correlation with openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, and agreeableness, and a negative correlation with neuroticism. General BJW was found to have a positive correlation with conscientiousness, extraversion, and agreeableness, and a negative correlation with openness and neuroticism. Implications for practice and recommendations for future research are considered.

Links of this systematic review with other chapters

The results in Chapter Two identified that there were significant correlations between personality traits and BJW, for both self and other. Research has highlighted the importance of examining a belief in a just world (BJW) as two separate constructs, and Chapter Two highlighted this where the results differed for a personal BJW and a general BJW. This systematic review aimed to further explore this correlation by systematically reviewing the current literature.

Introduction

Belief in a Just World

As described throughout this thesis, the concept of Belief in a Just World (BJW) was introduced by Lerner (1980). The theory suggests that people believe that good things tend to happen to good people and bad things happen to bad people (Lerner, 1980). The theory suggests that believing in a just world allows individuals to confront their environment as though it is a stable and orderly place. BJW serves important adaptive functions, for example keeping the world a predictable and safe place, and the production of evidence that threatens this belief can be greatly troubling (Furnham, 2003). One of the functions of a BJW is to provide a psychological buffer against negative events in the world, as well as allowing people to feel that they are in control of their future (Alves & Correia, 2010). BJW allows a sense of control over a person's destiny and can make an individual feel less personally vulnerable and lower a person's risk perception as they feel that they if they do not do bad things, then they will not deserve negative outcomes (Furnham, 2002). The BJW can be used as an explanation for a need to restore justice, this can be either be through compensation and helping behaviours, or via victim blaming (Furnham, 2003). Research into BJW postulates that it is stable across a person's lifespan (Nudelman, 2013). BJW has been linked with adaptive functions and has been found to have positive effects on mental health and wellbeing (Dalbert, 2001), as well as being linked with optimism and less loneliness (Sutton & Douglas, 2005). Lipkus et al. (1996) found that BJW was a predictor of life satisfaction and well-being, independent of personality traits.

BJW has been explored in relation to a belief in self, known as personal BJW, and in relation to others and the world, this is known as general BJW (Lipkus et al., 1996). Personal BJW refers to how much a person believes that they themselves get what they deserve, whilst general BJW refers to how much a person believes that people in general get what they deserve (Sutton & Douglas, 2005). Personal BJW has been found to be a predictor of psychological wellbeing and general BJW has been found to be a predictor of victim blaming and attitudes towards offenders (Sutton & Douglas, 2005). Overall, levels of personal BJW are often reported to be higher than general BJW (Bègue & Bastounis, 2003). If BJW is considered as two separate constructs then it can be argued that someone can have the mental

health benefits that personal BJW brings, without simultaneously having the harsh social views that general BJW brings.

A BJW has impacts throughout the judicial system. When considering jurors, decisions should be made unbiasedly and based on law and evidence, however a BJW can impact this where jurors may deliver judgements based upon their need to maintain their BJW and could impact their decision (Bennet, 2008). Naifach (2001) found that juries with a strong BJW were more likely to hold victims culpable, and jurors who held victims of crime culpable were more likely to reach verdicts of not guilty. BJW has also been found to have an impact on the feelings and behaviours of young prisoners, particularly in relation to their prospects of rehabilitation (Otto & Dalbert, 2005). Otto and Dalbert (2005) found that those with a high BJW were more likely to believe that their legal consequences were more just and therefore felt more guilty, thus possibly having an influence on their treatment motivation. Additionally, those who had a higher personal BJW displayed less deviant behaviour in comparison to those with a low personal BJW, again impacting rehabilitation.

Personality

The American Psychological Association (APA) defines personality as the “individual differences in characteristic patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving” (APA, 2021). Both nature and nurture have been argued to be influencing factors in the development of personality (e.g., Allport, 1961; Eysenck, 1952). Factors in relation to nature include genetics and biology, whilst factors relating to nurture include environmental influences and childhood experiences (Kandler, 2012). One of the most widely accepted theories of personality is the Five-Factor Model (FFM; Costa & McCrae, 1992; Chmielewski & Morgan, 2013). The FFM suggests that there are five core personality factors: Openness to Experience, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism, known as the Big Five. Openness refers to imagination and insight; someone high in openness tends to have a wide range of interests and are eager to learn new things and have new experiences. Conscientiousness refers to the level of thoughtfulness, impulse control and goal-directed behaviours; someone high in conscientiousness tends to be organised and mindful of details. Extraversion refers to the extent to which someone is sociable, assertive, and their emotional expression; someone

scoring high in extraversion is likely to be outgoing and gain energy in social situations. Agreeableness refers to trust, altruism, kindness and other pro-social behaviours; someone high in agreeableness is likely to be cooperative, care about others, and enjoy helping others. Finally, neuroticism refers to emotional instability and mood; someone scoring high in neuroticism is likely to experience a lot of stress, worry about many things, have mood swings, and can get upset easily (McCrae & John, 1992). In comparison to other personality theories where personality characteristics are binary, the FFM suggests that personality traits are on a spectrum across the five categories. The model has been widely researched across different populations and cultures, gaining much support and validation (McCrae & Costa, 2008). Despite this, critics have suggested that the model does not explain how traits develop and that it is too broad (John & Srivastava, 1999).

The FFM has been found to be useful in predicting important outcomes. Research has shown that the Big Five personality traits are associated with emotional regulation where higher levels of neuroticism were linked with poorer emotional regulation strategies whilst higher levels of extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness correlated with more adaptive emotion regulation strategies (Barańczuk, 2019). A negative correlation has been found between agreeableness and substance use disorders, whilst extraversion and conscientiousness were found to be negatively correlated with generalised anxiety and major depressive disorders, with both of these having a positive correlation with neuroticism (Kotov et al., 2010).

Belief in a Just World and Personality

There have been a number of studies which have explored the relationship between BJW and personality traits and characteristics. For example, those who have a high general BJW are more likely to be religious, more authoritarian, have a higher internal locus of control, and have a more trusting nature (Rubin & Peplau, 1975; Zuckerman & Gerbasi, 1977; Furnham, 2003). Personal BJW has been associated with positive mood, higher self-esteem, and life satisfaction (Dalbert, 1999; Sutton & Douglas, 2005). More specifically, the relationship between BJW and the FFM dimensions has been researched. The results of these associations have been mixed, which could be due to the distribution of effect size across the studies and where the effect size has been small, the results may not

reach significance (Nudelman, 2013). Nudelman's (2013) meta-analysis found that neuroticism negatively correlated with general BJW, whilst extraversion and agreeableness positively correlated with general BJW. Although within their review, the limited number of studies for some personality traits meant that robust estimations could not be made.

Scoping Exercise and Objectives

Research has found associations between BJW and the Big Five personality traits, however this has yielded mixed results. To ascertain whether prior systematic reviews had examined the link between BJW and personality, a scoping search was completed on 2nd July 2022. The Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, The Campbell Collaboration Library of Systematic Reviews and the search engine Google Scholar were searched. This revealed two meta-analyses exploring similar themes, the first one exploring the relationship between BJW and personality (Nudelman, 2013), with the second focusing on BJW and specifically the personality trait conscientiousness (Nudelman & Otto, 2021). Whilst Nudelman's (2013) meta-analysis determined statistical correlations between BJW and Big Five personality traits, a qualitative narrative was not given of the correlations found in the included papers. The systematic review question is therefore what is the association between personal and general BJW and the FFM personality traits.

Following this a basic scoping search was conducted, this revealed that more research since 2013 had been conducted exploring the relationship between BJW and personality traits. Garner et al. (2016) published guidance on when to update systematic reviews, with one of their criteria being when new research is available. Shojania et al. (2007) found that 23% of systematic reviews were out of date within 2 years of publication and suggested that systematic reviews had a 'survival time' of 5.5 years before new evidence would be published. Given these findings, the length of time between the 2013 meta-analysis and the current systematic review being 9 years, and with the scoping search revealing that new research had been published, the current review of the literature was deemed appropriate.

This aim of this systematic review is therefore to summarise the evidence of the researched links between personality traits and BJW, and to explore if any of the new research refutes or supports previous findings. Understanding this link further

will have multiple implications. Understanding the link between personality and BJW, can help support the understanding of legal decisions and how this link can impact decision making e.g., jury members and assigning responsibility, and build upon the victim blaming literature. Decision making within legal systems impacts many individuals such as the victim, alleged perpetrator, and jury members. By understanding the possible impacts of decision making within the legal system, this may possibly allow more impartial decisions to be made by both the jury members and also sentencing decisions. Additionally, understanding the link can support legal reform and policy making, in so far as to develop strategies that are impartial and promote fairness. Therefore, further exploring the link between personality and BJW will help understand the possible impact that it can have on legal systems and individuals within it.

Methods

Search Strategy

Search Terms

The key concepts within the review were identified and following this, the relevant search terms were developed. Articles identified in the initial scoping exercise were examined to identify keywords and psychological theories into personality. For the current research the FFM suggested by Costa and McCrae (1992) was used. Additionally, the final search terms were reviewed by a specialist librarian at the University of Nottingham to ensure that the list was appropriate and comprehensive. Search terms used can be found in Figure 1, with the full details of search terms and syntax used in Appendix H.

Figure 1. *Search Terms for Electronic Database Searches (adapted for each specific database)*

"Just World" OR "Just-World"
AND
("five factor" OR "five-factor") personality) OR ("big five" OR "big-five") personality) OR conscientious* OR agreeable* OR extravert* OR extrovert* OR neurotic* OR openness OR ((personality or character) (disorder* or difficulty or difficulties)) OR "FFM" OR "BIG 5"

Data Sources and Study Selection

The search terms identified were searched within multiple electronic databases on 22nd August 2022. The following electronic databases were searched:

- Ovid: MEDLINE(R) ALL (1946 to August 22, 2022)
- Ovid: Embase (1974 to 2022 Week 34)
- Ovid: PsychINFO (1806 - to August Week 4 2022)
- ProQuest: Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts (ASSIA) (ALL)
- Web of Science Core Collection

References were managed through EndNote management software. A manual search of the reference list of the full text articles was completed to identify any other potentially relevant studies. Key authors were contacted to identify any further papers or those that were currently in-publication, this resulted in no further papers.

Selection and Screening of References

Selection and Screening Tool

The SPIDER (Sample, Phenomenon of Interest, Design, Evaluation, Research type; Cooke et al., 2012) tool was used to decide whether each paper should be included or excluded. The inclusion and exclusion criteria can be found in Table 7. An initial review of the titles and abstracts was undertaken, where papers that did not meet the inclusion criteria were excluded. For the remaining titles, the full text was retrieved and reviewed.

Table 7. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

	Inclusion	Exclusion
<u>S</u>ample	• Individuals whose BJW has been measured • All genders • All countries • All ages	• Those whose BJW has not been measured.
<u>P</u>henomenon of <u>I</u>nterest	• Personality • Big 5 Personality • Personality Disorder • Personality difficulties	• No personality factors have been explored
<u>D</u>esign	• Empirical design • Cohort, Cross-sectional, Case-Control, Longitudinal, Prospective, Retrospective • Interviews • Psychometrics • Questionnaires • Assessments	• No empirical design
<u>E</u>valuation	• Themes, observations, opinions, experiences or outcome measure from questionnaires, psychometrics, or personality assessments	• No outcomes assessed
<u>R</u>esearch <u>T</u>ype	• Qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods • Published articles • Peer-review articles • Doctoral level thesis	• Non-empirical studies/papers, e.g., narratives, reviews, editorials, letters, biographies. • Below doctoral level thesis
<u>L</u>anguage	Papers written in English.	Papers written in non-English.

Quality Assessment

The quality assessment process is important to judge the reliability of a study as well as assessing its validity, relevance, and potential biases. Being critical of aspects of a study design, how it is carried out, and the reporting, is vital to be able to assess the quality (Downes et al., 2016). The Appraisal Tool for Cross-Sectional Studies (AXIS; Downes et al., 2016) was used to assess the quality of

the final papers included in the study (Appendix I). The tool was developed so that it could be used across disciplines to assess the quality of cross-sectional studies and was deemed the most appropriate.

Due to time limitations and lack of availability of a secondary reviewer, one was not used. The author acknowledges the limitations of this and recognises that this leaves the quality assessment as somewhat subjective, something which is further discussed in the limitations. It was deemed necessary to assess the quality of the papers to identify the strengths and weaknesses within the papers used in the review.

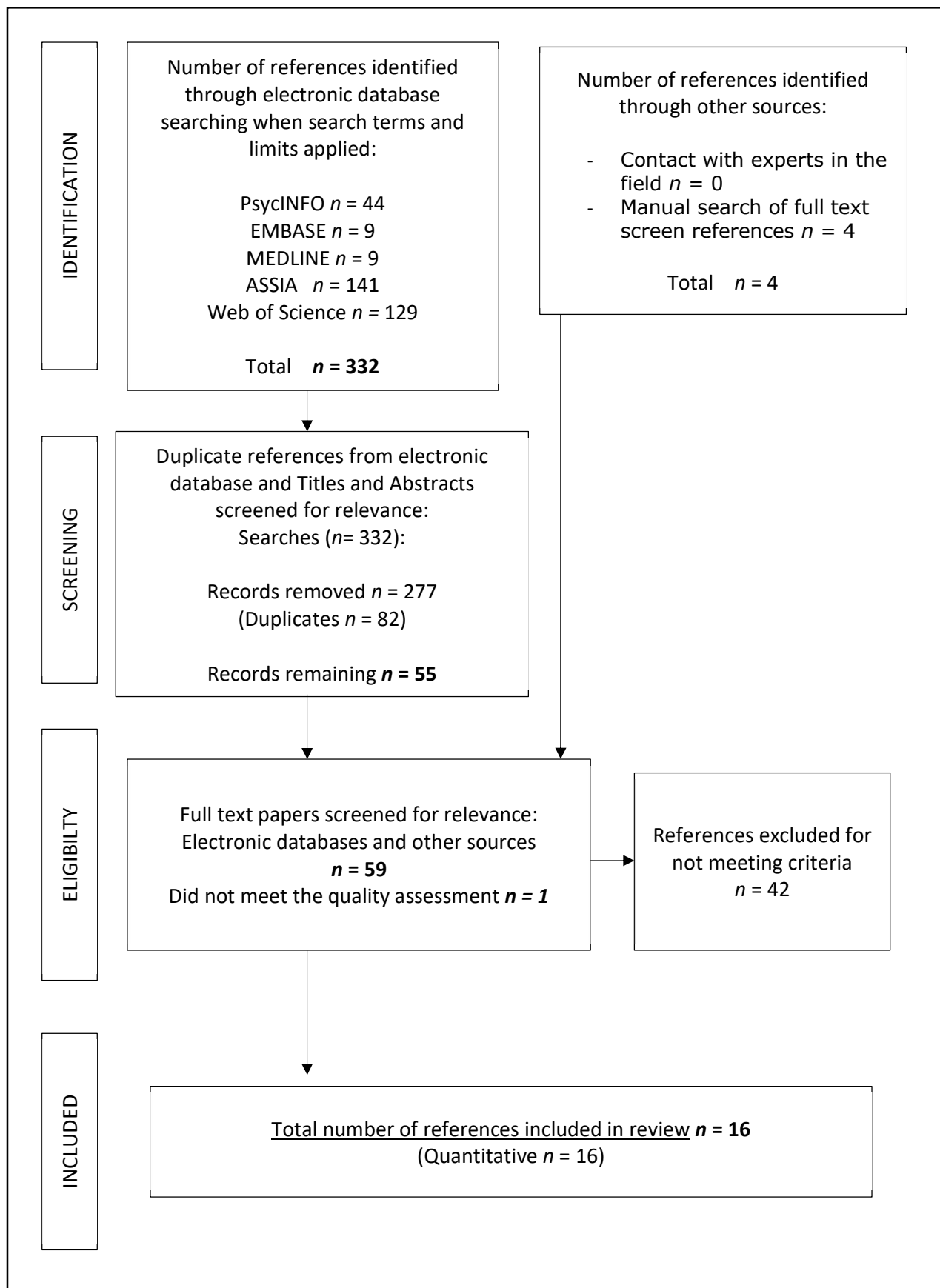
Data Extraction

A data extraction form was developed based upon the inclusion and exclusion criteria of the current systematic review. The form aimed to extract and record the relevant data to the systematic review question. The form can be found in Appendix K.

Results

A total of 332 references were found from the electronic database searches, with a further 4 papers being found from hand-searching relevant references lists. A screen for duplicate references and a screening of the titles and abstracts for relevance was conducted and 277 references were removed. The remaining 59 papers were retained for full-text screening and the inclusion and exclusion criteria was applied. This resulted in 17 papers being retained for inclusion in the review. Appendix L reports all references excluded. Please see Figure 2 for a flow diagram of the search process.

Figure 2. Flow Diagram of the Full Selection and Screening Process



Characteristics of Included Studies

Sixteen papers were included in the review, however not all aims, and results of the studies were relevant to the review question, therefore information not meeting the inclusion criteria was omitted from the table of information.

All of the studies utilised a cross-sectional design and 1. All of the included studies were quantitative papers and reported in the English language. The total number of participants across the 16 studies was 7746, with the number of participants ranging from 94 to 2447. The studies completed research in 9 different countries, including 4 from the USA, 2 from Switzerland, Germany, India, Slovakia, and Australia, and 1 from Austria, Russia, and Canada. Please note that 17 countries are listed due to one study taking place across two countries (Donat et al., 2014). The dates of the studies ranged from 1988 to 2021. Participant demographics varied between each study, however the majority of studies used school or university students (10 studies).

A range of psychometrics were used to measure both BJW and personality. Nine different psychometrics were used to measure personality. The most used personality psychometric was the NEO Five Factor Inventory Revised (McCrae & Costa, 2004), 6 papers used this psychometric in some form. Two papers used the German and French version of the psychometric, whilst 3 studies either used the short version or specific subscales from the full scale. Other psychometrics used to measure personality included HEXACO personality inventory (Lee & Ashton, 2004) and Eysenck Personality Scale (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1975).

Seven different psychometrics were used to measure BJW, some psychometrics measured BJW specifically relating to a personal BJW, and others measured specifically general or global BJW. The most utilised psychometrics were the Personal Belief in a Just World Scale (Dalbert, 1999) and the General Belief in a Just World Scale (Dalbert et al., 1987; Dalbert, 1999). Other psychometrics used included the Personal Belief in a Just World (Lipkus et al., 1996), Just World Scale (Rubin & Peplau, 1975), and the Just World belief subscale from the Primal Inventory (PI99; Clifton et al., 2019).

Table 8 summarises the characteristics of each included study, throughout the following sections they will be referred to by their numerical assignment.

Table 8. *Summary of Extracted Study Characteristics*

Study & Location	Aims	Design	Participants Characteristics	Measure of Just World Belief and Personality	Overall Quality Rating
1 Bollmann et al. (2015) Study 1 Switzerland	To measure the unique associations of each BJW with personality dimensions measured with the Five Factor Model (FFM). To examine the relationship between personal BJW and the five-factor model of personality controlling for the general BJW, and inversely, between the general BJW and the five-factor model controlling for personal BJW.	Cross Sectional	2447 Participants 50.7% Female Mean Age: 41.90 Recruited: Random sample drawn by the Swiss Federal Statistics Office from the national register of inhabitants. Sample representative of Swiss working age population in terms of age, gender, and nationality. Random sample provided by the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs and were drawn from the national register of unemployed people.	BJW: Personal Belief in a Just World Scale and General Belief in a Just World Scale (Dalbert, 1999) Personality: French and German version of the NEO Five Factor Inventory Revised (McCrae & Costa, 2004)	83%
2	To measure the unique associations of each BJW with personality	Cross Sectional	138 Participants Mean Age: 34.44	BJW: Personal Belief in a Just World Scale	83%

Bollmann et al. (2015)	dimensions measured with the HEXACO.		85 Females 55 Males	and General Belief in a Just World Scale (Dalbert, 1999)	
Study 2 USA	To examine the relationship between personal BJW and the HEXACO model of personality controlling for the general BJW, and inversely, between the general BJW and the HEXACO model controlling for personal BJW.		Recruited from US users of Mechanical Turk with a 95% approval rating of their activity at least.	Personality: HEXACO personality inventory (Lee & Ashton, 2004)	
3 Wolfradt & Dalbert (2003) Austria	To further explore the relationship between BJW and values (personality domains) To test whether meaningful types of BJW – value configurations (e.g., prosocial behaviour consequences) could be discriminated and how these value types are related to personality.	Cross Sectional	212 Participants Mean Age: 29.05 Age Range: 18-59 years 107 Females 105 Males 104 University students 108 individuals from a range of professions	BJW: General Belief in a Just World Scale (Dalbert et al., 1987) Personality: NEO Five Factor Inventory Revised (McCrae & Costa, 2004)	78%

4					
Donat et al. (2014)	To explore the relationship between students BJW, how they evaluate their teacher's behaviour towards them and how likely they are to show cheating or delinquent behaviour. To explore whether these relations persist when controlled for neuroticism, sex, and country.	Cross Sectional	382 Participants School Students German Sample (n=179): Mean Age: 15.3 Age Range: 14-18 years 94 Females 85 Males Indian Sample (n=203): Mean Age: 15.2 Age Range: 13-17 years 98 Females 105 Males Participants invited to complete questionnaire at school.	BJW: Personal Belief in a Just World Scale (Dalbert et al., 1999) Personality: German version - Neuroticism subscale of the Big Five Inventory Short Version (Rammstedt et al., 2013)	89%

5	To examine is personal BJW can uniquely predict well-being, namely life satisfaction, beyond personality traits well known for their correlation with BJW or well-being, respectively	Cross Sectional	191 Participants Unemployed subjects who did not have found a job or another education possibility directly after their final exam who reported themselves unemployed at the Labour Exchange Mean Age: 18.62 Age Range: 18-21 years 109 Females 82 Males	BJW: General Belief in a Just World Scale (Dalbert et al., 1987) Personal Belief in a Just World Scale (Dalbert et al., 1999) Personality: Extraversion and Neuroticism subscales of the Freiburg Personality Inventory (Fahrenberg et al., 1978)	83%
Dzuka & Dalbert (2002)					
Study 2					
Slovakia					
6	To examine the relationship between BJW and subjective wellbeing	Cross Sectional	195 Participants (85 excluded in analysis) Mean Age: 16.6 years Age Range: 15 -19 years 195 Males School students 31% victims of aggression 25% identified as aggressors 59 reported no aggression and 26 were both victims	BJW: Personal Belief in a Just World Scale (Dalbert, 1999) Personality: Extraversion and Neuroticism items of the NEO-FFI (Costa & McCrae, 1992)	89%
Dzuka & Dalbert (2007)	To examine if extraversion and neuroticism impact this relationship				
Slovakia					

			and perpetrators of aggression (both groups excluded from analysis)		
7	To explore the relationship between personality and BJW	Cross Sectional	198 Participants Mean Age: 21.72 years	BJW: Just World Scale (Rubin & Peplau, 1975)	83%
Heaven & Connors (1988)	To explore gender differences in BJW		105 Females 93 Males	Personality: Eysenck Personality Scale (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1975)	
Australia			Social science/humanities undergraduate students		
			Volunteers to participate		
8	To examine the influence of psychological resources (including BJW) on attitudes towards people with disabilities, controlling for demographic variables, the Big Five, and contact intensity with people with disabilities.	Cross Sectional	950 Participants Mean Age: 49.1 years	BJW: General Belief in a Just World Scale (Dalbert et al., 1987)	85%
Keller & Siegrist (2010)			519 Females 413 Males 18 gender not disclosed	Personality: German-language short version of the Big Five Inventory (BFI-K; Rammstedt & John, 2005).	
Switzerland			Varying educational levels		

9	To explore Russians' endorsement of general and personal BJW	Cross Sectional	1325 Participants Mean Age: 21.9 years Age Range: 14-60 years	BJW: Personal Belief in a Just World Scale (Dalbert, 1999)	95%
Nartova-Bochaver et al. (2017)	To test the construct validity of the Russian adaptation of the BJW scale by inspecting correlations with other personality dimensions		951 Female 370 Male 4 gender not disclosed	General Belief in a Just World Scale (Dalbert et al., 1987)	
Russia			University students and staff	Personality: Goldberg's (1992) Markers for the Big Five Factor Structure - Russian Version	
10	To explore the relationship between Personal BJW and conscientiousness	Cross Sectional	311 Participants Age Range: 18-65+ years	BJW: Personal Belief in a Just World (Lipkus et al., 1996)	95%
Nudelman & Otto (2021)	To explore the relationship between Personal BJW and the individual facets of conscientiousness.		158 Females 152 Males 1 gender not disclosed	General Belief in a Just World Scale (Dalbert et al., 1999)	
Study 2			Varying in household income, ethnicity, citizenship, education and marital status	Personality: Conscientiousness characteristic from the Big Five Model (Maples et al., 2014)	
USA					

11	To investigate the moderating role of personality factors between self-esteem and BJW.	Cross Sectional	400 Participants Age Range: 21-30 years 200 Females 200 Males University Students	BJW: Personal Belief in a Just World Scale (Dalbert, 1999) Personality: Mini-Marker Personality Inventory (Saucier, 1994)	89%
Riaz et al. (2013)					
India					
12	To find both the personality and social attitude correlates of BJW.	Cross Sectional	100 Participants Mean Age: 23 years Age Range: 21-26 years People who applied to be admitted to the Institute of Technology	BJW: Just World Scale (Rubin & Peplau, 1975) Personality: Eysenck Personality Scale (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1975)	61%
Rim et al. (1983)					
Israel					
Excluded based on quality assessment					
13	To explore the relationship agreeableness and conscientiousness and BJW well-being	Cross Sectional	211 Participants Mean Age: 56.44 years Age Range: 42-77 years 69% Female Advertised on a variety of social media sites and platforms	BJW: Just World belief subscale from the Primal Inventory (PI99; Clifton et al., 2019) Personality: HEXACO personality inventory (Lee & Ashton, 2004)	89%
Schuurmans-Stekhoven (2020)					
Australia					

14	To replicate earlier results relating to the BJW with extraversion and neuroticism and to extend these findings to the remaining three main personality dimensions of personality; agreeableness, openness, and conscientiousness.	Cross Sectional	94 Participants 43 Female 51 Male Undergraduate Students	BJW: Global Belief in a Just World (Lipkus, 1991) General Belief in a Just World Scale (Dalbert et al., 1987) Basic World Assumptions Scale (Janoff-Bulman, 1989) Personality: NEO Five-Factor Inventory – Short Version (Costa & McCrae, 1989)	78%
Lipkus et al. (1996)					
Study 1					
USA					
15	To replicate earlier results relating to the BJW with extraversion and neuroticism and to extend these findings to the remaining three main personality dimensions of personality; agreeableness, openness, and conscientiousness.	Cross Sectional	201 Participants Undergraduate Students	BJW: Global Belief in a Just World (Lipkus, 1991) General Belief in a Just World Scale (Dalbert et al., 1987) Basic World Assumptions Scale (Janoff-Bulman, 1989) Just World Scale (Rubin & Peplau, 1975) Personality: NEO Five-Factor Inventory – Short Version (Costa & McCrae, 1989)	78%
Lipkus et al. (1996)					
Study 2					
USA					

16	To explore why employees engage in organizational citizenship behaviours, exploring BJW as a moderating factor and controlling for agreeableness and conscientiousness	Interval-Contingent Experience Sampling	99 Participants Mean age: 32.07 years 65% Female Full-time employees	BJW: Personal Belief in a Just World Scale (Dalbert, 1999) Personality: Big Five Inventory (John & Srivastava, 1999)	90%
Spence et al. (2011)					
Canada					
17	To explore the relationship between BJW and the expected probability of adolescents' vocational and social goals when controlling for the Big Five personality traits.	Cross Sectional	392 Participants Average age: 15.1 years Age range: 14-17 years 195 Females 196 Males 1 Gender not indicated Secondary school students	BJW: Personal Belief in a Just World Scale (Dalbert et al., 1999) Personality: German version of NEO Five Factor Inventory (Costa and McCrae, 1992)	89%
Dette et al. (2004)					
Germany					

Quality of Included Studies

Quality assessment of the current studies ranged from 61% (Rim et al., 2013) to 95% (Nartova-Bochaver et al., 2017 and Nudelman & Otto, 2021), with a mean of 84.52%. This indicates that overall, the quality of the studies was good. All of the studies had clear aims and objectives of what the study was trying to achieve, as well as clearly defining who the research was about and the sample being representative of this population. All of the studies utilised psychometrics that appropriately measured the aims of the study, with all of the studies utilising standardised psychometrics that appropriately measured personality and a BJW. All of the studies reported the results for the analyses that the methods described. All of the papers that had non-responders, included a description of the measures taken to address and categorise them, for example Nudelman & Otto (2021) Study 2 outlined the number of participants excluded and the reason why e.g., failing an attention check item.

There were some methodological weaknesses identified within the included studies. All except one study (Nudelman & Otto, 2021, Study 2) failed to justify why the sample size had been chosen. This limits the ability to understand the statistical power used within the study, additionally, it limits the ability for peer review and replication of the studies. Another methodological weakness was that only 2 studies (Nartova-Bochaver et al., 2017 and Schuurmans-Stekhoven, 2020) explicitly outlined that there were no funding sources of conflicts of interest that could have impacted the author's interpretation of the results. Without stating this, it is possible that some of the results in the study could have been influenced by research bias based upon funding or conflicts of interest. Whilst it is hoped that all psychological studies pass ethical approval and gain full informed consent from participants, eight of the studies did not explicitly outline if ethical approval or participant consent was attained.

Rim et al. (1983) had the weakest quality assessment of the included studies at 61%; it was the only study that did not clearly outline the statistical significance (e.g., p-value used) or sufficiently describe the methods in order for the study to be repeated. The discussion and conclusion made by the paper were not clearly justified by the results and no limitations of the study were discussed. Due to the low quality of this study, it called into question the credibility of the findings,

additionally it was 17% lower than the next paper. It was determined that this study would not be used in the final write up. The remaining 16 papers included in the discussion had a mean of 86%, ranging from 78% to 95%.

Data Findings and Synthesis

The 16 included studies will now be discussed in relation to the aim of the current review. To clearly synthesise the results, the following section will discuss each of the Big Five personality traits in turn. A descriptive approach is employed to discuss the findings of each study with Table 9 providing information on statistical analyses and findings used.

Table 9. *Summary of Findings*

Study	Analysis	Statistical Results				
		Openness to Experience (O)	Conscientiousness (C)	Extraversion (E)	Agreeableness (A)	Neuroticism (N)
1 Bollmann et al. (2015) Study 1	Correlation Analysis	All 5 FFM personality features explained 13% of the variance in personal BJW ($F(5, 2441) = 72.76, p < .001$), remaining stable when controlling for general BJW.				
	Hierarchical Regressions	All 5 FFM personality features explained 4% of the variance in general BJW ($F(5, 2441) = 18.21, p < .001$). When controlling for personal BJW, neuroticism became a positive significant coefficient.				
		Personal BJW was significantly positively correlated with O ($r = .06, p < .01$). General BJW was significantly negatively correlated with O ($r = -.11, p < .001$). Showed the strongest coefficient with general BJW in regression analysis ($\beta = -.15, p < .001$).	Personal BJW was significantly positive correlated with C ($r = .10, p < .001$), however later regression analysis showed no significant relationship. General BJW was significantly positive correlated with O ($r = .07, p < .001$), however later regression analysis showed no significant relationship.	Personal BJW was significantly positively correlated with E ($r = .09, p < .001$). General BJW was significantly positively correlated with E ($r = .10, p < .001$).	Personal BJW was not significantly correlated with A ($r = .02, p = .244$). General BJW was not significantly correlated with A ($r = .04, p = .069$).	Personal BJW was significantly negatively correlated with N ($r = -.35, p < .001$). Showed the strongest coefficient with personal BJW in regression analysis ($\beta = -.37, p < .001$). General BJW was significantly negatively correlated with N ($r = -.09, p < .001$).

		In regression analysis, when controlling for personal BJW, N showed a significant positive coefficient with general BJW ($\beta = .05, p < .05$).			
2	Correlation Analysis	All 6 HEXACO personality features explained 19% of the variance in personal BJW ($F(6, 131) = 5.06, p < .001$). When controlling for general BJW, extraversion and agreeableness dropped, whilst emotionality emerged as a significant predictor.			
Bollmann et al. (2015)	Hierarchical Regressions	All 6 HEXACO personality features explained 23% of the variance in general BJW ($F(6, 131) = 6.36, p < .001$). When controlling for personal BJW, extraversion and openness to experience dropped to non-significant.			
Study 2		No correlation found between personal BJW and O	Neither personal nor general BJW was significantly correlated with C	Personal BJW was significantly positively correlated with E ($r = .46, p < .001$).	Personal BJW was significantly positively correlated with A ($r = .23, p < .05$).
		Negative non-significant relationship found between general BJW and O		General BJW was significantly positively correlated with E ($r = .41, p < .001$).	Regression analysis showed that A was a significant predictor of personal BJW ($\beta = .20, p < .021$), however this became non-significant when controlling for general BJW.
					(Emotionality) Neither personal nor general BJW significantly correlated with Emotionality. Regression analysis showed that Emotionality was a significant negative predictor of personal BJW when controlling for

					General BJW was significantly positively correlated with A ($r = .26, p < .05$). A was a significant predictor of general BJW, when controlling ($\beta = .32, p < .001$) for personal BJW and not ($\beta = .21, p < .001$).	general BJW ($\beta = -.17, p < .05$). Regression analysis showed that Emotionality was a significant positive predictor of general BJW when controlling for personal BJW ($\beta = .16, p < .05$).
3	Correlation Analysis	General BJW was significantly negatively correlated with O ($r = -.29, p < .001$). Relationship slightly stronger in males ($r = -.29, p < .01$) in comparison to females ($r = -.27, p < .01$). Relationship stronger in	General BJW was significantly positively correlated with C ($r = .14, p < .05$). When further analyses, female relationship remained significant ($r = .19, p < .05$), whilst the relationship for males became non-significant.	General BJW was not significantly correlated with E. Stable across all participant groups.	General BJW was not significantly correlated with A	General BJW was not significantly correlated with N. In the female group, there was a significant negative correlation between N and general BJW ($r = -.19, p < .05$).

		professionals ($r = -.27, p < .01$), in comparison to students ($r = -.21, p < .01$).				
4	Correlation Analysis	-	-	-	-	Personal BJW was significantly negatively correlated with N ($r = -.23, p < .01$).
Donat et al. (2014)						
5	Correlation Analysis	In all samples (students, short-term unemployed participants and long-term unemployed participants) personal BJW was not significantly correlated with O	-	In all samples (students, short-term unemployed participants and long-term unemployed participants) personal and general BJW was not significantly correlated with E	-	-
Dzuka & Dalbert (2002)		For short- and long-term unemployed participants, general BJW did not significantly correlated with O				
		For the student sample, General				

		BJW significantly negatively correlated with O ($r = -.21, p <.05$).				
6	Correlation Analysis	-	-	For both the victim and aggressors samples, personal BJW did not significantly correlate with E	-	For both the victim and aggressors samples, personal BJW did not significantly correlate with N
Dzuka & Dalbert (2007)						
7	Correlation Analysis	E and N were found to be significant predictors of unjust beliefs among females, predicting 12% of the variance.				
Heaven & Connors (1988)	Multiple Linear Regression	-	-	For male participants, neither the just nor unjust BJW had a significant correlation with E	-	For male participants, neither the Just nor Unjust BJW had a significant correlation with N
				For female participants, the just BJW did not have a significant correlation with E, whilst the unjust BJW scale had a negative significant correlation with E ($r = -.27, p <.01$).		For female participants, the just BJW did not have a significant correlation with E, whilst the unjust BJW scale had a negative significant correlation with N ($r = -.26, p <.01$).

8	Correlation Analysis	General BJW was significantly negatively correlated with O ($r = .07, p < .05$).	General BJW was not significantly correlated with C	General BJW was not significantly correlated with E	BJW was significantly positively correlated with A ($r = .19, p < .01$).	BJW was significantly negatively correlated with N ($r = -.12, p < .01$).
9	Correlation Analysis	Neither personal nor general BJW was significantly correlated with O	Personal BJW did not significantly correlate with C General BJW was significantly positively correlated with C ($r = .13, p < .05$).	Personal BJW was significantly positively correlated with E ($r = .13, p < .05$). General BJW was significantly positively correlated with E ($r = .21, p < .01$).	Personal BJW did not significantly correlate with A General BJW was significantly positively correlated with A ($r = .21, p < .01$).	Personal BJW was significantly negatively correlated with N ($r = -.34, p < .01$). General BJW was significantly negatively correlated with N ($r = -.26, p < .01$).
10	Correlation Analysis	-	Personal BJW significantly positively correlated with C ($r = .22, p < .001$). This correlation also remained consistent for facets C; Self-efficacy ($r = .30, p < .001$), Achievement-striving ($r = .15, p < .01$), and self-	-	-	-
Nudelman & Otto (2021)						

			discipline ($r = .23, p < .001$).			
			General BJW did not significantly correlate with C			
11	Correlation Analysis	Personal BJW was significantly positively correlated with O ($r = .31, p < .05$).	BJW was significantly positively correlated with C ($r = .31, p < .05$).	BJW was significantly positively correlated with E ($r = .14, p < .05$).	BJW was significantly positively correlated with A ($r = .19, p < .01$).	BJW was significantly negatively correlated with N ($r = -.14, p < .01$).
12	T-test	-	-	No significant difference in the E trait in those who had a high or low BJW.	-	Those who believe in a just world had significantly lower scores on the N scale ($p < .01$).
Excluded based on quality assessment						
13	Correlation Analysis	-	General BJW was significantly positively correlated with C ($r = .16, p < .05$).	-	BJW was significantly positively correlated with A ($r = .19, p < .01$).	-
14	Correlation Analysis	None of the BJW, personal or general, scales significantly correlated with O	None of the BJW scales significantly correlated with C	None of the BJW scales significantly correlated with E	None of the BJW scales significantly correlated with A	4 of the BJW scales did not significantly correlate with N

Study 1						One scale for Personal BJW negatively correlated with N ($r = -.37, p < .001$).
15	Correlation Analysis	4 of the BJW scales did not significantly correlate with O	None of the BJW scales significantly correlated with C	4 of the BJW scales did not significantly correlate with E	None of the BJW scales significantly correlated with A	4 of the BJW scales did not significantly correlate with Emotional Stability
Lipkus et al. (1996)		One scale found that general BJW significantly positively correlated with O ($r = .21, p < .01$).		One scale found that general BJW significantly positively correlated with E ($r = .19, p < .01$).		One scale found that BJW significantly positively correlated with Emotional Stability ($r = .29, p < .001$).
Study 2		One scale for Personal BJW significantly positively correlated with O ($r = .26, p < .001$).		One scale for Personal BJW significantly positively correlated with E ($r = .26, p < .001$).		One scale for Personal BJW significantly positively correlated with Emotional Stability ($r = .31, p < .001$).
16	Hierarchical Linear Modelling	-	Personal BJW was not significantly correlated with C	-	Personal BJW was significantly positively correlated with A ($r = .33, p < .05$).	-
Spence et al. (2011)						

17	Correlation Analysis	Personal BJW significantly positively correlated with O ($r = .11, p < .05$).	Personal BJW was significantly positively correlated with C ($r = .27, p < .001$).	Personal BJW significantly positively correlated with E ($r = .11, p < .05$).	Neither personal nor general BJW significantly correlated with A	Neither personal nor general BJW significantly correlated with N
Detle et al. (2004)		General BJW did not significantly correlate with O	General BJW was significantly positively correlated with C ($r = .20, p < .001$).	General BJW did not significantly correlate with E		

General Belief in a Just World

Openness to Experience

Nine studies looked specifically at general BJW and openness. Four of these studies found that there was not a significant correlation (Bollmann et al. (2015) Study 2, Nartova-Bochaver et al. (2017), Lipkus et al. (1996) Study 1 and Dette et al. (2004)) whilst 5 found a significant correlation, 4 negative (Bollmann et al. (2015) Study 1, Wolfradt & Dalbert (2003), Dzuka & Dalbert (2002) Study 2 and Keller & Siegrist (2010)) and 1 positive (Lipkus et al. (1996) Study 2).

Bollmann et al. (2015) Study 1 and 2 found a consistent negative correlation between general BJW and openness, however Study 1 found this to be a significant correlation, whereas this was non-significant in Study 2. Similarly, to the inconsistent findings within personal BJW, this could be due to the power differences in the sample size between the two studies, where Study 1 had 2447 participants whilst had 138 participants. Wolfradt & Dalbert (2003) found that within a sample of 212 participants in Austria, there was a significant negative relationship. This relationship was found to be stronger in males in comparison to females, and in professionals in comparison to students. Dzuka and Dalbert (2002) Study 2 found that in the student sample only (in comparison to the short- and long-term unemployed sample) that openness was significantly negatively correlated with general BJW. Keller and Siegrist (2010) also found a significant negative correlation between general BJW and openness. This means that those who have a higher BJW for the world in general are less likely to have a broader range of interests and be more willing to try new things and tackle new challenges.

Inconsistent with the other findings, Lipkus et al. (1996) Study 2 found a significant positive correlation between general BJW and openness. Opposite to the negative correlation found in the above studies, this finding suggests that those with a higher general BJW are more likely to try new things and have a broader range of interests.

Nartova-Bochaver et al. (2017) and Dette et al. (2004) both found a positive non-significant correlation between general BJW and openness.

Conscientiousness

Ten studies looked specifically at the relationship between general BJW and conscientiousness. Five of these papers found a significant positive relationship (Bollmann et al. (2015), Wolfradt & Dalbert (2003), Nartova-Bochaver et al. (2017), Schuurmans-Stekhoven (2020) and Dette et al. (2004)), whilst 5 found no significant relationship (Bollmann et al. (2015) Study 2, Keller & Siegrist (2010), Nudelman & Otto (2021), Lipkus et al. (1996) Study 1 and Lipkus et al. (1996) Study 2).

The findings for general BJW from Bollman et al.'s (2015) Study 1 and 2 reflect that of what was found for personal BJW. Initial correlations in Study 1 found a significant positive correlation, however later regression analysis showed that conscientiousness was not a significant predictor of general BJW. Study 2 analyses showed no significant relationships between general BJW and conscientiousness.

Wolfradt and Dalbert (2003) found a significant positive relationship between general BJW and conscientiousness. When further analysed, this relationship was only true of female participants, whilst male participants still showed a positive relationship, it was not a significant one. Nartova-Bochaver et al. (2017) and Spence et al. (2004) also found a significant positive correlation between general BJW and conscientiousness. This suggests that those with a higher belief that the world is a just place are more likely to recognise the value in preparation and scheduling and prioritise the completion of important tasks.

Keller and Siegrist (2010) and Nudelman and Otto (2021) found a positive non-significant correlation between general BJW and conscientiousness. Lipkus et al. (1996) Study 1 and 2 found a negative non-significant relationship between general BJW and conscientiousness.

Extraversion

Eleven studies looked specifically at general BJW and extraversion, 6 found no significant relationship between the two traits (Wolfradt & Dalbert (2003), Dzuka & Dalbert (2002), Keller & Siegrist (2010), Lipkus et al. (1996) Study 1 and Dette et al. (2004). Four studies found a significant positive correlation (Bollmann et al. (2015), Bollmann et al. (2015) Study 2, Nartova-Bochaver et al. (2017), Lipkus

et al. (1996) Study 2), whilst one study reported a significant negative correlation between unjust world beliefs and extraversion (Heaven & Connors, 1988).

Both Bollman et al. (2015) Study 1 and 2 produced a positive significant relationship between personal BJW and extraversion. The regression analysis in Study 2 showed that extraversion was not significantly predictive of general BJW. Nartova-Bochaver et al. (2017) found a significant correlation between the two traits. In Lipkus et al. (1996) Study 1, none of the BJW scales correlated with general BJW, however in Study 2, Dalbert et al.'s (1987) scale had a significant positive correlation. These findings suggest that the more a person believes that the world is a just place in general, the more sociable they will be. Additionally, highly extroverted derive energy from being around other people, and so therefore by believing the world is a just place it is possible that they feel the world is a safe place, thus being more outgoing.

Wolfradt and Dalbert (2003) found a negative non-significant correlation between general BJW and extraversion, this remained stable across all participant groups (females, males, students, and professionals), similarly Keller and Siegrist (2010) found negative non-significant correlations. Dette et al. (2004) reported a positive non-significant correlation. Dzuka and Dalbert (2002) found positive non-significant correlations in its students and short-term unemployed participants, whilst it found a negative non-significant correlation in the long-term unemployed sample.

Heaven and Connors (1988) found that for male participants, extraversion did not correlate with just or unjust beliefs. In female participants, they reported a non-significant relationship between extraversion and BJW, however they found a significant negative correlation between extraversion and unjust world beliefs, suggesting that females who believe the world is an unjust place are more introverted. Using the same Just World Scale (Rubin & Peplau, 1975), Rim (1983) found no significant difference in the extraversion trait in those who had a high or low BJW.

Agreeableness

Nine papers looked at the relationship between general BJW and agreeableness, 5 found a positive significant relationship (Bollmann et al. (2015), Bollmann et al. (2015) Study 2, Keller & Siegrist (2010), Nartova-Bochaver et al. (2017) and Schuurmans-Stekhoven (2020)) whilst 4 found no significant relationship (Wolfradt & Dalbert (2003), Lipkus et al. (1996) Study 1, Lipkus et al. (1996) Study 2 and Dette et al. (2004)).

Bollman et al. (2015) Study 1 did not find a significant correlation between agreeableness and general BJW. In the regression analysis, when not controlling for personal BJW, no significant correlation was found, however when controlling for personal BJW, agreeableness showed a small positive coefficient with general BJW. In Study 2, agreeableness and general BJW had a significant positive correlation. In the regression analysis, agreeableness yielded a significant positive coefficient with general BJW, when controlling and not controlling for personal BJW. Keller and Siegrist (2010), Nartova-Bochaver et al. (2017), and Schuurmans-Stekhoven (2020) found a significant positive relationship between agreeableness and general BJW. Similarly, to personal BJW, those who have a higher BJW in general are more likely to display affection, altruism, and cooperative behaviours.

Wolfradt and Dalbert (2003) did not find any significant correlations between agreeableness and general BJW. Within the male and professionals sample, they found a positive non-significant correlation, whilst in the female and students sample, they found a negative non-significant correlation. Dette et al. (2004) and Lipkus et al. (1996) Study 1 and 2 found positive non-significant correlations between agreeableness and any of the general BJW scales.

Neuroticism/Emotional Stability

Bollman et al. (2015) Study 1 found a significant negative correlation between neuroticism and general BJW. In the regression analysis, neuroticism did not yield a significant coefficient with general BJW, however after controlling for personal BJW, this coefficient became positive and significant. Bollman et al. (2015) study 2 did not find a significant correlation between emotionality (neuroticism in the HEXACO model) and general BJW. Similarly, to the findings for personal BJW, emotionality was not found to be a significant predictor of general BJW, however

when controlling for personal BJW, this became a positive and significant predictor of general BJW.

In the overall analysis, Wolfradt and Dalbert (2003) reported no significant correlation between neuroticism and general BJW. However, when further analysed, the female participant group showed a significant negative correlation between neuroticism and general BJW, this was not found in the male, student or professionals participant groups. Keller and Siegrist (2010) and Nartova-Bochaver et al. (2017) found a significant negative correlation between neuroticism and general BJW. This suggests that those who believe more that the world is a just place in general, are less likely to experience high levels of stress and emotional instability. Similarly, Lipkus et al. (1996) reported a significant positive relationship between general BJW and emotional stability.

Dette et al. (2004) found a positive non-significant correlation between general BJW and neuroticism.

Personal Belief in a Just World

Openness to Experience

Eight of the studies measured explored the relationship between personal BJW and Openness to Experience. Four of these found that there was not a significant correlation (Bollmann et al. (2015) Study 2, Dzuka & Dalbert (2002), Nartova-Bochaver et al. (2017) and Lipkus et al. (1996) Study 1) whilst the other 4 found that there was a significant positive correlation (Bollmann et al. (2015), Riaz et al. (2013), Lipkus et al. (1996) Study 2 and Dette et al. (2004).

Bollmann et al. (2015) Study 1 found that within a sample of 2447 participants, the largest sample of all included papers, that there was a significant positive correlation between BJW and openness. This finding however was not replicated in their second study, where there was a non-significant relationship found between the two traits. As identified by Bollmann et al. (2015) themselves, one explanation for this is the lack of power in the participant sample (149 participants) for Study 2. Riaz et al. (2013) found a significant positive relationship between personal BJW and openness among 400 university students. Lipkus et al.

(1996) Study 2 and Dette et al. (2004) also found a significant positive correlation between personal BJW and openness. This suggests that those who have a higher BJW for themselves, are more likely to be adventurous, creative, and have a willingness to try new things.

Dzuka and Dalbert (2002) found in all samples, students (92 participants), short-term unemployed (41 participants) and long-term unemployed (43 participants), that there were non-significant negative correlations with openness. Similarly, Lipkus et al. (1996) Study 1 also found a non-significant negative correlation between personal BJW and openness. Nartova-Bochaver et al. (2017) found a non-significant positive correlation.

Conscientiousness

Nine studies looked specifically at the relationship between personal BJW and conscientiousness. Four of these papers found a significant positive relationship (Bollmann et al. (2015), Nudelman & Otto (2021), Riaz et al. (2013) and Dette et al. (2004)) whilst 5 papers found no significant relationship (Bollmann et al. (2015) Study 2, Nartova-Bochaver et al. (2017), Lipkus et al. (1996) Study 1, Lipkus et al. (1996) Study 2 and Spence et al. (2011)).

Bollman et al. (2015) Study 1 correlation analysis showed that there was a significant positive relationship between personal BJW and conscientiousness, however in later hierarchical regression analysis, it was reported that conscientiousness was not a significant predictor of personal BJW. In Bollman et al.'s (2015) Study 2, no significant correlation was found between personal BJW and conscientiousness, and again conscientiousness was not a significant predictor of personal BJW.

Nudelman and Otto (2021) found a significant positive relationship between personal BJW and conscientiousness. They further explored personal BJW in relation to conscientiousness facets of self-efficacy, achievement-striving and self-discipline, all of which were consistently found to have a positive relationship with personal BJW. Riaz et al. (2013), Schuurmans-Stekhoven (2020) and Spence et al. (2004) also found a significant positive relationship between personal BJW and

conscientiousness. This finding suggests that those who have a higher personal BJW are more likely to be organised, and detail orientated.

Nartova-Bochaver et al. (2017), Lipkus et al. (1996) Study 1 and 2, and Spence et al. (2011) all found non-significant positive correlations between personal BJW and conscientiousness.

Extraversion

Nine papers specifically explored the relationship between personal BJW and extraversion. Consistently, 6 of these reported a significant positive relationship (Bollmann et al. (2015), Bollmann et al. (2015) Study 2, Nartova-Bochaver et al. (2017), Riaz et al. (2013), Lipkus et al. (1996) Study 2 and Dette et al. (2004)), whilst 3 reported no significant correlation (Dzuka & Dalbert (2002), Dzuka & Dalbert (2007) and Lipkus et al. (1996) Study 1).

Both Bollman et al. (2015) Study 1 and 2 produced a positive significant relationship between personal BJW and extraversion. Similarly, Nartova-Bochaver et al. (2017) and Riaz et al. (2013) found a significant correlation between the two traits. In Lipkus et al. (1996) Study 1, none of the BJW scales correlated with extraversion, however in Study 2, one scale, Personal BJW, was found to have a significant positive correlation with extraversion. Finally, Dette et al. (2004) reported a significant positive correlation between extraversion and personal BJW. This suggests that those who believe that the world is a just place for themselves are more likely to be sociable, talkative, and emotionally expressive.

In Dzuka and Dalbert's (2007) study exploring victims of aggression and aggressors themselves, they found a non-significant negative correlation in victims of aggression, and a non-significant positive correlation in perpetrators of aggression.

Agreeableness

Eight studies looked at the relationship between agreeableness and personal BJW, 3 of these papers found a significant positive relationship (Bollmann et al. (2015) Study 2, Riaz et al. (2013) and Spence et al. (2011)) whilst 5 papers found no

significant relationship (Bollmann et al. (2015), Nartova-Bochaver et al. (2017), Lipkus et al. (1996) Study 1, Lipkus et al. (1996) Study 2 and Dette et al. (2004))

Bollman et al. (2015) Study 1 found that agreeableness was not related to personal BJW and in the regression analysis, agreeableness did not significantly predict personal BJW. Study 2 found a significant positive relationship between the two traits. In the regression analysis, agreeableness was significantly related to personal BJW, however this became non-significant when controlling for general BJW. Riaz et al. (2013) found a significant positive correlation between agreeableness and personal BJW. Spence et al. (2011) also found a significant positive correlation. These findings suggest that those who have a higher belief that the world is a just place for themselves, they are more likely to display cooperative behaviour, they are more likely to trust others and show kindness to others.

Nartova-Bochaver et al. (2017) and Dette et al. (2004) found non-significant positive relationships between agreeableness and personal BJW. Lipkus et al. (1996) Study 1 found a negative non-significant correlation whilst Study 2 found a non-significant positive correlation between agreeableness and any of the personal BJW scales.

Neuroticism/Emotional Stability

Bollman et al. (2015) Study 1 found a significant negative correlation between neuroticism and personal BJW. In the regression analysis, they found that neuroticism showed the strongest association with personal BJW, this remained consistent when controlling for general BJW.

Bollman et al. (2015) Study 2 did not find a significant correlation between emotionality (neuroticism in the HEXACO personality model) and personal BJW. In the regression analysis, emotionality did not produce a significant coefficient with personal BJW, however when controlling for general BJW, it became a negative and significant predictor of personal BJW.

Donat et al. (2014) found a significant negative correlation between neuroticism and personal BJW. Although Dzuka and Dalbert (2007) reported a negative

correlation between neuroticism and personal BJW in both aggressors and victims of aggression, neither of these correlations were found to be significant. Heaven and Connors (1988) found no significant correlation between neuroticism and beliefs in a just and unjust world in the male participant group. In the female participant group, they found a positive significant correlation between neuroticism and unjust world beliefs, however no significant correlation between neuroticism and BJW was found. In further regression analysis, neuroticism was found to be a positive significant predictor of unjust world beliefs in females. Nartova-Bochaver et al. (2017), Riaz (2013), and Lipkus et al. (1996) Study 1 found a significant negative correlation between neuroticism and personal BJW. Lipkus et al. (1996) Study 2 found that there was a significant positive correlation between Personal BJW and emotional stability. Where a significant negative correlation had been found, this suggests that those who have a higher personal BJW were less likely to experience high emotional instability, experience a lot of stress, and get upset easily.

Detle et al. (2004) found a negative non-significant correlation between personal BJW and neuroticism.

Discussion

The aim of this review was to systematically examine the literature to collate the existing knowledge of the relationship between personality traits and BJW. Findings were grouped by personal BJW and general BJW, exploring their relationship with each of the Big five personality traits. A total of 16 studies met the inclusion criteria and were examined. All 16 of the studies utilised quantitative methodologies, 15 of these using a cross-sectional design and 1 using an interval-contingent experience sampling methodology. All of the studies used psychometric assessments to measure personality traits and BJW. Nudelman's (2013) meta-analysis included 12 studies, 7 of which were included in the current systematic review (5 papers did not publish the original statistics and these could not be obtained), with an additional 9 papers being included in the current review and adding to the literature base. The predominant direction of findings are listed in Table 10.

Table 10. *Overall correlations between Personal and General BJW and the Big Five Personality Traits found in the Systematic Review*

	Openness to Experience	Conscientiousness	Extraversion	Agreeableness	Neuroticism
Personal BJW	Positive	Positive	Positive	Positive	Negative
General BJW	Negative	Positive	Positive	Positive	Negative

In relation to personal BJW, 4 of the big five personality traits found a positive correlation, whilst neuroticism was found to be negatively correlated. Of the significant findings for personal BJW, there was a positive correlation with openness, indicating that the higher an individual's belief in a personal BJW, the more open minded, imaginative, creative, and insightful they will be. Similarly, conscientiousness, extraversion, and agreeableness also positively correlated with personal BJW. When considering agreeableness, the underpinnings of the BJW is that good things happen to good people, therefore it is plausible to suggest that those higher in BJW will be more agreeable as they want to determine their own fate and receive good things in return for helping others (Nudelman, 2013). The findings support the theory that those who have a higher personal BJW are also more conscientious (hard working, goal-directed, organised, and responsible). Despite there being 4 papers that found a non-significant relationship, it is worthy of note that all of these were of a positive direction, fully in line with the findings of the significant findings. Additionally, those who were more agreeable (tend to put other's needs above their own and be empathetic), and extraverted (energetic, sociable and friendly), also had a higher personal BJW. Therefore, by having higher in all of these personality traits, more positive things will come to that person as they believe themselves to be good people.

In relation to general BJW, 3 of the big five personality traits (conscientiousness, extraversion, and agreeableness) positively correlated, whilst openness to experience and neuroticism negatively correlated. Research shows that a higher BJW is related to trust in others and also wellbeing, two characteristics which have also been found in those with higher levels of conscientiousness (Roberts et al.,

2014). There were 5 papers that found a non-significant relationship, 3 of which supported the findings of the significant relationships by reporting positive correlations. There were 2 papers however that reported a negative non-significant relationship going against the other findings. Both of these papers had a quality assessment of 78%, which is lower than all of the other papers, therefore it is possible that the methodology of the paper impacted both the direction and significance of the results.

In relation to extraversion and general BJW, the qualities related to this personality trait e.g., excitement-seeking, to some extent is based on the belief that the world is a safe place, one of the underlying features of BJW. Therefore, those who are more extraverted are more likely to have lower risk perceptions, and so are more likely to believe that the world is a safe and predictable place (Lambert et al. 1999). Opposite to personal BJW, openness negatively correlated with general BJW, this can be understood as the more a person is open about the world, the less predictable and just they believe it is, as they are open to accepting different perspectives or multiple explanations for an event. Of the included studies that found a significant correlation, neuroticism had a consistent negative correlation with both personal and general BJW, suggesting that the lower a person's BJW, the more neurotic and emotionally unstable they will be. Higher BJW has been found to be related to better subjective wellbeing and more positive affect (Lipkus et al., 1996) in comparison to those with a weaker BJW.

It is of note that openness to experience yielded opposite directions in its correlation with personal and general BJW. Whilst personal BJW was positively correlated to openness, general BJW was negatively correlated to openness. For general BJW, all but one of the significant correlations indicated that those with a higher general BJW scored lower on the openness personality traits. The studies that found a significant negative relationship were all European countries (Switzerland, Austria, and Slovakia), whereas the one paper (Lipkus et al., 1996) which found a positive relationship was conducted in the USA, this might be indicative of cultural differences in the direction of this relationship, however further studies would need to confirm this. The different patterns of association between personal and general BJW further evidences the need to measure them as two separate dimensions.

Despite there being non-significant correlations between openness and general BJW, there were some interesting patterns that are felt important to note. There were 4 papers that reported a non-significant relationship between general BJW and openness, 3 of these were positive, whilst one was negative. Of the 5 significant correlations between general BJW and openness, 4 of these were negative and, one was positive. Further exploration into these papers found that the mean age of participants for the papers showing a negative correlation (significant and non-significant) was over 29 years old, whilst the papers showing a positive correlation (significant and non-significant) had a participant mean age of under 25. This indicates that age might strongly have an influence on the relationship between general BJW and openness, it is possible that the more life experiences a person has e.g., openness, their view of the world as being a just and fair place decreases (Kong et al., 2021).

Interpretation of mixed results

Whilst the significant findings were fairly consistent in their direction within each personality trait and personal and general BJW, there were mixed findings regarding the significance of the findings. A number of studies found the associations between each personality trait and BJW were not significant, calling into question the generalisability of such associations. One reason for the differences could be the variability in the psychometrics used within each of the studies. A total of 7 different psychometrics were used to measure BJW, and a total of 9 different psychometrics were used to measure personality. Whilst the majority of these psychometrics were established and validated measures, the stability of the factors that they are measuring could impact the strength of the results. Additionally, four of the psychometrics used in three of the papers had been translated into other languages (French, German and Russian). Although thought was given to the impact of the translation of this psychometrics, it is possible that this could have caused differences in the interpretation of them.

Studies which analysed results according to gender found gender differences within the results e.g., Heaven and Connors (1988) and Wolfradt and Dalbert (2003), indicating that gender might have a role in the relationship between BJW and personality traits. Within the included studies, extraversion and neuroticism

were found to have gender specific significant correlations. Heaven and Connors (1988) concluded that females who viewed the world as unjust were more likely to be introverted and be more neurotic, this was not found in males. Given the biological, psychological, and environmental make up of personality, it is arguable that the childhood experiences and biology between males and females is influential enough to have an impact on personality and BJW. The gender differences and the impact on personality and BJW could warrant further research.

Culture plays a crucial role in shaping a person's perspective and beliefs. Different cultures will have different values, norms and social systems that influence how a person perceives justice and fairness. The American culture places a strong emphasis on individualism, whilst the named European countries tend to adopt a collectivism approach, with an emphasis on community and group identity. It is possible that those from a more collectivist culture are more open to accepting diverse perspectives or considering multiple explanations for an event, thus lowering their belief in a just world. However, those from a more individualistic culture are more likely to believe that they are in control of their own fate and are more independent, so whilst they may demonstrate a more open personality e.g. more comfortable with ambiguity and uncertainty, the same correlations are not observed as collectivist cultures due to them needing to maintain a level of belief in the world that people are in control of their own fates e.g. a higher belief in a just world.

Links to Chapter Two

As part of Chapter Two, correlation analysis showed links between personal and general BJW with the Big Five personality traits. The significant correlations for conscientiousness and neuroticism were the same in direction with both personal and general BJW. For openness, Chapter One found a significant positive direction, this is the same as what was found in Lipkus et al.'s (1996) Study 2 paper conducted in the USA. As previously mentioned, this could highlight the cultural differences between cultures (USA and UK) in comparison to other cultures. Whilst agreeableness fell in line with the findings of the current review for personal BJW (positive relationship), the correlation with general BJW was found to be negative in Chapter One. One explanation for this could be understanding general BJW in the context of victim blaming. If a person has a high general BJW e.g., that a

person is more to blame for being a victim, then they are less likely to score highly in agreeableness and be friendly and caring towards them.

Methodological Considerations and Limitations of Reviewed Studies

There are a number of strengths for this systematic review. One of these is the broad range of literature included in the study; a date limit was not put on the search history meaning that the review could include as much literature as possible. The search terms within this review were developed based upon established theories and relevant literature. This ensured that the search terms were comprehensive and captured as much research as possible.

Whilst there are strengths of this systematic review, limitations should also be noted. All but one of the included papers adopted a cross-sectional study design. The data included was predominantly cross-sectional, therefore the nature of the data precludes being able to make any statements about the causal relationship between BJW and personality features. Some researchers argue that BJW develops in early childhood (Lerner, 1980) which later impacts personality traits. However, as earlier discussed, the Big Five personality traits have also been found to be influenced by genetics and can be linked to temperament and brain structure. Therefore, it is possible that those with particular personality traits develop weaker or stronger beliefs in BJW in line with their personality. It is also possible that personality and BJW develop independently and influence one another later in development. Whilst the current review evidences relationships between personality traits and BJW, it cannot provide any evidence regarding the direction of the relationship. Additionally, the studies relied on self-report data, with very few of the studies including any social desirability scales, therefore it is possible that there are some response biases across the included studies.

Due to the resources available and the feasibility of translating papers into English, only papers written in English were included, this therefore may have resulted in some bias. However, the papers that were included came from a number of different countries and cultures, therefore providing some generalisability of the findings. Due to the wide range of data sources used to obtain papers e.g., electronic databases, manual searching of reference lists, contacting experts in the field, and inclusion of non-significant findings, this reduced the chance of

publication bias. Additionally, no date limit was put in when searching the databases, therefore this allowed a wide range of literature to be searched.

Implications for Practice and Future Research

This review has further contributed to the research into BJW and personality characteristics and has important implications for the victim blaming literature. As discussed in the introduction, BJW has implications within the justice system in relation to jury decisions, as well as treatment efficacy. By broadening the knowledge of the factors that impact BJW, particularly such influential factors such as personality, this will help inform how effective a treatment programme might be. It can also help practitioners in how best to support particular individuals based upon their personality characteristics, enabling interventions to be altered in line with the specific need of that person and hopefully increasing the efficacy of rehabilitation e.g., reducing victim blaming attitudes and increasing victim empathy. Offenders who had a higher BJW were found to interpret life events as more just, they reported more feelings of guilt, were better able to cope with anger, and were more likely to invest in their future (Otto & Dalbert, 2005). Additionally, the current review can further the understanding as to how legal decisions are made e.g., jury decisions and the factors that impact how much blame is attributed to a victim. BJW has been found to impact the rewards given to a victim in court, where males with higher BJW awarded much less monetary damages to a rape victim in comparison to males with lower BJW (Foley & Pigott, 2006). Having an awareness of potential unconscious biases e.g., personality type and BJW, on decision making through psychoeducation may prompt people to examine their beliefs and decisions and come to fairer, less victim blaming opinions and actions. Additionally, those with higher BJW are more likely to have less favourable perceptions of defendants, and advocate for harsher sentences (Gerbas et al., 1977).

Further research would benefit from exploring the link between BJW and personality characteristics in males and females to examine if there are any differences in relation to gender. The included studies that examined males and females separately indicated that there were significant differences between the relationship between personality traits and BJW. Future research would benefit from studying this difference in more depth to further understand the potentially

moderating impact that gender has on personality traits and BJW. Additionally, the FFM was used within this study however research has begun to explore different personality models e.g., HEXACO (Bollmann et al., 2015) and their relationship with BJW, therefore further exploration of other personality factors outside of the Big Five would be beneficial.

Conclusion

The review identified a body of research exploring the relationships between BJW, personal and general, and personality traits, specifically the Big Five personality traits. It synthesised findings from research conducted across various countries and age ranges. Although research suggests that BJW should be split into two constructs, a personal and a general BJW, four out of the five personality traits appeared to have the same direction of correlation. Conscientiousness, extraversion, and agreeableness predominantly had a positive correlation with both personal BJW and general BJW. Neuroticism predominantly had a negative correlation with both personal BJW and general BJW. Openness was found to have a positive relationship with personal BJW but a negative relationship with general BJW. It is suggested that the synthesis of research provided in this review can be used to help inform current legal practices, for example providing psychoeducation to those making important legal decisions about potential biases they have through their personality type and BJW, and how these may impact their attitudes towards victims. Additionally, considerations about a person's personality type and BJW should be given in legal decision making and intervention efficacy.

Chapter Four: Victim Blaming Attitudes in an Offender: A Case Study

Abstract

This case study examined the assessment and formulation of an individual who had been sentenced for attempted murder against his mother. Following an assessment which included a clinical interview and psychometrics, a psychological intervention was developed to address prominent factors found in the formulation, in particular the high levels of victim blaming that this individual had towards his mother. The formulation highlighted the individual's victim blaming resulted from multiple factors, including a lack of identity, a need for control, and low self-esteem. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the proposed intervention could not take place, however the case study suggests ways of measuring change. The discussion considered the proposed intervention, as well as understanding victim blaming through the belief in a just world theory. The case study demonstrated the assessment and formulation of an individual who victim blames as well as discussing the importance of using a single case methodology to develop intervention targets. Limitations and future directions for research are discussed.

Links of this case study with other chapters

This case study provides an example of how victim blaming can occur from a perpetrator themselves. Chapter Two explored victim blaming from the perspective of the public, with Chapter Three exploring the relationship between personality factors and belief in a just world (BJW). Although the planned intervention in this case study could not be facilitated due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the case study attempts to understand victim blaming from an offender who has been convicted and blames their victim. This chapter attempts to utilise the BJW theory explored in Chapters Two and Three to understand victim blaming attitudes.

Introduction

Domestic Abuse

According to the Domestic Abuse Act (2021), domestic abuse is when a person over the age of 16 is physically or sexually abusive, or uses violent, threatening, controlling, or coercive behaviour. Abusive behaviour can also include economic, psychological, and emotional abuse (Domestic Abuse Act, 2021). Domestic abuse can be perpetrated by intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality (Domestic Abuse Act, 2021). The concept of child to parent violence (CPV) was first addressed in the 1970s (Harbin & Madden, 1979), however due to the rising frequency and negative consequences, in the past decade this concept has received greater attention. CPV can be understood as a pattern of abusive behaviour towards a parent that aims to practice power and exert control over them (Holt & Retford, 2013). Abusive behaviour might include, but it not limited to, physical abuse (e.g., punching or kicking), emotional abuse (e.g., threats or attempts of humiliation), and economic abuse (e.g., theft) (Holt, 2016). The prevalence of CPV is difficult to estimate due to the stigma of parenting a problematic child and the secrecy and shame associated with it. One study in the UK estimated that in a sample size of 469 university student 14.5% of young people had used violence against a parent at least once, with 3.8% reporting use of severe violence (Browne & Hamilton, 1998). Research conducted in other countries e.g., Australia, United States, and in Europe have found that between 6.5% and 10.8% of children had hit their parent at least once in the prior 1-3 years (Agnew & Huguley, 1989; Peek et al., 1985). A Canadian study found that 12% of children had used physical aggression towards a parent, and 60% of children had used verbal aggression towards their parent in the previous 6 months (Pagani et al., 2009). Gender prevalence differs between victims and perpetrators; mothers have been found to be more likely to be victims of CPV, where when violence was severe, it was five times more likely to be aimed at mothers (Cornell & Gelles, 1982; Routt & Anderson, 2011). Additionally, young men are more likely to be perpetrators of CPV, with sons being more physically abusive whilst daughters are more likely to be emotionally abusive (Routt & Anderson, 2011; Ibabe et al., 2013).

Victim Blaming

Domestic abuse has long been associated with a level of victim blaming and in the context of CPV, compounded by a parent blaming culture. Holt (2016) suggests that CPV is more readily excused than other forms of abuse, for example, that the period of adolescence is a time in which young people “let off steam” or “act out” and so therefore abusive behaviours are more likely to be dismissed in comparison to similar adult behaviour. Holt (2016) also suggests that a parent blaming culture impacts how a person responds to a parent of an abusive child, both informally e.g., pointing a finger in a supermarket, or formally e.g., through the justice system where parents hold more responsibility. The child-rearing practices of victims of CPV are more likely to be scrutinised, thus further impacting levels of victim blaming. Victim blaming within CPV can occur in a number of ways, including self-blame and blame from others. Mothers who had experienced CPV questioned their parental competency, often feeling embarrassment, shame, and guilt (Williams et al., 2017). These feelings were further exacerbated by the judgement received from others regarding a mother’s ability to parent (Williams et al., 2017).

Having considered public perceptions of victim blaming, this also can exist from the perpetrator themselves. Male perpetrators of domestic abuse have been found to utilise external attributions to excuse or minimise their abusive behaviour. Within partner domestic abuse, male perpetrators were found to attribute greater blame for abuse on partner characteristics in comparison to their own personal attributes (Henning et al., 2005). Attitudes and opinions towards domestic abuse can be linked to wider ideologies, such as the belief in a just world (BJW) theory (Lerner, 1980). As stated in previous chapters, a BJW relates to the idea that people get what they deserve. When something seemingly ‘bad’ happens to a person who is perceived as ‘good’ then this threatens a person’s BJW, therefore in order to protect their sense of justice, people use strategies such as believing that the bad thing has happened due to reckless behaviour, or that the victim is a bad person. When considering a BJW, when perpetrators distance themselves from violence or abuse, this allows them to maintain a social identity which is more socially acceptable. By removing themselves from the abuse, this means that they can also free themselves from accountability and blame (Henning et al., 2005). Baker (2021) suggested that by providing justifications for abuse towards parents, young people were able to divert responsibility from themselves and

allocate this blame elsewhere, mainly on the parents or other environmental factors.

Self-reports made by domestic violence perpetrators are often significantly influenced by social desirability responses, minimisation, and denial (Henning et al., 2005). Blaming the victim in domestic abuse cases can have detrimental impacts on later assessment and intervention. Men who evade taking responsibility for their violence have been found to be less motivated to change in treatment programmes and are also at higher risk of early drop out (Daly & Pelowski, 2000). Victim blaming and early drop out of interventions have both been found to be linked with an increased risk for recidivism (Olver et al., 2011; Henning & Holdford, 2006). Externalising blame has a number of risk related consequences. Cognitive distortions can be used to justify aggressive and antisocial behaviour, with externalisation of blame being one of these (Stuewig et al., 2010). High levels of blame have been linked to increased intimate abuse, with blame being strongly associated with men's coercion, intimidation, emotional abuse, and isolation of their partners (Dutton & Starzomski, 1997; Scott & Straus, 2007).

Intervention of CPV and Victim Blaming

CPV is becoming recognised as a significant social problem, resulting in researchers, policy makers, and practitioners evaluating how this problem is treated. In the UK, interventions into CPV often draw upon multiple theories. Some of the main approaches include restorative practices, cognitive, behavioural, non-violent, trauma-based, and systemic interventions (Holt, 2016). Many of these interventions not only attempt to address abuse against the parent, but they also attempt to increase perpetrator responsibility for the abuse against their parent. Restorative approaches utilise victim-offender mediation, attempting to make the perpetrator aware of their parent's experiences, encouraging them to think about the repercussions of their abuse and can help them to take responsibility for their actions (Holt, 2012). Similarly cognitive interventions focus on the understanding of thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and behaviours, supporting people to take ownership of their actions (Routt & Anderson, 2016). Non-violent resistance is based upon the principles of parental commitments to non-violence and focusses on helping parents in understanding dynamic interactions involved in abuse and how

escalation occurs. This approach works at a systemic level, looking at how parents can control their own behaviour to impact change as opposed to control the child behaviour, and attempts to avoid blaming the parent (Holt, 2012). Other approaches to intervention include trauma-based strategies which look at parent-child attachments, child development, and witnessing violence or abuse within the family. This approach helps the perpetrator understand how trauma has impacted them, develop their emotional regulation skills, and how to develop healthy relationships (Evans, 2016). Given that theories regarding parent abuse often involve factors at an individual, family, and societal level (Calvete et al., 2014), it would be plausible to support the notion that its intervention should also intervene at all of these levels (Holt, 2012).

Case study methodology

A case study approach was used to allow for an individualised approach to be taken towards intervention planning and implementation. Pre and post psychometric testing allows for the measurement of any statistically significant changes across psychological variables that the intervention aims to address. Whilst group interventions are cost effective in providing interventions, they lack the ability to take into consideration an individual's learning style, personality factors, motivation to engage, and individual circumstances about their offending.

The aim of this case study was to examine the impact of psychological intervention on pre- and post-intervention psychometric scores and behavioural change. In particular, the case study aimed to look at factors impacting victim blaming and how interventions could impact levels of victim blaming from a domestic abuse perpetrator towards their victim. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the intervention could not be facilitated as planned, and so therefore this case study will outline the initial assessment and formulation, discuss the proposed interventions and measuring outcomes, and finally evaluate the proposed intervention.

Method and Assessment

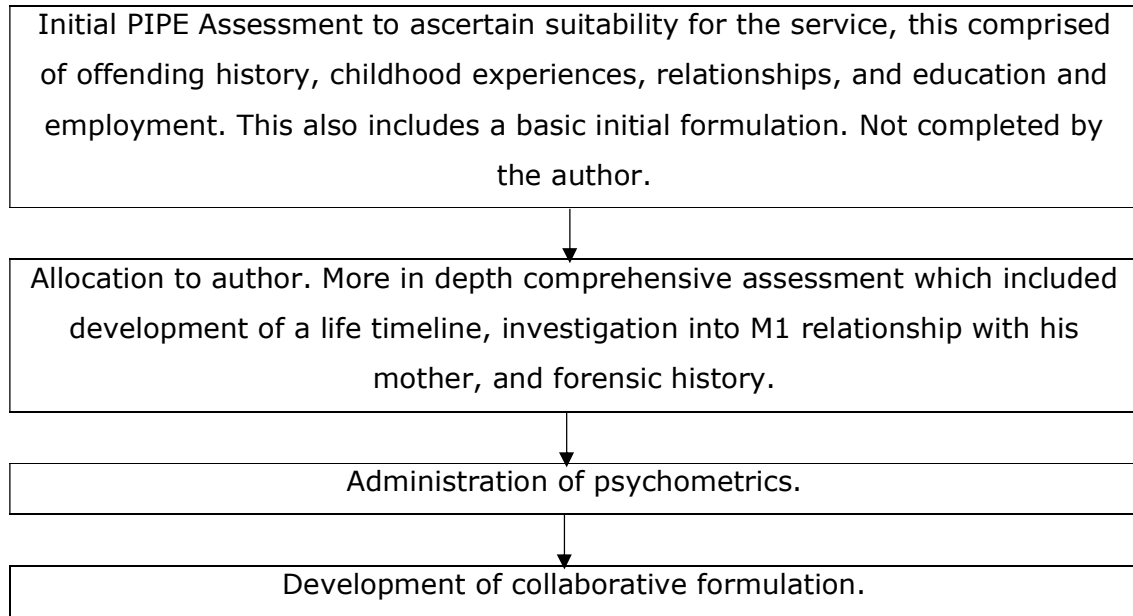
Initial Service Assessment

M1 (anonymised) was a black British male in his early 30s, residing in prison and engaging with a Psychologically Informed Planned Environment (PIPE) service. M1

was serving an Indeterminate Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) sentence for attempted murder against his mother. In 2011, M1 was sentenced to a minimum tariff of 8 years, and so therefore upon acceptance to the service in March 2021, he was post tariff awaiting a parole hearing. M1 had a diagnosis of Paranoid Schizophrenia and had been in contact with mental health services since 2000. M1 had been admitted to a mental health hospital on five occasions since he was 17, all following violent incidences towards his mother. M1 came into contact with the PIPE service after he was referred by his probation officer. Following a formal service assessment, it was determined that M1 was suitable for the service. The initial assessment aims to gain an understanding of the service user's background including relationships, education and employment and forensic history. In order to be deemed suitable, the service user had to demonstrate a willingness to change and motivation to engage in all aspects of the service. M1 appeared motivated to engage with the service, citing that he wanted to get the correct support to progress out of prison. M1 provided informed consent to participate in the case study (Appendix M). Figure 3 shows a timeline of the assessment and formulation.

M1's offending history included violence towards his mother, with formal reports of this dating back to 2004 where it was alleged that he punched her in the face. M1's violence towards his mother became increasingly more severe, where there were threats to kill, and weapons were used during attacks e.g., a baseball bat. It is reported that his mother did not want to press charges against M1 and that he would deny these attacks. In the index offence it was reported that M1 stabbed his mother in excess of 20 times, including in the head and in the body. His mother was physically assaulted and received bruising over her body. The attack included a penetrating stab wound to the head, which resulted in brain injury. Despite this violence, M1 continued to have a very close relationship with his mother where they would typically speak 3-4 times a day. As well as violence towards his mother, M1 perpetrated violence towards strangers, staff, and other patients in hospital. It is reported that M1 had punched patients, headbutted a member of nursing staff, and whilst on unescorted leave attacked a jogger with a pair of concealed nail clippers. Cannabis use had been present throughout M1's offending as well as mental health difficulties, with the suggestion that drug-induced psychosis and cannabis use often preceded violence and subsequent hospital admissions.

Figure 3. *Flowchart of Assessment Phases*



Comprehensive Assessment

M1 was assigned to the current author as his allocated clinician to engage with a clinical assessment, develop a collaborative formulation and treatment plan, and then engage in subsequent treatment interventions. M1's more comprehensive assessment comprised of self-report information, in the form of clinical interviews, and psychometric testing. Some of the information could be corroborated using collateral information from official reports such as psychiatric reports, probation risk assessments, and HCR-20's.

During the clinical assessment, a number of areas were explored including understanding family relationships, psychosocial functioning e.g., education and employment opportunities, mental health history, drug use, and offending behaviour. M1's lack of insight into his index offence and the lack of responsibility he took for his actions towards his mother were identified by a previous parole board as areas which were preventing his risk from being lowered and therefore progressing out of the prison system, for this reason these areas were focussed on during the assessment.

When asked about violence in general, M1 stated that he was "not a violent person" and that "when everyone is around, [he] is full of a lot of love". When asked about the incidences of violence that he has been convicted for, M1 stated that he has only been violent "due to the circumstances that [he] has been put in". When asked specifically about his index offence, M1 stated that he had taken responsibility for his actions, and he knows that it is not right to hit someone, however his mother also needed to take responsibility for the actions that led to the issues that made him violent. M1 stated that his mother had a "bad side", which included mind games, emotional abuse, and also physical violence. M1 described how his stepdad and auntie were "two of the nicest people that you could meet", yet they had both been violent towards his mother. He described how his mother "must have triggered something in them" for them both to be violent towards her. When asked if this was the same for his own violence towards his mother, M1 stated that his mother would do and say things that would make him reach "boiling point", which resulted in violence. When asked how he felt about the index offence, M1 stated that he had apologised and shown remorse for the offence, and that his mother has also apologised for the part that she played in the index offence. Most of M1's violence has been perpetrated towards his mother; this has included punching her as well as using weapons e.g., a saucepan. The index offence resulted in a fractured skull and subsequent brain damage. Other violence has been perpetrated towards other service users as well as staff.

M1 spoke about when he gets out of prison he would like to "start a new life" where his mother would not be part of this. Although initially he stated he was unsure why he did not want his mother to be part of his life, he later identified that he would like to move away from her so that she "doesn't trigger [my] violence anymore". When asked if there were any other factors that he felt made him be violent M1 stated that his mental health contributed to losing control, and despite using substances he did not feel that these were problematic for him nor were a contributing factor to his violence. When asked about his relationships whilst in prison and hospital, M1 stated that he had never had a problem with anyone and that wherever he has been, he has been the most "popular guy". When asked why he thought he was popular, M1 stated that he thought it was because he is a "warm hearted person that everyone can turn to". M1 also stated

that throughout his time in prison and hospital, staff had always stated that he “shouldn’t be in prison”.

Background History

Early Experiences

M1 grew up in an unpredictable and unstructured family home, where every night he would sleep in a different house due to his mother having a large family and staying at different family member’s houses. M1 describes how he would have to fight for a bed to sleep in, otherwise he would have to sleep on the floor. M1 describes how he was exposed to violence from an early age whereby his mother and stepdad would beat him, as well as his mother fighting with his stepdad and auntie. M1 describes how he was taken into care when he was 8 years old, he states that here he was not fed for two weeks and was not allowed to shower, resulting in him asking to be taken back to the family home. Following this, M1 moved in with his auntie due to his mother being sectioned and taken to hospital, she reportedly called the police and said that M1 had a bomb strapped to his chest, she was later diagnosed with paranoid personality disorder. He describes how at this time he felt loved and cared for by his auntie. M1’s stepdad left the family home when he was around 17, something that he found difficult and was a significant loss to him, although they still remain in contact now.

Education and Employment

M1 initially did not attend school and was placed on a child protection order after a visit from social services. M1 describes a difficult academic experience where he attended multiple schools due to being expelled. M1 found it hard to adapt to a new class and catch up with his classmates. He describes how he was often bullied for being the ‘new kid’ and felt singled out by everyone, this often resulted in him getting into fights and being expelled. M1 describes how he was always willing to go to school and wanted nothing more in life than a ‘normal’ school experience. There were ongoing concerns that M1’s mother was unable to get him to school on time and that she was reluctant to work with education services to develop structured plans to contain his violent behaviour. In addition to struggling academically, M1 would also get beaten by his mother if he fell behind in his classes. M1 has not had any employment.

Substance Misuse

M1 began smoking cannabis when he was 15 years old after he found that it helped him with sleeping and managing his anxiety. M1 would smoke cannabis most days, both at home and with his peers, and this would often precede violent situations. When he was in his 20's M1 progressed on to using cocaine and spice.

Mental Health

M1 first came in to contact with mental health services when he was 13, with appointments being made with his mother and stepfather, however the family disengaged with services. He was first sectioned when he was 17 following a violent incident against his mother which raised concerns about his behaviour. Following this M1 was in and out of hospital displaying persecutory delusions and thought disorder. Most of M1's admissions to hospital would be following a violent incident against his mother, he would often hold beliefs that she was 'setting him up to gain benefits'. During his time in hospital, M1's mother would come and visit, however these visits would often result in them being abusive to each other, verbally and sometimes physically.

Administration of psychometrics

Psychometric measures were chosen to gain an understanding of levels of victim blaming from M1 towards his mother, the victim in the index offence, and to understand factors which might have contributed to his levels of blame which could be targeted during treatment. M1 completed The Big Five Personality Test (Goldberg, 1992) and Procedural and Distributive Just World Belief Scale (Lucas et al., 2007), however he declined to complete the Perceptions of Victim Blame Scale - Revised (PVBS-R; Cramer et al., 2013). When given the PVBS-R, M1 immediately became guarded and stated that he would not complete the psychometric, when this was explored, M1 stated that generally in life he "did not blame others" and he would not say "I blame you for this happening to you". Whilst completing the Big Five Personality Test, M1 scored mainly at the extreme ends of the Likert-scale e.g., 1 or 5. The results were clinically examined and deemed that M1 had portrayed some level of social desirability, for example M1 scored the maximum score on 'Emotional Stability' indicating that he believed that he had full control of his emotions, did not get stressed out easily, and did not get

irritated easily. Based upon M1's initial formulation, assessment, and previous offending history, it was felt that these scores were not an accurate reflection of M1's true personality. Similarly, when completing the Just World Belief Scale, M1 scored all 7's about himself, indicating he believed that the world was a fair place towards him, however when he spoke about being in prison he would often state that it was "unfair" that he was in prison and that "it's understandable" that he committed his index offence and so therefore he "should be released", indicating that this BJW did not reflect that of the psychometric score.

Formulation

The aim of a forensic case formulation is to gather information from the assessment phase and integrate and interpret it alongside psychological theory to attempt to understand and explain the development and perpetuation of a particular problem, for example offending behaviour and victim blaming. Developing a formulation collaboratively with a service user means that a service user can take greater ownership of the formulation (Kuyken, 2006). Collaborative formulations have also been associated with better relationship quality between staff and service user and a higher degree of trust reported by service user towards the staff member (Shaw et al., 2017). Therefore, the formulation was developed collaboratively by the clinician and the service user which would then be used to inform a holistic treatment plan supported by scientific research. In particular, formulations are important when working with complex service users where treatment has failed and diagnosis may not strongly predict treatment efficacy (Hart et al., 2011).

During the assessment phase, M1 often shut down and withdrew from sessions when he felt that blame was being placed with him for his violent behaviour, therefore it felt appropriate for a formulation model to be used that was blame reducing and incorporated an understanding of his own trauma. The developed formulation was informed by the Power Threat Meaning Framework (PTMF; Johnstone & Boyle, 2018) and Schema Therapy (Young et al., 2003).

Sense made of experiences

All children have core needs and when these are not met these can lead to difficulties later in life (Martin & Young, 2010). M1's environment did not promote healthy expression of feelings and needs where he was often scolded for showing his emotions or caregivers failed to tend to his needs at all. Having not experienced healthier ways of managing and communicating emotions, M1 may have learnt to act in expressive ways in order to get people to notice how he was feeling. Additionally, growing up witnessing violence in adult relationships, as well as violence being perpetrated towards M1, is likely to have impacted his view of relationships, where violence and shouting are viewed as 'normal' parts of relationships, also impacting his view of who would be able to keep him safe, both physically and emotionally.

M1 was not afforded the opportunities to develop a healthy sense of identity, both personally and socially. M1 was often moved around within his home and schools, and rejected within relationships e.g., with his mother. These experiences are likely to have had an impact on how he viewed himself, leading him to develop a low self-esteem and developing the belief that other people could not keep him safe or meet his basic emotional needs. The negative messages that M1 received from his mother might have led him to internalise these and view them as a representation of who he is, and in the face of not being able to form relationships with other peers at school, it is possible that he struggled to form an identity away from his mother, becoming dependant on her. Having felt that he never belonged anywhere, M1 may have developed the belief that he is different to others as well as being filled with shame that he was not wanted within the home nor fitted in within a social network at school and could not perform academically to his mother's standards.

Coping mechanisms

Having no one to turn to for support may have led M1 to turn within himself to be able to survive and manage day to day life, impacting his mental health. As a way of coping with life stressors, M1 learnt that at times he could shut off from the outside world, becoming withdrawn, and neglecting his personal hygiene, which provided him safety from external stressors. By shutting off in this way, M1 was able to avoid painful emotions and did not have to confront the pain that this might bring with them. Drugs were also a way that M1 might have used to block

out the pain of life, however this also exacerbated mental health problems. Without having learnt healthy ways of managing difficult emotions, this has led M1 to attempt to end his own life. This could have been a way that M1 learnt to communicate to others how strongly he was experiencing emotions. Additionally, it may have been an attempt to punish or hurt himself.

In order to manage his low self-esteem and feelings of rejection, M1 portrays himself to others as a good person, often telling people how he has lots of friends, he is a kind and non-violent person and that he gets on with staff and peers alike. This belief makes it difficult for M1 to view himself as having done something bad, for example, his index offence and other violence that he has perpetrated. By overcompensating for his feelings of shame, M1 is able to develop a view of himself that does not incorporate the risk that he might pose to others. By placing blame on his mother for the index offence and not fully accepting responsibility for times in his life when he has posed a risk to others, this allows M1 to put a barrier between his actions and taking responsibility for them. If M1 were to view himself as someone who had done something 'bad' then this might destabilise his sense of self and the image that he holds of himself. In order to make sense of the index offence, or violence towards others, M1 appears to externalise blame, placing part of the fault with others and thus removing himself from holding responsibility for his actions, perpetuating his positive self-image. It is possible that it is too overwhelming for M1 to view himself as a perpetrator of violence as opposed to a victim of violence, by admitting that he may pose a risk, M1 might worry that people will forget his experiences of abuse. Within his interactions with others, M1 can present himself as dominating of conversations and finds it difficult to understand different perspectives, again this could be a protective mechanism as to see himself from a different perspective could destabilise his own self-identity.

Despite the violence between them, M1 continues to have a very close relationship with his mother, talking to her multiple times a day. Having an underdeveloped self, it is likely that M1 attempts to understand his own thoughts and feelings through that of his mother, relying on her for validation of his actions and emotions. It is also possible that M1 maintains this relationship in order to keep a sense of control over his mother, using violence as a way of controlling or

punishing her. M1 appears to find a lot of comfort in this relationship but simultaneously holds resentment towards his mother.

Strengths

M1 has some protective factors that can help him through these difficulties. M1 has a developing insight into his mental health, being able to understand triggers for a decline in mental health and how to manage these, he complies with his medication and can understand the impact on his mental health when he does not comply with this. M1 demonstrates motivation to want to progress out of prison where he understands the reasons as to why he remains in prison e.g., his relationship with his mother, and therefore attends sessions and groups that he is able to. M1 has positive relationships with other family members who appear to provide pro-social support to him.

Responsivity issues

During the assessment phase, responsivity issues which might impact intervention needed to be considered. M1's diagnosis of schizophrenia needed to be considered in his treatment and how this would impact his engagement and subsequent outcomes. Those with a mental illness are often difficult to engage with ongoing treatment displaying high dropout rates, cited reasons for this include poor therapeutic alliance and poor insight into the need for treatment (Dixon et al., 2016). The therapeutic relationship has been found to be important in all types of psychological therapy when working with those with schizophrenia as it provides a sense of safety. It has been suggested that in order for interventions to be successful the person needs to feel understood and part of the process in order to disclose important and distressing information (Dixon et al., 2016). Therefore, it was important to focus on building a rapport with M1 initially, as well as ensuring that M1 understood the aims of the therapy and that his own goals and desires were considered. A warm, empathic, and genuine approach was taken in order to foster a positive and trusting therapeutic relationship, with the aim that this would encourage M1 to engage on a more meaningful level and reduce the chances of dropout (Hewitt & Coffey, 2005).

Intervention and Measuring Change

The aim of this case study was to examine the impact of an intervention on pre- and post- intervention psychometric scores and behavioural change in relation to domestic abuse and attribution of blame from a perpetrator. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the planned intervention could not be facilitated as the prison was deemed an outbreak site and no one to one work could be carried out. Therefore, the planned intervention and its aims will be discussed. The assessment and formulation highlighted the intervention targets, which included M1's relationship with his mother particularly the dependant relationship they had at the time of the assessment, M1's views towards her and the victim blaming views he held in relation to the violence towards her, lack of insight into the index offence and previous violence towards his mother, and impulsiveness in response to negative emotions.

Schema informed therapy would be implemented as it has a focus on exploring childhood experiences, emotive techniques, the therapeutic relationship and also understanding coping techniques and developing adaptive coping strategies. This therapy would first aim to identify the triggers for abusive behaviours, before focussing on the related schemas and coping responses to them. The therapy would look at critical life events from childhood through to adulthood, developing an understanding of how underlying beliefs had formed. During this therapy, coping strategies would be provided including challenging beliefs about schemas and developing flash cards and behavioural pattern breaking such as rehearsing new behaviours. The aim of this therapy would be to reduce M1's dependence upon his mother, to develop more accountability for his actions, and to process childhood trauma. Smith (2011) found that following schema therapy, domestic violence perpetrators displayed reduced anger through changing the meaning linked to an event and also changing the behaviour associated with the emotion. They also found that there were attitude changes to personal and other responsibility, by increasing self-efficacy, assertiveness, and self-acceptance this led to changes in aggression and responsibility for one's own actions. Family characteristics e.g., attachment styles, familial violence and inconsistent childrearing boundaries and rules have been found to be risk factors for CPV (Calvete et al., 2014), therefore family approaches should be considered within M1's intervention. Family therapy would focus on the relationship between M1 and his mother, considering power dynamics within the relationship, understanding

their attachment system and understanding communication patterns that support violent behaviour (Turhan, 2020). The aim of this therapy would be for M1 to develop insight into the impact of his behaviours, reduce denial and victim blaming, enforce appropriate boundaries, and develop non-violent conflict resolution skills.

In addition to the above aims, the formulation highlighted that factors related to victim blaming attitudes also included low self-esteem, lack of sense of self, and lack of healthy coping mechanisms, all factors in which schema informed therapy would also be suggested to address. Addressing M1's low self-esteem would help him to accept the parts of himself that he finds difficult to acknowledge e.g., that he has caused harm to others, and which leads him to victim blame. This can be addressed through cognitive strategies such as identifying evidence for or against beliefs about himself, and also understand the development of low self-esteem by acknowledging the criticalness of others within his childhood. To support the development of M1's sense of self, treatment should focus on helping him to develop his own personal preferences, this would utilise behavioural strategies to encourage M1 to practice things that he enjoys away from his mother e.g., music, movies, and books. Experiential strategies would help support M1 in practising setting boundaries with his mother in order to help separate himself from her. An important part of this treatment focus would be to encourage M1 to consider the benefits and advantages of developing an identity away from his mother in order to increase his motivation to engage with the therapy (Young et al., 2003). Adaptive and healthy alternative coping mechanisms for coping with difficult emotions would be developed and encouraged throughout.

The psychometrics administered pre-intervention were attempted to be readministered following the development of the collaborative formulation to assess if the development of the formulation had facilitated any change. M1 declined to complete the psychometrics citing that he had "found them weird" when he completed them before and did not want to complete them again. M1's behaviour change, in addition to any psychometric changes, would be important to consider. M1's attitudes, feelings, and thoughts towards his mother and his past violence should be observed, with the aim that M1 would take accountability for his actions and place less blame on his mother. Behaviour changes could have

been monitored via listening to M1's calls with his mother, where prior to the intervention he would dominate the calls making demands and using black mail e.g., "if you do not get me x, I will not speak to you again". The aim of the intervention would be to reduce this behaviour. It would also be beneficial to gain self-report from M1's mother about his behaviour towards her, as well as M1's own self-report about his feelings towards his mother and their relationship. Long term behavioural changes would be to eradicate any future violence from M1, in particular towards his mother, and for him to take more responsibility for his actions.

Discussion

This case study investigated the assessment and formulation of a perpetrator of violence toward his mother who showed levels of victim blaming. The case study proposed a psychological intervention, the expected outcomes, and the proposed ways of measuring change. The assessment and formulation suggested that M1's violence and victim blaming derived from multiple factors, which included low self-esteem, a lack of sense of self and self-identity, and a lack of healthy coping mechanisms. Substances impacted M1's mental health which perpetuated his offence cycle. M1 developed a positive image of himself and so according to the Cognitive Dissonance Theory (Festinger, 1957) and the BJW theory, by blaming his mother for his violence towards her, he was likely able to minimise the harm he was causing to her and enable him to continue being violent.

The assessment and formulation were developed on the basis that M1 responded to questions and psychometrics appropriately. M1's pre-psychometric scores were not felt to be an accurate or true reflection of his presentation and that there was a level of social desirability in his scores. M1's presentation could be understood through impression management, where in order to be released from prison, M1 had to evidence a reduction in violence through engagement in treatment. It is possible that M1 wanted to present himself in the best possible way in order to 'look good' and reduce how risky he presented himself. This also falls in line with the BJW theory where M1 viewed himself as a victim throughout the assessment and could not view himself as having potentially have caused risk to others. M1's engagement in the assessment phase is likely to be an indicator for further intervention engagement. It is possible that M1's shame around the violence he

had perpetrated towards his mother would have limited the ability to show real engagement with treatment, with it being difficult for him to develop insight into himself that refuted the positive self-image that he had of himself. Using M1's self-report information during the assessment phase may have been limited by his difficulty with self-reflection where he presented himself as someone with no problems or difficulties (Mathie & Wakeling, 2011). Social desirability should be considered in future research, possible ways of managing this include using a social desirability scale to measure the extent to which a person is presenting themselves as overly positive (Lanz et al., 2021). It is also important to consider how personal BJW in itself can be socially desirable, where people will score themselves higher on personal BJW to distinguish themselves from others (Wenzel et al., 2017).

Baker (2021) found that young people had used minimisation, justification, denial and claims of reduced competence when speaking about violence towards their parents in a way to make their violence appear more socially acceptable and making them less accountable. M1's assessment and formulation highlighted these concepts where he would often try and either deny or minimise the role that he played in his violence and provide justifications in his mother's actions as to why he responded violently towards her. Additionally, it is helpful to understand M1's victim blaming in the context of the BJW theory. During the assessment M1 would often frame his violence towards his mother as an inevitable response to her actions, for example describing her as a bad person, or that she had done something wrong which meant that his violence towards her was excused. It could be hypothesised that M1 had a high BJW, allowing him to place blame on his mum for his actions against her, and distancing himself from taking responsibility for these actions. By placing the blame on his mum (and in his other violence), M1 could maintain the belief that bad things happen to bad people. During the assessment, M1 shared that he felt that it was unfair that he was in prison and also that he was a liked and good character. These views about himself were likely to threaten his BJW about himself e.g., that going to prison could happen to a good person like him, and so therefore in order to maintain a sense of just for himself, M1 overcompensated in sharing that he was a good person, and by placing the blame with his mum this allowed him to maintain a positive self-identity.

Schema informed practices heavily informed the proposed intervention for M1. In contrast to standard Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Schema Therapy focuses more on the childhood origins of maladaptive beliefs and behaviours, whilst also placing more emphasis on the therapeutic relationship. During the assessment phase, M1 found it difficult to relate to vulnerable emotions, often stating he was 'fine', therefore an intervention approach that was able to work with M1's vulnerabilities was required. Research has found that Schema Therapy has been more effective than other treatments in reaching vulnerable emotions in forensic patients (Chakhssi et al., 2014). These findings support the notion that Schema informed therapy would have been an effective treatment intervention in reducing M1's violence and victim blaming.

The proposed intervention was developed based upon M1's formulation and research around interventions into violence against parents. It should also be noted that the intervention would not only have been guided by the practitioner's own knowledge and skills, but also by the organisation and service that M1 engaged with (Toole-Anstey et al., 2021). Organisational policies and practice frameworks will have impacted the intervention and approach taken to M1's treatment. Service issues that might compromise intervention should be considered, for example, the availability of a family therapist being able to facilitate any suggested family therapy, as well as the logistics of carrying out this work given the restrictions of residing in a prison e.g., M1's mother not being able to physically attend any family therapy sessions.

There are some limitations to this research and proposed intervention. The assessment, formulation, and proposed intervention had a focus on M1's mother and their relationship, including the suggestion of family therapy. M1's mother also has a mental health diagnosis, has previously been detained under the mental health act and is under a community mental health team. Therefore M1's mother's capacity for engagement with the proposed interventions would need to be assessed. If deemed appropriate, it would have also been beneficial for information to have been corroborated with M1's mother to gain a further understanding of childhood experiences, the violence perpetrated towards her, M1's attitude toward this and the current difficulties within their relationship.

Many of the current interventions focus on domestic violence in relation to intimate partner violence, focussing on violence carried out within couples. This case study has highlighted the need to consider whether CPV needs further research into effective interventions. There is no current nationally agreed definition of CPV, which in turn causes inconsistencies in understanding, measuring, and providing interventions. It is also important to consider the impact of victim blaming within CPV, with further research exploring more widely the impact of blame on the ability to engage in treatment. It would be beneficial for future research to further develop an understanding of the BJW theory as a model for victim blaming in the context of child to adult violence.

This case study has demonstrated an assessment and formulation and proposed psychological intervention with a domestic violence perpetrator who holds victim blaming views. The formulation provides suggestions as to where victim blaming may derive from guided by the BJW theory. The study would be strengthened by the intervention being carried out and understanding the treatment outcomes, however due to the COVID-19 pandemic this was not feasible.

**Chapter Five: A Psychometric Critique of the Perceptions of Victim
Blame Scale-Revised (Cramer et al., 2013)**

Abstract

This chapter provides a critique of the Perceptions of Victim Blame Scale -Revised (PVBS-R; Cramer et al., 2013). An overview of the current blame literature is given, including a summary of the theory behind the development of the PVBS-R. The critique then goes on to review the psychometric properties of the PVBS-R giving comment to its reliability and validity. The PVBS-R has good internal consistencies, although there is no published data on its test-retest reliability, limiting its strength. The PVBS-R has good construct validity, with its 3 subscales falling in line with the current literature in blame. The scale has some evidence for its convergent validity, significantly positively correlating with authoritarianism and sexual prejudice, whilst divergent validity is evidenced by there being no significant correlations with trait aggression and social desirability. The malice subscale had a significant association with assigning the death penalty, providing some evidence for the scale's predictive validity. The PVBS-R has its strengths in being a measure of victim blaming, including its applicability to multiple crimes as well as measuring blame as a multifaceted construct. It does however have its limitations in relation to its test-retest reliability and its applicability away from Westernised cultures. That being said, there is a lack of non-specific crime measures of victim blaming. Test-retest data and utilising the PVBS-R across various populations is needed to provide more robust psychometric properties.

Links of this psychometric critique with other chapters

Chapter Two utilised a number of psychometrics to measure key concepts included in the empirical research study. One concept was the blame attributed towards a victim. Within the empirical research study, such exposure was assessed via the Perceptions of Victim Blame Scale -Revised (PVBS-R; Cramer et al., 2013), the scoring of which provides three subscales for blame: unreliability, recklessness, and malice. The results in Chapter Two indicated that these three subscales correlated differently with aspects of a belief in a just world (BJW) and personality traits, therefore this psychometric critique further explores this. Chapter Four aimed to utilise the PVBS-R, however the case study individual refused to complete it, something which is considered in this chapter as a limitation. Additionally, there are a limited number of blame scales for unspecified offences, which was identified when the author was researching blame scales to use in the empirical study. It was identified that the PVBS-R had limited use and therefore this prompted a more thorough review of the tool which is captured within this chapter. The discussions in this chapter revisit victim blaming and the functions of it.

Introduction

Throughout the victimology empirical literature, attribution of blame is a common phenomenon, discussed as a direct outcome variable (e.g., Bryant et al., 2003) and how levels of victim blaming impact other dependant measures, for example perceptions of the victim or an offender (e.g., Ayala et al., 2018). The negative outcomes of victim blaming such as the psychological impact, heightened levels of self-blame, and higher risk of revictimisation make it an important concept to understand (Eaton, 2019; Wager et al., 2021). Literature on victim blaming can be found within a number of crime types such as hate crimes, crimes of a sexual nature, stalking, and domestic violence (Rayburn et al., 2003; Grubb & Turner, 2012; Scott et al., 2014; Gracia, 2014).

The term victim blaming was first used by Ryan (1976) and can be defined as when a victim of a crime is held either partly or wholly responsible for the crime against them. As described in Chapter One, victim blaming can take multiple forms including behavioural, characterological, and situational blame (Janoff-Bulman, 1979; Taylor, 2020). Behavioural victim blaming cites the behaviour of the victim as the reason for the negative action against them, characterological blame cites the character or personality of the victim, whilst situational blame places the blame on the situation that the person was in for the actions against them. Whilst behavioural and characterological factors places blame with the person, situational blame places the blame with a situation or event outside of the persons control rather than an internal characteristic. When discussing victim blaming in relation to crime, victim blaming types often occur simultaneously, however all types minimise the actions and choices of the perpetrator of the crime. Research has found a number of factors that influence how much blame is attributed to a victim, such as physical, demographic, or personality characteristics of the observer, perpetrator, and victim (Alicke, 2000).

The function of victim blaming has been well explored within the literature. Some of the proposed functions of attributing blame to the victim has been to distance oneself from an unpleasant event, maintain a sense of personal control, and reduce the sense of one's own risk of being a victim (Taylor, 2020). Commonly used theories of victim blaming include the belief in a just world (BJW; Lerner, 1980), the Culpable Control Model (CCM; Alicke, 2000), and the Defensive

Attribution Hypothesis (DAH; Shaver, 1970). The BJW postulates that the world is a just and fair place where good things happen to good people and bad things happen to bad people, thus everyone gets what they deserve. Having a belief in this means that this provides a psychological buffer that something bad is unlikely happen to an individual if they continue to live a good life (Lerner, 1980). The CCM relates more closely to an individual's automatic emotional response to hearing about the experience of a victim (Alicke, 2000). The CCM suggests that blame is impacted by two factors: personal control and affective evaluations. Personal control relates to the perceived intentions, causality and foreseeability of the victim, whilst affective evaluations refer to the perceivers emotional reaction to the victim will influence blame. For example, if an observer perceives the victim's behaviours to have played a significant contributing role in setting up a situation where rape could occur, then the observer may have a negative emotional reaction to the victim, thus attributing blame to her (Pauwels, 2002). The DAH posits that blame attributed to the victim will depend on the observer's perceived similarity and identification with the victim. It states that when a person perceives themselves as similar to the victim e.g., same sex or ethnicity, then they are less likely to blame the victim (Grubb & Harrower, 2008).

Although explored within the literature, there is no widely accepted agreement on what blame is or what it consists of. Current literature often assesses blame as a single item; however, some researchers suggest that blame is complex and multifaceted. Shaver and Drown (1986) argued that the concepts of blameworthiness, causality, and responsibility are often treated as the same thing. Blameworthiness refers to how deserving a victim is of blame, causality refers to the judgements of how a victim caused the event, and responsibility refers to the behaviour alone and not the intent behind it. This may have had a detrimental impact on the methodology and interpretations of findings in research where the three concepts are not considered separately. Although some research has suggested that responsibility and morality are both framed as components of blame (Mikula, 2003), Chockler and Halpern (2004) argue that blame and responsibility should be considered as two different constructs, where blame must have intent and responsibility is purely the behaviour without intent.

Additionally, there is no one clear widely accepted measure of blame and instead blame is often measured with other items interchangeably e.g., responsibility and culpability. This review will examine the PVBS-R, a psychometric tool designed to measure different aspects of perceived blame, considering its psychometric properties, including reliability and validity, as well as its use in current practice and research.

Overview of the PVBS-R

The PVBS-R was developed to measure levels of blame attributed to a victim of a hate crime (Cramer et al., 2013). The PVBS-R is a 13 item self-report measure that consists of opposite adjectives e.g., violent and nonviolent, blameless and blameworthy, and careful and reckless, and each item is measured on a 7-point scale. Items 1, 3, 5, 7, 8, and 9 are reversed scored. The tool consists of 3 subscales measuring blame as a multifaceted phenomenon. The 3 subscales are malice (high and overt intention to harm, e.g., blameless/blameworthy and fault/faultless), recklessness (low to moderate perceived intent to harm, e.g., careful/careless), and unreliability (low perceived intent to harm, e.g., reliable/unreliable). The tool is scored by summing the relevant items within the subscales, with higher scores indicating higher levels of blame.

Development of the PVBS-R

Rayburn et al. (2003) initially developed the Perceptions of Victim Blame Scale (PVBS) to measure culpability and blame that participants assigned to victims within a study exploring victims of hate crime. This initial tool was a 14-item scale, following an identical model as the revised version of 14 bipolar adjectives and higher scores indicating a more unfavourable view of the victim. The original scale did not consist of subscales, focussing on a unidimensional concept of blame, and all scores were summed to result in one total score. The PVBS yielded an internal consistency of .90. The PVBS was initially used on 403 undergraduate students (102 men and 301 women), ranging in age from 17 to 57 years old.

The PVBS had several strengths, for example incorporating responsibility and blame as items on the scale and had acceptable internal consistency of .90. The scale also incorporated different victim judgements that could be aspects of blame e.g., maliciousness and recklessness. However, despite these strengths the

developers did not conduct a factor analysis on the PVBS to test whether the perceived blame tested by the scale also contained subcomponents. This was identified by Cramer et al., (2013) who conducted further testing on the scale and developed the PVBS-R.

Cramer et al. (2013) set out to test whether blame was multifaceted and so therefore ran a systematic psychometric evaluation on the PVBS. The aim of this study was to evaluate whether a single or multifactor model of victim blaming displayed the best statistical fit, and secondly the psychometric properties of the best fit model. They used the psychometric on three different participant groups (See Table 10). The first sample was 246 (96 men and 150 women) participants from a university in south-eastern United States, with a mean age of 18.19 years. The second sample was 199 (56 men and 143 women) participants with a mean age of 20.68 years, from a mid-Atlantic United States university. Both of these samples were given a manipulated crime vignette (control condition with no victim sexual orientation stated, a condition where the victim's sexual orientation was heterosexual, a condition where the victim's sexual orientation was gay, and finally a condition where the rationale for the rage towards the victim's sexual minority status was given), participants were then asked to complete a psychometric pack. The final sample was 155 (82 men and 73 women) participants from a south-eastern university in the United States with a mean age of 19.39. In the final sample, the procedures were the same however the manipulated information discussed both the victim's and perpetrator's sexual orientation. Cramer et al. (2013) ran an Exploratory Factor Analysis using a factor loading cut off of .4 for subscale inference. The three factors that came out of the analysis were malice, recklessness and unreliability. A confirmatory factor analysis was conducted with all 14 items on the original PVBS, this resulted in it being inadequate and a poor statistical fit, further evidencing the need for the scale to be broken into subscales, the overall statistics of the PVBS-R will be discussed later.

Psychometric Properties

According to Kline (2013), reliability, validity, and the appropriateness of normative data are all necessary components to evaluate the quality of a

psychometric measure. These constructs will be discussed in order to examine whether the PVBS-R is a valid, reliable, and useful measure.

Level of Measurement

The PVBS-R uses a seven-point scale, therefore each individual item on the scale is at an ordinal level of measurement. However, when the items are merged to produce levels of victim blaming on the three subscales, these can be treated as interval data (Allen & Seaman, 2007). According to Kline's (2013) standards for psychometric properties, the PVBS-R has an acceptable level of data to be deemed a good test.

Moreover, the PVBS-R uses a seven-point scale, meaning that it has a middle point, therefore respondents can answer neutrally. Kline (2013) says that this is better than having an 'unsure' category, however this can result in false high ratings and during analysis, researchers should take this into account.

Reliability

Reliability refers to the consistency or repeatability of a measure, reflecting how accurate a measure is at producing the same results at different times and in different conditions (BPS, 2017). When a psychometric is found to be reliable it means that any variation in participant's scores can be attributed to changes in them or the concept being measured, reducing the likelihood of random error. A sample size of 200 participants for reliability studies is suggested by Guildford (1956).

As the PVBS-R is a self-report measure, inter-reliability i.e., how consistent the scoring is between different researchers, it is not appropriate to assess. However, other types of reliability can be explored.

Internal Consistency

Internal consistency measures the consistency of all items within the psychometric to measure the same construct. Cronbach's alpha is the most frequently used coefficient alpha to measure internal consistency, this is expressed as a number between 0 and 1 (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). Most researchers argue that for a scale to be deemed internally consistent and reliable, Cronbach's alpha should be

at least .70. Kline (2000) argues in order for a psychometric to be considered good, the acceptable alpha level is between .60 and .70, with a recommended maximum alpha level of .90.

The original authors, Rayburn et al., (2003) found that the internal consistency of the PVBS was .90, suggesting that this had good internal consistency. Cramer et al. (2013) later looked at the PVBS-R and reported that the overall internal consistency for the scale was .96. The internal consistency for each of the subscales was also reported, with malice yielding an alpha level of .95, recklessness yielding an alpha level of .88, and unreliability yielding an alpha level of .90 in the first sample ($n = 246$). These results were supported when similar results were found in the second sample ($n = 199$). Overall, the entire scale and its subcomponents obtained good internal consistency. It should be noted however that some researchers argue that having such a large alpha level is problematic. Cattell (1973) suggests that researchers should be aware of bloating specific factors where when the internal consistency is too high, this could mean that the scale items are too similar resulting in the psychometric being too specific.

Within the empirical study in Chapter Two, the overall Cronbach's alpha level for the full scale PVBS-R was found to be .93. The Cronbach alpha levels for the malice, recklessness, and unreliability subscales were found to be .94, .87, and .87 respectively. The alpha levels for the recklessness and unreliability subscales are slightly lower than what previous research has found and do not go above the suggested maximum alpha level of .90, therefore minimising the risk of bloating specific factors. The scale and its subscales have a high internal consistency, although consideration should be given to the possibility of bloating specific factors.

Test-Retest Reliability

Test-retest reliability refers to the consistency of scores between two different time points using the same participants where there has been no intervention (Kline, 1986). Kline (1986) suggests that the most effective way of measuring test-retest reliability is through a correlation analysis, where a minimum correlation statistic of .80 should be used to deem the psychometric tool good. The time period between the two points should not be too short as this runs the

risk of participants remembering the questions or answers, therefore Kline (1986) suggests that a minimum of 3 months is sufficient. When measuring for test-retest reliability it is important for researchers to consider the impact of any other confounding variables e.g., substance use or mental health conditions.

At this juncture, it does not appear that there is any published research that has measured the test-retest reliability of the PVBS-R or the original PVBS. The researchers were contacted to obtain any information about the initial development of the PVBS, however they could not provide any further information. This indicates that there is no statistical support that the PVBS-R has good test-retest reliability.

Validity

Validity refers to whether a psychometric meaningfully measures what it set out to measure (BPS, 2017). There are different types of validity including construct validity, criterion validity, and content validity. With some types of validity being considered as more important than others depending upon the purpose of the measures.

It should be noted that the scale was initially developed by Rayburn et al., (2003) to measure levels of blame within the context of a hate crime, and later psychometric property testing by Cramer et al. (2013) also utilised hate crime vignettes within its studies. This therefore should be considered in its use in studies that do not utilise a hate crime scenario. Within their discussion, Cramer et al. (2013) evaluates its application and contribution to the general victim blaming literature, exploring its support for the theoretical understanding that victim blaming is not unidimensional. The psychometric itself would benefit from validity testing within other types of crime and also different types of victims to strengthen its generalisability and strength.

Construct Validity

Construct validity refers to the degree in which the items on the scale correlate with the theoretical underpinnings of it. For the PVBS-R this means the degree in which the items on the scale relate to the theoretical understanding of victim blaming. Kline (2000) suggests that construct validity should be assessed through

a factor analysis, which indicates how much each item on the scale contributes to the whole scale result. Kline (2000) then suggests that future studies should confirm construct validity, typically through a confirmatory factor analysis.

Using the first sample ($n=246$), Cramer et al. (2013) ran an exploratory factor analysis, and this resulted in three factors emerging from the 14-item scale. The first factor had 9 items loaded onto it (factor loading range from .49 to .87), with the second and third factors both having 2 items loaded onto it (factor loading range .75 and .78, and .78 and .79 respectively). A fourth factor came out of the analysis however this only had one item loaded on it and was excluded from the final model due to its variance proportion being minimal in comparison to the other factors (.09). The robustness of the scale should be considered given that there are two factors which have only two items loaded on to them. The more loadings on to a factor, the greater the reliability, therefore only having two items may reduce the reliability of the factor (Field, 2013). Despite this, the items that load onto the second and third factors had factor loadings that were above .7, thus indicating that they extract sufficient variance from the variable (Field, 2013). Additionally, a confirmatory factor analysis was undertaken to confirm the construct of each factor.

Cramer et al. (2013) confirmed the construct validity by completing a confirmatory factor analysis which supported an adequate model fit of the three-factor model. In line with the available literature, blame can be understood as a multidimensional construct and so therefore a psychometric should not be unidimensional. Additionally, current literature discusses perceived intention and blame (Scanlon, 2008), this is measured in the identified subscales, further supporting construct validity.

Convergent Validity

Convergent validity refers to when items on a scale that should be theoretically linked are found to be linked. There are conflicting results reported in the PVBS-R's convergent validity. In the first sample used in Cramer et al.'s (2013) study, all 3 subscales on the PVBS-R were found to be significantly positively correlated with measures assessing authoritarianism and homonegativity (ranging from $r = .18$ to $.27$). The overall scale also had a significant positive correlation with

authoritarianism ($r = .22, p < .001$) and homonegativity ($r = .23, p < .001$). Research has found that there are positive relationships between blame towards victims who are perceived as weak and authoritarianism and sexual prejudice (Altemeyer, 2004; Hill, 2000). Additionally, the subscale items were found to be highly intercorrelated. However, in the second sample, the correlations between the overall scale and the three subscales were found to be positively correlated with measures of authoritarianism and homonegativity, however they were nonsignificant. Again, the three subscales were found to be highly intercorrelated. Although not yielding significant results in the second study, there was still evidence for convergent validity for the PVBS-R where there are convergent associations with politically conservative attitudes.

Divergent Validity

Divergent validity refers to when items on a scale that should not be theoretically linked are not linked. Cramer et al. (2013) found that the overall PVBS-R scale and its three subscales were not significantly correlated with measures of trait aggression. Research has found that there is a correlation between perceiver trait emotion e.g., anger and subsequent perceptions of blame and responsibility, however in the context of an injustice, Feigenson and Park (2006) found that trait emotion may not impact blame during their review of the literature between trait emotion and blame. Therefore, in the context of an injustice, trait anger and victim blame should demonstrate divergent validity. The overall scale and its three subscales resulted in negligible associations with hostility, physical aggression, verbal aggression, anger and total aggression. The PVBS-R and its subscales were also found to have no significant relationship with social desirability. This suggests that the PVBS-R is not theoretically related to concepts that it should not be and therefore demonstrating good divergent validity.

Predictive Validity

Predictive validity, a form of criterion validity, refers to the degree in which a psychometric is able to make a prediction in relation to something about someone in the future. Within Cramer et al.'s (2013) study, they looked at predictive validity in relation to the PVBS-R subscales in predicting sentencing decisions and support for the death penalty. In both the first and second samples, the recklessness and unreliability subscales did not have a significant association with the likelihood of

assigning the death penalty to the perpetrator, the malice subscale did. It was hypothesised that consistent with the CMM (Alicke, 2000), reading a violent crime vignette promoted a negative emotional reaction, in turn this led to both a higher victim malice judgement and harsher punishments for the perpetrator.

Normative Data

Normative data refers to data from a reference population that determines a baseline distribution for a measure. Kline (2000) suggests that the two most important factors for normative data are the sample representativeness and the sample size, which should be at least 500 to reduce standard errors.

As previously stated, the original researchers of the PVBS were contacted to obtain information about the development of the tool, however they did not respond. The first published data on the PVBS was to 403 university students in the USA, this does not meet the sample size suggestion from Kline (2000) of 500. Most of the subsequent published data on the PVBS, including in the development of the PVBS-R, has been administered to those in the USA attending university. Therefore, the generalisability to other individuals of different cultures, socio-economic status, and educational levels is limited. Table 10 highlights the samples in the published studies of the PVBS and PVBS-R.

Table 11. *Demographic information from studies utilising the PVBS and PVBS-R*

Author(s)	Sample (location)	<i>N</i>	Age	Gender
Rayburn et al. (2003)	Undergraduate Students (Southern California)	403	17 – 57 $\bar{x} = 20.02$	Female = 301
Cramer et al. (2013)				
Study 1	University Students (South Eastern USA)	246	$\bar{x} = 18.19$	Female = 61%
Study 1	University Students (Mid-Atlantic)	199	$\bar{x} = 20.68$	Female = 71.86%
Study 3 (PVBS-R)	Undergraduate University Students (South Eastern USA)	155	$\bar{x} = 19.39$	Female = 78.06%
Cramer et al. (2013)	Jury Panel Members (South Eastern USA)	203	$\bar{x} = 45.37$	Female = 57.9%
Cramer et al. (2014)	Jury Panel Members (South Western USA)	510	$\bar{x} = 47.02$	Female = 300
Cramer et al. (2010)	Undergraduate Students (USA)	204	$\bar{x} = 19.36$	Female = 139
Deihl (2020) (PVBS-R)	USA Adults	752	19 – 75 $\bar{x} = 37.39$	Female = 278

Note = $\bar{x}$ = Mean

It is also of note that there does not appear to be any published data whereby the PVBS-R has been translated into other languages nor used within a variety of cultures.

Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to critically review the psychometric properties of the PVBS-R, a 13-item self-report measure of an individual's level of blame towards a victim. There is good evidence for some aspects of the PVBS-R validity, particularly in relation to its construct validity where it falls in line with previous research that blame is multidimensional. However, there appears to be some flaws with the psychometric. To the author's knowledge, there has been no published research about the test-retest reliability of the PVBS-R. This limits its psychometric strength in terms of its reliability and understanding to what extent it reliably measures victim blaming.

Additionally, as previously mentioned, the generalisability of the PVBS-R to populations outside of the US, or other Western cultures, is limited. Some of the current literature suggests that there are differences in victim blaming levels across cultures (Baboli & Karimi-Malekabadi, 2020; Gracia, 2014). Factors which impact levels of blame between cultures include socio-economic status, gender role beliefs, age, and education (Gracia, 2014). Future research looking at the differences between cultures in relation to victim blaming using the PVBS-R will provide more insight into its psychometric properties within these samples and provide evidence in relation to its external validity. Additionally, it was identified that the scale was developed based on victims of hate crime, therefore the PVBS-R would benefit from further use across different offence types and victims.

The PVBS-R was attempted to be used within the case study within Chapter Four, however when the service user read that the scale included the words 'victim blame', he refused to complete it due to not wanting to be associated with victim blaming. This is possibly one limitation of the scale when utilising it with perpetrators, where responses may be influenced by social desirability given the potential negative consequences of such associations. It is possible that the responses given could be influenced by the position of the responder, for those who are observers of a situation resulting in a victim there may be less social desirability influences. However, for those who are involved in the perpetration of an event resulting in a victim, there might be more influences on the responses, for example their personal BJW, how they view themselves, and also consequences within the criminal justice system. Consideration should be given to this when completing the psychometric with perpetrators.

Throughout the current literature there is no one 'gold standard' psychometric to measure perceptions of victim blaming. Many of the current psychometrics about blame are heavily focused on victims of sexual assaults, such as the Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (Burt, 1980), and the Acceptance of Modern Myths about Sexual Aggression (Gerger et al., 2007). However, it is argued that these scales do not measure victim blaming and instead measure wider social attitudes (Sleath, 2011). Other measures of blame that exist outside of sexual crimes include the Self- and Other- Blame Scale (SOBS; Besharat et al., 2001), an observational instrument designed to be applied to family assessment interviews and the Victim-

Blaming Attitudes in Cases of Intimate Partner Violence Against Women (VB-IPVAW; Martín-Fernández et al., 2018) Scale. In comparison to psychometrics focussing on wider social attitudes, the PVBS-R focuses solely on the appraisal of the victim in a specific scenario. Some studies measuring victim blaming do not use a specific psychometric and instead ask general questions such as 'I think x can be blamed for what happened' (e.g., Pedersen & Strömwall, 2013). Whilst this measures blame directly, it does not provide the ability to break levels of blame down further into a multifaceted construct. Throughout the literature there is a lack of psychometrics developed to measure blame in general e.g., not developed to measure blame for a specific crime, the PVBS-R does however offer a blame measure based upon a scenario or vignette of varied situations, additionally it measures different facets of blame.

The PVBS-R does provide a psychometric with good internal consistency and validity to measure victim blaming. Where the current literature lacks a psychometric measuring blame for victims of non-specific crimes and tests blame as multifaceted, the PVBS-R provides this. The PVBS-R would be strengthened by obtaining test-retest reliability data, as well as using it across different cultures, increasing its generalisability.

Chapter Six: Discussion

Overview

As noted in the introduction, victim blaming is a crucial phenomenon to understand, highlighting the complex dynamics of partially or fully attributing blame to a victim's misfortunes (Ryan, 1976). The consequences of victim blaming extend beyond the individual affected, impacting society and shaping wider views on justice (Fox & Cook, 2011). The belief in a just world (BJW) theory is one theoretical framework that attempts to explain victim blaming, by hypothesising that people believe that the world is a fair place and therefore good things happen to good people, and bad things happen to bad people (Lerner, 1980).

Within this thesis, central to the exploration of victim blaming was The Big Five personality traits - openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism – and the impact on a BJW. These personality traits have been identified as being influential factors in how blame is attributed to a victim. This thesis aimed to contribute to the growing body of academic research into victim blaming.

This thesis aimed to explore the following broad research question:

- 1) Do victim blaming attitudes exist within victims of cyberstalking?
- 2) How do personality traits and BJW impact levels of victim blaming?
- 3) What are the links between personality traits and BJW? And how do these relate to victim blaming?
- 4) How can victim blaming be measured?

In order to investigate these research questions, four interrelated pieces of work were undertaken. This thesis explored victim blaming in a relatively under researched area, cyberstalking, in Chapter Two. It also attempted to understand influencing factors on victim blaming, using the BJW theory and Big Five personality traits, which was also explored in Chapter Three and Four. A measure of victim blaming was then critically evaluated in Chapter Five. The majority of the results are consistent with previous literature in the direction of the relationships between BJW and personality traits and the functions that they serve. The findings are hoped to contribute to the existing field of victim blaming literature, with implications for future research and practice, which will be discussed below.

Summary of Findings

Chapter Two aimed to explore whether victim blaming existed in a relatively under researched area, cyber stalking, and how a BJW and personality factors would impact how much blame a person attributes to a victim. 317 participants completed a number of psychometrics and were exposed to a cyberstalking vignette. Although the level of personal disclosure did not significantly impact how much blame was attributed to the victim, statistical analysis resulted in other significant findings. Those scoring higher in agreeableness and openness to experience were less likely to blame the victim on the malice subscale and those scoring higher in openness to experience were less likely to blame the victim on the recklessness subscale. The victim was more likely to be blamed on the unreliability subscale by those who scored higher on general BJW, and less likely to be blamed on the same scale by those who scored higher in agreeableness.

Those who are more agreeable are more likely to provide emotional support and attempt to maintain positive relations with others, therefore are less likely to blame victims of crime (Jensen-Campbell & Graziano, 2001). Openness to experience can be linked to the belief that people can achieve more when co-operating with others, therefore by aligning themselves with the victim, less blame will be attributed to them (Morawetz et al., 2014). Finally, a stronger BJW for others has been associated with harsher attitudes towards victims, and victim derogation (Bègue & Bastounis, 2003). All of these findings are in line with the current literature. Additionally, Chapter Two highlighted a number of correlations between BJW for self and others and the Big Five personality traits.

Chapter Three aimed to expand on the relationships that had been identified in Chapter Two. Five electronic databases were searched, from which a total of 16 studies were extracted and included in the review. All of the included studies analysed the relationships between personal BJW and general BJW and at least one of the Big Five personality traits. The systematic review highlighted the relationships between personal BJW and general BJW, with personal BJW being found to have positive correlations with openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion and agreeableness, whilst having a negative relationship with neuroticism. General BJW was found to have positive correlations

with conscientiousness, extraversion, and agreeableness, whilst having negative correlations with openness to experience and neuroticism.

All of the personal BJW correlations supported the findings that had been found in Chapter Two, however, this was not the same for general BJW. For general BJW, the direction of the relationship for agreeableness and openness to experience were not the same. Chapter Two found a positive relationship between general BJW and openness to experience, whilst Chapter Three found a negative relationship. One paper, Lipkus et al. (1996), in the systematic review did however support a positive relationship between general BJW and openness to experience, similar to what had been found in the empirical study in Chapter Two. Lipkus et al.'s (1996) paper was the only one to be conducted within the USA, whilst the others were conducted in Central Europe (Switzerland, Austria, and Slovakia). This might be suggestive of differences in socioeconomic conditions and other cultural factors in the direction of association between personality traits and BJW. The other contrasting finding was the direction of the relationship between agreeableness and general BJW, with the systematic review indicating a positive correlation, whilst the empirical study in Chapter Two indicated a negative correlation. None of the significant findings within the papers in the systematic review were from a UK population as the participants in Chapter 2 were. As previously mentioned in Chapter 3, culture may have played a role in the findings of these papers. It is possible that the UK cultures places a higher value on social harmony, desire for positive relationships and cooperation e.g., higher in agreeableness, thus blaming victims less, than the countries utilised in the systematic review. Again, there are possible cultural differences that influenced these findings; however, further exploration is needed to confirm the direction of this relationship within a UK sample.

Additionally, the significant findings in Chapter Two, highlighted some interesting correlations. With regards to general BJW and the blame unreliability subscale, Chapter Two indicated that the higher a general BJW was, the more blame would be attributed to the victim, whilst the higher someone scored on the openness to experience scale, the less likely they were to blame the victim. This correlation was supported in the findings of the systematic review in Chapter Three, where there was a negative correlation found between openness to experience and

General BJW. In sum, the more open a person is, the weaker their belief in a general BJW is, and therefore less likely to blame the victim. However, the same theoretical understanding was not found with the agreeableness trait. In Chapter Two, the higher someone scored on the agreeableness trait, the less they were likely to blame the victim on the blame malice and unreliability subscales, however in Chapter Three, there was a positive correlation found between agreeableness and general BJW. Therefore, the more agreeable someone is, the higher their general BJW, which according to prior research, might suggest more victim blaming attitudes. In the correlations in Chapter Two however, agreeableness was negatively correlated with general BJW, which can theoretically explain blame attribution e.g., more agreeable, lower belief in a general BJW, leading to less blame. As previously mentioned, the differences in these findings could be a result of cultural differences, additionally, the cyberstalking vignette may have had an impact on the findings. One tentative explanation for this difference is around age, in adults, agreeableness is better understood as more empathic and compassionate tendencies (Tackett & Eisenberg, 2019). Three of the four studies included in the systematic review had a higher mean age range than the mean age in the sample in Chapter Two, therefore it might be possible that age impacts the relationship between general BJW and agreeableness, whereas someone matures, they become more concerned with their interpersonal relationships. Chapter Two did however find age did not significantly impact the amount of blame attributed to a victim.

To further examine the relationship of these constructs, Chapter Four presented a single-case study. The case study focussed on a male, M1, convicted of attempted murder against his mother, he displayed significant victim blaming attitudes and partially blamed his mum for the violence he had perpetrated against her. M1 completed some of the psychometrics, however it was felt by the author that he had not completed these truthfully and was heavily influenced by social desirability. M1 refused to complete the PVBS-R at all as he felt that he did not blame anyone else, however this was incongruent with his narrative. The case study presents the assessment that was undertaken and describes the victim blaming attitudes of M1. The formulation attempted to understand how M1's victim blaming attitudes had developed and how a strong BJW explains his victim blaming attitudes. M1 strongly portrayed himself as a good person and that due

to this, good things would happen to him e.g., "I am a likeable person and so therefore I have lots of friends", highlighting a strong personal BJW. During the assessment, M1 found it difficult to view himself as having been violent and externalised blame, something which if he had admitted, may have destabilised his BJW, and therefore he may have to accept that something 'bad' could happen to him. The suggested intervention attempted to increase M1's responsibility and accountability for his actions.

As highlighted in Chapter Two, different constructs of personality correlated significantly with different aspects of blame. The PVBS-R was further reviewed and critiqued to understand its development and its different subscales. Blame has been argued to be multidimensional, with many suggesting that intent underpins blame. Intent refers to the extent to which a person realised the consequences of their actions (Scanlon, 2008). The PVBS-R supported the notion of blame being multifaceted by identifying the three subscales: unreliability, recklessness, and malice. These three subscales also fall in line with the literature around intent, with unreliability being defined as low perceived intent to harm, recklessness being linked with low to moderate perceived intent to harm, and finally malice being linked to high and over intent to harm. As discussed throughout this thesis, those who have a BJW are more likely to believe that bad things happen to bad people, therefore a victim having high and overt intention to harm may lead to more perceptions that the victim is bad and enforce more blame. It is possible that the lack of correlation between a BJW and the recklessness and malice subscales in Chapter Two were due to the participants not deeming the victim to have any intent of harm, therefore eradicating any blame being attributed towards her. The correlation between general BJW and unreliability can be understood as the participants deeming the victim to have low perceived intent to harm, therefore attributing more blame.

Limitations

Limitations in the aforementioned chapters need to be considered, please note that additional limitations have been discussed within each chapter. The vignette used in Chapter Two had both a cyberstalking component and a physical component in it, possibly increasing the perceived severity of the incident and participants thinking of the case as severe. Although the vignette had been based

upon a convicted cyberstalking case, it is possible that the severity of the vignette impacted the level of blame attributed to the victim above that of a BJW and personality traits. Koehler and Weber (2018) have suggested that the higher the perceived severity of an incident, the lower the blame attributed to the victim will be. Therefore, future research into victim blaming should control for the perceived severity of the crime.

In Chapter Three, only papers that could be obtained in the English language were reviewed. Although the impact of non-English and unpublished studies on the findings of systematic reviews is suggested to be small, this should still be considered when interpreting the findings (Hartling et al., 2017). Despite this, in the current systematic review there were multiple papers included that did not find significant results and reported non-significant results, therefore this could reduce the risk of publication bias.

Some of the studies in Chapter Three highlighted that there were gender differences in the significance of the relationship between BJW and some personality traits. For example, females with lower general BJW were more likely to display traits of neuroticism, however, this relationship did not exist within males. Gender was tested in Chapter Two, however it showed that it did not have an impact on levels of blame. There are a limited number of studies that explores the impact of gender on the relationship between BJW and personality traits, and gender was not included as a moderating factor within Chapter Two, therefore any future research should consider the impact of gender.

Implications for Clinical Practice and Future Research

As discussed throughout the thesis, BJW and personality traits can have an impact on offender rehabilitation. A stronger BJW has been associated with more positive outcomes for offenders, whilst neuroticism and openness have been found to be higher in the offending population (Otto & Dalbert, 2005; Becerra-García et al., 2013). Therefore, this thesis highlights the importance of understanding the interaction between these factors and how they might impact offender behaviour and rehabilitation. Where appropriate, practitioners should aim to gain an understanding of a person's personality traits and BJW to be able to inform formulations as well as help support intervention targets.

Research has suggested that both BJW and personality traits are stable across a person's life span (Furnham, 2003; McCrae & Costa, 1994). However, there are arguments to suggest that personality traits can change, even in adulthood (Caspi & Roberts, 2009) and so therefore if they can change, then psychological programmes could aim to address victim blaming attitudes via focusing on targeting BJW and personality traits. Specifically, where agreeableness and openness to experience have been found to result in less victim blaming, then these traits should be focussed on and aimed to be increased. Additionally, where a stronger belief in a BJW for others has been identified, interventions should aim to reduce this belief in an attempt to reduce victim blaming attitudes.

Despite there being evidence for the relationship between a BJW and personality traits, practitioners should not assume that these correlations exist in everyone. However, knowledge regarding the relationship and the subsequent impact that it can have on victim blaming attitudes may be beneficial for practitioners when considering whether it would be used for an individual to be assessed for specific traits and for receiving any subsequent support and interventions.

There are infinite number of factors that may impact the decisions of those making legal decisions e.g., jury, judges etc., and testing and measuring them all would be near impossible. However, through psychoeducation, developing an awareness of some of the influencing factors can help regulate the fairness and impartiality of the legal system. For example, jurors' BJW may affect their attitudes towards punishment. Having an awareness of these beliefs, and the possible relation to personality traits, may help identify potential inconsistencies in sentencing decisions, ensuring that judgements are based on legal principles and evidence rather than subjective opinions. Insights into the link between BJW and personality traits and the impact that they have on legal decisions can help inform legal education and training programmes. A greater understanding may also contribute to discussions around potential legal reforms aimed at creating a more fair and unbiased legal system.

Given the findings of the empirical study and the later evaluation of the PVBS-R, where victim blaming exists, it is important for practitioners to have a full

understanding of the type of blame that is being attributed. Researchers have argued that intent underpins blame and the findings in Chapter Two indicate that the level of intent correlated differently with specific personality traits and general BJW. Therefore, the level of perceived intent by someone attributing blame might have an impact on the type of intervention that is offered. For example, people who perceive a person of having high intent of harm (as measured by the malice scale), are more likely to assign the death penalty, indicating harsher punishments. This should be considered when understanding blame and the subsequent interventions, where an understanding is taken where the perceived intent of the victim is more likely to result in harsher punishments and victim blaming attitudes. In summary, attribution of blame appears to be influenced by the perceived intent of the victim, therefore within the legal system, assessments and interventions should take consideration of this. Further research could investigate intent across other factors related to crime e.g., severity of the crime and types of crime.

The findings and conclusions made throughout this thesis provide some suggestions for the direction of future research. Chapters 2 and 3 highlight the associations between a BJW and personality traits, however, the population of all of these studies were non-offending. Chapter Four attempted to further investigate this relationship in an offender who displayed victim blaming attitudes, however, psychometrics could not be completed. To be able to build upon the existing literature regarding victim blaming, BJW, Big Five personality traits, and the impact that this has within the offending population, future research should investigate this relationship within an offending sample. Additionally, as highlighted in Chapter Three and Chapter Five, none of the studies used a sample from the United Kingdom, future research should investigate the strength and direction of these correlations within a UK sample.

Conclusion

Victim blaming has received a lot of attention from researchers in social psychology, with a number of theories attempting to explain why victim blaming occurs. Victim blaming can have devastating impacts on the individual being blamed, as well as on the wider community; as such, research into this field is very important. The BJW theory is a widely accepted theory that has been used

to attempt to explain why victim blaming occurs, additionally, personality traits such as the Big Five personality traits have correlations with BJW. The aim of this thesis was to add to the current understanding of victim blaming, and the relationship between BJW and Big Five personality traits, and the impact that these have on victim blaming.

This thesis has contributed to the current evidence base by exploring victim blaming attitudes within a UK sample in the case of a cyber stalking victim. Although no significant difference was found when the level of online personal disclosure was manipulated, significant correlations were found between agreeableness, openness to experience, general BJW and victim blaming. The thesis systematically reviewed the literature to further the understanding of the relationship between these constructs. The thesis has highlighted important concepts in relation to victim blaming, including the support of blame being seen as a multifaceted construct.

The findings support that there needs to be further exploration of the measured constructs in relation to the offending population, with results being able to inform intervention targets. Additionally, when working with victims and making legal decisions, it is important to consider how BJW and Big Five personality traits might have an impact on the decisions that have been made.

Overall, this thesis highlights a number of recommendations for the field of forensic psychology. Within prisons, BJW and personality traits have an impact on outcomes for offenders, therefore rehabilitation should consider traits that will support positive outcomes in offender rehabilitation. Within legal decision making, the development of psychoeducation material highlighting the association between BJW and personality traits and the potential biases that this may have on decision making should be developed. Additionally, psychoeducation about BJW and personality traits, should be provided to those who work with victims of crime in order to develop an awareness of biases that might influence perceptions of victims and how they are worked with.

To conclude, it is hoped that this thesis, its findings, and the recommendations for practice will be considered by practitioners working with victims and those who

victim blame, in order to reduce victim blaming attitudes and help understand why victim blaming occurs.

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Please note references marked with an asterisk (*) indicate the empirical studies included within Chapter Three's Systematic Review

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Appendices

Appendix A: Copy of Ethical Approval



**University of
Nottingham**
UK | CHINA | MALAYSIA

**Faculty of Medicine & Health Sciences
Research Ethics Committee**

Faculty Hub
Room E41, E Floor, Medical School
Queen's Medical Centre Campus
Nottingham University Hospitals
Nottingham, NG7 2UH
Email: FMHS-ResearchEthics@nottingham.ac.uk

18 July 2019

Amy Goodwill
Professional Doctorate in Forensic Psychology
c/o Dr Simon Duff
Director of Stage II Forensic Training
Centre for Forensic & Family Psychology
Room B05 YANG Fujia
Jubilee Campus
Wollaton Road
Nottingham
NG8 1BB

Dear Amy Goodwill

Ethics Reference No: 281-1904– please always quote	
Study Title: Victim blaming in Cyberstalking; does it exist and what effect does Personality type and a Jus World belief have?	
Chief Investigator/Supervisor: Dr Simon Duff, Registered Practitioner Psychologist (Forensic) Division of Psychiatry and Applied Psychology, School of Medicine.	
Lead Investigators/student: Amy Goodwill, Professional Doctorate in Forensic Psychology.	
Proposed Start Date: 01/04 /2019	Proposed End Date: 31/12/2019

Thank you for submitting the above application and the following documents were received:

- FMHS REC Application form and supporting documents version 1.0: 31/01/2019.

These have been reviewed and are satisfactory and the study has been given a favourable opinion.

A favourable opinion has been given on the understanding that:

1. The protocol agreed is followed and the Committee is informed of any changes using a notice of amendment form (please request a form).
2. The Chair is informed of any serious or unexpected event.
3. An End of Project Progress Report is completed and returned when the study has finished (Please request a form).

Yours sincerely

Professor Ravi Mahajan
Chair, Faculty of Medicine & Health Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Appendix B: Participant Information Sheet

Page 1: Page 1

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

School of Medicine, Faculty of Medicine & Health Sciences University of Nottingham, Wollaton Road, NG8 1BB

Study Title: Views towards Cyber-Stalking and its Victims Ethics Reference Number: 281-1904

Name of Researcher(s): Amy Goodwill and Dr Simon Duff

We would like to invite you to take part in a research study. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. One of our team will be happy to answer any questions you may have (Please see contact details given at the end of this sheet). Please take time to read this carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us anything that is not clear.

What is the purpose of the research?

The purpose of the study is to explore people's views towards cyberstalking in order to fill a gap in existing research and knowledge. The study aims to investigate what influences a person's views towards cyberstalking victims. At the present time there is limited research in victim perceptions in cyberstalking and so the current research aims to develop the understanding in this area in order to further support cyber stalking victims.

Why have I been invited to take part?

You have been invited to take part in this research because the study is looking to recruit as many people over the age of 18 who are internet users to gather opinions on cyberstalking victims

Do I have to take part?

No. It is up to you to decide if you want to take part in this research. If you agree to participate, we will ask you to sign a consent form and will give you a copy to keep. However, you would still be free to withdraw from the study at any time, without giving a reason and without any negative consequences, by advising the researchers of this decision. This would not affect your legal rights. If you are a student at the University of Nottingham, there would be no disadvantages to your study or to you personally if you decide not to take part in this study, or if you decide to withdraw at any point.

1. *What will happen to me if I take part?*

After reading the information sheet and consenting to partake in the study you will be asked to complete a survey which will take approximately 20 minutes. The first part of the survey will ask you about demographic information. You will then be asked to answer questions about yourself. After this you will read a hypothetical situation and be asked questions about the scenario. There is no right or wrong answer and so you can answer as truthfully as you would like.

2. Are there any risks in taking part?

There are no perceived risks in taking part in the study, however if you do feel affected by any of the questions asked then please do not hesitate to contact any of the researchers for further support.

3. Are there any benefits in taking part?

There will be no direct benefit to you from taking part in this research, but your contribution will help.

4. What happens to the data provided?

No data you give will be identifiable to you. All data will be stored electronically and securely. The research will be written up for publication however all of the findings will be aggregated and therefore will not be identifiable to you.

All research data and records will be stored for a minimum of 7 years after publication or public release of the work of the research.

We would like your permission to use anonymised data in future studies, and to share our research data (e.g., in online databases) with other researchers in other Universities and organisations both inside and outside the European Union. This would be used for research in health and social care. Sharing research data is important to allow peer scrutiny, re-use (and therefore avoiding duplication of research) and to understand the bigger picture in particular areas of research. All personal information that could identify you will be removed or changed before information is shared with other researchers or results are made public.

5. What will happen if I don't want to carry on with the study?

Even after you have signed the consent form, you are free to withdraw from the study at any time without giving any reason and without your legal rights being affected. Any personal data will be destroyed.

6. Who will know that I am taking part in this research?

All information collected about you during this research would be kept strictly confidential. All such data are kept on password-protected databases sitting on a restricted access computer system.

Under UK Data Protection laws, the University is the Data Controller (legally responsible for the data security) and the Chief Investigator of this study (named above) is the Data Custodian (manages access to the data). This means

we are responsible for looking after your information and using it properly. Your rights to access, change or move your information are limited as we need to manage your information in specific ways to comply with certain laws and for the research to be reliable and accurate. To safeguard your rights, we will use the minimum personally – identifiable information possible.

You can find out more about how we use your information and to read our privacy notice at: <https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/utilities/privacy.aspx/>

Designated individuals of the University of Nottingham may be given access to data for monitoring and/or audit of the study to ensure we are complying with guidelines.

7. What will happen to the results of the research?

The findings will be used by Amy Goodwill as a doctoral thesis for the Doctorate in Forensic Psychology programme at University of Nottingham. The study findings may also be presented at a professional conference or appear in a professional journal at a later date. As stated above, all information you consent to be used will be used in confidence and anonymously. The research is being supervised by Dr Simon Duff, Director of Stage II Forensic Training at University of Nottingham.

8. Who has reviewed this study?

All research involving people is looked at by an independent group of people, called a Research Ethics Committee, to protect your interests. This study has been reviewed and given favourable opinion by the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences Research Ethics Committee (Reference number: FMHS 281-1904).

9. What if something goes wrong?

If you have a concern about any aspect of this project, please speak to the researcher Amy Goodwill or the Principal Investigator Dr Simon Duff, who will do their best to answer your query. The researcher should acknowledge your concern within 10 working days and give you an indication of how he/she intends to deal with it. If you remain unhappy and wish to complain formally, you can do this by contacting the FMHS Research Ethics Committee Administrator, Faculty Hub, Medicine and Health Sciences, E41, E Floor, Medical School, Queen's Medical Centre Campus, Nottingham University Hospitals, Nottingham, NG7 2UH or via E- mail: FMHS-ResearchEthics@nottingham.ac.uk.

10. Contact Details

If you would like to discuss the research with someone beforehand (or if you have questions afterwards), please contact: Amy Goodwill

Email: Amy.Goodwill@nottingham.ac.uk

Dr Simon Duff

Email: Simon.Duff@nottingham.ac.uk

Appendix C: Participant Consent Form

Page 2: Consent

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information on the previous page

☐ Please tick here

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

☐ Please tick here

3. I understand that relevant sections of my data collected in the study may be looked at by the research group and by other responsible individuals for monitoring and audit purposes. I give permission for these individuals to have access to these records and to collect, store, analyse and publish information obtained from my participation in this study. I understand that my personal details will be kept confidential.

☐ Please select here

4. I understand that information about me recorded during the study will be made anonymous before it is stored. It will be uploaded into a secure database on a computer kept in a secure place. Data will be kept for 7 years after the study has ended and then destroyed.

☐ Please select here

5. I agree to take part in the above study

☐ Please select here

Appendix D: 50-item International Personality Item Pool – Five Factor Model (IPIP-FFM; Goldberg, 1992)

Introduction

This is a personality test, it will help you understand why you act the way that you do and how your personality is structured. Please follow the instructions below, scoring and results are on the next page.

Instructions

In the table below, for each statement 1-50 mark how much you agree with on the scale 1-5, where 1=disagree, 2=slightly disagree, 3=neutral, 4=slightly agree and 5=agree, in the box to the left of it.

Test

Rating	I....	Rating	I....
	1. Am the life of the party.		26. Have little to say.
	2. Feel little concern for others.		27. Have a soft heart.
	3. Am always prepared.		28. Often forget to put things back in their proper place.
	4. Get stressed out easily.		29. Get upset easily.
	5. Have a rich vocabulary.		30. Do not have a good imagination.
	6. Don't talk a lot.		31. Talk to a lot of different people at parties.
	7. Am interested in people.		32. Am not really interested in others.
	8. Leave my belongings around.		33. Like order.
	9. Am relaxed most of the time.		34. Change my mood a lot.
	10. Have difficulty understanding abstract ideas.		35. Am quick to understand things.
	11. Feel comfortable around people.		36. Don't like to draw attention to myself.
	12. Insult people.		37. Take time out for others.
	13. Pay attention to details.		38. Shirk my duties.
	14. Worry about things.		39. Have frequent mood swings.
	15. Have a vivid imagination.		40. Use difficult words.
	16. Keep in the background.		41. Don't mind being the center of attention.
	17. Sympathize with others' feelings.		42. Feel others' emotions.
	18. Make a mess of things.		43. Follow a schedule.
	19. Seldom feel blue.		44. Get irritated easily.
	20. Am not interested in abstract ideas.		45. Spend time reflecting on things.
	21. Start conversations.		46. Am quiet around strangers.
	22. Am not interested in other people's problems.		47. Make people feel at ease.
	23. Get chores done right away.		48. Am exacting in my work.
	24. Am easily disturbed.		49. Often feel blue.
	25. Have excellent ideas.		50. Am full of ideas.

Appendix E: Procedural and Distributive Just World Belief Scale (Lucas et al., 2007)

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 F: Perceptions of Victim Blame Scale - Revised (PVBS-R; Cramer et al., 2013)

Perceptions of Victim Blame Scale—Revised (PVBS-R)

Instructions: Please rate Sam on the following characteristics. Please indicate your answer.

Violent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	nonviolent*
Gentle	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	forceful
Maniacle	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	sane*
Good natured	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	vicious
Malicious	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	kind*
Blameless	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	blameworthy
Fault	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	faultless*
Harmful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	harmless*
Hurtful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	innocuous*
Careful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	reckless
Conscientious	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	careless
Reliable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	unreliable
Dependable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	undependable

Note. *Denotes a reverse-scored item.

Appendix G: Participant Debrief Form

Page 9: Final page

Thank you for your participation

School of Medicine, Faculty of Medicine & Health Sciences
University of Nottingham, Wollaton Road, NG7 1BB

Thank you for taking your time to complete this study. The study aims to explore whether victim blaming occurs in cyber-stalking, and what personality factors influence blame.

If you have any further questions then please contact the researchers using the below email addresses.

Amy Goodwill
Email: Amy.Goodwill@nottingham.ac.uk

Dr Simon Duff
Email: Simon.Duff@nottingham.ac.uk

If you have been distressed by any of the content in this questionnaire, or if you would like to seek advice, then please contact the following organisations for free help and support:

Samaritans: call 116 123 or email jo@samaritans.org

National Stalking Helpline: 0808 802 0300

Appendix H: Search Terms and Syntax used in Systematic Review Searches

Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts (22/08/2022) via ProQuest – Total Hits: 141

noft("Just World" OR "Just-World")

AND

noft(("Five Factor" OR "Five-Factor" NEAR/3 personality) OR ("big five" OR "big-five" NEAR/3 personality) OR conscientious* OR agreeable* OR extraver* OR extrover* OR neurotic* OR openness OR (personality OR character NEAR/1 disorder* OR difficulty OR difficulties) OR "FFM" OR "Big 5")

PsychINFO 1806 to August Week 4 2022 (22/08/2022) via Ovid – Total Hits: 44

+ = [mp=title, abstract, heading word, drug trade name, original title, device manufacturer, drug manufacturer, device trade name, keyword heading word, floating subheading word, candidate term word]

1. ("just world" or "just-world").mp.
2. exp Five Factor Personality Model/
3. exp Conscientiousness/
4. exp Agreeableness/
5. exp Extraversion/
6. exp Neuroticism/
7. exp Openness to Experience/
8. exp Personality Disorders/
9. (("five factor" or "five-factor") adj3 personality).mp.
10. (("big five" or "big-five") adj3 personality).mp.
11. (conscientious* or agreeable* or extraver* or extrover* or neurotic* or openness).mp.
12. ((personality or character) adj1 (disorder* or difficulty or difficulties)).mp.
13. FFM.mp.
14. "big 5".mp.
15. 2 or 3 or 4 or 5 or 6 or 7 or 8 or 9 or 10 or 11 or 12 or 13 or 14
16. 1 and 15

MEDLINE(R) ALL 1946 to August 22, 2022 (22/08/2022) via Ovid – Total Hits: 9

+ = [mp=title, book title, abstract, original title, name of substance word, subject heading word, floating sub-heading word, keyword heading word, organism supplementary concept word, protocol supplementary concept word, rare disease supplementary concept word, unique identifier, synonyms]

1. ("Just World" or "Just-World").mp.
2. Five Factor Personality Model.mp.
3. Conscientiousness.mp.
4. Agreeableness.mp.
5. exp Extraversion, Psychological/

6 exp Neuroticism/
 7 Openness to Experience.mp.
 8 exp Personality Disorders/
 9 (("five factor" or "five-factor") adj3 personality).mp. +
 10 (("big five" or "big-five") adj3 personality).mp. +
 11 (conscientious* or agreeable* or extravert* or extrovert* or neurotic* or
 openness).mp. +
 12 ((personality or character) adj1 (disorder* or difficulty or difficulties)).mp.
 +
 13 "FFM".mp. +
 14 "Big 5".mp. +
 15 2 or 3 or 4 or 5 or 6 or 7 or 8 or 9 or 10 or 11 or 12 or 13 or 14
 16 1 and 15

Embase <1974 to 2022 Week 34> (22/08/2022) via Ovid – Total Hits: 9

+ = [mp=title, abstract, heading word, drug trade name, original title, device manufacturer, drug manufacturer, device trade name, keyword heading word, floating subheading word, candidate term word]

1 ("Just World" or "Just-World").mp.
 2 Five Factor Personality Model.mp.
 3 Conscientiousness.mp.
 4 Agreeableness.mp.
 5 exp extraversion/
 6 Neuroticism.mp.
 7 Openness to Experience.mp.
 8 exp personality disorder/
 9 (("five factor" or "five-factor") adj3 personality).mp. +
 10 (("big five" or "big-five") adj3 personality).mp. +
 11 (conscientious* or agreeable* or extravert* or extrovert* or neurotic* or
 openness).mp. +
 12 ((personality or character) adj1 (disorder* or difficulty or difficulties)).mp.
 +
 13 FFM.mp. +
 14 "Big 5".mp. +
 15 2 or 3 or 4 or 5 or 6 or 7 or 8 or 9 or 10 or 11 or 12 or 13 or 14
 16 1 and 15

Web of Science (22/08/2022)– Total Hits: 129

(TS=("Just World" OR "Just-World")) AND TS=((("Five Factor" OR "Five-Factor"
 NEAR/3 personality) OR ("big five" OR "big-five" NEAR/3 personality) OR
 conscientious* OR agreeable* OR extravert* OR extrovert* OR neurotic* OR
 openness OR (personality OR character NEAR/1 disorder* OR difficulty OR
 difficulties) OR FFM OR "Big 5")

Appendix I: Quality Assessment Tool

Appraisal of Cross-sectional Studies

	Question	Yes	No	Don't know/ Comment
Introduction				
1	Were the aims/objectives of the study clear?			
Methods				
2	Was the study design appropriate for the stated aim(s)?			
3	Was the sample size justified?			
4	Was the target/reference population clearly defined? (Is it clear who the research was about?)			
5	Was the sample frame taken from an appropriate population base so that it closely represented the target/reference population under investigation?			
6	Was the selection process likely to select subjects/participants that were representative of the target/reference population under investigation?			
7	Were measures undertaken to address and categorise non-responders?			
8	Were the risk factor and outcome variables measured appropriate to the aims of the study?			
9	Were the risk factor and outcome variables measured correctly using instruments/measurements that had been trialled, piloted or published previously?			
10	Is it clear what was used to determine statistical significance and/or precision estimates? (e.g. p-values, confidence intervals)			
11	Were the methods (including statistical methods) sufficiently described to enable them to be repeated?			
Results				
12	Were the basic data adequately described?			
13	Does the response rate raise concerns about non-response bias?			
14	If appropriate, was information about non-responders described?			
15	Were the results internally consistent?			
16	Were the results presented for all the analyses described in the methods?			
Discussion				
17	Were the authors' discussions and conclusions justified by the results?			
18	Were the limitations of the study discussed?			
Other				
19	Were there any funding sources or conflicts of interest that may affect the authors' interpretation of the results?			
20	Was ethical approval or consent of participants attained?			

Appendix J: Quality Assessment of Included Studies

	Article author	Quality assessment item																					
																						Total	Quality
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13*	14	15	16	17	18	19*	20		
1	Bollmann et al. (2015) Study 1	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	-	Y	Y	Y	Y	U	U	15/18	83%
2	Bollmann et al. (2015) Study 2	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	-	Y	Y	Y	Y	U	U	15/18	83%
3	Wolfradt & Dalbert (2003)	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	-	Y	Y	Y	N	U	U	14/18	78%
4	Donat et al. (2014)	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	-	Y	Y	Y	Y	U	Y	16/18	89%
5	Dzuka & Dalbert (2002) Study 2	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	-	Y	Y	Y	Y	U	U	15/18	83%
6	Dzuka & Dalbert (2007)	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	-	Y	Y	Y	Y	U	Y	16/18	89%
7	Heaven & Connors (1988)	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	-	Y	Y	Y	N	U	Y	15/18	83%
8	Keller & Siegrist (2010)	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	U	U	17/20	85%
9	Nartova-Bochaver et al. (2017)	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	19/20	95%
10	Nudelman & Otto (2021) Study 2	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	U	Y	19/20	95%
11	Riaz et al. (2013)	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	-	Y	Y	Y	Y	U	Y	16/18	89%
12	Rim et al. (1983)	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	-	Y	Y	N	N	U	U	11/18	61%

13	Schuurmans-Stekhoven (2020)	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	-	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	17/19	89%
14	Lipkus et al. (1996) Study 1	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	-	Y	Y	Y	N	U	U	14/18	78%
15	Lipkus et al. (1996) Study 2	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	-	Y	Y	Y	N	U	U	14/18	78%
16	Spence et al. (2011)	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	U	Y	18/20	90%
17	Detle et al. (2004)	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	-	Y	Y	Y	Y	U	Y	16/18	89%

Note: 1: Were the aims/objectives of the study clear? 2: Was the study design appropriate for the stated aims? 3: Was the sample size justified? 4: Was the target/reference population clearly defined? (Is it clear who the research was about?) 5: Was the sample frame taken from an appropriate population base so that it closely represented the target/reference population under investigation? 6: Was the selection process likely to select subjects/participants that were representative of the target/reference population under investigation? 7: Were measures undertaken to address and categorise non-responders? 8: Were the risk factor and outcome variables measured appropriate to the aims of the study? 9: Were the risk factor and outcome variables measured correctly using instruments/measurements that had been trialled, piloted or published previously? 10: Is it clear what was used to determine statistical significance and/or precision estimates? (e.g., p-values, confidence intervals) 11: Were the methods (including statistical methods) sufficiently described to enable them to be repeated? 12: Were the basic data adequately described? 13: Does the response rate raise concerns about non-response bias?* 14: If appropriate, was information about non-responders described? 15: Were the results internally consistent? 16: Were the results presented for all the analyses described in the methods? 17: Were the authors' discussions and conclusions justified by the results? 18: Were the limitations of the study discussed? 19: Were there any funding sources or conflicts of interest that may affect the authors' interpretation of the results?* 20: Was ethical approval or consent of participants attained?

Y= Yes (1), N= No (0), U = Unknown (0), '-'= not applicable (not included in total)

*Reverse scored

Appendix K: Data Extraction Form

Data extraction		
1) Study Information:		
Paper title:		
Author(s)		
Year published		
Article type (e.g., journal, doctoral thesis etc.)		
Country research completed		
Study ID		
2) Study Characteristics:		
Quantitative ☐		Qualitative ☐
Study design (e.g., cross sectional etc)		
Study aims		
Study factors	How was Just World Belief defined and measured?	Defined:
		Measures used:
		Reliability and Validity:
	What personality type/disorder has been explored and how was it measured?	Defined:
		Measures used:
		Reliability and Validity:
Location/setting:		
3) Participant characteristics:		
Age information		
Gender		

Ethnicity breakdown	
Sample size	
Recruitment method	
4) Study results (only those relevant to the review question noted):	
Analysis used	
Findings	
5) Conclusion/Summary:	
6) Strengths and Limitations	
7) Quality assessment score:	
Quantitative	
8) Any other important/relevant information:	

Appendix L: Table of Excluded Articles at Full Text Review Stage

Table of Excluded articles at full text review stage

Note: These are not included in reference list due to extensive list and lack of need for repetition.

Excluded References and Reasons for Exclusion

	Reference	Reason for Exclusion
1	Atagunov, R., & Alishev, B. (2019) Social beliefs and convictions of Russian military service men: Conscripts and contract soldiers.	Full text not in English
2	Avdulova, T. P., & Motyleva, L. A. (2015). Social Representations in Risk-Taking Adolescents. <i>Social Psychology and Society</i> , 6(2), 105-116.	Does not analysis link between Just World and big five personality traits or personality disorder
3	Bal, M., & van den Bos, K. (2012). Blaming for a better future: Future orientation and associated intolerance of personal uncertainty lead to harsher reactions toward innocent victims. <i>Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin</i> , 38(7), 835-844.	Does not measure belief in a just world or big five personality traits or personality disorder
4	Ball, G. A., Trevino, L. K., & Sims, H. P. (1993). Justice and organizational punishment: Attitudinal outcomes of disciplinary events. <i>Social Justice Research</i> , 6(1), 39-67.	Does not measure big five personality traits or personality disorder
5	Ball, G. A., Trevino, L. K., & Sims Jr, H. P. (1994). Just and unjust punishment: Influences on subordinate performance and citizenship. <i>Academy of Management journal</i> , 37(2), 299-322.	Does not measure big five personality traits or personality disorder

6	Bartholomaeus, J., & Strelan, P. (2019). The adaptive, approach-oriented correlates of belief in a just world for the self: A review of the research. <i>Personality and Individual Differences</i> , 151, 109485.	Does not measure big five personality traits or personality disorder
7	Begue, L. (2005). Self-esteem regulation in threatening social comparison: The roles of belief in a just world and self-efficacy. <i>Social Behavior and Personality: an international journal</i> , 33(1), 69-76.	Does not measure big five personality traits or personality disorder
8	Bierhoff, H. W. (1994). Responsibility and altruistic personality. <i>ZEITSCHRIFT FUR SOZIALPSYCHOLOGIE</i> , 25(3), 217-226.	Not an empirical study
9	Bizer, G. Y., Hart, J., & Jekogian, A. M. (2012). Belief in a just world and social dominance orientation: Evidence for a mediational pathway predicting negative attitudes and discrimination against individuals with mental illness. <i>Personality and individual differences</i> , 52(3), 428-432.	Does not measure big five personality traits or personality disorder
10	Bonanno, G. A., Wortman, C. B., Lehman, D. R., Tweed, R. G., Haring, M., Sonnega, J., ... & Nesse, R. M. (2002). Resilience to loss and chronic grief: a prospective study from preloss to 18-months postloss. <i>Journal of personality and social psychology</i> , 83(5), 1150.	Does not analysis link between Just World and big five personality traits or personality disorder
11	Busseri, M. A., Hafer, C. L., & Choma, B. L. (2020). When will I get what I deserve? Examining personal belief in a just world from a temporally-expanded perspective. <i>Personality and Individual Differences</i> , 167, 110242.	Does not measure big five personality traits or personality disorder
12	Cameron, J. J., Stinson, D. A., Hoplock, L., Hole, C., & Schellenberg, J. (2016). The robust self-esteem proxy: Impressions of self-esteem inform judgments of personality and social value. <i>Self and Identity</i> , 15(5), 561-578.	Does not analysis link between Just World and big five personality traits or personality disorder
13	Carey, J. M., & Paulhus, D. L. (2013). Worldview implications of believing in free will and/or determinism: Politics, morality, and punitiveness. <i>Journal of personality</i> , 81(2), 130-141.	Does not measure big five personality traits or personality disorder
14	Chen, C., & Wang, L. (2012). Well-being promotes when conscientiousness increases: Effect of belief in just world. In <i>INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF PSYCHOLOGY</i> (Vol. 47, pp. 615-615).	Not an empirical study

15	Chen, C., Wang, L., & Ren, L. (2012). Subjective well-being promotes when conscientiousness increases: Moderating effect of the belief in a just world. In <i>INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF PSYCHOLOGY</i> (Vol. 47, pp. 617-617).	Not an empirical study
16	Collins, E., & Strelan, P. (2021). Being fair in an unfair world: The deleterious effect on self-esteem. <i>Personality and Individual Differences</i> , 173, 110602.	Does not measure big five personality traits or personality disorder
17	Duroska, T. (2004). Belief in a just world. <i>CESKOSLOVENSKA PSYCHOLOGIE</i> , 48(4), 330-350.	Does not measure big five personality traits or personality disorder
18	Claudia, D. (2000). J. D. WELL-BEING AS A PSYCHOLOGICAL INDICATOR OF HEALTH IN OLD AGE: A RESEARCH AGENDA.	Not an empirical study
19	Furnham, A., & Chamorro-Premuzic, T. (2005). Individual differences and beliefs concerning preference for university assessment methods. <i>Journal of Applied Social Psychology</i> , 35(9), 1968-1994.	Does not analysis link between Just World and big five personality traits or personality disorder
20	Greenier, K. D. (2018). The relationship between personality and schadenfreude in hypothetical versus live situations. <i>Psychological reports</i> , 121(3), 445-458.	Does not analysis link between Just World and big five personality traits or personality disorder
21	Harper, C. A., Smith, L., Leach, J., Daruwala, N. A., & Fido, D. (2020). Development and validation of the Beliefs about Revenge Pornography Questionnaire. <i>Sexual Abuse</i> , 10790632221082663.	Does not measure big five personality traits or personality disorder
22	Kilby, C. J., Sherman, K. A., & Wuthrich, V. (2018). Towards understanding interindividual differences in stressor appraisals: A systematic review. <i>Personality and Individual Differences</i> , 135, 92-100.	Not an empirical study

23	Kong, Y., Cui, L., Yang, Y., & Cao, M. (2021). A three-level meta-analysis of belief in a just world and antisociality: Differences between sample types and scales. <i>Personality and Individual Differences</i> , 182, 111065.	Not an empirical study
24	Kubrak, T. A., Grebenshikova, T. A., & Pavlova, N. D. (2017). Psychological profile of a modern viewer: the structure and correlates of movie preferences. <i>Experimental Psychology (Russia)</i> , 10(4), 5-19.	Does not analysis link between Just World and big five personality traits or personality disorder
25	Larionov, P., Ageenkova, E., & Smeyan, V. (2021). Aggression and belief in a just world among adolescents from Belarus and Ukraine: a comparative analysis.	Does not measure big five personality traits or personality disorder
26	Leary, M. R., & Hoyle, R. H. (Eds.). (2009). <i>Handbook of individual differences in social behavior</i> . Guilford Press.	Not an empirical study
27	Mariss, A., Reinhardt, N., & Schindler, S. (2022). The Role of Just World Beliefs in Responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic. <i>Social Justice Research</i> , 35(2), 188-205.	Does not measure big five personality traits or personality disorder
28	Mooney, R. (2019). Personality, belief in a just world, and attitudes toward criminal responsibility defenses: a preliminary study. <i>Journal of Criminological Research, Policy and Practice</i> .	Does not measure big five personality traits or personality disorder
29	Moore, D. (2008). Toward a more just world: What makes people participate in social action?. In <i>Justice</i> . Emerald Group Publishing Limited.	Does not measure big five personality traits or personality disorder
30	Nudelman, G. (2013). The belief in a just world and personality: A meta-analysis. <i>Social Justice Research</i> , 26(2), 105-119.	Not an empirical study
31	Nudelman, G., Kamble, S. V., & Otto, K. (2021). Can personality traits predict depression during the COVID-19 pandemic?. <i>Social justice research</i> , 34(2), 218-234.	Does not analysis link between Just World and big

		five personality traits or personality disorder
32 *	Otto, K. (2006). Belief in a just world, globalization and social network. In <i>10th Conference of European Association for Research on Adolescence, Antalya, Turkey</i> .	No access to full paper
33	Pietras, M. (2011). <i>Between Doing Harm and Breaking the Law: A Social-Psychological Perspective</i> (p. 95). Walter de Gruyter.	Not an empirical study
34	Rim, Y. (1981). Who believes in graphology?. <i>Personality and Individual Differences</i> , 2(1), 85-87.	Does not analysis link between Just World and big five personality traits or personality disorder
35	Schill, T., Beyler, J., & Morales, J. (1992). The role of just world belief and anger issues in self-defeating personality. <i>Psychological reports</i> , 70(2), 595-598.	Does not measure big five personality traits or personality disorder
36	Schofield, M. B., Roberts, B. L., Harvey, C. A., Baker, I. S., & Crouch, G. (2022). Tales From the Dark Side: The Dark Tetrad of Personality, Supernatural, and Scientific Belief. <i>Journal of Humanistic Psychology</i> , 62(2), 298-315.	Does not measure big five personality traits or personality disorder
37	Gardner, D. G., & Pierce, J. L. (2010). The core self-evaluation scale: Further construct validation evidence. <i>Educational and Psychological Measurement</i> , 70(2), 291-304.	Does not analysis link between Just World and big five personality traits or personality disorder
38	Jiang, F., Yue, X., Lu, S., Yu, G., & Zhu, F. (2016). How belief in a just world benefits mental health: The effects of optimism and gratitude. <i>Social Indicators Research</i> , 126(1), 411-423.	Does not analysis link between Just World and big five personality traits or personality disorder

39	Nudelman, G., & Nadler, A. (2017). The effect of apology on forgiveness: Belief in a just world as a moderator. <i>Personality and Individual Differences, 116</i> , 191-200.	Does not measure big five personality traits or personality disorder
40	Schmitt, M., Gollwitzer, M., Maes, J., & Arbach, D. (2005). Justice sensitivity: assessment and location in the personality space. <i>European Journal of Psychological Assessment, 21</i> (3), 202.	Does not analysis link between Just World and big five personality traits or personality disorder
41	Otto, K., Glaser, D., & Dalbert, C. (2009). Mental health, occupational trust, and quality of working life: Does belief in a just world matter?. <i>Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 39</i> (6), 1288-1315.	Does not analysis link between Just World and big five personality traits or personality disorder
42 *	Umlauft, S., & Dalbert, C. (2017). Justice experiences and feelings of exclusion. <i>Social Psychology of Education, 20</i> (3), 565-587	Does not analysis link between Just World and big five personality traits or personality disorder

Appendix M: Case Study Consent Form

CASE STUDY Information Sheet	
You are being asked to consider allowing myself (Amy Goodwill), to use information about your experiences, and our work together, to write what is called a Case Study. A case study is a piece of work that will summarise the work that we have done together. All personal information will be anonymised and identifying information will be changed e.g name, location etc. This means that you will not be able to be identified from the report. Before consenting it is important that you understand what a case study is and what it will involve. Please ask if you don't understand anything or would like more information. It is your choice and there will be no consequences if you choose not to consent.	
