BELIEF IN JUST WORLD, WELL-BEING AND LIFE SATISFACTION AMONG STUDENTS

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Abstract - *The aim of the study was investigating belief in just world as predictor of well-being and life satisfaction among students. The study also aimed at investigating gender differences among belief in just world, well-being and life satisfaction. The present research is based on correlational research design. A sample consisted of 200 students selected from different universities of Lahore with age range of 21-24 years. Personal Belief in Just World Scale, General Belief in Just World Scale, Belief in Just World Scale for Others, Traits Well-Being Inventory, Depression Anxiety and Stress Scale and Satisfaction with Life Scale were used. Multiple regression, Pearson correlation, t-test and ANOVA were applied to test the hypotheses. The study's conclusions showed that students' well-being and life satisfaction were highly predicted by their personal belief in a just world. Students' overall well-being and level of life satisfaction were not predicted by their general belief in a just world or in a just world for others. Comparing male and female students, gender differences showed that males scored much higher on beliefs about a just world, wellbeing, and life satisfaction. At the completion of the study, recommendations, consequences, and conclusions were explored.*
Key words: Belief in just world, well-being, life satisfaction, gender differences

INTRODUCTION

Belief in just world is based on the assumption that the world is orderly and every person gets what he or she deserves. It is also based on the assumptions that there is stability, orderings and justice in the world. According to Lerner (1980), justice motive theory proposed that individuals are driven to have faith in that they are living in just world and every person get for what the person deserve (Lerner & Montada, 1998). Belief in just world is widely studied by social psychologists and has continued examine its theoretical understanding across various cultures (Furnham, 2003). the belief in just world imitates, in detail, a plan of a meaningful and ordered world which provides sense of security, trust, adjustment, optimism as well as life satisfaction to an individual (Cubela & Kvartuc, 2007; Dalbert, 2001).

Belief in just world provides individual a good mental health which increase his well-being and results in life satisfaction There is much evidence that belief in just world also focused on negative life events and protect mental health of individuals (Dalbert, 2001). It is associated with great life satisfaction and well-being and less depression and stress effect (Hafer, & Olson, 1998; Ritter et al., 1990). Belief in just world is found in fair and unfair situations and effects and individual well-being. The more the belief in just world results in positive psychological consequences and well-being. Also individuals having better level of belief in just world were found low on depression (Riaz et al., 2013). In a 1977 research, Bulman and Wortman investigated patients with spinal cord injuries and discovered a strong positive association between the victims' sense of well-being and their belief in a just world.

On focusing consequences of personality differences among children and students in life satisfaction, recent researches in the labs has shown that life satisfaction has a relationship with stressful life events and pathological behavior in youth and students and results in low level of belief in just world among students (Dalbert, 2001). The effect of stressful life events have mediated by global life satisfaction in many studies (McKnight, Huebner, & Suldo, 2002). Research offers theoretical support for the beneficial relationship between students' life happiness and their belief in a just world. According to Riaz et al. (2013), high level of belief in just world results in positive outcomes among students university students. According to Jurkin and Adoric (2008) higher of belief in just world is linked with high life satisfaction and low depression.

There is distinction between personal belief in just world, general belief in just world, and belief in just world for others. In previous researches the clear pattern of differences of personal belief in just world with general and others are observed. Individual endorse personal belief in just world more strongly than general and others because we have more concerns with the experience of justice to ourselves than others. People with high levels of personal belief in a just world will also have high levels of happiness and well-being and low levels of sadness (Cubela & Kvartuc, 2007; Riaz 2013). On the other hand individuals who score high on general belief in just world would be high on negative psychological consequences (Allen, Ng, & Leiser, 2005; Dalbert, 2001). Dalbert (1999) made a distinction between believing in a fair world for oneself and believing in a just world for others. People with high belief scores in a just world for others are also likely to have high believe scores in negative social consequences associated with the measure, such as discrimination against the elderly. Gender differences can also be seen in belief in just world, well-being and life satisfaction. In the previous literature male were found to be more negative towards rape victims whereas female were found to be less negative towards rape victims with respect to belief in just world therefore male seemed to be high on belief in just world compared to females. Also previous literature is evident that male and female have equal level of well-being but some researches shows that male were high on overall well-being and life satisfaction of the individuals as compared to females. Male involved in more leisure activities which results in more life satisfaction. Also in collectivistic culture male were found to be high on well-being and mental health (Daig et al., 2009; Riaz, 2013). Following hypotheses were formulated on the basis of previous literature.

1.   Belief in just world will positively predict well-being and life satisfaction among students.
2.   Male will score high on belief in just world, well-being and life satisfaction among students.

METHOD

Participants
The sample size of the present study encompassed of 200 students including males (n = 100) and females (n = 100). Purposive sampling technique was applied to collect the data. Age range of the participants was 21 to 23 years. Education of the participants was graduation and master. The criterion to select the students was based on their scores on depression. For this purpose, the Depression subscale of Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS) was administered on students in order to determine their level of depression. Only these students were included in the sample who exhibited low level of depression as identified with the cut off scores in the scoring manual of DASS. Thus before administering the scales of belief in just world and well-being, the students scoring high on depression were screened out.

Measures
[1]The current research study uses the Personal Belief in a Just World Scale, which was developed by Delbert (1999). The measure is a four-point Likert type scale with seven items. The response categories are ranked from 1 to 4, whereas 1 represents "strongly disagree" to 4 represents "strongly agree". Scale's alpha dependability is between.82 and.87 and.93. [2] The General Belief in a Just World Scale used in this research study was created by Dalbert et al. (1987). The six items on the Likert-type scale have five points each. The response categories are ranked from 1 to 5, whereas 1 represents "strongly disagree," to 5 represent "strongly agree". Scale's alpha reliability is.81. [3] The current research study makes use of Dalbert's (1999) Belief in a Just World Scale for Others. The scale

is a five-point Likert-type scale with eight items. The response categories are ranked from 1 to 5, whereas 1 represents "strongly disagree," to 5 represent "strongly agree". Scale's alpha reliability is.83.

[4] In the current study, the Trait Well-Being Scale, created by Dalbert (1992) and translated by Fatima (2004), was used. The scale is a four-point Likert type scale with ten items. The Life Satisfaction Scale and the Mood Level Scale are the two subscales of the inventory. The response categories are ranked from 1 to 4, whereas 1 represents "strongly disagree," to 4 represent "strongly agree". Scale's alpha reliability is.76. [5] Diener et al. (1985)'s Satisfaction with Life Scale was used in this research investigation. The scale is a seven-point Likert type scale with ten items. The scale for response categories is 1 to 7, whereas 1 represents "strongly disagree," to 7 represent "strongly agree". Scale's alpha reliability is.87. [6] The current study used the depression subscale of the Lovibond and Lovibond (1995) Short Version of Depression Anxiety and Stress Scale. It is a 5-point Likert scale with seven items. The response categories are ranked from 1 to 5, whereas 1 represents "strongly disagree," to 5 represent "strongly agree". Scale's alpha reliability is.79.

Procedure

The present study aimed at investigating belief in just world as predictor of well-being and life satisfaction in students. The study also aimed at investigating gender differences in belief in just world, well-being and life satisfaction. Participants were chosen for this purpose from a variety of Lahore universities. To gather the data, the students were contacted in their various departments. The goal, importance, and future consequences of the study were clarified to the students. They received assurances that the data they collected would only be utilized for study. Before distributing the surveys, the subjects' informed consent was acquired. Towards the end, the participants were thanked.

RESULTS

The goal of the current study was to determine if students' beliefs about a just world were predictive of their well-being and level of life satisfaction. Investigating the relationship between gender and all research factors was another goal of the study. For every research variable, alpha reliability and descriptive statistics were calculated. To evaluate the hypotheses, parametric statistics were used.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics and Pearson Correlation for all study variables among students

Variables		M	SD	a	1	2	3	4	5
1.	Personal belief in just world	17.89	4.56	.82	-	.42**	.16*	.54**	.39**
2.	General belief in just world	18.88	3.45	.78		-	.35**	.17*	.21**
3.	Belief in just world for others	16.58	4.44	.80			-	.16*	.15*
4.	Well-being	14.82	3.98	.73				-	.48**
5.	Life satisfaction	13.24	4.12	.75					-

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

Table 1 shows descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation for all study variables. The reliability coefficients for each instrument employed in the current study are displayed in the table and vary from.73 to.82. The table's Pearson correlation coefficient shows that there is a substantial positive association between personal belief in a just world and other factors such as well-being, life satisfaction, and general belief in a just world. Belief in a just world for others, well-being, and life satisfaction are all strongly positively connected with general belief in a just world. Life happiness and well-being are strongly positively connected with the belief in a just world for others. Life satisfaction has a strong positive correlation with well-being.

Table 2

Multiple Regression Analysis Showing the Impact of Belief in Just World on the Prediction of Well-being and Life Satisfaction among Students

Belief in just world	{1} Well-being			{2} Life Satisfaction		
	β	*ΔR²*	*F*	*β*	*ΔR²*	*F*
Personal belief in just world	.19**	.077	13.46***	.15**	.054	10.25***
General belief in just world	.09			.03		
Belief in just world for others	.07			.06		

**p<.01, ***p<.001

{1} Well-being is the outcome variable and multiple regression analysis is performed using the following predictor variables: personal belief in a just world, general belief in a just world, and belief in a just world for others. The predictors with F (3,196) = 13.46, p<.001, may account for 7.7% of the variation in the criterion variable, according to the ΔR² value of.088 in the preceding table. The results indicate that personal belief in just world (*β* = .19, *p* <.01), is significant positive predictors of well-being. **{2}** Life satisfaction is the outcome variable in multiple regression analysis, and the predictor variables are the individual's belief in a just world, the general belief in a just world, and the belief in a just world for others. The predictors with F(3,196) = 10.25, p<.001, may account for 5.4% of the variation in the criterion variable, according to the ΔR² value of.088 in the above table. The results indicate that personal belief in just world (β = .15, p <.01), is significant positive predictors of life satisfaction.

Table 3

Gender Differences in Belief in Just World, Well-being and Life Satisfaction among Students

Variables	Males		Females				
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*(198)	*p*	*Cohen's d*
Personal belief in just world	15.79	4.89	13.09	4.80	2.52	.04	.20
General belief in just world	16.88	3.71	14.01	3.90	3.15	.01	.22
Belief in just world for others	13.50	4.98	15.88	4.95	1.96	.05	.33
Well-being	12.54	4.24	13.27	4.80	2.82	.02	.28
Life satisfaction	10.99	3.92	12.91	4.44	3.18	.01	.29

Table 3 indicates the Mean Differences, Standard Deviation and t values on all study variables among students. The findings showed that, in comparison to female students, male students substantially scored higher on beliefs about a just world, wellbeing, and life satisfaction.

DISICUSSION

The 1st hypothesis "Belief in just world will positively predict well-being and life satisfaction among students" was supported. According to the current research, only one's own personal belief in a just world predicted happiness and life satisfaction; beliefs in a just world for others and in general do not. The current findings are consistent with the evidence from earlier research (Lipkos et al, 1996). It has been fund in numerous researches that belief in just world is positive associated with well-being (i.e. Dzuka & Dalbert, 2007; Fatima, 2010) and life satisfaction (i.e. Dalbert, 2001; McKnight et al., 2002). According to the just world hypothesis, people who believe that the world treats them fairly can make confident plans for the future and anticipate their lives to be structured, purposeful, and under control, with a good outlook. And these expectations in turn increase their well-being and mental health as well as commitment to planned healthy survival and greater purpose in life and (Bègue & Bastounis, 2003; Hafer & Olson, 1993).

The belief in a just world appears to vary systematically throughout the lifespan as well (Maes & Schmitt, 2007). The primary purpose of the just world belief appears to be to instill confidence in the justice of the world, which empowers individuals to overcome obstacles at work and in education, to invest in their own aspirations, and to enhance their general well-being. According to Dalbert

(2001) individual have more concerns about his personal justice than general justice in existed in society. Individual with personal belief in just world seem to be high on positive psychological outcomes and well-being whereas in general belief in just world individuals seem to be high on depression and stress. Therefore in the current research only personal belief in just world predicted well-being and life satisfaction.

The 2nd hypothesis ''male students will score high on belief in just world, well-being and life satisfaction as compared to female students'' was supported. The present results are consistent with earlier studies (Blumberg & Lester, 1991; Conners & Heaven, 1990). Hunt (1996) studied effect of gender in belief in just world among whites and Latinos and found men are more likely to have stronger belief in just world than women. Conners and Heaven (1990) viewed AIDS victims with respect to gender differences of individuals having belief in just world. Results of his study revealed that male are more likely to rate AIDS victims as more deserving and responsible for their AIDS as compared to female participants. Female displayed more concern towards AIDS victims and rate them positively. Overall the research concluded that male were more blame to victims and female showed more sympathy and less blame the victims. That is why male always found to be high on belief in just world compared to female.

Subjective well-being levels do vary significantly across cultures because societies are defined by life satisfaction and well-being, and they are predicated on baseline levels of happiness that are either high or low and generally stable over time. However, within any given society, one typically finds only slight variations in the happiness levels of men and women. There are contradictory findings of well-being among male and female across different cultures. There are cultural variations in the well-being of men and women based on gender (Helliwell, 2003). Gender roles vary greatly depending on the situation (Arku, 2008). Women are happier than males in Scandinavian nations, while the contrary is true in the former Soviet Union (Helliwell, 2003). Eastern nations are collectivistic, male-dominated societies where women mostly do home chores while men earn money, participate in politics, make decisions, and engage in other activities due to their greater freedom than women. Because of this, they have higher levels of life satisfaction, mental health, and general well-being than females.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The aim of the study was investigating belief in just world as predictor of well-being and life satisfaction among students. The study also aimed at investigating gender differences among belief in just world, well-being and life satisfaction. The findings showed that among students, well-being and life satisfaction were exclusively predicted by a personal belief in a just world. Males were shown to have higher levels of belief in a just world, well-being, and life satisfaction than females, according to gender differences. The research was rather significant overall, and it will help guide future investigations.

The findings of the current research have implications in clinical settings. Clinical psychologist and therapists can help clients by improving their belief system especially belief in justice to increase their mental health, well-being and life satisfaction. As psychologists will increase clients thinking of personal justice this will results in positive psychological consequences and their well-being with also increased. Also this research will provide insight and direction for students and researcher for future research.

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