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Belief in a just world: research progress over the past decade

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Abstract

This paper reviews the literature on just world beliefs (BJW) and updates two previous reviews [Lerner & Miller \(1978\)](#), [Furnham & Proctor \(1989\)](#). Four broad areas of development were identified. First, critiques of self-report questionnaires and the development of new and psychometrically improved measures of BJW and related concepts were reviewed. Second, an extension of the studies of victim derogation and devaluation, particularly to those with AIDs and those who have experienced traumatic events such as rape, were discussed. Third, comparative recent research looking at BJW as a coping mechanism that may both buffer stress and facilitate achievement striving was reviewed. This focused on both the function and potential benefits of the BJW. Fourth an examination of cultural and demographic differences in the distribution of BJW was reviewed. There seems to be a movement from stressing the negative consequences of the BJW to understanding its psychological beneficial functions. It is concluded that the new direction in BJW research will ensure survival of research into the phenomenon for many years to come.



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Keywords

Just world beliefs; Social justice; Victim blaming

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