Attribution of responsibility for an accident as a function of outcome severity, deservability, and locus of control

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ATTRIBUTION OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR AN
ACCIDENT AS A FUNCTION OF OUTCOME SEVERITY,
DESERVABILITY, AND LOCUS OF CONTROL

A Thesis
Presented to the
Department of Psychology
and the
Faculty of the Graduate College
University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
University of Nebraska at Omaha

by
William H. Adams
August 1978
THESIS ACCEPTANCE

Accepted for the faculty of the Graduate College, University of Nebraska, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts, University of Nebraska at Omaha.

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<thead>
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<th>Thesis Committee</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gaylon L. Oswald</td>
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I would like to express appreciation to my parents Mr. and Mrs. William H. Adams for their support and financial aid permitting me to continue my education. In addition, I would like to extend my gratitude to Dr. Carl Greenberg, thesis committee chairman, for all his help and time that went into the preparation of this thesis, and Dr. Joseph LaVoie, Dr. Gaylon Oswalt, and Dr. George Barger for their suggestions and for serving as thesis committee members.
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ABSTRACT

One hundred male and female undergraduate students served as mock jurors. Subjects read four automobile accident summaries. For each case, subjects judged the defendant's responsibility, the plaintiff's responsibility, and evaluated the severity of consequences. In each case, the deservingness of the victim to suffer, and the severity of the accidental consequences were varied. In addition, a median split was done on subjects' locus of control scores to define a third treatment variable. Therefore, the study was a 2 (Internal vs. External) x 2 (High Severity vs. Low Severity) x 2 (High Deservingness vs. Low Deservingness) mixed factorial design. Results indicated that subjects compensated plaintiffs and defendants in line with hypotheses derived from equity theory for the distribution of rewards and punishments. Specifically, defendants received harsher punishments when the accident consequences were more severe for the plaintiff than for less severe consequences. However, when plaintiffs were in high deservingness to suffer situations (intoxicated but just below legal limit) compensation was less than for more respectable plaintiffs in low deservingness to suffer situations (non-drinking). Subjects' locus of control scores were found to only affect the extent that responsibility was derogated to plaintiffs. That is, externals attributed more responsibility to plaintiffs than internals. Results are discussed with regard to equity theory.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

To date there have been numerous studies that have dealt with attribution of responsibility by observers for victims of unwarranted consequences. These studies have been attempts to determine the underlying factors that account for differences for the manner that observers attribute responsibility. Two prominent approaches have emphasized individual differences, that is, the extent that a person believes the world is just, and the belief in personal causation as regards to the lots of others. This present study reviewed earlier studies that dealt with attribution of responsibility, and then examined more closely those studies concerned with personality variables that effect responsibility attribution. Then a suggestion was offered in order to better understand the reason individuals differ for their attribution of responsibility to another.

Attribution of Responsibility

There is evidence that things that happen to another person, even when these events are beyond the other's control, may have a large effect on our own attitudes toward him. While Walster (1966) proposed that when individuals hear about an accident, they will be sure to blame someone for the accident; Lerner (1965, 1966) argued that people are motivated to believe in a "just world," where people "get what they deserve, and deserve what they get."

Walster (1966) in addition to proposing that people desire to blame others for accidental consequences they encounter in order to have the world seem to be a predictable place, also predicted that the
tendency to assign responsibility to someone will increase as the
magnitude of the consequences increase. The assignment of responsi-
bility occurs through a process Walster called defensive attribution.
She argued that it is easy for the observer to feel sympathy for the
sufferer of a small loss and attribute the misfortune to chance. How-
ever, for an observer to attribute a severe accidental outcome to
chance implies that a catastrophe of equal magnitude could happen to
themself. Alternatively, by derogating the responsibility of the
grate outcome to the victim, the perceiver is convinced that they are
a different kind of person from the victim, or would have behaved
differently under the circumstances, the observer can reassure them-
self of being protected from a similar catastrophe.

Walster (1966) tested this hypothesis by describing a high school
student's driving habits to a group of subjects. Subjects were asked
to assess the responsibility of the driver whose parked and empty
automobile was involved in an accident when it rolled down a hill.
In her description, she varied the severity of the accident that was
said to have resulted from the same pre-accident behavior. The
accident conditions ranged from damage only to the car with no harm
to others, and damage to the car with the possibility of injury to
others. Walster's (1966) findings were in accordance with the predicted
attribution of responsibility. Sex differences indicated that women
were more likely to assign more responsibility as the possible conse-
quency of the accident were increased. However, no explanation was
offered by Walster. Furthermore, the results indicated that the
student's behavior was judged to be more "morally unacceptable" the
more severe the consequences were said to be for both men and women.
The plausibility of Walster's (1966) prediction for the increased assignment of responsibility as the magnitude of the severity of consequences increases has been explored in a line of research by Lerner and his associates (Lerner, 1965; Lerner & Matthews, 1967; Lerner & Simmons, 1966).

Lerner (1965, 1967) proposed that people need to believe in a just world and that they are motivated to distort reality in order to maintain the belief that such a world is indeed just. The research supported the notion that a person takes into account the outcomes of a social event in making sense out of what he has observed even when the outcome is fortuitously related to behavior. Lerner and his associates (Lerner & Simmons, 1966) asserted that the motive to distort reality leads individuals to derogate and blame people who have suffered by devaluation and reflection even if this suffering has occurred presumably for a sufferer who is innocent of responsibility. Sex of subject was not examined in Lerner's early studies (Lerner, 1965, 1966, 1967) since only female subjects were used for his formulation of the just world notion.

Lerner and Matthews (1967) asserted that the underlying process postulated in Lerner's (1965, 1966) earlier studies was based on a person's need to believe in a just world in which people deserve their fate. Furthermore, they reasoned that a person's fate is a result of what that person does, and it is only when an observer cannot attribute some misdeed to a suffering victim that the observer will derogate the victim as an undesirable person. Lerner argued that derogation as a distortion of reality was a result of the observer's desire to avoid such misfortune himself and to maintain a view that the world is just.
However, Lerner, Miller, and Holmes (1976) stated that observers of what appears to be unjust suffering do not necessarily resort to derogation of a victim automatically and uniformly. Among the potentially numerous means by which an individual may restore his concept of a just world include compensation and/or punishment of a tormenter; the victim may be blamed without being devalued; and/or the observer may deny that the suffering has even occurred. Lerner et al. (1976) suggested that compensation of an innocent victim is generally the preferred method. However, when an individual is unable to alter the state of affairs, a comfortable solution to reduce the sense of injustice is to ultimately devalue the victim. Kenrick, Reich, and Cialdini (1976) have shown that both compensation and derogation may be used; therefore, not to be taken necessarily as being mutually exclusive.

One theory that may be likened to the just world theory is that of social exchange, in particular, equity theory (Adams, 1963, 1965). The concern of equity theory is the manner that an individual responds to an injustice, such as by an attempt to restore actual equity, or equal relative outcomes for those persons involved. Alternatively, an individual may respond by distorting reality as suggested by a just world notion, in order to restore psychological equity. This would be especially likely to occur when the case is such that observers or participants are unable to restore actual equity. Additionally, an observer may respond to a situation by using a combination of both responses, partially restoring actual equity and sufficiently distorting reality to establish psychological equity. Therefore, it appears that the equity theory accounts for the situations that individuals
utilize a just world perception, that is, when actual equity cannot be restored.

The approach taken by an individual depends on costs and benefits perceived to be associated with each strategy. Equity theory is based on the assertion that observers can evaluate the fairness of an interaction more objectively than can participants, to the point that even the most aloof judges are motivated to right existing wrongs, and if that fails, to be convinced that this is a just world (Austin, Walster, & Utne, 1976). Equity theory predicts that the effect of a defendant's suffering determines a judge's or juror's liking for him and their eagerness to punish. Suffering by a defendant as a result of a crime may be regarded as punishment in itself which compensates further punishment. Such was the case for a bank robber who was crippled when making a getaway and who received an unusually light sentence, and the mother whose child was killed when she ran a stop sign treated with similar leniency (Austin, Walster, & Utne, 1976).

Further evidence that demonstrates that jurors take a criminal's "suffering in the act" into account when deciding on an appropriate sentence comes from two studies by Austin (1976). In both studies, Austin asked college students to read a synopsis of the proceedings of an actual trial and play the role of the mock jurors, and then recommend an appropriate sentence. In the first study, the defendant snatched a purse, a relatively minor crime. In the second study, the defendant's crime was more serious, not only had he snatched a purse but he had severely beat his female victim causing her to be hospitalized for a number of days. In both studies, after allegedly committing the crime, the defendant attempted to escape from the scene.
In the process of escape, it was claimed that the purse snatcher had suffered not at all, moderately (i.e., received cuts and bruises), or excessively (paralyzed from the neck down). Austin found, in both studies strong support for the "suffering in the act" notion. Such that, the more the defendant was said to have suffered, for both low severity and high severity crimes, the less extensive the prison sentence handed down by the mock jurors as being appropriate sentences.

The severity of outcome of an event as a determinant of responsibility attribution, a concern of both Walster's and Lerner's studies, is a relationship that Shaver (1970) concluded cannot be reliably produced. Shaver has reported two studies, neither of which offered support for the proposition that responsibility attribution increases with the severity of outcome. However, a study by Shaw and Skolnick (1971) provided evidence that partially supported Walster's view rather than Lerner's. That is, a person is more likely to blame a victim while at the same time regard themself as different from the victim. This supposedly protects the observer from a similar fate, rather than attribute responsibility for a severe accident in order to preserve a person's belief that the world is just.

Moreover, experiments using accident situations have partially demonstrated the observer's desire to find or create a correspondence between what happens to someone and what he deserves by virtue of his personal attributes. According to Lerner's (1965, 1966) just world notion, if something (pleasant or unpleasant) happens to a person, that person is seen as deserving it for one of two reasons: (a) because that person is intrinsically good (or evil), and their character merits the good or bad outcome; or (b) because that person has
behaved in a specific and direct manner to bring out the good or bad outcome. Jones and Aronson (1973) tested deservingness in a mock jury case on rape victims and predicted that if a catastrophe occurs to an individual, more responsibility is attributed to that victim if the victim is a respectable person than if he is less respectable. Specifically, Jones and Aronson (1973) found that married and virgin women were blamed more than divorced women in a rape case by both male and female subjects. There was no significant difference between the actual and the attempted rape conditions for the amount of fault attributed to the victim. Their results supported the prediction and suggested that the more an innocent and respectable victim suffers, the greater the threat to one's belief in a just world, and the greater the blaming or attribution of responsibility for the victim.

In summary, differences found for observers' attribution of responsibility may be due to several factors. Walster (1966) suggested severity of consequences serves to increase the responsibility attributed to an innocent victim. This contention is in agreement with the just world notion. In addition to severity of outcome, Lerner's (1965, 1966) just world notion was concerned with victim deservability. It was suggested that the more innocent the victim is, the more he is seen as deserving his fate, and the more he is blamed for the consequences. Alternatively, Austin et al. (1976) contended that suffering in the act effects observers consideration for responsibility in order to restore equity, such that punishments were less for those defendants who suffered as a result of the crime. A just world perception may be a contribution factor for restoring psychological equity when actual equity is not fulfilled. Jones and Aronson (1973) provided experimental
support for deservability such that, the more respectable the victim of rape, the more she was regarded as responsible. Sex of subject as a variable does not appear to contribute significantly to differences in attribution of responsibility.

**Personality Variables Affecting Attribution of Responsibility**

Belief in a just world refers to a person's desire to view the world as a just place where people get what they deserve and deserve what they get. This construct was used by Lerner et al. (1976) in order to suggest that those who see what appears to be unjust suffering will reduce the sense of injustice by derogation the victim under certain circumstances. Deservingness, according to Lerner, consists of two components: personal worth and behavior. Therefore, observers of a victim may conclude (a) that the victim is an undesirable person, or (b) that the victim behaved poorly and brought his suffering upon themself.

Rubin and Peplau (1973, 1975) devised and validated a direct simple paper-and-pencil measure to assess the degree to which people would express the belief that they lived in a just world ("Just World Scale"). They assumed that the belief in a just world was a relatively stable and measurable dimension along which people would vary and the degree of acceptance of this belief should be predictive of people's reactions in a variety of situations. For example, in one study (Rubin & Peplau, 1973), it was found that people who scored highly on the JWS were relatively unsympathetic to peers who were less fortunate than they were in a draft lottery.

Kerr and Kurtz (1977) in a replication of the Jones and Aronson (1973) study used the Rubin and Peplau (1973) Just World Scale to
assess subject differences. This scale was used in order to determine directly whether the results for attribution of responsibility could be attributed to differences in beliefs for a just world, rather than speculate that the results were due to a just world process by inference. Kerr and Kurtz (1977) used the length of sentence for the defendant in addition to attribution of responsibility as dependent measures. They found that the defendant was given a longer sentence when the victim suffered more, as a means of compensation for the suffering victim. This factor was in support of the just world theory. Results were inconsistent for sex of subject differences, however, it was found that females thought the victim suffered more than males and were more likely to give longer sentences to the defendant.

However, other predictions that followed from the theory uniformly failed (Kerr & Kurtz, 1977). The respectable and suffering victim was neither blamed nor devalued more than a victim who was less respectable or suffered less. In addition, those who believed most strongly that the world is just were not more likely to punish the defendant or blame the victim, and even gave more positive evaluations of the victim than those with a weak belief in the just world. Kerr and Kurtz (1977) stated this result does not necessarily disconfirm the just world theory if strong believers generally give more positive evaluations of others. However, Rubin and Peplau (1975) have not indicated that there is such a general bias in the research that has employed a just world scale.

One reason why the results were nonsignificant for the Kerr and Kurtz (1977) study may be found in a study that was done by Phares and Wilson (1972). At times situations can be differentiated on the
basis of a structural-ambiguity dimension. Therefore, this allows for the possibility that severe outcomes lead to greater responsibility attribution when situations are highly structured but not when situations are ambiguous remains plausible. Phares and Wilson (1972) explored this prediction and suggested that structured situations were those such that the connection between person and outcome is very direct while ambiguous situations were those in which the connection between person and outcome is not very clear, such that the events are chance-determined as a function of environmental events over which those persons involved have no control.

Rubin and Peplau (1973) concluded that the belief in a just world is not the only determinant of indifference toward victims of society, rather numerous other individual and cultural factors play important roles in shaping the tendency to perceive others as deserving their lots. It has been demonstrated (Rubin & Peplau, 1973) that high Just World scores were correlated with a tendency to score in the internal direction on the locus of control scale \( r = -.44, p < .001 \). This association is congruent with a just world notion that a belief in a just world stems from people's desire to believe that they can control their own outcomes.

The internal-external locus of control dimension (Rotter, 1966) is one that has received much attention for the assessment of individual differences (Lefcourt, 1976; Phares, 1976). The I-E scale has demonstrated its utility over a wide range of predictive situations that have provided evidence for its construct validity (Phares, 1976). Due to the construct validity and predictability for the locus of control dimension (Phares, 1976) it is proposed that this dimension is a
moderator variable for individual differences with regard to responsibility attribution.

Phares and Wilson (1972) introduced internal versus external control of reinforcement (I-E) as a determinant for individual differences of attribution of responsibility. The I-E dimension refers to the degree that people regard themselves as responsible for the occurrence or lack of occurrence of reinforcement (internals) as opposed to regarding luck, fate, chance, powerful others etc., (externals) as being responsible. Phares and Wilson found that in severe cases internals attributed more responsibility than externals, when the stimulus situations were ambiguous. When the stimulus situations were highly structured there was little in the way of I-E differences. When severity of outcomes were low, however, internals did not differ in responsibility attribution under ambiguous conditions, but under structured conditions internals attributed greater responsibility than did externals.

Locus of control and attribution of responsibility have been investigated in other studies. For example, Phares, Wilson, and Klyver (1971) noted that internals attribute less blame for their failure on tasks to the environment than do externals. Furthermore, in a study involving both success and failure, Davis and Davis (1972) demonstrated that internals show a greater tendency to accept responsibility for their behaviors than do externals. In addition, Krovetz (1974) found that subjects (either internals or externals) form attributions to account for their successes and failures that are congruent with their locus of control as determined by the I-E scale.

Phares and Wilson (1972) indicated that use of experimental conditions
that do not involve quasi-legal judgements, as was the case in the Phares, et al. (1971) and Davis and Davis (1972) studies, should produce the predicted interaction between I-E and ambiguous-structured factors. They also reasoned that the nonsevere, ambiguous combination may be so compelling that both internals and externals are unwilling to attribute much responsibility. However, when the outcome becomes severe, they felt this serves to produce individuals' reliance on their generalized expectancy as internals or externals for attribution of responsibility.

In summary, personality variables that have been forwarded to account for differences in observers attribution of responsibility were examined. The just world scale developed by Rubin and Peplau (1973) was used in a study by Kerr and Kurtz (1977) that investigated victim deservingness. However, Kerr and Kurtz did not obtain results that conclusively accounted for observer differences as determined by a belief in a just world for attribution of responsibility. Another construct, locus of control, was considered as regards to a study by Phares and Wilson (1972). Based on their findings it may be that the structure of the situations that Kerr and Kurtz (1977) used overrode individual differences predicted by just world beliefs. Due to the construct validity of the locus of control dimension, and the correlation with the just world scale, it would seem that the locus of control dimension may provide a stronger basis for prediction for observer differences for responsibility attribution.

A comparison of Kerr and Kurtz (1977) just world study and Phares' and Wilson's (1972) locus of control study will point out the differences in factors examined (see Figure 1). Both studies examined the
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Figure 1. Comparison of Kerr and Kurtz (1977) just world study with Phares’ and Wilson’s (1972) locus of control (I-E) study.
effects of attribution of responsibility, however, individual differences were just world measures or locus of control measures. While attribution of responsibility was examined for primarily the plaintiff (rapee) in the just world study, degree of punishment was also examined for the defendant. However, in the locus of control study only responsibility attribution was considered for the defendant, while any contributions by plaintiff for the outcome were ignored. The present study investigated underlying processes for attribution of responsibility to the plaintiff using a locus of control I-E subject variable.

It will be noted, that both studies considered severity of outcome (high and low) to have an effect on responsibility attribution. Deservingness for victim suffering was manipulated in the just world study by varying the victim's respectability. However, defendant characteristics were ignored. There was no manipulation for deservingness of victims's fate in the locus of control study, only attribution of responsibility measures were considered for the defendant.

Phares and Wilson (1972) have suggested that situation characteristics are an important factor for responsibility attribution. Therefore, the locus of control study manipulated this variable (high and low) such that structured and ambiguous cases were examined. Structured situations meant that judges felt that it was clear that the defendant was substantially at fault. Ambiguous meant that from the accident description it was not clear that the defendant was substantially at fault or that accompanying conditions were such as to significantly reduce his guilt. The just world study by using rape cases, considered only structured cases such that guilt was clear for the defendant.
Another differences between the studies that is determined largely by the structured-ambiguity dimension is the extent the consequences were due to chance. The just world study provided a condition in which there was little chance saliency due to the nature of the crime, such that in addition to the high association of guilt for the defendant, there was a motivational factor initiating the crime. Taken together, these factors seem to override any characteristics of the victim which may account for failures to replicate the Jones and Aronson (1973) findings by subsequent studies.

The locus of control study, on the other hand, provided conditions which varied the structured-ambiguity dimension. For all conditions, however, there was high chance saliency for the nature of the consequences, and presumably no motivation on the part of the defendant to initiate an automobile accident.

Statement of the Problem

It was the purpose of this study to examine the effect deservingness has for attribution of responsibility as predicted by the just world theory. However, rather than using the just world scale, locus of control (I-E) was the measure of individual differences for the judges. Generalized expectancies for a person's locus of control have been shown to depend on the assertion that internally oriented people not only see themselves as responsible for events, but will also see others as responsible for their own outcomes (Phares & Wilson, 1972). Conversely, externals may tend to attribute less responsibility to others just as they do to themselves. Due to the construct validity and predictability for the locus of control scale (Phares, 1976; Lefcourt, 1976), it was predicted that this dimension would demonstrate
individual differences as regards to attribution of responsibility for differences for victim deservingness.

Based on the results of the Phares and Wilson (1972) study, it appears that only locus of control differences will be produced by ambiguous situations that have severe consequences. Therefore, this present study used only ambiguous situations. It was the contention of this study that the structural-ambiguity dimension accounted for contradictions found for previous studies that dealt with attribution of responsibility in a just world framework (e.g., Jones & Aronson, 1973; Kerr & Kurtz, 1977). Furthermore, it is suggested that attribution of responsibility did not occur in the manner predicted by the just world theory because of the high situation structure for rape cases. Due to the descriptions of the cases by Kerr and Kurtz such that guilt was clear for the defendant when the crime was completed, it would seem easier to blame the defendant rather than attribute responsibility to the victim regardless of deservingness. This would seem especially true since the victim was described in a typical situation which could be assumed to occur regularly, that is, walking to her parked car after an evening class at a university. Therefore, a victim following a routine that has little to do with chance, is a structured situation. Additionally, it is a situation that obviously would have little to do with the respectability dimension such as married, virgin, or divorced victims used by Jones and Aronson (1973) and in the replication by Kerr and Kurtz (1977).

In addition to deservingness and locus of control, outcome severity was examined, since it has been demonstrated that responsibility attribution increases with outcome severity (Walster, 1966; Phares &
In summary, the objectives for this study were to test (a) the effect of plaintiff's deservingness to suffer, (b) severity of outcome to the plaintiff, and (c) observer's locus of control on attribution of responsibility in ambiguous situations.

Hypotheses

In summary, the following predictions were tested: (1) main effect for deservingness, such that, the more respectable the plaintiff, manipulated by deservingness of the plaintiff to suffer (a) the more responsibility attributed to the defendant; and (b) the greater the sentence recommendations for the defendant; and (c) the less responsible the plaintiff will be judged.

(2) Main effect for severity, such that, the more severe the accident, (a) the more responsibility attributed to the defendant; and (b) the greater the sentence recommendations for the defendant; and (c) the more responsible the plaintiff will be judged.

(3) No interaction between deservingness main effect and severity main effect was predicted.

(4) Main effects should be strongest for those who have an internal locus of control orientation. That is, this study proposed to investigate the effects on attribution of responsibility for two levels of I-E (internals and externals), two levels of severity of outcome (high and low), two levels of defendant deservingness (high and low), and nine different dependent measures (for defendant: statement of responsibility, imposition of fines, license suspension or jail, and driver re-education; for plaintiff: statement of responsibility, judgement for medical expenses, judgement for coverage of car repairs, extent
of pain and suffering retributions, and judgement for outcome severity).
Subjects

The subjects were 100 male and female undergraduate psychology students at UNO who received extra course credit for their participation. Subjects were administered the locus of control test and stimulus materials at the same time. Scores on the locus of control scale ranged from 2 to 12 with a median of 12. Internal subjects were defined as those with scores below 12, while external subjects were defined as those with scores above 12.

Design

A 2(I-E) x 2(Severity) x 2(Deservingness) mixed design (1 between and 2 within factors) was employed. All subjects were presented with four accident summaries adapted from the Phares and Wilson (1972) study (see Appendix B).

Both internal and external subjects received four combinations of severity and deservingness scenarios. There were four scenarios, each having four versions for severity and deservingness. Therefore, each subject received one version of each of the four scenarios in order to be presented with all possible combinations of severity and deservingness. There were, therefore, 16 setting produced. A random assignment of settings comprised the four stimuli that subjects received.

Independent Variables

The principal independent measures were two levels of plaintiff deservingness to suffer (high and low), severity of consequences for the plaintiffs (high and low), and locus of control (internal
and external). In general, plaintiffs deservingness referred to plaintiffs contributions to the accident in such a manner as to have potentially avoided or not to have avoided the accident.

Severity of outcome referred to the extent of bodily injury and/or property damage to the plaintiff. A median split was performed on the last factor (locus of control). All accident summaries were ambiguous such that from the accident description it was not clear that the defendant was substantially at fault or that accompanying conditions were such as to significantly reduce the guilt (see Appendix B).

**Dependent Variables**

The principal dependent measures were seven-point unipolar scales for two categories, one for the defendant, the other for the plaintiff. The measures for the defendant were: (a) judgement of defendant's responsibility for the accident, (b) imposition of fines, (c) license suspensions or jail, and (d) driver re-education.

The measures for the plaintiff were: (a) judgement of plaintiff's responsibility, (b) judgement for payment of medical expenses, (c) judgement for payment of car damage expenses, and (d) extent of pain and suffering retributions.

The manipulation checks consisted of seven-point unipolar scales that assessed each subject's perception for each of the four scenarios as regards severity of the accident for the plaintiff, and deservingness for the plaintiff to suffer.
Procedure

Subjects were administered the Locus of Control Scale (Rotter, 1966; see Appendix A) and the stimulus materials, accident summaries simultaneously. The size of experimental groups varied with number of subjects who arrived as scheduled for experimental sessions ranging from 2 to 16 subjects.

Each subject received a stimulus booklet for which conditions had been counter-balanced and randomly assigned. Each booklet contained the following instructions:

This is a study which deals with the American jury system. We have taken a series of brief legal summaries of court cases which were printed in the Midwest Auto Digest and assembled them into booklets. We would like you to read these summaries and then make certain judgements. The purpose of this research is to determine how closely your judgements correspond to the actual judgements and verdicts of the real juries. In this way, we may be able to learn something about the manner in which information should be presented to juries so that they can better process it and reach valid conclusions. Ultimately, it may then be possible to move toward computerization of some of these processes and modes of information presentation.

The following are approximations of actual court cases, tried in various Superior Courts. The plaintiffs were suing the defendants for damages. Damages here means money above the costs of any property damage or medical expenses, i.e., beyond auto repairs or hospital costs. You are to examine the evidence and rate the cases on the scales provided.
As in an actual court of law, the insurance coverage, or lack of it should not be a factor in determining guilt, and will not therefore, be specified. As we said before, we are comparing your ratings with the actual jury responses.

There followed four brief case descriptions for each subject, the following two were typical:

Defendant: Harrison
Plaintiff: Norwick

Harrison was driving home from work and happened to be following a farm truck which was carrying bales of hay. Suddenly, a bale of hay fell from the truck and landed on the road several car lengths in front of Harrison’s car causing him to lose control. Harrison’s car crossed the center line and side-swiped Norwick. Norwick received very minor cuts and bruises. His car was damaged but only slightly. The truck disappeared and was not identified.

Norwick claims that Harrison was following the truck too closely--otherwise he could have avoided the hay and prevented the accident. In short, Harrison was not alert and not a particularly intelligent driver.

Police investigation revealed that Norwick had been drinking. However, the recorded alcohol level in a breath analysis was just below the legal intoxication limit.

Harrison claims on the other hand, that no one expects to have a bale of hay fall off a truck like that and therefore, he should not be held accountable. He also claims that he was following a reasonable distance. The police report indicated that there was no trace of alcohol for
Harrison according to a breath analysis.

Defendant: McGee

Plaintiff: Bell

McGee claims he was temporarily blinded by the headlights of the car preceding Bell through the turn. McGee's speed could not be assessed since there were no skid marks. However, a pedestrian believes McGee's speed was not excessive. The collision occurred at 11:40 PM. The weather was clear and no mechanical impairments were observed on McGee's car.

Bell received fractures and internal bleeding and also sustained extensive damage to his car. He was still partially incapacitated for work. Medical testimony indicated that there was no trace of alcohol in a blood sample from Bell.

Bell's lawyer states that either McGee was driving too fast or did not know how to handle a car properly after dark. But in either case, he was at fault.

McGee's lawyer contends that anyone can be blinded by the lights of an oncoming car, and therefore his responsibility reduced. Police investigation determined McGee had not been drinking prior to the accident.

This particular Harrison versus Norwick version represented a nonsevere situation such that deservingness is low for the defendant. The example version for McGee versus Bell case represented a situation such that deservingness is high for the defendant and the outcome is severe. Of the 16 scenarios, four were presented to each subject (one version for each of four cases) so that each subject received all
combinations. Of the four presented, one was high deservingness-severe, one low deservingness-severe, one high deservingness-nonsevere, and one low deservingness-nonsevere.

After each case description, subjects were asked to make ratings for the defendant and plaintiff. The ratings consisted of seven-point bipolar scales. The first rating for the defendant consisted of the regard for defendants' responsibility for the accident. The other defendant ratings were each within maximum-minimum sentence allocations and included jail and/or license suspension, driver re-education, and fine. The ratings for the plaintiff were also seven-point bipolar scales, that asked for subjects' judgements for plaintiffs responsibility for the accident, to what extent the plaintiff account for his own medical expenses and car damages, and the extent of the severity of the accident. There also was one open-ended question that requested an evaluation of the dollar amount to be indicated for pain and suffering experienced by the plaintiff. These scales appear in Appendix C.

Upon completion of the stimulus materials and rating scales, subjects were debriefed and dismissed. Subjects' participation credit cards were signed by the experimenter and returned at this time.
CHAPTER III

RESULTS

Manipulation Checks

The results of univariate analyses of variance revealed successful manipulations of subjects' perceptions for both plaintiffs deserving-ness and severity of accidental consequences treatments. Subjects perceived those plaintiffs who had been drinking, though not legally intoxicated, as more deserving to suffer the responsibility for the accident \( (M = 2.80) \) than those who had not been drinking \( (M = 1.82) \), \( F(1,98) = 72.01, p < .001 \). Likewise, subjects regarded the accident more severe when plaintiffs incurred major injuries and extensive automobile damages \( (M = 5.07) \) than those who received minor cuts, bruises and slight automobile damages \( (M = 2.51) \), \( F(1,98) = 573.09, p < .001 \).

Attribution of Responsibility

Multivariate Analysis of Variance. Separate three-way (Locus of Control x Severity x Deservingness) multivariate analyses of variance were performed on the variables that pertained to the defendant: responsibility, sentence, driver re-education, and fine; and the variables that pertained to the plaintiff: responsibility, medical expenses, automobile expenses, and pain and suffering retributions. Defendants produced a significant main effect for outcome severity, \( F(3,92) = 11.17, p < .001 \). In addition, plaintiffs produced a significant main effect for locus of control, \( F(3,92) = 5.64, p < .05 \); severity, \( F(3,92) = 8.17, p < .01 \); and deservingness, \( F(3,92) = 18.68, p < .001 \).
Univariate Analyses of Variance. Separate three-way analyses of variance were performed for each of the eight dependent variables that pertained to defendants and plaintiffs. These analyses revealed that subjects allocated more responsibility to defendants for high severity consequences ($M = 4.02$) than for defendants in low severity conditions ($M = 3.49$), $F(1, 98) = 12.94, p < .001$; gave harsher license suspensions to defendants for severe consequences ($M = 1.62$) than for defendants in nonsevere conditions ($M = 1.30$), $F(1, 98) = 34.47$, $p < .001$; gave a more extensive driver re-education program to defendants when consequences were severe ($M = 3.21$) than when consequences were nonsevere ($M = 2.65$), $F(1, 98) = 17.81, p < .001$; and gave a higher monetary fine to defendants for high severity consequences ($M = 2.60$) than for defendants in low severity consequences ($M = 1.90$), $F(1, 98) = 34.00, p < .001$.

Subjects were found to differ for their responsibility derogated to plaintiffs based upon locus of control orientations. Subjects with an external locus of control attributed more fault to plaintiffs ($M = 2.47$) than subjects with an internal orientation ($M = 2.15$), $F(1, 98) = 4.05, p < .05$. A significant interaction was found for locus of control versus severity of consequences, $F(1, 98) = 4.00, p < .01$. Further analysis revealed that subjects with an internal orientation gave a stiffer fine ($M = 2.78$) to the defendant than subjects with an external orientation ($M = 2.42$), $F(1, 98) = 1.66, p < .08$. This was determined to occur only for situations with highly severe consequences.

Additional findings indicated that subjects held plaintiffs less accountable for medical expenses when the accident was not severe.
(M = 1.90) than when the accident was severe (M = 2.25), $F(1,98) = 4.30, \ p < .05$; and when sober (M = 1.82) than when they had been drinking (M = 2.34), $F(1,98) = 11.34, \ p < .001$. Likewise, plaintiffs were held less accountable for car damages when sober (M = 2.15) than when intoxicated (M = 2.47), $F(1,98) = 3.49, \ p < .10$. 
CHAPTER IV
DISCUSSION

In general, the data did not support the contention that the more respectable the plaintiff as determined by deservingness of the plaintiff to suffer, the more the defendant would be regarded as responsible and therefore receive harsher sentence recommendations, while the plaintiff held less responsible. Evidently, observers do not make judgements for the defendant's and plaintiff's responsibility in conjunction as regards to plaintiff's deservingness to suffer. Rather, observers considered the plaintiff's deservingness to suffer only for the plaintiff when judging the amount of responsibility assigned to the plaintiff and the extent plaintiffs were accountable for their own damages. If one can assume the plaintiffs deservingness to suffer as analogous with Jones' and Aronson's (1973) respectable-nonrespectable variable for victim deservingness, then their results were not replicated. This is because plaintiff deservingness did not affect observers assignment of responsibility to the defendant.

On the other hand, the data supported the contention that the more severe the accident consequences for the plaintiff, the more responsible the defendant was judged, and the more extensive the sentence recommendations. This finding is in accordance with Walster's (1966) prediction that the responsibility one assigns increases as the magnitude of consequences increases. However, the severity of consequences did not have an affect on the observers assignment of responsibility to the plaintiff. As was predicted, no interaction was found between deservingness and severity main effects.
The data did not support the prediction that the main effect for deservingness would be strongest for those observers who have an internal locus of control orientation. However, the data did support the prediction that internals would judge the defendant as more responsible when accident consequences were severe due to the harsher fine recommendations given by internals. Therefore, in part, the result were found to support Phares* and Wilson's (1972) findings for locus of control dimension as a determinant for individual differences of attribution of responsibility. This is because they had found that severe cases produced an internal-external effect such that internals derogated defendants more than externals when stimulus situations were ambiguous rather than structured. In addition the results of this present study indicated that observers' locus of control orientation affected the degree of fault assigned to plaintiffs. Externals assigned more fault to the plaintiffs than internals.

The derogation of a highly respectable victim appears to be evident in cases where the victim is clearly innocent, as was the finding for a typical rape case (Jones & Aronson, 1973) such that the guilt of the defendant is highly unambiguous. However, when the guilt of the defendant is ambiguous, then it is very likely that the highly respectable plaintiff will not be derogated, as was the finding of this present study. Phares and Wilson (1972) did not examine perceived deservingness for the victim to suffer nor the affect that victim deservingness has for defendant blame and punishment.

Another explanation for why the respectable plaintiff was not regarded as deservingness the outcomes and derogated with more responsibility may be due to the manner jurors formulate their perceptions
of the accident. In order to determine a person’s estimate of victim deservingness, people use several considerations such as the contributions made by those involved in a situation, their needs as a result of the situation, and consideration for equal treatment (Leventhal, 1976). Furthermore, a person uses separate computational routes to estimate the victim’s deservingness, and then combines these estimates in order to arrive at an overall judgement of deservingness. Generally, people judge those involved in a situation fairly by giving them outcomes they deserve, but sometimes may be unable to change their actual outcomes. In such cases, according to Leventhal (1976), people may change their perceptions of the victim’s behavior, for example, by derogation them. Since the jurors in this present study were able to alter the outcomes for the plaintiff to some extent, that is, allow for greater compensation, there was no need to derogate the highly respectable plaintiff.

Therefore, it seems that the reason the present results occurred may best be explained in terms of equity theory (eg., Austin, Walster, & Utne, 1976, Leventhal, 1976) That is to say, jurors applied equity principles for consideration of mitigating circumstances (inputs) for determining rewards and handing down sentences (outcomes).

Qualitatively, an equitable relation can be determined from the following basic equation: \[ \frac{\text{outcomes}_A - \text{inputs}_A}{\text{inputs}_A} = \frac{\text{outcomes}_B - \text{inputs}_B}{\text{inputs}_B} \] (Adams, 1965). Applying this equation to the findings obtained from this study, one finds that equitable relations result. This is because, those plaintiffs regarded as less than respectable had outcomes significantly reduced for reparations due to the input of having been drinking. This balances with the regard for the defendant who was
considered to have little or no responsibility for the accident (input), therefore little punishment (outcome) was suggested by the jurors. In summary, the less respectable plaintiff was perceived as more deservingness to suffer responsibility for the consequences, and observers decreased the blame and punishment for the defendant. In addition, plaintiffs were compensated less when they were regarded as more deserving to suffer responsibility for the accident than those not deserving to suffer.

On the other hand, severe accident consequences were viewed as inputs for the defendant such that harsher punishments were suggested by the jurors (outcomes). In order to restore equity to the plaintiff for the severe consequences, plaintiffs were regarded as less deserving to suffer (input), which was most notable for non-drinking plaintiffs, and greater reparations (outcomes) were suggested by the jurors.

It appears therefore, that jurors take into consideration moral and ethical aspects for plaintiffs in awarding direct compensation to them, but have less regard for such factors when they pertain directly to defendant sentencing. In other words, jurors allocate rewards and punishments to plaintiffs and defendants based upon the perceived deservingness of each in order to restore equity to those involved. Plaintiffs deservingness to be rewarded and compensated is a function of their perceived moral and legal innocence, while the severity of consequences determines defendants deservingness to be punished.
REFERENCES


APPENDICES
APPENDIX A: Rotter Internal-External Locus of Control Scale
SOCIAL REACTION INVENTORY

This is a questionnaire to find out the way in which certain important events in our society affect different people. Each item consists of a pair of alternatives lettered a or b. Please select the one statement of each pair (and only one) which you more strongly believe to be the case as far as you’re concerned. Be sure to select the one you actually believe to be more true rather than the one you think you should choose or the one you would like to be true. This is a measure of personal belief, obviously there are no right or wrong answers.

Your answer, either a or b to each question on this inventory, is to be reported on the answer sheet. Print your name and any other information requested by the examiner on the answer sheet, then finish reading these directions. Do not begin until you are told to do so.

Please answer these items carefully but do not spend too much time on any one item. Be sure to find an answer for every choice. For each numbered question make an X on the line beside either the a or b, whichever you choose as the statement most true.

In some instances you may discover that you believe both statements or neither one. In such cases, be sure to select the one you more strongly believe to be the case as far as you’re concerned. Also try to respond to each item independently when making your choice; do not be influenced by your previous choices.

REMEMBER

Select that alternative which you personally believe to be more true.

I more strongly believe that:

1. a. Children get into trouble because their parents punish them too much
   b. The trouble with most children nowadays is that their parents are too easy with them.

2. a. Many of the unhappy things in people's lives are partly due to bad luck.
   b. People's misfortunes result from the mistakes they make.

3. a. One of the major reasons why we have wars is because people don't take enough interest in politics.
   b. There will always be wars, no matter how hard people try to prevent them.

4. a. In the long run people get the respect they deserve in this world.
   b. Unfortunately, and individual's worth often passes unrecognized no matter how hard he tries.
5. a. The idea that teachers are unfair to students in nonsense.
b. Most students don't realize the extent to which their grades are influenced by accidental happenings.

6. a. Without the right breaks one cannot be an effective leader.
b. Capable people who fail to become leaders have not taken advantage of their opportunities.

7. a. No matter how hard you try some people just don't like you.
b. People who can't get others to like them don't understand how to get along with others.

8. a. Heredity plays the major role in determining one's personality.
b. It is one's experiences in life which determine what they're like.

9. a. I have often found that what is going to happen will happen.
b. Trusting to fate has never turned out as well for me as making a decision to take a definite course of action.

10. a. In the case of the well prepared student there is rarely if ever such a thing as an unfair test.
b. Many times exam questions tend to be so unrelated to course work that studying is really useless.

11. a. Becoming a success is a matter of hard work, luck has little or nothing to do with it.
b. Getting a good job depends mainly on being in the right place at the right time.

12. a. The average citizen can have an influence in government decisions.
b. This world is run by the few people in power, and there is not much the little guy can do about it.

13. a. When I make plans, I am almost certain that I can make them work.
b. It is not always wise to plan too far ahead because many things turn out to be a matter of good or bad fortune anyhow.

14. a. There are certain people who are just no good.
b. There is some good in everybody.

15. a. In my case getting what I want has little or nothing to do with luck.
b. Many times we might just as well decide what to do by flipping a coin.

16. a. Who gets to be the boss often depends on who was lucky enough to be in the right place first.
b. Getting people to do the right thing depends upon ability, luck has little or nothing to do with it.
17. a. As far as world affairs are concerned, most of us are the victims of forces we can neither understand, nor control.
   b. By taking an active part in political and social affairs the people can control world events.

18. a. Most people can't realize the extent to which their lives are controlled by accidental happenings.
   b. There really is no such thing as "luck".

19. a. One should always be willing to admit his mistakes.
   b. It is usually best to cover up one's mistakes.

20. a. It is hard to know whether or not a person really likes you.
    b. How many friends you have depends upon how nice a person you are.

21. a. In the long run the bad things that happen to us are balanced by the good ones.
    b. Most misfortunes are the result of lack of ability, ignorance, laziness, or all three.

22. a. With enough effort we can wipe out political corruption.
    b. It is difficult for people to have much control over the things politicians do in office.

23. a. Sometimes I can't understand how teachers arrive at the grades they give.
    b. There is a direct connection between how hard I study and the grades I get.

24. a. A good leader expects people to decide for themselves what they should do.
    b. A good leader makes it clear to everybody what their jobs are.

25. a. Many times I feel that I have little influence over the things that happen to me.
    b. It is impossible for me to believe that chance or luck plays an important role in my life.

26. a. People are lonely because they don't try to be friendly.
    b. There's not much use in trying too hard to please people, if they like you, they like you.

27. a. There is too much emphasis on athletics in high school.
    b. Team sports are an excellent way to build character.

28. a. What happens to me is my own doing.
    b. Sometimes I feel that I don't have enough control over the direction my life is taking.

29. a. Most of the time I can't understand why politicians behave the way they do.
    b. In the long run the people are responsible for bad government on a national as well as on a local level.
APPENDIX B

Stimulus Materials
Defendant: Harrison

Plaintiff: Norwick

Harrison was driving home from work and happened to be following a farm truck which was carrying bales of hay. Suddenly, a bale of hay fell from the truck and landed on the road several car lengths in front of Harrison's car causing him to lose control. Harrison's car crossed the center line and side-swiped Norwick. Norwick received very minor cuts and bruises. His car was damaged but only slightly. The truck disappeared and was not identified.

Norwick claims that Harrison was following the truck too closely—otherwise he could have avoided the hay and prevented the accident. In short, Harrison was not alert and not a particularly intelligent driver.

Harrison claims on the other hand, that no one expects to have a bale of hay fall off a truck like that and, therefore, he should not be held accountable. He also claims that he was following a reasonable distance.

The police report indicated that neither Harrison or Norwick had been drinking alcohol according to the results of a breath analysis.
Defendant: Harrison
Plaintiff: Horwick

Harrison was driving home from work and happened to be following a farm truck which was carrying bales of hay. Suddenly, a bale of hay fell from the truck and landed on the road several car lengths in front of Harrison's car causing him to lose control. Harrison's car crossed the center line and side-swiped Horwick. Horwick received very minor cuts and bruises. His car was damaged but only slightly. The truck disappeared and was not identified.

Horwick claims that Harrison was following the truck too closely—otherwise he could have avoided the hay and prevented the accident. In short, Harrison was not alert and not a particularly intelligent driver.

Police investigation revealed that Horwick had been drinking. However, the recorded alcohol level in a breath analysis was just below the legal intoxication limit.

Harrison claims on the other hand, that no one expects to have a bale of hay fall off a truck like that and, therefore, he should not be held accountable. He also claims that he was following a reasonable distance. The police report indicated that there was no trace of alcohol according to a breath analysis for Harrison.
Defendant: Harrison
Plaintiff: Norwick

Harrison was driving home from work and happened to be following a farm truck which was carrying bales of hay. Suddenly, a bale of hay fell from the truck and landed on the road several car lengths in front of Harrison's car causing him to lose control. Harrison's car crossed the center line and side-swiped Norwick. Norwick's car received extensive damage. The truck disappeared and was not identified. Medical testimony established that Norwick received numerous multiple fractures, severe internal bleeding and was not able to resume work for a considerable period of time (8 months after the accident). According to a blood sample, there was no trace of alcohol for Norwick.

Norwick claims that Harrison was following the truck too closely—otherwise he could have avoided the hay and prevented the accident. In short, Harrison was not alert and not a particularly intelligent driver.

Harrison claims on the other hand that no one expects to have a bale of hay fall off a truck like that and, therefore, he should not be held accountable. He also claims that he was following a reasonable distance. The police report indicated that there was no trace of alcohol according to a breath analysis for Harrison.
Defendant: Harrison

Plaintiff: Norwick

Harrison was driving home from work and happened to be following a farm truck which was carrying bales of hay. Suddenly, a bale of hay fell from the truck and landed on the road several car lengths in front of Harrison's car causing him to lose control. Harrison's car crossed the center line and side-swiped Norwick. Norwick's car received extensive damage. The truck disappeared and was not identified. Medical testimony established that Norwick had received numerous fractures, severe internal bleeding and was not able to resume work for a considerable period of time (8 months after the accident).

Norwick claims that Harrison was following the truck too closely--otherwise he could have avoided the hay and prevented the accident. In short, Harrison was not alert and not a particularly intelligent driver.

Medical testimony revealed that Norwick had been drinking prior to the accident. However, the recorded alcohol level in a blood sample was just below the legal intoxication level.

Harrison claims on the other hand, that no one expects to have a bale of hay fall off a truck like that and, therefore, he should not be held accountable. He also claims that he was following a reasonable distance. The police report indicated that there was no trace of alcohol according to a breath analysis for Harrison.
Defendant: Doe
Plaintiff: Rack

Doe claimed the accident (sideswiping of Rack's car) was not his fault. Doe claims that he swerved from his lane striking the front of Rack's auto with his rear bumper in order to avoid striking a child that stepped into the street. Doe's claim concerning the child was corroborated by the testimony of other children in the vicinity. The weather was clear and neither party was exceeding the speed limit. Rack received minor abrasions and damage to his car was not extensive. Neither Doe or Rack was reported to have been drinking alcohol according to the police report.

Rack claims that although in all probability the child did step in front of Doe's car, he should have been more alert. After all, Rack claims, it was 4:00 PM (just when local schools let out) and signs clearly indicated that drivers should beware of children.
Defendant: Doe
Plaintiff: Rack

Doe claimed the accident (sideswiping of Rack's car) was not his fault. Doe claims that he swerved from his lane striking the front of Rack's auto with his rear bumper in order to avoid striking a child that stepped into the street. Doe's claim concerning the child was corroborated by the testimony of other children in the vicinity. The weather was clear and neither party was exceeding the speed limit. Rack received minor abrasions and damage to his car was not extensive. The results of a breath analysis revealed that Rack had been drinking, however, the alcohol level was just below that of the legal intoxication limit. The police indicated that Doe had not been drinking alcohol.

Rack claims that in all probability the child did step in front of Doe's car, he should have been more alert. After all, Rack claims, it was 4:00 PM (just when local schools let out) and signs clearly indicated that drivers should beware of children.
Defendant: Doe
Plaintiff: Rack

Doe claimed the accident (sideswiping of Rack's car) was not his fault. Doe claims that he swerved from his lane striking the front of Rack's auto with his rear bumper in order to avoid striking a child that stepped into the street. Doe's claim concerning the child was corroborated by the testimony of other children in the vicinity. The weather was clear and neither party was exceeding the speed limit. Rack received a whiplash and several fractures, and was incapacitated for work (5 months after the accident). Damage to Rack's car was considerable. Neither Doe or Rack was reported to have been drinking alcohol according to the police report.

Rack claims that in all probability the child did step in front of Doe's car, he should have been more alert. After all, Rack claims, it was 4:00 PM (just when local schools let out) and signs clearly indicated that drivers should beware of children.
Defendant:  Doe  

Plaintiff:  Rack  

Doe claimed the accident (sideswiping of Rack's car) was not his fault. Doe claims that he swerved from his lane striking the front of Rack's auto with his rear bumper in order to avoid striking a child that stepped into the street. Doe's claim concerning the child was corroborated by the testimony of other children in the vicinity. The weather was clear and neither party was exceeding the speed limit. Rack received a whiplash and several fractures, and he was incapacitated for work (5 months after the accident). Damage to Rack's car was considerable.

The results of a blood sample revealed that Rack had been drinking, however, the alcohol level was just below the legal intoxication limit. The police report based on a breath analysis, indicated no trace of alcohol for Doe.

Rack claims that in all probability the child did step in front of Doe's car, he should have been more alert. After all, Rack claims, it was 4:00 PM (just when local schools let out) and signs clearly indicated that drivers should beware of children.
Defendant: McGee
Plaintiff: Bell

McGee claims he was temporarily blinded by the headlights of the car preceding Bell through the turn. McGee's speed could not be assessed since there were no skid marks. However, a pedestrian believes McGee's speed was not excessive. The collision occurred at 11:40 PM. The weather was clear and no mechanical impairments were observed on McGee's car. Bell received minor abrasions and damage to his auto was only slight.

Bell's lawyer states that either McGee was driving too fast or did not know how to handle a car properly after dark. But in either case he was at fault.

McGee's lawyer contends that anyone can be blinded by the lights of an oncoming car and, therefore, his responsibility was reduced.

Police reports indicated that neither Bell or McGee had been drinking alcohol based on the results of breath analyses.
Defendant: McGee  
Plaintiff: Bell

McGee claims he was temporarily blinded by the headlights of the car preceding Bell through the turn. McGee’s speed could not be assessed since there were no skid marks. However, a pedestrian believes McGee’s speed was not excessive. The collision occurred at 11:40 PM. The weather was clear and no mechanical impairments were observed on McGee’s car. Bell received minor abrasions and damage to his auto was only slight. Police testimony stated Bell had been drinking, however, the alcohol level according to a breath analysis was just below the legal intoxication limit.

Bell’s lawyer states that either McGee was driving too fast or did not know how to handle a car properly after dark. But in either case, he was not at fault.

McGee’s lawyer contends that anyone can be blinded by the lights of an oncoming car and, therefore, his responsibility was reduced. Police investigation determined McGee had not been drinking alcohol prior to the accident.
Defendant: McGee
Plaintiff: Bell

McGee claims he was temporarily blinded by the headlights of the car preceding Bell through the turn. McGee's speed could not be assessed since there were no skid marks. However, a pedestrian believes McGee's speed was not excessive. The collision occurred at 11:40 PM. The weather was clear and no mechanical impairments were observed on McGee's car.

Bell received fractures and internal bleeding and also sustained extensive damage to his car. He was still partially incapacitated for work. Medical testimony indicated that there was no trace of alcohol in a blood sample from Bell.

Bell's lawyer states that either McGee was driving too fast or did not know how to handle a car properly after dark. But in either case, he was at fault.

McGee's lawyer contends that anyone can be blinded by the lights of an oncoming car and, therefore his responsibility reduced. Police investigation determined McGee had not been drinking alcohol prior to the accident.
Defendant: McGee

Plaintiff: Bell

McGee claims he was temporarily blinded by the headlights of the car preceding Bell through the turn. McGee's speed could not be assessed since there were no skid marks. However, a pedestrian believes McGee's speed was not excessive. The collision occurred at 11:40 PM. The weather was clear and no mechanical impairments were observed on McGee's car.

Bell received fractures and internal bleeding and also sustained extensive damage to his car. He was still partially incapacitated for work. Medical testimony indicated that the alcohol level in a blood sample was just below the legal intoxication limit for Bell.

Bell's lawyer states that either McGee was driving too fast or did not know how to handle a car properly after dark. But in either case, he was at fault.

McGee's lawyer contends that anyone can be blinded by the lights of an oncoming car and, therefore, his responsibility reduced. Police investigation determined that McGee had not been drinking alcohol prior to the accident.
Defendant:  Mills
Plaintiff:  Denning

Denning was traveling west. Mills was traveling east. Mills hit a small but deep pothole created by recent rains. The pothole was very difficult to see when driving east. Striking the pothole caused Mills' tie-rod (part of the assembly controlling the steering of the car) to break. Mills' car went out of control, crossed the center line and side-swiped Denning's vehicle causing only moderate damage. Witnesses said both parties were well within the speed limit. Denning suffered minor cuts and bruises.

Mills argued that he could not anticipate hitting the hole and that it was not his fault that his car careened out of control.

Denning argued that Mills should have been more alert for bad road conditions following the recent rains and that, besides, he should have had more knowledge about how to control a car that had a steering breakdown.

Police investigation revealed that neither Mills or Denning had been drinking alcohol based upon breath analyses.
Defendant: Mills

Plaintiff: Denning

Denning was traveling west. Mills was traveling east. Mills hit a small but deep pothole created by recent rains. The pothole was very difficult to see when driving east. Striking the pothole caused Mills' tie-rod (part of the assembly controlling the steering of the car) to break. Mills' car went out of control, crossed the center line and side-swiped Denning's vehicle causing only moderate damage. Witnesses said both parties were well within the speed limit.

Denning suffered minor cuts and bruises. According to the police report, Denning had been drinking. However, the breath analysis determined that his alcohol level was just below the legal intoxication limit.

Mills argued that he could not anticipate hitting the hole and that it was not his fault that his car careened out of control. The police report indicated that Mills had no trace of alcohol in his system according to a breath analysis.

Denning argued that Mills should have been more alert for bad road conditions following the recent rains and that, besides, he should have had more knowledge about how to control a car that had a steering breakdown.
Defendant: Mills
Plaintiff: Denning

Denning was traveling west. Mills was traveling east. Mills hit a small but deep pothole created by recent rains. The pothole was very difficult to see when driving east. Striking the pothole caused Mills' tie-rod (part of the assembly controlling the steering of the car) to break. Mills' car went out of control, crossed the center line and struck Denning's vehicle head-on (causing severe damage to Denning's car). Witnesses said both parties were well within the speed limit.

Denning suffered severe internal bleeding and 3 badly broken bones as a result of the collision. He was still not able to work full-time (11 months after the accident). Medical testimony indicated that there was no trace of alcohol in a blood sample.

Mills argued that he could not anticipate hitting the hole and that it was not his fault that his car careened out of control. A police report revealed that Mills had not been drinking alcohol.

Denning argued that Mills should have been more alert for bad road conditions following the recent rains and that, besides, he should have had more knowledge about how to control a car that had a steering breakdown.
Defendant: Mills
Plaintiff: Denning

Denning was traveling west. Mills was traveling east. Mills hit a small but deep pothole created by recent rains. The pothole was very difficult to see when driving east. Striking the pothole caused Mills' tie-rod (part of the assembly controlling the steering of the car) to break. Mills' car went out of control, crossed the center line and struck Denning's vehicle head-on (causing severe damage to Denning's car). Witnesses said both parties were well within the speed limit.

Denning suffered severe internal bleeding and 3 badly broken bones as a result of the collision. He was still not able to work full-time (11 months after the accident). Medical testimony indicated that there was no trace of alcohol in a blood sample.

Mills argued that he could not anticipate hitting the hole and that it was not his fault that his car careened out of control. A police report revealed that Mills had not been drinking alcohol.

Denning argued that Mills should have been more alert for bad road conditions following the recent rains and that, besides, he should have had more knowledge about how to control a car that had a steering breakdown.
Defendant: Mills

Plaintiff: Denning

Denning was traveling west. Mills was traveling east. Mills hit a small but deep pothole created by recent rains. The pothole was very difficult to see when driving east. Striking the pothole caused Mills' tie-rod (part of the assembly controlling the steering of the car) to break. Mills' car went out of control, crossed the center lane and struck Denning's vehicle head-on (causing severe damage to Denning's car). Witnesses said both parties were well within the speed limit.

Denning suffered severe internal bleeding and 3 badly broken bones as a result of the collision. He was still not able to work full-time (11 months after the accident). Medical testimony revealed that the alcohol level in a blood sample was just below the legal intoxication limit.

Mills argued that he could not anticipate hitting the hole and that it was not his fault that his car careened out of control. The police report indicated that Mills had no trace of alcohol in his system according to a breath analysis.

Denning argued that Mills should have been more alert for bad road conditions following the recent rains and that, besides, he should have had more knowledge about how to control a car that had a steering break-down.
APPENDIX C

Responsibility Attribution Scales
I. Please rate your feelings about the defendant's responsibility for the accident. That is, the degree to which the accident was his fault.

Circle one. Not at all responsible Moderately responsible Very responsible

I personally feel he was: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6

II. Remember. The following court sentences should be considered in addition to any costs of repairs or medical expenses. I would recommend that the judge impose upon the defendant, the following sentence. Place a check next to one alternative under A, B, and C.

A. 1. Nothing
   2. Suspend his driver's license for one month
   3. Suspend his driver's license for three months
   4. Suspend his driver's license for six months
   5. Suspend his driver's license for six months and sentence him to one weekend in jail
   6. Suspend his driver's license and sentence him to three weekends in jail
   7. Revoke his driver's license completely and sentence him to one full month in jail

B. 1. Nothing
   2. Recommend that he study the driving manual
   3. Require that he re-read and pass a test on the driving manual
   4. Require that he re-read and pass a test on the driving manual and also take the driving test again
5. Require that he spend three sessions in a driver training course and pass the driving test again

6. Require that he spend nine sessions in a driver training course and pass the driving test again

7. Require that he spend 15 sessions in a driver training course and pass the driving test again

C. Fine of:

1. Nothing
2. $1 - 50
3. $51 - 100
4. $101 - 250
5. $251 - 500
6. $501 - 1,000
7. over $1,000

III. Please rate your feelings about the plaintiff's responsibility for the accident. That is, the degree to which the accident was his fault.

Circle one.

I personally feel he was: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6

Not at all responsible Moderately responsible Very responsible

IV. In addition to the sentences recommended for the defendant, I would suggest that the plaintiff be accountable for the following expenses. Place a check next to one alternative under A, and determine the dollar amount.

A. Medical

1. Nothing
2. $1 - 20%
B. Car damages

_____ 1. Nothing
_____ 2. 1 - 20%
_____ 3. 21 - 40%
_____ 4. 41 - 60%
_____ 5. 61 - 80%
_____ 6. 81 - 100%
_____ 7. 100% and inconveniences

C. Pain and suffering, indicate dollar amount: $____________________

V. Please rate your feelings about the severity of the accident.

That is, the extent that you feel the plaintiff suffered.
Circle one:

Not at all Moderately Very much

I personally feel he suffered: 0  1  2  3  4  5  6
APPENDIX D

Analysis of Variance Tables and Figure
Table I

Multivariate Analysis of Variance:
Defendant Variables

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*p < .01

**p < .001
TABLE II

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TABLE IV

Univariate Analysis of Variance:
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Univariate Analysis of Variance:
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### TABLE VI

Univariate Analysis of Variance:

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**p < .001
## TABLE VII

Univariate Analysis of Variance:

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*p < .10*
TABLE X

Univariate Analysis of Variance:

Pain and Suffering Retributions

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Univariate Analysis of Variance:

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<td>L x D</td>
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<td>&lt; 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>S x D</td>
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<td>&lt; 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Within cell error (NS(L))</td>
<td>98</td>
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<td>&lt; 1</td>
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<td>L x S x D</td>
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<td>&lt; 1</td>
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*p < .001
Figure 2. Relationship between severity of outcome and locus of control.
APPENDIX E

Means and Standard Deviation Tables
TABLE XII

Means and Standard Deviations for Responsibility Attribution Variables by Internal and External Subjects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variables</th>
<th>High Victim Severity</th>
<th>Low Victim Severity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N = 100</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aDefendant responsiblity</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>1.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aLicense</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aDriver</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>1.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aFine</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>1.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bPlaintiff responsiblity</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>1.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cMedical expenses</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>1.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cAuto expenses</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>1.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dPain and suffering retributions</td>
<td>2432.11</td>
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<td>eSeverity</td>
<td>5.01</td>
<td>1.17</td>
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**TABLE XIII**

Means and Standard Deviations for Responsibility Attribution Variables by Internal Subjects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variables</th>
<th>High Victim Severity</th>
<th>Low Victim Severity</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>High Defendant</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Deservingness</td>
</tr>
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<td>( \bar{X} ) SD</td>
<td>( \bar{X} ) SD</td>
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<td>4.08 1.76</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>aLicense</td>
<td>1.62 .88</td>
<td>1.72 .90</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1.36 .78</td>
<td>1.18 .52</td>
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<tr>
<td>suspension</td>
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<td>3.52 2.01</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>cMedical</td>
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<td>expenses</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2.60 2.05</td>
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<td>dPain and suffering</td>
<td>( 2912.02 ) ( 14150.38 )</td>
<td>( 1370.02 ) ( 2517.54 )</td>
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<tr>
<td>retributions</td>
<td>( 34.44 ) ( 89.32 )</td>
<td>( 46.52 ) ( 169.76 )</td>
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<tr>
<td>eSeverity</td>
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<td>2.34 .96</td>
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TABLE XIV
Means and Standard Deviations for Responsibility Attribution Variables by External Subjects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>High Victim Severity</th>
<th>Low Victim Severity</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low Defendant</td>
<td>High Defendant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Deservingness</td>
<td>Deservingness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>SD</td>
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<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
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<td>License</td>
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<td>.91</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suspension</td>
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<td>Driver</td>
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<td>Plaintiff</td>
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<td>4439.24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pain and</td>
<td>4.90</td>
<td>1.13</td>
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</table>

\footnote{a, b, c, d, e}
Footnotes For Means and Standard Deviation Tables

\[a\] The higher the mean, the greater the responsibility, license suspension/jail, driver re-education, and fine assigned the defendant.

\[b\] The higher the mean, the greater the responsibility assigned.

\[c\] The higher the mean, the more the plaintiff pays medical and auto expenses.

\[d\] The higher the mean, the greater the retributions awarded the plaintiff.

\[e\] The higher the mean, the greater the severity judged for the plaintiff.