Criminals are Punished Less When They Harm Statistical Victims

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Abstract

There is a wealth of literature showing that people feel less compassion for statistical victims than for identified victims. But do people punish criminals less when they harm statistical victims than when they harm identified victims? We don't know if this study has been run already, but Josh thinks it's an interesting idea.

Keywords: statistical victims, law and emotion, sentencing

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Create separate paragraphs with double spaces.

You can *italicize* text with the textit function, if needed. For some special symbols that LaTeX uses, such as % or $, you need to use a backslash before the symbol.

Method

Overview

Subjects read about a legal case in which the criminal stole money from one identifiable victim, or from many statistical victims. Then they indicated how many years they thought the criminal should spend in prison.

Subjects

Subjects were 40 students (27 female) who participated for course credit.

Procedure

First Phase of the Study. Subjects did tasks A, B, and C.

Second Phase of the Study. Subjects did tasks X, Y, and Z.

Results

Subjects' punishment was no different when they read about identifiable victims ($M = 3.75$, $SD = 1.01$) than when they read about statistical victims ($M = 3.42$, $SD = 0.79$), $t(35.89) = 1.13$, $p = 0.264$.

Discussion

Now, let's discuss the results...