### **BACHELOR THESIS**

Faculty of Behavioural, Management, and Social Sciences (BMS) Bachelor of Psychology

# Motivating Factors for Perpetrators to Participate in Victim-Offender Mediation

Replicating the Relationship Effect

L.H. GROENEVELD

Supervision: Dr. S. Zebel & Dr. P. de Vries City & Country: Enschede, The Netherlands Date: 19-06-2017

## **UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE.**

#### Abstract

This study aimed to find out what motivates perpetrators to participate in Victim-Offender Mediation (VOM). VOM is the most prevalent type of Restorative Justice (RJ); a justice system which focuses on the uniqueness of both victim and perpetrator by giving them the opportunity to be heard and restore relationships. A study of Rosies (2017) found that having a relationship with the victim positively influences perpetrators' willingness to participate in VOM (the relationship effect). This study tried to replicate this result and tested two explanations for this relationship effect. First, based on the Needs-Based Model of Reconciliation of Shnabel and Nadler (2008), it was expected that the need for acceptance amongst perpetrators would mediate this effect. Because research (Zebel, 2012) has found that participating in VOM can have multiple positive effects, among which the reduction of feelings of anger towards the offender, it has been argued that such reduced emotions would lead to less escalations in the future. In a similar vein, it was expected that a high tendency to avoid escalations amongst perpetrators had a mediating influence on the relationship effect.

The study consisted of a questionnaire where participants had to empathize with the idea of stealing from someone in a locker room. Two conditions were created: 'no relationship' vs. 'relationship', where in the first condition the victim remained a complete stranger and in the second condition the victim was a teammate of the participant. The participants were provided with a story and a video, where a scenario of a theft was presented.

Results indicated that, unexpectedly, the relationship effect was not replicated in this study: Being in a relationship with the victim did not have a positive influence on the willingness of perpetrators to participate in VOM. Moreover, no significant indirect effects were found regarding the proposed mediators. Although a higher need for acceptance did predict greater willingness to participate in VOM, having a relationship with the victim did not have anything to do with this in this study. The willingness had been measured differently in other studies, which could be a reason for not finding the same results. Another reason could be that the manipulation had not worked out well, or that people saw VOM as a punishment because they were not well informed. The most important limitation of this study would be, however, the fact that the manipulation could not have been strong enough. The movie could also have played a role in this: it was exactly the same in both conditions. In the end, it would be important to conduct more research considering this topic, as VOM could lead to multiple positive effects: less fear and anger amongst victims, and less recidivism of perpetrators.

#### Samenvatting

Dit onderzoek probeerde erachter te komen wat misdadigers motiveert om deel te nemen in 'Victim-Offender-Mediation' (VOM). VOM is de meest voorkomende vorm van 'Restorative Justice' (RJ); een rechtssysteem wat focust op de uniekheid van slachtoffers en daders door hen de mogelijkheid te geven om gehoord te worden en om relaties te herstellen. Rosies (2017) vond dat het hebben van een relatie met het slachtoffer de bereidheid om deel te nemen aan VOM positief beïnvloedt (het relatie-effect). Dit onderzoek probeerde dit resultaat te repliceren en testte twee verklaringen voor dit effect. Gebaseerd op het 'Needs-Based Model of Reconciliation' (Shnabel en Nadler, 2008), werd verwacht dat een behoefte aan acceptatie van misdadigers dit effect zou mediëren. Omdat Zebel (2012) had gevonden dat deelnemen aan VOM positieve effecten kan hebben, waaronder afname van boosheid gericht naar de misdadiger, was het beargumenteerd dat afname van die emoties kan leiden tot minder escalaties in de toekomst. Zo was het verwacht dat een hoge neiging van misdadigers om escalaties te voorkomen een mediërende invloed zal hebben op het relatie- effect.

Het onderzoek bestond uit een vragenlijst waar deelnemers zich moesten inleven in het idee dat ze van iemand in een kleedkamer stalen. Er waren twee condities: 'geen relatie' vs. 'relatie'. In de eerste conditie bleef het slachtoffer een vreemdeling en in de tweede conditie was het slachtoffer een teamgenoot van de deelnemer. De deelnemers werden voorzien van een verhaal en een video, waarin een scenario van diefstal was gepresenteerd.

De resultaten lieten, onverwachts, zien dat het relatie-effect niet gerepliceerd werd in dit onderzoek. Het hebben van een relatie met het slachtoffer had geen effect op de bereidheid van misdadigers om deel te nemen aan VOM. Bovendien waren er geen significante indirecte effecten gevonden voor de voorgestelde mediatoren. Een hogere behoefte aan acceptatie voorspelde wel meer bereidheid om deel te nemen aan VOM, maar een relatie met het slachtoffer had hier niks mee te maken. De bereidheid om deel te nemen was anders gemeten dan in andere onderzoeken, wat een reden zou kunnen zijn voor het niet vinden van dezelfde resultaten. Een andere reden zou kunnen zijn dat de manipulatie niet goed gewerkt heeft, of dat men VOM als een straf zag omdat ze niet goed geïnformeerd waren. Echter, de grootste limitatie van dit onderzoek is het feit dat de manipulatie waarschijnlijk niet sterk genoeg was. De film kan hier ook een rol in hebben gespeeld: die was precies hetzelfde in beide condities. Uiteindelijk is het belangrijk om meer onderzoek te doen naar dit onderwerp, aangezien VOM kan leiden tot meerdere positieve effecten: minder angst en boosheid onder slachtoffers, en minder recidive onder misdadigers.

#### Introduction

Whereas the concept of Restorative Justice (RJ) has existed in North America since the late 1970s (Umbreit, Coates, & Vos, 2004; Choi, Bazemore, & Gilbert, 2011; Lens, Pemberton, & Bogaerts, 2013; Zehr, 2002), it only gained its popularity in the Netherlands since 11 years now (www.perspectiefherstelbemiddeling.nl). RJ did exist in the Netherlands before, it just was not as well-known as it is now. As stated in the work of Zehr (2002), RJ is a "movement to address the needs and roles of victims of crime, offenders, and communities, rather than the legal system that holds offenders accountable purely in relation to violation of the state and law". Restorative Justice gives victims the opportunity to be heard, and it addresses needs and restores relationships; perhaps more effectively than the traditional ways of handling in the criminal justice process (Umbreit et al., 2004; Choi et al., 2011; Paul, 2015). Traditionally, victims affected by criminal behaviour had no place in the justice process and it has been shown that victims participating in restorative justice processes (Braithwaite, 2002; Umbreit et al., 2004; Borton, 2009; Paul, 2015).

#### **Victim-Offender Mediation**

The most prevalent way to participate in Restorative Justice is Victim-Offender Mediation (VOM). VOM is a way for victims to be able to interact with perpetrators in order to hold them accountable for their behaviour, whilst having an attending mediator to assist them (Umbreit et al., 2004; Paul & Schenck-Hamlin, 2017). There are a lot of advantages for victims who participate in VOM, but it should be noted that not all victims have a high need to participate in VOM; as cited in Lens et al. (2013), Orth and Maercker (2009) stated that the impact of the crime may play a role in the victim's opinion on the criminal justice procedure. Lens et al. (2013) have found that increased levels of anxiety of victims and stress will reduce the likelihood of them to participate in face-to-face mediation. A study of Zebel, Ufkes, and Schreurs (2017) showed that the willingness of victims of severe crimes to participate in VOM would increase when they are offered sufficient time after the crime took place.

By participating in VOM, victims will most likely have a higher satisfaction rate of their justice process than when this is not the case (Borton, 2009; Choi et al., 2011). Moreover, a lot of victims stated that they valued the opportunity to talk (face-to-face) with the perpetrator about the feelings they had about the crime (Umbreit et al., 2004). Although it was found that high levels of anxiety and stress could reduce the probability of participating in VOM (Lens et al., 2013), studies have also found that participating could lead to a decrease

of those feelings. Participating in VOM can namely lead to a decrease of fear and an increase of feelings of empowerment amongst victims (Morris, 2002; Strang, 2006; Choi et al., 2011).

As shown above, multiple studies have explained the reasons which victims could have for participating in VOM and what the outcomes are for them of participation. However, less is known about the reasons of perpetrators to partake in VOM. If this knowledge would actually be available, institutions like Perspectief Herstelbemiddeling in the Netherlands could respond to this information and find ways to better address and perhaps influence perpetrators to participate. This could in turn lead to less recidivism (Morris, 2002; Rodriguez, 2007; Borton, 2009; Umbreit et al., 2004). Therefore, this study focused on how perpetrators could be motivated to participate in VOM.

#### **VOM in the Netherlands**

In the Netherlands, RJ happens mostly through the organization 'Slachtoffer in Beeld'(SiB), which changed its name in April 2017 to 'Perspectief Herstelbemiddeling' (PH). This organization assumes that stakeholders of a crime have the ability to contribute to their own recovery and it focuses on the uniqueness of each person and crime. PH offers different forms of RJ, namely a face-to-face conversation between victims and offenders, letter writing between parties, and shuttle mediation (PH, n.d.). Different forms of RJ are offered to the stakeholders so that each one can find a suitable form for themselves.

There are multiple outcomes which RJ aspires to achieve. For instance, it aims to give the victims a feeling of empowerment and to restore their sense of security and control (Braithwaite, 2002; Morris, 2002; Choi et al., 2011; Paul, 2015). RJ also gives the opportunity for victims to get information from the perpetrators and the latter are able to restore their responsibility (Morris 2002; Umbreit et al., 2004; Paul, 2015). Braithwaite (2002) emphasizes that the aim of RJ is to soothe the hurts that a victim had felt because of the injustice. Paul (2015) and Morris (2002) even state to hope for reconciliation between the victims and perpetrators, although Morris also acknowledges that this is not always possible (Morris, 2002).

However, as showed before, RJ also exists to have positive effects for the perpetrators. Similar to victims, perpetrators often have a higher satisfaction rate when participating in RJ (McCold & Wachtel, 2002). Moreover, multiple studies have found that perpetrators participating in RJ programs are less likely to reoffend than those who do not participate in RJ (Borton, 2009; Bradshaw, Roseborough, & Umbreit, 2006; Umbreit et al., 2004).

#### Relationships

The study of Rosies (2017) showed that perpetrators were more willing to participate in VOM when they had to keep contact with the victims (meeting at a sports event) than when this was not the case. This effect is labeled here as the 'Relationship Effect'. It has not been shown yet how this effect can be explained. Therefore, this study will focus on why perpetrators are more willing to participate in VOM when there is a relationship with the victim than when there is no relationship.

In general, humans have a natural desire to establish and sustain belongingness towards others (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Baumeister and Leary (1995) state that the need to belong indicates having meaningful relationships with people. This can also be a relationship in which you gain skills from someone. In the current study, having a relationship indicates being in contact with another person; acquaintances (such as teammates). This is the case because it is expected that participants would find it more difficult to empathize with the idea of committing a crime towards a close friend or family member, especially when the idea of one's moral image is taken into consideration. Moreover, the study of Rosies (2017) used the same kind of relationship in her research, and in order to be able to replicate her results, it should concern the same relationship in this study as well. Also, this study is about pickpocketing and the official site of the Dutch police states that this happens most frequently in public spaces like dressing rooms (politie.nl/themas/zakkenrollen.html).

It has been chosen to focus this study on pickpocketing, because it was believed that this would be easier to empathize with than with a more severe crime like rape or murder. Moreover, a study of Gehm (1990) has shown that individuals (both victims and perpetrators) are more willing to participate in VOM when they are involved with an offence than when they are involved with a felony (Umbreit et al., 2004). A recent study of Van Velzen (2016) had the same results as there were significant effects of "wrongfulness of the crime" (seriousness) on the intention to participate in mediated contact, meaning that Van Velzen also found that individuals were more motivated to participate in VOM when they imagined being victim of a less serious crime than a more serious one.

#### The Needs-Based model

The studies of Shnabel and Nadler (2008) and Nachlieli and Shnabel (2013) are among the few to address the needs of the victims as well as those of the perpetrators in the domain of reconciliation. A model is proposed where both victims and perpetrators have certain (moral) identities. The core of the Needs-Based model lays in the fact that it acknowledges that it

should be of importance to be aware of the different needs of victims and perpetrators in order to achieve reconciliation. As people are usually willing to maintain positive identities, it is argued here that victims may wish to restore their empowered identity through mediation. This can happen when perpetrators for instance apologize and show respect to the victim during mediation; this may help them to feel empowered (Shnabel et al. 2008).

On the other hand, being able to offer an apology and gain forgiveness from the victim could be a reason for perpetrators to participate in VOM, since forgiveness may restore their moral image. In this model, restoring their moral image is viewed as a need of many perpetrators. This is in line with the fact that perpetrators often fear the risk of social exclusion, and that they have the need to gain (re)acceptance to the community from which they feel potentially excluded (Shnabel et al., 2008; Nachlieli et al., 2013; Harth & Shnabel, 2015). The fear of being socially excluded could be caused by the natural desire to establish and sustain belongingness towards others, the desire which was found by Baumeister and Leary (1995).

In terms of the Needs-Based Model, victims could re-accept perpetrators by expressing readiness to form friendships with the perpetrators (Shnabel & Nadler, 2008). Baumeister and Leary (1995) showed that interactions with strangers are not appealing for most people, except when there is a chance on long-term relationships (like friendships). Moreover, it seems that a lot of perpetrators are more willing to reconcile with their victims after they receive accepting messages from them (Nachlieli et al., 2013). Based on the knowledge about relationship forming and the Needs-Based Model, it is expected that the need for acceptance could be one explanatory factor of the relationship effect, as shown in figure 1. Therefore, the following hypotheses have been formulated:

H1: Perpetrators in a relationship with the victim prior to the delict are more likely to participate in VOM than those who are not in a relationship with the victimH2a: The effect of H1 is caused by a higher need for acceptance amongst the perpetrators in a relationship with the victim than amongst those who are not in a relationship with the victim

#### Avoidance

Another explanatory factor could have a more practical base: perpetrators may want to avoid having any conflicts or escalations when encountering or contacting the victim again in the future (figure 1). In this study, participating in VOM itself is not seen as a trigger for escalations. The study of Landa-Gonzalez (2008) found that of all the ways to deal with

conflict, people in general tend to avoid them. Another study found that especially individuals with little control over outcomes chose to avoid interpersonal conflict (Langner, Epel, Matthews, Moskowitz, & Adler, 2012). Moreover, victims often experience feelings of anger towards the perpetrators, which could cause situations to escalate into conflicts. Research from Zebel (2012) showed that these feelings reduce after having participated in face-to-face VOM. A study of Fullwood (2007) found that it might be beneficial to have face-to-face contact (VOM), because in that case people will see each other as more favourable afterwards. This could in turn be helpful for future contact. As cited in Rosies (2017), Staub (2005) found that when people are living in the same neighbourhood – and thus seeing each other regularly – are eager to avoid any confrontations. Since participating in VOM can reduce and resolve conflict (Umbreit, Coates, & Vos, 2007), it is therefore expected that perpetrators choose to participate in VOM when they are motivated to avoid future escalations with the victim. Based on this expectation, the following hypothesis has been formulated:

**H2b:** The effect of H1 is caused by a higher tendency to avoid future escalation amongst the perpetrators in a relationship with the victim than amongst those who are not in a relationship with the victim



Figure 1. Conceptual model

#### Methods

#### **Participants and Design**

This research had a between-group design with two conditions ('relationship' vs. 'no relationship'). The dependent variable was the willingness to participate in VOM and the measured mediator variables were the need for acceptance and the tendency to avoid escalations amongst participants.

The participants of this study were recruited via SONA and personal networks such as Facebook, WhatsApp and Gmail. In total, 235 participants started the questionnaire. However, 99 of these were disregarded because they had not finished the questionnaire (which was mostly caused by technical difficulties with the movie). Thus, a total of 136 participants finished the questionnaire of the study and these were all used for the analyses, because they stated to have been sufficiently able to empathize with the situation. The participants were randomly divided over the two conditions: there were 69 participants in the 'no relationship' condition, and 67 participants in the 'relationship' condition. Of those participants, 41 were male and 95 were female. The participants were partly of Dutch nationality (61%), partly of German nationality (34.6%), and partly of another nationality (4.4%). They had a minimum age of 18 years old and the oldest participant had an age of 74 (M = 26.9; SD = 13.3). The participants were also asked about their highest reached level of education, however, because a lot of participants had interpreted this question differently than was intended the results were deviant from the expected. For instance, a lot of participants (students) chose to fill in 'secondary education' where it was meant for them to fill in 'university'. The participants were divided into having reached secondary education (51.5%), secondary vocational education (8.8%), higher education (18.4%), and university (21.3%).

#### Procedure

First, it should be noted that everything from this study was created in English as well as in Dutch, because it was expected that more Dutch participants could be reached when the questionnaire was in Dutch. The participants could choose whether they wanted to do the questionnaire in English or in Dutch, except those who participated via SONA where it was only possible to do the English version. The Dutch materials were completely identical to the English materials and thus it was not expected that this difference in languages could cause any biases.

*The start.* The participants started the questionnaire in Qualtrics where they received the informed consent in which a brief explanation of the research was given. No information

about the goal of the research had been given until the very end of the experiment. After having read the informed consent, the concept of VOM was explained. The introduction consisted out of a short informative text wherein the main concepts of VOM were made clear (Appendix A).

*Manipulation of relationship.* Next, the participants were equally divided into the two conditions. For each condition, a story has been created which explained that the participant was an offender of theft. At the beginning of each condition, it was explicitly asked to the participants to empathize with the situation. In order to make it easier for participants to empathize with the idea of the theft, the stories included an excuse for the thief to commit the crime. This excuse included the fact that the thief's grandmother had fallen ill and the thief had to pay for the expense. The two stories were exactly the same except for one aspect: in the control condition it was explained that the participant had a relation with the victim (the victim was a teammate), whereas in the other condition the victim remained a complete stranger. The conditions can be found in Appendix B. At the end of both stories, the participant was informed – not pressured – that there was a possibility to participate in VOM.

*The movie*. After the participants read the story, they were presented the exact same situation in a short movie. In this movie, a thief's perspective of stealing from someone's bag in a locker room was presented<sup>1</sup>. This film was shown in order to hopefully increase the ability of participants to empathize with the situation (Christian, Edwards, & Bradley, 2010).

*The questions.* After having seen the movie, the participants had to fill in the questionnaire. This questionnaire existed out of a number of items, which tried to measure different constructs. These constructs can be found in the next paragraph and in Appendix C. After the questionnaire, the participants had been given the opportunity to debrief. In this section, the participants were showed gratitude and there was a more elaborate explanation on the research including the goal of it.

*Mediator and Dependent Variables.* The mediator and dependent variables consisted out of six constructs of which two directly measured the mediator variables: the need for acceptance and the tendency to avoid escalations. All items of all constructs were the same for each participant and can be found in Appendix C. Every closed question in these constructs was measured with a seven-point Likert scale ([1] strongly disagree – [7] strongly agree).

The dependent variable 'Willingness to participate in VOM' was directly measured through the construct 'Willingness' which consisted out of five items, for instance: "*I would* 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The video can be found at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eKYEh2-mt94

like to participate in VOM", "If I were to be approached to participate in VOM, I would participate", and "I would participate in VOM when my family would like me to". As can be seen in these example items, there has been made a distinction between whether participants were approached to participate or whether they had to take their own initiative, to see if this influenced the willingness to participate as well. A principal component analysis with varimax rotation on the items of this construct indicated two components, which explained a total of 85% of the variance. The difference between these components laid in the fact that the three items of the first component were more about general intention (all loadings > .67), whereas the two items of the second component were more focused on the influence of family and friends (all loadings > .81). An example of a general item would be "I would participate in VOM", and an example of a personal item would be "I would participate in VOM when my family would like me to". Based on these findings, two scales were created: 'General motivation to participate' (all general items;  $\alpha = .87$ ) and 'Extrinsic motivation to participate' (all other items; r = .80; p < .01).

Another construct ('Actions during VOM') measured the actions the participants would like to do when they would participate in VOM, for instance "*If I would participate in VOM, I would like to apologize to the victim*". A principal component analysis with varimax rotation on the three items of this construct indicated one component, which explained 63% of the variance. Based on these findings, one scale was created: 'Actions during VOM' (all loadings > .61;  $\alpha = .70$ ).

The mediator variable 'tendency to avoid escalations' was measured through the construct 'Avoidance', which consisted out of four items. One of these items was "*I would like to avoid any future arguments with the victim*". A principal component analysis with varimax rotation on the four items of this construct indicated one component, which explained 58% of the variance. Based on these findings, one scale was created: 'Tendency to avoid escalation' ( $\alpha = .75$ ).

The previously mentioned variable was more indirectly measured through the construct 'Opinion', wherein seven items existed which were to find out the more general opinion of the participants about VOM. An example of an item would be "*I think that if I would participate in VOM, I would avoid any escalations in the future*". Another example of an item which tried to measure the general opinion of participants would be "*I think that VOM, in general, can be useful*". A principal component analysis with varimax rotation on the items of this construct indicated two components, which explained a total of 60% of the variance. The difference between these components laid in the fact that the items of the first

component were more about personal aspects (all loadings > .32), whereas the items of the second component were far more general (all loadings > .60). An example of a personal item would be "*I expect personal benefits if I would participate in VOM*", and an example of a general item would be "*I think that VOM, in general, can be useful*". Based on these findings, two scales were created: 'Personal opinion about VOM' (five personal items;  $\alpha = .78$ ) and 'General opinion about VOM' (two general items;  $r = .38^{**}$ ; p < .01).

The mediator variable 'Need for Acceptance' was measured through the construct of 'Acceptance', which consisted out of eight items. This construct had its focus on the need for acceptance of friends and family and the need for forgiveness from the victim. An example of an item would be "I hope that the victim is willing to forgive me" and "Acceptance from my family would be a reason for me to participate in VOM". The need for acceptance was also measured more indirectly via the construct 'Opinion' and an example of an item would be "I think that if I would participate in VOM, the victim will be able to forgive me". A principal component analysis with varimax rotation on the eight items of the construct Acceptance indicated two components, which explained a total of 57% of the variance. The difference between these components laid in the fact that the items of the first component were more about personal feelings or ideas (all loadings > .49), whereas the items of the second component were more focused on extrinsic reasons to participate in VOM (all loadings > .66). An example of a personal item would be "I find it important that the victim will see me as a *likeable person*", whereas an example of a more extrinsic item would be "Acceptance from my friends would be a reason for me to participate in VOM". Based on these findings, two scales were created: 'Personal Need for Acceptance (NFA)' (personal items;  $\alpha = .74$ ) and 'NFA towards friends and family' (other items;  $r = .68^{**}$ ; p < .01).

The remaining construct ('Empathy') measured with ten items whether participants were able to empathize with the offender or whether they were able to concentrate sufficiently. This construct was created in order to avoid any biases which could be caused by for instance distractions. An example of an item from this construct would be "*I was able to concentrate sufficiently*" or "*I was able to empathize with the offender in the video*". The items had a Chronbach's Alpha of .76. Although there was no need to create scales for the analyses, a principal component analysis with varimax rotation on the ten items of this construct indicated three components, which explained a total of 65% of the variance. Five items measured the general ability of the participants to fill in the questionnaire (example item: "*I was able to concentrate sufficiently*"), three items measured the explicit empathy with the perpetrator (example item: "*I could understand why the offender took the money*"), and

two items measured the extent to which the participants found the scenario realistic (example item: "*I found the story realistic*").

At the end of the questionnaire the demographics of the participants were measured through four items which asked for the participants' gender, age, nationality, and highest level of education. An example of an item would be *"What is your nationality?"*. This was a semiclosed item, where the participants had the opportunity to fill in their nationality on their own when this was not Dutch or German. The items about gender and education were closed questions, whereas the item about age was an open question.

#### **Results**

#### **Descriptive statistics**

Whether participants were able to empathize with the situation, was measured via the construct 'Empathy'. All 136 participants indicated that they were sufficiently able to empathize with the situation on the following items; '*I was able to empathize with the offender in the story*' (M = 5.48, SD = 1.37); '*I was able to empathize with the offender in the offender in the story*' (M = 5.06, SD = 1.49); and '*I could understand why the offender took the money*' (M = 4.99, SD = 1.62). Moreover, all answers on item 'I took part seriously in this study' answered above 3 on a 7-point Likert scale, M = 6.39. Therefore, no one was left out for the analyses.

First, a Chi-square test has been conducted in order to see whether the participants were successfully randomized across the two conditions. It became clear that the participants were equally distributed in terms of gender:  $X^2$  (1, N = 136) = .66, p = .41, and nationality:  $X^2$  (1, N = 136) = 1.32, p = .52. To examine whether participants were equally distributed over the two conditions considering their age, an independent t-test has been conducted, which showed a well-distributed result over the 'no relationship' condition (M = 25.74, SD = 11.73) and the control condition (M = 28.20, SD = 14.73); t(133) = -1.075, p = .284.

To examine how scales were interrelated, the correlation has been calculated on the basis of Pearson's *r* (Table 1). A positive significant correlation has been found between 'Actions during VOM' and 'Personal need for acceptance (NFA)', and 'Personal need for acceptance (NFA)' and 'Tendency to avoid escalation'. This means that participants with a higher personal need for acceptance were also more willing to perform certain restorative actions in VOM. It also means that when participants had a higher tendency to avoid escalation, they were also more motivated to participate in VOM. It has also been measured whether the conditions correlated with the 'Need for Acceptance' scales, in order to see whether this could be of influence later while testing the hypotheses. Unfortunately, no

significant effects have been found ('General motivation to participate': r(136) = -.03, p = .73, 'Extrinsic motivation to participate': r(136) = .09, p = .30). This means that being in a certain condition did not mean that participants had a higher need for acceptance. To give more meaning to these results, more analyses have been conducted.

	М	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. General motivation to participate	4.63	1.37	-	.45**	.37**	.15	.06	07	.25**	.34**
2. Extrinsic motivation to participate	5.01	1.30		-	.29**	.10	.31**	.01	.07	.13
3. Actions during VOM	6.01	.85			-	.49**	.26**	.27**	.37**	.42**
4. Personal need for acceptance (NFA)	5.76	.69				-	.39**	.49**	.28**	.34**
5. NFA towards friends and family	5.76	1.01					-	.25**	.19*	.21*
6. Tendency to avoid escalation	5.46	.95						-	.37**	.20*
7. Personal opinion about VOM	4.98	.88							-	.44**
8. General opinion about VOM	5.72	.83								-

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the constructs which were used in the questionnaire.

*Note*. *N* = 136, \*p<0.05; \*\*p<0.01.

#### Hypotheses testing

Willingness to participate in VOM. To test the first hypothesis, the control condition was compared to the 'no relationship' condition on the 'General motivation to participate' scale. An independent samples t-test showed no significant difference between the scores in the 'no relationship' condition and the control condition; t(134) = 1.43, p = .745. On the scale 'Extrinsic motivation to participate this also did not show a significant difference between the scores on the 'no relationship' condition and the control condition; t(134) = 1.02, p = .197. Thus, unexpectedly, participants in the control condition did not show a higher willingness to

participate in VOM than those in the 'no relationship' condition, meaning that hypothesis 1 cannot be supported.

*Need for Acceptance*. Despite not being able to confirm the first hypothesis, it has been decided to check anyway whether an indirect effect of the relationship manipulation existed<sup>2</sup>. In the second hypothesis, it was predicted that the need for acceptance played a mediating role in the effect of hypothesis 1. This was measured with a PROCESS analysis by A. Hayes (2016). The focus laid on the indirect effect, which was expected to go via the mediator 'Need for Acceptance'. First, the dependent variable (Y) was 'General motivation to participate', the independent variable (X) was 'condition' ('no relationship', 'relationship'), and the mediator variable (M) was 'Personal need for acceptance (NFA)'. The effects are displayed in figure 2. No significant effects were found: c' = -.32, p = .17, 95% CI [-.78, .14];  $a_1 = -.04$ , p = .73, 95% CI [-.28, .19];  $b_1 = .29$ , p = .09, 95% CI [-.04, .62]. No significant indirect mediating effect was found either:  $M_1 = -.01$ , 95% CI [-.14, .05]. So, unexpectedly, this aspect of need for acceptance did not play a mediating role between the condition and the participant's willingness to participate in VOM.



*Figure 2*. The mediating effect of 'Personal Need for Acceptance (NFA)' on 'General motivation to participate'

Second, it was examined whether an indirect effect emerged via the mediator (M) 'NFA towards friends and family'. The effects are displayed in figure 3. No significant effects were found: c' = -.32, p = .17, 95% CI [-.79, .15];  $a_1 = -.19$ , p = .30, 95% CI [-.55, .17];  $b_1 =$ 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> It has been decided to test the mediators all together as well. This was decided because it would give a better view of unique contributions of the mediators, and it would made it possible to discover whether those mediators have a stronger effect together instead of separately. Unfortunately, no significant effects were found here either.

.06, p = .56, 95% CI [-.15, .58]. No significant indirect mediating effect was found either:  $M_1 = -.01$ , 95% CI [-.15, .04]. So, unexpectedly, this aspect of need for acceptance did not play a mediating role between the condition and the participants' willingness to participate in VOM.



*Figure 3*. The mediating effect of 'Need for Acceptance towards friends and family' on 'General motivation to participate'

Third, the dependent variable (Y) was 'Extrinsic motivation to participate', the independent variable (X) was 'condition', and the mediator variable was 'Personal need for acceptance (NFA)'. The effects are displayed in figure 4. No significant effects were found: c' = .22, p = .32, 95% CI [-.66, .22];  $a_1 = -.04, p = .73, 95\%$  CI [-.28, .19];  $b_1 = .18, p = .26, 95\%$  CI [-.14, .50]. No significant indirect mediating effect was found either:  $M_1 = -.01, 95\%$  CI [-.13, .03]. So, unexpectedly, this aspect of need for acceptance did not play a mediating role between the condition and the participant's willingness to participate in VOM.



*Figure 4*. The mediating effect of 'Personal Need for Acceptance (NFA)' on 'Extrinsic motivation to participate'

Lastly, the dependent variable (Y) was 'Extrinsic motivation to participate', the independent variable (X) was 'condition', and the mediator variable was 'NFA towards friends and family'. The effects are displayed in figure 5. One significant effect was found:  $b_1 = .37$ , p = .0003, 95% CI [.17, .57]. This means that a high 'NFA towards friends and family' leads to a higher 'Extrinsic motivation to participate'. The other non-significant effects were: c' = -.16, p = .46, 95% CI [-.58, .27] and  $a_1 = -.19$ , p = .30, 95% CI [-.55, .17]. No significant indirect mediating effect was found either:  $M_1 = -.07$ , 95% CI [-.25, .05]. Thus, unexpectedly, this aspect of need for acceptance alongside with all the other aspects did not play a mediating role between the condition and the participant's willingness to participate in VOM, meaning that hypothesis 2a cannot be supported.



*Figure 5*. The mediating effect of 'Need for Acceptance towards friends and family' on 'Extrinsic motivation to participate'. *Note*. \*\*\*p<0.001

*Tendency to avoid escalation.* In the second hypothesis, it was also predicted that the tendency to avoid escalation played a mediating role in the effect of hypothesis 1. This was again measured with a PROCESS analysis by A. Hayes (2016). The focus laid on the indirect effect, which was expected to go via the mediator 'Tendency to Avoid Escalation'. First, the dependent variable (Y) was 'General motivation to participate', the independent variable (X) was 'condition' ('no relationship', 'relationship'), and the mediator variable (M) was 'Tendency to avoid escalation'. The effects are displayed in figure 6. No significant effects were found; c' = -.33, p = .17, 95% CI [-.79, .14];  $a_1 = -.09$ , p = .58, 95% CI [-.23, .41];

 $b_1 = .09, p = .49, 95\%$  CI [-.33, .16]. No significant indirect mediating effect was found either:  $M_1 = -.01, 95\%$  CI [-.12, .03]. So, unexpectedly, tendency to avoid escalation did not play a mediating role between the condition and this aspect of the participant's willingness to participate in VOM.



*Figure 6.* The mediating effect of 'Tendency to avoid escalation' on 'General motivation to participate'

Second, the dependent variable (Y) was 'Extrinsic motivation to participate', the independent variable (X) was 'condition' ('no relationship', 'relationship'), and the mediator variable (M) was 'Tendency to avoid escalation'. The effects are displayed in figure 7. No significant effects were found; c' = -.23, p = .31, 95% CI [-.67, .21];  $a_1 = -.09$ , p = .58, 95% CI [-.23, .41];  $b_1 = .02$ , p = .86, 95% CI [-.21, .25]. No significant indirect mediating effect was found either:  $M_1 = -.002$ , 95% CI [-.04, .07]. Thus, unexpectedly, the tendency to avoid escalation did not play a mediating role between the condition and both aspects of the participant's willingness to participate in VOM. This means that hypothesis 2b also cannot be supported.



*Figure 7*. The mediating effect of 'Tendency to avoid escalation' on 'Extrinsic motivation to participate'

In conclusion, it can be stated that none of the hypotheses of this study could be supported due to non-significance. Only one significant effect has been found: 'NFA towards friends and family' predicted positively the 'Extrinsic willingness to participate'. This means that participants with a higher need for acceptance towards friends and family have scored higher on the extrinsic motivation to participate in VOM than those with a lower need for acceptance.

#### Discussion

The current study aimed to find out what exactly motivates perpetrators to participate in Victim-Offender Mediation (VOM). In a previous study of Rosies (2017), it has been found that having a 'relationship' (knowing that one will have to talk to the victim again in the future versus not) positively influences the willingness to participate in VOM. This study tried to replicate this Relationship Effect and examined whether the need for acceptance and tendency to avoid conflict amongst perpetrators could explain this effect. According to the found results, this was not the case. This study has not been able to replicate the results of Rosies, because no significant effect was found which showed that being in a relationship with the victim positively influenced the willingness of perpetrators to participate in VOM. Moreover, no significant effects were found considering the proposed mediators either, meaning that the proposed effect of the first hypothesis had not been influenced by either need for acceptance or tendency to avoid escalation.

A reason for not replicating the effect of having a relationship with the victim on the willingness to participate (Rosies, 2017) could be that in this study, the willingness to participate is measured differently. For example, Rosies used items as 'I would like to apologize to the victim during a victim-offender meeting' and 'I would like to show the victim that I am not a bad person' as direct indications of willingness to participate in VOM. In this study, these statements were not viewed as such indications for participants' willingness to participate, because it was believed that these measured different things. For instance, the first mentioned item of Rosies has been measured in the construct 'Actions during VOM'<sup>3</sup>. The latter item is believed to be general in a way that people have the ability to show the victim they are not a bad person in other situations as well as in VOM. However, in this study, not one significant difference has been found between the conditions on the construct of willingness to participate, so it could not have been the case that the way it has been measured caused this study not being able to replicate the results of Rosies (2017).

Moreover, this study did not have a manipulation check: there was no question asking the participants if they understood the (lack of a) relationship they had with the victim. This could have been of great influence, however, results do show that participants have been sufficiently able to empathize with the situation and took part seriously in this study. Thus, it could be argued that participants would have read the scenario well and could very well know which relationship they had. Then again, it cannot be known for sure whether this aspect has been picked up by the participants despite the fact that they took the questionnaire seriously. It could have been that the manipulation has failed, since there is only one variable ('tendency to avoid escalation') on which the mean has been higher when participants had a relationship with the victim<sup>4</sup>. However, this difference was extremely small. On both constructs, the participants without a relationship with the victim scored higher than those in a relationship with the victim. Therefore, it seems that a great limitation of this study had been the lack of a well-implemented manipulation.

The results of this study also showed that the need for acceptance did not have a mediating effect either. The following could be a possible explanation for why the participants' need for acceptance did not have the desired effect between the conditions. As described in the model of Nadler and Shnabel (2008), being able to offer an apology and gain forgiveness from the victim may restore their moral image, which is seen as an important

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> No differences between the conditions on this variable has been found, 'no relationship': M = 6.03, SD = .87, and 'relationship': M = 6.00, SD = .83

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> 'no relationship': M = 5.41, SD = 1.05; 'relationship': M = 5.50, SD = .85.

need of perpetrators. However, it has been found in another study that perpetrators can have their moral image restored in different ways than being in contact with the victims. These needs can namely be met through self-affirmation (Barlow, Thai, Wohl, White, Wright, & Hornsey, 2015). So, it may have been the case in this study as well that the participants do not feel any need to participate in VOM, because they feel that they are adequate to deal with their needs on their own. This could be the case with participants in both conditions. For example, those in the a relationship with the victim could have thought that they could settle things with their victim over a drink on the Saturday as written in the scenario. Then again, the possibility that the manipulation of this study did not work out should be taken into account.

To expand on the latter explanations, it could be that some more practical reasons could have played a role. For instance, participants could see VOM as useless since the scenario stated that they were already convicted to community service. Maybe they see VOM as a bother rather than as something valuable. A debate over whether Restorative Justice (RJ) is a punishment has been going around for a lot of years now, and one of the positions which has been taken is when the perpetrator is seen as a "bad person", who should pay back that what they had caused to the victim (Daly, 2011). Since RJ is for a majority about apologizing to the victim (Shnabel et al., 2008; Umbreit et al., 2004) – which had also been explained to the participants in this study – the participants may have felt as if VOM would be a punishment. If this were to be the case, it would not have had mattered whether they were in the in a relationship with the victim, or whether they were sensitive to 'need for acceptance' or 'tendency to avoid conflict' at all. It would not matter, because when people think VOM would be another punishment – on top of their community service – it is less likely that they would voluntarily join it, because of the negative effects punishments are generally known for.

It could also be the case that the movie played a significant role in this study. If this study only showed the movie, the previously mentioned problem could be avoided because then there would not be an indication of a sentence on top of another one (since a community service would not be mentioned). The video only showed someone stealing from an individual – who remained anonymous. The video was also exactly the same in both conditions, and so it could have been more difficult for participants in a relationship to imagine that their victim was an acquaintance. Moreover, using a movie in a study like this was very different from previous studies such as the one of Rosies (2017). This big difference may also have caused this study not being able to replicate the previously found results.

No significant mediating effect of participants' tendency to avoid conflict was found either. It could be the case people were "afraid" to participate in VOM, because that could be seen as a confrontation itself. However, then it would be expected that there would be a negative significant effect, which also had not been the case. Another reason could be that participants may think that, being in a relationship or not, they would be able to avoid the victim if they would really want to, and thus VOM would not be necessary (for this aspect).

#### Limitations

As stated before, one limitation of this study was that it did not have a manipulation check and that the manipulation could have failed. It could have been the case that the relation manipulation has not been strong enough: as can be seen in Appendix B, the only difference between the two conditions lays in a few sentences. When participants did not have a relationship with the victim, it was only stated in one sentence that you do not recognize the individual, whereas when they were in a relationship, it stated the following:

"Then you recognize him, it seems to be one of your teammates. You hang out with these people in the local bar almost every Saturday."

This may not have been enough for the participants to be convinced of a relationship with the victim, as it depends on the participant how much value they give to this "relationship". Moreover, there is not any information on how the victim felt about this crime. To avoid this mistake in the future, the relation manipulation can be made stronger by for instance focus more on the victim. In the study of Rosies (2017) it was explicitly explained how awful the victim felt about the fact that he/she seemed to know you. The latter may cause the participants to be more aware of what it would mean for them and their relationship with the victim, and thus this should be taken into consideration.

Another limitation could lay in the information given to the participants (Appendix A). This could have been too little for them to fully understand and imply the given knowledge about VOM. Although the results say otherwise, there could be all sorts of reasons for people to state that they did understand VOM, but secretly felt differently, for instance social desirability. Another factor which could have played a role in this aspect of the study, is the amount of information about advantages for perpetrators through VOM which was given. As can be seen in Appendix A, this is only a very small amount and this could have led to the participants not being convinced about the well-doing of VOM for perpetrators. Thus,

participants could have seen VOM negatively, no matter the condition they were in. Moreover, the tendency to avoid escalation could play a role here as well: As this did not seem to play a significant role, it should be made clearer to the participants that VOM itself is not a confrontation, but that escalations in the future could happen without it.

#### **Future Research and Practical Implications**

Although this particular study did not find any significant effects regarding to its hypotheses, that does not mean that it should be ignored for further research. The theories on which this research was based are still relevant and promising. If researchers were to keep focusing on this particular topic, this could have multiple positive effects such as being able to better address and maybe influence perpetrators into participation in VOM. As stated before, this could in turn lead to less recidivism (Morris, 2002; Rodriguez, 2007; Borton, 2009; Umbreit et al., 2004).

However, in order for future research to be more successful, it is necessary to make up for some limitations in this study. First of all, it should be researched whether being in a relationship with the victim has indeed a positive effect on the willingness to participate in VOM, as what was found in the study of Rosies (2017). It would be of importance to check whether the manipulation has worked out, to prevent uncertainties. To reinforce the manipulation, there are some adjustments which could be made to the movie which was showed to the participants. First, there should be a movie for each condition with clear differences between them. For instance, when it is stated that the perpetrator has a relationship with the victim, both individuals could wear the same sports shirt in order to make it more clear that they are acquaintances. Moreover, the victim should not remain anonymous and it could even be made possible to show contact between the victim and the perpetrator in the control condition (greeting).

It would also be important to make sure that participants understand the positive effects that VOM could have for them, and not only for the victims: in order to prevent skepticism. Thus, sufficient information about VOM should be provided to the participants, to make it clear as well that VOM is not meant solely to be a punishment for the perpetrators. It is important to prepare not only the perpetrators, but the victims as well when participating in VOM. Sherman stated to have put a great emphasis on adequate preparation of both parties (Sherman, Strang, Angel, Woods, Barnes, Bennet, & Inkpen, 2005), and Umbreit et al. (2007) stated that preparation of dialogue interventions is one of the underlying dimensions of Restorative Justice. Moreover, another study stated that the facilitator should explain very well to both parties what their roles and responsibilities are, in order to prepare the conversation (Strang, Sherman, Angel, Woods, & Bennet, 2006). In order to follow these statements, it could for instance be explained to participants that feelings of anger towards perpetrators often reduce after VOM, as found by Zebel (2012).

If future research does succeed to find similar effects as those which were desired in this study, this could be of certain importance for the practice of VOM. As mentioned in Zebel (2012), the annual rapport of SiB (2014) stated that 57% of registrations for VOM did not lead to actual mediated contact between victim and perpetrator because of various reasons. Future research could also focus on these reasons and in combination with knowledge about need for acceptance amongst perpetrators, this could lead to – as stated before – being able to better address perpetrators' needs and motivations considering participation in VOM. If this were to succeed, the Dutch society could benefit from this through less fear and anger amongst victims, less recidivism of perpetrators, and more people in general gaining advantages from the innovative justice system: Restorative Justice.

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## Appendices

## Appendix A

#### Information given to the participants

What you have to know:

In this research, the important concept is Victim-Offender Mediation (VOM). It has been popular in the Netherlands for about 11 years now. VOM is a way for victims to be able to interact with perpetrators (offenders) in order to hold them accountable for their behavior whilst having an attending mediator to assist them. In other words, victims and offenders of crimes can get together to talk. You could imagine that someone who's been robbed would like to tell the perpetrator how they feel about this: VOM gives those people that opportunity. In general, victims really value the opportunity they get to talk with their offenders and a lot of victims feel less scared after participating in VOM. The victims also find it very valuable to hear an apology from the offenders. The offenders get the opportunity to apologize and can try to undo damage.

#### **Appendix B**

The 'no relationship' condition

Please read this with care:

In a minute you will see a short video of a crime taking place. Please try your very best to imagine that you committed this crime yourself: it was you who did it. This is what happened: since you cannot seem to find a decent job you have been short on money for quite a while now. Recently your grandmother has fallen ill and sadly, most of the expense (costs) need to be paid by you. You are becoming more desperate every day and one day when you're at your local sports centre you notice an individual not paying attention to his belongings. You don't know the individual, but you are really curious to what is in his bag.

Considering the circumstances, you decide that it is needed to take some money from this random stranger. You succeed! You find a wallet in his bag and decide to take it. Feeling satisfied and glad that you are now able to help your grandmother, you spend the next few days taking care of her. However, the thoughts of your crime still cross your mind a lot. Then suddenly, you get a call from the local police station: you are caught on the surveillance cameras of the locker room of the sports centre. You are convicted to community service (taakstraf). One day when you are at work your supervisor notices your remorse and tells you about the possibility of Victim-Offender Mediation ...

#### The control condition (relationship)

Please read this with care:

In a minute you will see a short video of a crime taking place. Please try your very best to imagine that you committed this crime yourself: it was you who did it. This is what happened: since you cannot seem to find a decent job you have been short on money for quite a while now. Recently your grandmother has fallen ill and sadly, most of the expense (costs) need to be paid by you. You are becoming more desperate every day and one day when you're at your local sports centre you notice an individual not paying attention to his belongings. Then you recognize him, it seems to be one of your teammates. You hang out with these people in the local bar almost every Saturday. However, you are really curious to what is in his bag.

Considering the circumstances, you decide that it is needed to take some money from him. You succeed! You find a wallet in his bag and decide to take it. Feeling satisfied and glad that you are now able to help your grandmother, you spend the next few days taking care of her. However, the thoughts of your crime still cross your mind a lot. Then suddenly, you get a call from the local police station: you are caught on the surveillance cameras of the locker room of the sports centre. You are convicted to community service (taakstraf). One day when you are at work your supervisor notices your remorse and tells you about the possibility of Victim-Offender Mediation ...

#### **Appendix C**

#### Items: Willingness to participate in VOM

#### What do you think?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I would like to participate in VOM	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	0	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$
If I were to be approached to participate in VOM, I would participate	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$
I would personally apply for participation in VOM	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$
I would participate in VOM if my family asks me to	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$
I would participate in VOM if my friends ask me to		$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$

## Items: Actions during VOM

#### What do you think?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
If I were to participate in VOM, I would like to apologize to the victim	$\bigcirc$				$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	
If I were to participate in VOM, I would like to show myself as a worthy individual instead of a criminal	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	0	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\odot$
If I were to participate in VOM, I would explain my reasons for the crime to the victim	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$			$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$

## Items: Need for Acceptance

#### What do you think?

what do you think.							
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I hope that the victim is willing to forgive me	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$
I am afraid that people will exclude me from their social groups now that I have committed this crime	$\odot$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\odot$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$
I hope that the victim is not afraid of me	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$
I find it important that the victim will see me as a likeable person	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$
I hope that my family still accepts me after this crime	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$
Acceptance from my family would be a reason for me to participate in VOM	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$
I hope that my friends still want to be friends with me after this crime	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$
Acceptance from my friends would be a reason for me to participate in VOM	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$

## Items: Tendency to Avoid Escalation

#### What do you think?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I would like to avoid any future arguments with the victim	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$
I would dislike the idea of the victim being angry with me	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$
I would dislike the idea of the victim swearing at me	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$
I would dislike the idea of the situation escalating in the future	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$

## Items: Opinion about VOM

#### What do you think?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I think that VOM, in general, can be useful	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$
I expect personal benefits if I would participate in VOM	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$
I think that VOM is a sufficient way to deal with crimes similar to this one	$\bigcirc$			$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$
I think that if I would participate in VOM, the victim would be able to forgive me	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$
I think that if I would participate in VOM, the victim would find me more likeable	$\bigcirc$			$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$
I think that if I would participate in VOM, I would avoid any future escalations	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$
I think that if I would participate in VOM, the victim would be less angry with me	$\bigcirc$			$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$

## Items: Empathy

#### What do you think?

2	Strongly		Somewhat	Neither agree nor	Somewhat		Strongly
	disagree	Disagree	disagree	disagree	agree	Agree	agree
I was able to concentrate sufficiently	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$
I did not experience any distractions when filling in this questionnaire	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$
I took part seriously in this study	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$
I understood the questions I was asked	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$
I understand the concept of VOM	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$
I was able to empathize with the offender in the story	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$
I was able to empathize with the offender in the video	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$
I found the story realistic	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$
I found the video realistic	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$
I could understand why the offender took the money	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$

## Items: Demographical information

#### What is your age?

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### What is your gender?

.....

What is your nationality?

o Dutch

o German

o Other: .....

What is your highest reached level of education?

o Secondary education (High school, LTS, MAVO, HAVO, VWO)

o Secondary vocational education (MBO, MTS, MEAO)

o Higher education (HBO, polytechnic)

o University (WO)