
Bachelor Thesis

The importance of victims' needs in the context of Victim-Offender Conferencing

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between the need for information and the willingness to participate in Victim-Offender Conferencing (VOC) and how this need can be used when informing victims about VOC. More precisely, it was investigated whether different needs fall under the same construct, need for information, and how these are related to the willingness to participate in VOC. Based on this, it was assumed that the relation between a higher need for information and the willingness to participate is moderated by the level of awareness that their needs can be met. Lastly, it was tested if victims who received a video or flyer experienced a higher awareness and willingness compared to those who received a letter. The study was conducted with participants who imagined themselves being a victim by reading a scenario of a violent robbery. Immediately after, they were asked about their needs. Subsequently, they received either a video, flyer or letter explaining VOC and if they were willing to participate. At the end of the survey and after having made their decision to participate or not they were asked about their level of awareness. Results showed that only one of the needs, namely the need for explanation positively predicts the willingness to participate and that there were no differences in groups regarding their level of awareness and their willingness. However, the awareness fully explained the relationship between the need for explanation and the willingness to participate in VOC. Despite the disapproval of some expectations, this research serves as a good starting point for future research about new ways of raising awareness of the benefits of restorative justice programs and how to present them most effectively.

Keywords: Need for information, Willingness to participate in VOC, Awareness

Introduction

The primary means of dealing with criminal behaviour in the traditional, retributive justice system, is punishment. The courts declare the offenders as guilty and by imposing a punishment, justice is usually considered done, leaving the victim out of the process (Wenzel, Okimoto, Feather, & Platow, 2008). This is, however, not the only way to deal with crimes. Since decades, there is a different system, called restorative justice which serves as an alternative or addition to the traditional justice system, putting victims' and offenders' voice in the foreground of the process (Greenwood & Umbreit, 1998; Umbreit, Coates, & Vos, 2004). The main difference between the retributive justice system and the restorative justice system is that the former ensures justice by using a one-sided process and the latter refers to a mutual process (Wenzel et al., 2008). This means that the restorative justice system differs in that it actively includes the people that are directly affected by the crime in the criminal process.

Restorative justice systems provide victim, offender and the community with the possibility to meet and be able to talk about the consequences of the crime (Dhimi, 2016; Umbreit et al., 2004). This takes place with the assistance of a trained neutral third party who assists them at any time, making it a safe environment (Dhimi, 2016; Umbreit et al., 2004). The final step of the process is to put up a signed restitution agreement in which both parties identify and negotiate what would be a suitable punishment for the offender and or an acceptable compensation for the victim (Buchholz, 2014; Umbreit et al., 2004; Wenzel et al., 2008). This is, however, secondary to the process and not common practice in all restorative justice programs, like in the Netherlands the Perspectief Herstelbemiddeling, as the initial dialogue is of more importance (Umbreit et al., 2004). The participation in restorative justice programs is voluntary for both victim and offender (Latimer, Dowden & Muise, 2005; Marshall, 1999). A requirement for the success of the program is that the offender is willing to take responsibility as well as that both parties are willing to share honest thoughts about the criminal aspects (Latimer et al., 2005).

The main idea behind restorative justice programs is to restore the harm that has been caused as much as possible (Strang & Sherman, 2003; Zehr, 2015). Zehr (2015) summarized that this can be done through acknowledging the injustice; restoring equity (e.g. through an apology) and through addressing future intentions by for example discussing how both parties move ahead with their lives. Moreover, restorative justice programs aim to improve the psychological well-being of both victim and offender (Bradshaw, Roseborough, & Umbreit, 2006; Umbreit et al., 2004). Research has shown that victims participating in such programs

experience less fear and anger towards the offender afterwards (Strang et al., 2006). Umbreit et al. (2004) found that the vast majority of participants were satisfied with the results of the process and described the experience as helpful and fair. Moreover, it has been found that participation in such programs reduces the victim's trauma caused by the crime as he or she has the opportunity to talk about the emotional consequences and to receive an apology (Gehm, 1998). Similar positive outcomes apply to the offenders. Through participation in such programs, offenders are offered a possibility to explain themselves as well as to show responsibility (Dhimi, 2016). Additionally, such programs support offenders to find a path towards rehabilitation and reintegration back in society (Dhimi, 2016). Finally, offenders have proven to have less relapse when participating in face to face exchange (Nugent, Williams, & Umbreit, 2004; Sherman, Strang, May-Wilson, Woods & Ariel, 2015).

Over the years, restorative justice practices have gained popularity since it covers many aspects that are missing in retributive justice (Ward & Langlands, 2009). A major aspect that is covered in restorative justice and missing in retributive justice systems is the failure to address the needs of victims, offenders and their communities (Ward & Langlands, 2009). All people affected by the crime (also the offenders) have needs that should be fulfilled beyond the compensation that the court provides for the victim's and the community's loss (Wenzel et al., 2008).

Restorative justice system is a general term for many different programs. One of the oldest and most often practised programs is victim-offender mediation (VOM) (Bradshaw et al., 2006; Umbreit, 1998). It was first implemented in 1974 in Canada and has gained popularity ever since (Bradshaw et al., 2006). Nowadays, there are about a thousand different forms of VOM programs which makes it one of the most common forms of restorative justice programs (Dhimi, 2016; Zebel, Schreurs, & Ufkes, 2017). Generally, VOM takes place face-to-face, through shuttle mediation (a third-party shuttles back and forth between victim and offender) or via letter exchange (Mullane, Burrell, Allen, & Timmermann, 2014). Importantly, there are other forms of restorative justice systems such as victim-offender conferencing (VOC), family group conferences (FGC) or other circles which all practice according to the same principles (Zehr, 2015). This research focuses on victim-offender conferencing (VOC) which concentrates on the encounters between victims and offenders as well as on the inclusion of the community (Maxwell, Morris & Hayes, 2006). Therefore, VOC differentiates from the other programs in that it concentrates on the victim, offender and their families and communities in order to discuss how the harm that has been caused can best be restored (Sherman et al., 2015).

Despite the positive outcomes of restorative justice, less than half of the victims and offenders who were offered the opportunity to participate in such programs were actually willing to do so (Zebel, 2012). The amount of people taking part in such programs varies between 40 and 60 percent (Umbreit et al., 2004). Reasons, why victims are not willing to participate, are according to Umbreit and Coates (1992) because they already came up with a settlement before the mediation; because they do not believe that talking to the offender could solve anything or simply because of their lack of time. More profound reasons are that the victim is too afraid or angry to meet the offender; is not willing to help the offender; wants to have a harsher punishment for the offender and does not want to sympathize with the offender (Umbreit & Coates, 1992; Umbreit et al., 2004). Wemmers (2002) points out that there is a lack of participation because some victims are not content with having such an active role in the criminal justice system. Instead, they would prefer to have less decision-making power, but more consultation and information during the process (Wemmers, 2002). Moreover, victims were not content with their invitation to the restorative programs as they had the feeling that their case was not taken seriously (Choi, Bazemore, & Gilbert, 2011). Another reason why victims might not be willing to participate in such programs is, as Zebel et al. (2017) state, the fact that victims who will suffer strongly after the crime, will have a stronger need for revenge and do not feel like seeing the offender ever again. Finally, Choi et al. (2011) conclude that victims often do not feel adequately prepared as the invitation does not fully explain what the meaning and focus behind the program is.

Because of the contrasting results that restorative justice has many positive outcomes but still a high number of victims that decline the possibility to take part, the willingness to participate in such programs is an increasingly interesting subject among researchers (Kippers, 2015). So far, some research tried to examine what factors influence the willingness to participate in restorative justice programs, such as VOC or VOM (Strang et al., 2006). This is necessary as, offering victims the information that fit their needs might make their decision to participate more thoughtful and maybe more victims would be willing to participate in such programs.

Several factors have already been shown to positively influence the victims' motivation to participate, such as the wish to help the offender change; to see the offender being punished or to get social support (Paul & Schenck-Hamlin, 2017; Umbreit et al., 2004). Additionally, research from Zebel et al. (2017) suggested that victims were more willing to participate in restorative justice programs the more time has passed if the crime caused serious harm whereas willingness to participate decreased if the crime was less severe.

Moreover, it has been shown that victims who would like to receive further information about the crime, as in for example information about the offenders' motive, show increased interest in participation in VOM (Kippers, 2015; Paul & Schenck-Hamlin, 2017). Finally, it has been found that victims who are more extraverted are also more motivated to participate in VOM (Kippers, 2015).

Regardless of the factors that influence the willingness to participate in restorative justice programs, there is still a lack in research when it comes to how to make use of these factors in order to heighten victims' motivation to participate in these programs (Dijk, 2016; Kippers, 2015). It is most interesting to examine how these factors can be taken into account when informing victims about restorative justice programs. It might be that victims with different needs also need different types of information or preparation before they can decide if they want to participate. The research of Mika, Achilles, Halbert, & Amstutz (2004) suggests that victims who seek peace and closure should receive adequate information about what possibilities the programs entail regarding finding closure.

The current paper focuses on one factor, namely the need for information and how it is related to the willingness to participate in VOC. A second aim is to examine what type of communication might increase victims' awareness that these needs can be met when participating in such programs and if this might heighten their motivation to participate.

Theoretical framework

Need for information

A general definition for the need for information is the victims' desire to learn more about the offender, the crime and the motives (Ten Boom, Kuipers & Moene, 2008). Victims are interested in the background information of the offender if the offender regrets his actions and what the emotional consequences are for him (Paul & Schenck-Hamlin, 2017). To get more in-depth knowledge about the term 'need for information', it is important to look at its four basic components which are based on the research by Ten Boom and Kuijpers (2012). First of all, the need for information comprises the general need for explanation which can be subdivided into two forms. Firstly, this can be a need for explanation about the procedure of the justice system which can be fulfilled by the police or judiciary. Secondly, it can be a need for explanation regarding the offender about the background information of the crime and motives (Ten Boom & Kuijpers, 2012).

A second component of the need for information is the need to be involved. Victims want to be informed about the progress of the case, in a language that is understandable to

them (Baptista, Silva, & Carrilho, 2015; Ten Boom & Kuijpers, 2012; Wemmers, 2002). Wemmers (2013) has shown that victims' sense of fairness depends on the amount of information they receive as well as on the positive interactions they have with the police. Hence, it can be concluded that victims want to receive information about all aspects regarding the crime: how the legal system works; about the procedure of the criminal justice system and what part they will play in the whole process.

A third component is the need for information about preventing repeat victimization. Victims want to get information about how they could prevent repeat victimization, meaning that the offender will not repeat his or her actions again (Baptista, Silva, & Carrilho, 2015). Moreover, a victim wants to be ensured that he or she is not a victim anymore. This can be fulfilled by other people such as the victims' family, agencies, police or judiciary (Baptista, Silva, & Carrilho, 2015; Ten Boom & Kuijpers, 2012).

The final component regarding the need for information is about mentally coping with the crime which can be fulfilled by agencies or other persons (Ten Boom & Kuijpers, 2012). Victims want to get information on how they will be supported or that they have the option to ask questions.

In conclusion, victims want to be informed about the legal system, the progress of the criminal case, the motive of the crime, what kind of support they can be expecting and how they can be better able to deal with the crime (Paul & Schenck-Hamlin, 2017). Answering all the questions that come up from the need for information reduces the frustration and confusion that victims feel and can help them to build up a new order in their lives (Achilles & Zehr, 2001). Regarding this, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: The need for explanation, the need to be involved, the need to prevent repeat victimization as well as the need to mentally cope with the crime all fall under the same construct: need for information.

Need for information and its relation to participation in VOC

There are several questions that are commonly asked in VOC. As an example, victims want offenders to give them explanations about the motives of their actions. They want to know about the background information of the crime as well as about the offenders' life or situation. Moreover, the offender has the possibility to answer if and why he chose that specific victim. It might have been planned or a coincidence. It could be answered whether this was the first time the offender committed a crime. All these questions have one thing in common:

questions regarding the need for information. The need for information occurs most commonly among all victims of crimes and is regarding literature a predominant factor for victims to participate in restorative justice programs (Choi, & Severson, 2009; Kippers, 2015; Ten Boom et al., 2008; Umbreit, 1998). This is also supported by several researchers such as Ten Boom and Kuijpers (2012), Umbreit et al. (2004) and Zebel et al. (2017), who stated that the need for information is a motivating factor for victims to participate in such programs. Additionally, research has shown that fulfilling the need for information is important to prevent victims from self-blame and doubt about their responsibility for the event (Zehr, 2015). Furthermore, Shnabel and Nadler (2008) state that an end to a conflict can only be achieved if certain needs of the parties are satisfied and that resolving these needs is the right path to reconciliation. Therefore, it can be concluded that the need for information might play an important role in the well-being of victims and that according to research, it is a predominant factor for victims to participate or not. This study is, therefore, trying to replicate research in that domain to find out if it is indeed a motivating factor for victims to participate in VOC or not. Hence, with respect to that, the following hypothesis is suggested:

H2: Victims with a higher need for information are more willing to participate in restorative justice programs.

The importance of raising awareness

By now it might be clear that restorative justice programs offer victims the possibility to get answers to all the questions regarding the crime. However, in reality, victims often do not understand how the program could help them and what the focus is (Choi et al., 2011). Victims are often not willing to participate as the invitation to the program was not attractive to them (Choi et al., 2011). Moreover, Choi et al. (2011) have shown that victims often feel insulted as the invitation gave them the impression that their case was not taken seriously, and they did not understand how these programs could improve anything. Sometimes victims do not understand how they could benefit from participating in such programs and they are not aware that questions regarding the need for information can be answered. Therefore, it is assumed that the way how invitations and preparation for restorative justice programs are created leave space for improvements. It might be that when victims understand what the focus of restorative justice is and how it could help them to better cope with the crime, they are more inclined to participate in such programs. Moreover, findings of Dijk (2016) suggests that practitioners working in the field of VOM should consider the need for information as

important when offering the choice of mediation towards the victims. Hence, it could also be important when offering the programs in general. Additionally, several researchers such as McCart, Smith, and Sawyer (2010) have shown that it is natural that victims of crime seek ways to solve their problems and to satisfy their needs.

Hence, it might be important to increase victims' awareness of their personal benefit when participating in VOC. This can be done by specifically pointing out that questions regarding the need for information will be addressed. Making them aware that their needs can be met in such programs could influence their decision to participate in such programs. Based on this, the following hypothesis can be made:

H3: The relation between a higher need for information and the willingness to participate in victim-offender conferencing (VOC) is positively influenced by the awareness that the needs can be met by participation.

In this research, three different types of communication are examined to test what kind of communication mean raises the highest awareness within victims and which one has the highest impact on the willingness to participate. There will be one group receiving a flyer; another one a video and a control group that gets a plain text in the form of a letter. The types of communication all contain the same information, such as a general description of what VOC is and that it can meet their needs. However, it is expected that victims who receive the video are more aware that their needs can be met when participating in VOC because of the images within a video. By reading a text, an image must be created by the recipient whereas in a video the image is already provided (Green et al., 2008). Referring this to the current study, this could mean that individuals getting the flyer might not be as able to make themselves a picture of how participation in VOC could look like in comparison to the video condition. This is even worse in the control condition that receives only a text without any pictures or striking things such as bigger font sizes and brighter colours for more important things. Another aspect that should be considered is that information is more likely to stick when it is easier to process and feels more familiar (Schwarz, Newman, & Leach, 2016). Finally, the video includes excerpts of a 'real' victim and offender who explain firsthand how they have benefited from the program. Showing faces to a success story makes the usefulness of the program more credible and might inspire people to do the same (Sandercock, 2003). Based on these findings the following hypotheses are made:

H4: Victims in the video condition experience the highest awareness that the need for information is addressed by participation and victims in the control condition the lowest.

H5: Victims in the video and flyer condition are more willing to participate in victim-offender conferencing compared to victims in the control condition

Figure 1 summarizes the hypotheses that will be tested in this research as a model.

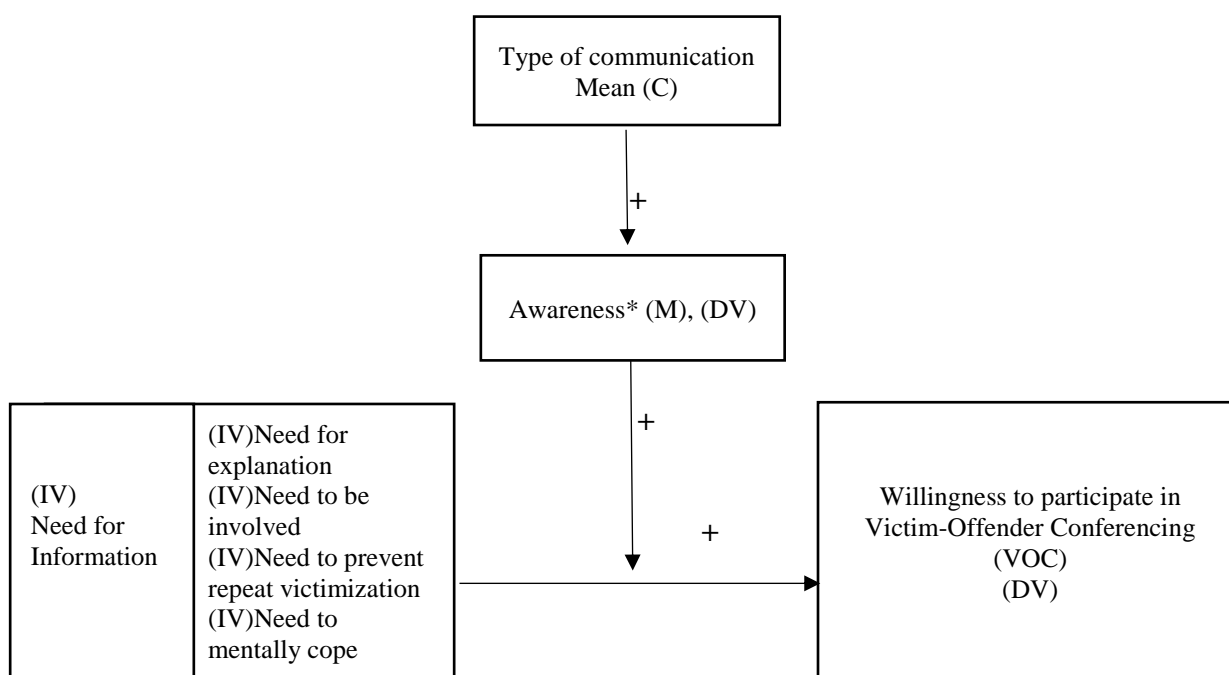


Figure 1. Research model (IV=independent variable, DV= dependent variable, M=moderator variable= independent variable, C=condition, *Awareness=Awareness that needs can be met when participating.

Method

Design

To examine the effect of the need for information on the victims' willingness to participate in VOM and how this is influenced through different types of communication, a between-groups design was employed. The types of communication were experimentally manipulated. The participants were randomly assigned to one of the three experimental groups. One group received the information in means of a flyer. Another one received a link to a video and a control condition received a plain text. Figure 1 illustrates the independent and dependent variables used in this study and how the variables relate to each other. The awareness variable functioned as both dependent and moderator variable. The awareness was dependent because

the higher the information richness of the communication means (e.g. video) the higher the awareness. Differently stated, the type of communication influenced the level of awareness. The awareness variable functioned as a moderator because it affected the strength of the relationship between the independent variable, need for information, and the dependent variable, willingness to participate in VOM.

Participants

The study compromised a snowball and convenience sample of 142 participants, divided into undergraduate students from the University of Twente as well as people from the researchers' network. The convenience sample means that people were chosen because of their convenient accessibility and proximity to the researcher. This was necessary due to time and resource limitations. Snowball sampling compromises those participants who were obtained from the researchers' network. A total of 142 people started filling out the questionnaire, however, only 99 could be used for further analysis. Reason for this is that the remaining 43 participants did not fit the selection criteria (Questionnaire is not filled out completely; did not read the material properly due to insufficient time spent on that page, did not pass the control questions). The response rate was 69.7 percent. The average age was 26 with a standard deviation of 9.87.63 percent were female participants and 36 percent male. The distribution of the participants was not completely equal over the different type of communication means. Only 29 participants were distributed to the video condition whereas 35 were allocated to either the flyer or letter condition. Table 1 gives an overview of the allocation of participants in the three different groups. The table includes the differences in age, gender, level of education as well as nationality in the three different conditions. A randomization check with half of the participants¹ confirmed that there are no relevant differences between the conditions regarding age, gender, level of education and nationality.

¹ The outcomes of the randomization check can be found in Table 2 (Appendix B)

Table 1*Descriptives, Differences between conditions.*

	Control (n=35)	Flyer (n=35)	Video (n=29)	Overall (n=99)
Age				
Mean (SD)	26.2 (10.2)	25.7 (9.53)	26.1 (10.3)	26.0 (9.87)
Median [Min, Max]	23.0 [18.0, 54.0]	22.0 [19.0, 58.0]	22.0 [14.0, 54.0]	22.0 [14.0, 58.0]
Gender				
Male	12 (34.3%)	11 (31.4%)	13 (44.8%)	36 (36.4%)
Female	23 (65.7%)	24 (68.6%)	16 (55.2%)	63 (63.6%)
Education				
Primary/School	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (3.4%)	1 (1.0%)
Secondary/School/Practical	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (3.4%)	1 (1.0%)
Secondary/School/Theoretical	1 (2.9%)	1 (2.9%)	4 (13.8%)	6 (6.1%)
Graduate/School	8 (22.9%)	8 (22.9%)	7 (24.1%)	23 (23.2%)
University/Bachelor	22 (62.9%)	20 (57.1%)	14 (48.3%)	56 (56.6%)
University/Master	3 (8.6%)	4 (11.4%)	1 (3.4%)	8 (8.1%)
Other	1 (2.9%)	2 (5.7%)	1 (3.4%)	4 (4.0%)
Nationality				
German	17 (48.6%)	19 (54.3%)	20 (69.0%)	56 (56.6%)
Dutch	9 (25.7%)	5 (14.3%)	0 (0%)	14 (14.1%)
Other	9 (25.7%)	11 (31.4%)	9 (31.0%)	29 (29.3%)

Note. SD = standard deviation; Min =minimum, Max = maximum**Materials**

All participants received a scenario in which they had to imagine themselves being a victim. They had to read a story written in the ‘you’ form in which they imagined themselves being a victim of a violent robbery. The story explained that the person wanted to withdraw money from an ATM machine when he or she suddenly got hit on the back head and was threatened with a gun. The story was based on a similar story which was already used by Dijk (2016) and Kippers (2015) who conducted research in a comparable field, the willingness to participate in Restorative Justice Programs. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the three conditions that differed in the type of communication mean. This means that each

participant received either a video, flyer or letter. In general, all types of communication included the same content.

Research Instruments

Independent variables. Within this research, the independent variables were the need for explanation, the need to be involved, the need to preventing repeat victimization as well as the need to mentally cope with the crime. All of these were subcategories for the need for information variable. Additionally, the research included the independent variable, awareness, which served as a moderator and dependent variable. All items used for measuring the different variables were answered on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

The need for information was measured by 21 items in total ($\alpha=.89$). The items regarding the need for explanation were translated and adjusted from the questionnaire from Dijk (2016). All the other items were based on the description of needs by Ten Boom and Kuijpers (2012). A factor analysis has shown that the four suggested independent variables do not fall under the same construct, need for information. Instead of four underlying factors, the factor analysis has shown five with an eigenvalue higher than one. These factors together explained 66.43 percent of the variance.

Five items that were initially supposed to measure the need for explanation, showed high factor loadings, all above .68, on the first factor. Hence, these items measure what they were intended to. However, there is another item that loaded relatively high (.50) on the first factor. That question: “I need to know if the offender regrets his actions” was initially intended to measure the need to mentally cope with the crime, however, it seems as if this questions rather refers to an explanation instead of how to be able to mentally cope. Therefore, it was decided to use it for the construct, need for explanation. This shows to have high reliability ($\alpha=.86$).

Three items which were expected to measure the need to be involved, showed high factor loadings, above .72 on the second factor. All the other items that were intended to measure the need to be involved construct, loaded high on another factor. Although all measure a need to be involved in the criminal justice system, it seems as if there is a distinction between questions about the general involvement in the criminal justice system as well as involvement for the particular case. As an example, the question: “I have a need to know about the procedure of the criminal justice system” loaded high on the general involvement factor. A question loading high on the other factor was for example: “I want to

actively deal with the crime instead of playing a passive role in the process". Since all questions still measure the involvement in the criminal justice process it was decided to use them within one overarching construct, which shows to have high reliability ($\alpha=.86$).

Four items which were supposed to measure the need to prevent repeat victimization load highly, all above .61, on factor three. An example question was: "I need to know that the offender will not commit his actions again." This construct showed good reliability ($\alpha=.80$).

Another four items which were intended to measure the need to mentally cope with the crime loaded highly on the fourth factor with loadings above .65. An example question was: "I need information on how to go on with my life.". Initially, there was another item supposed to measure that construct, namely: "I need to know if the offender regrets his actions". This was decided to measure the construct, need for explanation, instead. Considering this, the construct shows good internal reliability ($\alpha=.79$).

The awareness variable served as both, an independent variable i.e. moderator variable and as a dependent variable. The variable was measured by twelve items. An example question for that variable was: "I think that I will receive all the information I need when participating in victim-offender conferencing to cope with the crime.". The factor analysis indicated three underlying factors for that variable. Although all items measure to what extent victims are aware of how victim-offender conferencing can meet their needs, it seems as if there are distinctions between the questions. Six items seem to refer to awareness about the victims' feelings. An example of that is: "I think that victim-offender conferencing will help me put an end to my suffering from the offence.". These six items load highly on factor one, with loadings above .44. Whereas, another 4 items seem to refer to an awareness that is more general about the criminal justice process. An example here is: "I think that victim-offender conferencing will give me a say in the outcome of the justice process". These items loaded high on the third factor with loadings above .70. Another two items refer to awareness that victim-offender conferencing will prevent repeat victimization. The item is an example: "I think that victim-offender conferencing will change offenders". These items have factor loadings above .82. Despite, these small distinctions, all items still measure the level of awareness of how victim-offender conferencing can meet victims' needs. Hence, it was decided to use all items within one overarching construct, which showed high reliability ($\alpha=.92$).

Dependent variables. The willingness to participate in victim-offender conferencing was measured by four items. One of them was for example: "I would like to participate in

victim-offender conferencing. All items used for measuring the different variables were answered on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

A factor analysis showed one underlying factor with an eigenvalue higher than one. Three items showed high factor loadings above .95. One of the items had to be reversed coded since it was a negative formulated question. The factor loading then is .70. In total, the variable showed excellent reliability ($\alpha=.92$).

Control variables. The first questions in the questionnaire were regarding the participants' demographical information (i.e. gender, age, nationality, and education). The final questions were some to check whether the participant was able to concentrate during the questionnaire or whether he or she got distracted. Moreover, after the scenario in which they had to imagine themselves being a victim of a violent robbery, the participants were asked what weapon was used in order to check whether they have carefully read the scenario. Additionally, they were asked whether they could imagine themselves being in the situation as well as being a victim in general. The questions were formulated as such: "What weapon did the offender have?". To what extent were you able to imagine yourself being in the ATM robbery situation; To what extent were you able to imagine yourself as a victim?". Participants with too many missing values as well as those who were not able to imagine themselves in the situation and not concentrated or distracted were excluded from the data set.

Procedure

The questionnaire was conducted through an online platform called Qualtrics. This enabled the researcher to gain a lot of respondents to participate in a very short amount of time. Before presenting the respondents the questionnaire, the research was approved by the ethical committee of the University of Twente. Each respondent was informed about the anonymity of the study and about the possibility to withdraw at any moment without giving an explanation. Moreover, they were informed that participation in the study takes approximately 15 minutes. Once the respondent accepted the declaration of consent, the study began. The first questions asked were regarding the participants' demographical data (age, gender, nationality, educational level). After that, participants were asked to read a scenario in which they had to imagine themselves being a victim of a violent robbery. The next question was asked in order to check whether they have read the scenario by asking what weapon was used and to what extent they were able to imagine themselves in the situation and as a victim. Following, the participants were asked about the needs they had regarding the crime. More specifically, participants had to answer questions regarding the need for information and its'

components: need for explanation, need to be involved, need for information to prevent repeat victimization as well as need for information about mentally coping with the crime. After answering these questions, they were assigned to three different experimental groups, each receiving a different type of communication mean that aims to raise awareness about how victim-offender conferencing can meet victims' needs. One group receives a flyer, one a video and a control condition gets the information in the form of a plain text. No matter in what group the participant got in, he or she was asked to carefully read the information that was presented, or in case of the video condition, to carefully watch the video. After that, they were asked questions whether they would like to participate in victim-offender conferencing. Once they have decided whether they would like to participate in victim-offender conferencing or not, they were asked additional questions about their level of awareness of how victim-offender conferencing can meet their needs. At the end of the questionnaire, the participants were thanked and informed about the purpose of the study. Moreover, they were given the opportunity to contact the researcher in case they were having any questions or concerns.

Results

Overall view

An overview of the main variables used in this research is demonstrated in table 3. It includes the mean scores, standard deviation, range, minimum, maximum per variable and correlations between the variables. In general, participants scored high on the need to prevent repeat victimization (M=5.41), need to mentally cope with the crime (M=5.43), awareness (M=4.90) and willingness to participate in victim-offender conferencing (M=4.86). Slightly below scored the need for explanation (M=4.56) and need to be involved (M=4.82). Since all the variables scored above 4² they can all be considered high scores. There are positive correlations between three of the need for information variables: need for explanation (.41), need to be involved (.30), need to cope (.25) and the willingness to participate in victim-offender conferencing. The variable need to prevent repeat victimization did not positively correlate with the willingness to participate in victim-offender conferencing. This indicates that only the three variables: need for explanation, need to be involved as well as need to mentally cope positively relate to the willingness to participate. This means that people who score high in the need for explanation, need to be involved as well as need to mentally cope with the crime, also score high on the willing to participate. Hence, the expectation that

² The value of 4 was considered neutral, because it was also labeled in the questionnaire as neither agree nor disagree. Values higher than 4 were considered as high. Values under 4 considered as low. The items were measured with a 7-point Likertscale.

victims with a higher need for information are more willing to participate in restorative justice programs can only be partly confirmed if the need for information compromises the need for explanation, need to be involved and need to cope, based on the correlations. It is striking, however, that the awareness variable correlated in a highly positive and significant manner with the willingness to participate in VOC variable (.71). This is in accordance with the expectation: the higher the willingness to participate the higher the awareness of the personal value of victim-offender conferencing.

Table 3

Descriptives and Correlations.

	M	SD	R	Min	Max	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Need for explanation	4.56	1.32	6.00	1.00	7.00	1	.40**	.57**	.41**	.54**	.41**
2. Need to be involved	4.82	1.14	5.14	1.86	7.00		1	.50**	.44**	.37**	.30**
3. Need to prevent	5.41	1.13	5.25	1.75	7.00			1	.38**	.39**	.17
4. Need to mentally cope	5.43	1.16	5.00	2.00	7.00				1	.43**	.25*
5. Awareness	4.90	1.09	5.50	1.50	7.00					1	.71**
6. Willingness	4.86	1.57	6.00	1.00	7.00						1

Note. M = Mean; SD = standard deviation; R = range; Min = minimum, Max = maximum.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$. All variables were measured on a scale from 1 to 7

Testing the hypotheses

Overarching construct: Need for information

The first hypothesis stated that the need for explanation, need to be involved, need to prevent repeat victimization as well as need to mentally cope with the crime, all fall under the same construct, the need for information. Results of a factor analysis showed that there were five factors with an eigenvalue above one. Hence, the need for information was no overarching construct. Together the constructs explained 66.00 percent of the variance. The first factor named the need for explanation, explained 35.23 percent of the variance. A detailed description of the constructs and items used to measure them can be found in the methods

section, independent variables. Therefore, hypothesis one is rejected because the need for information was no overarching construct for the different variables.

Need for information variables and relationship to willingness to participate

A linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between the independent variable need for information and the dependent variable willingness to participate in victim-offender conferencing. The need for information variable was divided into four variables: need for explanation, need to be involved, need to prevent repeat victimization as well as need to mentally cope with the crime. This analysis was conducted with the mean scores of each variable. The adjusted R square of .18 tells us that 18 percent of the variance of the dependent variable is explained by the independent variables.

The analysis showed that the need for explanation positively predicted the willingness to participate in victim-offender conferencing ($B=.50$, $SE=.14$, $p < .001$). The need to be involved, the need to prevent repeat victimization as well as the need to mentally cope were no significant predictors of the willingness to participate in VOC (Table 4).

Therefore, the need for explanation variable is the only significant predictor of the willingness to participate in victim-offender conferencing³. This indicates, that Hypothesis two – victims with a higher need for information are more willing to participate in restorative justice – could only be partly confirmed since only one underlying variable, instead of all four, positively predicted the willingness to participate.

Testing Hypothesis three – the relation between a higher need for information and the willingness to participate in restorative justice programs is influenced by the awareness that needs can be met by participation – requires a positive relationship between the need for information and the willingness to participate in VOC. Hence, further analyses were conducted with the need for explanation (because it is the only need that has a positive relationship to the willingness to participate) and it was tested if awareness moderates the relationship to the willingness to participate in VOC.

³ However, if the need for information is considered as a construct on its own and not as an overarching construct, then it is a positive predictor for the willingness to participate in VOC ($B=.66$, $SD=.16$, $p=.00$)

Table 4*Analysis of Variance.*

	B	SE	p
Need for explanation	.50	.14	<.001
Need to be involved	.25	.15	.106
Need to prevent repeat victimization	-.26	.17	.128
Need to mentally cope with crime	.09	.14	.521

Note. Dependent variable: Willingness to participate in VOC

The relationship between a higher need for explanation and the willingness to participate moderated by the level of awareness

A moderation analysis was conducted to examine if awareness moderates the relationship between the need for explanation and the willingness to participate in VOC. In total, the moderation analysis was conducted three times, each time the awareness variable with different items as suggested in the factor analysis. Hence, the moderator analysis was conducted firstly with the awareness moderator variable that included all items. A second time with the awareness variable that included only the items regarding victims' feelings. Lastly, the awareness variable that included only items referring to an awareness about the criminal justice process.⁴ Either way, the moderation analyses showed no interaction effects (Table 5). Hence, awareness does not moderate the relationship between the need for explanation and willingness to participate in victim-offender conferencing (Table 5). This also indicates that the relation between a higher need for explanation and the willingness to participate is not influenced by the awareness about how victim-offender conferencing can meet their needs.⁵ However, a notable effect is that even though there is no moderation, the effect of awareness on willingness to participate in victim-offender conferencing is significant in all cases regarding the need for explanation (all p 's <.001).

⁴ See factor analysis: Awareness Feelings included items Q21_1, Q21_2, Q21_3, Q22_4, Q22_5, Q22_6, Awareness Justice Process included items Q21_4, Q21_5, Q21_6, Q22_1

⁵ Comparable outcomes were presented when conducting a moderation analysis with the need for information variable. However, results give no solid conclusions since the need for explanation is an integral part of that variable (Appendix C)

Table 5*Moderation analyses: need for explanation.*

	B	SE	p
Need for explanation	.04	.10	.711
Awareness	.99	.13	<.001
Interaction	-.06	.07	.423
Need for explanation	.12	.10	.232
Awareness Feelings	.86	.10	<.001
Interaction	.04	.06	.505
Need for explanation	.22	.12	.073
Awareness Justice Process	.51	.14	<.001
Interaction	-.07	.08	.338

Note. Dependent variable: Willingness to participate in VOC

Types of communication and influence on awareness and willingness to participate in VOC

A one-way ANOVA was conducted in order to examine the differences between the three conditions (video, flyer, text). Results showed that there was no statistically significant difference between the three different experimental groups ($F(2,96)=.99, p=.377$) on awareness. Hence, it cannot be confirmed that there is a difference in awareness that needs can be met by participating in the different groups. Hypothesis four: Victims in the video condition experience the highest awareness that the need for information is addressed by participation and victims in the control condition the lowest – needs to be rejected.

A second one-way ANOVA was conducted in order to examine whether the types of communication had an influence on the willingness to participate in VOC. The results, however, have shown that the willingness to participate did not increase because of a particular type of communication mean. There were no differences in groups regarding the willingness to participate ($F(2,96)=1.98, p=.144$). Hence, Hypothesis five – Victims in the video and flyer condition are more willing to participate in victim-offender conferencing compared to victims in the control condition – was also rejected.

Additional ‘explorative’ results

Although there was no interaction effect found in the previous moderation analysis, the variable awareness apparently does have an influence on the relationship between the need for explanation⁶ and the willingness to participate in VOC since the relationship was no longer significant when awareness was added to the model. Therefore, a mediation analysis was conducted via PROCESS (SPSS) in order to test whether awareness that the needs can be met explains the effect of the need for explanation on the willingness to participate in VOC.

The first step of the mediation model tested the regression of the need for explanation on the willingness to participate in VOC, ignoring the possible mediator of awareness that the needs can be met, was significant ($B=.49$, $SE=.11$, $p < .001$). The second step showed that the regression of the need for explanation on the mediator, awareness, was significant, ($B=.45$, $SE=.07$, $p < .001$). The third step of the mediation showed that awareness, the mediator controlling for the need for explanation, was significant, ($B=.99$, $SE=.13$, $p < .001$). The fourth step of the analyses revealed that controlling for the mediator (awareness), need for explanation was not a significant predictor of the willingness to participate in VOC ($B=.05$, $SE=.10$, $p=.621$). Hence, awareness fully mediates the relationship between need for explanation and the willingness to participate in VOC. Figure 2 illustrates a visual explanation of the mediation.

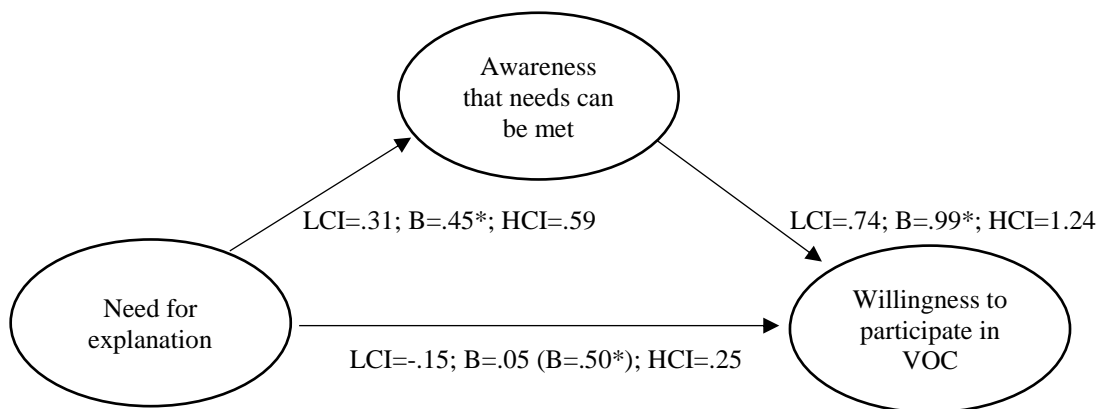


Figure 2. Mediation of awareness on the relation between need for explanation and the willingness to participate in VOC (* $p < .05$) (B-value in brackets is original relation between need for information and willingness to participate in VOC). LCI and HCI= Confidence Intervals.

⁶ Again, there are comparable results when conducting a mediation analysis with the need for information variable if it is considered as an independent construct (Appendix D)

Discussion

Research shows that victims have different needs that should be fulfilled after a crime (Achilles & Zehr, 2001; Ten Boom & Kuijpers, 2012). This study examined the needs victims have after crime and how they are related to the willingness to participate in VOC. Also, it was investigated whether the victims' level of awareness that these needs can be met positively influenced the relationship between the need for explanation or need for information and the willingness to participate in VOC. Lastly, it was examined how information offered through different types of communication increased victims' level of awareness that their needs can be met when participating as well as their willingness to participate in VOC.

Contrary to the expectation, the need for information could not be taken as an overarching construct for the need for explanation, need to be involved, need to prevent repeat victimization as well as need to mentally cope with the crime. A reason for that could be that the research of Ten Boom and Kuijpers (2012), on which this assumption was based, only presented a list of the different needs and clustered them into different fields of needs (e.g. field of information, field of emotions, etc.) that a victim could have. Problematic with this assumption is, and that was already stressed out by Ten Boom and Kuijpers (2012) that not all needs are applicable to all kinds of victims. Hence, clustering needs might be too complex. An additional problematic with clustering needs is that needs are very subjective (Robins, 2013). It might be that every victim has an individual combination of needs. It could be for example that a victim was high in the need for explanation and high in the need to mentally cope with the crime but certainly not interested in being involved or preventing repeat victimization. Hence, it is not advisable to merge these needs together even though they are all referring to gaining information about the crime. Moreover, it could be that the questions that were intended to measure the different constructs were not best suited for measuring the different constructs. The questions, except the ones from the need for explanation which were based on research findings of Dijk (2016), were self-invented and not chosen from an existing scale. As there was an additional factor recognizable, the validity of the scale was only modest. Moreover, there were some items that could be improved as they were formulated too shallow in that they rather refer to the need that victims want to be informed more generally about the criminal justice system. Hence, future research might want to involve an additional factor which could be called need for information about the justice system or they might reevaluate each item and reconsider whether it makes sense to take the need for information variable as an overarching construct for the different needs.

Another finding of this research was that only one of the four needs, namely the need for explanation positively predicted the willingness to participate in VOC. An explanation for this finding could be that although victims were high in the need to be involved, need to prevent repeat victimization and need to mentally cope, these needs were not related to a higher willingness to participate since they might feel that there are other ways to meet those needs. As an example, the need to mentally cope could for example also be solved through talking to a therapist or family. Another possible explanation why the need for explanation related to a higher willingness might be due to the content of the questionnaire. It could be that the fact that the need for explanation is fulfilled in VOC was put in the foreground by the types of communication and that even though participants scored high on all the other needs they might have thought that in order to fulfill this specific need they would have to participate. As an example, in the video, the participants are directly told that VOC can give them the explanations they need, and that the offender can apologize for the harm he or she has caused (Appendix A). Hence, the participants could have been induced to believe that in order to fulfil that specific need, they would have to participate in VOC whereas regarding the other needs they did not see a necessity to participate. Finally, it could be argued that the need for explanation was the only predictor of the willingness to participate because it best represents the need for information. This is plausible since the questions used to measure the need for explanation were based on existing scales by Dijk (2016) and Kippers (2015) that measure the need for information. This would also explain why the need for information, if you consider it as an independent construct, positively influenced the willingness to participate in VOC and shows similar results to the need for explanation. That the need for explanation best represents the need for information variable might also be the most logical explanation since research has already shown that the need for information is a positive predictor of the willingness (Dijk, 2016; Ten Boom & Kuijpers, 2012; Umbreit et al., 2004; Zebel et al., 2017).

Interestingly, the obtained results did not confirm that awareness moderates the relationship between neither the need for explanation and the willingness to participate nor the need for information and the willingness to participate. What was found, however, is that awareness fully explains the relationship between the need for explanation and the willingness to participate in VOC and that the variable, awareness, itself has a positive impact on the willingness to participate in VOC. This means that people high in the need for explanation need to be aware that their needs can be met in order to be willing to participate in restorative justice programs. This idea is also in line with previous research that suggested how important

it is to make victims understand how they could benefit from participating in restorative justice programs and what the focus of such programs is (Choi et al., 2011). A possible explanation for the awareness not being a moderator but a predictor of the willingness to participate in VOC could be that it had a stronger effect on the willingness compared to the need for explanation. Another plausible explanation could be that participants who are high in the need for explanation knew already that through restorative justice programs one could get explanations since it is explained primarily when such programs are presented. It could be that raising awareness is more important with needs where it is less obvious that these could be fulfilled when participating in restorative justice programs. To illustrate a situation in which it is less obvious that VOC can fulfil certain needs, it could be for example that the offender is related to the victim (e.g. your boss) and that the victim wants to keep the relationship positively even though he or she wants justice. The need accordingly would then be the need for restoration, as Ten Book and Kuijpers (2012) stated it and it is important to make victims aware that such needs can also be fulfilled when participating.

A final finding of this study was that there were no differences concerning the level of awareness as well as willingness to participate in VOC after offering them information about VOC through means of a video, flyer or letter. A possible explanation for that could be that the findings on which this assumption has been made cannot be applied to more vulnerable groups of people, such as victims. It could be that people who have never experienced a crime, as also shown by the research of Green et al., 2008 are more responding to a video, whereas victims do not care as much what communication means they are presented with since they would respond to every option that might help them. Victims are in completely different positions than ordinary people who have not been involved in a crime. As McCart et al., (2010) already showed, it is natural for victims of crime to seek ways to solve their problems and to satisfy their needs. Hence the research findings on which this assumption was based on might not be suitable for the crime context. Therefore, it is likely that victims consider any option as they are eager to solve their problem. Consequently, it could be that they consider taking the effort to read long texts if they see a chance that there might be a way to solve their problems. Whereas, in contrast, a person who has no problems is not eager to read long texts and responds more to less effort-taking options, such as watching a video or looking at a flyer (Green, 2008). Another explanation for not finding differences between the three groups could be that the different communication means did not fulfil the participants' expectations or that they did not respond positively to the material. This could be due to two reasons: Firstly, the flyer was designed by the researchers instead of a professional media

designer. Secondly, it could have been that the researchers were too much into the topic beforehand and, therefore, the flyer could not be designed objectively. Persons outside the topic could have been overwhelmed by the amount of information.

An additional interesting finding of this study was that the need to prevent repeat victimization was the only one that showed no connection to the willingness to participate in victim-offender conferencing based on the correlations. This led to the conclusion that this need differentiates itself from the others in that it is referring to a change wished for in others instead of a process of change in oneself. Hence, participants could have had more difficulties to comprehend the relation between preventing repeat victimization and participating in such programs. It is certainly easier to imagine that one could change something about his own state of mind instead of imagining that one could change someone else's since people primarily act out of self-interest (Darnton, 2008).

Limitations

One of the most important limitations of this study is that it is not conducted with real victims. The participants were asked to read a scenario and imagine themselves being a victim of a violent robbery. They might have under- or overestimated how they would feel if they would actually have experienced it. It could be that some victims have different coping mechanisms to deal with the offender pointing a gun at his or her head. This might also depend on the type of personality someone is having as well as on how much of an imaginative power someone is having. Therefore, it would have been better to use options that would simplify the process of imagination such as virtual reality. Additionally, it could be that another scenario such as a burglary could have caused more intense or different needs and hence more willingness to participate.

Another limitation could be that the vast majority of participants were females in this study. It might be that there would have been slightly different results if gender would have been more evenly distributed among the participants. It could be that males would be more willing to meet their offender since they principally engage in more risk-taking activities compared to females (Eagly & Crowley, 1986).

Importantly to mention is also that the research focused on VOC which differentiates itself from other restorative justice programs in that it includes the community of the people who were affected by the crime (Maxwell et al., 2006). It might be that needs slightly differ considering that family members or friends are included in the program. Hence, it would be interesting to see if there are different results if another program such as VOM is chosen.

Additionally, the study was limited in that it used an online questionnaire since it is difficult to control whether the participants were concentrated or participated seriously. Therefore, one could consider concentration as a confounding variable that might have had an uncontrollable influence on the results.

Implications

Even though not all of the results of this research were as expected, this research serves as a good starting point for conducting further research about new ways of presenting restorative justice programs to victims and how needs can be taken into account. As Dijk (2016) already said it is important to find beneficial ways for practitioners of VOM to explain to victims how their needs can be fulfilled in mediation, i.e. conferencing.

Another direction for future research could be to have a look at different personality dimensions and whether they play a role in the level of awareness and type of communication means they prefer. It might be that extraverted people are more open to new things and as research of Kippers (2015) have shown they are also motivated to participate in such programs. Moreover, it might be of interest to examine whether there are specifically suitable types of communication for more vulnerable target groups, such as victims. It might be that it is best for them to get the information presented personally or at least as easy and beneficial as possible. Additionally, there could be differences in generations. The younger generation might prefer to be contacted via social media through a video invitation for example, whereas the elderly might prefer an invitation through a letter. This is in line with research that suggests that elderly prefer deeper and more thoughtful types of communication such as e-mails, telephone calls or written letters (Hope, Schwaba, & Piper, 2014).

Interestingly for future research could also be to combine current research findings with the findings of Zebel et al.,(2017) and test whether there is an even stronger connection between awareness and willingness to participate in such programs if the crime is more severe and if awareness must be increased the more time passed by.

To the researcher's knowledge, this is the first study assessing how to take needs into account when presenting victims with restorative justice programs, hence it provides an important addition to the existing literature in this topic. In line with the findings of this study, it could be interesting for future research to find out how to make society more aware that their needs can be met when participating in restorative justice programs.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Questionnaire: Feelings of victims after crime

Informed consent

First of all thank you for your interest in participating in this study. This study is a bachelor thesis within the department of Psychology, Conflict Risk and Safety at the University of Twente. The purpose of this study is to investigate the feelings of victims after crime and how this influences their attitudes towards justice. You will read a scenario in which you have to imagine yourself as a victim. Afterwards, some questions will be asked. **It is important that you can play sound and videos properly while filling in the research.**

The study will take approximately 15 minutes. There are no right or wrong answers. Participation in this study is completely anonymously and voluntary. You can stop at any time, without any negative consequences and without providing a reason. However, it would be helpful if you fill out the questionnaire completely and in one go. Your data is treated confidentially and the results will only be used for the purpose of this study. Your data will not be given to third parties without your expressed permission. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact the researcher, Jennifer Rentzsch, via j.rentzsch@student.utwente.nl.

If you have any complaints about this research, please direct them to the Secretary of the Ethics Commission of the faculty Behavioral, Management and Social Sciences at University Twente via email: ethicscommittee-bms@utwente.nl.

Declaration of consent:

I declare that I have been informed in a clear manner about the purpose of this study. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study and I have the right to withdraw at any time. I know that my data and results are used completely anonymously and confidentially. My personal data will not be used without my expressed permission.

☐ I agree

☐ I disagree

Demographical questions

What is your gender?

☐ male

☐ female

☐ other

What is your age in years?

What is your nationality?

☐ german

☐ dutch

☐ other: namely

What is your level of education?

☐ Primary School

☐ Secondary School Practical Pathway

☐ Secondary School Theoretical Pathway

☐ Graduate School

☐ University Bachelor

☐ University Master

☐ Other: namely

Scenario

Please carefully read the following scenario. Afterwards some questions will be asked about this scenario.

Imagine it is Friday night and you want to withdraw some money before you go to the city to meet some friends. While you were looking for an ATM machine, you realise that the streets get more empty and that you ended up in a shady area. This already makes you feel a bit nervous and you start walking faster. Reaching the ATM machine you immediately take the money out and put it in your wallet. Then you suddenly hear someone shouting and you feel a loud thump against your head. Someone has hit you really hard and when you turn around you realise that a masked men stands in front of you and points a gun towards your head. He shouts at you that he wants your money. You are so shocked that you simply don't see another possibility than giving him the money. The offender runs away. You need some minutes to understand what just happened and you feel that there is some blood coming down your face. You have a wound on your head. After the robbery you feel very scared and you are more skeptical and careful everywhere you go. Different questions go through your head: Why me? What was his motive? Could it happen again? A few days later, you receive the message that the police has been able to track down the offender and that he will be arrested. The offender has been convicted.

Control questions Q09

What weapon did the offender have?

☐ gun

☐ electric shocker

☐ knife

To what extent do you agree to the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I was able to imagine myself as a victim	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was able to imagine myself being in the ATM robbery situation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Questions: Need for explanation (Need for Information) Q10

To what extent do you agree to the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I wish to get information from the offender about the motives of the crime	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have the need to ask the offender why he chose me as a victim	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I want to know how the offense impacted the offender	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I wish to get information from the offender about his reason for committing the crime	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I need to know if the offender planned the offense	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Questions: Need to be involved (Need for information) Q11

To what extent do you agree to the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I want to actively deal with the crime instead of playing a passive role in the process	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I want to have an active role in finding an adequate punishment for the offender	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I need to get information about what part I play in the whole criminal justice process	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have a need to know about the procedure of the criminal justice system	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I want to be involved in the criminal justice process	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I want to get information about the legal system	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I want to be informed about the course of the case	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Questions: Need to prevent repeat victimization (Need for information) Q12

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I need to know if the offender regrets his actions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I need to know that I will be supported	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I need information on how I can go on with my life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have a need to not feel as a victim anymore	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I need to get information on how to be better able to cope with the offense	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Questions: Need to mentally cope with the crime (Need for information) Q13

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I have a need to not feel as a victim anymore	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I need information on how I can go on with my life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I need to know if the offender regrets his actions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I need to know that I will be supported	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I need to get information on how to be better able to cope with the offense	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Distributions conditions: (Participants received the following text with either flyer, video or letter in the brackets)

A few weeks after the offence you receive a (flyer, video, letter) from the criminal prosecutor. This (flyer, video, letter) explains to you that you have the opportunity to participate in victim-offender conferencing. You receive the following (flyer, video, letter) in which conferencing is explained. Please carefully the (flyer, video, letter)

Flyer condition


GET RESTORATIVE JUSTICE—It may change your life

Many victims of crime feel that they are left out of the criminal justice process altogether. Restorative justice, often called victim-offender conferencing, however, gives them a voice and the opportunity to play an active part in helping prevent others from becoming a victim again.

How does VICTIM-OFFENDER CONFERENCING work?

By facilitating contact between the victim and offender, restorative justice gives victims the chance to explain to offenders the real impact of the crime, to get answers to their questions and an apology. It holds offenders accountable for what they have done and helps them understand the real impact of their crime, take responsibility and make amends.

WANT TO MOVE ON AFTER A CRIME?



Offender: "...I wanted to change my life... So I wanted to meet her to apologise. It gave me feelings of guilt and something to work on."

Victim: "I wanted him to understand how he made me feel. The main outcome I had of participating was that I don't feel like a victim anymore."

It does not happen automatically-It's a serious thing:

- a lot of **planning** and work goes into making sure that the meeting is **safe** and **effective**
- it includes **support** for both victim and offender
- a **trained** facilitator guides the dialogue, ensuring that each participant has a **voice**

Research funded by the Ministry of Justice has found that 85% of victims that took part were satisfied with the process and the frequency of reoffending reduces by 14%

Requirements that must be met before conference can take place:

- 1) The offender must accept responsibility for the crime
- 2) Both the victim and the offender must be willing to participate
- 3) The facilitator provides a safe environment for both the victim and the offender.

Video condition

Link to video: <https://youtu.be/WrEApuJ-DTE>



Letter condition

Imagine having the opportunity to speak directly to someone who has committed a crime against you, to tell them face to face how much that crime has affected you and show them the harm they have caused. Now imagine being a criminal and hearing firsthand from the victim the pain and suffering you have caused them. How would this make you feel?

Restorative Justice makes this happen and really does have the power to change people's lives. By facilitating contact, by means of a conversation between a victim and offender, restorative justice gives victims the chance to explain to offenders the real impact of their crime to get answers to their questions and an apology. It holds offenders accountable for what they have done and helps them understand the real impact of their crime, take responsibility and make amends.

Many victims of crimes feel that they are left out of the criminal justice process altogether.

Restorative justice gives victims a voice and the opportunity to play a part in helping prevent others from becoming a victim.

Research funded by the Ministry of Justice has found that 85 % of victims who take part are satisfied with the process and the frequency of reoffending reduces by 14 %.

However, it is not until you read directly from someone who participated in the process that you really understand the benefits:

Victim testimony: "The reason I wanted to take part is because I wanted to come across this person who really made me very angry and put me to a lot of trouble. I wanted him to understand what it felt like. I wanted to make him understand the impact that it could have on somebody else. They can think about it and realize that if you happen to think how he would feel. I don't feel like a victim anymore. That's what it gives me."

By making criminals face the true impact of their crimes Restorative Justice helps reduce reoffending. This means that there is less crime and fewer resources needed to prevent and manage the crime. The benefits of a lower crime rate within a community are numerous. With many criminals reoffending on a regular basis, Restorative Justice offers a proven way to support communities, while helping offenders turn their lives around.

Offender testimony: "I've never felt sorry. I have never put a face to the crimes. So it never kicked in. But, the last time I wanted to change my life. I need to change my life and you have to start from bottom up. So I wanted to meet him to apologise. It gave me feelings of

guilt and something to work on from there. I've been trying to do that, since then."

Restorative Justice is not something that just happens automatically. Meeting the offender of a crime committed against you is a serious thing and a lot of work and planning goes into making sure that meeting is safe and effective. A Restorative Justice meeting, often called victim-offender conference, includes support for both the victim and offender. A trained facilitator guides the participants in a dialogue, ensuring that each participant has a voice in the proceedings. There are three basic requirements that must be met, before a conference can take place:

- 1) The offender must accept responsibility for the crime*
- 2) Both the victim and the offender must be willing to participate*
- 3) Both the victim and the offender must consider it safe to be involved in the process*

Questions: Willingness to participate in VOC Q21

To what extent do you agree to the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I would like to get in contact with the offender	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would like to have a conversation with the offender	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would like to participate in victim-offender conferencing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I probably will not participate in victim-offender conferencing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Questions Awareness Q22_1

To what extent do you agree to the following statement?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I think that I will benefit from participation in victim-offender conferencing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think that victim-offender conferencing could give me the explanations that I need from the offender	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think that I will be informed about the course of the criminal case when participating in victim-offender conferencing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think that I will be informed about the procedure of the criminal justice system when participating in victim-offender conferencing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think that victim-offender conferencing will give me a say in the outcome of the justice process	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think that victim-offender conferencing could give me answers to questions regarding the offense	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Questions: Awareness Q22_2

To what extent do you agree to the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I think that through participation in victim-offender conferencing I will prevent offenders from reoffending	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think that victim-offender conferencing will help me realize that I am not a victim anymore	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think that I will receive all the information I need when participating in victim-offender conferencing to cope with the crime	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think that victim-offender conferencing will actively involve me in the criminal process	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think that victim-offender conferencing will help me put an end to my suffering from the offense	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think that victim-offender conferencing will change offenders	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Questions: Control Q23

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I was distracted while I was filling out the previous answers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was able to concentrate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Debriefing Q24

This study has come to an end. Thank you for your cooperation. The study had two main purposes. The first one, was to investigate in victims needs after a crime and how they are related to the willingness to participate in victim-offender conferencing. The second purpose was to find out what type of communication mean (letter, flyer or video) works best in order to raise victims' awareness of how restorative justice can meet their needs and whether this influences their willingness to participate in such programs. If you are interested in the results of the research , you can send the researcher a message via e-mail: j.rentzsch@student.utwente who will send you the results of the research.

Once again thank you for your participation!

Jennifer Rentzsch

Appendix B

Table 2

Randomization check

	Control (n=18)	Flyer (n=12)	Video (n=20)
Age			
Mean (SD)	27.6 (11.41)	26.6 (9.37)	24.3 (7.95)
Median [Min, Max]	23.0 [18.0, 54.0]	22.0 [19.0, 42.0]	22.0 [14.0, 48.0]
Gender			
Male	6 (33,3%)	4 (33.3%)	7 (35.0%)
Female	12 (66.7%)	6 (66.7%)	13(65.0%)
Education			
Primary/School	0(0%)	0(0%)	1(5%)
Secondary/School/Practical	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
Secondary/School/Theoretical	1(5.6%)	0(0%)	3(15.0%)
Graduate/School	4(22.2%)	2(16.7%)	5(25.0%)
University/Bachelor	13(72.2%)	7(58.3%)	9(45.0%)
University/Master	0(0%)	1(8.3%)	1(5.0%)
Other	0(0%)	2(16.7%)	1(5.0%)
Nationality			
German	10(55.6%)	4(33.3%)	16(80.0%)
Dutch	4(22.2%)	1(8.3%)	0(0%)
Other	4(22.2%)	7(58.3%)	4(20.0%)

Appendix C

Moderation analyses: Need for information

Additional moderation analyses were conducted in order to test whether the awareness moderates the relationship between the need for information and the willingness to participate in VOC. The moderation analyses were also conducted three times, each time the awareness included different items. The results are comparable to the need for explanation in that there is no moderation, hence, there are no interaction effects recognizable (Table 5). However, there is a significantly predicting relationship between awareness and the willingness to participate in VOC (Table 5).

Table 5

Moderation analyses: need for information.

	B	SE	p
Need for information	-.04	.09	.77
Awareness	1.04	.16	.00
Interaction	-.09	.00	.38
Need for information	.05	.14	.71
Awareness Feelings	.90	.11	.00
Interaction	.05	.08	.57
Need for information	.22	.19	.24
Awareness Justice Process	.55	.15	.00
Interaction	-.11	.11	.33

Appendix D

Mediation analysis: Need for information

An additional mediation analysis was conducted in order to test whether awareness that the needs can be met explains the effect of the need for information (considering it as an independent construct) on the willingness to participate in VOC. The first step of the mediation model tested the regression of the need for information on the willingness to participate in VOC, ignoring the possible mediator of awareness that the needs can be met, was significant ($B=.66$, $SE=.16$, $p < .001$). The second step showed that the regression of the need for information on the mediator, awareness, was significant, ($B=.67$, $SE=.10$, $p < .001$). The third step of the mediation showed that awareness, the mediator controlling for the need for information, was non-significant, ($B=1.04$, $SE=.13$, $p < .001$). The fourth step of the analyses revealed that controlling for the mediator (awareness), need for information was not a significant predictor of the willingness to participate in VOC ($B=-.04$, $SE=.15$, $p=.81$). Hence, awareness mediates the relationship between need for information and the willingness to participate in VOC. The figure below illustrates a visual explanation of the mediation.

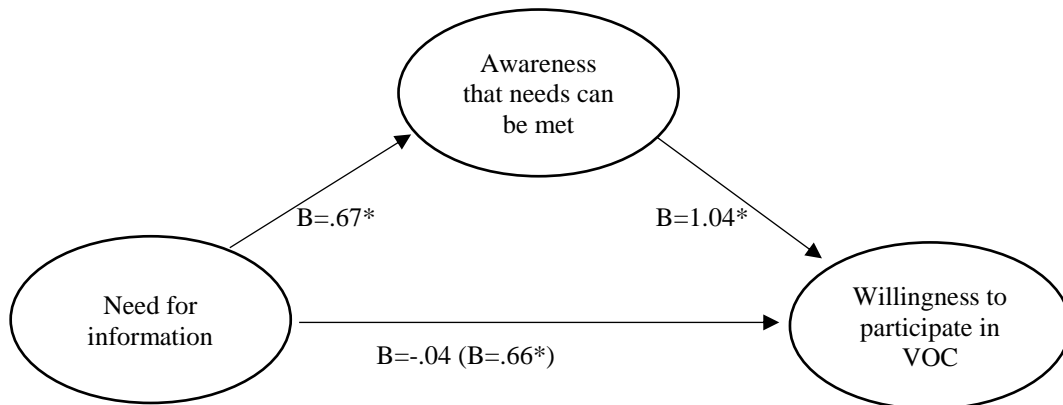


Figure 3. mediation of awareness on the relation between need for information and the willingness to participate in VOC (* $p < .05$) (B-value in brackets is original relation between need for information and willingness to participate in VOC).