

Introduction

- This study explores societal perceptions of redeemability and how they affect the willingness to hire ex-offenders looking for employment. Previous research consistently lists employment as one of the most influential and best predictors of successful reintegration of ex-offenders back into the community (Berg & Huebner, 2011; Cook et al., 2015).
- Age is shown to be negatively related to likeliness of being hired (Richardson, et al., 2013) despite other factors such as experience and skill being equal.
- Belief in redeemability in Reich's study (2017) and this one is the perceived malleability of an individual's nature in relation to their attitudes about others. This study measures forgiveness and belief in a just world to operationalize redeemability.
- It was first hypothesized that higher ratings in *forgiveness* would relate to more willingness to hire an ex-offender. Second, it was hypothesized that higher ratings in *belief in a just world* would negatively relate to willingness to hire an ex-offender. Lastly, it was hypothesized that the older age of the ex-offender would more negatively impact the participants' willingness to hire.

Methods

- Seventy-one (n=71) participants were recruited from IUPUC and off Facebook. There were 56 females, 13 males, and 2 gender fluid participants.
- Participants were given a link to follow to start the survey in Qualtrics. Each survey contained a demographic collection, an 18-item Heartland Forgiveness Scale $\alpha=0.81$, a 6-item Belief in a Just World Scale $\alpha=0.72$, a vignette, and a 2-item willingness to hire scale $\alpha=0.60$.
- Situational forgiveness is a subscale of the Heartland Forgiveness Scale used in this study. Thompson, et al. (2005) define forgiveness in terms of situation as one that is viewed "as being beyond anyone's control."
- The vignette was randomized between four different conditions using the randomizing tool in Qualtrics. The factors were age with a level of 32-years old and 62-years old and whether or not there was criminal history.

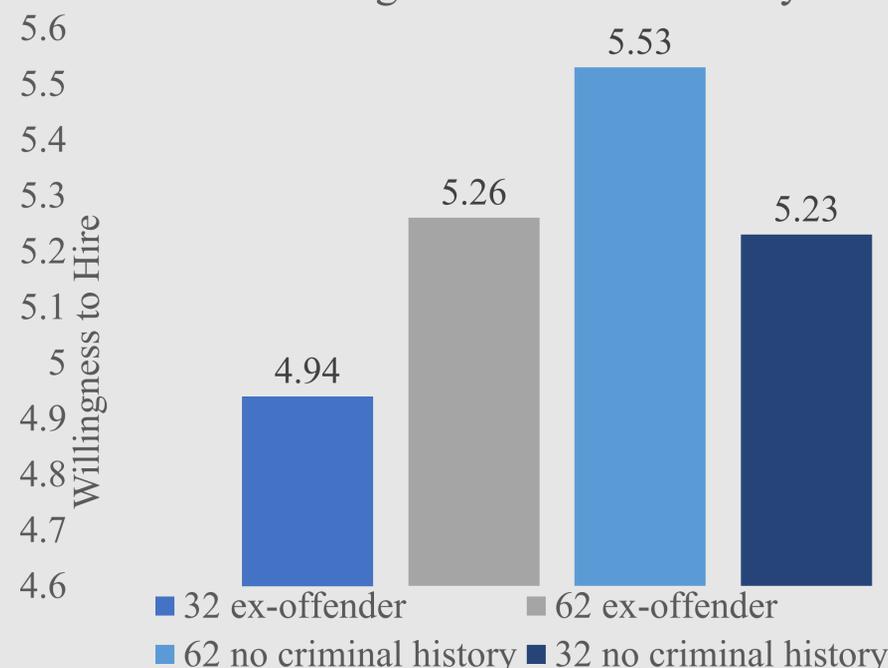
Results

	Willingness to Hire	Belief in a Just World	Situational Forgiveness	Forgiveness of Others	Forgiveness of Self
Willingness to Hire	1	-.29*	-.30**	.07	-.05
Belief in a Just World	-.29*	1	.27*	.04	.29*
Situational Forgiveness	-.30**	.27*	1	.23	.54**
Forgiveness of Others	.07	.04	.23	1	-.04
Forgiveness of Self	-.05	.29*	.54**	-.04	1

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Willingness to Hire Means by Condition



- While analyses show no significant correlation $r(71)=-0.14, p=0.25$, between forgiveness and willingness to hire there is a significant negative correlation $r(71)=-0.30, p=0.01$, between situational forgiveness and willingness to hire.
- There is also a significant negative correlation $r(71)=-0.29, p=0.014$, between Belief in a Just World and willingness to hire.
- Finally, there was no significant interaction effect found $F(1,70)=0.004, p=0.949$, for age and criminal history of the applicant and willingness to hire.

Discussion

- The analyses demonstrate that situational forgiveness and belief in a just world influence willingness to hire a hypothetical job applicant. This suggests that an individual's overall belief that people get what they deserve (belief in a just world) could be a factor affecting hiring managers' willingness to hire ex-offenders. This could be an area that is targeted for training in awareness and factors considered for ex-offender reentry program placement coordination.
- The vignette in this study did not explain the situational factors surrounding an ex-offender's incarceration and subsequent gap in employment history apart from criminal activity. The negative correlation between situational forgiveness and willingness to hire could be expressed because of the lack of an explanation in the vignette about why the ex-offender had been incarcerated.
- The study could have been improved in a few areas such as a larger sample and providing a more reliable willingness to hire scale.

References

- Berg, M. T. & Huebner, B. M. (2011). Reentry and the ties that bind: An examination of social ties, employment, and recidivism. *Justice Quarterly*, 28(2), 382-410. doi:10.1080/07418825.2010.498383
- Cook, P., Kang, S., Braga, A., Ludwig, J., & O'Brien, M. (2015). An Experimental Evaluation of a Comprehensive Employment-Oriented Prisoner Re-entry Program. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, 31(3), 355-382. https://doi-org.proxy.ulib.uits.iu.edu/10.1007/s10940-014-9242-5
- Reich, S. E. (2017). An exception to the rule: Belief in redeemability, desistance signals, and the employer's decision to hire a job applicant with a criminal record. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 56(2), 110-136. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10509674.2016.1268235
- Richardson, B., Webb, J., Webber, L., & Smith, K. (2013). Age discrimination in the evaluation of job applicants. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 43, 35-44. doi:10.1111/j.1559-1816.2013.00979.x
- Thompson, L. Y., Snyder, C. R., Hoffman, L., Michael, S. T., Rasmussen, H. N., Billings, L. S., ... Roberts, D. E. (2005). Dispositional Forgiveness of Self, Others, and Situations. *Journal of Personality*, 73(2), 313-360. https://doi-org.proxy.ulib.uits.iu.edu/10.1111/j.1467-6494.2005.00311.x