

Research Paper

The Impact of Media Consumption of the Gaza Genocide on Personal and General Belief in a Just World

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated “The Impact of Media Exposure to the Gaza Genocide on Personal and General Belief in a Just World” among adults. Data was collected from a sample of 212 participants using Personal Belief in a Just World Scale and General Belief in a Just World Scale by Dalbert et al (1999) along with their media consumption habits. The quantitative research design used convenience sampling of which 139 were females and 73 were males. Independent sample T-test statistics were used to analyze the data. The results portray no significant difference between the amount of media consumption, on personal and general belief in a just world among adults. The study concluded that there is no impact on amount of media consumption of the Gaza Genocide on Personal and General Belief in a Just World.

Keywords: *Gaza, Genocide, Personal, General, Belief in a Just World*

There must exist a primary difference between people who are exposed to media of genocide and ethnic cleansing and those who are unaware or non-engaging of such happening. Gaza’s imposed obliteration in the past year of gruesome, atrocious crimes against humanity broadcasted through media may alter the perception of the world as one knows it to be. Changes in beliefs and attitudes are irrevocably shuffled to make peace with the knowledge of such affairs of the world. This is especially evident in the way that the world processes information regarding the events unfolding in Gaza, dubbed as the “the first genocide in history where its victims are broadcasting their own destruction in real time in the desperate so far, vain hope that the world might do something’ (The Guardian, 2024), the Gazan genocide offers the world to experience humans and humanity at its worst. The illegal unrestrained wanton military occupation, killing and maiming civilians, systemic apartheid, and the lack of sanctions, and accountability, on the part of Israel driven by its guiding cauldron of Zionism is out for the world to witness. It presents an upturned world with documented crimes facing not repercussions but glory, suggesting that something must be deeply, truly perverted about the world. In the same vein, it can be purported that individuals who remain unexposed to such, may have no qualms in believing that the world is a just place.

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Received: April 11, 2025; Revision Received: April 21, 2025; Accepted: April 25, 2025

The Impact of Media Consumption of the Gaza Genocide on Personal and General Belief in a Just World

When people are ignorant of such affairs, it espouses them to lead lives free of concern, to decrease their role of responsibility in attempts to defend against anxiety, as the confrontation of such challenges decodes of perception, seeking to safeguard their Belief in a Just World i.e., the notion that the world is a just, fair place where people get what they deserve and deserve what they get. Greater beliefs in a just world the more likely they are to blame victims of sexual assault (Vonderhaar, 2013; Gabriela et al, 2018) It can be purported that the defense against this anxiety must be of tantamount importance as it protects the psyche even in the direst of circumstances, immediately met with defenses, any attempts to bring awareness to the issue of Gaza in their lives are seen as political in nature. The individuals that consistently engage and consume media in the form of news, and social media, do not do so in support of an ethnic group, but feel a deep moral duty to bear witness and speak against these horrors. They experience concerns about their safety on speaking on such matters. On witnessing such crimes against humanity, they understand their responsibility, and their part in contributing to the onslaught, and seek means to reduce their contribution. People boycott industries, sever their relationships, and lose their jobs, visas, get deported, all in efforts to minimize their footprint in Genocide. Despite hardships in their daily lives, a moral duty obligates them to take action by whatever means necessary. They seek to lose more than gain by speaking for Palestine.

The propaganda about the “brutality and terrorism” of the Palestinians have been routinely disseminated through the forms of media, indoctrination in schools, social norms, and modeling causing an out-group effect (Hoskote, 2023). According to the Defense Minister of Israel, Yoav Gallant, Palestinians are "human animals". The propaganda has essentially manufactured consent from public consumers, that it is acceptable to slaughter a large population by systemic means of weapons. The social media content about the struggles, and plight of the people of Gaza has helped the people wake up to the reality of the situation of apartheid, and of the military state that is controlling the narrative.

Both groups have a defense against anxiety, where differences exist. One group seems to seek comfort in not knowing or engaging with content media that might contradict their worldview via means of deliberate ignorance whereas, the others' defense transmutes itself in a constructive sense, lobbying for attention to the matter, actively seeking to address the problem itself, and defending themselves from feelings of helplessness. The third group involves deliberate exposure to such media of gore and violence to gain satisfaction from the suffering of the people in a sadistic sense, filming themselves online, reacting to the cries of Palestinians in agony.

Social media in its entirety presents to be a tool of extreme importance with respect to Gaza. Social media was used extensively as a platform to convey vicissitudes on ground zero with the people on the outside. Newspapers despite being an important medium of news are favored by the older generation than the younger. The younger generation is much more in favor of using technological communication for news-related information (Alzubi, 2023). While the different modes of media are effective, social media platform remains highly efficient in its communicative capabilities tethering the user to the world as it unfolds.

Activism emerges as a key component in the usage of social media. Social media plays an integral part in social networking, collaborating, fundraising activities, and bringing attention to the matter of Gaza. There could be a possibility of inflexibility of beliefs that manifest as a result of chronic exposure to injustices of others and self. Their evaluations of

The Impact of Media Consumption of the Gaza Genocide on Personal and General Belief in a Just World

justice tend to be more stagnant perpetuating learned helplessness and becoming resigned to the belief that the world is an unjust place. On being exposed to such human loss, pain, suffering, and death, a person may seek to regain his composure through the interaction of cognitive dissonance. Their worldview shifts, paving for reform in their attitudes, beliefs, and behavior. Those who seek to reduce their distress must change their attitudes to fit their behavior or change the behavior to be in conjunction with their attitudes. Some will discard the events that it was a "conspiracy" changing their cognition, and evaluation due to an inability to change their behavior, destroying the credibility of the news itself.

The purpose of the study was to understand the impact of media exposure of the Gazan genocide on General and Personal Belief in a Just World among adults. It was undertaken to understand the effects of media, on the Belief in a Just World of the individual in the light of the destruction of Gaza and obliteration of the Gazans. The study sought to understand that exposure to mass killings, shelling, and bombing of a people would change the perceptions of a Just World. It also sought to understand the levels of beliefs in a Just World. The impact of the study is on themes of social psychology and Justice, the nature of Beliefs in a Just World, the existence of defense against the anxiety of living in a Just World, civilians leading to collective action and advocacy.

METHODOLOGY

Objectives:

1. To study the levels of consumption of media of Gazan Genocide among adults
2. To study the General and Personal Beliefs in a Just World among adults
3. To study the impact of different levels of media consumption of Gazan Genocide on Personal and General Beliefs in a Just World among Adults.

Hypotheses:

- H₀₁: There is no significant difference in general Belief in a Just World between individuals with high and no media consumption of Gaza
- H₀₂: There is no significant difference in general Belief in a Just World between individuals with high and no media consumption of Gaza
- H₀₃: There is no significant difference in general Belief in a Just World between individuals with low and no media consumption of Gaza
- H₀₄: There is no significant difference in personal Belief in a Just World between individuals with high and low media consumption of the Gazan genocide.
- H₀₅: There is no significant difference in personal Belief in a Just World between individuals with high and no media consumption.
- H₀₆: There is no significant difference in personal Belief in a Just World between individuals with no and low media consumption.
- H₀₇: There is no significant difference in Belief in a Just World between individuals with low and no media consumption.
- H₀₈: There is no significant difference in Belief in a Just World between individuals with high and low media consumption.
- H₀₉: There is no significant difference in Belief in a Just World between individuals with high and low media consumption

The Impact of Media Consumption of the Gaza Genocide on Personal and General Belief in a Just World

Sample

The sample included two hundred and twelve adults ranging from 18 to 70 years. The sample consisted of 212 individuals with 139 females and 73 males. Participants were selected through convenience sampling. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from individuals prior to their involvement in the study and informed about the confidentiality of data.

Instruments

The measures used in this study,

The Belief in Just World Scale: The Belief in Just World Scale was developed by Dalbert (1999) The scale consisted of 13 items, divided into two subscales: General Belief in a Just World (GBJW) and Personal Belief in a Just World (PBJW). The General Belief in a Just World (GBJW) assesses an individual's general belief that the world is a just place, where people get what they deserve. Personal Belief in a Just World (PBJW) evaluates an individual's personal belief that they live in a just world, where they are treated fairly. Respondents rate their agreement with each item on a 6-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). "I believe that by and large, people get what they deserve." (GBJW) "I am confident that I will always be treated fairly." (PBJW). Higher scores indicate a stronger belief in a just world. The scale has been shown to have good reliability and validity.

Procedure

The study investigated the impact of media consumption of the Gaza genocide on Personal and General Belief in a Just World The data was collected using the General Belief in Just World Scale (Dalbert, 1994) and the Personal Belief in a Just World Scale (Dalbert, 1999) along with demographic details and Media consumption habits. The target population was adults from 18 to 70 years of age. The analysis was done by categorizing the consumption of media by Nil, Low and High. Nil corresponded to No consumption, Below Half Hour to Low consumption and Above Half Hour to High Consumption. With the required consent, the questionnaire was distributed to the sample. The data from the sample was collected and analyzed using MS Excel Data Analysis ToolPak.

RESULTS

Table No. 1 Descriptive statistics mean and standard deviation of General and Personal Belief in a Just World.

N	Variables	Mean	Standard deviation
212	General Belief in a Just World	24.61	5.43
	Personal Belief in a Just World	28.22	5.97

On comparing the means of the variables, Personal Belief in a Just World scores ($M=28.22$) are higher than the General Belief in a Just World ($M=24.61$), indicating that individuals feel more strongly about personal justice than the general concept of justice. On comparing the variability, Personal Belief in a Just World have a slightly greater standard deviation compared to General Belief in a Just World scores, indicating minute differences in the spread of scores.

The Impact of Media Consumption of the Gaza Genocide on Personal and General Belief in a Just World

Table No. 2 indicates the categorization of the participants based on the amount of media consumption per day.

N	Media consumption (per day)		n
212	More than half an hour	High Consumption	42
	Less than Half an hour	Low Consumption	111
	Nil Consumption	Nil Consumption	59

Through self-reported questions, the amount of time spent consuming media per day was evaluated. Based on the results, the amount of consumption of media was categorized into 3 levels. The level of consumption corresponding to the number of participants that fall under the categories are tabulated. Table 2 describes the amount of time spent consuming media on the Gazan Genocide in a day on average. "More than half an hour" was categorized as "High level of consumption" under which 42 out of the 212 participants fall. The low consumption category comprised 111 participants, a significant number of the sample. Nil consumption had 59 respondents.

Table No. 3 indicates the t-test: Two-Sample Assuming Equal Variances for General Belief in a Just World between High and Low media consumption groups.

	General BJW (High Consumption)	General BJW (Low consumption)
Observations	42	111
Mean	24	24.5
Variance	35.07	32.59
df	151	
t Stat	-0.457	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.648	
t Critical two-tail	1.976	

The t-value is -0.456. The p-value is greater than 0.05. The result is not significant at $p < 0.05$ level

The difference in General Belief in a Just World was calculated between participants of High consumption and low consumption. The F statistic was computed to determine the variance of the sample. Comparing the t Stat with the T critical values, the t stat of -0.457 is smaller than the t critical value of 1.976. As such, it indicates that the means of the groups are equal, leading to acceptance of the H_{01} null hypothesis. Thus the hypothesis H_{01} : There is no significant difference in general Belief in a Just World between individuals with high and no media consumption of Gaza is accepted.

Table 4 indicates the t-test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances for General Belief in a Just World between High and Nil media consumption groups.

	General BJW (High Consumption)	General BJW (Nil consumption)
Observations	42	59
Mean	24	25.31
Variance	35.07	20.04
df	73	
t Stat	-1.204	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.232	

The Impact of Media Consumption of the Gaza Genocide on Personal and General Belief in a Just World

	General BJW (High Consumption)	General BJW (Nil consumption)
t Critical two-tail	1.99	

The t-value is -1.204. The p-value is greater than 0.05. The result is not significant at $p < 0.05$ level.

The mean for the High consumption group was 24 and for the Nil consumption group was 25.31. The variance in the high consumption group was 35.07 which was higher than the Nil consumption group (20.04). This suggests a greater variability in the high consumption group beliefs concerning General Belief in a Just World. The t statistic of -1.204 indicates a difference in the means of the groups. The negative sign suggests the high consumption group scored slightly lower than the nil consumption group. However, the difference was small and was not statistically significant. The p-value of 0.232 was greater than the significance level of 0.05, indicating the difference in General Belief in a Just World was due to chance and thus did not have statistical significance. Hence the hypothesis H_{02} there is no significant difference in general Belief in a Just World between individuals with high and no media consumption of Gaza is accepted.

Table 5 indicates the t-test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances for General Belief in a Just World between Low and Nil Media consumption groups.

	General BJW (Low Consumption)	General BJW (Nil Consumption)
Observations	111	59
Mean	24.48	25.31
Variance	32.59	20.04
df	145	
t Stat	-1.04	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.300	
t Critical two-tail	1.976	

The t-value is -1.039. The p-value is greater than 0.05. The result is not significant at $p < 0.05$ level.

The means of both groups, $M = 24.48$ low consumption group, and $M = 25.31$ nil consumption indicate a slight difference between the groups. Individuals in the nil consumption group have slightly greater General Belief in a Just World than the low consumption group. However, the difference is relatively small. The variance for the low consumption group is 32.60 and for the nil consumption group is 20.04, which indicates a greater spread of scores in the low consumption group, while the General Belief in a Just World of Nil consumption groups are more centered around the mean. The t-statistic score of -1.04 indicates the difference between the means of the two groups relative to the variability within groups. The negative value suggests that the low consumption group has a lesser mean score compared to the nil consumption group, which is small and thus not statistically significant. However, the slight differences between low and nil consumption groups do suggest a viable significance if the sample size of the groups were larger. The p-value of 0.300 is greater than 0.05 significance, indicating the observed difference in means is largely due to random chance rather than from the effect of media consumption. Further, the t critical value of 1.976 falls beyond the rejection region. It indicates the difference in means is not large enough to be considered statistically significant. Hence the null hypothesis H_{03} : there is no significant difference in general Belief in a Just World between individuals with low and no media consumption of Gaza, is accepted.

The Impact of Media Consumption of the Gaza Genocide on Personal and General Belief in a Just World

Table 6 indicates the t test: Two Sample Assuming Equal Variances for Personal Belief in a Just World between High Media Consumption and Low Media consumption groups.

	Personal Belief in a Just World (High Consumption)	Personal Belief in a Just World (Low Consumption)
Observations	42	111
Mean	28.17	28.05405405
Variance	30.68	43.22
df	151	
t Stat	0.098	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.922	
t Critical two-tail	1.976	

The t-value is 0.098. The p-value is greater than 0.05. The result is not significant at p 0.05 level.

The results of a two-sample t-test comparing the Personal Belief in a Just World scores between the high media consumption group and the low media consumption group are presented in Table 5. The mean score of Personal Belief in a Just World in high consumption group was 28.17 with a variance of 30.68, while the mean score of low consumption group was 28.05 with a variance of 43.22. There is a minimal difference between the groups means, with slight increased score in high consumption group. The t test statistic was 0.10 indicating the small effect size and the two tailed p value was 0.922, indicating a higher value than the threshold of 0.05. Thus, there is no statistical difference between two groups and the null hypothesis is accepted. The t statistic of 0.098 is extremely small suggesting negligible differences between the groups, which are further confirmed by the p value of 0.922. Accounting these factors, there is no impact of consumption of media on individual's personal Belief in a Just World, i.e., the perception of justice and fairness in their own lives as they relate to it. It can be purported that the individuals personal beliefs in a just world maybe more influenced by individual's experiences of successes, challenges, one's circumstances, privileges and prejudices than by consumption of media relating to justice or injustice. Individual factors such as facing economic hardships, may lead individuals to have a more pessimistic view on justice while a privileged life may offer the individuals a more optimistic perception on the world. Thus certain factors may play a role regardless of the amount of consumption of media. Hence the hypothesis H₀₄: There is no significant difference in personal Belief in a Just World between individuals with high and low media consumption of the Gazan genocide, is accepted.

Table 7 indicates the t test: Two Sample Assuming Equal Variances for Personal Belief in a Just World between High Media Consumption and Nil Media consumption groups.

	Personal Belief in a Just World (High consumption)	Personal Belief in a Just World (Nil Consumption)
Mean	28.17	28.58
Variance	30.68	26.007
Observations	42	59
Pooled Variance	27.94	
df	99	
t Stat	-0.38	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.701	
t Critical two-tail	1.98	

The t-value is -0.38. The p-value is greater than 0.05. The result is not significant at p 0.05 level.

The Impact of Media Consumption of the Gaza Genocide on Personal and General Belief in a Just World

A two-sample t test was used to analyse the scores between Personal Belief in a Just World between High consumption group and Nil consumption group. The number of observations recorded from the groups are 42 and 49 respectively. The test aimed to evaluate if there were significant differences in the personal Belief in a Just World as the consumption levels varied. The result showed that the groups had small differences between the means, the high consumption group had a mean of 28.17 with the low consumption group, a mean of 28.58 was observed. This indicates the consumption of media had negligible effect on their personal just world beliefs. The t statistic was calculated to be -0.38 indicating a small negligible effect. The p value was found to be 0.70 indicating a much larger value than the threshold of 0.05, suggesting no statistically significant difference between the groups i.e., the media consumption (high or nil levels) does not have an effect on the personal perception that the world is a just place. The t critical value for a two tailed test with 99 degrees of freedom was found to be 1.984. On comparing the t critical value with the absolute t value of -0.38, the t statistic is found to be much smaller than the critical value, indicating failure to reject the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between the two groups. The null hypothesis is accepted and can be concluded that there is no significant difference between the amount of media consumption and the personal Belief in a Just World.

The results suggest that there is no significant effect on individuals that consumed higher levels of media of Gazan genocide when compared to individuals that did not consume media relating to Gaza. The means of both the groups were similar and are indicative of similar personal beliefs, negating the effect of media. The results also suggest the observed differences between the groups can be largely attributed to the chance factors than the underlying effect of media consumption. Possible reasons for the lack of significance could be that the personal beliefs in a just world are largely shaped by individual factors of first-hand experiences of fairness and unfairness relating to themselves, than as a result of consumption of media relating to others. Hence, the null hypothesis H_0 : There is no significant difference in personal Belief in a Just World between individuals with high and no media consumption, is accepted.

Table 8 indicates the t test: Two Sample Assuming unequal Variances for Personal Belief in a Just World between Nil Media Consumption and Low Media consumption groups.

	Personal Belief in a Just World (Nil Consumption)	Personal Belief in a Just World (Low Consumption)
Mean	28.58	28.05
Variance	26.00701344	43.2
Observations	59	111
df	146	
t Stat	0.573165211	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.567414579	
t Critical two-tail	1.976345655	

The t-value is 0.573. The p-value is greater than 0.05. The result is not significant at p 0.05 level.

A two sample t test was conducted to compare personal Belief in a Just World between individuals in the nil consumption group (n=59) and the low consumption (n=111), to assess

The Impact of Media Consumption of the Gaza Genocide on Personal and General Belief in a Just World

if there was a statistically significant difference between groups in terms of their personal belief in a Just World depending on their amount of consumption of media. The Nil consumption and Low consumption groups means are 28.58 and 28.05 respectively. The means indicate a small difference between the two groups which suggests the two groups have similar personal Belief in a Just World scores. The variance in the low consumption group is higher (43.215) than the nil consumption 26.007. This indicates greater spread of personal in a Just World in low consumption group than in nil consumption group. The t statistic obtained was 0.57 which is relatively small, indicating minor differences between the two groups. The p value of 0.567 is higher than the significance level of 0.05, suggesting that the differences in personal in a Just World is not statistically significant. On comparing the absolute t statistic of the group 0.573 with the t critical value of 1.976, the t statistic is found to be smaller than the critical value.

This deems a failure to reject the null hypothesis, concluding that there is no statistically significant difference between the groups. The findings from the t test suggest that there is no statistically significant difference between the nil media consumption group and low media consumption group. This means that regardless of consumption of media related to Gazan Genocide the personal just world beliefs are similarly held across individuals, and that the consumption of media, had no effect on the personal Belief in a Just World in individuals as hypothesized.

The little differences found between the groups are negligible, likely due to chance factors than stemming from the effect of the media itself. Potential explanations of non-significance can be attributed largely to the personal nature of the phenomenon. Personal Belief in a Just World are shaped by personal experiences and as such are influenced more by personal factors than by external media influences. Factors of personal injustices, faced are more likely to influence ones perceptions of the world than the injustices faced by others. Hence factors like media influence is more likely to influence the general Belief in a Just World than personal Belief in a Just World. The null hypothesis H_{06} : There is no significant difference in personal Belief in a Just World between individuals with no and low media consumption is accepted.

Table 9 indicates the t test: Two Sample Assuming unequal Variances for Belief in a Just World between Low Media Consumption and Nil Media consumption groups.

	Belief in a Just World (Low Consumption)	Belief in a Just World (Nil Consumption)
Observations	111	59
Mean	52.53153	53.88136
Variance	106.5422	60.17534
df	149	
t Stat	-0.95934	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.338943	
t Critical two-tail	1.976013	

The t-value is -0.959. The p-value is greater than 0.05. The result is not significant at p 0.05 level.

A two sample t test was used to compare scores of Belief in a Just World (Total Personal and General Beliefs) between individuals in the low consumption group and nil consumption group, to analyse the effect of consumption of media of Gazan Genocide on

The Impact of Media Consumption of the Gaza Genocide on Personal and General Belief in a Just World

Just World Beliefs. The mean and variances of the Belief in a Just World score for Low consumption and nil consumption are 52.53 and 53.88 respectively. This suggests a fairly low difference between the groups, indicating similar beliefs about justice. The variances for the groups are 106.54 and 60.17 respectively. Low consumption group has a greater variance of the scores than Nil consumption group, indicating that the beliefs are spread across the distribution.

The t statistic for the comparison between groups was -0.96, which is quite small. The two tailed p value was 0.338 which is a greater value than 0.05 significance threshold. This result suggests that the difference between the Low Media consumption group and Nil media consumption group is negligible and not statistically significant. The p value being much higher than the significance threshold, there is insufficient evidence to suggest that the amount of media consumption influences the belief in a just world. In addition, the absolute t statistic (0.96) is smaller than the t-critical value of 1.976. This posits that there is no significant difference between the groups. Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the two groups is accepted. Hence the null hypothesis H_{07} : There is no significant difference in Belief in a Just World between individuals with low and no media consumption, is accepted.

Table 10 indicates the t test: Two Sample Assuming equal Variances for Belief in a Just World between High Media Consumption and Low Media consumption groups.

	Belief in a Just World (High Consumption)	Belief in a Just World (Low consumption)
Mean	52.17	52.53
Variance	99.40	106.54
Observations	42	111
df	151	
t Stat	-0.197	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.844	
t Critical two-tail	1.976	

The t-value is -0.196. The p-value is greater than 0.05. The result is not significant at p 0.05 level.

A two sample t test was used to compare Belief in a Just World (Total Personal and General Beliefs) between individuals in the high consumption group (n=42) and low consumption group (n=111), to analyse the effect of consumption of media of Gazan Genocide on Just World Beliefs. The mean and variances of the Belief in a Just World score for High consumption and low consumption are 52.17 and 52.53 respectively. This suggests a quite low difference between the groups, indicating similar beliefs about justice. The variances for the high consumption group and low consumption groups are 99.40 and 106.54 respectively. Low consumption group has a greater variance of the scores than high consumption group, indicating that the scores are slightly higher in variability compared to high consumption group. The t statistic for the groups is -0.197. The p value (two-tailed) is 0.844, which is higher than the significance level of 0.05. Since the p value is higher than the 0.05 threshold, we fail to reject the null hypothesis. This indicates that the amount of consumption does not significantly impact the Belief in a Just World. Additionally, the t statistic value of -0.197 is quite small, indicating that the mean difference observed is small. On comparison of the absolute t statistic 0.197 with the t-critical value of 1.976, it is considered, the difference between the two groups is not statistically significant. The results suggest that the media

The Impact of Media Consumption of the Gaza Genocide on Personal and General Belief in a Just World

consumption in high and low levels has no significant effect on the Belief in a Just World, as the difference in means is negligible. The p value 0.844 observed differences is likely to be caused by random chance factors than as a result of the effect of media consumption. The null hypothesis, H_{08} : There is no significant difference in Belief in a Just World between individuals with high and low media consumption is accepted.

Table 11 indicates the t test: Two Sample Assuming unequal Variances for Belief in a Just World between High Media Consumption and Nil Media consumption groups.

	Belief in a Just World (High Media Consumption)	Belief in a Just World (Nil Media Consumption)
Mean	52.17	53.88
Variance	99.40	60.17
Observations	42	59
df	74	
t Stat	-0.93	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.355	
t Critical two-tail	1.993	

The t-value is -0.931. The p-value is greater than 0.05. The result is not significant at p 0.05 level.

A two sample t test was used to compare Belief in a Just World (Total Personal and General Beliefs) between individuals in the high consumption group ($n=42$) and nil consumption group ($n=59$), to analyse the effect of consumption of media of Gazan Genocide on Just World Beliefs. The mean and variances of the Belief in a Just World score for High consumption and low consumption are 52.17 and 53.88 respectively. This suggests a slight difference between the groups, indicating similar scores on just world beliefs. The variances for the high consumption group and nil consumption groups are 99.40 and 60.17, with variance higher in high media consumption group, indicating greater variability in Belief in a Just World within the group.

The t-statistic for the groups is -0.93 and the p value 0.355, which is higher than the threshold of 0.05. The t statistic implies a relatively small difference between the groups. On comparing the absolute t statistic -0.93 with the t critical value of 1.993, it can be concluded that the difference between the high consumption (more than half an hour) and the low consumption (less than half hour) groups is not statistically significant. Hence the null hypothesis, H_{09} : There is no significant difference in Belief in a Just World between individuals with high and nil media consumption is accepted.

DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to assess the relationship between the amount media consumption of Gaza Genocide and the Belief in a Just World among Adults. Contrary to expectations, the data did not reflect a difference in between amount media consumption and belief in a Just World. These can be attributed to a number of factors. Firstly, the Just World theory, that the world is a just place for me (Personal Belief in a Just World) and is a just world for others (General Belief in a Just World) wherein people get what they deserve and deserve what they get, has a resistance to change. This suggests that the nature of Belief in a Just World may be more resistant to change than initially assumed. These results align with study by Ludwig et al (2023) outlining the resilience of primal world beliefs (general beliefs about the world) with respect to covid - 19. In theory, primals become more negative after adverse

The Impact of Media Consumption of the Gaza Genocide on Personal and General Belief in a Just World

events. However, the study concluded that primals are stable lenses and suffer little to no changes even after personal encounters with negative events. Similarly, “Belief in a Just World” may have identical underlying mechanisms. Studies by Dalbert et al has shown that Belief in a Just World tend to develop in childhood and teens, with greater stability established in early adulthood, and that personal Belief in a Just World were more stable than general Belief in a Just World. Also, in experimentally induced conditions, Just world beliefs maintain temporal stability. However, contrary to these, study by Lutz et al (2024) contends that belief in a just world fluctuates in daily life and correlates with perceptions of justice and injustices.

Secondly, a mechanism of action of the Belief in a Just World could be explained through the psychoanalytical thought, which asserts unacceptable outcomes, thoughts, feelings and emotions cause an inexplicable anxiety within the individual that exceeds the capacity to cope with the situation. As a result, unacceptable attitudes, beliefs are pushed into the “unconsciousness” through defense mechanisms. The dearth of power and the unjustness, incapacity to stop such suffering, has to be repressed in order to lead a life of safety and concern, to minimize the dissoluteness of the situation in domains of cognition and affect. “Belief in a Just World” can also be understood as deeply rooted cognitive frameworks, which help maintain order and meaning. On being exposed such media, mental reinterpretation or justification of suffering in a way that preserves their existing worldview may also be an influence. They may question the accuracy of media, blame the victims for their misfortune or minimize the severity of the situation. Though they may undeniably suffer an emotional distress on being exposed to such suffering and brutality, it could be that the shift in core beliefs may require more than that.

Belief in a just world may also be viewed as a dimension of spiritual rationalization. By viewing through this lens, people may not view it as injustice but as a part of a much larger and intricately woven God’s plan. This buffers their emotional and psychological concerns while maintaining their beliefs of a just world.

Another possible explanation for this might be explained by “The discourse of global compassion” by Höijer (2004). Höijer makes evident that becoming numb or immune to the media of human suffering on a large scale is also a common reaction. Repeated exposure to images of war, genocide thus may make individuals feel powerless over the situation, leading to “compassion fatigue”, they may engage less with what they consume, which can potentially affect their shift in Belief in a Just World. An “us-them” perspective i.e., outgroup effect in addition to stereotypes, metaphors, dehumanizes Gazans wherein empathy reduces and the lack of involvement is rationalized and legitimized (Höijer, 2004)

Furthermore, the result may also be explained by the way in which news on Gaza is portrayed to the public. Research contends the framing of narratives in news media is skewed, biased. Research by Amer M (2024) analyzed the BBC and New York Times coverage of the May 2021 Israeli onslaught on Gaza. The study demarcates a significant difference in the style of reporting on Gaza and in Israel. This minimizes the public perception of Gaza, downplaying the seriousness of the events in Gaza.

It seems possible that these results are due to the existing discourse surrounding the topic of Gaza, and as a consequence, their belief in a just world. The dehumanization of the Palestinians through the use of metaphors, are said to have an effect in thought and action

The Impact of Media Consumption of the Gaza Genocide on Personal and General Belief in a Just World

(Maalej, 2024). Through comparison of Palestinians to “rats”, “cockroaches”, “human animals” dehumanization occurs, shaping public opinion and manufacturing consent. Similarly, study by Supriyanato et al, (2022) depicts that social media activists and vocal individuals are being censored and curtailed. Censorship prevents knowledge-engagement with the consumers, and may thus have bearings on just world beliefs the belief in a just world. These systemic factors may have contributed to the protective effects in shifts against belief in a just world.

Besides the mentioned factors, the non-significance may similarly be attributed to conformity i.e., Herd Mentality, wherein dominant narratives are taken in, conformed to, without much thought or rationale. People may conform to narratives, adopt beliefs on social media, without critical thought and assimilate dominant media discourses. This may perhaps reflect an underlying motivation to the social validation process than changes in personal and general belief in a just world.

Lastly, the system justification theory suggests the tendency of people to want to see the world as a fair and a just place, leading them to view injustices as isolated single time incidents or occurrences than as a part of broader systemic issues. People may discard what is happening in Gaza, as they may construe it to be one occurrence amidst the broad “goodness of the world”, failing to see patterns in systemic injustices. They may view these incidences as befalling “others” and embrace beliefs that it won’t occur to them, leading to higher just world beliefs. This can have negative connotations for two reasons, one, it fails to humanize those that are suffering and two, it does not make individuals relate to the incidents unfolding in Gaza. Thus, all these various factors may have had an effect in the individuals’ belief in a just world.

CONCLUSION

The study shows with the data collected and analyzed, that there is no significant difference on the amount of consumption of media of Gazan Genocide on Personal and General Belief in a Just World among adults. The findings indicate that the amount of media consumption of the Gazan Genocide does not significantly influence individual’s beliefs in a just world, whether on a personal or general level. Therefore, the study accepts the null hypothesis, concluding that there is no significant difference between amount of media consumption of Gazan Genocide on Personal and General Belief in a Just World among adults.

Recommendation

For future studies in this area, it is recommended to examine the effects of media consumption on humanitarian crises, oppression and how it affects other constructs such as empathy and desensitization. A longitudinal study on the prolonged exposure of the Gazan genocide on the Belief in a Just World may bring in new perspectives on the cumulative effects of consumption. Genocide denial in news platforms shaping the narrative may also be undertaken. A comparative study on the effects of traditional media and technological media in shaping general and personal Belief in a Just World. Studies regarding the mental health of people exposed to media related to Palestine, Sudan, Yemen, Syria can also be analyzed.

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The Impact of Media Consumption of the Gaza Genocide on Personal and General Belief in a Just World

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Acknowledgment

The author sincerely thanks Mr. Manoj R, Head of the Department of Psychology, for all the guidance, encouragement throughout the course of this research. Appreciation is also extended to Ms. Shalini, Asst. Professor, for their kind and composed guidance. The author also appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interests.

How to cite this article: Muhammadh Iqbal, A., Manoj, R. & Shalini, R. (2025). The Impact of Media Consumption of the Gaza Genocide on Personal and General Belief in a Just World. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 13(2), 810-824. DIP:18.01.070.20251302, DOI:10.25215/1302.070