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Katherine White, Rhiannon MacDonnell, & John H. Ellard

Belief in a Just World: Consumer Intentions and Behaviors Toward Ethical Products

Although consumers report positive attitudes toward ethical goods, their intentions and behaviors often do not follow suit. Just-world theory highlights the conditions under which consumers are most likely to prefer fair-trade products. This theory proposes that people are motivated to construe the world as a just place where people get what they deserve. In the current research, when people are confronted with high levels of injustice (communicated need is high) and avenues for justice restoration seem uncertain or unavailable, assisting others by supporting fair trade *decreases*. However, highlighting how injustice can be redressed through purchases *enhances* fair-trade support under conditions of high need. The effects are moderated by justice sensitivity factors, such as just-world beliefs and whether the product type (indulgence vs. necessity) makes the injustice of consumer privilege salient. The results suggest that communicating high need when requesting consumer prosocial actions can sometimes backfire. Marketers employing high need appeals should heighten perceptions of justice restoration potential and activate fairness-related thoughts through product positioning to encourage fair-trade purchases.

Keywords: belief in a just world, fair trade, ethical products, need, prosocial behavior, justice

Although the marketing literature has begun examining the implications of justice perceptions related to *one's own* consumption experiences, less attention has been given to consumer attitudes and behaviors related to *justice received by others*. Yet many ethical consumer behaviors, such as charitable donations, cause-related purchases, avoidance of goods made with sweatshop labor, and choosing of fair-trade products, surely reflect some degree of concern about justice for others. Notably, recent research has suggested that though consumers are increasingly interested in ethical, socially conscious product options (Trudel and Cotte 2009), product ethicality does not invariably lead to a positive consumer response (Aaker, Vohs, and Mogilner 2010; Carrington, Neville, and Whitwell 2010; Auger and Devinney 2007; Luchs et al. 2010; Luo and Battacharya 2006). We show that the ethical attribute of being fair trade is not always viewed positively and highlight how an understanding of concern about justice for others can provide a more nuanced view of when and why consumers will be inclined to choose fair-trade products.

Fair trade is a social movement that aims to set fair prices for products, alleviate poverty, and assist producers marginalized by the traditional economic model (De Pelsmacker and Janssens 2007; Raynolds 2000). Of particular interest from a marketing perspective is research showing that consumers are increasingly engaging in socially aware consumption (Harrison, Newholm, and Shaw 2005), are demanding ethical options such as fair-trade products (Nicholls and Opal 2005), and will punish companies promoting unethical goods (Trudel and Cotte 2009). The challenge for marketers, however, is that fair-trade products often involve a unique consumer trade-off between individual-level costs (e.g., higher prices and less accessible distribution) and more societal, other-oriented payoffs (e.g., fair wages and ethical working conditions for producers in developing countries). This is likely why it is often difficult to translate positive consumer attitudes toward fair trade into more meaningful intentions and behaviors (e.g., Auger and Devinney 2007; Carrington, Neville, and Whitwell 2010; Chatzidakis, Hibbert, and Smith 2007). Whereas prior research notes a range of motives for ethical consumption, including genuine altruism (Batson 1998), adherence to social norms (White and Peloza 2009), and egoistic self-interest (Cialdini et al. 1987), the current work uses just-world theory (Lerner 1980; Lerner and Clayton 2011) to highlight how consumer concerns about justice for others can play a pivotal role in encouraging the selection of products with ethical attributes.

Belief in a Just World and Willingness to Purchase Fair-Trade Products

Just-world theory proposes that people have a need to believe that the world is a just place where people receive the rewards and/or punishments they deserve, a tendency that Lerner and colleagues refer to as belief in a just world

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(BJW; Lerner 1980; Lerner and Miller 1978; Montada and Lerner 1998). According to the authors, the need to believe in a just world is adaptive because it enables people to view the world as stable and orderly, something necessary for commitment to long-term goals and day-to-day functioning. Maintaining just-world views allows people to retain the expectation that they too will get what they deserve, and such views are often expressed in the form of the belief that good things should come to good people and bad things to bad people. Evidence that the world is not a just place, such as exposure to the suffering of an undeserving victim, challenges just-world views (Hafer and Bègue 2005; Lerner 1980). Prior research suggests that when BJW is threatened, people will employ several strategies to reduce this threat (see Hafer and Bègue 2005; Lerner 1980).

We examine just-world theory in the context of fair trade, in which some degree of injustice toward producers (who often are not paid a fair price for their products) is present. We propose that two potential ways to resolve just-world threat in the fair-trade context are providing assistance (e.g., redressing the injustice by choosing fair-trade options) and rationalizing the situation (e.g., accommodating the injustice by ascribing some degree of deserving to the producers). Marketing efforts that emphasize a high degree of victim need should threaten just-world views because exposure to the undeserved suffering of others challenges such beliefs (Hafer 2000). When need is high and the consumer believes that fair-trade products have the potential to restore justice, he or she will likely opt to redress the injustice by supporting fair trade. Indeed, just-world theory suggests that helping in the face of just-world threat is enhanced when the opportunity to help is available, presumably because injustice can be redressed in some way (Lerner and Simmons 1966; Miller 1977). We propose that support for fair trade will be enhanced under conditions of high need and high justice restoration potential because this is when justice restoration efficacy (the belief that consumers can actually have an *impact* on the observed injustice through fair-trade purchases) will be the highest.[1] That is, only when the injustice is most pronounced but has the potential of being redressed can the consumer truly effect justice for others.

If justice restoration potential is low, helping is unlikely to be viewed as leading to justice restoration, and the person may respond to threat with more defensive strategies and be less likely to provide assistance (Lerner and Simmons 1966). One such defensive strategy is to derogate the victim of an unjust occurrence, often in a manner that construes the victim as being somehow deserving of the negative circumstances (Hafer and Bègue 2005; Jones and Aronson 1973; Lerner 1980). For example, Lerner and Simmons (1966) find that participants who viewed a female victim

suffering through little fault of her own and were not given the opportunity to help her situation derogated the victim, describing her character in particularly negative terms. Such victim derogation is proposed to occur because observing an innocent victim suffering threatens the view that good things happen to good people and bad things to bad people (Lerner 1980). If the opportunity to help is not available, one response is to rationalize the situation by construing the victim as somehow deserving of his or her ill fate (Lerner and Simmons 1966). If people can conclude that the victim deserved to suffer to some degree, the just-world threat is thus accommodated.

We highlight an important qualification of Lerner and Simmons's (1996) findings in the domain of ethical consumption. In the fair-trade context, the consumer arguably *always* has the opportunity to help. He or she has the option to support or choose fair-trade over non-fair-trade products. Research has shown, however, that consumers do not always do this (Auger and Devinney 2007; Carrington, Neville, and Whitwell 2010; Luchs et al. 2010). We propose that it is not merely having the opportunity to help that is important but also presuming a justice impact of helping that determines prosocial responses. When helping is perceived as having high justice restoration potential, consumers will be willing to help by supporting fair trade under conditions of high need. However, when justice restoration potential is low or uncertain, consumers will likely exhibit decreased support for fair-trade products when need is *high* rather than *moderate*.[2] This is because just-world threat is heightened under high need conditions (Hafer 2000), and limited justice restoration potential gives consumers few ways to resolve the threat. Under conditions of moderate need, just-world threat is not as pronounced, and reduced ability to effect justice is not as disturbing to just-world views. This is an important caveat for marketers in light of recent calls by researchers to enhance perceptions of need to facilitate requests for prosocial consumer responses (Bendapudi, Singh, and Bendapudi 1996; Fisher and Ackerman 1998), often in ways that induce negative emotional states (Small and Verrochi 2009). We predict that when high need is not coupled with clear information about the justice-restoring properties of the action of purchasing fair trade, consumer support for fair trade will be diminished.

Contributions of the Research

The current work answers calls for research into the specific factors that can encourage ethical, prosocial consumption (Bendapudi, Singh, and Bendapudi 1996; Menon and Menon 1997; Mick 2006) by using an experimental framework to demonstrate causal links between factors that marketers can control and consumer preferences for products with ethical attributes. In doing so, we make several notable contributions to the literature. First, we build on recent research suggesting that increasing product ethicality does not always lead to a positive consumer response (e.g., Luchs et al. 2010; Luo and Battacharya 2006; Obermiller et al. 2009). For example, the product category

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[1] We view justice restoration potential and justice restoration efficacy as distinct constructs. Justice restoration potential refers to whether the particular avenue is perceived as having the *possibility* of restoring justice, whereas justice restoration efficacy refers to the belief that consumers *actually can effect* the observed injustice through fair-trade purchases. Thus, justice restoration potential reflects real-world variability in the tractability of justice redress, whereas justice restoration efficacy reflects a person's subjective sense of the efficacy of his or her actions in redressing injustice.

[2] This article compares high and moderate need conditions because the context of fair trade precludes the examination of truly low need situations.

(Luchs et al. 2010), branding and positioning (Obermiller et al. 2009), and the nature of the firm itself (Aaker, Vohs, and Mogilner 2010; Luo and Battacharya 2006) all can moderate responses to companies promoting ethical products and practices. The current research complements this work by showing that fair-trade products are not invariably viewed favorably and by highlighting an additional factor that can moderate consumer responses to ethical products. In particular, we show that concerns about *justice for others* can play a pivotal role in determining support for ethical goods.

Second, to our knowledge, this is the first research to merge just-world theorizing with work on ethical consumption. Doing so provides truly novel extensions to the just-world literature and marketing research on ethical consumerism because the fair-trade context uniquely offers conditions under which justice concerns about others are relevant; yet providing assistance is often at some cost to the self (e.g., fair-trade options often cost more). Thus, the synthesis of these two bodies of work highlights that concerns about justice for others can be influential, even in contexts in which strong egoistic motives exist. Study 3, in particular, takes this further to show how responsiveness to the plight of others is influenced by one's own circumstances. That is, when the product category is an indulgence (and highlights the consumer's own sense of privilege), this can activate thoughts about justice for others, leading consumers to be more likely to support products that are fair trade. Just-world research often examines reactions to the fates of others *or* reactions to one's own fate but seldom examines how the two may be linked.

A third contribution of this research is that it qualifies prior work suggesting that marketers wanting to solicit prosocial consumer behaviors should heighten perceptions of need (Bendapudi, Singh, and Bendapudi 1996; Fisher and Ackerman 1998). Counter to conventional wisdom, we show that under certain conditions, heightening perceptions of need can lead to backfire effects, in which consumers are *less* likely to help when need is highest. Fourth, we demonstrate that the tendency to decrease helping when it is needed the most is related to consumer judgments about whether justice can indeed be restored with fair-trade purchases. This leads to an important implication both theoretically and practically: Factors that allow for the communication of justice restoration potential can reverse this result, spurring consumers to support and choose fair-trade options under conditions of high need even when the fair-trade option is costlier than other alternatives. This also has theoretical implications for just-world theory itself (e.g., Lerner 1980; Lerner and Simmons 1966). Simply having the opportunity to help is not enough; consumers need to know that the provision of assistance in the form of supporting fair trade will likely have an impact on the observed injustice.

A fifth contribution of this work is that we suggest that *justice for the victim* is the driving concern about consumers, thus distinguishing our just-world interpretation from other more self-oriented dynamics, such as self-efficacy (Bandura 1977) and cognitive dissonance (Festinger 1957). Indeed, Festinger's (1957, p. 1) original cognitive dissonance theory focuses on the notion that "the individual strives toward consistency within *himself*," and more recent views of dissonance implicate cognitions

and behaviors directly relevant to the *self* (e.g., Aronson, Blanton, and Cooper 1995; Aronson and Carlsmith 1962; Steele, Spencer, and Lynch 1993; Stone and Cooper 2001). In summarizing the cognitive dissonance literature, Stone and Cooper (2001, p. 229, emphasis added) state that "each contemporary model of dissonance begins with the assumption that people behave and then attempt to make sense out of what *they have done*." Just-world processes are thus distinguishable from dissonance in that the "inconsistency" that drives justice motivation is not between the experience of oneself and one's own past actions but rather between people (self and others) and their fate.

The Current Research

This research uses a just-world framework to highlight the factors that increase and decrease consumer willingness to support fair trade. We demonstrate that consumers' responsiveness to fair-trade attributes depends on both the extent to which their BJW is violated and the degree to which justice restoration potential is offered. Importantly, a just-world framework also allows for distinct moderation and mediation predictions that self-efficacy and cognitive dissonance theories do not account for. We examine the moderating role of justice restoration potential, or the degree to which a particular avenue has the potential to restore justice. We do so using different operationalizations of justice restoration potential, including high versus low payoffs to the producer (Study 1), positive versus negative justice outcomes (Studies 2 and 3), and a new versus long-standing situation (Study 4). We also show that individual differences in BJW moderate the effect of justice restoration on consumer preferences (Study 2). Furthermore, the belief that consumer purchases of fair trade can influence injustice mediates the effects (Studies 2, 3, and 4), and indulgent products (which make the position of consumer privilege particularly salient) enhance the effects (Study 3). Thus, the studies converge on an account suggesting that *justice for the victim* can be the driving concern for consumers in the domain of ethical consumption.

Pilot Study: Degree of Perceived Need

Following from our conceptualization, our first study tested the prediction that when justice restoration potential is low or uncertain (i.e., not explicitly communicated), consumers are *less* likely to prefer a fair-trade product under conditions of high rather than moderate need. We propose that this is because consumers do not necessarily view fair-trade products as possessing justice-restoring qualities. Indeed, it is not always clear that companies promoting fair-trade products are really following through with the ethical principles they espouse (Castaldo et al. 2009; McMurty 2009). Therefore, unless consumers are explicitly told about the justice-restoring properties of fair-trade products, the fair-trade context may not be perceived as high in justice restoration potential. Paradoxically then, and in contrast with extant research (Bendapudi, Singh, and Bendapudi 1996; Fisher and Ackerman 1998), when information about justice restoration potential is not clearly communicated,

consumers will be *less* likely to provide assistance when perceived need is *high* rather than *moderate*. Thus, when justice restoration potential is not explicitly communicated, we predict the following:

H₁: Fair-trade purchase intentions will be lower when need is high rather than moderate.

Method

We begin our investigation with coffee because it is among the most well-established and frequently consumed fair-trade commodities in the world. Undergraduate students (n = 139; M_{age} = 21.04) and community members (n = 46; M_{age} = 39.98 [20–61 years]) read a vignette describing a situation for coffee producers in Malawi that pretested as being either high or moderate need. Participants received general information about conditions for producers and read a quote from a specific coffee producer. In the high need condition, participants read, "This situation has led to extreme levels of poverty, social unrest, and unsuitable living conditions in the area" and "The need for help in this area is extremely severe." They further read of a coffee producer named Bagatunde Obunfuwora who described his situation as follows: "We just can't survive. I do everything I can, but my children are starving and none of them have been to school at all. My wife is dying of a treatable disease, but we can't possibly afford the medication." In the moderate need condition, participants read, "This situation has led to moderate levels of poverty and some social unrest in the area" and "There is some need for help in this area." They further read, "We are struggling. I do everything I can, but my children are not as well fed as they should be, and their education is not as good as it could be. My wife has a treatable disease, but we can barely afford the medication." Participants then read a profile of a company that produces fair-trade coffee in Malawi and reported their purchase intentions (i.e., "I would be likely to purchase this product," "I would be willing to buy this product," "I would likely make this product one of my first choices in this product category," and "I would exert a great deal of effort to purchase this product" [α = .84]).[3]

Results and Discussion

Consistent with H₁, consumers reported significantly less positive fair-trade purchase intentions when need was high (M = 4.10) than when need was moderate (M = 4.95; t(185) = 3.79, *p* < .001). The pilot study provides preliminary support that heightening perceptions of victim suffering can lead to *decreased* fair-trade support. Merely having the option to help is not enough to assuage just-world threat in this context, given that consumers could have provided assistance by indicating increased purchase intentions when the need was high. We propose that this is because

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[3]Similar intention measures have been used previously and do correspond to actual behaviors (White and Peloza 2009). Furthermore, in a pretest (n = 74), participants evaluated fair-trade tea on an intentions scale and were given a choice task that assessed relative preference for fair-trade options (see Study 2). The intention and behavior measures were positively correlated (r = .523, *p* < .001).

when justice restoration potential is not explicitly communicated, people view such "helping" as making little difference, regarding fair-trade purchases as having dubious justice restoration potential.

To examine this possibility, we conducted a follow-up test. Participants ($n_{undergrads}$ = 25 and $n_{community}$ = 45) reported beliefs about the justice restoration potential of fair-trade products ("I can depend on products branded as fair trade to help producers in developing nations get paid what they deserve for their products," "I am confident that products that are branded as fair trade can be relied upon to help producers in developing nations get paid what they deserve for their products," "I am confident that by purchasing fair-trade branded products I can contribute toward restoring fair and just outcomes for producers in developing nations," and "By purchasing products that are branded as being fair trade, I can be confident that I am eliminating injustice toward producers in developing nations" [α = .94]), as well as items regarding trust in companies that promote fair-trade products ("I can depend on companies that offer products that are branded as fair trade to be truthful about the products they offer," "I can rely on companies that offer products that are branded as fair trade to be truthful about the products they offer," and "I am confident that companies that offer products that are branded as fair trade are honest about the products they offer" [α = .96]). Participants did not report particularly positive beliefs about the justice restoration potential of fair-trade products or trust in companies promoting fair trade. Indeed, ratings of justice restoration potential (M = 4.06; t(69) = .71, not significant [n.s.]) and of trust in fair-trade companies (M = 3.72; t(69) = 1.59, *p* < .17) were not significantly different from the scale midpoint. We propose that this is why, under normal conditions (that do not explicitly highlight high justice restoration potential), consumers are less likely to support fair-trade options in response to high rather than moderate need. When consumers perceive justice restoration potential of fair trade as high, however, we expect these results to be reversed, positively spurring consumers to action. Thus, we propose an important nuance to prior work on just-world theory—that is, merely having the opportunity to "help" is not enough in the face of just-world threat in the fair-trade context. High need communications must be combined with information about justice restoration potential to facilitate a prosocial consumer response.

Study 1: Justice Restoration Potential

The pilot study and follow-up show that people are (1) less willing to help by purchasing fair-trade products when need is high rather than moderate and (2) generally skeptical about the justice restoration potential of fair-trade purchases. Study 1 builds on these initial findings with the proposition that highlighting how action will redress injustice precludes the need for defensive reactions and enhances the favorability of fair-trade products linked to high need. Following from the aforementioned conceptualization, this is because just-world threat is reduced by the act of providing assistance. When justice restoration potential is low, consumers can only resolve just-world threat by distancing themselves from the situation and thus will exhibit lower

purchase intentions when need is high rather than moderate (as in the pilot study). Thus, we anticipate an interaction between justice restoration potential and need:

H₂: When justice restoration potential is low, fair-trade purchase intentions will be lower when need is high rather than moderate. When justice restoration potential is high, purchase intentions will be greater when need is high rather than moderate.

Method

Business students (n = 137; 70 females; M_{age} = 20.81 years) received course credit and took part in small groups. They were randomly assigned to conditions in a 2 (need: moderate vs. high) × 2 (justice restoration potential: low vs. high) between-subjects design. They were informed that the study was concerned with attitudes toward fair trade and that, to familiarize them with fair trade, they would read a news article and a press release. The news article introduced the manipulation of need and described circumstances faced by coffee producers in Malawi (see the Appendix). In the high need condition, participants learned that the situation for producers was severe and unjust, and in the moderate need condition, they learned that the situation was moderately severe.[4] They then read a press release, purportedly from the Fair Trade Federation (FTF; www.fairtradefederation.org/), that manipulated justice restoration potential. In the low justice restoration potential condition, participants learned that "20% of the money used to purchase coffee by consumers in developed nations...is actually received by the producers themselves" and that "purchasing fair-trade products authorized by the FTF is a step in the right direction, but we are still working toward getting fair prices for coffee producers in developing nations." In the high justice restoration potential condition, participants read that "90% of the money used to purchase coffee by consumers in developed nations...is actually received by the producers themselves" and that "by purchasing fair-trade products authorized by the FTF you can make a significant impact in getting fair prices and ensuring equitable conditions for coffee producers in developing nations."[5] Participants reported their fair-trade purchase intentions (α = .83) as in the pilot study. Finally, participants completed manipulation checks for need and justice restoration potential, which were successful.

Results and Discussion

A 2 (need) × 2 (justice restoration potential) analysis of variance revealed the predicted two-way interaction (F(1, 133) = 15.23, p < .001). Consistent with H₂, when justice restoration potential was low, purchase intentions

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[4]In a pretest (n = 44), perceived need ("What degree of need exists in Malawi?" "How severe is the need for help in Malawi?" "How unjust is the situation in Malawi?" and "How dire is the need for help in Malawi?" [α = .88]) was greater in the high (M = 6.38) than in the moderate (M = 5.72) need condition (p < .001). In addition, measures of justice restoration potential were completed, and the need manipulation did not predict differences in justice restoration potential ($M_{moderate}$ = 5.98 vs. M_{high} = 5.60; p < .18).

[5]Both versions of this manipulation were viewed as being equally "believable" (M_{low} = 5.05 vs. M_{high} = 5.15; n.s.).

FIGURE 1
Study 1: Fair-Trade Purchase Intentions as a Function of Need and Justice Restoration Potential
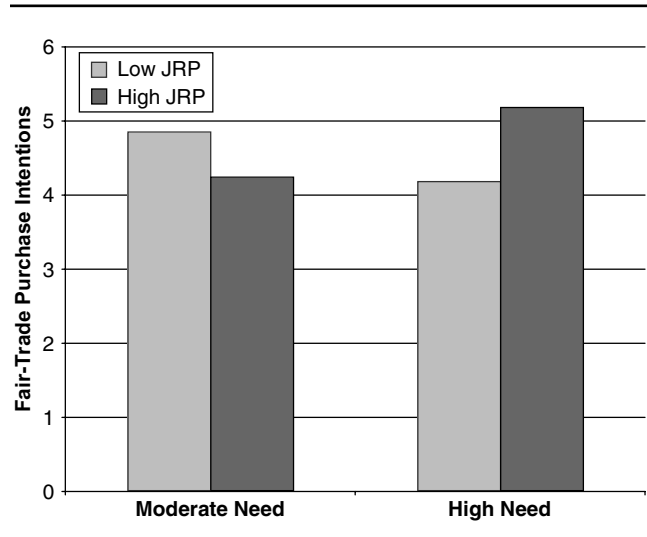
Notes: JRP = justice restoration potential.

were lower in the high (M = 4.17) than in the moderate (M = 4.84) need condition (t(133) = 2.39, p < .05; Figure 1). This pattern reversed when justice restoration potential was high, such that purchase intentions were stronger in the high (M = 5.17) than in the moderate (M = 4.23) need condition (t(133) = 3.23, p < .01). The main effects for need (F(1, 133) = .34, n.s.) and justice restoration potential (F(1, 133) = 1.06, n.s.) did not reach significance.

The results of Study 1 reveal that when justice restoration potential is low, the previously observed defensive pattern emerged, with consumers being *less* willing to purchase a fair-trade product when need was high rather than moderate. The strongest fair-trade purchase intentions emerged, however, when participants were aware of great need *and* believed that the opportunity to restore justice existed. Thus, we show the conditions under which high need can be leveraged to produce a positive consumer response.

Study 2: Moderating Role of BJW

We build on Study 1 by seeking further evidence for the role of justice concerns in fair-trade purchases. We do so by examining the moderating role of an individual difference measure of sensitivity to injustice—namely, BJW (Lipkus 1991). People high in BJW are particularly sensitive to injustice and are highly motivated to preserve just-world beliefs (Hafer 2000; Hafer and Bègue 2005; Rubin and Peplau 1973). Importantly, those high in BJW are particularly likely to assist victims when the opportunity to help is regarded as being available (DePalma et al. 1999; Miller 1977). In contrast, the responses of those low in BJW are not particularly sensitive to the degree to which the opportunity to help is made salient (Miller 1977). We examined the moderating effect of BJW in a context in which, in all cases, need was high, and we investigated it along with a new manipulation of justice restoration potential (including

low, control, and high conditions). Because high-BJW people are more sensitive than their low-BJW counterparts to the opportunity to help, we predict that under conditions of high need, those high in BJW will be particularly likely to choose fair-trade products when justice restoration potential is high. No such differences in helping responses as a function of justice restoration potential should arise when BJW is low. In summary, when need is high, an interaction between BJW and justice restoration potential will emerge:

H$_3$: When BJW is high, choice of fair-trade products will be more likely when justice restoration potential is high, rather than low, or when no mention of justice restoration potential is made. When BJW is low, choice of fair-trade products will not vary as a function of justice restoration potential.

We further predict that the results will be mediated by justice restoration efficacy (i.e., the belief that consumers can *effect* the observed injustice through the purchase of fair-trade products). Thus, when need and justice restoration potential are both high, consumers should feel that they can effect justice the most through the support of fair-trade products.

H$_4$: The effect of the interaction between BJW and justice restoration potential on consumer choice will be mediated by justice restoration efficacy.

In the interest of examining other product categories, we use a new product, tea. We chose tea because it is a highly consumed fair-trade product category. In addition, because ethical consumption research has been criticized for examining consumer intentions, rather than behaviors (Auger and Devinney 2007; De Pelsmaker, Driesen, and Rayp 2005), we assessed actual choices rather than intentions. Furthermore, we assigned a greater cost to selecting the fair-trade option to ensure enhanced realism. Ethically produced goods typically involve a trade-off for consumers; consumers gains an ethical good but must pay more for the product or lose some other desirable attribute (Auger et al. 2003; Luchs et al. 2010; Obermiller et al. 2009).

Method

Undergraduate students (n = 105; 55 females, M$_{age}$ = 21.23) completed the study for course credit in a business course. We used a 3 (justice restoration potential: low vs. control vs. high) × BJW between-subjects design. Participants completed a measure of BJW (Lipkus 1991) embedded in some filler items before the study session. They received an e-mail containing the pretest, typed in their responses, and e-mailed these to the experimenter (3–17 days before the study). We mean-centered the BJW scores for analysis and anonymously linked them with the study session data.

The study was run in small groups. Participants first read an article that exposed everyone to the high need scenario described in Study 1, with the exception that the product was tea. Participants then read a press release that provided an alternative manipulation of justice restoration potential, which included three levels—low, control, and high. In the control condition, participants read only general information about the FTF, and no additional information was given. In the low condition, participants read general

information about the FTF and then learned that justice restoration potential was low:

> Although the FTF attempts to assist in the restoration of fair and equitable conditions, this is not always possible. Despite the fact a portion of tea sales goes back to the producers, this has not necessarily made the situation better. One tea farmer notes: "We still can't produce quality food for our families and community, or provide adequate medical care or schools for our communities. Plus, the tea trader 'middlemen' are still making huge profits at our expense."

In the high condition, participants read general information about the FTF and then learned the following:

> The FTF further assists in the restoration of fair and equitable conditions with regards to producers' and intermediaries' outcomes. This is done by ensuring that the intermediaries or "middlemen" do not take more than their fair share. One tea farmer notes, "As a result of the FTF, the tea traders can't exploit us anymore. This has cut their profits, so that overall things are fairer."

Participants completed a justice restoration efficacy measure that assessed the degree to which they "believe that the purchase of fair-trade products can help to ensure that producers (i.e., tea farmers) receive fair and just outcomes?" and "believe that the purchase of fair-trade products can help to ensure that intermediaries (i.e., the "middlemen") receive fair and just outcomes?" (α = .63). Following this, they completed some filler items and were given some background information on a tea company. They were then shown an assortment of fair-trade and non-fair-trade teas (in counterbalanced order) and told that they had $1.00 to spend on some sachets of tea they could take as a gift. The teas pretested as being similar in likability. A premium was placed on fair-trade teas by pricing them at $.50 and regular teas at $.25 each. Choices were coded to reflect whether the participant showed a preference for regular teas (–1), an equal preference for each type of tea (0), or a preference for fair-trade tea (1).

Results and Discussion

Tea selections. We used ordinal logit regression to analyze tea choice as an ordered choice variable. The interaction between justice restoration potential and BJW significantly predicted product choice (Wald = 5.12, $p < .03$; Figures 2 and 3). The main effect for justice restoration potential was significant (Wald = 13.42, $p < .001$), while the main effect for BJW was not (Wald = 2.31, $p < .13$). We created two dummy-coded variables to reflect high and low justice restoration potential, respectively (Aiken and West 1991). We used ordinal logit regression to examine the interaction between each dummy variable and the centered BJW index, while entering the main effects as predictors and using tea choice as the dependent measure. Consistent with H$_3$, the interaction between high justice restoration and BJW was significant (Wald = 6.55, $p < .02$), while the interaction between low justice restoration and BJW was not (Wald = .18, n.s.).

Mediational role of justice restoration efficacy. Using linear regression, we entered restoration potential, BJW, and

FIGURE 2
Study 2: Tea Preferences When Need Is High as a Function of BJW and Justice Restoration Potential
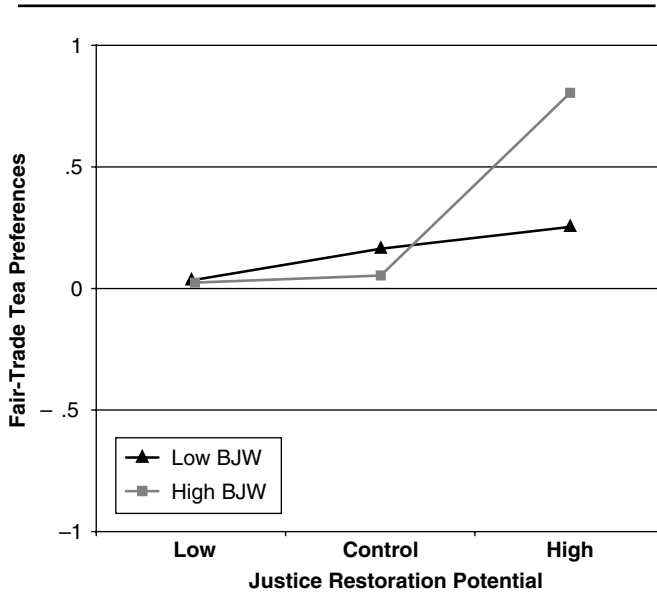
Notes: Simple slope analysis revealed that those high in BJW were more likely to select fair-trade teas when justice restoration potential was high rather than low or in the control condition (t(99) = 3.18, p < .01, β = .48), but no significant differences emerged for those low in BJW (t(99) = .20, n.s., β = .03). The lines in the graph represent those 1 standard deviation above and below the mean on the BJW scale.

their interaction term as predictors of justice restoration efficacy. The interaction significantly predicted justice restoration efficacy (t(100) = 3.33, p < .01, β = .33). When we entered justice restoration efficacy into the original ordered logit regression predicting tea choice, justice restoration efficacy remained significant (Wald = 6.33, p < .02) while the impact of the interaction on purchase intentions was reduced (Wald = 4.82, p < .05; Sobel's z = 1.99, p < .05; Sobel 1982). Thus, consistent with H_4, justice restoration efficacy partially mediated the effects.

Discussion. Under conditions of high need, consumers were more inclined to choose fair-trade products when they perceived justice restoration potential as high than when they perceived justice restoration potential as low or it was not explicitly communicated. The finding that consumers

are similarly avoidant of fair-trade options when low justice restoration potential and no information about justice restoration potential are communicated confirms the notion that people do not necessarily view fair-trade products as having justice-restoring properties.

That our effects are particularly pronounced for high-BJW people further validates a just-world analysis. Indeed, the mechanism underlying the effects seems to be the belief that the consumer can restore justice by choosing fair trade. Importantly, the handful of studies that have examined helping as a potential outcome of just-world threat have only inferred that just-world processes were occurring without demonstrating the underlying mechanism (e.g., Lerner and Simmons 1966; Miller 1977). The moderating role of BJW and the mediating role of justice restoration efficacy highlight that consumer responses are driven, at least in part, by justice concerns, rather than general self-efficacy or dissonance reduction.

Study 3: The Moderating Role of Product Type

Study 2 shows that fair-trade products are most favored when need and justice restoration potential are both high, particularly among those highly sensitive to injustice (based on an individual differences in BJW). In Study 3, we build on the previous studies by conceptualizing the salience of a consumer's sense of privilege as a situational source of sensitivity to injustice for others. We do so by varying whether the product is viewed as an indulgence or a necessity. We view indulgences as products that add "to pleasure or comfort but [are] not absolutely necessary" (Hagtvedt and Patrick 2009). A pretest indicated that our previously examined fair-trade products (coffee and tea) are neutral on the luxury-necessity dimension. Undergraduates (n = 40) completed the following items for both coffee and tea (α = .70): "I see coffee [tea] as being a luxury," "I see coffee [tea] as being a treat to myself," "I see coffee [tea] as being a necessity" (reverse scored), and "I see coffee [tea] as being something that I really do need" (reversed scored) (α = .72). Ratings of perceived luxury did not significantly differ from the scale midpoint for coffee (M = 4.23; t(39) = 1.00, p < .25) or tea (M = 4.16, t(39) = .73, p < .46). However, it seems likely that the luxury-necessity dimension moderates the observed effects.

Prior work has found that consumers often experience negative feelings when choosing indulgences over necessities (Kivetz and Simonson 2002). Indulgences might be expected to increase sensitivity to justice for others in the

FIGURE 3
Study 2: Choice Percentages When Need Is High as a Function of BJW and Justice Restoration Potential

	Low BJW				High BJW		
	Low	Control	High		Low	Control	High
Regular tea	15.8%	16.7%	23.5%	Regular tea	16.7%	14.3%	0%
Combination	57.9%	38.9%	29.4%	Combination	66.7%	57.1%	11.5%
Fair-trade tea	26.3%	44.4%	47.1%	Fair-trade tea	16.6%	28.6%	88.5%

Notes: We calculated high and low BJW using a median split on the BJW scale.

context of fair trade because such products make salient one's own situation of advantage compared with others. From a just-world perspective, this is because there are two sources of just-world threat: (1) the unjust fate of the victim and (2) the privileged and, thus, "undeserved" fate of the consumer considering an indulgence while others are unjustly treated. Note that the latter only emerges because of the unique juxtaposition of an indulgence with victim injustice in the fair-trade context, but it has the effect of enhancing consumer sensitivity to injustice for others. Thus, the injustice of one's own privileged status is temporarily made salient by the indulgent product, which may lead the consumer to resolve just-world threat by preferring fair-trade options. Although this notion has not been tested, Strahilevitz and Myers (1998) find that donations to charity are more likely when the product is bundled with a frivolous, rather than a utilitarian, product incentive.

To test the premise that considering an indulgence enhances justice concerns about others, we conducted a pretest. Participants (n = 58) read the high need information and either the luxury or the necessity product manipulation (see the "Method" section). Items assessed the effectiveness of the manipulation ("To what degree did you consider the Dagoba bar to be more of a necessity versus a luxury?" 1 = "more of a necessity," and 7 = "more of a luxury") and the degree to which participants had justice concerns about others ("To what degree were you concerned about what was fair?" "To what degree were you concerned about justice for others?" "To what degree did you think about the needs of others?" and "To what degree did you consider your own situation compared to the situation of others?" [α = .96]). Participants also completed items to assess a focus on one's own needs ("To what degree were you focused on your own level of hunger?" "To what degree were you focused on what you needed in the situation?" and "To what degree were you focused on the fact that it was necessary to get something to eat?" [α = .96]). Participants reported greater concern about justice for others when they were considering a product that was positioned as a luxury (M = 4.94) rather than a necessity (M = 3.64; t(56) = 2.94, p < .01) and were more focused on their own needs when the product was positioned as a necessity (M = 5.17) rather than a luxury (M = 3.95; t(56) = 2.92, p < .01). The results also revealed that the manipulation was successful (t(56) = 2.50, p < .02; M_{luxury} = 5.62 vs. $M_{necessity}$ = 4.66). Similar checks were also successful in the study itself.

Given that indulgences are particularly likely to activate justice concerns about others and that those high in BJW are most sensitive to injustice (Rubin and Peplau 1973), we propose that it is when the product is perceived as an indulgence and BJW is high that people are the most responsive to the degree of justice restoration potential. Because our pretest shows that consumers considering a necessity are not particularly sensitive to information about justice for others (and are relatively more focused on their own needs), we do not predict that factors related to justice sensitivity (BJW) and justice restoration potential will interact to drive consumer response for necessities. We therefore anticipate an interaction among product type, BJW, and justice restoration potential.

H_{5a}: When an *indulgence* is considered, higher BJW will be related to increased fair-trade purchase intentions when justice restoration potential is high rather than low.

H_{5b}: When a *necessity* is considered, differences in fair-trade purchase intentions will not emerge as a function of BJW and justice restoration potential.

Consistent with H_3, we also predict that the results will be mediated by justice restoration efficacy. In addition, we consider the possibility that a more general form of efficacy is driving the effects (Bandura 1977). According to Bandura (1977), self-efficacy pertains to a person's beliefs about his or her ability to produce a level of performance that can influence events in his or her life. Our conceptualization suggests that it is not general efficacy that is important, but rather the belief that one's behaviors have the ability to influence the observed *injustice*. We measure *justice restoration efficacy* as well as *general efficacy* in this study, to rule out the latter as a potential mediator.

Method

Consumers (n = 147) at a local market participated in return for a $5.00 gift card from a coffee shop. The sample included 95 women and 52 men, who ranged in age from 16 to 73 years and had a range of household incomes. We used a 2 (product type: indulgence vs. necessity) × 2 (justice restoration potential: high vs. low) × BJW between-subjects design. All participants read the high need version of the news article similar to that in the previous studies, with the exception that the product was cocoa products from Ghana. The press release presented either the high or the low version of the manipulation of justice restoration potential, taken from Study 2.

Participants then read a scenario asking them to imagine a snack bar purchase that was either an indulgence or a necessity. In the necessity condition, they read, "You are absolutely ravenous and have decided that it is necessary for you to get something to eat. You have enough time to grab something to eat and decide that a breakfast bar is just what you need." In the indulgence condition, they read, "You decide that you would really enjoy a treat and that it would be nice to get yourself something to indulge in. You have enough time to grab something to eat and decide that a specialty chocolate bar is just what you want." In addition to the description, in the *necessity* (indulgence) condition, the product was the Dagoba Nutritional Breakfast (Luxury Chocolate) Bar, which is made with fair-trade chocolate. The fair-trade option cost $4.50, and the alternatives were between $2.50 and $3.50. We chose the specific price levels through pretesting; we selected prices that consumers would consider somewhat expensive but not so prohibitive that they would not choose the fair-trade options.

Participants then completed the purchase intentions measure, with respect to the Dagoba bar. They also completed items created on an a priori basis to assess justice restoration efficacy and general efficacy. Factor analysis revealed that the items loaded on two separate factors, both with eigenvalues greater than 1. We created the *justice restoration efficacy* index by averaging: "To what degree do you believe that the purchase of fair-trade products can help to ensure that cocoa producers receive fair and just outcomes?" "To what degree do you believe that the purchase

of fair-trade products can help to ensure that intermediaries (i.e., the "middlemen") receive fair and just outcomes?" and "To what degree did you think about your ability to reduce the injustice experienced by others?" ($\alpha = .71$). We created a *general efficacy* index by averaging: "I believe I can make a difference by purchasing fair-trade products," "I believe that by purchasing fair-trade products I can help others," and "I believe that purchasing fair trade really won't do much in terms of helping those in need" (reverse scored; $\alpha = .74$). In addition, participants completed the BJW measure, which we mean-centered for analysis.
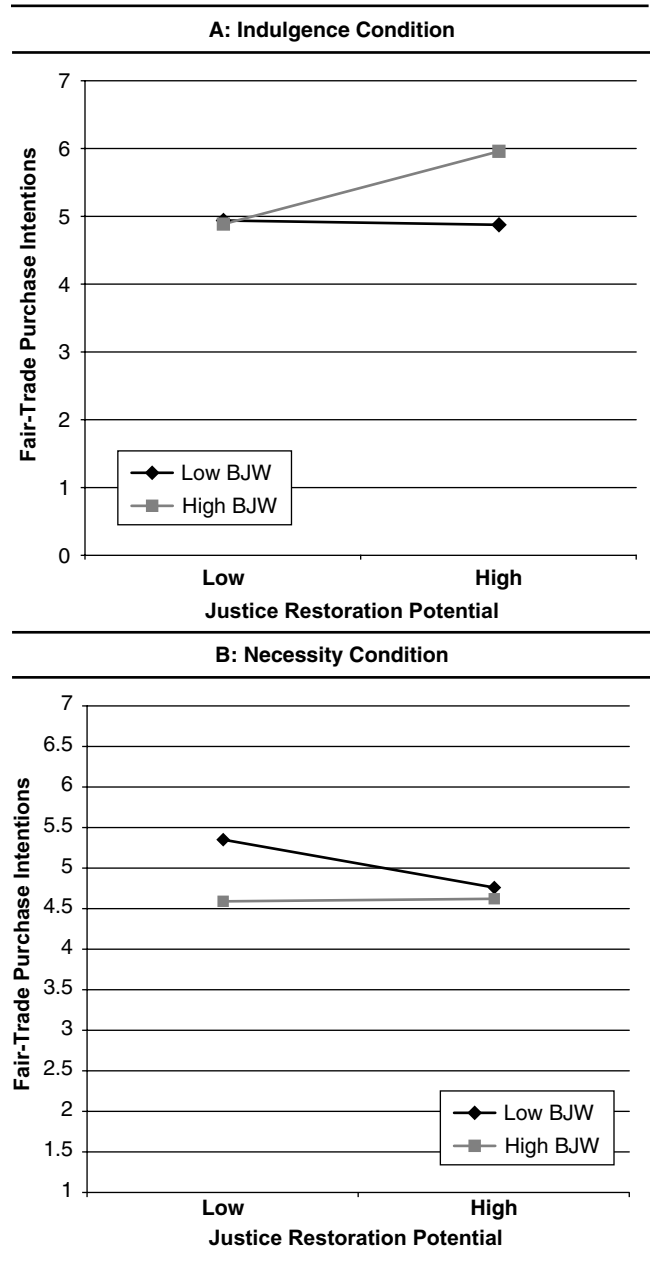
Results

Purchase intentions. Regression analysis using product type, justice restoration potential, BJW, and all interaction terms as predictors of purchase intentions revealed a three-way interaction ($t(140) = 2.48$, $p < .02$, $\beta = .21$), as well as an interaction between BJW and product type ($t(140) = 2.23$, $p < .05$, $\beta = .19$). When the product was an indulgence, a significant interaction between BJW and justice restoration emerged ($t(75) = 2.34$, $p < .03$, $\beta = .26$; Figure 4). The main effect for justice restoration potential was significant ($t(75) = 1.98$, $p < .05$, $\beta = .21$), while the main effect of BJW was not ($t(75) = 1.58$, $p < .12$, $\beta = .18$). As we predicted in H_{5a}, simple slope analysis (Aiken and West 1991) shows that high-BJW participants reported significantly more positive purchase intentions when justice restoration potential was high rather than low ($t(75) = 2.19$, $p < .05$, $\beta = .40$). The same analysis was not significant for low-BJW participants ($t(75) = .40$, n.s.). As we predicted in H_{5b}, when the product was a necessity, the interaction between BJW and justice restoration potential was nonsignificant ($t(65) = 1.27$, $p > .20$, $\beta = -.15$). The main effects for BJW ($t(65) = 1.33$, $p < .20$, $\beta = -.16$) and justice restoration potential ($t(65) = .54$, n.s., $\beta = .07$) also did not reach significance.

Mediational role of justice restoration efficacy. When the product was an indulgence, the interaction between BJW and justice restoration potential significantly predicted justice restoration efficacy ($t(75) = 2.73$, $p < .01$, $\beta = .31$). The main effect for justice restoration potential was significant ($t(75) = 2.35$, $p < .03$, $\beta = .25$), while the main effect for BJW was not ($t(75) = -.24$, n.s., $\beta = -.03$). Finally, when we entered justice restoration efficacy into the original regression predicting purchase intentions, justice restoration efficacy remained significant ($t(74) = 6.69$, $p < .001$, $\beta = .61$), while the impact of the interaction on purchase intentions was no longer significant ($t(74) = .44$, n.s., $\beta = .05$; Sobel's $z = 2.54$, $p < .02$). When the product was an indulgence, the interaction between BJW and justice restoration potential did not predict general efficacy ($t(75) = 1.08$, n.s.). Thus, while justice restoration efficacy mediated the observed effects, general efficacy did not.

Discussion

The results demonstrate the moderating role of product type on the observed effects. When the product is an indulgence, high-BJW participants report more positive purchase intentions toward a fair-trade product when justice restoration potential is high rather than low. When the product is a necessity, those high in BJW do not demonstrate differential purchase intentions as a function of justice restoration

FIGURE 4
Study 3: Fair-Trade Purchase Intentions When Need Is High as a Function of Product Type, Justice Restoration Potential, and BJW

A: Indulgence Condition

B: Necessity Condition

potential. The results suggest that when justice concerns are particularly heightened (the product is an indulgence and the person is high in BJW), consumers respond differentially to the justice restoration capabilities of fair-trade products. Importantly, justice restoration efficacy, but not general efficacy, mediates the effects. Again, the results converge on an account suggesting that justice concerns about others drive consumer response, rather than more general dissonance or efficacy effects.

These results build on the work on cause-related marketing that finds that a charity incentive is more effective when paired with a frivolous, rather than practical, product (Strahilevitz and Myers 1998). Although the results do

not demonstrate the mechanism underlying their effects, we show that the desire for justice for others is a possible mechanism underlying the tendency for more hedonic, indulgent products for the self to lead to the support of a social good. We also make a unique contribution to the just-world literature by examining how responsiveness to the plight of others is influenced by circumstances shaping one's own deserving. Just-world research has tended to examine reactions to the fates of others *or* reactions to one's own fate but seldom how the two may be linked.

Study 4: Restoration Efficacy and Victim Derogation as Mediators

In Study 4, we build on the previous studies by examining a different operationalization of justice restoration potential. Consumer sensibilities about the potential for fair trade to redress injustice are presumably due in part to their judgment of the nature of the injustice (e.g., whether it is considered long-standing or new). For example, recent work shows that people are often less sympathetic to a victim when the suffering has been a long-standing, chronic situation rather than a new and emerging situation (Small 2010). This effect has been described in terms of reference dependence, in which people compare the victim's current state with the previous state. In the long-term condition, the victim is experiencing the same state as he or she was previously, but in the new condition, the victim is experiencing a situation different from his or her previous one. We propose that this effect may also be partially driven by differences in perceived justice restoration potential and, as such, that the effects of need will be moderated by the nature of the situation. When the injustice is long-standing and chronic in nature, people will perceive the situation as having low justice restoration potential (as confirmed with a pretest; study method). As a result, consumers should be less likely to help by supporting fair trade when need is high rather than moderate. This is because when justice restoration potential is low, helping is unlikely to be viewed as leading to justice restoration, and the person will respond to the threat with more defensive strategies, such as derogation, and be less likely to provide assistance (Hafer and Bègue 2005; Lerner and Simmons 1966). However, a new injustice will likely be viewed as having a moderate degree of justice restoration potential. Under these conditions, we do not expect differences in fair-trade purchase intentions among those exposed to high versus moderate need to emerge. Thus, we anticipate an interaction between the nature of the situation and need:

> H₆: When suffering is long-term, purchase intentions will be lower for high than for moderate need. When suffering is new, this difference will not emerge.

Recall that our conceptualization predicts two potential responses to just-world threat: helping by purchasing fair trade and reconstruing the victim as being deserving of his or her fate. Our studies thus far have demonstrated that the helping response is mediated by justice restoration efficacy. However, when justice restoration potential is low, people may respond to threat with more defensive strategies, such as derogating the victim (Lerner and Simmons 1966). This

is because the just-world threat cannot be accommodated in other ways. Thus, both of these processes may work in tandem; as perceived justice restoration efficacy increases, derogation of the victim decreases, and vice versa. Assessing these two variables enables consideration of mediators that can both increase (justice restoration efficacy) and decrease (victim deservingness) helping responses.

> H₇: The effect of the interaction between need and nature of the situation (i.e., long-term or short-term) on purchase intentions will be mediated by both justice restoration efficacy and victim deservingness.

Pretest

To check the manipulation of the nature of the situation (chronic vs. new) and confirm our proposition that type of situation influences perceived justice restoration potential, we conducted a pretest. Undergraduate students (n = 40) all read the high need manipulation to provide background information about fair trade. They then read the manipulation of the nature of the situation (see the "Method" section) and responded to items assessing whether the event was considered new or long-standing ("To what degree are the problems in Malawi a new phenomenon?" (reverse scored), "To what degree are the problems in Malawi an emerging phenomenon?" (reverse scored), and "To what degree is the situation in Malawi a chronic, long-term problem?" [α = .68]), a justice restoration potential ("To what degree does the potential to restore justice in Malawi exist?" "To what degree does the possibility of restoring justice in Malawi exist?" and "To what degree does the potential to redress injustice in Malawi exist?" [α = .74]), and a need (Study 1 pretest). Participants perceived the situation as more long-standing in the long-term (M = 5.73) than the new (M = 4.66) condition (t(38) = 4.61, $p < .001$). In line with our conceptualization, the manipulation of the nature of the situation influenced perceptions of justice restoration potential in expected ways ($M_{new} = 4.67$ vs. $M_{long - term} = 3.80$; t(38) = 2.58, $p < .05$) but did not significantly predict perceptions of need ($M_{new} = 6.25$ vs. $M_{long - term} = 6.28$); t(38) = .15, n.s.).

Method

Both business (n = 71) and psychology (n = 61) students took part as a class exercise in a 2 (need: moderate vs. high) × 2 (nature of the situation: new vs. long-standing) between-subjects design. We used the same news article followed by the press release procedure. As in Study 1, the news article included the need manipulation, and the product was coffee. The press release highlighted either new or long-standing suffering. In the new suffering condition, participants read, "According to the FTF, the negative effects of a lack of fair trade are a new and emerging phenomenon. A lack of fair trade in Malawi is just beginning to adversely affect workers and their day-to-day living." In the long-standing suffering condition, participants read, "According to the FTF, the negative effects of a lack of fair trade are not new and have been a long-term problem. A lack of fair trade in Malawi has been adversely affecting workers and their day-to-day living for over 80 years" (for similar manipulations, see Crandall et al. 2009; Small 2010). Participants then rated purchase intentions (α = .83), justice

restoration efficacy ($\alpha = .97$), and victim deservingness perceptions: "How responsible is Bagatunde for his situation?" and "To what degree does Bagatunde deserve to be in this situation?" ($\alpha = .64$) on seven-point scales ("not at all/very much so").

Results

Purchase intentions. A need × nature of the situation analysis of variance on purchase intentions revealed the predicted two-way interaction ($F(1, 124) = 9.72$, $p < .01$). Consistent with H_6, when suffering was long-standing, participants reported decreased purchase intentions when need was high ($M = 3.36$) rather than moderate ($M = 4.43$, $t(124) = 3.02$, $p < .01$; Figure 5). When suffering was new, no differences in purchase intentions emerged ($M_{high} = 4.54$ vs. $M_{moderate} = 4.01$; $t(124) = 1.64$, n.s.). Thus, when need was moderate, the nature of the situation did not influence purchase intentions ($t(124) = 1.13$, n.s.). When need was high, more positive purchase intentions emerged when it was a new rather than a long-standing situation ($t(124) = 3.32$, $p < .001$). The main effects for situation ($F(1, 124) = 2.13$, $p < .15$) and need ($F(1, 124) = 1.09$, $p < .30$) did not reach significance. The three-way interaction among need, situation, and sample was not significant, highlighting that a similar pattern of results emerged in both samples ($F(1, 124) = .02$, n.s.). However, psychology students exhibited higher purchase intentions overall ($M = 4.40$) than business students ($M = 3.82$; $F(1, 124) = 4.92$, $p < .05$).

Mediational roles of justice restoration efficacy and victim deservingness. Our framework suggests that the influence of the interaction (between need and nature of the situation) on intentions is mediated by both justice restoration efficacy and victim deservingness. We used structural equation modeling to test the predicted mediated moderation effect (Iacobucci, Saldanha, and Deng 2007). First, we created a model without mediators, with need, nature of the situation, and their interaction term as predictors of intentions. The interaction significantly predicted

FIGURE 5
Study 4: Fair-Trade Purchase Intentions as a Function of Need and Nature of the Situation

intentions ($\beta = -.401$; $p < .001$). Next, we tested a model in which justice restoration efficacy and victim deservingness concurrently mediate the effect of the interaction on intentions (comparative fit index = .989; normed fit index = .981). The interaction significantly predicted both justice restoration efficacy ($\beta = -.327$, $p < .02$) and deservingness ($\beta = .521$, $p < .001$). Both justice restoration efficacy ($\beta = .364$, $p < .001$) and deservingness ($\beta = -.170$, $p < .05$) significantly predicted fair-trade purchase intentions, while the original relationship between the interaction and intentions fell from significance ($\beta = -.119$, $p = .095$; both Sobel's $p < .05$). Thus, as we predicted in H_7, the effects are mediated by both justice restoration efficacy and victim deservingness.

Discussion

Under conditions of long-standing suffering, fair-trade purchase intentions are lower when need is high rather than moderate. No differences in fair-trade purchase intentions emerge between those in the high versus moderate need conditions when suffering is new. We highlight the mechanisms underlying this effect by showing that beliefs about justice restoration efficacy, along with judgments about victim deservingness, mediate the results. Moreover and as predicted, the two mediators were negatively correlated ($r = -.481$). Conditions that heighten just-world threat (high need) and limit justice restoration potential (long duration) tend to thwart taking action to redress injustice, in this case by reducing intentions to purchase fair-trade products. Feeling unable to redress injustice through purchase, consumers resort to the alternative defensive mechanism of perceiving producers as deserving of their fates.

General Discussion

Converging evidence across four experiments suggests that when the justice restoration potential of fair-trade purchases is low or uncertain, purchase intentions and choices are less likely to favor fair-trade options when a high rather than moderate degree of need is communicated. Although the finding that consumers provide less assistance when it is needed most may seem counterintuitive, in our view, just-world theory provides a useful framework for understanding the patterns of findings across the four studies. Just-world theorizing enables us to make predictions about when people will be most likely to provide assistance—that is, when both need and justice restoration potential are high. Although high need can, at times, hinder prosocial responses, our findings show that the desire for justice can animate efforts to redress rather than justify social injustice.

Theoretical Implications of the Research

This research provides a coherent analysis of *why* fair-trade products may sometimes be less attractive than other options and, importantly, clarifies the factors that enhance the attractiveness of these products. We build on theories of prosocial marketing more generally to show that simply heightening the salience of high need (e.g., Bendapudi, Singh, and Bendapudi 1996; Fisher and Ackerman 1998; Small and Verrochi 2009) may sometimes backfire. The validity of the analysis hinges on the ability of just-world
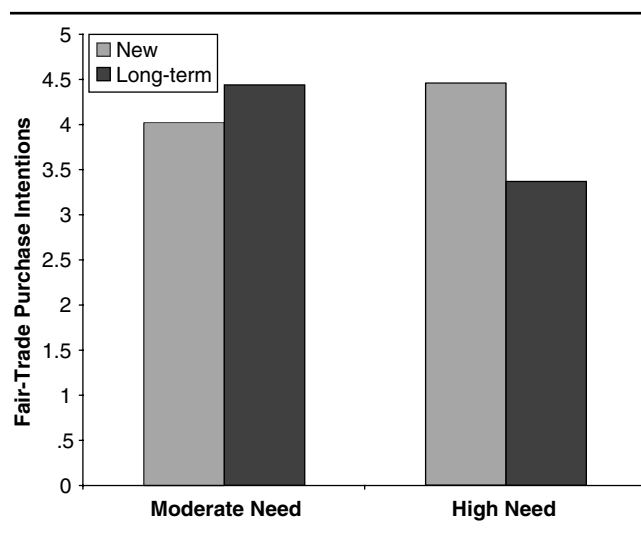
theory to generate plausible moderation and mediation predictions in the fair-trade context. First, we examined the moderating role of justice restoration potential by including direct manipulations in Studies 1–3 and a situation manipulation in Study 4. Second, we examined the moderating role of factors related to sensitivity to injustice—individual differences in BJW and product type. Consistent with our framework, we also observed justice-related mediators. In Studies 2 and 3, justice restoration efficacy mediated the observed effects. Furthermore, in Study 4, both justice restoration efficacy and perceptions of victim deservingness mediated fair-trade purchase intentions in a priori predicted ways. These findings represent a contribution to just-world investigations to date, which have only inferred that justice restoration efficacy and victim derogation shape willingness to assist victims. Indeed, just-world research has been criticized for rarely documenting the processes underlying the effects (Hafer and Bègue 2005). By demonstrating the mediational roles of victim deservingness and justice restoration efficacy, along with the moderating roles of BJW and product type, the current work provides strong evidence for a just-world account.

An alternative explanation for the current findings lies in the possible role of general efficacy (Bandura 1977), rather than efficacy linked to the ability to restore observed injustice. This approach would argue that it is not justice restoration efficacy *per se* that drives the effects, but simply knowledge that a particular course of action will be effective. We believe that the general efficacy argument is unable to provide an adequate explanation for our results when taken as a whole. While we found mediational evidence for justice restoration efficacy beliefs (Studies 2, 3, and 4), general efficacy did not mediate (Study 3). Furthermore, the moderating role of BJW in both Studies 2 and 3 shows that the effects are heightened among people who are particularly sensitive to *injustice*—a result that a general efficacy account neither predicts nor accounts for. In addition, we believe that a cognitive dissonance account also does not adequately explain the effects observed in the current studies. Although a cognitive dissonance explanation would focus on inconsistency relevant to the *self* (i.e., Aronson, Blanton, and Cooper 1995; Aronson and Carlsmith 1962; Festinger 1957; Steele, Spencer, and Lynch 1993; Stone and Cooper 2001), our studies empirically converge on account suggesting that thoughts about *justice for others* underlie the effects.

One theoretical implication of the current research is that there may be a curvilinear relationship between the degree of need and helping. For example, although a low degree of need does not activate just-world threat, it also does not evoke enough motivation to provide assistance to others. A moderate degree of need may induce a moderate amount of just-world threat, along with enough motivation to assist others. Finally, a truly high degree of need may induce such extreme just-world threat that the person is no longer motivated to help and instead uses other defensive strategies to cope. Such a pattern would be predicted by just-world theory but not by cognitive dissonance theory. The current research investigated high versus moderate need conditions. One important possibility is that prior research suggesting that high need evokes a helping response may have investigated a moderate amount of need versus low need. Thus, although some degree of need is necessary to prompt consumers toward action, if the need becomes too intense, consumers may be less likely to help. Examining the curvilinear nature of the effect of just-world threat on consumer prosocial behaviors is a promising direction for future research.

An additional theoretical contribution of the current work is that it sheds light on the more general debate regarding the factors that can encourage prosocial, helping behaviors. Researchers have disagreed about whether helping others is motivated purely by altruism (e.g., Batson 1997; Batson et al. 1989) or by more egoistic, self-serving motives (Cialdini et al. 1987; Cialdini et al. 1997). Justice researchers have similarly argued that people behave in a manner consistent with justice principles only when there is some self-benefit to doing so (Messick and Cook 1983; Walster, Walster, and Bercheid 1978). The current research highlights an important nuance regarding what drives prosocial, ethical responses. Under certain conditions, concerns about justice for others, even when this can confer costs to oneself, can be used to facilitate prosocial responses. In addition, examination of justice motivation in the consumer context also highlights the extent to which other-oriented concerns often coexist with egoistic ones. Thus, for both theoretical and practical reasons, the more useful strategy might be for researchers to focus on how people take care of their own *and* other people's needs through their purchase decisions.

Actionable Recommendations

This research provides guidance to companies with ethical products in their portfolios and those considering the introduction of new products with ethical attributes. Research shows that consumers are beginning to demand ethically produced goods from companies and are willing to pay a premium to attain such goods (Bird and Hughes 1997; Trudel and Cotte 2007). The world is getting smaller as a result of increased globalization, improved transportation, and the explosion of the Internet—consumers not only are indicating that they are interested in fair-trade options but also are able to access ethically produced and priced goods with greater ease. However, consumers are often surprisingly unresponsive to ethical attributes (Auger and Devinney 2007; Carrington, Neville, and Whitwell 2010). We demonstrate that in the fair-trade context, this unresponsiveness is unlikely due to indifference to injustice, but rather to a lack of confidence that fair-trade products have the potential to actually restore justice. The first implication for marketers offering ethical goods then is that simply highlighting an ethical attribute, such as being fair trade, may not be enough. Marketers need to consider the way these ethical products are offered to consumers.

Although a common assumption is that increasing perceived need (Bendapudi, Singh, and Bendapudi 1996; Fisher and Ackerman 1998) enhances consumer prosocial motivations, our findings suggest that this strategy can sometimes backfire, leading to less favorable responses to high rather than moderate need appeals. Importantly, researchers have called on marketers to enhance the impact of felt need by increasing emotional distress (Small and Verrochi 2009). Although increasing negative emotions can sometimes evoke an empathetic reaction (Small and

Verrochi 2009), emotional distress can also heighten just-world responses (Lerner 2003). Marketers should be aware of this important caveat. Consumers may sometimes exhibit defensive reactions to high need communications, particularly in the absence of clear information about how the prosocial action will redress injustice. Our research finds that when no specific information is communicated regarding justice restoration potential, consumers are less likely to help by supporting fair trade when need is high rather than moderate. In one telling example, Barnando's "Silver Spoons of Poverty" social marketing campaign used harsh images (e.g., a newborn baby with a syringe in its mouth) to evoke a negative emotional response. The campaign tagline read, "We can't end poverty . . . ," and then asked for charitable support to tackle smaller issues. If anything, the advertisements combined extremely high need with dubious justice restoration potential. The campaign resulted in widespread consumer backlash, leading to numerous complaints and Britain's Advertising Standards Authority banning the advertisements. Our research suggests that when justice restoration potential is not explicitly highlighted, marketers should not employ high need communications. Furthermore, when need is high, factors that explicitly imply low justice restoration potential, such as low pay-offs to the producer (Study 1), ineffective justice restoration (Studies 2 and 3), and long-standing injustice (Study 4), should be avoided because these will reduce the attractiveness of fair-trade products.

Importantly, the current work also points to the marketing conditions that optimize the attractiveness of fair-trade products. Conveying high need can be expected to strongly motivate consumers if they believe their fair-trade choice will meaningfully contribute to reducing injustice. Indeed, across all our studies, under conditions of high need, consumers responded more positively to fair-trade options when justice restoration potential was high rather than low. In an example of a positioning strategy using the concept of justice restoration potential, a package of Choice fair-trade tea reports on its label: "[b]y choosing Fair Trade Certified tea you are directly contributing to the livelihood of tea growing communities and promoting a *just form of trade* with the developing world." Our results suggest that these marketers have got it right. If high need is salient, the fair-trade marketer should communicate that the consumer's actions can effect the injustice experienced by others.

The current results also hold promise for social marketers more generally attempting to encourage consumers to engage in prosocial, other-oriented actions. Marketers wanting to encourage consumers to make charitable donations, volunteer their time, or make socially conscious product choices would do well to promote high need, along with high justice restoration potential. For example, the product (RED) campaign (see http://www.joinred.com/red/#impact) communicates the high degree of need that exists in Africa, but its web page also communicates how consumer purchases and donations can redress the existing injustice. Indeed, our results imply that if social marketers can tap into people's desire for justice in the world by communicating high need *and* justice restoration potential, there is great promise of moving people to action.

Furthermore, the nature of the product may affect consumer responses to appeals to purchase fair-trade products, given that indulgences activate thoughts about justice for others. Companies differ in the types of products and ethical attributes they offer. Marketers promoting indulgences would do well to highlight the extravagance of the product alongside victim injustice, particularly when promoting products with ethical features. Marketers promoting necessities might want to consider promotions that highlight other, more self-relevant benefits of the product offering. The results also suggest that marketers should consider the benefits of strategic product positioning. The products used in Study 3 were very similar—both were bars shown in identical packaging, both were the same price, and both were made with fair-trade chocolate. What really differed for these products was how they were positioned for the consumer. Products such as coffee and tea were considered neutral on the indulgent-necessity dimension. However, it is likely that consumer responses to these products could be enhanced, under conditions in which high need is linked with high justice restoration potential, if they are positioned as luxuries. Thus, marketers wanting to encourage justice-conscious consumers to purchase fair trade in high need contexts should highlight the product's indulgent qualities, while conveying the high justice restoration potential of the product.

An additional implication of the research is drawn from the negative relationship between justice restoration potential and ascriptions of victim deserving observed in Study 4. Notably, social services agencies and victim activist groups find that people often derogate and devalue victims, from those with AIDS, to those who have experienced rape, to those who live with a mental illness (Furnham 2003). The current research offers a ray of hope, suggesting that by changing society's perceptions of the potential of helping responses to redress injustice, organizations can also work toward altering the pervasive tendency to derogate and devalue victims in society.

A final actionable implication of the current research lies in identification of high-BJW people. Marketers should focus on promoting fair-trade alternatives to consumers who will be most receptive to product offerings, allowing them to redress the injustice experienced by others. The current research suggests that a successful market segmentation strategy for fair-trade marketers should consider targeting those who are particularly sensitive to justice infractions. However, those high in BJW do not always show a preference for ethical, fair-trade options, and they should not simply be targeted with high need appeals for help. Rather, if marketers can effectively communicate high justice restoration, those high in BJW will be the most moved to help under conditions of high need by supporting fair-trade products.

Future Directions for Research

Several potential avenues for further research emerge. Extreme just-world violations may lead consumers to perceive other qualitative differences between options in post-decisional contexts. For example, a brand of coffee vividly displaying a photo of a suffering child on the packaging could potentially lead consumers to perceive the brand as having inferior taste or quality to an alternative brand of coffee that does not threaten just-world beliefs, to justify avoidance of the brand that violates just-world views. In

this work, we examine victim blame and product purchase as two potential outcomes of just-world threat in the consumer context. However, complete avoidance of the just-world threatening stimuli is one other potential response (Hafer and Bègue 2005). It is not uncommon for social marketers to produce lengthy television broadcasts that are hosted by celebrities and devoted to worthy causes, such as feeding children in Africa. One hurdle for these programs is encouraging people to even watch them, given that high need communications may lead people to tune out. Additional questions for research then are, When do such avoidant responses occur, and how can marketers best calibrate messages in a way that captures the desire to ensure justice is done rather than avoiding just-world threat?

A strength of this research is that we show our effects when there is (Studies 2 and 3) and when there is not (Studies 1 and 4) an explicit consumer trade-off in terms of cost. That is, our results emerge regardless of whether the consumer considers the fair-trade product in a context in which more affordable, non-fair-trade alternatives are available. That our effects arise even in the absence of a clearly stated consumer trade-off supports the view that consumers know they must give up something for ethical good, be it low price (Trudel and Cotte 2009), taste (Obermiller et al. 2009), or some other quality of the product (Luchs et al. 2010). One lingering question, however, is, How big of a trade-off are consumers willing to make? Is there a point at which the trade-off between a more affordable price and an ethical attribute becomes too large? For example, the Canadian diamond market positions itself on offering ethical, "conflict-free" diamonds, but the price attached to this ethical attribute is much higher than that attached to the purchase of a cup of fair-trade coffee. Further research might consider this as a boundary condition to the current effects.

Although we examined our predictions in the domain of fair trade, the results should also generalize to other domains in which justice concerns are pertinent. Research might profitably examine the application of just-world theory to other prosocial consumer behaviors, such as charitable donations and volunteerism. One possibility is to examine the effectiveness of other- versus self-benefit appeals on consumer charitable support (White and Peloza 2009) at varying levels of just-world threat. If just-world threat is heightened by a charitable appeal, perhaps accompanying this with a benefit to the self would reduce the experienced threat, leading to greater helping. Alternatively, it would be worthwhile to examine whether, under certain conditions, justice concerns can truly trump self-interest. Although several avenues for further research exist, this work is an important first step toward examining how justice affects consumers' intentions and behaviors.

Appendix

Need Manipulation (Study 1)[6]

In Malawi, Africa, coffee is purchased from producers at *extremely* (**relatively**) low prices. The amount paid for the coffee does not provide adequate income for producers to *support the production of the coffee itself, themselves, or their families* (**live in the comfort they should**). Because coffee growers are not receiving a fair price for their products, this has *created severe problems for coffee producers, such as poverty, sickness, and suffering* (**this has created some degree of challenge for the coffee producers**).

This situation has led to *extreme levels of starvation, social unrest, and unsuitable living conditions in the area* (**moderate levels of poverty and uncomfortable living conditions in the area**). Because coffee growers are not receiving a fair price for their products, *they and their families are forced to starve and forgo other necessities, such as education and medical care. These unjust conditions by far fail to meet even the most basic standards for human rights and fairness and have left the country's people in the most perilous state imaginable. Thus, the need for help in this area is extremely severe* (**they and their families must make due with less income. These conditions fail to meet these individuals' desires and have left the country's people in an uncomfortable situation. Thus, there is some need for help in this area**). Coffee producer Bagatunde Obunfuwora describes the situation [translated]:

We just can't survive. I do everything I can, but my children are starving and none of them have been to school at all. My son, Ngozi, is suffering terribly from malnutrition and there is no end in sight. (**We struggle to get by. I do everything I can, but my children are not as well-educated and as well-fed as I would like.**)

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[6]The high need condition is in italics, and the moderate need condition is in boldface.

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