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The Gudjonsson Blame Attribution Inventory - Revised (GBAI-R) is a self-reported measure of an individual’s blame attribution. Blame attribution refers to the process of attempting to construct causal explanations for behaviours displayed by themselves and others.

The GBAI-R is specifically designed for use with offenders and frames the statements in relation to the attribution of their previously committed crime(s). The inventory measures three factors: mental element attribution (i.e. blaming responsibility for the crime on mental illness or poor self-control), external attribution (i.e. blaming the crime on social circumstances, victims, or society), and guilt feeling attribution (i.e. feelings of regret and remorse concerning the offence). Comparing an individual offender’s score on each of these three factors with the appropriate normative scores allows for a profile of their blame attribution type to be created.
The Gudjonsson Blame Attribution Inventory (GBAI) was developed by Professor Gisli Gudjonsson (1984) as an easy to administer measure that assessed offenders’ attributions for their crime. Literature and theory recognises two distinct types of attribution, internal-external and self-control/freedom to act (Snyder, 1976), of which both were incorporated into the development of this scale. In addition, items relating to feelings of guilt were included as guilt and self-blame typically impact on an individual’s attribution of blame and responsibility for a negative event. It has a ‘true’ versus ‘false’ response format.

Forty-eight items were derived from attribution theory and considered contextually relevant for use in the GBAI. The factor structure, factor scores and reliability coefficients of the GBAI with a sample of 224 subjects who had committed criminal offences is reported by Gudjonsson (1984). Three major factors representing the three theorised types of attribution emerged, each with good test-retest reliability ($r = 0.73$, 0.85, and 0.78 for mental element, external, and guilt attributions, respectively).

The GBAI was later revised (GBAI-R; Gudjonsson & Singh, 1989) due to two weaknesses identified in the original scale. The original items were both specific and general, with some relating to their most recent crime whilst others enquired about general attitudes, limiting its use as a measure of attribution of a particular crime. In addition, two of the factors consisted of purely positive loadings, increasing the chance of a response bias. These weaknesses were addressed in the revised version, resulting in a 42 item measure consisting of three factors closely resembling those of the original scale. The three scales have satisfactory test-retest reliability and internal consistency (Cima et al., 2007; Dolan, 1995; Fox et al. 2003). Table 1 provides a summary of the three GBAI-R factors and the final items included in each.
Table 1: Gudjonsson Blame Attribution Inventory - Revised factor items (* = items endorsed as ‘false’, so scoring is reversed).

**Guilt Factor – Extent to which individuals feel shame and remorse for the crime (18 items):**

1) I feel very ashamed of the crime(s) I committed.
4) I am constantly troubled by my conscience for the crime(s) I committed.
5) I will never forgive myself for the crime(s) I committed.
6)* I feel no remorse or guilt for the crime(s) I committed.
8) It is definitely not in my nature to commit crimes.
13) The crime(s) I committed was very much out of character.
14) I hate myself for the crime(s) I committed.
22)* I would have been better off if I had not been caught.
23) I constantly have the urge to punish myself for the crime(s) I committed.
24) I fear that people will never accept me because of the crime(s) I committed.
27)* I have no need to feel ashamed of what I did.
28)* I feel annoyed that I was caught.
30)* There is no such thing as an innocent victim in my case.
34)* I should not punish myself for what I did.
35) I deserve to be severely punished for the crime(s) I committed.
37)* I have no serious regrets about what I did.
39) I would very much like to make amends for what I did.
40) I sometimes have nightmares about the crime(s) I committed.

**External Factor – Extent to which individuals blame the victims or society for their crime (15 items):**

2)* I am entirely to blame for my crime(s).
3) I did not deserve to get caught for the crime(s) I committed.
7)* I am responsible for my criminal act(s).
9) I should not blame myself for the crime(s) I committed.
12)* I should not blame other people for my crime(s).
15) Society is to blame for the crime(s) I committed.
16) I should not be punished for what I did.
18) In my case the victim(s) was largely to blame for my crime(s).
19) I would not have committed any crime(s) if I had not been seriously provoked by the victim(s)/society.
21)* I deserved to be caught for what I did.
26)* I was in no way provoked into committing a crime.
31) Other people are to blame for my crime(s).
32) I could have avoided getting into trouble.
33) I had very good reasons for committing the crime(s) I did.
42)* I have no excuse for the crime(s) I committed.

**Mental Element Factor – Extent to which individuals state they had no mental control (9 items):**

10)* At the time of the crime(s) I was fully aware of what I was doing.
11) I would not have committed the crime(s) I did if I had not lost control of myself.
17)* I was feeling no different to usual at the time of the crime(s).
20) What I did was beyond my control.
25) I was very depressed when I committed the crime(s).
29) I must have been crazy to commit the crime(s) I did.
36) I would certainly not have committed the crime(s) I did if I had been mentally well.
38) I was under a great deal of stress/pressure when I committed the crime(s).
41)* I was in full control of my actions.
Description of the Sample

Four groups were compared based on their category of offence (Gudjonsson & Singh, 1988). The sample consisted of 176 individuals, 37 were forensic patients at the Maudsley and Bethlem Royal Hospitals and the remaining 139 were from Grendon Psychiatric Prison. All participants had a criminal history and were categorised into the following four groups based on the type of offence committed prior to the current admission to hospital or prison. The sample was predominately male with a mean age of 29 years (SD = 7.8).

Group 1) N=49 - Violent offence (e.g. homicide, attempted homicide, grievous bodily harm, actual bodily harm, wounding with intent)
Group 2) N=47 - Sexual offence (e.g. rape, indecent assault, buggery, unlawful sexual intercourse)
Group 3) N=50 - Property offence (e.g. theft, burglary, robbery)
Group 4) N=25 - Other offence (e.g. drug offences, blackmail, kidnapping, conspiracy)

Mean and Standard Deviation Scores

Table 2 displays the mean scores and standard deviations for the four groups on each of the three GBAI-R factors. Analysis of variance was performed to compare differences between the four groups on each of the three factors. Highly significant differences were found for the guilt and mental element attributions. Those who had committed a sexual or violent offence had the highest guilt scores, and those who had committed a violent offence had the highest mental element attribution scores, followed by those with a sexual offence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Guilt Mean</th>
<th>Guilt S.D.</th>
<th>Mental Element Mean</th>
<th>Mental Element S.D.</th>
<th>External Mean</th>
<th>External S.D.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Violent</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Administration

Instructions

A copy of the 42-item GBAI-R is provided in the Appendix. It can be administered either individually or in a group setting. The instructions are provided at the top of the GBAI-R and read:

“Below are a number of statements related to the crime(s) you committed. Please read each item carefully and decide whether the statement is TRUE or FALSE as it applies to you personally. If the statement is true as applies to you then circle True; and if it is false as applied to you then circle False.”

The participant is asked to write the type of offence they committed in the appropriate box on the questionnaire. This would normally be the current (‘index’) offence, but may in certain circumstances apply to a previous offence and/or cover several offences.

In cases of literacy problems, the items may need to be read out to the participant and in some instances explained. The GBAI-R is not suitable for people with an intellectual disability or in the case of children (i.e. those below the age of 17). It can be used for both males and females, although the normative data and most of the research studies have focused predominantly on males.

If participants wish to change their original response, they should be asked to place an “X” through the original response and then tick the correct response.

Scoring

The scoring overlays for each of the three scales are provided in the Appendix. To optimise use, these can be photocopied onto transparency film. Each item endorsed that falls in the blank box is counted and added to make up a total score for that scale. Higher scores represent greater attribution of blame to the respective factor.

Interpretation

For clinical purposes, the attribution style of the participant can be commented on in terms of whether or not the scores obtained are similar to that of offence type norms provided in Table 2. As a rule of thumb, one standard deviation below or above the mean are worth commenting on as differing moderately from the norm.
Gudjonsson and Young (2007) argue that the way offenders attribute blame for their offending is a key factor to be addressed in offence-related work. External attribution of blame is most strongly associated with personality disorder and antisocial personality traits (Dolan, 1995; Gudjonsson, 1997; 1999) and psychopathy (Batson et al., 2010). Mental element attribution, in contrast, is more associated with anxiety, and feelings of guilt with introversion and anxiety (Gudjonsson, 1997).

Gudjonsson (1990) found that among 25 imprisoned sex offenders there was a strong relationship between external attribution and cognitive dissertations with a large effect size. Blumenthal et al (1999) found that those sex offenders who offended against adults had the highest level of external attribution, whereas those offending against children had the strongest guilt feeling attribution. Mental element attribution was associated with alcohol intoxication during the commission of the offence.

One study (Weizmann-Henelius et al., 2002) focused exclusively on violent female offenders and found that mental element attribution was related to a ‘borderline defence style’ and guilt feeling attribution to a ‘neurotic defence style’. External attribution was not found to be related to any of the defence styles.

In a recent study of mentally disordered offenders, Young et al. (2015) found that reported remorse for an index offence, as measured by the GBAI-R, was significantly correlated with both cognitive and affective empathy on a new victim empathy measure (VERA-2) that had nothing to do with their own index offence. This has both theoretical and clinical relevance and suggests that the capacity for empathy is a prerequisite to feelings of remorse. Young and her colleagues suggest that improving capacity for empathy may increase feelings of remorse. This has implications for empathy training and the current Government focus on restorative justice.
References and publications relevant to the GBAI-R


Appendix
Below are a number of statements related to the crime(s) you committed. Please read each item carefully and decide whether the statement is TRUE or FALSE as it applies to you personally. If the statement is true as applies to you then circle True; and if it is false as applied to you then circle False.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>I feel very ashamed of the crime(s) I committed.</td>
<td>True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>I am entirely to blame for my crime(s).</td>
<td>True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>I did not deserve to get caught for the crime(s) I committed.</td>
<td>True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>I am constantly troubled by my conscience for the crime(s) I committed.</td>
<td>True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>I will never forgive myself for the crime(s) I committed.</td>
<td>True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>I feel no remorse or guilt for the crime(s) I committed.</td>
<td>True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>I am responsible for my criminal act(s).</td>
<td>True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>It is definitely not in my nature to commit crimes.</td>
<td>True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>I should not blame myself for the crime(s) I committed.</td>
<td>True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>At the time of the crime(s) I was fully aware of what I was doing.</td>
<td>True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>I would not have committed the crime(s) I did if I had not lost control of myself.</td>
<td>True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>I should not blame other people for my crime(s).</td>
<td>True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>The crime(s) I committed was very much out of character.</td>
<td>True</td>
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<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>I hate myself for the crime(s) I committed.</td>
<td>True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Society is to blame for the crime(s) I committed.</td>
<td>True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>I should not be punished for what I did.</td>
<td>True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>I was feeling no different to usual at the time of the crime(s).</td>
<td>True</td>
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<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>In my case the victim(s) was largely to blame for my crime(s).</td>
<td>True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>I would not have committed any crime(s) if I had not been seriously provoked by the victim(s)/society</td>
<td>True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>What I did was beyond my control.</td>
<td>True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>I deserved to be caught for what I did.</td>
<td>True</td>
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<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>I would have been better off if I had not been caught.</td>
<td>True</td>
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<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>I constantly have the urge to punish myself for the crime(s) I committed.</td>
<td>True</td>
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<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>I fear that people will never accept me because of the crime(s) I committed.</td>
<td>True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>I was very depressed when I committed the crime(s).</td>
<td>True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>I was in no way provoked into committing a crime.</td>
<td>True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>I have no need to feel ashamed of what I did.</td>
<td>True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.</td>
<td>I feel annoyed that I was caught.</td>
<td>True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>I must have been crazy to commit the crime(s) I did.</td>
<td>True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.</td>
<td>There is no such thing as an innocent victim in my case.</td>
<td>True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31.</td>
<td>Other people are to blame for my crime(s).</td>
<td>True</td>
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<tr>
<td>32.</td>
<td>I could have avoided getting into trouble.</td>
<td>True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33.</td>
<td>I had very good reasons for committing the crime(s) I did.</td>
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<td>34.</td>
<td>I should not punish myself for what I did.</td>
<td>True</td>
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<td>35.</td>
<td>I deserve to be severely punished for the crime(s) I committed.</td>
<td>True</td>
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<tr>
<td>36.</td>
<td>I would certainly not have committed the crime(s) I did if I had been mentally well.</td>
<td>True</td>
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<tr>
<td>37.</td>
<td>I have no serious regrets about what I did.</td>
<td>True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38.</td>
<td>I was under a great deal of stress/pressure when I committed the crime(s).</td>
<td>True</td>
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<tr>
<td>39.</td>
<td>I would very much like to make amends for what I did.</td>
<td>True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40.</td>
<td>I sometimes have nightmares about the crime(s) I committed.</td>
<td>True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41.</td>
<td>I was in full control of my actions.</td>
<td>True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42.</td>
<td>I have no excuse for the crime(s) I committed.</td>
<td>True</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Scoring:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>G</th>
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Mental Element Factor

Once overlaying the questionnaire correctly, score by awarding 1 point for each item endorsed (circled or ticked) that falls within the blank boxes. Place the final Mental Element Factor score in the score box labelled ‘M’.
External Factor

Once overlaying the questionnaire correctly, score by awarding 1 point for each item endorsed (circled or ticked) that falls within the blank boxes. Place the final External Factor score in the score box labelled ‘E’
Guilt Factor

Once overlaying the questionnaire correctly, score by awarding 1 point for each item endorsed (circled or ticked) that falls within the blank boxes. Place the final Guilt Factor score in the score box labelled ‘G’.

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