“Eye for an Eye” or “Turn the Other Cheek?” Exploring the Moderating Roles of Revenge and Forgiveness when Examining Death Penalty Support and Religious Fundamentalism

William Howard Whited

Follow this and additional works at: https://aquila.usm.edu/dissertations

Part of the Other Legal Studies Commons, Psychology Commons, and the Social Psychology and Interaction Commons

Recommended Citation
Whited, William Howard, ““Eye for an Eye” or “Turn the Other Cheek?” Exploring the Moderating Roles of Revenge and Forgiveness when Examining Death Penalty Support and Religious Fundamentalism” (2016). Dissertations. 124.
https://aquila.usm.edu/dissertations/124

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by The Aquila Digital Community. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations by an authorized administrator of The Aquila Digital Community. For more information, please contact Joshua.Cromwell@usm.edu.
“EYE FOR AN EYE” OR “TURN THE OTHER CHEEK?”
EXPLORING THE MODERATING ROLES OF REVENGE AND FORGIVENESS
WHEN EXAMINING DEATH PENALTY SUPPORT AND
RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM

by

William Howard Whited

Abstract of a Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
of The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

August 2016
ABSTRACT

“EYE FOR AN EYE” OR “TURN THE OTHER CHEEK?”
EXPLORING THE MODERATING ROLES OF REVENGE AND FORGIVENESS
WHEN EXAMINING DEATH PENALTY SUPPORT AND
RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM

by William Howard Whited

August 2016

Public attitudes towards the death penalty appear to influence the usage of legislative policies about this highly debated sanction in the United States. However, existing ways of measuring public opinion about the death penalty are limited in the information that they provide. As such, one purpose of the study was to further develop the Revised Attitudes towards the Death Penalty Scale (RATDP), an instrument that measures level of support for the death penalty and is inclusive of the rationales that both proponents and opponents use to justify their stance. Support for a five-factor structure of the RATDP was found in an exploratory factor analysis of an American non-student sample ($N = 401$) and then replicated in two separate confirmatory factor analyses utilizing non-student ($N = 357$) and student ($N = 460$) data. Initial evidence for the RATDP’s reliability and validity was also found, particularly among non-students. The study also further assessed the relationship between religious fundamentalism and death penalty support, as well as the moderating influence of forgiveness and revenge in this relationship in both samples of American non-students ($N = 347$) and students ($N = 380$). Forgiveness and revenge were not found to moderate the relationship between religious fundamentalism and death penalty support for either sample. However, religious
fundamentalism, forgiveness, and revenge all predicted level of death penalty support among both non-students and students. The implications of conceptualizing death penalty attitudes as a multifaceted construct that is associated with multiple variables (e.g., religious fundamentalism, revenge, forgiveness) are discussed in terms of future research and jury selection in capital cases.
COPYRIGHT BY
WILLIAM HOWARD WHITED
2016
“EYE FOR AN EYE” OR “TURN THE OTHER CHEEK?”

EXPLORING THE MODERATING ROLES OF REVENGE AND FORGIVENESS
WHEN EXAMINING DEATH PENALTY SUPPORT AND
RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM

by

William Howard Whited

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
and the Department of Psychology
at The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Approved:

______________________________________________
Dr. Jon T. Mandracchia, Committee Chair
Assistant Professor, Psychology

______________________________________________
Dr. Eric R. Dahlen, Committee Member
Associate Professor, Psychology

______________________________________________
Dr. Emily B. Yowell, Committee Member
Assistant Professor, Psychology

______________________________________________
Dr. Melanie Leuty-Blackwell, Committee Member
Assistant Professor, Psychology

______________________________________________
Dr. Karen S. Coats
Dean of the Graduate School

August 2016
DEDICATION

I am tremendously grateful to the support and encouragement I received from my parents and their constant support for my academic endeavors, even when it meant that I would need to move far from home. I also thank the many other family members and friends who constantly reminded me that they believed in my abilities and knew that I could reach my academic aspirations. Finally, I cannot thank my wife, Bethany, enough for the support she gave me while I completed this dissertation. The unwavering encouragement you provided helped sustain my progress on this project, especially during those instances when procrastination was a more appealing option. I could not have done this without you.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge and extend my appreciation to the members of my dissertation committee, including Dr. Eric Dahlen, Dr. Melanie Leuty-Blackwell, and Dr. Emily Yowell. The valuable feedback and contributions you each provided throughout the proposal and defense process have strengthened the quality of this research. Additionally, I would like to thank Dr. Jon Mandracchia, the chair of my dissertation committee and my mentor. You have been immensely helpful to me throughout this process, both in terms of project development as well as enhancing my internal motivation to maintain my writing goals. Your research savvy, words of encouragement, scientific writing skills, and availability have greatly facilitated my efforts. You have made this project, and more importantly, my graduate training and professional development a priority, and I am grateful. Finally, I would like to voice my appreciation for the support, guidance, and quality feedback I received throughout the duration of this project from members of my research team, particularly David Gavel and Rose Gonzalez, for their help in the formulation of this project.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....................................................................................................................ii

DEDICATION ..................................................................................................................iv

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ...............................................................................................v

LIST OF TABLES ..........................................................................................................vii

CHAPTER

I. INTRODUCTION ........................................................................................................1
   Purpose of the Study
   Research Questions

II. METHODOLOGY .....................................................................................................29
   Participants
   Measures
   Procedures
   Research Questions and Hypotheses

III. RESULTS ..............................................................................................................50
   Preliminary Analyses
   Primary Statistical Analyses

IV. DISCUSSION .........................................................................................................80
   Summary of Results
   Research Implications
   Implications for Jury Selection and Capital Murder Cases
   Limitations and Future Directions
   Conclusion

APPENDICES ............................................................................................................107

REFERENCES ............................................................................................................131
LIST OF TABLES

Table

1. Frequencies of Non-Student and Student Participants by Demographic Category .................................................................30

2. Comparison of Gender, Race, Region of Residence, and Age between the Current Study’s Non-Student Participants and the 2010 U.S. Population .................33

3. Comparison of Means for Measures in Non-Student and Student Samples ..........51

4. Summary of Intercorrelations for the Total Scores of the Study Variables ..........53

5. Initial Eigenvalues and Explained Variance from a Primary Factor Analysis of the Revised Attitudes Towards the Death Penalty Scale (RATDP) ..................56

6. Item Communalities and Pattern Matrix of Factor Loadings for the Five-Factor Model of the RATDP ..................................................................................58

7. Completely Standardized Loadings of Items on Factors for Non-Student and Student Samples ..............................................................................................65

8. Invariance Testing Review .................................................................................................................................................68

9. Internal Consistency for the RATDP Total Score and Each of the Five Factors Extracted ........................................................................................................69

10. Correlations between RATDP Total and Factor Scores and DPS Factor Scores in a Non-Student Sample ........................................................................71

11. Correlations between RATDP Total and Factor Scores and DPS Factor Scores in a Student Sample ......................................................................................72

12. Summary of Moderated Multiple Regression for Religious Fundamentalism and Forgiveness Predicting Level of Support for the Death Penalty in Non-Student and Student Samples ..........................................................75

13. Summary of Moderated Multiple Regression for Religious Fundamentalism and Revenge Predicting Level of Support for the Death Penalty in Non-Student and Student Samples .................................................................77

14. Summary of Sequential Regression Analyses for Forgiveness and Revenge Predicting Level of Support for the Death Penalty in Non-Student and Student Samples .............................................................................79
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Capital punishment continues to be a highly salient and hotly contested moral and political issue in the United States. Recent findings from large-scale political surveys indicate that the majority of Americans (i.e., 63% from Gallup poll, 56% from Pew survey; Jones, 2014; Pew Research Center, 2015) continue to support the general use of the death penalty; however, death penalty support has gradually decreased since its peak of 80% in 1994 and is currently at its lowest level of support since the 1970s. It is often remarked that popular public support of the death penalty is likely necessary for its continued use in the United States (Ellsworth & Gross, 1994), particularly considering that public support for the sanction was at its lowest level in the United States around the time when the Supreme Court ruled that all death penalty sentences that existed at that time were unconstitutional (i.e., Furman v. Georgia, 1972). However, majority support, in and of itself, may not be sufficient to retain the sanction given other countries’ eradication of the death penalty despite popular public support (Zimring & Hawkins, 1986). Simply put, the steady decrease in the public’s general support of the death penalty over the past several decades may be consequential to the sanction’s legislative status in America and merits a need for the continued research of attitudes towards the death penalty.

Measurement of the public’s general support for the death penalty has been traditionally achieved through the use of large scale political polls and social research surveys, such as the aforementioned Pew and Gallup polls. In these surveys, participants are typically asked a single question to measure their overall attitude towards the death penalty, such as “Are you in favor of the death penalty for a person convicted of
murder?” used by the Gallup poll, or “Do you strongly favor, favor, oppose, or strongly oppose the death penalty for persons convicted of murder?” used by the Pew survey. Response options given to participants are typically limited to only a handful of choices (e.g., “favor,” “oppose,” or “don’t know”). Although some researchers advocate for the usage of this question to monitor overall trends in the public’s “global” belief in capital punishment (Moon, Wright, Cullen, & Fisher, 2000), there have been a variety of longstanding and outspoken critics of the usage of this ‘pro/con’ question (Ellsworth & Gross, 1994; Harris, 1986; Vidmar & Ellsworth, 1974; Wallace, 1989). For example, Ellsworth and Gross (1994) notably stated that “Answers to this kind of question tell us little about what people think or feel or notice—why do they support or oppose capital punishment, what they know about it, how and to whom they believe it should be applied, how this attitude is related to their behavior or to other attitudes” (p. 21). In other words, the simplicity of the standard question format stifles the acquisition of rich information about one’s stance on and knowledge about the death penalty.

Moreover, recent studies suggest that having a general support for the death penalty is far different than endorsing the utilization of the sanction over other viable alternatives, such as life imprisonment. In one of the most comprehensive large-scale surveys on the public’s opinion towards the death penalty, 61% of registered voters polled reported that they preferred another sentence besides the death penalty for those convicted of murder, including life imprisonment without parole and victim restitution (39%), life imprisonment without parole (13%), and life imprisonment with the possibility of parole (9%; Death Penalty Information Center, 2010). These findings, suggesting that more individuals prefer an alternative sanction than capital punishment,
are replications of multiple other studies (e.g., Bowers, 1993; Bowers & Steiner, 1998; Bowers, Vandiver, & Dugan, 1994; Dieter, 1993; Sandys & McGarrell, 1995).

Niven (2002) further suggested that the media is “bolstering an illusory majority” by its portrayal of the findings of surveys using the standard, single question to suggest that the death penalty is “indisputably favored” by the majority of Americans when other research asking more comprehensive questions, including the aforementioned studies, indicates that the death penalty is not the preferred sentence for murderers. In an experiment, Niven found that a group of participants who read a more “realistic” account of the public’s attitude towards the death penalty (i.e., article stating that more Americans prefer a sanction of life imprisonment without parole in addition to financial restitution to the victim’s family than the death penalty) were less supportive of the sanction and believed the sanction would be used less in the next 20 years when compared to participants who read typical media coverage of the death penalty or those in a control group (i.e., read an article on an unrelated topic; Niven, 2002).

Additionally, Murray (2003) found that participants tend to be less supportive of the death penalty after asking participants a series of questions (versus using a single item), including if they would support applying the death penalty to a variety of specific situations (e.g., the defendant was a woman or juvenile, murdered someone during a robbery, committed an act of terrorism, suffered extensive child abuse) and if they would support the commutation of a death penalty sentence under several additional considerations (e.g., existence of credible evidence suggesting innocence of defendant, defendant undergoes a religious conversion, defendant displays remorse). Murray (2003) opined that only a multiple-question format can accurately gauge the circumstances in
which a person may or may not endorse support for the death penalty. Taken together, these studies indicate that the standard single-item approach to measuring the death penalty lacks validity, erroneously implies that a majority of individuals prefer the death penalty, and supports the usage of a multiple-item measure of death penalty attitudes that captures the nuanced and contextual nature of the construct.

Generally speaking, the existing multiple-item death penalty measures are few, dated, and tend to have poor psychometric properties. By way of example, Thurstone’s 25-item Attitudes Towards Capital Punishment Scale (Peterson, 1933) has been rarely used in death penalty literature and its item content consists of statements regarding general support and opposition of the death penalty. For this measure, respondents are only given two response options for each item (i.e., agree, disagree). Internal consistency for the measure appears to be in the low to adequate range (α = .59 - .88), depending on the study (Shaw & Wright, 1967). Some support has been found for its convergent validity (e.g., moderate correlation with Thurstone’s Attitude toward Punishment of Criminal Scale). Subsequently, both Andrich (1988) and Balogh and Mueller (1960) developed additional measures of death penalty attitudes. The authors of both measures replicated Thurstone’s agree/disagree response option; however, the item content of their measures also included topics of deterrence and rehabilitation. Limited support has been found for the reliability or validity of these measures (O’Neil, Patry, & Penrod, 2004; Shaw & Wright, 1967).

O’Neil et al. (2004) provided a measure of death penalty attitudes that, when compared to the aforementioned measures, appears to have remarkably stronger psychometric properties. They developed the Death Penalty Scale (DPS), a 15-item
measure with 5 underlying factors (i.e., General Support, Retribution and Revenge, Death Penalty is a Deterrent, Death Penalty is Cheaper, and Life Without Parole Allows Parole). They found support for convergent and divergent validity as well as generally adequate internal consistency ($\alpha = .87, .75, .85, .89, \& .69$, respectively) for each factor. Support for predictive validity was also found for the general support factor. However, although the measure’s item content included several items reflecting common rationales that supporters of the death penalty use (e.g., the cost-effectiveness of the death penalty as compared to life without parole), it neglected mention of the common rationales used by opponents of the death penalty (e.g., sanction is “uncivilized,” devalues worth of human life, brutalization effect, unequal sentencing of minorities).

Considering the need for an updated measure of death penalty attitudes that includes item content reflecting the arguments of both proponents and opponents of the death penalty, Whited, Mandracchia, and Bennet (2014) sought to examine the factor structure and psychometric properties of an existing, but underdeveloped and unpublished death penalty attitudes measure: the Attitudes towards the Death Penalty Scale (ATDP; Hingula & Wrightsman, 2002). Data were obtained in two phases from undergraduate students attending a university located in a southern region of the United States.

In phase one, the data from 311 participants were analyzed in an exploratory factor analysis (principal factor analysis extraction method, oblique rotation). This analysis yielded a five-factor model and 7 of the initial 23 items were removed due to poor loading or double-loading on the factors. Factors included: Sentencing Disputes (4 items related to typical issues involved in death penalty sentencing, e.g., appeals, judicial
recommendation), Sanction Exceptions (4 items concerning situations or types of defendants that can be exempt from receiving a death penalty sentence, e.g., defendants with a cognitive impairment), Crime Control (3 items involving the utility of the death penalty to serve as a deterrent or in an incapacitation function), Opposition Concerns (3 items reflecting common rationales that death penalty opponents use to justify their stance), and Gender Equality (2 items suggesting that the utilization of the death penalty should be the same across genders). In general, however, the internal consistency of several factors was fairly low (α = .60, .58, .79, .70, .60, respectively).

In phase two of the study, a confirmatory factor analysis was run on data collected from an additional 341 participants to further explore the proposed 5-factor model of the ATDP and identify other issues that could be revised or further developed with this scale. The confirmatory factor analysis was performed using a maximum-likelihood estimated method. Fit indices of the proposed 5 factor model were indicative of a poor fit with the chi-square ($\chi^2 = 260.287 \ [df = 94; p < .0001]$) and NFI (.802), a marginally adequate fit with the CFI (.859), and a reasonable fit with the RMSEA (.072; 90% CI = .062-.083). Two items were also identified as loading poorly onto their respective factor. Given the relatively poor fit of the model as indicated by several fit indices, the poor internal consistency of the factors noted in the first phase, and the poor loadings of several items onto their factor, Whited et al. (2014) noted that additional item and factor development is warranted prior to the use of the ATDP in research settings.

It is evident that contemporaneous measures of death penalty attitudes, such as the DPS and ATDP, have become more complex and multifaceted than the traditional single-item measures commonly used in political polls. The trend towards a more
comprehensive approach to measuring death penalty attitudes may be due, in part, to the oversimplification of a single-item measure: people give a wide variety of rationales to justify their stance on capital punishment. More specifically, because people with the same ‘pro’ or ‘anti’ stance often rely on vastly different justifications for their stance, a single item cannot adequately depict attitudes towards the death penalty. As such, a thorough exploration of the underlying factors that inform or provide the basis for one’s level of support for the death penalty is necessary to gather valuable information about the public’s support for the death penalty.

Given the lengthy history of public polling about the death penalty in the United States, interestingly, the underlying rationales of one’s death penalty stance had not been researched until the 1970s (Ellsworth & Gross, 1994). Research conducted since that time indicates that an individual’s stance on the death penalty may be founded on a variety of different rationales. Furthermore, the common underlying rationales used by both proponents and opponents have begun to change within the last 20 to 30 years (Radelet & Borg, 2000). For example, the argument of deterrence, or the notion that the usage of capital punishment prevents would-be murderers from committing murder, was once the most common reason given by death penalty supporters to justify their position (Thomas, 1977; Thomas & Foster, 1975; Vidmar, 1974; Vidmar & Ellsworth, 1974). However, the propagation of recent studies demonstrating that the usage of capital punishment does not lower crime or murder rates (see, e.g., Bailey, 1990; Kovandzic & Vieraitis, 2009) as well as the rejection of the deterrence argument by an overwhelming number of experts in criminology (see e.g., Radelet & Akers, 1996; Radelet & Lacock, 2009) appears to have prompted a decrease in the usage of this rationale by some
proponents of the death penalty. Interestingly, at a time when deterrence was still frequently cited as a top rationale among death penalty supporters, Ellsworth and Ross (1983) found that most proponents would still maintain their support of the sanction, even if it was found that life imprisonment had an equal deterrent utility. Similarly, most death penalty opponents would also maintain their position, even if there was overwhelming evidence to suggest that it was more of a deterrent than life imprisonment (Ellsworth & Ross, 1983). These studies indicate that besides deterrence, there are more salient underlying arguments that are used to justify one’s level of death penalty support.

Besides deterrence, supporters of the death penalty use other instrumental or utilitarian rationales to justify their stance, including incapacitation (i.e., prevention of the convicted murderer from committing future serious criminal offences), maintenance of law and order, and cost (e.g., supposing that the completion of a death sentence is less costly than life imprisonment without parole; Ellsworth & Gross, 1994; Lambert, Clarke, & Lambert, 2004; Radelet & Borg, 2000; Tyler & Weber, 1982; Whitehead & Blankenship, 2000). It appears that these rationales, while still sometimes referenced by death penalty supporters, are no longer as frequently endorsed as they were previously to justify their pro-death penalty stance (Radelet & Borg, 2000). This could be due to research findings that fail to provide empirical support for the benefits of incapacitation (e.g., finding that risk of repeat murder is low once released, convicted murderers exhibit lower rates of recidivism than other released felony offenders; Bendau, 1997; Marquart & Sorensen, 1989; Stanton, 1969) and firmly establishing the notion that the cost of completing a death sentence far exceeds the cost of life imprisonment without parole.
(e.g., Dieter, 1992, 2009; Bohm, 1998; Spangenberg & Walsh, 1989). Instead, it seems that the argument of retribution has begun to take center stage.

Retribution is typically defined as the idea that criminals deserve to be punished in a manner proportional to their crime (Gerber & Jackson, 2013). In other words, according to the notion of retribution, “justice is restored” when an offender receives a punishment that is proportionate to the amount of suffering and injustice that their crime caused (p. 256; Okimoto, Wenzel, & Feather, 2012). Retribution was once touted as a less socially permissible or legitimate rationale for death penalty supporters to endorse than other strictly pragmatic and non-emotionally laden reasons (e.g., deterrence; Thomas & Foster, 1975; Vidmar & Ellsworth, 1974); however, retribution now appears to be much more socially acceptable and has been opined to be the “most important contemporary pro-death argument” (Radelet & Borg, 2000; p. 52). The argument of retribution has been connected with support for the death penalty in numerous studies (e.g., Baker, Lambert, & Jenkins, 2005; Ellsworth & Gross, 1994; Ellsworth & Ross, 1983; Firment & Geiselman, 1997; Lambert, Clarke, & Lambert, 2004; O’Neil et al., 2004; Schadt & DeLisi, 2007; Tyler & Weber, 1982). Although retribution is commonly conceptualized as a pragmatic manner of maintaining order and restoring balance, there appears to be a darker, vengeful, and more emotionally-laden component of the retribution argument.

First proposed by von Hirsch (1976), there appear to be two dimensions of a retributive justice orientation that are cited in the literature: “just deserts” and revenge. The “just deserts” dimension of retribution follows the previously described and common understanding of retribution; that is, the administration of a proportional punishment to
the offender that is purposed to restore balance. On the other hand, in “retribution as revenge,” punishment is administered not only just for the purpose of restoring a sense of balance, but also for exacting retaliation on the offender (von Hirsh, 1976). Individuals endorsing revenge as the manner in which they believe justice should be served may take emotional pleasure in seeing the offender suffer and may advocate for offenders’ receipt of punishments that are disproportionately harsh relative to the severity of their wrongdoing (Finckenauer, 1988). Gerber and Jackson (2013) found that the endorsement of the “revenge” dimension was positively correlated with right-wing authoritarianism and group-based dominance (i.e., preference of one’s in-group to dominate over a defined out-group) and predicted the support of harsher sentences and denial of due process rights. In sum, it appears that death penalty proponents have recently decreased utilization of instrumental rationales (e.g., deterrence, incapacitation, cost) but have instead utilized more emotionally laden reasoning (e.g., retribution, revenge) to explain their stances.

Similarly, opponents of the death penalty also appear to use both instrumental and symbolic (i.e., based on emotions and ideological self-image) arguments as justification for their disapproval of the sanction (Ellsworth & Gross, 1994; Tyler & Weber, 1982). Specifically, common rationales used by death penalty opponents include that the enforcement of the sanction is cruel, immoral, and/or uncivilized, does not permit rehabilitation of offenders, is unfairly dispersed (e.g., disproportionately higher when defendants are a racial minority and/or poor, and cases in which there is a White victim), perpetuates a cycle of violence by punishing murder with death (i.e., the brutalization effect), and could lead to the execution of an innocent individual (see, e.g., Baker,
Lambert, & Jenkins, 2005; Ellsworth & Gross, 1994; Firment & Geiselman, 1997; Lambert et al., 2004). Of these rationales, Ellsworth and Gross (1994) suggested that the most salient reasons that underlie abolitionists’ stance are not utilitarian, but rather based on the emotional idea that the death penalty is morally wrong and/or against religious convictions.

Interestingly, both abolitionists and proponents of the death penalty use their religious beliefs or convictions to inform or determine their attitude towards the sentence. For instance, both groups use religious texts and phrases such as “turn the other cheek,” and “eye for an eye” to justify their positions (Cook & Powell, 2003). The common use of religious explanations for death penalty stances has led many researchers to further explore the link between attitudes towards capital punishment and religion. Researchers have found that some religious beliefs (e.g., importance of religion to an individual) and behaviors (e.g., church attendance) are consistently predictive of opposition to the death penalty (Britt, 1998; Grasmick, Cochran, Bursik, & Kimpel, 1993; Grasmick, Davenport, Chamlin, & Bursik, 1992); however, it appears that the vast majority of religious variables (e.g., Biblical literalism, religious activity, being “born again,” adherence to a conservative theology, belief that human nature is corrupt) have consistently been found to be unrelated to death penalty support (see Unnever, Cullen, & Applegate, 2005). Furthermore, some religious variables studied in conjunction with attitudes towards the death penalty have an inconsistent predictive relationship with support for the death penalty in the literature.

One religious variable that has been shown to be inconsistently related to death penalty support is religious fundamentalism. Religious fundamentalism is a construct
that has been frequently examined in the death penalty literature and is of particular interest to researchers due to the increased promotion of instituting punitive correctional policies (including capital punishment) by conservative or “right-wing” religious leaders as a way to enhance society’s moral compass (Unnever, Cullen, & Applegate, 2005).

Religious fundamentalists in the United States are often viewed as a monolithic socio-religious force of conservative Christians that share similarly conservative religious and political beliefs (Ammerman, 1987). Although “fundamentalists” in the United States have mostly been researched within the Christian religion in the death penalty literature, the construct of religious fundamentalism appears to have a much broader conceptualization. Specifically, Altemeyer and Hunsberger (1992) view religious fundamentalism as a global construct that can be present among individuals of any religious background. They define religious fundamentalism as:

The belief that there is one set of religious teachings that clearly contains the fundamental, basic, intrinsic, essential, inerrant truth about humanity and deity; that this essential truth is fundamentally opposed by forces of evil which must be vigorously fought; that this truth must be followed today according to the fundamental, unchangeable practices of the past; and that those who believe and follow these fundamental teachings have a special relationship with the deity. (p. 118)

Heriot (2009) supported this conceptualization of religious fundamentalism and added that fundamentalists appear to have a fear of, feel threatened by, and choose to fight against “modernism.” He also placed a larger emphasis on the social, instead of the individual, belief system and the salience of social phenomena (e.g., in-group vs. out-
group) among fundamentalist groups. More exactly, Kirkpatrick (2005) noted that a
primary characteristic of religious fundamentalism is “establishing and defending a
particular set of beliefs and practices that define an in-group; those failing to accept and
live by these particular standards are assigned to the out-group” (p. 265). Altogether, it
appears that the religious fundamentalists exist within any religion, have a comprehensive
system of religious beliefs that they assume is the absolute and sole truth, are heavily
embedded in their respective faith community (i.e., in-group), and vehemently stand in
opposition of any attempts to stray from traditional religious practices and teachings.

Theoretically, religious fundamentalists are assumed to be supportive of the death
penalty for several reasons, including their tendency to view their god(s) as a harsh,
hierarchical, and punitive deity (Greely, 1995), literal interpretation of punitive scriptures
(e.g., passages such as “Eye for an eye;” Unnever & Cullen, 2006), staunch acceptance of
their religious leaders’ interpretation of scriptures (Ellison & Musick 1993; Grasmick et
al., 1993; Ellison & Sherkat, 1993), and belief that criminal behavior is sinful and
intentionally carried out (i.e., criminal actions are attributed to the perpetrator’s choices,
not considered a product of unfortunate or unfair environmental conditions; Unnever &
Cullen, 2006). Although a theoretical case has been made for religious fundamentalists
to be more supportive of capital punishment than those with more liberal religious
attitudes and beliefs, researchers attempting to empirically examine this relationship have
been hampered by difficulties with operationalizing a definition of religious
fundamentalism.

The majority of research examining religious fundamentalist’s attitudes towards
the death penalty has utilized denominational affiliation as the primary operationalization
strategy for the identification of those adhering to a religious fundamentalist belief system. Specifically, these studies have utilized Smith’s (1990) FUND categorization system to operationalize religious fundamentalism. Smith’s (1990) FUND system organizes approximately 170 Protestant Christian denominations (as well as Judaism and Catholicism) into one of three categories ranging on a continuum from fundamentalism to liberalism (i.e., Fundamentalist, Moderate, Liberal) through the use of several categorization strategies (e.g., utilization of prior classification schemes, membership of denominations in theological movements, surveys of clergy, denominational theological doctrine).

The literature comparing the relationship between the affiliation with a fundamentalist denomination and death penalty support has inconsistent findings. More specifically, fundamentalist denominational affiliation, measured by FUND, positively predicted death penalty support in some studies (Britt, 1998; Grasmick et al., 1993; Unnever, Cullen, & Bartkowski, 2006; Young, 1992). Fundamentalist affiliation has also predicted death penalty support after accounting for covariates in other studies (e.g., race, political conservatism; Britt, 1998; Unnever & Cullen, 2007; Young, 1992). However, many studies have found no statistically significant predictive relationship between the affiliation with a fundamentalist denomination and death penalty support (Baumer, Messner, & Rosenfeld, 2003; Cochran, Boots, & Heide, 2003; Messner, Baumer, & Rosenfeld, 2006; Sandys & McGarrell, 1997; Unnever & Cullen, 2005, 2006; Unnever, Cullen, & Fisher, 2007).

Despite its widespread use by penologists, the employment of FUND as a measure of religious fundamentalism has been widely criticized. Some authors note that
the use of any denominational affiliation categorization system, such as FUND, is not a valid way to measure complex religious constructs (Fulton, 1997; Gorsuch, 1998). This may be due to the noted variation within intradenominational churchgoers’ religious beliefs (Ammerman, 1982; Hunter 1982, 1991). Simply put, a churchgoer’s personal religious beliefs are unlikely to be identical to the teachings and doctrine of their specific denomination. Moreover, several scholars have identified various empirical problems with using the FUND system specifically, including its (a) inflated designation of about 30% of all Americans as belonging to a fundamentalist Christian denomination when “religious fundamentalists” more accurately refers to a small group within the Christian population (Kellstedt & Smidt, 1996) and (b) inclusion of denominations with divergent cultural traditions and political attitudes into the same category (e.g., categorizing both Black Protestant denominations and Evangelical denominations as fundamentalist; Steensland et al., 2000). At best, the use of FUND serves only as an imprecise proxy measure of religious fundamentalism (Applegate, Cullen, Fisher, & Vander Ven, 2000); at worst, FUND is an invalid measure of fundamentalism with inherent weaknesses that severely limits the interpretation, generalizability, and implications of prior significant research findings in which it was employed.

Besides using denominational affiliation, other scholars have operationalized religious fundamentalism by measuring the extent to which individuals agree with fundamentalist beliefs or practices. One such characteristic that fundamentalists are believed to share is perceiving God as a harsh, hierarchical, and punitive deity (e.g., emphasizing descriptions of God as a father, master, judge, and/or king rather than a mother, spouse, lover, and/or friend). There has been some exploration into how the way
Christians perceive the image of God relates to their attitudes towards capital punishment. For instance, Unnever and Cullen (2006) found that individuals who view God as harsh and punitive were significantly more likely to be supportive of the death penalty than their counterparts. More recently, Bader, Desmond, Mencken, and Johnson (2010) found that, after accounting for several other factors, possessing an image of God as a judgmental or angry deity was significantly related to support for the death penalty and shares the strongest association with support for the death penalty. Dissimilarly, however, other investigations have not found a significant relationship between possessing a punitive image of God and supportive attitudes towards the capital punishment (Applegate et al., 2000; Evans & Adams, 2003).

Biblical or scriptural literalism is another aspect of religiosity that has been theoretically and empirically tied to religious fundamentalism in the literature. For example, Unnever and Cullen (2006) found that churchgoers affiliated with fundamentalist denominations were over 4 times more likely to interpret the Bible in a literal fashion than their non-affiliate counterparts. There is some empirical evidence to suggest that biblical literalism is linked with death penalty support (Miller & Hayward, 2008; Stack, 2004; Young, 1992). However, several other studies have failed to find a significant relationship between biblical literalism and support for the death penalty after accounting for a series of covariates (Applegate et al., 2000; Britt, 1998; Sandys & McGarrell, 1997; Unnever, Cullen, & Applegate, 2005; Unnever & Cullen, 2006).

Unique to other measurement approaches for religious fundamentalism, Soss, Langbein, and Metelko (2003) asked participants in their nation-wide study to identify themselves as a religious fundamentalist to explore whether or not these persons were
more supportive of capital punishment; however, they did not find a significant predictive relationship between the two constructs. Using a similar self-identification approach to measure fundamentalism, Vogel and Vogel (2003) found a significant relationship with support for the use of the death penalty with adult offenders, but not juvenile offenders. Finally, Miller and Hayward (2008) operationalized religious fundamentalism by utilizing a short, 6-item measure of “religious orthodoxy” published by Putney and Middleton (1961). Although Miller and Hayward found a positive predictive relationship between higher levels of fundamentalism and death penalty support, several limitations of their fundamentalism measure (e.g., age of measure, lack of strong psychometric properties) hinder the generalizability of their findings.

Generally speaking, no matter how religious fundamentalism is operationalized, there appears to be inconsistent findings regarding the presence (or lack thereof) of a significant relationship between death penalty support and religious fundamentalism. Noticing these discrepancies, Whited, Mandracchia, Mohn, and Dahlen (2014) endeavored to further explore the relationship between death penalty support and religious fundamentalism. They employed a psychometrically-sound instrument of religious fundamentalism (i.e., Revised Religious Fundamentalism Scale [RRF]; Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 2004) and compared its ability to statistically predict level of support for the death penalty with the traditionally utilized, but commonly criticized FUND classification system (Smith, 1990). These authors found that fundamentalist denominational affiliation, as measured by FUND, had a positive predictive relationship with level of support for the death penalty. However, religious fundamentalism, as measured by the RRF, was not statistically predictive of favorable attitudes towards the
death penalty. As such, Whited et al.’s (2014) findings suggested that there are distinct differences between the constructs of fundamentalist denominational affiliation (FUND) and religious fundamentalism that lend additional support to the rendering of FUND an invalid measure of religious fundamentalism.

Moreover, Whited et al. (2014) also agreed with Unnever and Cullen’s (2006) postulation that the inconsistent findings in the extant literature between death penalty support and fundamentalism denomination affiliation may not only be due to measurement error, but could also be due to the conflicting system of beliefs and characteristics within religious fundamentalists. For example, Christian fundamentalists that literally interpret Biblical passages are tasked with the application of seemingly contrasting passages related to the punishment of offenders, such as “Eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth” (Exodus 21:24; Leviticus 24:20; Deuteronomy 19:21, New International Version [NIV]) and “Whoever takes the life of any human being shall be put to death” (Leviticus 24:17, NIV), with other passages including “But, if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins” (Matthew 6:15, NIV) and “Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right check, turn to him the other also” (Romans 12:17, NIV). Consequently, it is not surprising that Unnever and Cullen (2006) found that even though churchgoers of fundamentalist denominations have more pro-punitive characteristics (e.g., conceptualize God as a harsh deity) than affiliates of more liberal denominations, they are also more inclined to possess higher levels of anti-retributive characteristics, such as forgiving and compassionate beliefs. Considering these findings, it is reasonable to suggest some fundamentalists have more pronounced retributive characteristics and are therefore inclined to assert that crime should be dealt
with in a punitive and/or vengeful manner, whereas other fundamentalists have a more pronounced forgiving, rehabilitative, and/or restorative attitudinal stance towards the treatment of offenders. As such, in order to better understand the association between religious fundamentalism and death penalty support, it is essential to consider that the relationship between these constructs may vary as a function of other factors, such as forgiveness and vengeance.

Upon examining the extant literature on the construct of forgiveness, it is evident that there are many working definitions of forgiveness. These varying conceptualizations of forgiveness are sometimes conflicting (e.g., seen as a strength versus a limitation), and the construct of forgiveness is often confused with, or incorrectly believed to be equivalent to, several related yet distinct constructs (e.g., reconciliation, pardoning, excusing, pseudoforgiveness; Enright, 1996; Worthington, 2000). Most researchers, however, consistently adhere to the notion that the trait or behavior of forgiveness is an adaptive coping strategy (e.g., McCullough, 2000), and forgiveness is linked with overall psychological well-being and life satisfaction (e.g., Witvliet, 2001). Forgiveness is generally viewed as a reduction of negative responses (e.g., thoughts, motivations, emotions, and behaviors) towards a transgression along with an installment of neutral or positive responses towards a transgressor (for an extended review of forgiveness definitions, see Worthington, 2000). Thompson et al. (2005) noted that “the source of a transgression, and therefore the object of forgiveness, may be oneself, another person or persons, or a situation that one views as being beyond anyone’s control (e.g., an illness, ‘fate,’ or a natural disaster)” (p. 318). Forgiveness is highly valued in most religions,
including major religions such as Christianity (Marty, 1998), Judaism (Dorff, 1998), Islam (Rye et al., 2000), and Buddhism (Rye et al., 2000).

Several meta-analyses examining research on religion/spirituality and forgiveness have discovered that religion has a small to moderate correlation with forgiveness, depending on how forgiveness is measured (Davis, Worthington, Hook, & Hill, 2013; Fehr, Gelfand, & Nag, 2010; McCullough & Worthington, 1999). More specifically, when measured as a trait or disposition (i.e., a generally pervasive and persistent tendency to be forgiving), forgiveness is moderately correlated with religion or spirituality measures (e.g., $r = .29$; Davis et al., 2013). However, forgiveness has a much weaker correlation (e.g., $r = .15$; Davis et al., 2013) with religion when forgiveness is measured as a state (i.e., how forgiving an individual is towards a specific, identifiable transgressor or transgression at one particular point in time).

Although forgiveness is a construct with an extensive body of literature, there is a shortage of research examining forgiveness in the context of religious fundamentalism. In fact, it appears that only one study (i.e., Brown, Barnes, & Campbell, 2007) has examined these two constructs. In a sample of college students, religious fundamentalism (as measured by the RRF scale) was positively and significantly related to a measure of general attitudes favoring forgiveness (e.g., “I believe that forgiveness is a moral virtue”), even after accounting for gender and religious orthodoxy (Brown et al., 2007). However, religious fundamentalism was not statistically predictive of an individual’s tendency to forgive others that have specifically wronged them (e.g., “When people wrong me, my approach is just to forgive and forget”). Therefore, those with a high level of fundamentalism appeared to desire or have positive attitudes towards
forgiveness, but not necessarily for forgiving specific transgressors. The authors opined that these findings could be due to fundamentalists’ tendency to have a high need for structure and demonstrate cognitive rigidity, traits that have been found to lend themselves well to several potential forgiveness barriers (e.g., simplistic thinking, ambiguity intolerance, negative affectivity; Moskowitz, 1993; Neuberg & Newsom, 1993; Schaller, Boyd, & Yohannes, 1995).

As a second part of their study, Brown et al. (2007) discovered an interesting interaction between intrinsic religiosity (i.e., one’s usage of their religion as the framework by which they live; Allport & Ross, 1967), need for structure, and pro-forgiveness attitudes in a second sample of college students. Namely, they found that individuals with high religiosity and a rigid, structured cognitive style (conceptually descriptive of religious fundamentalists) had especially pronounced attitudes in favor of forgiveness compared to their counterparts (low religiosity individuals with little need for structure). In summary, although there is a dearth of research examining forgiveness within the context of religious fundamentalism, Brown and colleagues’ work provides a glimpse of how two unique characteristics of some fundamentalists (i.e., their rigid cognitive style and need for structure) may cause religious fundamentalism to relate differently to forgiveness attitudes and tendencies than non-fundamentalists without these attributes that still possess a strong intrinsic religiosity.

When considering the relationship between forgiveness and attitudes towards the punishment of criminals, including level of support for capital punishment, it is important to note that forgiveness does not equate to pardoning or freeing an offender from facing consequences from their actions; forgiveness can exist within the context of seeking
justice (Worthington, 2000). Therefore, at least conceptually, the existence of forgiveness does not necessarily automatically or linearly precede an opposition to an offender’s receipt of criminal sanctions, including the death penalty. However, it is difficult to determine if an empirical connection between forgiveness and support for the death penalty exists, particularly within religious individuals, due to an insufficient amount of quality research examining the relationship between these three constructs.

In one of the few studies examining forgiveness and death penalty support, Applegate, Cullen, Fisher, and Vander Ven (2000) found that a 3 item measure of forgiveness (i.e., “hate the sin but love the sinner,” forgiveness is required by God, and forgiveness is without limit if the sinner is penitent) negatively predicted death penalty support along with other punitive measures (i.e., support for harsher court sanctions, and general punitiveness) by itself and after accounting for several covariates (e.g., age, race, gender, education, political affiliation, political conservatism, prior victimization) in a sample of Ohio residents. Two other studies (Unnever & Cullen, 2006; Unnever, Cullen, & Applegate, 2005) examined data from large-scale social surveys and found that participants who expressed forgiving beliefs, using the same aforementioned 3-item forgiveness measure utilized by Applegate et al. (2000; i.e., items about self-forgiveness, forgiveness of others, and forgiveness from God), were significantly less likely to support the death penalty than their counterparts.

Although there is some empirical evidence implicating a negative association between forgiveness and support for the death penalty, no study has directly examined if this relationship exists among those with a high level of religious fundamentalism. Unnever and Cullen (2006), however, found evidence for a possible relationship between
forgiveness and death penalty support in a sample of those affiliated with a fundamentalist denomination. Specifically, they noted that both forgiveness and compassion, two anti-punitive characteristics, were positively and significantly associated with religious salience (e.g., the importance of a religion and religious practices to an individual) in a sample of fundamentalist denomination affiliates. Religious salience, in turn, was negatively related to death penalty support in the same sample. These authors postulated that the higher levels of religious salience in fundamentalist affiliates were responsible for the subsequent greater infusion of particular religious practices (e.g., compassion, forgiveness) that lessened their support for the death penalty. Though this research provides a potentially useful theoretical understanding of a mechanism by which forgiveness may be associated with level of death penalty support in religious fundamentalists, the authors’ usage of FUND and a short, undeveloped measure of forgiveness to operationalize religious fundamentalism and forgiveness, respectively, undermines the generalizability of these findings. Further research examining the relationships between these variables is warranted.

Besides forgiveness, the construct of retribution has also been implicated as a trait that may influence the relationship between religious fundamentalism and death penalty support (Unnever & Cullen, 2006). Although retribution and forgiveness are often considered to be antithetical motives for justice, Strelan and Van Prooijen (2013) found an interesting connection between the two constructs in their sample of European college students and community adults who reported that they had recently experienced a “deep hurt.” Specifically, they found that for some participants (i.e., “victims” in the study), viewing offenders receive a punishment that was proportionate to their crime (i.e., a
retribution as “just deserts” perspective), indirectly facilitated the victims’ ability to forgive their offender. Dissimilarly, they found that seeking retribution from a revenge standpoint (i.e., belief that an offender should suffer and receive a punishment disproportionately worse than the original offense) was negatively correlated with forgiveness, and revenge did not serve as a significant mediator between punishment and forgiveness. Strelan and Van Prooijen (2013) concluded that it was “just desert’s” capacity to restore a sense of balance and justice that served to facilitate forgiveness; alternatively, they suggested that possessing a revenge motivation for punishment likely only produces further interpersonal conflict and inhibits forgiveness.

Therefore, of the two distinct forms of retribution designated by von Hirsh (1976), it appears that “retribution as revenge,” hereafter simply referred to as “revenge” or “vengeance,” reflects the harsher and more punitive punishment motivation that may facilitate supporting attitudes towards the death penalty in those with a high level of religious fundamentalism. There are a small number of studies examining the relationship between either religious fundamentalism or religious characteristics possessed by fundamentalists (e.g., high religious conservatism, high religious attendance, punitive view of God) and vengeance. Cota-McKinley, Woody, and Bell (2001), for instance, discovered that higher scores on a scale of religious conservative beliefs associated with Christianity (e.g., scriptures are the literal word of God, pre-marital intercourse, homosexuality, and masturbation are sinful, creationism should be taught alongside evolution; Bensko, Canetto, Sugar, & Viney, 1995) were predictive of more vengeful attitudes and desires than those with lower levels of religious conservatism. Moreover, Ellison and Musick (1991) found that among residents of the
southern region of the United States, both high attendance in religious meetings as well as punitive and hierarchical images of God served as positive statistical predictors of retaliatory violence (e.g., an individual’s use of violence in response to an offender hurting his/her child or spouse). This relationship was not found among a nation-wide sample, which led the authors to hypothesize that certain aspects of the southern religious culture (e.g., fundamentalist view of God as wrathful, theology stressing Old Testament divine punishment) may justify some low-level vengeful behaviors.

More recently, Greer, Berman, Varan, Bobrycki, and Watson (2005) found that several religious variables, including intrinsic religiosity (defined above), participation in several church activities, and high frequency in church attendance, were negatively related to vengeance attitudes. Extrinsic religiosity (i.e., use of religion to suit one’s needs, such as security, sociability, and/or status; Allport & Ross, 1967) as well as a frequent church donation pattern were both positively related to vengeance attitudes. Finally, Miller (2013) found that high levels of religious fundamentalism, along with evangelism (i.e., belief in the necessity of converting others; Young, 1992) and extrinsic religiosity, were consistently significant predictors of greater leniency towards individuals who committed acts of vengeance against criminals who carried out different types of crime (i.e., murder, drug dealing, and child molestation). In sum, the extant literature seems to provide an empirical connection between religious fundamentalism (or fundamentalist-like characteristics) and attitudes of revenge towards perpetrators.

There also appears to be an empirical basis for the link between the endorsement of pro-revenge attitudes and support for capital punishment. For instance, in a sample of Australian college students, McKee and Feather (2008) found that the higher adoption of
vengeance attitudes in participants positively predicted death penalty support, after accounting for conservation (i.e., valuing tradition, conformity, and security over openness-to-change) and self-enhancement (i.e., valuing power and achievement over self-transcendence). Similarly, Schadt and DeLisi (2007) found that participants that endorsed vigilante beliefs (e.g., “If anyone ever victimized my family I would hurt the person responsible”) were significantly more likely to support the death penalty than their counterparts in a sample of American college students. The findings of these two studies, along with the suppositions of other authors (Ellsworth & Gross, 1994; Finckenauer, 1988), seem to suggest that there are, as described by Schadt and DeLisi (2007), several similar “ugly emotions” (e.g., revenge, vigilantism) that have at least a partial role in the informing of a death penalty support stance. However, there is unfortunately a dearth of literature examining the impact of possessing a vengeful attitudinal stance on death penalty support among those with high levels of religious fundamentalism.

Purpose of the Study

Due to the longstanding concerns regarding the measurement of death penalty attitudes via single-item measures as well as the lack of updated multiple-item instruments of death penalty attitudes with strong psychometric properties, novel scales of death penalty attitudes are in need of development. Even O’Neil and colleagues’ (2004) measure of death penalty attitudes, an exemplar of an instrument with a confirmed factor structure and otherwise strong psychometric properties, neglects inclusion of the arguments used by abolitionists in its item content. As such, one purpose of the current study was to extend the development of a death penalty attitudes measure from the work demonstrated in Whited et al. (2014). In particular, the current study sought to examine
and verify the factor structure of the Revised Attitudes Towards the Death Penalty Scale (RATDP) following the addition of several novel items as well as find support for the measure’s convergent validity and internal consistency. In order to bolster the generalizability of the current study’s findings, data from both undergraduate college students and non-student adult samples were collected.

Furthermore, the current study was used to further explore the nature of the relationship between religious fundamentalism and death penalty support. Previous attempts at examining this relationship seem to have generated inconsistent and confusing findings, which is at least partially due to measurement error in the form of an overwhelming use of an invalid measure of religious fundamentalism, fundamentalist denominational affiliation (i.e., FUND; Smith, 1990). To complicate matters, researchers have demonstrated that even when using a valid means of operationalizing religious fundamentalism, there is an absence of a statistically predictive relationship with level of death penalty support (Whited et al., 2014). However, the suppositions of some penologists (e.g., Unnever & Cullen, 2006) paint a depiction of a complex relationship between religious fundamentalism and death penalty support, given that fundamentalists tend to have conflicting beliefs and characteristics (e.g., forgiving dispositions and retributive beliefs) that impact their attitudes towards the treatment of offenders.

As such, it is reasonable to hypothesize that those possessing high levels of fundamentalism and a more pronounced forgiving nature are less likely to have high levels of support for the death penalty than their counterparts. Or in other words, the relationship between religious fundamentalism and level of death penalty support may vary as a function of dispositional forgiveness. Alternatively, it is reasonable to
hypothesize that those with high levels of fundamentalism and more pronounced attitudes of revenge are more likely to have high levels of support for the death penalty than their counterparts; that is, the relationship between religious fundamentalism and level of death penalty support may vary as a function of pro-revenge attitudes.

In summary, in light of the aforementioned gaps in the literature, the current study had two general aims: (1) Continued development of a death penalty attitudes measure with item content that reflects the arguments used by both proponents of capital punishment and abolitionists, and (2) Further exploration of the association between religious fundamentalism and death penalty support by examining the extent to which forgiveness and revenge serve as moderators in the relationship.

Research Questions

Four primary questions were evaluated in the current investigation, namely:

1. What is the factor structure of the RATDP?

2. How does the RATDP correlate with a different and psychometrically sound measure of death penalty attitudes?

3. Do forgiveness and revenge moderate the relationship between religious fundamentalism and level of support for the death penalty?

4. Do the constructs of forgiveness and revenge predict level of support for the death penalty?
CHAPTER II
METHODOLOGY

Participants

Participants for this study came from two primary sources: an adult undergraduate student population and a non-student adult population. In total, data were collected from 1663 participants in the current study. However, 444 of these participants (26.7%) were deleted from the study due to indications that they were inattentive to study content (see below for exclusionary criteria). Therefore, the data from 1219 participants were analyzed in the current study. A total of 758 participants served as the non-student sample; the student sample was comprised of 461 participants. Demographic characteristics of the non-student and student samples are presented in Table 1.

Participants in the student sample were adult male and female college students attending The University of Southern Mississippi. Student participants were enrolled in psychology courses at the time of data collection and were recruited through Sona. The student sample was predominately female (78.6%) and White (60.2%) and the mean age was 20.61 years ($SD = 4.82$, median = 19 years). The majority of the students identified themselves as Freshmen ($n = 195$, 42.6%), followed by those self-classified as Sophomores ($n = 109$, 23.8%), Juniors ($n = 84$, 18.3%), Seniors ($n = 66$, 14.4%), and Other ($n = 4$, 0.9%).

The non-student sample was composed of participants recruited through Amazon’s Mechanical Turk (MTurk) online marketplace (described below). Similar to the student sample, the non-student participants were predominately female (61.2%) and White (80%). The mean age for the non-student sample was 35.58 years ($SD = 12.76$, median = 31 years). The non-student sample was well-educated, with 90.24% of
### Table 1

*Frequencies of Non-Student and Student Participants by Demographic Category*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Type of Participant</th>
<th>Non-Student Participants</th>
<th>Student Participants</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>n (%)</td>
<td>n (%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>292 (38.8%)</td>
<td>98 (21.4%)</td>
<td>390</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>460 (61.2%)</td>
<td>360 (78.6%)</td>
<td>820</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>605 (80%)</td>
<td>277 (60.2%)</td>
<td>882</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>44 (5.8%)</td>
<td>157 (34.1%)</td>
<td>201</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>41 (5.4%)</td>
<td>8 (1.7%)</td>
<td>49</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>42 (5.6%)</td>
<td>7 (1.5%)</td>
<td>49</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>24 (3.2%)</td>
<td>11 (2.4%)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 21</td>
<td>61 (8.1%)</td>
<td>377 (82.5%)</td>
<td>438</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 – 30</td>
<td>282 (37.3%)</td>
<td>60 (13.1%)</td>
<td>342</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 – 40</td>
<td>184 (24.3%)</td>
<td>13 (2.8%)</td>
<td>197</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 – 50</td>
<td>114 (15.1%)</td>
<td>5 (1.1%)</td>
<td>119</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 50</td>
<td>116 (15.3%)</td>
<td>2 (0.4%)</td>
<td>118</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Annual Family Income</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 20,000</td>
<td>144 (19.5%)</td>
<td>87 (21.1%)</td>
<td>231</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20,000 – 60,000</td>
<td>361 (49%)</td>
<td>149 (36.1%)</td>
<td>510</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 60,000</td>
<td>232 (31.5%)</td>
<td>177 (42.9%)</td>
<td>409</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education Level</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School or Lower</td>
<td>1 (0.1%)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some High School</td>
<td>10 (1.3%)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS Diploma or GED</td>
<td>63 (8.3%)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>63</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College</td>
<td>208 (27.4%)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>208</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate’s Degree</td>
<td>71 (9.3%)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>71</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>270 (35.6%)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>270</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>94 (12.4%)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>94</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral Degree</td>
<td>13 (1.7%)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Degree</td>
<td>13 (1.7%)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>15 (2.0%)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>College Status</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>195 (42.6%)</td>
<td>195</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>109 (23.8%)</td>
<td>109</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>84 (18.3%)</td>
<td>84</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 (continued).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>U.S. Region of Residence</th>
<th>Senior</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>144 (19.1%)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwest</td>
<td>184 (24.4%)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>271 (36.0%)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>154 (20.5%)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship Status</th>
<th>Single or Never Married</th>
<th>In a Committed Relationship</th>
<th>Engaged, Married, or Partnered</th>
<th>Divorced or Separated</th>
<th>Widowed</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single or Never Married</td>
<td>212 (28.2%)</td>
<td>293 (63.8%)</td>
<td>505</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a Committed Relationship</td>
<td>182 (24.3%)</td>
<td>142 (30.9%)</td>
<td>324</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaged, Married, or Partnered</td>
<td>289 (38.5%)</td>
<td>18 (3.9%)</td>
<td>307</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced or Separated</td>
<td>59 (7.9%)</td>
<td>6 (1.3%)</td>
<td>65</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>9 (1.2%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-Identified Political Conservatism</th>
<th>Liberal</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Conservative</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>374 (49.5%)</td>
<td>115 (25.0%)</td>
<td>489</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>180 (23.8%)</td>
<td>134 (29.1%)</td>
<td>314</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>184 (24.4%)</td>
<td>135 (29.3%)</td>
<td>319</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>17 (2.3%)</td>
<td>76 (16.5%)</td>
<td>93</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Christian or Protestant</th>
<th>Catholic</th>
<th>Jewish</th>
<th>Buddhism</th>
<th>Hinduism</th>
<th>Muslim</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Christian or Protestant</td>
<td>221 (29.3%)</td>
<td>295 (64.1%)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>357</td>
<td>113</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>120 (15.9%)</td>
<td>67 (14.6%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>10 (1.3%)</td>
<td>1 (0.2%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddhism</td>
<td>11 (1.5%)</td>
<td>3 (0.6%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hinduism</td>
<td>8 (1.1%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>8 (1.1%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>308 (40.8%)</td>
<td>49 (10.7%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>68 (9.0%)</td>
<td>45 (9.8%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Percentages in parentheses reflect the percent of cases for that sample in each demographic category. All participants who were excluded from the study due to inattentiveness are not included in this table. U.S. Region of Residence, College Status, and Level of Education data were not collected from both samples.

participants obtaining at least some college education and 53.43% of participants obtaining a Bachelor’s Degree or higher. More non-student participants reported that
they resided in the states of California \((n = 64, 8.5\%)\), Florida \((n = 59, 7.8\%)\), Pennsylvania \((n = 49, 6.5\%)\), Texas \((n = 48, 6.4\%)\), and New York \((n = 42, 5.6\%)\) than the other states. However, except for Vermont, at least one participant reported that they resided in each of the other 50 states. With the exception of Washington, D.C. \((n = 3)\), no non-student participant resided in any U.S. territory.

To determine what demographic categories may be not accurately represented in the non-student sample compared to the American population, several demographic details of the American population were obtained from the 2010 United States Census (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013). Compared to the American population, the non-student sample appears to have higher amounts of female participants and White participants. Conversely, male participants, Black participants, and Latino participants appear to be under-represented in the non-student sample. Moreover, the median age of the non-student sample \((31.0 \text{ years})\) is slightly lower than the median age of the American population \((37.2 \text{ years})\). Finally, the proportion of non-student participants residing in the four regions of the United States appears similar to the census findings: all proportions from the current study are within ±3% of the proportion of the American population living in the four regions. See Table 2 for this comparison.

Finally, a series of independent samples t-tests and chi-square tests of independence were utilized to identify any differences between the student and non-student datasets based on age, gender, race, and self-identified political conservatism. The findings of these analyses indicated several significant differences: the student participants were significantly younger \((M = 20.61 \text{ years})\) than the non-student participants \((M = 35.58 \text{ years}, t(1057.9) = 29, p < .001, r = 0.67)\). Regarding gender,
there was a significant difference noted in the proportion of men and women ($\chi^2(1) = 39.60, p < .001$); specifically, students were significantly less likely to be male ($z = -4.1$) and significantly more likely to be female ($z = 2.8$). There was also a significant racial difference between the two samples ($\chi^2(4) = 176.19, p < .001$) with students significantly less likely to be White ($z = -3.1$) and more likely to be Black ($z = 9.3$). Finally, a difference was found between these samples in terms of self-identified political conservatism ($\chi^2(3) = 124.60, p < .001$); more exactly, students were more likely to identify themselves as “Unsure” of their political orientation ($z = 6.9$) and less likely to identify themselves as “Liberal” ($z = -5.2$).

Table 2

Comparison of Gender, Race, Region of Residence, and Age between the Current Study’s Non-Student Participants and the 2010 U.S. Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Non-Student Sample</th>
<th>U.S. Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>38.8%</td>
<td>49.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>61.2%</td>
<td>50.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>80.0%</td>
<td>72.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region of Residence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwest</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>36.0%</td>
<td>37.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Age (in years)</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>37.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Measures

Demographic Questionnaire. A form solicited basic demographic information from the participants, such as their age, gender, and race. Additionally, basic questions were asked about the participant’s religious behaviors (e.g., church attendance, denominational affiliation), political preferences (e.g., self-identified level of conservatism, political party affiliation), and basic attitudes towards the death penalty (e.g., overall level of general support). Self-identified level of political conservatism, in particular, was utilized as a covariate in several regression analyses. Similar to many other studies on death penalty attitudes (e.g., Applegate et al., 2000; Britt, 1998; Unnever & Cullen, 2005; 2006; Wozniak & Lewis, 2010), political conservatism was measured by each participants’ response to a single item: “Here's a seven point scale on which the political views that people might hold are arranged from extremely liberal to extremely conservative. Where would you place yourself on this scale?” Participant responses ranged from a “1” (Extremely Liberal) to a “7” (Extremely Conservative). Participants were also given an option to respond “I don’t know” for this item; those who selected this response option were removed from some analyses (see below).

Revised Attitudes Toward the Death Penalty Scale (RATDP). The Attitudes Toward the Death Penalty Scale (ATDP; Hingula & Wrightsman, 2002) was developed to measure level of support for capital punishment. The original ATDP is a 23-item measure in which participants are asked to indicate their level of agreement with each item, from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Total scores on the 23-item ATDP can range from 23-115, with higher scores indicative of a higher level of support for the death penalty. When it was originally developed, the ATDP was not assessed for its
psychometric properties (e.g., factor structure, reliability, validity). However, subsequent studies have found support for adequate levels of internal consistency: $\alpha = .85$ (Bloechl, Vitacco, Neuman, & Erikson, 2007; Whited et al., 2014), $\alpha = .88$ (Mandracchia, Shaw, & Morgan, 2013). In a previous study (i.e., Whited et al., 2014), the researchers examined the psychometric properties of the ATDP in exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses in order to investigate the notion that death penalty attitudes are a multifaceted construct.

In the first part of Whited et al.’s (2014) study, data from 307 undergraduate students were subjected to an exploratory factor analysis (i.e., principal factor analysis extraction method, oblique rotation method). After preliminary analyses to determine the number of factors that should be retained, the five-factor model was found to be the most interpretable and explained the greatest total variance (39%), so it was retained. Following item deletion procedures using a minimum factor loading cutoff of 0.32, a total of 16 items were retained. In the final analysis constrained to five factors and 16 items, sampling adequacy was classified as great (KMO = .838; Hutchenson & Sofroniou, 1999) and Bartlett’s test of sphericity was significant ($\chi^2 (120) = 1301.45, p < .001$). The 16-item five-factor model explained 44.3% of the total variance. The factors and items of the 16-item ATDP can be found in Appendix G.

Factor 1 was labeled Sentencing Disputes, accounted for 25.0% of total variance, and included four items regarding issues involved in death penalty sentencing (e.g., number of permitted appeals, life imprisonment, length of time before execution). Factor 2 was labeled Sanction Exceptions, accounted for 8.8% of total variance, and consisted of four items concerning types of defendants (e.g., cognitively impaired defendants, pregnant defendants) or situations (e.g., existence of doubt about the defendant’s guilt)
that may be exempt from receiving the death penalty. Factor 3 was labeled Crime Control, accounted for 4.3% of total variance, and included three items concerning the ability of the death penalty to function as a deterrent for future crimes. Factor 4 was labeled Opposition Concerns, accounted for 3.4% of total variance, and consisted of three items reflecting common rationales used by opponents of capital punishment to justify their stance (e.g., sanction devalues life, brutalization effect). Finally, factor 5 was labeled Gender Equality, accounted for 3.0% of total variance, and consisted of two items advocating for the equal dispersal of death penalty sentencing on men and women.

Internal consistency was calculated for the full 16-item ATDP as well as the five factors extracted from the measure. The total 16-item ATDP reliability coefficient was good (α = .81); however, the internal consistencies of each of the factors were fairly low (i.e., ranged from α = .58 to α = .79). The low reliability from the ATDP factors highlighted a need to bolster several of the factors by adding or revising items in future research.

In the second part of the study, Whited et al. (2014) analyzed a novel sample of adult undergraduate students using a confirmatory factor analysis in order to further explore the proposed 5-factor model of death penalty attitudes and identify other areas of the ATDP in need of further development. The confirmatory factor analysis was conducted using maximum likelihood estimation. Various fit indices were examined to determine the strength of the fit between the proposed five-factor model and the data. Specifically, the chi-square represented a poor fit (χ² = 260.29; df = 94; p < .0001), the CFI suggested an adequate but marginal fit (.859), the NFI indicated a poor fit (.802), and the RMSEA indicated a reasonable fit (.072, 90% CI = .062-.083). After examining the standardized regression weights, or factor loadings, of each individual item, two items
were also found to be poorly loaded onto their factors. Given the relatively poor fit of the model as indicated by several fit indices, the researchers decided that further work in item development and factor identification was warranted prior to continuing confirmatory factor analysis procedures to respecify the model. See Appendix G for the 16-item ATDP.

In sum, the exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses of the ATDP illuminated several limitations of the measure that needed to be addressed, including (a) poor internal consistency values of most factors in the model, (b) poor communality of several items, and (c) poor fit of the hypothesized five-factor model with the data. Moreover, another concern and a major limitation of Whited et al.’s (2014) 16-item ATDP was that its item content was not inclusive of several salient themes and rationales discussed in death penalty literature. To address these concerns, items identified as problematic (e.g., low communality with other factor items, skewed variability in participant responses, unclear wording) were revised, and additional items were developed for the RATDP for the purposes of the current study. To identify important aspects of death penalty attitudes that were not included in the item content of the ATDP, an extensive review of death penalty literature was conducted for articles discussing salient rationales that seem to shape modern attitudes towards the death penalty (e.g., Baker, Lambert, & Jenkins, 2005; Ellsworth & Gross, 1994; Firment & Geiselman, 1997; Lambert, Clarke, & Lambert, 2004; Radelet & Borg, 2000; O’Neil et al., 2004; Tyler & Weber, 1982; Vogel & Vogel, 2003). Additionally, a preliminary analysis using both quantitative and qualitative data collected in Whited et al.’s (2014) study was conducted to identify possible gaps in the ATDP item content. More specifically, the participants in that study had been asked to
identify their top rationale for their general stance (i.e., support, unsure, oppose) on the death penalty. Participants were able to select among five different options or provide their own rationale.

Among the 505 participants who indicated that they were generally supportive of the usage of the death penalty for persons convicted of murder, 43.8% indicated that an item regarding retribution (“The death penalty fits the crime [i.e., ‘eye for an eye’]”) best characterized their top rationale, 22.4% endorsed an incapacitation item (“The death penalty permanently prevents the criminal from committing further crimes”), 13.7% endorsed a deterrence item (“The death penalty prevents others from committing similar crimes in the future”), 8.1% endorsed a law and order item (“The death penalty maintains order in society and prevents chaos”), 7.1% endorsed a cost item (“The death penalty is cheaper than incarcerating a person in prison for life”), and 5.0% provided an “other” explanation for their top rationale. Those that selected “other” and provided qualitative explanations of their top rationale for death penalty support (n = 25) mostly indicated that they agreed with all or several of the five aforementioned rationales, wrote general statements of support for the death penalty without further elaboration (e.g., “[The death penalty] is a necessity”), or wrote explanations related to retribution (e.g., “eye for an eye”) or incapacitation (e.g., “keeps murderers from killing again”). Two unique participant rationales included a statement in support of the discretionary usage of the death penalty for heinous crimes as well as a statement regarding the victim’s family (i.e., “The death penalty gives the families of victims a peace of mind…”).

When asked to identify their primary rationale for opposing the usage of the death penalty for persons convicted of murder (n = 224), 36.6% of the self-identified death
penalty opponents cited moral/religious reasons (“The death penalty is immoral and/or goes against my religious convictions”), 22.3% reported a primary concern over the execution of an innocent (“The death penalty is irreversible; an innocent person could be executed”), 18.8% chose an item regarding the brutalization effect (“The death penalty continues the cycle of violence”), 8.5% identified an item regarding rehabilitation (“The death penalty does not allow a convicted criminal the chance for rehabilitation”), 2.7% cited concerns about cost (“The death penalty is more costly than incarcerating a person in prison for life”), 0.9% endorsed an item regarding unfair administration (“The death penalty is unfairly dispersed to minorities and the impoverished”), and 10.3% provided an “other” rationale to explain their stance. Death penalty opponents that selected “other” and provided qualitative explanations of their top rationale for death penalty opposition (n = 23) mostly indicated that they viewed the death penalty as an easier sentence than life without parole (e.g., “being sentenced to death for a horrible crime is too easy of a punishment”), agreed with several of the 5 aforementioned rationales, or wrote general opposition statements about capital punishment without further elaboration (e.g., “We do not have the right to take a life…”). Other novel participant rationales included a statement about religious beliefs (i.e., “my religion is against killing”) as well as a statement regarding the mental health of the offender (i.e., “the majority of people in jail have a mental illness that they have no control over what caused them to commit the crime…”).

Finally, those participants who indicated that they were “unsure” of their position on the death penalty (n = 229) were also given an opportunity to provide a statement explaining their current stance. Unfortunately, examining the responses from this group
was essentially unhelpful in illuminating rationales that could be added to the measure. The vast majority of “unsure” participants reported feeling indifferent or being unknowledgeable about the subject area, preferred not to explain their reasoning behind their stance, or described a desire for the discretionary application of the death penalty depending on the aggravating and/or mitigating factors of the case. Other participants described feeling conflicted or ambivalent about supporting capital punishment due to difficulties reconciling retributive desires and religious beliefs (“My religious beliefs say don’t kill someone for killing someone, but I’m southern and in the South we believe you get what you deserve…”).

This preliminary analysis, as well as a review of relevant literature, highlighted several rationales used by death penalty opponents, proponents, and the “unsure” that were not included in the ATDP. In particular, there were no items in the ATDP concerning retribution (the highest reported top rationale of proponents), incapacitation, the morality of the death penalty (the highest reported top rationale of opponents), the execution of an innocent defendant, the cost of the death penalty in comparison to life without parole, or the unfair administration of the death penalty to minorities. As such, items were developed reflecting each of these subject areas for the RATDP. Although there were already items regarding deterrence and maintaining law and order in the 16-item ATDP (i.e., items within the Crime Control factor), additional deterrence and incapacitation items were added to the RATDP item pool with the hope of strengthening the internal consistency of the factor. An additional item concerning the feasibility of life imprisonement without parole was similarly added to the item pool to potentially strengthen the internal consistency of the Judicial Disputes factor. Moreover, given the
recent increase of discussion about the treatment of juvenile offenders and offenders with a serious mental illness in the literature and media, items were added regarding the execution of juvenile offenders and the execution of those diagnosed with a severe mental illness. Finally, several additional items were included in the RATDP that were based on the aforementioned qualitative responses (e.g., items suggesting that the death penalty is an “easy way out,” items regarding providing the victim’s family with a sense of closure, and items measuring general support of the death penalty).

In total, five items were revised and 24 novel items were added to the 16-item ATDP to create the 40-item RATDP. The RATDP items are located in Appendix F. Similar to the ATDP, participants who completed the RATDP in the current study indicated their level of agreement to each item from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree); reverse coded items will be scored on a scale from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree).

Death Penalty Scale (DPS). The DPS (O’Neil et al., 2004) is a 15-item, 5-factor scale that was developed over the course of 11 distinct studies (see O’Neil et al., 2004). The DPS is a self-report measure designed to quantify an individual’s level of support for the use of capital punishment. Respondents answer each item on a 9-point Likert-type scale from “1” (strongly disagree) to “9” (strongly agree). There is no total scale score for the DPS; however, scores are provided for each of the five subscales. Subscale scores have various ranges (lowest range is 2-18 [Life Without Parole Allows Parole], highest range is 4-36 [General Support, Retribution and Revenge]), depending on the number of items within each particular subscale.
The five subscales of the DPS include: (1) General Support – higher scores indicate general support of the usage of the death penalty (e.g., “I think the death penalty is necessary”), (2) Retribution and Revenge – higher scores indicate support for the death penalty due to personal or societal retributive reasons (e.g., “The desire for revenge is a legitimate reason for favoring the death penalty”), (3) Death Penalty is a Deterrent – higher scores indicate belief that the death penalty acts as a general deterrent (e.g., “Executing a person for premeditated murder discourages others from committing that crime in the future”), (4) Death Penalty is Cheaper – higher scores indicate belief that execution is less costly than life imprisonment without parole (e.g., “Executing a murderer is less expensive than keeping him in jail for the rest of his life”), and (5) Life Imprisonment without Parole Allows Parole – higher scores indicate belief that individuals who are sentenced with life imprisonment will eventually receive parole (e.g., “There is no such thing that truly means ‘life without parole’”).

Support has been found for the 5-factor model of the DPS in student and non-student samples through a series of sequential exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses (O’Neil et al., 2004). Generally speaking, the internal consistencies of subscales appear strong ($\alpha = .87, .75, .85, .89, & .69$, respectively). The internal consistencies of subscales in the current study were similarly strong in the non-student sample (ranging from $\alpha = .74 - .90$); however, the internal consistencies of the subscales in the student sample were much lower (ranging from $\alpha = .59 - .81$) Support has been found for the convergent and divergent validity of each subscale (see O’Neil et al., 2004). Additionally, support was found for the predictive validity of the general support factor
(i.e., high general support factor scores predicted sentencing verdicts across 11 studies; mean total effect of .39).

**Revised Religious Fundamentalism Scale (RRF).** The RRF (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 2004) is a 12-item measure designed to assess the level to which an individual endorses attitudes supporting Altemeyer and Hunsberger’s (1992) abovementioned conceptualization of religious fundamentalism. Participants are instructed to choose one of nine responses indicating their level of agreement to each item, ranging from **very strongly agree** to **very strongly disagree**. Participants with a higher total score on the RRF (possible score range is 12 to 108) have endorsed a high level of agreement with religious fundamentalist beliefs. Similar to its original version, Altemeyer and Hunsberger (2004) note that the scale is free of content specific to any one religion and is therefore able to measure religious fundamentalism in individuals from any religious or denominational background. The scale appears to have excellent internal consistency (e.g., $\alpha = .91-.92$; Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 2004; $\alpha = .94$; Hathcoat & Barnes, 2010) and support has been found for the scale’s construct validity, convergent validity (e.g., strong positive correlation with right-wing authoritarianism, frequency of church attendance, belief in creationism, religious ethnocentrism, dogmatism, and childhood religious emphasis), and discriminant validity (e.g., moderate negative correlation with doubts about religion) in samples of community adults and college students (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 2004). The RRF’s internal consistency for the current study was excellent, for both non-students ($\alpha = .96$) and students ($\alpha = .94$).

**Heartland Forgiveness Scale (HFS).** The HFS (Thompson et al., 2005) is an 18 item self-report measure of dispositional or trait forgiveness (i.e., one’s general and
enduring tendency to be forgiving). Participants are given seven response options for each item, ranging from 1 (Almost Always False of Me) to 7 (Almost Always True of Me). There are three subscales of the HFS: HFS Self (i.e., measurement of one’s ability to forgive oneself for perceived transgressions), HFS Other (i.e., measurement of one’s ability to forgive others for perceived transgressions), and HFS Situation (i.e., measurement of one’s ability to forgive a situation outside of anyone’s control; e.g., “fate,” natural disaster, illness). Each subscale score ranges from 6 to 42, with higher scores indicating higher levels of forgiving in the subscale domain. Total HFS scores range from 18 to 126, with higher scores suggesting that a participant has higher levels of dispositional forgiveness.

Regarding reliability, acceptable internal consistency has been indicated for the HFS total scores (ranging from $\alpha = .86-.87$) and each of the subscales (i.e., HFS Self $\alpha = .72-.76$, HFS Other $\alpha = .78-.81$, HFS Situation $\alpha = .77-.82$; Thompson et al., 2005). Test-retest reliability coefficients are also adequate across the HFS total score and HFS Self, Other, and Situation subscales (3 week interval = .83, .72, .73, & .77, respectively; 9 month interval = .78, .69, .69, .68; Thompson et al., 2005). Evidence has been found to support the measure’s convergent validity (e.g., strong correlation with other measures of forgiveness, cognitive flexibility, and positive affect) and discriminant validity (e.g., negative correlation with measures of negative affect, vengeance, hostile automatic thoughts, and trait anger). Furthermore, Thompson et al. (2005) found that high dispositional forgiveness is associated with romantic relationship duration and predictive of other forgiveness behaviors (e.g., choosing to listen to more self-forgiving than self-punitive statements, describing prior transgressions in more neutral or positive responses
than negative responses). The HFS internal consistency for the current study was excellent, for both non-students ($\alpha = .90$) and students ($\alpha = .86$).

**Vengeance Scale (VS).** The VS (Stuckless & Goranson, 1992) is a uni-dimensional self-report measure of attitudes toward “personal vengeful responses to perceived wrong” (Stuckless & Goranson, 1992, p. 37). Participants choose between seven response options for each of the 20 items of the measure, from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” Ten of the 20-items are written in reverse direction (e.g., “It is always better to ‘turn the other cheek’”) and are reverse-scored. Total scores can range from 0 to 140, with higher scores indicating a greater endorsement of favorable attitudes towards revenge or vengeance.

Support has been found for the measure’s reliability, as evidenced by strong internal consistency scores across two studies during its development across both genders ($\alpha = 0.92, 0.92$), males only ($\alpha = 0.93, 0.93$), and females only ($\alpha = 0.90, 0.92$). During measure development, test-retest reliability after five weeks ($r = 0.90$) and mean inter-item correlation were acceptable (.36; Stuckless & Goranson, 1992). Evidence has been found to support the measure’s convergent validity (e.g., strong positive correlation with measure of trait anger), divergent validity (e.g., moderate negative correlation with measures of empathy), concurrent validity (e.g., strong positive correlation with seven hypothetical and two actual vengeful behaviors), and discriminant validity (e.g., negative correlations with four hypothetical helpful or positive reciprocity behaviors). The VS internal consistency for the current study was excellent, for both non-students ($\alpha = .95$) and students ($\alpha = .91$).
Procedure

Participants were obtained through a convenience sampling approach and took approximately 30 minutes to complete the entire study. Participants from the undergraduate student sample were enlisted via an online research system used by the Department of Psychology, Sona Systems, Ltd. Once indicating their interest in serving as participants in the study, the prospective participants were linked to a research-based survey service (qualitrics.com) wherein they were administered an informed consent form (see Appendix I) and all remaining measures (i.e., demographics questionnaire, RADTP, DPS, RRF, HFS, & VS [see Appendices A-F]). To control for order effects and/or fatigue, the order of measures following the demographics questionnaire was randomized. Additionally, all politically and religiously themed demographic questions were not given to participants until after they completed the study measures to prevent the priming of their responses. Student participants were given research credit in Sona for psychology courses for their participation in the study.

Participants from the non-student sample were enlisted from Amazon’s Mechanical Turk (MTurk), an online marketplace that recruits individuals to complete tasks that require human intelligence in exchange for monetary compensation. Previous research exploring the suitability of MTurk for social science research has demonstrated that workers on MTurk are more representative of the United States’ population in terms of gender, race, age, and education than participants from traditional university subject pools (Paolacci, Chandler, & Ipeirotis, 2010). Other studies have found that data obtained from MTurk workers are reliable, and the data quality is not impacted by the compensation amount (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011; Mason & Suri, 2012).
Given the population of interest for this study (i.e., U.S. adults), the survey was restricted to adult MTurk workers currently residing in the United States. Following their indication of interest in completing the survey, prospective participants from MTurk were directed to the aforementioned research-based survey service (qualitrics.com) where they were informed about the study, asked to provide consent to participate in the study, and then (following their consent; see Appendix I) directed to complete the measures of the study (i.e., demographics questionnaire, RADTP, DPS, RRF, HFS, & VS [see Appendices A-F]). Participants were compensated between $0.20 to $0.50 for their participation.

Excluding Cases Based on Inattention. In order to facilitate the assortment of high quality data to analyze, two directed response items were inserted throughout the survey to detect random responding and inattention (e.g., “Select ‘strongly agree’ for this item.”). It was assumed that participants who did not correctly answer these simple and easily-identifiable attentiveness items were not attending to the survey content or providing valid responses. Therefore, data from the 163 student and 281 nonstudent participants who failed to correctly answer both of these items were excluded from the dataset and all analyses and did not receive compensation for their participation.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

1. What is the factor structure of the RATDP?

Hypothesis 1A. Following an exploratory factor analysis, the RATDP will have a multifaceted factor structure of death penalty attitudes in a sample of nonstudent American adults.
Hypothesis 1B. Following a confirmatory factor analysis using novel data from a nonstudent American adult sample, the resulting factor structure of the RATDP will demonstrate a reasonably good fit with the model identified in the exploratory factor analysis.

Hypothesis 1C. Following a confirmatory factor analysis using a novel dataset from a college student sample, the resulting factor structure of the RATDP will demonstrate a reasonably good fit with the model identified in the exploratory factor analysis.

2. How does the RATDP correlate with another measure of death penalty attitudes?
   Hypothesis 2. The RATDP total score will demonstrate a low to moderate correlation with each of the five subscales from the measure of death penalty attitudes proposed by O’Neil et al. (2004).

3. Does forgiveness and/or revenge moderate the relationship between religious fundamentalism and level of support for the death penalty?
   Hypothesis 3A. After accounting for race and political conservatism, the relationship between religious fundamentalism and level of support for the death penalty will vary as a function of the participant’s level of forgiveness.
   Hypothesis 3B. After accounting for race and political conservatism, the relationship between religious fundamentalism and level of support for the death penalty will vary as a function of the participant’s level of revenge attitudes.

4. Do the constructs of forgiveness and revenge predict level of support for the death penalty?
Hypothesis 4A. Above and beyond the effects of race and political conservatism, forgiveness will be negatively associated with level of support for the death penalty.

Hypothesis 4B. Above and beyond the effects of race and political conservatism, revenge will be positively associated with level of support for the death penalty.
CHAPTER III

RESULTS

Preliminary Analyses

Stage 1: Data Screening, Scoring, and Preliminary Analyses. Raw data were cleaned and cases were removed from the non-student (MTurk) and student (Sona) datasets based on the aforementioned inattention criteria. Total and scale scores for each measure were calculated; ten non-student and student cases were chosen at random and also hand-scored to identify any potential problems with the computer scoring. No problems were identified.

Given that the RATDP initially had 40 items, data from approximately 400 non-student participants was needed to conduct the exploratory factor analysis. This sample size was based on recommendations of gathering 5 to 10 participants per item (Clark & Watson, 1995; Floyd & Widaman, 1995). Therefore, following item scoring procedures, 401 non-student cases (i.e., 400 cases with no missing data, see below) were randomly selected and pulled from the non-student dataset to be used in the exploratory factory analysis of the RATDP (see Stage 2 below). The remaining 357 non-student cases were assigned to be utilized in the initial confirmatory factor analysis of the RATDP (see Stage 3 below). Descriptive statistics (i.e., means & standard deviations) for the RATDP total and subscale scores (based on the 5 factor-model explicated below, see Stage 3), RRF, HFS, DPS subscale scores, and VS are provided in Table 3.

Several independent t-tests were also used to determine if there were significant mean differences between the non-student and student samples on each measure used in the analyses (see Table 3). The significant findings of these analyses indicated that,
### Table 3

*Comparison of Means for Measures in Non-Student and Student Samples*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Non-Student</th>
<th>Student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RATDP Total Score</td>
<td>47.49 (14.29)</td>
<td>48.77 (9.72)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abolitionist Arguments</td>
<td>18.62 (6.41)***</td>
<td>16.95 (4.76)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innocence Concerns</td>
<td>4.93 (2.02)</td>
<td>5.62 (1.96)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LI Viability</td>
<td>5.71 (1.89)</td>
<td>6.43 (1.53)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Statements</td>
<td>11.54 (4.58)</td>
<td>12.57 (3.40)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanction Exceptions</td>
<td>6.70 (3.09)</td>
<td>7.22 (2.44)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RRF Total Scores</td>
<td>43.64 (27.53)</td>
<td>68.61 (24.47)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HFS Total Scores</td>
<td>84.34 (16.25)</td>
<td>86.57 (14.79)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VS Total Scores</td>
<td>62.19 (21.39)</td>
<td>60.16 (18.65)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Support (DPS)</td>
<td>20.27 (9.80)</td>
<td>19.82 (8.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retribution &amp; Revenge (DPS)</td>
<td>17.34 (8.02)</td>
<td>16.91 (6.84)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DP is a Deterrent (DPS)</td>
<td>13.27 (7.11)</td>
<td>14.69 (5.42)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DP is Cheaper (DPS)</td>
<td>11.39 (5.27)</td>
<td>11.44 (4.18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LWOP Allows Parole (DPS)</td>
<td>8.48 (4.21)</td>
<td>9.37 (3.40)***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| N                                     | 757               | 459            |

*Note.* *p* < .05. **p** < .01. ***p** < .001. The presence of one or more asterisk(s) indicates a significant difference on the mean score between the non-student and student samples. For example, the three asterisks on the abolitionist arguments mean score for non-students indicates that the abolitionist arguments score was significantly higher, at the *p* < .001 level, for non-students than students.

RATDP = Revised Attitudes Towards the Death Penalty Scale; LI Viability = Life Imprisonment Viability; RRF = Revised Religious Fundamentalism Scale; HFS = Heartland Forgiveness Scale; VS = Vengeance Scale; DPS = O’Neil et al.’s (2004) Death Penalty Scale.
compared to the non-student sample, the student sample had higher religious fundamentalism scores, higher dispositional forgiveness scores, supported abolitionist arguments and deterrence/pro-death penalty arguments (on the RATDP and DPS) to a greater extent, supported innocence concerns to a lesser extent, and viewed life imprisonment without parole as a less viable alternative to the death penalty. The non-student and student samples did not significantly differ on their general level of support for the death penalty, as measured by either the RATDP total score or the DPS General Support subscale score. On average, the non-student sample supported the death penalty, as measured by the RATDP total score (mean of 47.49, with a midpoint of 45) and DPS General Support subscale score (mean of 20.27, with a midpoint of 20). However, the student sample, on average, supported the death penalty, as measured by the RATDP (mean of 48.77), but not as measured by the DPS General Support subscale (mean of 19.82).

Finally, a series of bivariate correlations were calculated to examine the relationships among the study variables for the non-student and student samples (see Table 4). Of all other measures, the RATDP total scores had the highest correlation with the VS total scores (revenge) for the non-student and student samples ($r = .369$; $r = .334$, respectively). The VS total score (revenge) was also highly negatively correlated to the HFS total score (dispositional forgiveness) for both non-students ($r = -.54$) and students ($r = -.51$), a finding that is theoretically sound.

Missing Data. It was fairly uncommon for the non-student participants to leave items blank or report that they preferred to not answer an item. Of the non-student sample utilized in the exploratory factor analysis ($n = 401$; Stage 2), data from one case
was removed because the participant left several RATDP items blank. One participant from the remaining non-student sample utilized in the confirmatory factor analysis \((n = 357; \text{Stage 3})\), was responsible for all missing data in that analysis. This case was also removed from the analysis. Finally, of the portion of the non-student sample utilized in the moderation (Stage 5) and supplemental regression (Stage 6) analyses \((n = 357)\), up to 10 of the participants \((2.8\%)\) had missing data on one or more values. Given that these participants represented less than 5% of the total sample size, they were excluded from all analyses using list-wise deletion.

Table 4

Summary of Intercorrelations for the Total Scores of the Study Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. RATDP</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>-.134*</td>
<td>.369***</td>
<td>.241***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. HFS</td>
<td>-.125**</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>-.540***</td>
<td>.163**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. VS</td>
<td>.334***</td>
<td>-.507***</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>-.178**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. RRF</td>
<td>.052</td>
<td>.167***</td>
<td>-.163***</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Intercorrelations for non-student participants \((N = 356)\) are presented above the diagonal; intercorrelations for student participants \((N = 460)\) are presented below the diagonal. RATDP = 18-item Revised Attitudes Towards the Death Penalty Scale (see Stages 2 & 3 below for explanation of RATDP measure development); HFS = Heartland Forgiveness Scale; VS = Vengeance Scale; RRF = Revised Religious Fundamentalism Scale. *\(p < .05\). **\(p < .01\). ***\(p < .001\).*

It was more common for the student participants to leave items blank. In the confirmatory factor analysis of the RATDP utilizing the student data (Stage 3), 1 participant of the 461 cases was responsible for all missing data. This case was removed from the analysis. In this same portion of the student sample \((n = 460)\) utilized in the moderation (Stage 5) and supplemental regression (Stage 6) analyses, 80 participants \((17.35\%)\) had missing data on at least one variable. Most of these participants \((n = 76)\)
left the Political Conservatism item blank or indicated that they were unaware of where their political views fell on the conservatism spectrum. Given the large number of participants with missing data, choosing a listwise deletion method could be problematic, particularly if the missing data are not missing completely at random (MCAR; Allison, 2002; Enders, 2010). Separate variance \( t \)-tests and Little’s MCAR test (Little, 1998) were utilized to determine if there were any notable patterns in the missing data of this sample (Little’s MCAR test: \( \chi^2 (19) = 14.50, p = .75 \)); they revealed that the missing data was MCAR. Since the data was MCAR, missing data for the student sample for all analyses in Stages 5 and 6 was handled using listwise deletion.

**Primary Statistical Analyses**

*Stage 2: Exploratory Factor Analysis on RATDP.* The first research question asks, “What is the factor structure of the Revised Attitudes Towards the Death Penalty Scale (RATDP)?” It was hypothesized that following an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) of the RATDP, a multifaceted factor structure would be identified (Hypothesis 1A). To investigate the underlying factor structure of the RATDP, an EFA was conducted on a portion of the sample of non-student American adults (\( N = 400 \)). More specifically, a principal factor analysis was utilized for extraction because the purpose of the analysis was to estimate the underlying factors of the RATDP; an oblique rotation method was used based on the assumption that the resultant factors would be correlated. An initial factor analysis supported a five-factor model using Kaiser’s criterion of 1 and explained 63.41% of the variance (see Table 5 for the initial eigenvalues and explained variance for the unrotated factors). Based on the points of inflexion, the initial scree plot appeared to support a three, four, or five factor model. Both a parallel analysis (i.e., the
comparison of each eigenvalue with a randomly generated eigenvalue with the same characteristics; Horn, 1965) and minimum average partial (MAP) test (i.e., supports retaining the number of factors which minimizes the average partial correlations between the variables after removing the effect of the factors; Velicer, 1976) were also conducted as additional methods of identifying the number of factors to extract. The parallel analysis (SPSS syntax created by O’Conner, 2000) supported a six-factor model; the MAP test, updated by Velicer, Eaton, and Fava (2000; SPSS syntax created by O’Conner, 2000), supported a five-factor model. Based on these findings, it appeared that the choice of factor solution was a four, five, or six-factor model.

Subsequent analyses using identical extraction and rotation methods were conducted constraining the number of factors to three, four, five, and six factors. The three-factor model appeared too simplistic and had factors that were hard to interpret so it was discarded. The four, five, and six-factor models were more complex and the most interpretable. When comparing these models, the six-factor model explained slightly more total variance (65.92%) than the five-factor (63.41%) or four-factor models (60.72%). However, the five-factor model had a more reasonable interpretation (i.e., the factors were understandable, there was a more equal spread of items between the factors, and the items had higher loadings onto their respective factors) than the six-factor or four-factor models. The five-factor model was retained given that it was (a) the most interpretable factor structure, (b) supported by the scree plot, MAP test, and Kaiser’s criterion of 1, and (c) more parsimonious than the six-factor model.

Within the retained five factor model, further item deletion occurred for those items that either had a factor loading lower than .40 on their respective factor or loaded at
or above .40 on more than one factor. The minimum factor loading of .40 was chosen based on recommendations by Stevens (2009) and Myers, Gamst, and Guarino (2013). After items that did not meet the factor loading requirements were successively removed after several iterations, a total of 26 items remained.

Table 5

*Initial Eigenvalues and Explained Variance from a Primary Factor Analysis of the Revised Attitudes Towards the Death Penalty Scale (RATDP)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Eigenvalue</th>
<th>% of variance</th>
<th>Cumulative %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>18.14</td>
<td>45.36</td>
<td>45.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>7.18</td>
<td>52.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.01</td>
<td>5.03</td>
<td>57.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>60.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>63.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>65.99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further analysis of the extent to which these 26 items related to one another revealed a problem: several items, particularly in the first factor, were so highly correlated ($r < .8$) that extreme multicollinearity was a concern. For example, the item, “It is immoral for society to take a human life, no matter the circumstances,” loaded on factor 1; however, it was highly correlated with four other items that loaded onto factor 1. Extreme multicollinearity causes problems with interpreting the factors as it is impossible to distinguish the unique contributions of each highly correlated item on their respective factors (Field, 2009). As such, a total of 8 additional items were removed that were
highly correlated (and conceptually very similar or identical) with other items. For example, the item, “The possibility of being executed serves as a deterrent against committing violent crimes,” was removed from factor 4 due to its strong correlation and content similarity with the item, “Giving the death penalty to serial killers or murderers of horrific crimes is one method that the state can use to discourage future heinous murders.” Removing these additional items generated an R-matrix determinant that was not indicative of multicollinearity.

A final exploratory factor analysis, utilizing the 18 retained items, was conducted and constrained to five factors. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (KMO) for the final analysis was classified as “superb” (KMO = .92; Hutcheson & Sofroniou, 1999), indicating that the sample size is large enough to provide a reliable factor analysis. Moreover, Bartlett’s test of sphericity was significant, $\chi^2 (153) = 4482.11, p < .001$, indicating that inter-item correlations were large enough for the principal factor analysis. The final 18 item, five-factor model of the RATDP explained 74.29% of the total variance and supported Hypothesis 1A that proposes that death penalty attitudes are a multifaceted construct. Table 6 shows item communalities and the pattern matrix for the five-factors of the RATDP Scale.

Each of the factors from the five-factor model was labeled based on the apparent theme of its items. Factor 1, labeled Abolitionist Arguments, is composed of 6 items concerning the rationales frequently endorsed by opponents of the death penalty, including more general statements of dissent (e.g., “No civilized society permits capital punishment”) as well as more specific reasons (e.g., brutalization effect, religious/moral beliefs). An example item is “Being sentenced to death for a horrific crime is too easy
Table 6

*Item Communalities and Pattern Matrix of Factor Loadings for the Five-Factor Model of the RATDP*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Communality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A murderer may “deserve” to die, but humans cannot objectively</td>
<td>.910</td>
<td>.099</td>
<td>-.035</td>
<td>-.091</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>.754</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>determine who should die because of our biases.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that it is morally wrong to have the power to take anyone’s</td>
<td>.820</td>
<td>-.024</td>
<td>-.001</td>
<td>.022</td>
<td>-.067</td>
<td>.751</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>life, regardless of the reasoning or the suspected crime.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The death penalty goes against my beliefs about the importance of</td>
<td>.798</td>
<td>-.046</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>-.021</td>
<td>-.012</td>
<td>.615</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>forgiving others for their wrongdoings.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laws permitting the death penalty continue a harmful cycle by using</td>
<td>.794</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>.046</td>
<td>-.057</td>
<td>.739</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>violence to punish violence.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No civilized society permits capital punishment.</td>
<td>.712</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>-.030</td>
<td>.153</td>
<td>.023</td>
<td>.633</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being sentenced to death for a horrific crime is too easy and quick</td>
<td>.577</td>
<td>.030</td>
<td>.084</td>
<td>.093</td>
<td>-.034</td>
<td>.503</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of a punishment; a person who committed murder should be made</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to spend the rest of their life behind bars.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One major disadvantage of the death penalty is the possibility that</td>
<td>.037</td>
<td>.781</td>
<td>.076</td>
<td>.040</td>
<td>.047</td>
<td>.632</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>an innocent person may be executed.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If a defendant on death row wants a DNA test of evidence, the state</td>
<td>.059</td>
<td>.675</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>-.082</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>.456</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>should automatically grant it.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If there is any doubt about a defendant’s guilt, he or she should</td>
<td>-.088</td>
<td>.418</td>
<td>-.081</td>
<td>.153</td>
<td>-.269</td>
<td>.356</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not be executed.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is no sentence that truly means “life without parole;” unless</td>
<td>-.065</td>
<td>.031</td>
<td>.913</td>
<td>-.009</td>
<td>-.059</td>
<td>.838</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>an offender is put to death, they could always get out of prison one</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>day.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6 (continued).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Those sentenced to life imprisonment usually get out on parole.</td>
<td>.032  .016 .634 .051 -.023 .470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving the death penalty to serial killers or murderers of horrific crimes is one method that the state can use to discourage future heinous murders.</td>
<td>.038 -.002 .058 .844 .109 .717</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The only way to control some potential crime is to enforce the death penalty.</td>
<td>.092 .071 .123 .756 .035 .774</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Eye for an eye” is the only way criminals will know that society is serious about protecting its citizens.</td>
<td>.009 -.006 -.067 .733 -.157 .630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any person convicted of premeditated murder, no matter their race, gender, age, or level of income should be considered to receive the death penalty.</td>
<td>.231 -.127 .171 .458 -.152 .631</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is wrong to sentence a person diagnosed with mental retardation to death.</td>
<td>.049 -.015 .100 .001 -.822 .793</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am against the execution of a defendant who committed a crime when they were suffering from a severe mental illness, such as schizophrenia.</td>
<td>.114 .050 .136 -.035 -.751 .793</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No matter the severity of the crime, any offender under the age of 18 should not receive the death penalty.</td>
<td>.212 .094 -.001 .123 -.491 .570</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Factors include, in order: Abolitionist Arguments, Innocence Concerns, Life Imprisonment Viability, Support Statements, and Sanction Exceptions. Items are sorted by size, with higher factor loadings within each respective factor presented first. The highest factor loading for each item is bolded.

and quick of a punishment; a person who committed murder should be made to spend the rest of their life behind bars.” Factor 2, labeled Innocence Concerns, consists of 3 items that discuss the possibility of executing an innocent person or advocate for the use of
DNA testing if requested by the defendant. An example item is, “If there is any doubt about a defendant’s guilt, he or she should not be executed.”

Factor 3, labeled Life Imprisonment Viability, is composed of 2 items that suggest that a life imprisonment sentence is not a viable alternative to the death penalty. An example item is, “Those sentenced to life imprisonment usually get out on parole.”

Factor 4, labeled Support Statements, includes 4 items that reflect many of the rationales used by proponents of the death penalty to justify their stance (e.g., efficacy of sanction as a deterrent, utility of sanction to maintain law and order, societal retribution). An example item is “‘Eye for an eye’ is the only way criminals will know that society is serious about protecting its citizens.” Factor 5, labeled Sanction Exceptions, includes 3 items concerning types of defendants that may be exempt from receiving a death sentence (e.g., cognitively impaired, those with a severe mental illness, juveniles). An example item is “I am against the execution of a defendant who committed a crime when they were suffering from a severe mental illness, such as schizophrenia.”

Stage 3: Confirmatory Factor Analyses on the RATDP. Hypothesis 1B proposes that following a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using novel data from a nonstudent American adult sample, the resulting factor structure of the RATDP will demonstrate a reasonably good fit with the model identified in the previous EFA. To test this hypothesis and further evaluate the factor structure of the RATDP, a CFA was conducted on a nonstudent American adult sample (i.e., the unexamined portion of data from the non-student sample; $N = 356$) using the statistical program Amos (Version 23.0.0). More specifically, the five-factor model of the RATDP found in the abovementioned EFA was replicated in Amos. The CFA was conducted using maximum likelihood estimation, a
commonly used estimation technique that estimates the values of the model parameters in such a way that results in the highest likelihood of a match between the proposed model and the data (Myers et al., 2013).

In order to determine the goodness-of-fit between the proposed 5-factor model of the RATDP and the data, several fit indices were examined. The CFA produced a significant chi-square statistic ($\chi^2 = 279.15, df = 125, p < .001$), which indicates that there is a significant difference between the saturated model (i.e., an unconstrained model that fits the data perfectly) and the proposed model. Therefore, according to the chi-square test, the proposed model is a poor fit for the data. However, many researchers have deemed the sole use of the chi-square test to determine model fit as problematic, particularly because it is overly sensitive to sample size (i.e., samples over 200 usually have too much statistical power and so the chi-square test may detect very trivial differences; Bentler, 1990; Joreskog & Sorbom, 1996) and large correlations in the model (Kenny, 2014). As such, although the chi-square test indicated a poor fit of the model with the data, additional fit indices were examined.

The other examined fit indices, including both absolute (CMIN/$df$, GFI, RMSEA) and a relative fit index (CFI), overwhelmingly indicated that the proposed five-factor model of the RATDP had a “good” or “acceptable” fit with the data. For instance, dividing the chi-square value by the degrees of freedom (CMIN/$df$) helps to balance the aforementioned problems with using the chi-square test with a large sample. CMIN/$df$ values that are less than 3 suggest a “good” fit and values between 3 and 5 are considered to suggest a “permissible” fit (Bollen & Curran, 2003). The CMIN/$df$ for the proposed model is 2.233, indicating a good fit. The goodness of fit index (GFI) provides a value
that reflects the proportion of variance in the sample correlation/covariance for which the proposed model accounts. GFI values range from 0 (no fit) to 1 (perfect fit); values greater than .90 are indicative of an acceptable model (Myers et al., 2013). With these cutoffs, the GFI value of .921 indicates that the hypothesized model is acceptable.

A widely utilized absolute fit index is the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). The RMSEA reflects the degree to which a lack of fit is present based on the chi-square value, the degrees of freedom, and the sample size. Although it uses the chi-square value, RMSEA’s inclusion of the estimated error of the population permits it to be relatively independent of sample size, and it is therefore viewed as a less-biased fit indicator. There appear to be many different guidelines for the interpretation of RMSEA; however, generally speaking, values of less than .01 indicate excellent fit, values between .01 and .05 indicate good fit, values between .05 and .08 indicate an acceptable or reasonable fit, values between .08 and .10 indicate questionable fit, and values greater than .10 indicate unacceptable fit (Browne & Cudeck, 1993; MacCallum, Browne, & Sugawara, 1996). The hypothesized five-factor model generated a RMSEA of .059 (90% CI = .050-.068), indicating an acceptable fit of the proposed model with the data.

Besides the absolute fit indices, one relative fit index was examined. Relative fit indices compare the null or independence model (i.e., the worst possible model for the data that assumes there are no relationships in the data) to the saturated model (i.e., the best fitting model for the data) to determine the fit of the hypothesized model, on a continuum from 0 (no fit) to 1 (perfect fit; Myers et al., 2013). Generally speaking, values greater than .90 or .95 suggest an acceptable fit between the model and data. The
comparative fit index (CFI), a commonly utilized relative fit index that adjusts for sample size, was .959, indicating a good fit (Byrne, 2001; Knight, Virdin, Ocampo, & Roosa, 1994).

To identify any poor-fitting items that may require removal from the model, the standardized regression weights, or factor loadings, of each item were examined. None of the 18 items loaded poorly (i.e., had estimates less than .40) on their respective factors (see Table 7 for a list of the factor loadings); therefore, no paths were identified that necessitated removal from the model. In order to illuminate other potential model alterations, or respecifications, the modification indices were examined. The modification indices included several recommendations for adding correlations and paths to the model, but none of these suggestions made theoretical sense or would greatly improve the fit of the model. As such, the five-factor model was not respecified in any way; the underlying factor structure and item content resultant from the aforementioned EFA was retained.

In sum, the chi-square test was the only fit index that indicated that the model had a poor fit with the data, with the other absolute and all relative fit indices suggesting an acceptable-to-good fit of the proposed model with the data. Relying on the chi-square test as an indicator of model fit is problematic for the current study, particularly because of the large sample size. Furthermore, an examination of the factor loadings of the items and modification indices did not reveal any necessary changes for the model. In light of the reasonably good fit of the five-factor model of the RATDP in a sample of nonstudent American adults, demonstrated by a variety of absolute and relative fit measures, Hypothesis 1B was supported.
Hypothesis 1C states that following a CFA using a novel dataset from a college student sample, the resulting factor structure of the RATDP will demonstrate a reasonably good fit with the five-factor model identified earlier in the EFA. Similar to the CFA conducted on the nonstudent sample, this analysis was conducted in Amos (Version 23.0.0) using maximum likelihood estimation ($N = 460$). Several fit indices were examined to determine the level of fit between the proposed five-factor model and the data. The chi-square test was significant ($\chi^2 = 313.34$, $df = 125$, $p < .001$), indicating that the proposed model is a poor fit for the data. However, in light of the previously cited concerns about using the chi-square test with large sample sizes, the fit of the five-factor model was largely determined using other fit indices.

Besides the chi-square test, all other absolute fit indices indicated good or adequate fit. The CMIN/df was 2.51, which is below the cutoff of 3, indicating a good fit of the model with the data (Bollen & Curran, 2003). The GFI was also examined; based on the earlier mentioned cutoff of .90, the GFI value of .928 indicates that the proposed model is acceptable (Myers et al., 2013). The last absolute fit index that was examined was the RMSEA. The RMSEA value for this analysis was .057 (90% CI = .049-.065), indicating an acceptable fit of the hypothesized model with the data (Browne & Cudeck, 1993; MacCallum et al., 1996). Finally, the CFI, a commonly used relative fit index, was examined. The CFI value for the current model was .921, indicating a good fit using the guidelines explicated above (Byrne, 2001; Knight, Virdin, Ocampo, & Roosa, 1994).

Next, standardized regression weights (i.e., factor loadings) of each item and the possible modification indices were examined to determine if the model could be improved by item deletion, the removal or addition of a correlation, and/or the removal or addition of a
Table 7

*Completely Standardized Loadings of Items on Factors for Non-Student and Student Samples*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Abolitionist Arguments</th>
<th>Innocence Concerns</th>
<th>LI Viability</th>
<th>Support Statements</th>
<th>Sanction Exceptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N-S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>N-S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>N-S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deserve</td>
<td>.849</td>
<td>.718</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morally Wrong</td>
<td>.895</td>
<td>.820</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forgiving</td>
<td>.730</td>
<td>.746</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmful Cycle</td>
<td>.866</td>
<td>.687</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civilized</td>
<td>.808</td>
<td>.478</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too Easy</td>
<td>.658</td>
<td>.506</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innocent Person</td>
<td></td>
<td>.722</td>
<td>.735</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DNA Test</td>
<td></td>
<td>.658</td>
<td>.681</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doubt</td>
<td></td>
<td>.659</td>
<td>.446</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Sentence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.777</td>
<td>.563</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.680</td>
<td>.671</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discourage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.802</td>
<td>.687</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.856</td>
<td>.795</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eye for an Eye</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.791</td>
<td>.466</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any Person</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.748</td>
<td>.707</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Retardation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.876</td>
<td>.717</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Illness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.834</td>
<td>.693</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of 18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.725</td>
<td>.510</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Non-student sample loadings are presented in the N-S columns; Student sample loadings are presented in the S columns. Items are labeled by keyword for identification, but appear in the same order as in Table 6. All loadings are significant \((p < .001)\). LI Viability = Life Imprisonment Viability.
path. Reviewing the standardized regression weights revealed no items eligible for deletion from the model: all factor loadings loaded onto their respective factor at higher than the .40 level. Any potential changes to the model suggested in the modification indices were not viable as they did not make theoretical sense and/or would not significantly improve the fit of the model. Overall, similar to the results of the CFA with the nonstudent sample, all fit indices, with the exception of the chi-square test, indicated that the proposed five-factor model appears to have an acceptable or good fit with the data. Therefore, Hypothesis 1C, proposing that the five-factor model of the RATDP would demonstrate a reasonably good fit in a sample of college students, was supported.

All further analyses were conducted using the aforementioned five-factor model of the RATDP. Total scores for the measure were calculated (i.e., RATDP total score) as well as each of the five factor scores (i.e., Abolitionist Arguments, Innocence Concerns, Life Imprisonment Viability, Support Statements, & Sanction Exceptions) by (a) reverse scoring all items in the Abolitionist Arguments, Innocence Concerns, and Sanction Exceptions factors, and (b) summing the score of the items for each respective factor (item scores can range from 1 to 5). As such, the RATDP total score could range from 0 to 90. Similarly, ranges were calculated for each factor score (Abolitionist Arguments score range = 0-30; Innocence Concerns score range = 0-15; Life Imprisonment Viability score range = 0-10; Support Statements score range = 0-20; Sanction Exceptions score range = 0-15). For the total score and each subscale scores on the RATDP, higher scores reflect higher levels of support for the death penalty or lower levels of support for anti-
death penalty rationales. The directions and items of the RATDP are equivalent to approximately a 9th to 10th grade reading level (i.e., Flesch-Kincaid grade level = 9.9).

*Measurement Model Invariance Testing.* Although the data from both college student and nonstudent samples appeared to fit well with the five-factor model of the RATDP in the CFAs, supplemental model invariance, or equivalence, analyses were conducted to determine if there were significant differences in the factor-structure or factor loadings between both samples. Invariance testing was examined in two steps, configural invariance (i.e., determined whether or not the factor structure of the RATDP fit both non-student and student groups when analyzed together and without constraints) and metric invariance testing (i.e., determined whether or not the magnitude of the loadings on each RATDP factor is similar across non-student and student groups; see Table 8 for review). Amos software (Version 23.0.0) was utilized for both multi-group modeling procedures. The configural invariance test provides goodness-of-fit indices that are interpreted to determine the fit of the multi-group model. The current data evidence a reasonably well-fitting multi-group model ($\chi^2 = 592.51$, $df = 250$, $p < .001$; GFI = .925; RMSEA = .041, 90% CI = .037-.045; CFI = .944). Specifically, this indicates that the five-factor model of the RATDP has an acceptable fit across the non-student and student participants, suggesting configural invariance.

In metric invariance testing, a series of constraints are placed on the model. Amos automatically places constraints, in a step-wise fashion, on the factor loadings, variance of the latent variables, and residual item variances of the model (see Table 8 for the differentiation between weak, strong, and strict metric invariance). Each level of metric invariance is determined successively if a chi-square difference test on the $\chi^2$
values of the unconstrained and constrained models are not significant. First, to
determine if weak invariance testing was present in the multi-group model, the $\chi^2$ of the
constrained model (in which factor loadings were constrained) was compared to the $\chi^2$ of
the unconstrained model. The constrained model produced a $\chi^2$ value of 666.26 ($df =
263, p < .001$). The chi-square difference test between the unconstrained and constrained
models was significant ($\chi^2 = 73.75, df = 13, p < .001$), indicating that weak metric
invariance is not present. That is, the magnitude of the factor loadings differ between
non-student and student participants. Since weak metric invariance between students and
non-student models was not supported, no additional metric invariance tests (e.g., strong,
strict) were conducted. In sum, although configural invariance of the non-student and
student groups was found, given that the metric invariance of the model was not similarly
supported, the remainder of the analyses (Stages 4 – 6) were conducted on both non-
student and student datasets separately.

Table 8

Invariance Testing Review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Baseline Model</th>
<th>Parameters Constrained to be Equal</th>
<th>$\Delta \chi^2$ Test</th>
<th>Type of Invariance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Configural</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Configural Invariance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metric Invariance 1</td>
<td>Factor loadings</td>
<td>$\Delta \chi^2 M1-M0$</td>
<td>Weak Metric Invariance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metric Invariance 2</td>
<td>Factor loadings and item intercepts</td>
<td>$\Delta \chi^2 M2-M1$</td>
<td>Strong Metric Invariance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metric Invariance 3</td>
<td>Factor loadings, item intercepts, and residual item variances/covariances</td>
<td>$\Delta \chi^2 M3-M2$</td>
<td>Strict Metric Invariance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Significance on the $\chi^2$ difference test when examining any level of metric invariance indicates that the constrained and unconstrained models are significantly different, and therefore not invariant.*
RATDP Reliability. Table 9 contains the reliability statistics for the total RATDP score as well as the five factors extracted from the measure for both students and nonstudents. The internal consistencies for the RATDP total score were acceptable for both nonstudent and student participants ($\alpha = .93$, $\alpha = .84$, respectively). Among the nonstudent participants, reliability statistics for each of the factors were acceptable (ranging from $\alpha = .71$ [Innocence Concerns] to $\alpha = .92$ [Abolitionist Arguments]). However, the internal consistencies of the five factors for students were fairly low (ranging from $\alpha = .59$ [Life Imprisonment Viability] to $\alpha = .82$ [Abolitionist Arguments]).

Table 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>No. of Items</th>
<th>Internal Consistency ((\alpha))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Abolitionist Arguments</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Innocence Concerns</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Life Imprisonment Viability</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Support Statements</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Sanction Exceptions</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RATDP Total Score</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>.93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stage 4: Construct Validity of the RATDP. Hypothesis 2 proposes that the RATDP total score will have at least a low to moderate positive correlation with another measure of death penalty attitudes, O’Neil and colleagues’ (2004) Death Penalty Scale. In order to investigate this, a series of Pearson correlation coefficients (\(r\)) were examined; the strength of each correlation was interpreted based on Cohen’s (1988) guidelines (i.e.,
absolute value of coefficients ranging from 0 to .10 are uncorrelated, absolute value of coefficients from .10 to .30 represent a low correlation, absolute value of coefficients from .30 to .50 represent a medium correlation, and absolute value of coefficients .50 or higher represent a high correlation).

For both the non-student and student samples, the intercorrelations between the RATDP total and subscale scores were first examined (see Table 10 for the non-student sample and Table 11 for the student sample). For the non-student sample \((N = 356)\), the RATDP total score was highly correlated with each subscale score except Innocence Concerns, which represented a medium correlation \((r = .47)\). Among the subscales, Abolitionist Arguments and Support Statements were the most related \((r = .80)\), followed by Support Statements and Sanction Exceptions \((r = .63)\) and Abolitionist Arguments and Sanction Exceptions \((r = .61)\). All other relationships between the RATDP subscales reflected a low to medium correlation, with Innocence Concerns having the overall lowest correlations with the other RATDP subscales. For the student sample \((N = 460)\), the RATDP total score was highly correlated with the Abolitionist Arguments, Support Statements, and Sanction Exceptions subscale score \((r = .84, r = .75, r = .72, \text{respectively})\) and moderately correlated with Innocence Concerns and Life Imprisonment Viability \((r = .46, r = .35, \text{respectively})\). No subscales were highly correlated with each other in the student sample and Innocence Concerns was uncorrelated with Life Imprisonment Viability and Support Statements. Overall, when examining the intercorrelations of the RATDP total and subscale scores for non-students and students, it is apparent that the strength of the relationships in the non-student sample was greater than the student sample.
Table 10

Correlations between RATDP Total and Factor Scores and DPS Factor Scores in a Non-Student Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>RATDP Total Score</th>
<th>Abol. Arguments</th>
<th>Innocence Concerns</th>
<th>LI Viability</th>
<th>Support Statements</th>
<th>Sanction Exceptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RATDP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Score</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abol. Arguments</td>
<td>.91***</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innocence Concerns</td>
<td>.47***</td>
<td>.24***</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LI Viability</td>
<td>.50***</td>
<td>.30***</td>
<td>.20***</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Statements</td>
<td>.91***</td>
<td>.80***</td>
<td>.28***</td>
<td>.41***</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanction Exceptions</td>
<td>.80***</td>
<td>.61***</td>
<td>.47***</td>
<td>.33***</td>
<td>.63***</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Support</td>
<td>.89***</td>
<td>.88***</td>
<td>.28***</td>
<td>.34***</td>
<td>.85***</td>
<td>.63***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retribution &amp; Revenge</td>
<td>.64***</td>
<td>.57***</td>
<td>.28***</td>
<td>.31***</td>
<td>.62***</td>
<td>.52***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DP Is a Deterrent</td>
<td>.74***</td>
<td>.65***</td>
<td>.32***</td>
<td>.32***</td>
<td>.77 ***</td>
<td>.52 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DP Is Cheaper</td>
<td>.52***</td>
<td>.49***</td>
<td>.14***</td>
<td>.30***</td>
<td>.51***</td>
<td>.39***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LWOP Allows Parole</td>
<td>.43***</td>
<td>.25***</td>
<td>.24***</td>
<td>.72***</td>
<td>.35***</td>
<td>.34***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11

Correlations between RATDP Total and Factor Scores and DPS Factor Scores in a Student Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RATDP Total Score</th>
<th>RATDP Total Score</th>
<th>Abol. Arguments</th>
<th>Innocence Concerns</th>
<th>LI Viability</th>
<th>Support Statements</th>
<th>Sanction Exceptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Score</td>
<td>.84***</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abolitionist</td>
<td>.46***</td>
<td>.24***</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arguments</td>
<td>.45***</td>
<td>.12**</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innocence</td>
<td>.35***</td>
<td>.12**</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.33***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerns</td>
<td>.75***</td>
<td>.48***</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.33***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Statements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LI Viability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Statements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanction Exceptions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.10*</td>
<td>.37***</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exceptions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DPS

| General Support   | .77***            | .77***          | .14**             | .23***      | .62***            | .45***            |
| Retribution & Revenge | .44***            | .35***          | .16**             | .18***      | .43***            | .25***            |
| DP Is a Deterrent | .50***            | .41***          | .09*              | .20***      | .52***            | .26***            |
| DP Is Cheaper     | .21***            | .28***          | -.18***           | .16***      | .20***            | .03               |
| LWOP Allows Parole| .33***            | .25***          | .07               | .46***      | .21***            | .18***            |

Note. N = 460. ***p < .001. **p < .01. *p < .05. LI = Life Imprisonment; LWOP = Life Without Parole; DP = Death Penalty; RATDP = Revised-Attitudes Towards the Death Penalty Scale; DPS = Death Penalty Scale, O’Neil et al. (2004).
The RATDP total score had at least a low correlation with all of O’Neil et al.’s (2004) DPS subscale scores in both the non-student and student samples. In particular, the DPS General Support subscale, a measure of one’s overall level of support for capital punishment, was highly positively correlated with the RATDP total score for non-students \((r = .89)\) and students \((r = .77)\). These findings support Hypothesis 2 and provide initial support for the validity of the RATDP total score as a measure of level of support for the death penalty.

Additional relationships were examined between the RATDP factors and DPS subscales based on similar item content. Abolitionist Arguments (note that higher scores in this factor represent higher levels of disagreement with anti-death penalty rationales) was highly positively correlated with general support in both non-student \((r = .88)\) and student \((r = .77)\) samples. Support Statements, a factor of the RATDP that includes items regarding deterrence and society’s use of retribution to maintain control, was highly correlated with the DPS subscale “Death Penalty is a Deterrent” in both nonstudent \((r = .77)\) and student \((r = .52)\) samples and was at least moderately correlated with the DPS subscale “Retribution and Revenge” in both samples.

Moreover, Life Imprisonment Viability (note that higher scores in this factor represent higher disagreement with the use of a life imprisonment sentence instead of a death sentence) was highly correlated with the DPS subscale “Life Without Parole Allows Parole” in the non-student sample \((r = .72)\) and moderately correlated with that subscale in the student sample \((r = .46)\). Finally, both Innocence Concerns (note that higher scores in this factor represent lower levels of concern about the possibility of executing an innocence) and Sanction Exceptions (note that higher scores in this factor
represent lower levels of concern about using the death penalty for juvenile, severely mentally ill, and/or cognitively impaired defendants) had mostly non-significant and low correlations with the DPS subscales. These findings likely reflect the neglect of any mention of either subject in the DPS.

**Stage 5: Moderated multiple regression analyses.** Hypothesis 3A supposes that after accounting for covariates (i.e., self-identified political conservatism, race), forgiveness (as measured by the HFS total score) will moderate the relationship between religious fundamentalism (as measured by the RRF total score) and level of support for the death penalty (as measured by the RATDP total score). Two sequential regression analyses were utilized to test this hypothesis in the non-student and student samples. For both analyses, race, a categorical variable, was dummy-coded into two variables (i.e., White [Constant] vs. Black, White [Constant] vs. Other Races) and was entered in the first block along with political conservatism. Moreover, total scores on the RRF and HFS were centered based on recommendations by Frazier, Tix, and Barron (2004); these scores were entered into the second block. Finally, the interaction term (i.e., the product of the centered RRF [predictor] and HFS [moderator] total scores) was calculated and entered into the third block.

The assumptions for sequential regression (e.g., normality, multicollinearity, homoscedasticity, independent errors) were met for both non-student and student samples. Influence statistics did not significantly skew the data for the non-student sample; however, four outliers were identified for the student sample and were removed. Table 12 displays the results of the moderation analyses for the non-student \(N = 349\) and student samples \(N = 377\). Note that a significant moderation effect is found when
Table 12

Summary of Moderated Multiple Regression for Religious Fundamentalism and Forgiveness Predicting Level of Support for the Death Penalty in Non-Student and Student Samples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>Non-students</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Students</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>$\Delta R^2$</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>$\Delta R^2$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Race</td>
<td>5.618</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.444</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Race</td>
<td>2.376</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.433</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservatism</td>
<td>3.003**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.093**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2 (First-Order Effects)</td>
<td>.158</td>
<td>.047***</td>
<td></td>
<td>.067</td>
<td>.027**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RRF</td>
<td>.006*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.058**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HFS</td>
<td>-.176***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.076*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3 (Interaction)</td>
<td>.161</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td></td>
<td>.067</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RRF x HFS</td>
<td>-.002</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001. N = 349 for non-student sample; N = 377 for student sample. RRF = Revised Religious Fundamentalism Scale; HFS = Heartland Forgiveness Scale.

there is a significant $R^2$ change coefficient when the interaction term is added into the model (Frazier et al., 2004). For the non-student sample, the total model accounted for 16.1% of the variance in level of support for the death penalty. In the student sample, the total model accounted for a mere 6.7% of the variation in level of support for the death penalty. For both samples, religious fundamentalism and forgiveness emerged as unique, significant predictors of level of death penalty support. However, the third-step
interaction was not significant for either the non-student ($\Delta R^2 = .003, p = .277, \beta = -.055$) or the student sample ($\Delta R^2 = .000, p = .962, \beta = .004$). This indicates that the relationship between religious fundamentalism and level of support for the death penalty are consistent across levels of forgiveness for both non-students and students. Therefore, Hypothesis 3A is not supported.

Hypothesis 3B posits that after accounting for covariates, revenge (as measured by the VS total score) will moderate the relationship between religious fundamentalism (as measured by the RRF total score) and level of support for the death penalty (as measured by the RATDP total score). To test this hypothesis in a non-student and student sample, two sequential regression analyses were employed. Race was dummy coded, the RRF and VS total scores were centered, and an interaction term was created (i.e., the product of the centered RRF [predictor] and HFS [moderator] total scores), and the variables were entered into each step in the same manner as discussed in the aforementioned moderation analyses. Table 13 displays the findings of both of these analyses.

The assumptions for sequential regression analysis were examined in both analyses; none were violated. Examining the influence statistics led to the identification of 3 outliers in the non-student sample and 2 outliers in the student sample. These cases were removed from the analyses. For non-students ($N = 344$), the regression model accounted for 28.3% of the variation in the outcome variable, level of support for the death penalty. In the student sample ($N = 380$), 16.4% of the variation in level of support for the death penalty were accounted for by the model. First-order effects were found for both samples; specifically, both religious fundamentalism and revenge emerged as
unique, significant predictors of death penalty support among non-students and students. However, the third-step interaction was not significant for either the non-student ($\Delta R^2 = .000, p = .899, \beta = .006$) or the student sample ($\Delta R^2 = .000, p = .946, \beta = .003$). This indicates that, for both non-students and students, the relationship between religious fundamentalism and level of support for the death penalty are consistent across levels of revenge. Therefore, Hypothesis 3B is not supported.

Table 13

**Summary of Moderated Multiple Regression for Religious Fundamentalism and Revenge Predicting Level of Support for the Death Penalty in Non-Student and Student Samples**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>$\Delta R^2$</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>$\Delta R^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Race</td>
<td>2.814</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.571</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Race</td>
<td>2.359</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.376</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservatism</td>
<td>2.894***</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.208***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 2 (First-Order Effects)</strong></td>
<td>.283</td>
<td>.183***</td>
<td>.164</td>
<td>.120***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RRF</td>
<td>.106***</td>
<td>.071**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VS</td>
<td>.273***</td>
<td></td>
<td>.169***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 3 (Interaction)</strong></td>
<td>.283</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.164</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RRF x VS</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$. $N = 344$ for non-student sample; $N = 380$ for student sample. RRF = Revised Religious Fundamentalism Scale; VS = Vengeance Scale.

Stage 6: Supplemental regression analyses. In order to examine if the constructs of forgiveness and revenge predict level of support for the death penalty, two sequential
regression analyses were conducted. It was hypothesized that after accounting for covariates, forgiveness would be negatively associated with level of support for the death penalty (Hypothesis 4A) and revenge would be positively associated with level of support for the death penalty (Hypothesis 4B) in both non-student and student samples. For both analyses, the dependent variable was the level of support for the death penalty, as measured by the RATDP total score. Political conservatism and race were entered into the first block of the analyses as control variables. Race was recoded into two dummy variables, including White (Constant) vs. Black and White (Constant) vs. Other Races. Dispositional forgiveness, as measured by the HFS total score, and revenge, as measured by the VS total score, were entered into the second block as the predictor variables of the analyses.

The results of these regression analyses can be seen in Table 14. The assumptions for sequential regression analyses were not violated. Examination of the influence statistics revealed 3 outliers in the non-student sample; these were removed from the analyses. No outliers were identified in the student sample. For the non-student sample \( (N=344) \), the total model explained 27.4% of the variance in RATDP total scores \( (R^2 = .274, F(5, 99) = 12.226, p < .001) \), with vengeance \( (\beta = .430, p < .001) \) emerging as the sole significant, unique predictor of level of support for the death penalty. Forgiveness was not significantly predictive of level of support for the death penalty \( (\beta = .058, p = .307) \).

For the student sample \( (N = 381) \), the total model explained 15.7% of the variance in RATDP total scores \( (R^2 = .157, F(3, 375) = 26.83, p < .001) \), with vengeance \( (\beta = .390, p < .001) \) emerging as the sole significant, unique predictor of level of support for
the death penalty. Similar to the non-student sample, forgiveness was not significantly predictive of level of support for the death penalty ($\beta = .107, p = .054$). The collective findings from analyses using both non-student and student samples support Hypothesis 4B; Hypothesis 4A was not supported.

Table 14

*Summary of Sequential Regression Analyses for Forgiveness and Revenge Predicting Level of Support for the Death Penalty in Non-Student and Student Samples*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>Non-students</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$\beta$</td>
<td>$R^2$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Race</td>
<td>.296</td>
<td>.037**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Race</td>
<td>.182</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservatism</td>
<td>.339***</td>
<td>.158***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HFS</td>
<td>.058</td>
<td>.107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VS</td>
<td>.430***</td>
<td>.390***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$. N = 344 for non-student sample; N = 381 for student sample. HFS = Heartland Forgiveness Scale; VS = Vengeance Scale.*
CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

Summary of Results

*Measuring Death Penalty Attitudes.* The first purpose of the current study was to continue the development of a revised, multi-item measure of death penalty support, the Revised Attitudes Towards the Death Penalty Scale (RATDP). The need for such a measure is apparent when considering the lack of a psychometrically-sound way to examine one’s level of agreement with pro and anti-death penalty sentiments. Examination of the factor structure of a previously-developed measure, the 23-item Attitudes Towards the Death Penalty Scale (ATDP; Hingula & Wrightsman, 2002), in an earlier study suggested that death penalty attitudes are likely a multi-faceted construct (i.e., a 16-item, five-factor model on the ATDP was found after conducting an EFA; Whited et al., 2014); however, the limitations of that scale (i.e., low reliability statistics, poor fit of the factor structure, non-inclusion of several important death penalty rationales) warranted a substantial revision of the ATDP. An initial step towards revising this measure included developing a preliminary 40-item version that was subjected to an EFA in the current study. The findings of the EFA supported an 18-item, 5-factor model of the RATDP, a factor structure that was then replicated in separate CFAs utilizing data from non-student and student samples.

Overall, the current investigation of the structure of the RATDP by means of factor analyses yielded five factors (i.e., Abolitionist Arguments, Innocence Concerns, Life Imprisonment Viability, Support Statements, and Sanction Exceptions) and supported the hypothesis that death penalty attitudes are multifaceted in nature
(Hypothesis 1A). The hypotheses that the model of the RATDP found in the EFA would demonstrate good fit in CFAs using a non-student (Hypothesis 1B) and student (Hypothesis 1C) sample were also supported. Abolitionist Arguments, the first identified factor, consisted of six distinct statements of opposition towards the death penalty, including both general statements (e.g., “No civilized society permits capital punishment”) as well as specific points of contention with the sentence (e.g., it is morally wrong, contributes to brutalization effect, is too easy and quick of a punishment, goes against importance of forgiving others). Because each item in the factor is reverse scored, higher scores on Abolitionist Arguments reflect lower levels of support for common anti-death penalty sentiments. The second factor, Innocence Concerns, measures one’s attitudes towards the possibility of executing an innocent person. These items are also reverse-scored; therefore, higher scores on this factor reflects a lower level of concern about executing an innocent defendant, granting requests for DNA testing, or staying an execution if any doubt exists regarding a defendant’s guilt.

Factor three, Life Imprisonment Viability, was comprised of statements measuring the extent to which one believes that a sentence of life imprisonment without the possibility of parole is a viable alternative to a death sentence. Higher scores on this factor reflect greater disagreement with the ability of a “life sentence” to completely incapacitate an offender for the remainder of his/her life. Support Statements, the fourth factor, consisted of four distinct arguments utilized by proponents of the death penalty (e.g., deterrence, maintenance of control, societal retribution); those with higher scores on this factor have higher levels of agreement with pro-death penalty rationales. Finally, Sanction Exceptions included types of defendants who may be exempt from receiving the
death penalty (e.g., the cognitively impaired, the severely mentally ill, and juveniles). Higher scores on this factor indicate higher levels of agreement with the execution of defendants with those characteristics.

Invariance testing results indicated that the five-factor model fits both samples well (i.e., support was found for configural invariance); however, there was a significant difference in the magnitude of the item factor loadings between both samples (i.e., weak metric invariance was not supported). In other words, the RATDP appears to measure a similar construct for both samples, but not the same construct. Interestingly, both the student and non-student samples had similar levels of overall death penalty support, as measured by the RATDP total score and the DPS General Support subscale score. O’Neil and colleagues (2004) likewise found no significant difference in the DPS General Support subscale scores between their non-student and student samples.

Although the non-student and student samples had similar levels of overall death penalty support (i.e., the RATDP total scores were not significantly different), many differences were found in the underlying factor scores between both samples. More precisely, compared to the non-student sample, the student sample had significantly greater levels of agreement with anti-death penalty viewpoints (i.e., lower Abolitionist Arguments score) as well as pro-death penalty viewpoints (i.e., higher Support Statements score). These findings could indicate that students generally tend to have extreme levels of agreement with pro and anti-death penalty rationales (resulting in a moderate level of support), whereas non-students generally tend to have milder levels of agreement with the arguments of both sides (producing a similarly moderate overall score). Alternatively, these findings may suggest that these two samples have opposing
death penalty support “profiles;” that is, students may generally tend to agree equally with both opposing and favorable arguments about capital punishment, while non-students may generally tend to disagree equally with the common arguments of both sides. Additionally, in the current study the student sample had significantly greater levels of disagreement with the innocence argument, the usage of life imprisonment as an alternate sentence to the death penalty, and the permitting of sanction exceptions (i.e., higher Innocence Concerns, Life Imprisonment Viability, and Sanction Exceptions scores, respectively), compared to the non-student sample. This could indicate that, when matched against non-students, students are overall less aware or concerned with the nuances of the death penalty that pose problems for its administration.

The differences in the underlying factors of death penalty attitudes noted between non-students and students could be due to differences in their cognitive processing states or traits; that is, how capital case decisions are made (e.g., the extent to which rational or experiential processes are utilized when considering evidence). Previous research on non-capital legal decision making has shown that non-student samples (e.g., community adults, jury panelists) tend to make different sentencing verdicts, favor different forms of evidence, and use different decision-making processes when compared to a college student sample (Fox, Wingrove, & Pfeifer, 2011; Keller & Wiener, 2011; McCabe & Krauss, 2011; McCabe, Krauss, & Lieberman, 2010). The extent to which these group differences apply to capital cases, however, is slightly less clear. Miller, Wood, and Chomos (2014) reported some initial evidence to support differences between the cognitive processing states of non-student and student samples when considering general death penalty attitudes; however, they unfortunately utilized a single-item to measure
death penalty support. Importantly, regardless of the reason why non-students and students may have had similar levels of overall death penalty support (i.e., RATDP total score) but significantly different levels of the underlying factors of death penalty attitudes (i.e., RATDP factor scores), these findings illustrate the notion that death penalty attitudes are multifaceted and are too complex to be accurately examined in a single item.

Although the five-factor model of the RATDP was replicated in CFAs of both non-student and student samples, the initial empirical evidence supporting the psychometric properties of the RATDP appears stronger for the non-student sample. Specifically, in the non-student sample, all internal consistency coefficients for the RATDP total and factors are in an acceptable range ($\alpha = .71-.93$). In the student sample, the RATDP factor internal consistency values were lower ($\alpha = .59-.82$), even though the RATDP total score value was acceptable ($\alpha = .84$). This indicates that the RATDP total scores have sufficient levels of reliability to be used in either sample; however, usage of RATDP factor scores should be limited to non-students until additional revisions are made that enhance the reliability of the factor scores with students. Examination of the relationships between the RATDP total and factor scores and O’Neil et al.’s (2004) DPS factor scores in both non-students and students reveals initial evidence to support the convergent validity of the RATDP total score (Hypothesis 2). Additionally, the moderate to high correlations found in both samples between theoretically-similar RATDP and DPS factors (i.e., Abolitionist Arguments and DPS General Support; Support Statements and DPS General Support; Life Imprisonment Viability and DPS LWOP Allows Parole; Support Statements and DPS DP is a Deterrent) also lends support for the convergent

When comparing the RATDP with its predecessor (i.e., the 16-item ATDP; Whited et al., 2014), there are some notable similarities. Both measures are of similar length and both have a five-factor model. There were five items that remained unaltered between the ATDP and RATDP and two items that were only slightly revised. There are also several similarities between the factors of both versions; for example, both the ATDP and RATDP have factors reflecting pro-death penalty and anti-death penalty arguments and both versions have a “Sanction Exceptions” factor. Although there is some overlap between RATDP and ATDP, there are many indications which suggest that the RATDP is an improvement compared to its predecessor. The RATDP total score as well as the majority of the RATDP factor scores for both non-students and students have better internal consistency values than the ATDP. Several ATDP items had low communality and/or factor loadings, problems that do not exist with the RATDP for either sample. Unlike the results of the CFA on the five-factor model of the ATDP, the RATDP’s five factor model was confirmed in both non-student and student samples. Finally, the RATDP’s item content emphasizes several salient death penalty rationales that were not part of the ATDP, including societal retribution, the morality of the sanction, the potential of executing an innocent person, the sentencing of juveniles and defendants with severe mental illnesses, and forgiveness.

*Religious Fundamentalism, Forgiveness, and Revenge as Predictors of Death Penalty Support.* The second purpose of the current study was to further investigate the relationship between religious fundamentalism, forgiveness, and revenge. It was
expected that forgiveness and revenge would separately moderate the relationship between religious fundamentalism and level of death penalty support (Hypotheses 3A and 3B); yet, these hypotheses were not supported for either the non-student or student samples. In other words, the results from the current study suggest that the relationship between religious fundamentalism and death penalty support is consistent across levels of forgiveness and revenge. No previous research has examined the ability of forgiveness or revenge to moderate the religious fundamentalism-death penalty support relationship. However, Unnever and Cullen (2006) found that affiliates of fundamentalist Christian denominations are more likely to possess retributive beliefs (e.g., viewing God as a harsh, punitive deity) and beliefs about the importance of forgiveness than affiliates of more liberal denominations. They postulated that this conflicting belief system (e.g., possessing both retributive and forgiving beliefs) could create ambiguity and subsequently weaken fundamentalists’ level of support for the death penalty.

The current study found no empirical support for Unnever and Cullen’s proposed relationship. First and foremost, the failure to find a moderating effect of either forgiveness or revenge could indicate that these variables are not particularly meaningful in helping to understand the basis for a religious fundamentalist’s level of death penalty support. It could also be, at least in part, because different strategies were used in the current study to measure all of the different variables (i.e., religious fundamentalism, forgiveness, retribution, death penalty support) than used by Unnever and Cullen. Of particular note is the difference in how religious fundamentalism was operationalized between both studies: Unnever and Cullen used affiliation with a Christian fundamentalist denomination, a commonly utilized but problematic proxy for religious
fundamentalism, while the current study measured religious fundamentalism directly with a psychometrically-sound measure (RRF). It may be, therefore, that there is greater variability of constructs, such as forgiveness or revenge, among fundamentalist denominational affiliates such that they are able to serve as moderators in the relationship with death penalty support. Alternatively, those with higher levels of religious fundamentalism may have relatively consistent levels of forgiveness and revenge.

Moreover, it could be that the results of the forgiveness and revenge measures were contaminated, at least to some extent, by social desirability (i.e., responding to items in the manner that is perceived to be more acceptable to others). When the HFS (i.e., the measure of dispositional forgiveness utilized in the current study) was developed, Thompson and colleagues (2005) found that the HFS total score was moderately correlated with a measure of social desirability, indicating that responses to forgiveness items on that measure may be influenced by an individual’s desire to respond in a socially permissible manner. Other research has similarly found low to moderate correlations between social desirability and various types of forgiveness measures (e.g., Brose, Rye, Lutz-Zois, & Ross, 2005).

Although no research has been conducted to determine if religious fundamentalists are more likely to use impression management when responding to forgiveness measures, several forgiveness scholars have noticed a religion-forgiveness discrepancy. That is, highly religious individuals tend to report that they are highly forgiving in general (i.e., have high levels of dispositional forgiveness); however, they tend to demonstrate lower levels of the forgiveness towards a specific offense or offender (i.e., have low levels of transgression-specific forgiveness; McCullough & Worthington,
Brown and colleagues (2007) found evidence of this discrepancy in religious fundamentalists: fundamentalism was predictive of positive attitudes towards forgiveness in general but not forgiveness towards specific individuals. Therefore, it may be that some participants with higher levels of religious fundamentalism in the current study over-emphasized their levels of dispositional forgiveness due to social desirability. A quick glance at the data for both samples supports this notion: the mean HFS total scores in individuals with a high level of religious fundamentalism (i.e., scoring in the highest quartile of possible RRF scores) was approximately 11 points higher than those with lower levels of religious fundamentalism.

Similar to forgiveness measures, several measures of trait anger and revenge have also demonstrated susceptibility to social desirability. The measure of revenge utilized in the current study, the VS, has been shown to have a low correlation with social desirability in a sample of students (Greer et al., 2005; Stuckless & Goransen, 1992) and office workers (Lepofsky, 1993, as cited in Stuckless, Ford, & Vitelli, 1995) as well as moderate to high correlations with social desirability in inmate sample (Ford, Vitelli, & Stuckless, 1996; Stuckless et al., 1995). Given the many religious directives against acts of revenge or harboring vengeful attitudes towards others, it is reasonable to suggest that those with a higher level of religious fundamentalism likely have a vested interest in endorsing fewer pro-revenge attitudes. Therefore, in the current study, those with a higher level of religious fundamentalism may have under-reported their levels pro-revenge attitudes due to social desirability. The current study’s data also appear to support this notion: the mean VS total score of those participants with a high level of religious fundamentalism (i.e., scoring in the highest quartile of possible RRF scores)
was approximately 16 points lower than those with lower levels of religious fundamentalism.

There are a few studies that have linked religious fundamentalism or fundamentalist characteristics to pro-revenge attitudes, vengeful behaviors, or support for a vigilante’s revenge act against a criminal (Bensko et al., 1995; Cota-McKinley et al., 2001; Ellison & Musick, 1991; Greer et al., 2005; Miller, 2013). Interestingly, in the current study, religious fundamentalism (as measured by the RRF) had a low negative correlation with revenge (as measured by the VS) for both non-students and students. This is a dissimilar result to the aforementioned studies and indicates that as the level of religious fundamentalism increases, the level of pro-revenge attitudes decrease. This inconsistency may be another indicator of social desirability contamination or could be due to other factors (e.g., differences in how the constructs were measured, sample differences).

As explicated above, there is a possibility that social desirability may have been a contributing factor to the current study’s results that those with higher levels of religious fundamentalism possessed higher dispositional forgiveness and lower vengeance attitudes than their counterparts. However, the alternate possibility is as equally plausible: religious fundamentalists, as a group, may be more forgiving and less vengeful individuals. If that were the case, it may impact the variability needed for forgiveness and revenge to serve as moderators in religious fundamentalism and death penalty support relationship.

Although the results of the moderation analyses indicated that revenge and forgiveness are not moderators of the religious fundamentalism-death penalty support
relationship, there were significant first-order effects in the analyses for both samples, indicating that religious fundamentalism, forgiveness, and revenge are statistical predictors of level of support for the death penalty. Firstly, the current study provides convincing empirical evidence to support the previously-proposed theoretical connection between religious fundamentalism and death penalty support for both non-student and student samples. All prior studies using a non-student sample that have found a significant relationship between fundamentalism and death penalty support did not employ a psychometrically sound measure of religious fundamentalism, instead typically relying on either fundamentalist denominational affiliation (i.e., FUND; Britt, 1998; Grasmick et al., 1993; Unnever et al., 2006; Unnever & Cullen, 2007; Young, 1992) or single religious beliefs or practices (Bader et al., 2010; Miller & Hayward, 2008; Stack, 2004; Unnever & Cullen, 2006; Young, 1992) to operationalize the construct. However, these findings are suspect due to potential measurement error (both denominational affiliation and single religious beliefs/practices can, at best, only serve as proxies); therefore, the current study provides the strongest empirical evidence to date that supports the religious fundamentalism-death penalty support association for non-student American adults. The current study’s finding that religious fundamentalism is a predictor of level of death penalty support among students is dissimilar to the results of Whited et al. (2014) who found a null relationship between the two constructs. One possible explanation for these differences could be the differences in how death penalty support was measured: the current study employed the 18-item RATDP total score, while Whited et al. (2014) utilized its less-refined predecessor, the 16-item ATDP total score.
Pro-revenge attitudes were also found to be significant predictors of the levels of support for the death penalty for non-students and students, both in the moderation analyses and supplemental regression analyses. More specifically, in the current study, revenge was the strongest predictor of level of death penalty support compared to all other variables for each model in which it was included. These results, when considered in combination with other prior studies that also demonstrated a connection between pro-revengeance attitudes and death penalty attitudes (McKee & Feather, 2008; Schadt & DeLisi, 2007), indicate that the revenge and death penalty support relationship is robust.

The construct of revenge is often seen as the darker and more emotionally-laden dimension of a retributive justice orientation, especially when considering the tendencies of the vengeful to endorse disproportionately harsh punishments (von Hirsch, 1976) and/or derive emotional satisfaction from watching an offender suffer (Finckenauer, 1988). Retribution has been identified as a rationale underlying death penalty support in numerous studies (Baker, Lambert, & Jenkins, 2005; Ellsworth & Gross, 1994; Ellsworth & Ross, 1983; Firment & Geiselman, 1997; Lambert, Clarke, & Lambert, 2004; O’Neil et al., 2004; Schadt & DeLisi, 2007; Tyler & Weber, 1982), yet it is unclear if retribution is primarily motivated by desires of revenge (e.g., make the offender suffer, retaliate against the offender) or just deserts (e.g., fair and proportional punishment, providing compensation to victim(s) or society) in relation to death penalty support. In other words, do those who endorse the death penalty for reasons of retribution have stronger underlying motivations of revenge or just deserts? Gerber and Jackson (2013) found that of the two dimensions, revenge-motivated retribution alone predicted endorsement of
harsher punishment for offenders in general, but the extent to which this applies to capital punishment support has yet to be determined.

Finally, in the current study, dispositional forgiveness among non-student and student participants was also a significant predictor of level of support for the death penalty, but only in the moderation analyses. Specifically, forgiveness was not a significant predictor of level of death penalty support when placed in the same model as revenge, but it was a significant predictor when placed alongside religious fundamentalism. Due to the high negative correlation between revenge and forgiveness (i.e., $r = -.54$ for non-students, $r = -.51$ for students), it may be that revenge accounted for some of the variability that would have otherwise been accounted for by forgiveness. Additional research could be conducted in the future to determine if forgiveness is a predictor of death penalty support above and beyond the effects of revenge. The current findings, however, suggest that at least in some cases, higher levels of dispositional forgiveness are associated with lower levels of death penalty support. Other studies, utilizing shorter measures for both forgiveness and death penalty support, have demonstrated similar results (Applegate et al., 2000; Unnever & Cullen, 2006; Unnever et al., 2005).

Research Implications

*Measuring Death Penalty Attitudes.* The current study’s confirmation of the five-factor model of the RATDP in both non-student and student samples as well as findings from other studies (Harvey, 1986; O’Neil et al., 2004; Tyler & Weber, 1982) clearly indicates that death penalty attitudes are a multifaceted and complex construct. More specifically, the findings of this study strongly suggest that an individual’s attitudes
towards the death penalty are not accurately represented by measurement of his/her
general level of support for the sanction; instead, one’s level of agreement with several
underlying rationales of the sentence is also necessary. In other words, the traditionally
utilized single, binary item (e.g., “Do you favor or oppose the death penalty for persons
convicted of murder?”) that measures death penalty attitudes as a unitary construct is
inherently problematic, in a theoretical and empirical sense.

One major limitation of single item measures is that they fail to differentiate
between individuals who prefer discretionary or mandatory sentencing procedures for the
death penalty. Those who report that they “agree” or “strongly agree” to the traditional
single-item measure would likely disagree to the mandatory sentencing of the death
penalty to all convicted murderers. In fact, prior research suggests that even the
stauncest of supporters or opponents of capital punishment predominately prefer
discretionary privileges over mandatory sentencing (Ellsworth & Ross, 1983). Therefore,
only a multi-item instrument, such as the RATDP, should be utilized to measure such
complex attitudes. Secondly, single-item strategies give no indication of the underlying
rationales that form one’s stance on capital punishment. However, examination of the
RATDP factors scores clearly provides a better understanding of these rationales, thereby
helping to answer the “why” behind a person’s stance. A third major limitation of single-
item measures is that it neglects to specify what sorts of defendants “should” or “should
not” receive the death penalty. The RATDP addresses this limitation: examination of
items in the Support Statements and Sanction Exceptions factors clearly helps to begin
answering the “who” behind a person’s stance.
In the present study, there were several differences between the death penalty attitudes of the non-student and student samples (e.g., metric invariance of the RATDP five-factor structure not supported, significant differences in all RATDP factor scores). The model invariance testing revealed that the RATDP was measuring a similar, but not the same construct between non-student and student participants. Therefore, future researchers should avoid use of measures of death penalty attitudes that have only been developed using college student data on a non-student sample and avoid making generalizations about Americans’ death penalty attitudes from student data.

Finally, because both the DPS and the RATDP focus on level of death penalty support, there is some overlap between the two measures. For instance, several factors of both measures (e.g., RATDP Support Statements and DPS General Support) refer to similar arguments or have similar item content themes. The RATDP’s inclusion of the arguments commonly cited by opponents of the death penalty, however, sets the RATDP apart from the exclusively pro-death penalty themes found in the DPS. The neglect of measuring a participant’s level of agreement to both supportive and oppositional statements towards the death penalty can be problematic. For instance, a person who strongly agrees with all supportive statements about the utility of the death penalty (e.g., it is necessary, a deterrent, less costly effective than life imprisonment, a way to compensate the victim’s family) but is also aware of some of the disadvantages of the sanction (e.g., it could lead to the execution of an innocent person, continues a harmful cycle of violence, it opposes a belief in forgiveness) may generate high scores on the DPS factors (indicating high levels of support for the death penalty), but would likely generate moderate scores on the RATDP (indicating only a moderate level of support for the death penalty).
penalty). Therefore, predominately focusing on pro-death penalty arguments in a measure and thereby ignoring the salient conflicting viewpoints, as seen in the DPS, may lead to the over-inflation and/or mischaracterization of a participant’s level of support for the death penalty.

Unlike the DPS, the RATDP was also developed with the intention of having a total score (calculated by combining all the factor scores together) to be used to quantify one’s overall level of support for the death penalty. Initial evidence was found in the current study in support of the reliability and validity of the RATDP total score. The DPS was not originally developed to have a total score, but some researchers have calculated and used a total score in their research regardless (e.g., Kandola & Egan, 2014). Instead, for the DPS, one’s general level support for the death penalty appears to be measured by the four-item DPS General Support factor score. This subscale includes two general statements of support (e.g., “I think the death penalty is necessary.”) and opposition (e.g., “It is immoral for society to take a life regardless of the crime the individual has committed.”). Although a four-item scale is likely a better way to measure general level of support for the death penalty than the standard single-item approach, the utilization of the RATDP total score, which is based on the sum of 18-items, is a more comprehensive measurement approach. Therefore, researchers searching for a short scale with the capability to provide a comprehensive estimation of a participant’s overall level of support for the death penalty (based on their agreement with several specific arguments from both stances), may find the RATDP better suited for their purpose than the DPS.
Research on Predictors of Death Penalty Support. This study provides evidence that when religious fundamentalism is measured by a psychometrically sound instrument (i.e., by an instrument such as the RRF), it is statistically predictive of level of death penalty support for both non-students and students, as measured by the RATDP. Prior inconsistent findings between these two constructs could be due to measurement error, as in the case of the numerous aforementioned studies operationalizing religious fundamentalism by using denominational affiliation (e.g., FUND) or single religious beliefs or practices (e.g., Biblical literalism, harsh view of God), or differences in how death penalty support was measured, as in the case of Whited et al.’s (2014) study that utilized the ATDP. Due to the existence of many strategies that can be utilized to operationalize religious fundamentalism (some more problematic than others), future researchers should clearly discuss how they measured religious fundamentalism and specifically describe their rationale for using a proxy measure of fundamentalism, such as FUND, when there are better validated operationalization strategies.

Despite retribution being identified as the “most important contemporary pro-death argument” (p. 52; Radelet & Borg, 2000), a notion supported by the findings of the current study, there have only been a few studies that have empirically examined retribution’s utility as a statistical predictor of death penalty support. One reason why this may be the case is that participants previously viewed retribution as a less acceptable rationale for their support of the sanction than more instrumental arguments (Thomas & Foster, 1975; Vidmar & Ellsworth, 1974), thus participants and researchers alike may have neglected its importance. Perhaps a more likely explanation is that there is no common consensus regarding how retribution should be operationalized in the death
penalty attitudes literature. For example, McKee and Feather (2000) utilized the VS, which is only suited to measure the “revenge” dimension of retribution, while other researchers (e.g., Lambert et al., 2004; Whitehead & Blankenship, 2000) measured retribution with a single-item scale. Simply put, the argument of retribution has not received much consideration in the death penalty literature. Because pro-revenge attitudes were consistently the strongest predictor of level of death penalty support for all of the current study’s analyses in which the variable was included, future researchers should consider inclusion of a measure of revenge or, preferably, both dimensions of retribution in any model examining predictors of death penalty support.

Implications for Jury Selection and Capital Murder Cases

One of the most notable legal statements about the impact that a juror’s death penalty attitudes have on their sentencing decision is found in the Supreme Court’s opinion in Witherspoon v. Illinois (1968): “But in Illinois, as in other States, the jury is given broad discretion to decide whether or not death is ‘the proper penalty’ in a given case, and a juror’s general views about capital punishment play an inevitable role in any such decision” (p. 519). It appears that there is a common legal understanding that jurors’ attitudes towards the death penalty can impact their decision-making but should not be too influential. Specifically, in order to be eligible to serve as a jury member on a capital murder case, each potential juror, or venireperson, must be “death qualified.” Death qualification is not dependent on possessing a supportive stance towards capital punishment; instead, in order to be excluded from the jury of a capital case, the stance must be so firm that the potential juror believes he/she cannot make an objective decision.
Therefore, excludable jurors would include those who would never endorse a death sentence, no matter the aggravating factors of the case, as well as those who would always endorse a death sentence, regardless of any mitigating factors. The latter of the two cases is much rarer; however, in general, only a small amount of the American population are considered excludable, demonstrated by findings that 5.8% Californians indicated that they could never impose the death penalty and 2.6% indicated that they would always impose the sanction (Haney, Hurtado, & Vega, 1994). Although participants in the current study were not specifically asked questions to determine if they were death qualified, either extremely high or extremely low RATDP scores could potentially identify participants that may require additional questioning to determine excludability. Furthermore, participants with extremely high scores on the Innocence Concerns or Sanction Exceptions factors in particular (i.e., demonstrating a very low level of concern regarding the nuances that sometimes make the sentencing or administration of the death penalty difficult), may be later identified as excludable based on their inability to impose other sanctions besides the death penalty.

Based on the current study’s findings that death penalty attitudes are multifaceted, potential jurors likely possess several underlying (and perhaps competing) beliefs about the sanction that (a) they believe to differing extents and (b) form the basis for their overall stance on the death penalty. Therefore, prosecution and defense attorneys are likely to gain a better understanding of a venireperson’s death penalty attitudes by asking about his/her agreement towards several different rationales of the sanction. For example, asking potential jurors if they believe the death penalty is unfairly and disproportionately administered to minorities would provide much better information
about how venireperson’s attitudes influence their sentencing decisions (compared to solely knowing their general level of agreement with the usage of the death penalty) in a capital case involving a minority defendant. Additionally, examining the RATDP Sanction Exceptions factor score (or responses to specific items) could help identify jurors that are likely favorable for the prosecution or defense in cases in which there is a question of the defendant’s cognitive functioning or mental health.

Obtaining an understanding of a capital jury’s level of support for the death penalty, through a measure such as the RATDP, may also indicate which mitigating factors the defense may want to emphasize (or, alternatively, which aggravating factors the prosecution may want to highlight) during the sentencing phase of the trial. For example, previous research indicates that the more a participant juror supported the death penalty, the more they argued to discount the offender’s history of child abuse and alcohol abuse as potential mitigating factors in death penalty sentencing (Stevenson, Bottoms, & Diamond, 2010). Additionally, mock jurors who support the use of the death penalty are also more likely to interpret the defendant’s actions as indicative of criminal intent (Goodman-Delahunty et al., 1998).

Regarding religious beliefs, there is evidence to suggest that those with higher levels of religious fundamentalism (as measured by RRF) are 70.5% more likely to find a non-capital defendant guilty than those who are less fundamentalist (Miller & Maskaly, 2014). Therefore, Miller and Maskaly suggest that criminal defense lawyers should attempt to exclude fundamentalist jurors, even though Lieberman and Sales (2006) have demonstrated that demographic characteristics (including religious variables) and attitudinal variables only account for a small portion of predictive validity in non-capital
trial outcome. In a capital case, though, with higher stakes (i.e., the defendant may lose his/her life, not just his/her freedom), those representing the prosecution and defense are more likely to utilize every possible way to obtain the desired trial outcome.

Research suggests that death qualification processes may unfortunately be biased towards the prosecution in capital cases. Specifically, compared to their counterparts, death qualified participants appear to have a lower threshold of conviction for defendants (i.e., takes less evidence for guilt beyond a reasonable doubt to be assumed; Thompson, Cowan, Ellsworth, & Harrington, 1984) and tend to interpret evidence from the prosecution in a more favorable manner (Poulson, Wunsch, Brown, & Braithwaite, 1997; Thompson et al., 1984). Death qualification processes may also disproportionately exclude participants who tend to provide oppositional attitudes towards the death penalty; for example, death qualified participants are more likely to have supportive death penalty attitudes (Butler, 2007), disproportionately include Catholics and Protestants (Fitzgerald & Ellsworth, 1984), and disproportionately exclude Jews, atheists, and agnostics (Fitzgerald & Ellsworth, 1984). Other research has found that both Biblical literalism and religious fundamentalism are significant predictors of death qualification (Summers, Hayward, & Miller, 2010). Due to these factors, Summers and colleagues note that “the pool from which jurors in death-penalty cases may be drawn is likely to be systematically skewed toward a particular set of beliefs and attitudes” (p. 3229; Summers et al., 2010).

Considering the current study’s findings that religious fundamentalism is statistically predictive of level of death penalty support, when forgiveness or revenge is also considered, it seems clear that defense attorneys may want to strongly consider asking about an individual’s agreement with specific religious fundamentalist beliefs,
either through direct interviewing or supplemental questionnaires. Similarly, defense attorneys should attempt to select non-fundamentalist venirepersons to serve in the jury. However, of even greater importance, defense attorneys may consider examining potential jurors’ pro-revenge attitudes as that variable was the strongest predictor of death penalty support in the current study’s analyses for both non-students and students. Doing so may help defense attorneys ensure the jury is more balanced, with greater numbers of jurors holding ambivalent or oppositional attitudes towards the sanction. This is particularly important considering that the deck may already be stacked against the defendant due to death qualification procedures. Defense attorneys may also advocate for jury members to receive comprehensible instruction prior to deliberation on the importance of attempting to remain passive, objective decision-makers, thereby placing more substantive weight on the aggravating and mitigating factors to determine a death sentence, not one’s particular attitudes towards the death penalty.

Limitations and Future Directions

One limitation of the current study is the convenience sampling approach utilized for collecting non-student data. Although MTurk data is far more representative of the United States population when compared to a college student sample (Paolacci et al., 2010), there were some slight differences between the non-student sample collected and the American population (as counted in the 2010 Census), particularly the over-representation of female and White participants. It is likely that a national probability sampling method would collect more representative data; however, the data collected in the current study is likely more generalizable than studies utilizing a traditional college student samples. A second limitation is related to the characteristics of the student
sample: most student participants were religious and reported high levels of religious fundamentalism. Therefore, the student sample utilized in the current study is likely not representative of the college student population in the United States; however, it may provide a glimpse of the death penalty attitudes and religious beliefs of other college students that are either residing in the southern region of the country or have similarly strong religious beliefs.

Thirdly, participants were unfortunately not asked to complete any measure of social desirability. As such, it is difficult to determine if (or the extent to which) participants presented themselves in an overly favorable light on the measures of forgiveness or revenge and if it impacted the results of the study. Future researchers examining these variables could alleviate this concern by including a measure of social desirability as a control variable in their statistical analyses. Finally, participants were not questioned to determine if they were registered voters, jury eligible (e.g., had never committed a felony offense), or “death qualified,” so it would go beyond the scope of the data to make direct inferences about the level of death penalty support in those adults who are eligible to vote on proposed legislative acts regarding the death penalty or serve as a capital case juror.

Despite these limitations, future investigation into death penalty attitudes (and the underlying rationales that inform those attitudes) promises to be informative. There are some additional steps that could be taken to further develop the RATDP. Additional item development, particularly in factors that demonstrated low internal consistency reliability in students, could be undertaken to improve the reliability of the RATDP factors for students. Moreover, considering the current study’s findings that pro-revenge attitudes
are the strongest predictor of level of support for the death penalty, it is unfortunate that
the RATDP only has one retribution or revenge-related item (i.e., “‘Eye for an eye’ is the
only way criminals will know that society is serious about protecting its citizens.”), an
item that reflects the utility of social retribution for maintenance of law and order, not a
sense of personal vengeance. Extra items, or perhaps even another factor, could be
created to include that salient theme. Additional support for the construct validity of the
RATDP could be found by investigating how the total and factor scores correlate with a
measure of juror decision-making, such as the Pretrial Juror Attitude Questionnaire
(PJAQ; Lecci & Myers, 2008), a measure of attitudes towards the insanity defense, such
as the Insanity Defense Attitude Scale-Revised (IDAS-R; Skeem & Golding, 2001;
Skeem, Louden, & Evans, 2004), and measures of other potentially-related personality
traits (e.g., authoritarianism, dogmatism). The predictive validity of the RATDP should
also be examined, potentially by examining the RATDP’s ability to predict a death
sentence verdict in a mock capital case study. In the same vein, an interesting and “real-
world” applicable future direction of the RATDP would be to conduct analyses to
determine a cutoff score that can predict if a participant or potential juror is death
qualified.

As previously mentioned, one of the areas in which the present study was limited
was the lack of information to determine if participants are registered voters or death
qualified. Future research could be conducted to determine attitudinal differences
between the “death qualified” and “death excludable” participants in relation to the death
penalty, as measured by the RATDP. For example, answers could be found to questions
like: Do death qualified or death excludable participants have a different factor structure
of death penalty attitudes? Or, what differences exist between qualified and excludable participants in terms of the strength of their agreement towards specific arguments in support or opposition of the death penalty? Future researchers could also seek to determine if the 5-factor model structure for the RATDP is replicated among a broader student sample that would, for instance, include students from several regions of the country and/or students from a more diverse religious orientation.

Additional research may also serve to continue the clarification of the relationship between religious fundamentalism and level of support for the death penalty. For example, researchers could investigate the extent to which religious fundamentalism specifically predicts trial verdicts (i.e., the result of the innocence/guilt phase of a capital case), death sentence decisions (i.e., the result of the sentencing phase of a capital case), and/or the substantive weight those with high levels of religious fundamentalism place on either aggravating or mitigating factors in capital cases. Miller and Hayward (2008) previously found that religious fundamentalism predicted death sentences, yet their findings should be replicated due to their poor operationalization of fundamentalism.

Finally, further research can be conducted examining the relationship between death penalty support and the two other primary predictors in the current study: revenge and forgiveness. Firstly, additional research could be conducted to determine if the “just deserts” dimension of retribution is a similarly significant and/or stronger predictor of death penalty support, compared to the “revenge” dimension. Both dimensions of retribution should also be examined as potential predictors of sentencing verdicts in capital cases. Given the above-described religion-forgiveness discrepancy seen in highly religious individuals, it would be interesting to determine if one’s level of dispositional
forgiveness or level of forgiveness towards a specific defendant in a mock capital case were more predictive of sentencing verdict. Of course, if future researchers are interested in examining variables that tend to be viewed in highly positive terms, such as compassion or forgiveness, or highly negative terms, such as revenge, they should consider accounting for level of social desirability.

Conclusion

As Whitehead, Blankenship, and Wright (1999) very accurately state, “Given the literal life and death nature of capital punishment, it is important to continue research on this topic” (p. 250). This is a particularly meaningful point considering that there are instances in which judges rely on social science research when deliberating about death penalty usage or previous sentencing verdicts (see Diamond, 1993; Diamond & Casper, 1994). This study, and a growing body of literature, indicates that one’s death penalty attitudes are multifaceted and are informed by, or associated with, a variety of rationales (e.g., innocence concerns, sanction exceptions, life imprisonment viability), religious factors (e.g., religious fundamentalism), traits (e.g., dispositional forgiveness), and associated attitudes (e.g., pro-revenge attitudes). Death sentences, when completed, are irrevocable. Therefore, decisions about the usage of the death penalty, both for capital case jurors considering a death sentence as well as legislative bodies considering procedural or policy changes, are not simple and should not be made lightly. When a decision-maker (e.g., legislator, judge, attorney, juror, voter) turns to social science research to help illuminate areas of concern, it is essential that he/she can gather potentially useful information. As such, it is vital that death penalty researchers avoid problematic and overly simplistic measurement strategies to measure death penalty
support (e.g., single-item, binary measures) or religious variables (e.g., denominational affiliation) and instead rely on valid, psychometrically-sound measurement strategies when conducting research. Findings from quality death penalty research studies could challenge previously-held misconceptions about the level of public support for the death penalty and potentially serve to inform both prosecutorial and defense lawyers, judges, policy makers, and politicians.
APPENDIX A

DEMOGRAPHIC FORM

Demographic Information
Please check or circle the response or fill in the blank where appropriate

1. How old are you (in years)? ___

2. What is your gender? (circle one) M F Other

3. Which racial or ethnic group do you identify with?
   a. _______ African American/Black
   b. _______ American Indian/Native American
   c. _______ Asian/Asian American
   d. _______ Caucasian
   e. _______ Hispanic/Latino(a)
   f. _______ Biracial/Multiracial (Explain)
      __________________________________________
   g. _______ Other (Explain)
      __________________________________________

4. How are you currently classified here at the University of Southern Mississippi? (student sample only)
   a. _______ Freshman
   b. _______ Sophomore
   c. _______ Junior
   d. _______ Senior
   e. _______ Other (Explain):
       __________________________________________

5. What is the total number of years you have been in school (kindergarten through present)? _____

6. Have you ever been charged with a crime? Yes  No
   a. If yes, please list the crime(s) you have been charged with.
      __________________________________________
      __________________________________________
      __________________________________________
7. Have you ever been convicted of a crime? Yes  No  
   a. If yes, please list the crime(s) you have been convicted of.  
   ________________________________________________________________  
   ________________________________________________________________  
   ________________________________________________________________  

8. Have you ever been sentenced to time in jail or prison for a crime?  
   a. If yes, please list the type of crime(s) you were incarcerated for.  
   b. How long were you incarcerated for (total for all crimes)?  

9. Assign a numerical value that you believe best represents your political beliefs.  

   1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  
   Extremely Conservative  Moderate  Extremely Liberal  

10. To the best of your ability, please estimate your total household income (include parent’s income if you are still dependent on them for financial support. _______  

Religious Identification Questions  

1. What is your spiritual/religious identification or denomination? Please check one.  
   ___A) Agnostic  ___M) National Baptist Convention, Incorporated  
   ___B) Atheist  ___N) National Baptist Convention, Unincorporated  
   ___C) Buddhist  ___O) Progressive National Baptist Convention  
   ___D) Catholic  ___P) Church of God in Christ  
   ___E) Lutheran  ___Q) LDS - Mormon  
   ___F) Methodist  ___R) Hindu  
   ___G) Southern Baptist  ___S) Muslim/Islam  
   ___H) Missionary Baptist  ___T) African Methodist Episcopal  
   ___I) Jewish  ___U) African Methodist/Episcopal Zion  
   ___J) Taoist  ___V) Christian Methodist Episcopal  
   ___K) Presbyterian  ___W) Unitarian-Universalist  
   ___L) Pagan/Wiccan  ___X) Nondenominational  
   ___Z) None  ___Y) Other (specify:__________________________ )
2. Over the past year, about how often have you attended church or a religious meeting?
   a. More than once a week
   b. Once a week
   c. Two or three times per month
   d. Once per month
   e. Once every few months
   f. Very rarely, or only on religious holidays (e.g., Christmas, Easter)
   g. Never attended

3. If applicable, to the best of your ability, please estimate the total amount of time (in years) you were or have been a member of a religious body or church. _____

   **Death Penalty Questions**

1. Generally speaking, do you approve or disapprove of the death penalty for persons convicted of murder?
   a. Strongly Approve (if so, answer questions 2 & 3)
   b. Approve (if so, answer questions 2 & 3)
   c. Unsure (if so, skip to question 4)
   d. Disapprove (if so, skip to question 5)
   e. Strongly Disapprove (if so, skip to question 5)

2. If you chose “strongly approve” or “approve” for question 1, think about your reasoning behind your approval of the death penalty for persons convicted of murder. Compare your reasoning with the options from the list below and choose the option that best describes your **top rationale** for your support of the death penalty. If none of the options matches your reasoning, select “other” and give a brief description of your rationale.
   a. The death penalty prevents others from committing similar crimes in the future.
   b. The death penalty fits the crime (i.e., “eye for an eye”)
   c. The death penalty maintains order in society and prevents chaos
   d. The death penalty permanently prevents the criminal from committing further crimes
   e. The death penalty is cheaper than incarcerating a person in prison for life
   f. Other:________________________________________________________
       __________________________________________________________
       __________________________________________________________

3. If researchers found, and were completely certain, that the using the death penalty as a punishment for murderers did not deter other criminals from committing similar severe crimes, would you still favor using the punishment?
   a. Yes, I would still support the death penalty
   b. No, I would no longer support the death penalty

   *Skip to question 6*
4. If you chose “unsure” for question 1, please describe, to the best of your ability, why you chose this option.

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

___________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________

5. If you chose “disapprove” or “strongly disapprove,” think about your reasoning behind your opposition of the death penalty for persons convicted of murder. Compare your reasoning with the options from the list below and choose the option that best describes your top rationale for your opposition of the death penalty. If none of the options matches your reasoning, select “other” and give a brief description of your rationale.

a. The death penalty is immoral and/or goes against my religious convictions
b. The death penalty does not allow a convicted criminal the chance for rehabilitation
c. The death penalty is irreversible; an innocent person could be executed
d. The death penalty is unfairly dispensed to minorities and the impoverished
e. The death penalty continues the cycle of violence
f. The death penalty is more costly than incarcerating a person in prison for life
g. Other:_________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________

________________________________

6. Generally speaking, how committed are you to your stance on the death penalty? Assign a numerical value to signify your level of commitment, with lower numbers meaning strongly committed and higher numbers meaning strongly uncommitted.

0 Strongly Uncommitted

100 Strongly Committed

7. When considering your stance on the death penalty, how much did you think about and explore opposing stances on the death penalty before reaching your decision? Assign a numerical value to signify the level you thought about, researched, and/or explored opposing stances on the death penalty prior to reaching your own decision. Lower values signify active exploration of alternative stances and higher values signify no exploration of alternative stances.

0 No Exploration

100 Active Exploration
8. Generally speaking, do you approve or disapprove of the death penalty for persons convicted of serious crimes besides murder (e.g., rape)?
   a. Approve
   b. Disapprove
   c. Unsure

9. Generally speaking, do you believe that criminals are treated too harshly, not harshly enough, or just right in the criminal justice system?
   A. Not Harshly Enough
   B. Just Right
   C. Too Harshly
APPENDIX B

THE REVISED RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM SCALE

This survey is part of an investigation of general public opinion concerning a variety of social issues. You will probably find that you agree with some of the statements and disagree with others, to varying extents. Please indicate your reaction to each of the statements by marking your opinion to the left of each statement, according to the following scale:

Mark a -4 if you very strongly disagree with the statement
-3 if you strongly disagree with the statement
-2 if you moderately disagree with the statement
-1 if you slightly disagree with the statement

Mark a +1 if you slightly agree with the statement
+2 if you moderately agree with the statement
+3 if you strongly agree with the statement
+4 if you very strongly disagree with the statement

If you feel exactly and precisely neutral about a statement, mark a “0” next to it.

You may find that you sometimes have different reactions to different parts of a statement. For example, you might very strongly disagree (“-4”) with one idea in a statement, but slightly agree (“+1”) with another idea in the same item. When this happens, please combine your reactions, and write down how you feel on balance (a “-3” in this case).

1. God has given humanity a complete, unfailing guide to happiness and salvation, which must be totally followed.
2. No single book of religious teachings contains all the intrinsic, fundamental truths about life.*
3. The basic cause of evil in this world is Satan, who is still constantly and ferociously fighting against God.
4. It is more important to be a good person than to believe in God and the right religion.*
5. There is a particular set of religious teachings in this world that are so true, you can’t go any “deeper” because they are the basic, bedrock message that God has given humanity.
6. When you get right down to it, there are basically only two kinds of people in the world: the Righteous, who will be rewarded by God; and the rest, who will not.
7. Scriptures may contain general truths, but they should NOT be considered completely, literally true from beginning to end.*
8. To lead the best, most meaningful life, one must belong to the one, fundamentally true religion.

9. For this item, mark the answer choice “moderately agree.”

10. “Satan” is just the name people give to their own bad impulses. There really is no such thing as a diabolical “Prince of Darkness” who tempts us.*

11. Whenever science and sacred scripture conflict, science is probably right.*

12. The fundamentals of God’s religion should never be tampered with, or compromised with others’ beliefs.

13. All of the religions in the world have flaws and wrong teachings. There is no perfectly true, right religion.*

Note: * = con-trait item, for which the -4 to +4 scoring key is reversed.
APPENDIX C
HEARTLAND FORGIVENESS SCALE

Directions: In the course of our lives negative things may occur because of our own actions, the actions of others, or circumstances beyond our control. For some time after these events, we may have negative thoughts or feelings about ourselves, others, or the situation. Think about how you typically respond to such negative events. Next to each of the following items write the number (from the 7-point scale below) that best describes how you typically respond to the type of negative situation described. There are no right or wrong answers. Please be as open as possible in your answers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Almost Always False of Me</td>
<td>More Often False of Me</td>
<td>More Often True of Me</td>
<td>Almost Always True of Me</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

____ 1. Although I feel bad at first when I mess up, over time I can give myself some slack.
____ 2. I hold grudges against myself for negative things I’ve done.
____ 3. Learning from bad things that I’ve done helps me get over them.
____ 4. It is really hard for me to accept myself once I’ve messed up.
____ 5. With time I am understanding of myself for mistakes I’ve made.
____ 6. I don’t stop criticizing myself for negative things I’ve felt, thought, said, or done.
____ 7. I continue to punish a person who has done something that I think is wrong.
____ 8. With time I am understanding of others for the mistakes they’ve made.
____ 9. I continue to be hard on others who have hurt me.
____ 10. Although others have hurt me in the past, I have eventually been able to see them as good people.
____ 11. If others mistreat me, I continue to think badly of them.
____ 12. When someone disappoints me, I can eventually move past it.
____ 13. When things go wrong for reasons that can’t be controlled, I get stuck in negative thoughts about it.
____ 14. With time I can be understanding of bad circumstances in my life.
15. If I am disappointed by uncontrollable circumstances in my life, I continue to think negatively about them.

16. I eventually make peace with bad situations in my life.

17. It’s really hard for me to accept negative situations that aren’t anybody’s fault.

18. Eventually I let go of negative thoughts about bad circumstances that are beyond anyone’s control.

**Scoring Instructions:**

To calculate the scores for the HFS total and its three subscales, first reverse score items 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, and 17. Then, sum the values for the items that compose each subscale (with appropriate items being reverse scored): HFS total (items 1–18), HFS Self subscale (items 1–6), HFS Other subscale (items 7–12), HFS Situation subscale (items 13–18).
APPENDIX D

VENGEANCE SCALE

Instructions: Below there are a number of statements that describe attitudes in different people. There are no right or wrong answers, only opinions. For every statement, please:

a. Read the statement

b. Decide whether you agree or disagree using the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disagree strongly</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree slightly</td>
<td>Neither disagree nor agree</td>
<td>Agree slightly</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Agree strongly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

___ 1. It’s not worth my time or effort to pay back someone who has wronged me. (R)
___ 2. It is important to me to get back at people who have hurt me.
___ 3. I try to even the score with anyone who hurts me.
___ 4. It is always better not to seek vengeance. (R)
___ 5. I live by the motto “Let bygones be bygones.” (R)
___ 6. There is nothing wrong in getting back at someone who has hurt you.
___ 7. I don’t just get mad, I get even.
___ 8. I find it easy to forgive those who have hurt me. (R)
___ 9. I am not a vengeful person. (R)
___ 10. I believe in the motto “An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.”
___ 11. Revenge is morally wrong. (R)
___ 12. If someone causes me trouble, I’ll find a way to make them regret it.
___ 13. People who insist on getting revenge are disgusting. (R)
___ 14. If I am wronged, I can’t live with myself unless I get revenge.
___ 15. Honor requires that you get back at someone who has hurt you.
___ 16. It is usually better to show mercy than to take revenge. (R)
___ 17. Anyone who provokes me deserves the punishment that I give them.
___ 18. It is always better to “turn the other cheek.” (R)
19. To have the desire for vengeance would make me feel ashamed. (R)
20. Revenge is sweet.
APPENDIX E

DEATH PENALTY SCALE

Directions: Please respond whether you agree or disagree with the following statements on a scale from 1 to 9, where 1 represents that you "strongly disagree" with the statement and 9 represents that you "strongly agree" with the statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. It is immoral for society to take a life regardless of the crime the individual has committed.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Executing a person for premeditated murder discourages others from committing that crime in the future.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The death penalty is the just way to compensate the victim’s family for some murders.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. It is more cost efficient to sentence a murderer to death rather than to life imprisonment.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The death penalty should be used more often than it is.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. There are some murderers whose death would give me a sense of personal satisfaction.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. There is no such thing as a sentence that truly means &quot;life without parole.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The desire for revenge is a legitimate reason for favoring the death penalty.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Executing a murderer is less expensive than keeping him in jail for the rest of his life.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. The death penalty does not deter other murderers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. No matter what crime a person has committed executing them is a cruel punishment.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Even when a murderer gets a sentence of life without parole, he usually gets out on parole.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>I think the death penalty is necessary.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>The death penalty makes criminals think twice before committing murder.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Society has a right to get revenge when murder has been committed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX F

REVISED ATTITUDES TOWARD THE DEATH PENALTY SCALE

Scale Items and Directions: This questionnaire contains a set of attitude statements. There are no right or wrong answers: we are interested in your opinions. Please read each statement carefully and then circle the response that reflects your reaction.

SA = strongly agree, A = agree, U = undecided, D = disagree, SD = strongly disagree

1. If there is any doubt about a defendant’s guilt, he or she should not be executed.**
   SA  A  U  D  SD

2. “Eye for an eye” is the only way criminals will know that society is serious about protecting its citizens.
   SA  A  U  D  SD

3. The death penalty is given too often to convicted defendants from a racial minority.**
   SA  A  U  D  SD

4. People remain on death row too long before their execution is carried out.
   SA  A  U  D  SD

5. Being sentenced to death for a horrific crime is too easy and quick of a punishment; a person who committed murder should be made to spend the rest of their life behind bars.**
   SA  A  U  D  SD

6. Giving the death penalty to serial killers or murderers of horrific crimes is one method that the state can use to discourage future heinous murders.
   SA  A  U  D  SD

7. The only way to control some potential crime is to enforce the death penalty.
   SA  A  U  D  SD

8. I am against the execution of a defendant who committed a crime when they were suffering from a severe mental illness, such as schizophrenia.**
   SA  A  U  D  SD

9. Those sentenced to life imprisonment usually get out on parole.
10. No civilized society permits capital punishment.**

11. Human beings and/or the government/society shouldn’t have the power to put a person to death, no matter what crime they committed.**

12. It is wrong that the death penalty is given to more poor defendants than those with financial resources.**

13. No matter the severity of the crime, any offender under the age of 18 should not receive the death penalty.**

14. If a woman committed a crime along with a man, and he is sentenced to death, she should be too.

15. There is no sentence that truly means “life without parole;” unless an offender is put to death, they could always get out of prison one day.

16. Since the person receiving the death penalty did not respect the victim’s life then they deserve to die.

17. I am opposed to the execution of mothers who have young children.**

18. It is necessary to permit the death penalty in order to reduce the murder rate.

19. I believe that it is morally wrong to have the power to take anyone’s life, regardless of the reasoning or the suspected crime.**

20. Any person convicted of premeditated murder, no matter their race, gender, age, or level of income should be considered to receive the death penalty.
21. If a defendant on death row wants a DNA test of evidence, the state should automatically grant it.**
SA A U D SD
22. One major disadvantage/con of the death penalty is the possibility that an innocent person may be executed.**
SA A U D SD
23. Giving someone the death penalty does not allow them to experience enough punishment; having them live out the rest of their days behind bars is a more suitable penalty.**
SA A U D SD
24. The possibility of being executed serves as a deterrent against committing violent crimes.
SA A U D SD
25. The death penalty goes against my moral and/or religious convictions.**
SA A U D SD
26. A murderer may “deserve” to die, but humans cannot objectively determine who should die because of our biases.**
SA A U D SD
27. Laws that permit the death penalty devalue the worth of every human life.**
SA A U D SD
28. It is wrong to sentence a person diagnosed with mental retardation to death.**
SA A U D SD
29. Men and women should be treated equally when the death sentence is considered.
SA A U D SD
30. A judge should have the right to sentence a defendant to death, even if the jury has recommended life in prison.
SA A U D SD
31. It is better that one murderer die than many people die at the hands of that one murderer.
SA A U D SD
32. Laws permitting the death penalty continue a harmful cycle by using violence to punish violence.**

SA A U D SD

33. The death penalty gives the victim’s family security in knowing that they don’t have to fear future harm from the perpetrator.

SA A U D SD

34. It is immoral for society to take a human life, no matter the circumstances.**

SA A U D SD

35. Carrying out an execution of a convicted murderer is far more costly than keeping them in prison for the rest of their lives.**

SA A U D SD

36. Executing a murderer is the only way to be certain they will never hurt others again.

SA A U D SD

37. People on death row are permitted to appeal their sentence too often.

SA A U D SD

38. Executing a convicted murderer can help give the victim’s family a sense of closure and peace.

SA A U D SD

39. The death penalty goes against my beliefs about the importance of forgiving others for their wrongdoings.**

SA A U D SD

40. The appeal processes and procedures for convicted inmates on death row allow defendants ample opportunity to provide evidence that they are innocent of their charges.

SA A U D SD
APPENDIX G

ATTITUDES TOWARD THE DEATH PENALTY SCALE (16-ITEM)

Scale Items and Directions: This questionnaire contains a set of attitude statements. There are no right or wrong answers: we are interested in your opinions. Please read each statement carefully and then circle the response that reflects your reaction.

SA = strongly agree, A = agree, U = undecided, D = disagree, SD = strongly disagree

1. A judge should have the right to sentence a defendant to death, even if the jury has recommended life in prison.
   SA A U D SD

2. People on death row are permitted to appeal their sentence too often.
   SA A U D SD

3. If there is any doubt about a defendant’s guilt, he or she should not be executed.*
   SA A U D SD

4. If a defendant on death row wants a DNA test of evidence, the state should automatically grant it.*
   SA A U D SD

5. People remain on death row too long.
   SA A U D SD

6. It is wrong to sentence a mentally retarded person to death.*
   SA A U D SD

7. Those sentenced to life imprisonment often get out on parole.
   SA A U D SD

8. Men and women should be treated equally when the death sentence is considered.
   SA A U D SD

9. I am opposed to the execution of women who are pregnant.*
   SA A U D SD

10. No civilized society permits capital punishment.*
    SA A U D SD

11. It is necessary to permit the death penalty in order to reduce the murder rate.
    SA A U D SD

12. The possibility of being executed serves as a deterrent against committing violent crimes.
13. Laws that permit the death penalty devalue the worth of every human life.*

14. Laws permitting the death penalty use violence to punish violence.*

15. The only way to control some potential crime is to enforce the death penalty.

16. If a woman committed a crime along with a man, and he is sentenced to death, she should be too.

*Indicates a reverse-coded item

**Factor 1 (Sentencing Disputes):** Items 1, 2, 5, & 7

**Factor 2 (Sanction Exceptions):** Items 3, 4, 6, & 9

**Factor 3 (Crime Control):** Items 11, 12, & 15

**Factor 4 (Opposition Concerns):** Items 10, 13, & 14

**Factor 5 (Gender Equality):** Items 8 & 16
APPENDIX H

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
118 College Drive #5147 | Hattiesburg, MS 34906-0001
Phone: 601.266.9997 | Fax: 601.266.4377 | www.usm.edu/research/institutional.review.board

NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the "Adverse Effect Report Form".
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months.

Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 14100902
PROJECT TITLE: "Eye for an Eye" or "Turn the Other Cheek?" The Moderating Roles of Revenge and Forgiveness when Examining Death Penalty Support and Religious Fundamentalism
PROJECT TYPE: New Project
RESEARCHER(S): Willem Whited
COLLEGE/DIVISION: College of Education and Psychology
DEPARTMENT: Psychology
FUNDING AGENCY/SPONSOR: N/A
IRB COMMITTEE ACTION: Expected Review Approval
PERIOD OF APPROVAL: 10/10/2014 to 10/09/2015

Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.
Institutional Review Board
APPENDIX I

INFORMED CONSENT FORMS

Attitudes Towards Social Issues Study Consent Form (M-Turk)

You are being asked to participate in a study about your attitudes towards social issues. The researchers of this study are Will Whited, M.A. and Jon Mandracchia, Ph.D. at the University of Southern Mississippi, Department of Psychology.

Background Information:
The purpose of this study is to gather information to better understand your attitudes towards social issues and your social experiences in several domains.

Procedures:
If you agree to participate in this study, the following will be asked of you. You will be asked to complete several questionnaires and a demographic sheet online. The amount of time expected for participation is this study is 20-30 minutes.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study
The risks associated with your participation are minimal. You may find that you may become bored or tired when completing questions. Additionally, you will be asked some sensitive questions, such as your personal beliefs and stances on social issues. Some individuals may feel slight psychological discomfort when answering these questions. Some people report having higher self-awareness of their own attitudes by responding to questions.

Confidentiality
The records of this study will be kept private. You will not be asked to provide your name. In any sort of report that might be published from this data, no identifiable material for any participant will be included. By consenting to participate in this study, each participant’s MTurk worker identification number will be collected for the sole purpose of screening to prevent any participant from completing the survey more than one time. All MTurk worker ID numbers will be deleted from all datasets after data collection is completed. Research records will be stored securely and only the researchers involved in this study will have access to the research records.

Compensation
Upon successful completion of the survey, you will be paid 15 to 50 cents into your MTurk account. There will be several questions throughout the survey designed to determine if you are attending to item content. If correct answers are not given for these questions, then you will not be compensated. Additionally, each participant will only be
compensated once for completing the survey. Participants that attempt to complete the survey more than one time will only be compensated once, after their first completed survey.

**Voluntary Nature of the Study**
Participation in this study is completely up to you. Whether you decide to participate or not will not affect your current or future relations with the University of Southern Mississippi. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

**Contacts and Questions**
Again, the researchers conducting this study are Will Whited and Dr. Jon Mandracchia. If you have questions later, you may contact Will Whited at William.Whited@eagles.usm.edu or Dr. Mandracchia at Jon.Mandracchia@usm.edu. This project has been reviewed by the Human Subjects Protection Review Committee, which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations. Any questions or concerns about rights as a research subject should be directed to the chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Drive #5147, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001, (601) 266-6820.

I have read and understand the above information. By clicking below, I am indicating that I am at least 18 years of age and that I consent to participate in this study.
Attitudes Towards Social Issues Consent Form (SONA)

You are being asked to participate in a study about your attitudes towards social issues. The researchers of this study are Will Whited, M.A. and Jon Mandracchia, Ph.D. at the University of Southern Mississippi, Department of Psychology.

Background Information:
The purpose of this study is to gather information to better understand your attitudes towards social issues and your social experiences in several domains.

Procedures:
If you agree to participate in this study, the following will be asked of you. You will be asked to complete several questionnaires and a demographic sheet online. The amount of time expected for participation is this study is 20-30 minutes.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study
The risks associated with your participation are minimal. You may find that you may become bored or tired when completing questions. Additionally, you will be asked some sensitive questions, such as your personal beliefs and stances on social issues. Some individuals may feel slight psychological discomfort when answering these questions. Some people report having higher self-awareness of their own attitudes by responding to questions.

Compensation
You must get to the end of the survey to be awarded your SONA credit for participating. Upon successful completion of the survey, you will receive .5 SONA credit. There will be several questions throughout the survey designed to determine if you are attending to item content. If correct answers are not given for these questions, then you will receive no SONA credit.

Confidentiality
The records of this study will be kept private. You will not be asked to provide your name. In any sort of report that might be published from this data, no identifiable material for any participant will be included. Research records will be stored securely and only the researchers involved in this study will have access to the research records. No information that you provide for this study will be disclosed to your employer(s) or course instructor(s).

Voluntary Nature of the Study
Participation in this study is completely up to you. Whether you decide to participate or not will not affect your current or future relations with the University of Southern
Mississippi. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions
Again, the researchers conducting this study are Will Whited and Dr. Jon Mandracchia. If you have questions later, you may contact Will Whited at William.Whited@eagles.usm.edu or Dr. Mandracchia at Jon.Mandracchia@usm.edu. This project has been reviewed by the Human Subjects Protection Review Committee, which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations. Any questions or concerns about rights as a research subject should be directed to the chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Drive #5147, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001, (601) 266-6820.

I have read and understand the above information. By clicking below, I am indicating that I am at least 18 years of age and that I consent to participate in this study.
REFERENCES


Altemeyer, B., & Hunsberger, B. (1992). Authoritarianism, religious fundamentalism, 
113-133.

short and sweet of it. *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion, 14*(1), 
47-54. doi:10.1207/s15327582ijpr1401_4

*Sociological Analysis, 43*, 170-172.

Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Andrich, D. (1988). The application of an unfolding model of the PIRT type to the 

fundamentalism: Reconsidering the relationship between correctional attitudes 
and religion. *Criminology, 38*, 719–753.

Relationship Between Images of God and Attitudes Toward Criminal Punishment. 
*Criminal Justice Review (Sage Publications), 35*(1), 90-106. 
doi:10.1177/0734016809360329


doi:10.1080/00223980.1995.9914934


doi:10.1016/j.ijlp.2006.03.007


doi:10.1016/j.paid.2004.11.001

doi:10.1016/j.paid.2007.04.025


*Counseling and Values, 40*, 107–126.


population. *Computers In Human Behavior, 12*(1), 159-166. doi:10.1016/0747-5632(95)00026-7


doi:10.1016/j.paid.2014.03.005

doi:10.1002/bsl.971


