



ASSOCIATION BETWEEN BYSTANDER ATTITUDES AND SPECIFIC PERSONALITY TRAITS

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ABSTRACT

The study explored the association between bystander attitudes and specific personality traits, focusing on empathy, assertiveness, and social responsibility. The aim was to investigate how these personality traits influence bystander behaviour in various situations, such as emergencies, bullying, or harassment. Utilizing the Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI) and the Bystander Attitudes and Behaviours scale, data was collected from 260 individuals aged 16 to 60 above years in the Delhi NCR region. The hypothesis posits a significant relationship between bystander attitude and personality traits. Findings from this research contribute to understanding the psychosocial factors underlying bystander intervention, thereby informing interventions aimed at promoting proactive bystander behaviour in communities. The study aims to investigate the

correlation between specific personality traits, including empathy, assertiveness, and social responsibility, and bystander attitudes towards intervening in emergency situations. Additionally, it seeks to examine how variations in these personality traits influence bystander behaviour and the willingness to intervene in instances of bullying or harassment. By employing rigorous methodology and utilizing validated scales such as the TIPI and Bystander Attitudes and Behaviours scale, this research endeavours to shed light on the nuanced interplay between personality characteristics and bystander intervention tendencies.

Keywords: Bystander Attitudes, Personality Traits, Empathy, Assertiveness, Social Responsibility, Intervention Behaviour, Bullying, Harassment, Psychosocial Factors

Introduction

The prevalence of sexual assault among college students underscores the pressing need to unravel the multifaceted elements contributing to such distressing incidents (McMahon et al., 2015). Central to this exploration are the attitudes and personality features associated with sexual aggression, which play a pivotal role in perpetuating such misconduct within academic settings (Franklin et al., 2017). Moreover, the emergence of effective intervention tactics, notably bystander interventions, has assumed paramount importance in addressing the pervasive issue of sexual violence on college campuses (McMahon et al., 2015). These strategies not only empower individuals to intervene and prevent assaults but also foster a culture of accountability and support within university communities (Abbott & Cameron, 2014).

Simultaneously, the advent of cyberbullying has introduced a new dimension to the landscape of interpersonal harm, manifesting as a deliberate use of digital platforms to inflict pain

and anguish on victims (Song & Oh, 2018). This insidious form of harassment poses significant challenges, with its detrimental effects extending to various aspects of victims' physical and mental well-being (DeSmet et al., 2016). Yet, despite its prevalence and impact, the role of bystanders in mitigating cyberbullying remains relatively underexplored (Van Cleemput et al., 2014). Understanding bystander behaviour in the context of cyberbullying is crucial, considering the unique affordances and challenges posed by electronic media (Thornberg & Wänström, 2018). Thus, this introduction sets the stage for a comprehensive examination of bystander dynamics in both sexual assault and cyberbullying contexts, aiming to elucidate strategies for intervention and prevention that are tailored to the nuances of these complex phenomena.

Bystander Attitude

Bystander intervention plays a crucial role in addressing various forms of harm, including sexual assault and bullying. According to the Bystander Intervention Model, individuals typically progress through five stages before deciding to intervene: a) awareness of the situation, b) recognizing it as an emergency, c) agreeing to intervene, d) believing in their ability to make a difference, and e) acting (Huston et al., 1981). Contextual factors, such as the bystander effect, can influence decision-making through mechanisms like self-awareness, social cues, blocking, and diffusion of responsibility (Levine & Crowther, 2008).

Understanding the progression of bystander behaviour is essential for designing effective intervention strategies. Behaviour changes theories offer insight into the factors influencing bystander actions, including attitudes, self-efficacy, abilities, and subjective norms (Bennett et al., 2014). These theories also provide strategies for promoting positive bystander behaviour, such as

identifying determinants and employing corresponding change techniques like modelling and guided practice (Pronk et al., 2021).

In the context of cyberbullying, which emerged as a significant concern in 2004, bystander behaviour remains understudied. Nonetheless, research suggests that bystander involvement is common in cyberbullying incidents, and factors like social self-efficacy may influence bystander actions (Van Cleemput et al., 2014). Gender differences also play a role, with males more likely to intervene in potentially risky situations involving strangers, while females may act when they perceive the situation as safer (Jenkins & Nickerson, 2017).

Moreover, bystander behaviour is influenced by factors like moral sensitivity, moral disengagement, and self-efficacy (Thornberg & Jungert, 2013). Moral sensitivity, rooted in empathy and awareness of harm, shapes individuals' readiness to intervene in morally simple situations like bullying. On the other hand, moral disengagement mechanisms, such as cognitive restructuring and victim attribution, can reduce individuals' willingness to help others by rationalizing or minimizing harm (Sjögren et al., 2020). Self-efficacy, or confidence in one's ability to intervene effectively, is another crucial factor that affects bystander behaviour, particularly in situations involving sexual assault or violence (McMahon et al., 2015).

Personality Traits

Personality traits and gender norms significantly influence bystander behaviours, particularly in the context of sexual assault and bullying (Franklin et al., 2017; Forbes et al., 2020). While previous research suggests gender differences in helpful behaviours, recent studies reveal inconsistencies in findings and highlight the need to explore the relationship between masculinity

and prosocial interventions further. Adherence to traditional masculine standards, emphasizing traits like independence and dominance, has been associated with various negative outcomes for men's physical and emotional well-being (Abbott & Cameron, 2014). However, scholars advocate for including positive dimensions of masculinity in research to better understand its impact on behaviours like bystander intervention (Koon, 2013).

Understanding the link between masculinity and bystander interventions is crucial for developing effective violence prevention education programs. The Prosocial Tendencies Measure (PTM) offers a comprehensive framework for evaluating individual variations and global factors related to prosocial bystander behaviours (Banyard, 2008). Additionally, tools like the Conformance to Male Norms Inventory (CMNI) can measure participants' adherence to socially constructed male role standards (Mowle, 2019). By studying the relationship between masculinity, bystander interventions, and attitudes toward violence prevention, researchers can inform the development of more targeted and impactful intervention strategies (Banyard et al., 2014).

Bystander intervention programs play a critical role in addressing sexual assault and bullying, but further research is needed to understand the factors influencing their effectiveness (McMahon et al., 2015). Programs should educate participants about the nature and prevalence of sexual assault, its harmful effects on victims, and how to recognize warning signs and intervene effectively (Van Cleemput et al., 2014). By debunking rape culture and providing victims with support and confidence, bystander intervention programs can contribute to creating safer environments (Banyard & Moynihan, 2011). However, a complete understanding of the factors

influencing bystander interventions is necessary to strengthen these initiatives and reduce the prevalence of sexual assault and bullying on university campuses and beyond.

Individual Characteristics

Evidence suggests a correlation between children's propensity to intervene when they see bullying and several personal traits. The present research also set out to test a secondary hypothesis: that the associations shown in the first study persist after controlling for variables including empathy, prosocial conduct, and callous-unemotional (CU) personality traits.

Empathy

When youngsters see bullying, those who react with empathy are more inclined to step in and stop it. Peers' reports of intervention at school were shown to be predicted by children's physiological and emotional responses to bullying films. Furthermore, defensive behaviour has been predicted by self-reported empathy, suggesting that bullied guys are more inclined to intervene.

Prosocial Behaviour

Children who are naturally more sociable are more likely to step in when they see bullying happening, even if no one else is around. Children between the ages of 8 and 12 who reported more prosocial behaviour in a recent study were more likely to help a peer and their answers were unaffected by bystanders' presence or absence, compared to children whose reports of their own prosocial behaviour were lower.

Rationale of the Study

Exploring the correlation between personality traits and bystander attitude is essential for understanding the multifaceted dynamics of social behaviour, particularly in bystander intervention scenarios. Bystander behaviours in situations of bullying or violence can significantly impact the well-being of individuals involved, making it imperative to identify factors influencing bystander responses. By examining the relationship between personality traits and bystander attitude, researchers can gain insights into the underlying mechanisms driving intervention behaviours. Understanding these dynamics enables the development of targeted interventions aimed at promoting positive bystander behaviours and reducing the negative consequences of bullying or violence. Moreover, this research contributes to raising awareness and fostering support networks for individuals affected by bullying or violence, ultimately paving the way for more effective strategies to promote social responsibility and well-being in communities. Through evidence-based interventions, this study aims to empower individuals to effectively intervene in bystander situations, fostering a safer and more supportive environment for everyone involved.

Research Gap

Despite extensive research on bystander behaviour in bullying situations, there remains a significant research gap concerning the nuanced interplay between personality traits and bystander attitudes. While, numerous studies have explored the influence of personality traits on various aspects of social behaviour, few have specifically investigated how individual characteristics impact bystander responses in bullying scenarios. Additionally, existing literature often focuses on specific personality traits in isolation, overlooking potential interactions or combined effects that may shape bystander attitudes more comprehensively. Moreover, while some research has

examined the role of empathy or assertiveness in bystander intervention, there is limited understanding of how other personality dimensions, such as conscientiousness or neuroticism, contribute to bystander attitudes. Addressing these gaps is essential for developing tailored interventions that effectively promote positive bystander behaviours and mitigate the adverse effects of bullying. By exploring the intricate relationship between personality traits and bystander attitudes, future studies can provide valuable insights into the underlying mechanisms driving bystander responses and inform the development of more targeted intervention strategies.

Purpose

The purpose is to study the relationship between bystander attitudes and specific personality traits.

Hypothesis

H1: There exists a statistically significant relationship between bystander attitudes and personality traits.

Sample

- **Participants:** A total of 260 individuals were included in the study, selected through purposive sampling.
- **Gender:** Both male and female participants were actively encouraged to participate, ensuring a diverse representation.
- **Age Range:** The sample predominantly consists of individuals aged between 16 to 60 above years, covering a broad spectrum of age groups for comprehensive analysis.

Data collection procedure

- **Inclusion Criteria:** Participants were required to be above 16 years of age, with a specific focus on individuals aged between 30 to 45 years, residing in the Delhi NCR region.
- **Questionnaire Distribution:** Questionnaires were distributed through Google Forms and other locations to recruit a diverse group of participants from various backgrounds.
- **Explanation of Study Objectives:** Potential participants were provided with detailed information about the study objectives, privacy concerns, researcher contact details, and other relevant measures before being invited to participate.

Administered Scales:

- **Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI):** Participants completed the TIPI, a brief self-report questionnaire consisting of 10 items designed to assess Big Five personality traits. Responses were recorded on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from "Disagree strongly" to "Agree strongly." The scale was developed by Gosling et al. (2003).
- It is a seven pointer-pointer scale:

Disagree strongly	Disagree moderately	Disagree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree a little	Agree moderately	Agree strongly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

- **Bystander Attitudes and Behaviors Scale:** Participants also completed the Bystander Attitudes and Behaviors Scale, which measures attitudes and behaviors as bystanders in various situations. Responses were recorded on a scale ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree/not at all true) to 5 (Strongly agree/very much true). The scale was developed by Latane and Darley (1970).
- **Scoring:** Responses from both scales were scored according to the respective scoring criteria provided for each measure.

1 = strongly disagree/not at all true 5 = strongly agree/very much true

Procedure

The participants were informed about the purpose of the research and the questionnaires were filled through google form & Offline, face to face mode. Each participant was thanked for their cooperation. Standardized psychological tests were administered to the participants.

Analysis of Data

Results

Table 1

N, Mean and Standard Deviation

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Personality traits	260	45.6000	4.24009	17.978

Valid N (listwise)	260			
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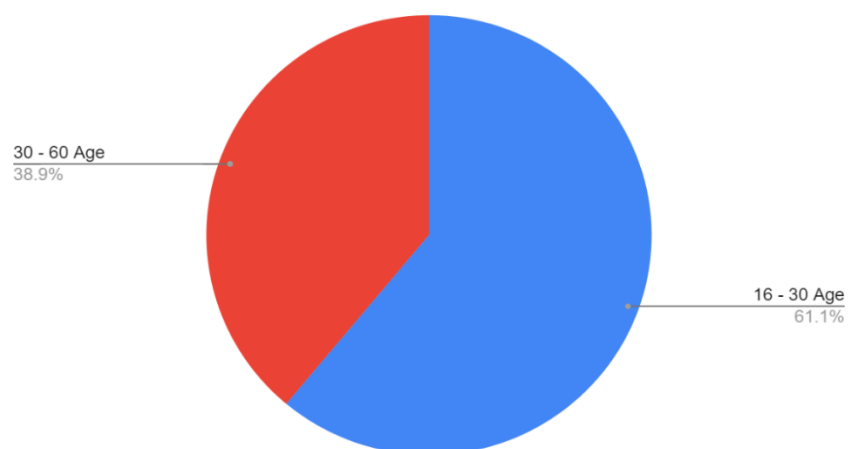
Table 2*Descriptive statistics of bystander attitude*

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Bystander Attitude	260	86.5577	13.66535	186.742
Valid N (listwise)	260			

Table 3*Pearson correlation for hypothesis testing*

		Personality traits	Bystander attitude
Personality traits	Pearson Correlation	1	.234
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.947
	N	260	260
Bystander attitude	Pearson Correlation	.234	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.947	
	N	260	260

Age

**Figure 1***Age Ratio*

The chart shows that most of the respondents, 61.1%, fall into the 16-30 age group. The remaining 38.9% of the respondents are in the 30-60 age group.

Gender

**Graph 2***Gender Ratio*

Specifically, the chart indicates that 53.8% of the population is female and 46.2% is male.

Discussion of Results

The descriptive statistics for personality traits and bystander attitude offer valuable insights into the characteristics of the sample population. In terms of personality traits, the moderate mean score of 45.60 suggests a balanced distribution among individuals, with relatively low variability indicated by the standard deviation of 4.24. On the other hand, bystander attitude scores exhibit a higher mean of 86.5577, indicating a predominantly positive disposition within the sample, with a slightly higher standard deviation of 13.66535, implying some variability in attitudes among individuals.

A Pearson correlation analysis between personality traits and bystander attitude reveals a weak positive relationship with a correlation coefficient of 0.234. However, the calculated p-value of 0.947 suggests that this correlation is not statistically significant at the conventional significance level of 0.05. Consequently, the null hypothesis, stating no significant relationship between personality traits and bystander attitude, cannot be rejected based on the provided data. This indicates that while there may be a weak positive association between these variables, it is not substantial enough to infer a meaningful connection within the sample population.

Furthermore, examining bystander behaviors sheds light on the role of moral disengagement and social anxiety. Bystander behaviors show low levels of moral disengagement across different roles, suggesting moral disengagement does not distinguish between outsiders and defenders. Additionally, there's a complex relationship between social anxiety, bullying

involvement, and bystander behaviors, indicating the need for further investigation into the psychological factors influencing bystander actions.

The correlation analysis between personality traits and bystander attitude yields intriguing insights into the potential interplay between these two constructs. While a weak positive association is observed, the lack of statistical significance challenges previous notions and suggests a more nuanced relationship. Further research is warranted to explore the multifaceted dynamics between personality traits, psychological factors, and attitudes towards bystander intervention, emphasizing the need for comprehensive, multidisciplinary approaches in understanding and promoting pro-social behaviors.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the analysis revealed a nuanced relationship between personality traits and bystander attitudes, suggesting that while there is a weak positive correlation, personality alone may not decisively shape attitudes towards intervention. This underscores the need for a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted determinants influencing social behaviors. Future research should explore contextual influences, societal norms, and individual experiences to gain deeper insights. While this study did not find statistically significant results, it lays the groundwork for further inquiry. Future studies could employ robust methodologies and consider cultural variations to uncover causal relationships and inform more effective interventions. Embracing a multidimensional perspective can advance our understanding of bystander attitudes, ultimately fostering a culture of active intervention in social settings.

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