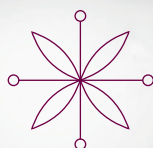


The Abstract Book of the 22nd European Conference on Developmental Psychology



August 25-29, 2025
Vilnius, Lithuania

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RESPONSE BY CYBERBULLYING BYSTANDERS: THE ROLES OF PROXIMITY TO THE PERPETRATOR AND PRESENT-FATALISTIC TIME PERSPECTIVE IN YOUNG ADULTS

Antanas Kairys, Goda Gegieckaitė, Vilmantė Pakalniškienė

Institute of Psychology, Faculty of Philosophy, Vilnius University, Lithuania

antanas.kairys@fsf.vu.lt

Cyberbullying on the internet often are witnessed by bystanders and their response can have an effect on whether these acts will amplify. Therefore, it is important to understand factors related to bystanders' actions. The aim of the study was to examine the bystanders' proximity to perpetrator effect on their responses and whether the level of person's present-fatalistic time perspective (PFTP; perceived lack of control of their life), will moderate the response. This research has received funding from the Research Council of Lithuania (LMTLT), agreement No.S-LL-21-1.

Methods. 221 participants (aged 19-25; 57,5% women) participated in an online experiment. Participants' PFTP was measured with short version of the Zimbardo Time Perspective Inventory (Zimbardo & Boyd, 1999). After they were randomly assigned to one of three groups, instructed to imagine the perpetrator as: a close friend, an acquaintance, or a stranger. They then read 10 offensive comments presented in a format resembling a social media platform. Afterward, participants indicated the actions they would take in response to such a scenario. Linear regression models were fitted for each outcome variable, with PFTP, experimental group, and their interaction as predictors.

Results. The interaction between PFTP and group membership was significant for several behavioral reactions. A higher PFTP reduced the perceived likelihood of reacting when the perpetrator was a close friend. For instance, participants with a higher PFTP were less likely to write a personal message to the perpetrator if he/she was a close friend. However, this effect did not emerge when the perpetrator was presented as an acquaintance or a stranger.

Discussion. Study findings reveal that the impact of a perpetrator proximity to the bystander varies depending on the bystander's PFTP. Bystanders might be less likely to interfere with their friend committing cyberbullying if they believe that their actions have little influence over the future.