Bystander intervention among Secondary school pupils: Testing the Theory of Planned Behaviour and the Prototype Willingness Model

Stefania Pagani
PhD Researcher
University of Strathclyde

Supervisors: Simon C. Hunter, Mark A. Elliott, Anna Macintyre
Gender-based violence

- Levels of domestic abuse high and stable in Scotland since 2012.

- Police recorded 59,541 cases of domestic violence a year in 2017-18.

- Around four out of five cases had a female victim.

- Link to domestic abuse: children exposed to gender-based violence / domestic abuse more likely to be a victim and/or perpetrator of domestic abuse in adulthood (Kimber et al., 2018).

- Important to focus on early intervention i.e. prevention

Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP)


- Transferred to Scotland in 2012 – implemented firstly by Police Scotland’s Violence Reduction Unit and, now, Education Scotland.

- There are 33 education authorities and 359 schools in Scotland.

- MVP is currently being implemented in at least one school in every education authority across Scotland – at least 104 schools actively implementing MVP (2017-18).

- Implementation of MVP now extended to England.
What is MVP?

Aims of MVP:

- Challenge attitudes, beliefs and cultural norms especially underpinning gender-based violence.
- Equip pupils with the skills to be active and positive bystanders.

America – male athletes as role models

- Change focus from accusing males to enabling them

Scotland – High school programme where older pupils (S4-S6) are mentors to younger pupils (S1-S3).

- Primary focus still on gender-based violence but has extended to other types of violence.
Theoretical explanations of bystander intervention behaviour

• Aim of MVP is to challenge stereotypical attitudes, and build confidence in younger pupils to increase their intervention behaviour when witnessing gender-based violence.

• What lends to intervention behaviour?

• Theoretical models that have argued for the importance of attitudes, social influences, normative beliefs.

• Maps onto objectives of MVP.

• Studies have shown that TPB accounts for 20-30% of variance in the decision making process (Armitage & Conner, 2002; Elliott et al., 2017).

• Attitudes, perceived behaviour control, and social influences predict intentions which, in turn, predict behaviour.

• Attitudes: positive and negative (bi-dimensional constructs – Elliott et al., 2015).

• PBC: external but also internal - Importance of examining self-efficacy.

• Social influences: Descriptive norms e.g. what would my friends do?

• Intentions: Likeliness of intervening
The Prototype Willingness Model (Gerrard & Gibbons, 1994)

• TPB accounts for 20-30% - what about the remaining 70-80%?
• Similar to TPB: importance of attitudes and social influences.
• Key difference: TPB proposes a deliberative decision making process where PWM argues that decisions can be automatic as well as thoughtful.
• Additional variables: prototype perceptions and willingness
• Prototype perceptions: how similar/different person is to the prototype
• Willingness: how willing to intervene given a specific situation
Importance of evaluating PWM and TPB

• PWM may help to explain additional variance in the decision making process – both theories have their place.

• Studies have shown that PWM is effective in explaining adolescents’ decision making – importance of image.

• Can bystander intervention behaviour be explained by both deliberative (Rosval, 2014) and automatic processes?

• Potential interactions between variables: importance of examining attitudes with social influences and control
My Study

Pre-registered on Open Science Framework

Preliminary analyses

• Subsample of 735 participants. Once merging finished, final sample size will include 2079 participants.
• Prospective correlational design: two different time points.
• Multiple linear regressions - controlling for age, gender, ethnicity, affective empathy, moral disengagement.
• Subsample analyses: used separate multiple regressions to test TPB, PWM and interaction variables.
• Main analyses: will test the full model at one time.
Self-Efficacy

Positive Attitudes

Negative Attitudes

Prototype perceptions

Intentions

Positive Bystander Behaviour

Willingness

Descriptive Norms

* Self-Efficacy

* Positive Attitudes

* Negative Attitudes

Prototype Percep

* Positive Attitudes
Self-Efficacy
Positive Attitudes
Negative Attitudes
Prototype perceptions

PBC
Self-Efficacy
Positive Attitudes
Negative Attitudes
Prototype Percep
Positive Attitudes

Intentions
Willingness

Negative Bystander Behaviour

* doing nothing, laughing along
Discussion and Take home remarks

• Subsample: results should be interpreted with caution.
• Attitudes, confidence and image are important drivers in the decision making process
• Social influences and confidence interact with attitudes and impact on intentions and willingness to intervene
• A pupil’s willingness to intervene seems to be a key factor in whether or not a pupil intervenes positively when they witness gender-based violence
• Internal and external control seem to impact on negative intervention behaviour
My Research

Largest evaluation of the MVP to date.

**Three studies:**

- Testing psychological models to identify relevant factors that predict behaviour.

- Pre- and post-intervention testing to identify whether these factors have improved after MVP.

- Implementation evaluation: both quantitative and qualitative. To test if implementation is impacting on the effectiveness of the MVP.
References


Any Questions?