



Who Helps Who? The Role of Stigma Dimensions in Harassment Intervention

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Abstract

Observer intervention can be useful in preventing workplace harassment. This research extends the workplace harassment literature by using the Jones et al. (1984) stigma dimensions and related research (Summers et al., 2018; Weiner et al., 1988) to highlight differences and similarities between three forms of harassment (i.e., sexual, sexual orientation, religious) and their relations to observer intervention in workplace harassment incidents. Results from two studies reveal differences (controllability, stability, visibility) and similarities (disruptiveness, peril, bystander efficacy, position authority) across forms of harassment in associations with observer intervention. Several differences across harassment of different religious subgroups (Atheists, Christians, Jews, Muslims) are also noted. We explore the implications of these findings and suggest future directions for research in the observer intervention and workplace harassment literature.

Keywords Observer intervention · Stigma dimensions · Harassment type

Introduction

I witnessed a newly hired shift manager put his hand on the butt of another employee. The girl was stunned and immediately told him to not do that. She quickly left and he continued on as if nothing had happened even though it was clear that she was very upset.

My manager at the beauty salon I work at is gay and very feminine.... every now and then a customer will come in and when my manager attempts to take them to his chair, they will refuse to let him service them. I

overheard a coworker tell such a customer 1 day that this happened [and] that she didn't blame them for not wanting to let the freak cut their hair.

I was working at a country club where one of my coworkers is Muslim. She wore a headdress while still in uniform. I was assigned with her 1 day, when a male coworker pulled me aside and whispered, "Make sure to check her for bombs," as a joke.

Although the Civil Rights Act of 1964 forbids workplace harassment (constituting any unwelcome conduct that creates an intimidating, offensive, or abusive environment), the quotes¹ above highlight the existence of workplace harassment toward certain protected stigmatized classes. Stigmas refer to when an individual with an attribute (e.g., gender, sexual orientation, and religion) is discredited by society and is rejected because of these attributes (Goffman, 1963). Not only can workplace harassment of protected stigmatized groups carry serious legal repercussions, but it can also have deleterious effects on harassment victims and organizational diversity climate (Bowling & Beehr, 2006). As harassment may go unchecked and unreported by victims out of fear of retaliation from harassers (Woodzicka & LaFrance, 2001), empowering observers to act has been seen as an effective method to combat harassment (O'Leary-Kelly et al., 2000). However, there is a lack of

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¹ Quotes directly from participants in research presented here.

synthesis of research on third-party intervention across stigmas (i.e., sexual, religious, ethnic, sexual orientation), making it difficult to assess whether theories and empirical findings regarding observer intervention generalize (Bowes-Sperry & O'Leary-Kelly, 2005; Ghumman et al., 2016; Ryan & Wessel, 2012), as well as whether training to encourage observer action needs to be target group specific (e.g., sexual harassment intervention as distinct from religious harassment intervention).

Specifically, while previous research has examined observer intervention of various stigmas (gender, sexual orientation, religion) in the work setting independently (Bowes-Sperry & O'Leary-Kelly, 2005; Ghumman et al., 2016; Ryan & Wessel, 2012) and even posited that different stigmas can have differential treatment effects (see Summers et al., 2018 for review), no research to date has theorized and empirically tested how the nature of the stigma itself influences the likelihood of observer intervention in the workplace. Consequently, the primary goal of this paper is to expand the theory on third-party intervention in workplace harassment contexts to consider the nature of the stigmatized group the harassed target belongs to. We borrow from Jones et al. (1984) classic model of stigma characteristics and related research (Summer et al., 2018; Weiner et al., 1988) to make a conceptual contribution regarding how differences between stigma perceptions may influence observer intervention. Second, we provide an empirical contribution by expanding the limited research on observer intervention (Benavides-Espinoza & Cunningham, 2010; Bowes-Sperry & O'Leary-Kelly, 2005; Bowes-Sperry & Powell, 1999; Ghumman et al., 2016; Ryan & Wessel, 2012) by examining similarities and differences across three types of harassment in influences on decisions to intervene.

To begin, we summarize the research on both workplace harassment and observer intervention (Bowes-Sperry & O'Leary-Kelly, 2005; Dhanani & LaPalme, 2018; Ghumman et al., 2016; Ryan & Wessel, 2012). We then describe Jones et al.'s (1984) model and related research (Summers et al., 2018) on the nature of stigmas and develop conceptual arguments regarding differences in observers' views of the target of harassment's characteristics, and consequently their willingness to provide help (Weiner et al., 1988). Next, we hypothesize contextual and individual difference factors that have been theorized as relevant to harassment intervention but that are underexamined across different types of stigmas. We examine our proposed hypotheses across two studies, via a within-subjects experiment and a critical incident recall technique.

Workplace Harassment

Workplace harassment can present itself in many different forms, ranging from exclusion, hostile working environment, and unwanted emotional, verbal, and physical conduct (Ryan

& Wessel, 2012). Depending on the stigmatized attribute, workplace harassment can also have distinct manifestations. For example, religious workplace harassment can include religious participation coercion, whereas sexual harassment can include unwanted sexual advances (Bowes-Sperry and O'Leary-Kelly, 2005; Ghumman et al., 2016). Despite these diverse presentations, workplace harassment in general has been shown to yield negative psychological (emotional harm) and organizational consequences (lower organizational commitment and job satisfaction) across several types of stigmas (Bowling & Beehr, 2006; Willness et al., 2007).

While victim's attitudes and responses to harassment incidences clearly are important to examine (Cragun et al., 2012; Rippey & Newman, 2006; Volpe & Strobl, 2005), bystanders can also profoundly influence cases of harassment (Dhanani & LaPalme, 2018; Skarlicki & Kulik, 2004; Skarlicki et al., 2015). Thus, training and encouraging third parties, or observers, to intervene can further help organizations mitigate workplace harassment (Holland et al., 2016). Ultimately, enabling observers to act may prove to be a more effective method than depending on victims alone to report unwanted harassment behaviors (O'Leary-Kelly et al., 2000).

Observer Intervention

Bowes-Sperry and O'Leary-Kelly (2005) define observer intervention as any aid provided by a third party upon witnessing or becoming aware of harassment of another. Observer intervention is described as an advocacy behavior in the allyship literature (Martinez et al., 2017; Sabat et al., 2014), which refer to allies as non-stigmatized individuals who are aware of the struggles of stigmatized minorities and combat their oppression by supporting and advocating on their behalf. Although allyship can refer to engaging in supportive behaviors, such as displaying a support sticker (e.g., Black Lives Matter), being a listening ear, and participating in a minority-focused social event, it can also include advocacy behaviors (Sabat et al., 2013). Advocacy behavior refers to actively engaging in outward support for stigmatized groups such as educating peers, advocating for accommodation, and confronting discrimination directly. Observer interventions fall into the latter category of confrontation, which Martinez et al. (2017, p. 72) refer to as "verbally expressing one's dissatisfaction with a perpetrator's negative behaviors, attitudes, or assumptions."

Allies engaging in observer intervention can bring to light treatment of harassment victims (Bowes-Sperry & Powell, 1999), who may not always report harassment, and foster zero-tolerance work atmospheres by signaling the inappropriateness of workplace harassment (O'Leary-Kelly et al., 2000). Because allies are not themselves targets but are

knowledgeable of the biases and discriminatory behavior against certain groups, they can speak up for victims of harassment and prevent the negative repercussions that targets might incur from speaking up for themselves (Martinez et al., 2017).

Previous research (Bowes-Sperry & O'Leary-Kelly, 2005; Dhanani & LaPalme, 2018; Ghumman et al., 2016; Ryan & Wessel, 2012) has identified a multitude of factors influencing allies' or observers' decision to intervene or not in harassment situations. For example, choosing to intervene can be influenced by perceptions of what types of actions are required, situational ambiguity, group size, and personal responsibility, whereas choosing how much to intervene and when to intervene can depend on the urgency of situation and the costs of intervening (Clark & Word, 1972; Latané & Darley, 1968). However, some factors may be less relevant to certain harassment types. For example, in Ryan and Wessel's (2012) study, knowledge of target's sexual orientation was an important correlate of intervention, but a similar predictor (knowledge of target's gender) may not be as meaningful in sexual harassment intervention, given the visibility and saliency of gender. Likewise, Ghumman et al. (2016) examined shared religion, religious commitment, and religion of target as being distinct to religious harassment intervention.

Research has historically reported a delta between behavioral intervention intentions and actual behaviors (Fishbein et al., 2003; Swim & Hyer, 1999), in which individuals tend to overestimate their likelihood of intervention. Specifically, the observer intention literature has found that participants' intention to intervene for hypothetical religious and sexual orientation harassment scenarios tended to be higher than reports of actual intervention in religious and sexual orientation harassment incidents (Ghumman et al., 2016; Ryan & Wessel, 2012). Thus, the distinction between intervention intentions and actual intervention is important, and we consider it in the work presented here.

Although the observer intervention and related allyship research include multiple stigmatized minorities such as women, ethnic minorities, and those with invisible disabilities (Sabat et al., 2014; Reason et al., 2005), no research to date has empirically examined whether the nature of the stigma itself (i.e., gender, sexual orientation, religion) influences observer's decisions to act or not. Researchers have highlighted the need for alternative models of observer intervention to be developed that account for distinct types of harassment. Rather than proliferating theories and models, we would suggest that theory and research on how different stigmatizing characteristics are perceived (see Ghumman et al., 2016) be better incorporated into a more general theory of observer intervention.

In the next section, we discuss differences and similarities between gender, sexual orientation, and religion from the lens of Jones et al.'s (1984) stigma dimensions

(origin, stability, visibility, disruptiveness, peril) and related research (Summers et al., 2018; Weiner et al., 1988). While we acknowledge the importance of intervention in other forms of harassment (race/ethnicity, disabilities), we focus on these three characteristics because there is already empirical groundwork specifically on observer intervention in these types of harassment incidents. We later delve into some contextual and individual difference factors that may further influence intervention across harassment types.

Stigma Dimensions

Jones and colleagues (1984) classified six stigma dimensions that identify the degree to which a stigma will come to be discredited: (1) *origin*-how was the stigma acquired and who is responsible for it? (2) *course of the mark (stability)*-how does the stigma change over time? (3) *visibility/concealability*-is the stigma visible or not? (4) *disruptiveness*-does the stigma hamper social interactions with others? (5) *Peril*-how much danger does the stigma pose to others? and (6) *Aesthetics*-how repellant or upsetting is the stigma in appearance to others?

Each of these features attributed to the stigmatized individual may affect how they are stereotyped and treated (e.g., the perceived controllability of obesity can be seen as a sign of laziness). For example, Crocker et al. (1993) specifically emphasized the importance of visibility and controllability in the likelihood of experiencing stigmatization. Summers et al. (2018) further advanced Jones et al.'s framework by applying it to the organizational context and suggested a 3-factor typology that influences access and treatment discrimination: (1) visibility, (2) controllability, and (3) legality. In addition to underscoring the role of visibility and controllability in influencing the probability of stigmatization in organizations, Summers et al. introduced another dimension regarding *protected legal* status, or whether state and federal regulations are in place that protects against discrimination on a given attribute. Summers et al. noted that empirical data were needed to test their typology and acknowledged that their three factors alone might not be all-inclusive. Further, U.S. federal protections based on sexual orientation have been extended since their typology was published (i.e., all three attributes examined in our research are legally protected). Thus, we focused on Jones et al.'s (1984) more exhaustive list of stigma dimensions as a basis for our theorizing about what influences intervention across three different harassment types (sexual harassment, sexual orientation harassment, and religious harassment) in the work context.

Origin

Origin concerns perceptions of how the stigmatizing condition was acquired and who is responsible for it (Jones et al., 1984). Origin includes not just the initial responsibility of acquiring the condition (onset controllability) but also the general day-to-day manageability of the condition (personal controllability) (Weiner, 1995). For example, while a person may have a genetic predisposition to heart disease (onset controllability), they can observe an active lifestyle of eating healthy and exercising to maintain cardiovascular health (personal controllability). Given this distinction, we explore both types of controllability in our research.

Gender has prototypically been considered an *ascribed* stigma (Foladore, 1969), and thus as having both low onset and personal controllability. While gender fluidity is embraced by many in the millennial generation, most Americans (54%) believe that one's gender is determined by one's sex at birth (Pew Research Center, 2017). Summers et al. (2018) also characterized gender as an *uncontrollable* stigma. Religion is typically perceived as more of an *achieved* or *controllable* stigma (Summers et al., 2018), as individuals can choose to convert to another belief system, although its typical connection to family and culture may suggest mixed perceptions of onset controllability with high personal controllability (Ghumman et al., 2016). Last, recent opinion polls suggest that individuals favor more biological explanations for individual sexual orientations suggesting low onset controllability (Gallup poll, 2015). Summers et al. (2018) also characterized sexual orientation as an *uncontrollable* stigma. Considering these potential differences in controllability perceptions, we predict

Hypothesis 1a Religious identity will be perceived as more controllable at onset than gender and sexual orientation.

Hypothesis 1b Religious identity will be perceived as more personally controllable than gender and sexual orientation.

Stability²

Stability refers to perceptions of whether a stigma can be altered or not (Jones et al., 1984). It is important to note that although stability is related to certain aspects of personal controllability (e.g., obesity may be changed by managing one's diet and exercising), it can be also distinguished as some personally controllable stigmas have low likelihood of being able to be changed (e.g., chronic illness can be

managed daily even if it cannot be cured). Gender and sexual orientation are considered by many to be stable attributes (CNN Pew Research Center, 2017; Poll, 2012), with the former being seen as more changeable and the latter as less changeable in recent years. In contrast, religion reflects a belief system that can be changed over time (Beatty & Kirby, 2006; Ghumman et al., 2016). A Gallup poll (2013) revealed that 25% of participants switched preferences or moved away from any religion whatsoever. Given that religion is malleable over time, we predict

Hypothesis 2 Religious identity will be perceived as less stable than gender and sexual orientation.

Visibility

Visibility refers to how obvious one's stigmatized attribute is. Gender is a more conspicuous attribute (Quinn, 2006), not just given associated physical differences, but also based on different gender norms and role expectations within our society (e.g., clothing choices), although once again we note changing societal norms associated with conceptualizations of gender. In contrast, sexual orientation is not readily visible and can be concealed (Ragins, 2008). Finally, while religious symbols, attire, and observances may make one's religion visible (Ghumman et al., 2013), in many cases, religion is only visible to the extent that one chooses to reveal one's affiliation or beliefs to others (Ghumman et al., 2016). Given the secularity of the American workplace, many individuals may never have a reason to identify their religious affiliations or beliefs to fellow employees. Likewise, Summers et al. (2018) identified gender as a visible stigma, whereas religion and sexual orientation were described as invisible stigmas. As such, we predict

Hypothesis 3 Gender will be perceived as more visible than sexual orientation and religious identity.

Disruptiveness

Disruptiveness concerns whether a stigmatized attribute is seen as hampering or making it difficult to have a relationship with the stigmatized person (Jones et al., 1984). As our research focuses on the *work* context and since Goffman (1963) suggested that stigmatized attributes should be considered in context, we examine how different attributes would be perceived as disruptive to the U.S. workplace. Given that there is a significant presence of females in the American workplace (U.S. Department of Labor, 2019), the presence of women at work may not be perceived as a disruptive force in the workplace in general. Nonetheless, it is possible that certain gender-linked accommodations (e.g.,

² While Jones et al. used the term "course" for this dimension, for ease of discussion of the directional relationships regarding course we will use the term "stability".

maternity leave) may be considered mildly disruptive to the work environment (King & Botsford, 2009).

Similarly, sexual orientation should not be considered disruptive to the workplace (Beatty & Kirby, 2006), although some coworkers may feel uncomfortable in interacting with homosexuals (Hebl et al., 2000) or feel threatened by sexual orientation disclosures of employees when they are presented in opposition of heterosexual norms (Lyons et al., 2020). However, Lyons et al. found that of those individuals who perceived identity threat from the sexual orientation disclosure of employees, this effect was buffered by viewing one's heterosexual identity as a personal construction.

Unlike gender and sexual orientation, which each might be viewed as bringing singular forms of disruption either in the form of accommodations or challenging belief systems, religion can potentially stir both of these types of disruptions simultaneously. For example, some religious accommodations (e.g., Muslims cannot serve or handle pork and alcohol products, Jews cannot work on the Sabbath) may directly influence one's ability to perform certain aspects of the job (Ghumman et al., 2016). Moreover, requesting such religious accommodations could serve as an antithesis to the assimilating strategy, which Lynch and Rodell (2018) noted bolstered colleagues' reactions toward employees with stigmatized concealable identities.

Additionally, certain religious practices (e.g., displaying religious symbols and praying during work hours) and stances (e.g., anti-abortion and LGBTQ rights) might make certain employees uncomfortable by coming into conflict with their own different belief systems and personal identities (Ghumman et al., 2013). Lynch and Rodell (2018) found that when employees with concealable stigmas adopted confirming strategies of their stigmatized identities, they negatively influenced acceptance and increased ostracism from colleagues. In line with this, the U.S.'s historical separation of church and state suggests that religion may not be welcome in the American workplace and its mere presence may be perceived as disruptive. As such, we predict

Hypothesis 4 Religious identity will be perceived as more disruptive than gender and sexual orientation.

Peril

Peril focuses on the perceived level of danger posed by the individual with the stigmatized attribute (Jones et al., 1984). Beatty and Kirby (2006) suggested that threat can come from individuals seeing themselves as adopting the stigmatized attribute (e.g., becoming gay, religious), whereas more absolute traits (e.g., gender) do not pose a similar level of threat. Further, sexual orientation and religion have a greater potential to be perceived as threatening because homosexuality and another's religion may challenge one's cultural

worldview (i.e., terror management theory; Greenberg et al., 1986). Moreover, individuals belonging to certain religions also have stereotypes associated with them that reflect danger (e.g., Muslims being stereotyped as belligerent, aggressive, evil, and terrorists; Asani, 2003). As such, we predict

Hypothesis 5 Gender will be perceived as less perilous than sexual orientation and religious identity.

Stigma Dimensions and Intervention

One question is whether the differences between religion, gender, and sexual orientation on Jones et al.'s (1984) stigma dimensions influence observer behavior. According to Summers et al. (2018), stigma dimensions will create differential treatment effects (e.g., hiring, promotions), such that those that are perceived as having visible, controllable, and legally unprotected stigmas will fare the worst treatment in the organizational context. (Although we note again that all attributes studied here have legal protections regarding discrimination). More directly related to the topic of observer intervention, attribution theory (Weiner, 1995) suggested that observers will make attributions regarding how responsible a stigmatized individual is for his/her treatment, and subsequent affective reactions and helping behaviors will be based on these attributions.

Unfavorable reactions occur if the stigma is perceived as a controllable attribute (Summers et al., 2018). For example, Weiner et al. (1988) found that individuals who had stigmas that they were not considered responsible for (e.g., Alzheimer's disease, blindness, cancer) were rated as more likable and elicited more help-giving intentions than individuals whose stigmas were viewed as the target's responsibility (e.g., drug addiction, obesity). As such, stigmas perceived as having greater onset and personal controllability are associated with greater negative affect (less liking, pity, greater anger) and less help-giving intentions.

In addition to origin, a stable trait with little possibility for improvement and future success may also elicit negative affect and less help (Weiner et al., 1988). However, given that some of the attributes we are examining (i.e., gender, sexual orientation) represent uncontrollable identities, we believe that the perceived stability of a stigmatized attribute will elicit positive rather than negative reactions toward the harassed individual. Not surprisingly, Weiner et al. found that uncontrollable stable stigmas (e.g., blindness, paraplegia) elicited positive affect and help-giving intentions.

Although visibility, disruptiveness, and peril have not been central to Weiner's attribution analysis (2006) of stigmas, these dimensions have also been noted as influencing affective reactions and helping behaviors (Ghumman et al., 2016). Generally, visible stigmas are more likely to elicit negative reactions than invisible stigmas (Goffman,

1963; Jones et al., 1984; Summers et al., 2018). For example, research has shown that individuals tend to avoid, keep more distance, and exhibit more anti-social responses when they encounter individuals with visible illnesses compared to individuals with invisible illnesses (Covey, 1998; Crandall & Moriarty, 1995). Disruptiveness and peril also elicit unfavorable attitudes because they disrupt the flow of one's social interactions, lead to unpredictability, increase the feelings of fear, or lead to feeling uncomfortable around the individuals with the stigma (Jones et al., 1984; Ragins, 2008). For example, danger and disruptiveness are associated with greater social rejection of the mentally ill (Corrigan et al., 2003; Feldman & Crandall, 2007; Levey & Howells, 1995). We predict

Hypothesis 6 Observer intervention is more likely when the stigmatized attribute of the target is perceived to have (a) low onset controllability, (b) low personal controllability, (c) high stability, (d) low visibility, (e) low disruptiveness, and (f) low peril (versus high onset controllability, high personal controllability, low stability, high visibility, high disruptiveness, and high peril).

Other Influences on Observer Intervention

While we expect that, due to differences in stigma dimensions, intervention differences will occur between gender, sexual orientation, and religious harassment, there are other influences that should operate similarly across the different harassment types. The workplace observer intervention literature (Bowes-Sperry & O'Leary-Kelly, 2005; Dhanani & LaPalme, 2018; Ghumman, et al., 2016; Ryan & Wessel, 2012) and related research on bystander intervention (Banyard, 2008; Clark & Word, 1972) point to several situational factors as well as individual differences that influence observers' decision to intervene on behalf of harassment victims. We expand on this existing research by looking at some under-examined factors that are related to the harassment context (intent to harm, position authority) and a key individual difference (bystander efficacy).

Intent to Harm

In their decision to intervene, observers factor in the intentionality of the harassment (Bowes-Sperry & O'Leary-Kelly, 2005). For harassment behaviors that are interpreted as unintentional or ambiguous in intent, observers may assume that the harasser is oblivious and might question the degree of harm incurred by such unintended actions. In contrast, observers may find harassment overt and malicious in intent. Observers are more likely to act in the harmful intent situations as there is less ambiguity in the harm being caused to the victim and there are greater norms to intervene

(Benavides-Espinoza & Cunningham, 2010; Bowes-Sperry & Powell, 1999). Consequently, we predict

Hypothesis 7 Observer intervention is more likely to occur when the observer perceives the behavior as harmful in intent (versus behavior perceived as less harmful in intent).

Bystander Efficacy

One aspect of an observer's willingness to help those in need is bystander efficacy, or the observer's beliefs regarding one's effectiveness and capabilities in intervening. For example, Laner et al. (2001) found that individuals who had successful experiences in dealing with violence were more likely to intervene in future incidents of physical violence. Consequently, it is no surprise that many harassment prevention programs focus on empowering bystanders by training them in effectively intervening on behalf of victims (Banyard et al., 2004). Thus, we predict

Hypothesis 8 Observer intervention is more likely to occur when the observer has high bystander efficacy (versus when the observer has low bystander efficacy).

Position Authority

Observers consider whether it is their responsibility to act (Ashburn-Nardo et al., 2008; Holland et al., 2016). When individuals with positions of authority (i.e., managers) are present in harassment incidents, observers are less likely to intervene because they consider those with positions of authority as being better adept at dealing with the situation (Bowes-Sperry & O'Leary-Kelly, 2005; Cramer et al., 1988). However, if the observers themselves hold positions of authority, then they will be expected to intervene because of the role expectations attached to these positions (O'Leary-Kelly et al., 2004; Paetzold & O'Leary-Kelly, 1994), which lead them to feel more accountable for intervention (Tetlock, 1992). Consequently, we expect

Hypothesis 9 Observer intervention is more likely to occur when the observer has high position authority (versus when the observer has low position authority).

Studies Overview

We conducted two studies to examine our hypotheses. The first study involved a within-subjects experiment in which respondents rated gender, sexual orientation, and religion on stigma dimensions and intervention intentions to examine Hypotheses 1–5 as well as to explore religious identity group differences (see our exploratory investigation section below).

In the second study, we examined Hypotheses 1–9 by using a critical incident recall technique in which the respondents reflected on real harassment incidents and actual observer intervention. The different methodologies employed across our two studies also provide a natural comparison of intentions to intervene with actual interventions.

Exploratory Investigation Regarding Religious Identity Groups

Although contemporary views have shifted away from defining gender and sexual orientation as being exclusively binary categories (e.g., trans and non-binary identities), a major feature of religion is that it has historically always been accepted as having numerous identities, and one in which different religious groups are stereotyped differently. Numerically, Atheists, Jews, and Muslims represent minority religious groups in the U.S., making up 4%, 2%, and 1% of the American population, while Christians (65%) represent the majority (Pew Research Center, 2021). Minority religious populations have generally been associated with several negative stereotypes and have been the main targets of religious harassment (Asani, 2003; Cohen et al., 2009; Gervais, 2011); however, Christian groups are also not immune to harassment and unflattering stereotypes (Moran, 2007). Given that religious harassment can be targeted toward both minority and majority religious identity groups (Ghumman et al., 2016), we do not provide any directional hypotheses regarding the differences between religious identities but investigate differences between religious identity groups in stigma dimensions and observer intervention intentions in an exploratory fashion. We describe our methods and results for both studies in further detail below.

Study 1: Method

The purpose of Study 1 was to examine how controllability, stability, visibility, disruptiveness, and peril are perceived across gender, sexual orientation, religion, and various religious identities (H1-5), and how each of these stigma dimensions relate to intervention intentions across the different identities (H6). To achieve these goals, Study 1 employed a within-subjects design in which participants responded to measures for each of the stigma groups as well as four religious identities (i.e., Atheist, Christian, Jew, Muslim).

Participants

Two hundred and three participants (50.7% male) were recruited from Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) in exchange for \$2. Sample size was determined by the correlations effect size benchmarks set by Bosco et al., 2015,

making our sample size at the 50th percentile of effect sizes for 0.80 power for a behavior intention outcome. To be eligible for the study, participants had to have been currently employed for at least 3 months within the same organization, be living in the U.S. for the past 5 years, have an above-average English language proficiency, and be at least 18 years of age. The mean age of the sample was 37.41 years, ranging from 20 to 71 years old, and 73.8% were Caucasian, 11.9% African American, 5.4% Hispanic, 4.5% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 3.5% other. Religious affiliations were 46.8% Christian, 31.1% Atheist/Agnostic, 16.7% other, 3.4% Jewish, 1% Hindu, 0.5% Buddhist, and 0.5% Muslim. Regarding sexual orientation, 93% were predominately to exclusively heterosexual, 1.5% equally heterosexual and homosexual, 4.5% predominately to exclusively homosexual, and 1% non-sexual. Regarding work, 79.3% of the participants reported working full time at their current job and had an average organization and position tenure of 5.93 and 4.16 years, respectively.

Procedure

Participants were recruited through HITs (Human Intelligence Tasks) posted on the MTurk worker database. In comparison to traditional samples, MTurk workers have been shown to be equal, if not greater, in quality with regard to reliability, attention to instructions, and diversity (Buhrmester et al., 2011; Paolacci et al., 2010). Participants were screened for eligibility and, if qualified, completed informed consent. Out of the 339 participants who accepted the HIT, 315 participants passed the screening questions, out of which 203 completed the full survey and were included in analyses.

Measures

As the online survey employed a within-subjects design, participants completed two overarching measures (observer intervention intentions, stigma dimensions) that were each presented separately on different pages. Specifically, participants completed measures regarding their likelihood of engaging in intervention toward harassed females, homosexuals, and religious persons, followed by their perceptions of onset controllability, personal controllability, stability, visibility, disruptiveness, and peril associated with each group. Both measures employed a matrix style table that listed the following order for each group: religious person, Atheist, Christian, Jewish, Muslim, female, and homosexual. This order was constant across all the dependent variables and within each subject. The participants then concluded the survey with demographic questions.

Observer intervention intentions were assessed with the hypothetical question: “If a coworker with one of the following attributes (religious person, Atheist, etc.) was being

harassed at work,..." coupled with a modified 2-item helping scale (Corrigan et al., 2003), rating their willingness to help (e.g., *how likely is it that you would help this person?*). Responses ranged from 1 to 9 (e.g., Definitely would not help/Definitely would help; $\alpha = 0.83\text{--}0.92$ across the different groups).

Stigma Dimensions

Participants were asked to rate their opinions of the different group attributes (*religious person, Atheist*, etc.) in general on the following sigma dimensions:

- (1) *Onset Controllability* was measured using a modified 3-item personal responsibility scale (Reisenzein, 1986), (e.g., *How responsible, do you think, is a person for having the following attribute?*) with responses ranging from 1 to 9 (e.g., Not at all responsible/Very much responsible; $\alpha = 0.80\text{--}0.95$).
- (2) *Personal Controllability* was assessed using the 3-item external control subscale from McAuley et al.'s (1992) causal dimension scale, with 9-point scale anchors (e.g., Not Manageable/Manageable, Person cannot/can regulate attribute, etc.; $\alpha = 0.87\text{--}0.96$).
- (3) *Stability* was measured using the 3-item stability subscale from McAuley et al.'s (1992) causal dimension scale, with 9-point scale anchors (e.g., Temporary/Permanent, Changeable/Unchangeable, etc.; $\alpha = 0.77\text{--}0.90$).
- (4) *Visibility* was assessed using a modified 4-item concealability scale (Jantke, 2011), (e.g., *easy to recognize attribute*), with responses from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 9 (Strongly agree); $\alpha = 0.76\text{--}0.89$.
- (5) *Disruptiveness* was measured by a modified 7-item stigma scale (McLaughlin et al., 2004) focusing on performance impact, social impact, and unpredictability at work. Responses ranged from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 9 (Strongly agree) and measured the extent to which the attribute was perceived as disruptive at work (e.g., *makes person difficult to work with*; $\alpha = 0.91\text{--}0.93$).
- (6) *Peril* was measured by a modified 3-item fear scale (Corrigan et al., 2003; e.g., *How scared would you feel of a person with this attribute?*), with responses from 1 (Not at all) to 9 (Very much); $\alpha = 0.82\text{--}0.96$.

Study 1 Results

Table 1 provides means, standard deviations, and inter-correlations. Figure 1A shows a graphical representation for the three identity groups across observer intervention

intentions and the stigma dimension measures. A within-subjects ANOVA comparing the effect of group attributes on intervention intentions revealed a significant effect ($F(1.63, 328.36) = 18.26, p = 0.00$). Pairwise comparisons using the Bonferroni adjustment revealed that participants rated themselves as less likely to have intentions to intervene on behalf of a religious person or homosexual as compared to a female ($M = 7.56, SD = 1.66$), but there were no statistical differences in intervention intentions between religious persons ($M = 6.97, SD = 2.12$) and homosexuals ($M = 6.71, SD = 2.24$).

Within-Subjects ANOVA Analyses

To assess H1-H5, one-way within-subjects ANOVAs were conducted to compare the effects of the stigmatized attribute (female, homosexual, and religious person) on the stigma dimensions (Table 2), followed by pairwise comparisons using the Bonferroni adjustment where findings were significant. There was a significant effect of group attribute on onset controllability ($F(1.94, 390.80) = 258.22, p = 0.00$). Religion ($M = 7.12, SD = 2.13$) was rated as more onset controllable than being female ($M = 2.13, SD = 2.15$) or homosexual ($M = 3.75, SD = 3.13$). Regarding personal controllability, the means of the three stigmatized attributes were significantly different ($F(1.90, 384.28) = 296.88, p = 0.00$). Religion ($M = 7.59, SD = 2.03$) was seen as more personally controllable than being female ($M = 2.26, SD = 2.20$) or homosexual ($M = 4.04, SD = 3.12$). Hypotheses 1a and 1b were supported.

There was also a significant effect of group attribute on stability ($F(1.89, 382.04) = 228.14, p = 0.00$). Religious persons ($M = 4.17, SD = 1.98$) were rated less stable than females ($M = 8.18, SD = 1.43$) and homosexuals ($M = 6.56, SD = 2.46$). Hypothesis 2 was supported.

Regarding visibility, a significant effect of group attribute was found ($F(2, 404) = 242.60, p = 0.00$). Females ($M = 7.96, SD = 1.46$) were rated more visible than religious persons ($M = 4.78, SD = 2.09$) and homosexuals ($M = 5.20, SD = 2.08$). Hypothesis 3 was supported.

There was a significant effect of group attribute on disruptiveness ($F(1.84, 371.38) = 42.39, p = 0.00$). Religious persons ($M = 2.71, SD = 1.82$) were rated more disruptive than females ($M = 1.86, SD = 1.29$) but not statistically different in disruptiveness than homosexuals ($M = 3.01, SD = 1.97$). Hypothesis 4 was partially supported.

Regarding peril, a significant effect of group attribute was found ($F(1.48, 295.33) = 7.57, p = 0.00$). Females ($M = 1.34, SD = 0.93$) were rated less perilous than religious persons ($M = 1.54, SD = 1.35$) and homosexuals ($M = 1.74, SD = 1.65$). Hypothesis 5 was supported.

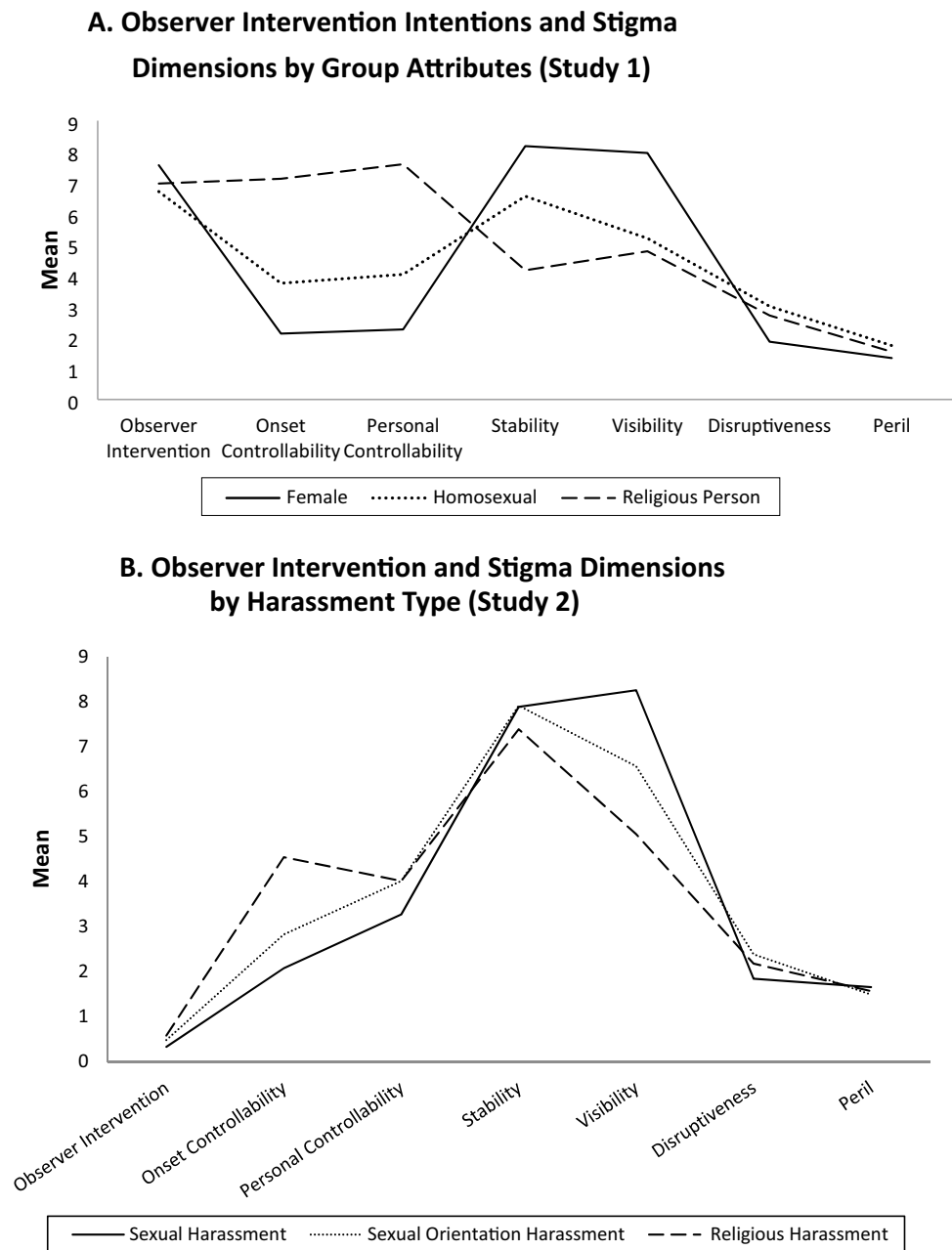
Table 1 Study 1: descriptive statistics and correlations of stigma dimension across harassment types

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<i>Female</i>											
1 Age	37.41	11.92	-								
2 Gender	1.49	0.50	0.03	-							
3 Observer Intervention—Female	7.56	1.66	0.10	0.18**	(0.90)						
4 Onset Controllability—Female	2.13	2.15	-0.04	0.02	-0.06	(0.86)					
5 Personal Controllability—Female	2.26	2.20	-0.05	0.09	-0.03	0.69**	(0.87)				
6 Stability—Female	8.18	1.43	0.19**	0.07	0.26**	-0.37**	-0.26**	(0.80)			
7 Visibility—Female	7.96	1.46	0.00	0.04	0.26**	-0.15*	-0.09	0.44**	(0.81)		
8 Disruptiveness—Female	1.86	1.29	-0.11	-0.14*	-0.38**	0.13	0.12	-0.25**	-0.12	(0.92)	
9 Peril—Female	1.34	0.93	0.02	-0.06	-0.38**	0.17*	0.11	-0.20**	-0.20**	0.36**	(0.82)
<i>Homosexual</i>											
1 Age	37.41	11.92	-								
2 Gender	1.49	0.50	0.03	-							
3 Observer Intervention—Homosexual	6.71	2.24	-0.04	0.25**	(0.89)						
4 Onset Controllability—Homosexual	3.75	3.13	0.09	-0.08	-0.40**	(0.95)					
5 Personal Controllability—Homosexual	4.04	3.12	0.04	-0.05	-0.38**	0.84**	(0.95)				
6 Stability—Homosexual	6.56	2.46	-0.02	0.08	0.39**	-0.72**	-0.73**	(0.90)			
7 Visibility—Homosexual	5.20	2.08	0.01	0.02	-0.18**	0.33**	0.36**	-0.26**	(0.88)		
8 Disruptiveness—Homosexual	3.01	1.97	0.12	-0.09	-0.58**	0.39**	0.42**	-0.37**	0.36**	(0.92)	
9 Peril—Homosexual	1.74	1.65	0.10	-0.03	-0.46**	0.35**	0.28**	-0.25**	0.21**	0.54**	(0.91)
<i>Religious person</i>											
1 Age	37.41	11.92	-								
2 Gender	1.49	0.50	0.03	-							
3 Observer Intervention—Religious Person	6.97	2.12	0.12	0.17*	(0.87)						
4 Onset Controllability—Religious Person	7.12	2.13	0.07	0.16*	0.12	(0.83)					
5 Personal Controllability—Religious Person	7.59	2.03	0.07	0.13	0.19**	0.69**	(0.94)				
6 Stability—Religious Person	4.17	1.98	0.03	-0.07	0.08	-0.30**	-0.40**	(0.78)			
7 Visibility—Religious Person	4.78	2.09	0.06	-0.02	0.13	0.16*	0.13	0.05	(0.81)		
8 Disruptiveness—Religious Person	2.71	1.82	-0.01	-0.04	-0.33**	0.07	0.01	0.03	0.36**	(0.92)	
9 Peril—Religious Person	1.54	1.35	0.01	-0.11	-0.29**	-0.15*	-0.15*	0.04	0.08	0.37**	(0.91)

N=203. Gender coded as male=1, female=2. Alphas reported on the diagonal. To conserve space, correlations for the different religious identities (Atheist, Christian, Jewish, Muslim) are not shown in this table but can be made available upon request from author

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Fig. 1 Observer intervention and stigma dimensions by (A) group attributes and (B) harassment type



Multiple Linear Regression Analyses

To test Hypothesis 6, three separate multiple linear regression analyses were conducted for each of the group attributes (female, homosexual, and religious person) by regressing intervention intentions on each of the stigma dimensions (see the top half of Table 3). No control variables were used.

For females, intervention intentions were higher when disruptiveness ($b = -0.34, p = 0.00$) and peril ($b = -0.45, p = 0.00$) were perceived as low. Onset controllability ($b = 0.05, p = 0.43$), personal controllability ($b = 0.02, p = 0.81$), stability ($b = 0.13, p = 0.13$), and visibility ($b = 0.15, p = 0.06$) did not relate to intervention intentions.

A similar pattern of results emerged for homosexuals, in that intervention intentions were higher when disruptiveness ($b = -0.46, p = 0.00$) and peril ($b = -0.25, p = 0.01$) were low but onset controllability ($b = -0.07, p = 0.37$), personal controllability ($b = 0.01, p = 0.86$), stability ($b = 0.14, p = 0.07$), and visibility ($b = 0.07, p = 0.29$) did not relate to intervention intentions. For religious persons, intervention intentions were greater when there was higher stability ($b = 0.17, p = 0.02$) and when disruptiveness ($b = -0.44, p = 0.00$) and peril ($b = -0.23, p = 0.04$) were seen as low. Surprisingly, intervention intentions were also higher when personal controllability ($b = 0.22, p = 0.02$) and visibility ($b = 0.24, p = 0.00$) were high.

Table 2 Study 1: results for one-way within-subjects anova and pairwise comparison tests for stigma dimensions and observer intervention intentions by identity

Identity	Stigma Dimensions and Observer Intervention Intentions													
	Onset Controllability		Personal Controllability		Stability		Visibility		Disruptiveness		Peril		Observer Intervention Intentions	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Female	2.13	2.15	2.26	2.20	8.18	1.43	7.96	1.46	1.86	1.29	1.34	0.93	7.56	1.66
Homosexual	3.75	3.13	4.04	3.12	6.56	2.46	5.20	2.08	3.01	1.97	1.74	1.65	6.71	2.24
Religious Person	7.12	2.13	7.59	2.03	4.17	1.98	4.78	2.09	2.71	1.82	1.54	1.35	6.97	2.12
<i>Mauchly's Test for Sphericity</i> $\chi^2(2) =$	6.91, $p = .04$		10.59, $p = .01$		11.90, $p = .00$		2.05, $p = .36$		18.48, $p = .00$		87.09, $p = .00$		52.63, $p = .00$	
<i>Greenhouse Geisser Correction</i> $F(1.94, 390.80) =$	258.22, $p = .00$		296.88, $p = .00$		228.14, $p = .00$		242.60, $p = .00$		42.30, $p = .00$		7.57, $p = .00$		18.26, $p = .00$	
$\eta^2 =$	0.56		0.60		0.53		0.55		0.17		0.04		0.08	
Religious Identity	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Atheist	7.38	2.02	7.69	2.00	3.98	1.94	3.50	1.80	2.67	1.67	1.73	1.47	6.50	2.33
Christian	7.16	2.05	7.57	2.13	4.35	2.10	4.56	2.14	2.47	1.73	1.54	1.34	7.07	2.16
Jewish	6.35	2.55	6.88	2.58	4.93	2.49	4.47	2.05	2.34	1.50	1.48	1.18	7.00	2.04
Muslim	6.70	2.34	7.12	2.32	4.55	2.27	5.11	2.31	3.40	2.09	2.88	2.43	6.04	2.43
<i>Mauchly's Test for Sphericity</i> $\chi^2(5) =$	122.41, $p = .00$		153.36, $p = .00$		29.93, $p = .00$		38.18, $p = .00$		63.59, $p = .00$		238.10, $p = .00$		74.06, $p = .00$	
<i>Greenhouse Geisser Correction</i> $F(2.20, 443.73) =$	27.41, $p = .00$		25.58, $p = .00$		21.66, $p = .00$		65.09, $p = .00$		33.14, $p = .00$		48.66, $p = .00$		22.50, $p = .00$	
$\eta^2 =$	0.12		0.11		0.10		0.24		0.14		0.20		0.10	

Note. $N = 203$. Brackets indicate differences between conditions that were not significant. All other conditions showed significant differences. All pairwise comparisons used the Bonferroni adjustment

*Mauchly's test for sphericity was not violated and therefore, the non-corrected within subjects effects (sphericity assumed) are reported instead of Green House Geisser correction

Table 3 Study 1: observer intervention intentions regression on stigma dimensions for female, homosexual, religious person, and religious identities

Variable	Identity							
	Female		Homosexual		Religious person			
	b	p	b	p	b	p		
Onset Controllability	0.05	0.43	- 0.07	0.37	- 0.02	0.81		
Personal Controllability	0.02	0.81	0.01	0.86	0.22*	0.02		
Stability	0.13	0.13	0.14	0.07	0.17*	0.02		
Visibility	0.15	0.06	0.07	0.29	0.24**	0.00		
Disruptiveness	- 0.34**	0.00	- 0.46**	0.00	- 0.44**	0.00		
Peril	- 0.45**	0.00	- 0.25**	0.01	- 0.23*	0.04		
R^2	0.25**	0.00	0.40**	0.00	0.24**	0.00		
Variable	Religious Identity							
	Atheist		Christian		Jewish		Muslim	
	b	p	b	p	b	p	b	p
Onset Controllability	0.04	0.70	0.03	0.71	0.11	0.16	- 0.10	0.24
Personal Controllability	0.04	0.66	0.15	0.10	0.05	0.56	0.15	0.10
Stability	0.24**	0.00	0.14*	0.05	0.15*	0.02	0.02	0.74
Visibility	0.01	0.90	0.15*	0.03	- 0.02	0.82	0.00	0.99
Disruptiveness	- 0.34**	0.00	- 0.48**	0.00	- 0.34**	0.00	- 0.30**	0.00
Peril	- 0.40**	0.00	- 0.10	0.42	- 0.36**	0.00	- 0.38**	0.00
R^2	0.23**	0.00	0.22**	0.00	0.18**	0.00	0.36**	0.00

$N = 200$. All regression weights reported in the table are unstandardized

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Onset controllability ($b = -0.02$, $p = 0.81$) did not relate to intervention intentions. Overall, these results support Hypotheses 6e (disruptiveness) and 6f (peril) across all group attributes, and partially support 6c (stability) for the religious group attribute. Hypotheses 6a (onset controllability), 6b (personal controllability), and 6d (visibility) were not supported across any of the stigmatized attributes.

Exploratory Analyses

We also explored whether there would be differences on each of the stigma dimensions across the various religious identities (Atheist, Christian, Jewish, Muslim; see the bottom half of Table 2). There were significant effects of religious identity on all the stigma dimensions and intervention intentions. Pairwise comparisons using the Bonferroni adjustment reveal that participants were less likely to report intervention intentions on behalf of Muslims compared to Christians, Jews, and Atheists. Atheist and Christian religious identities were seen as more onset and personally controllable than Jewish or Muslim religious identities. The Atheist religious identity was seen as the least stable and the least visible religious identity, while Muslims were considered the most visible, most disruptive, and most perilous. Overall, these exploratory results reveal that there are significant differences across various religious identities in intervention intentions and stigma dimensions.

We also considered whether controlling for observer characteristics might impact results. As previous research has noted that females are more likely to elicit sympathy toward victims of harassment (Yule et al., 2022), we reran the regression analyses in Tables 3 and 6 with *gender of observer* as an additional predictor. We did not find *gender of observer* to be a significant predictor for sexual harassment, Atheist harassment, Christian harassment, Jewish harassment, and Muslim harassment but it was a significant predictor for religious harassment ($b = 0.64$, $p = 0.02$) and sexual orientation harassment ($b = 0.87$, $p = 0.00$). Additionally, research has also pointed to shared minority status as being a precursor for engaging in helping behaviors toward other minority victims (Ghumman et al., 2016). Thus, for both observer religious affiliation and observer sexual orientation, we created a respective dichotomous variable for each characteristic (e.g., exclusively heterosexual or not, majority religion (Christian) or not) and analyzed these variables as controls but did not find either observer characteristics to be significant predictors of intervention intentions across any harassment type.

Study 1 Discussion

Study 1 shows that there are differences in perceptions of gender, sexual orientation, and religious group stigma attributes, and some stigma dimensions relate to intervention intentions. Overall, these findings highlight the value of incorporating Jones et al. (1984) stigma dimensions and related research (Summer et al., 2018; Weiner et al., 1988) in theory regarding third-party intervention and on allyship behaviors. For example, perceived disruptiveness and peril were negatively associated with intervention intentions in all cases, and we found stability, personal controllability, and visibility as significant correlates of intervention intentions for religion.

Although this contrasts with previous studies that show a negative association between the latter two dimensions and intervention (Covey, 1998; Crandall & Moriarty, 1995; Weiner et al., 1988), the *religious person* target was not defined in terms of any specific religion in our experiment, whereas the *female* and *homosexual* targets were clearer in interpretation. Consequently, participants may have been substituting the majority religious identity (Christianity) for this attribute. Perhaps because Christianity is the majority religious group in the U.S., it is considered more acceptable to identify with and to be recognized as belonging to this in-group (visibility), which in turn incurs favorable reactions from others (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Study 1 also shows that there are differences in perceptions of stigma dimensions across various religious identities.³

In summary, Study 1 demonstrated how stigma dimensions are perceived differently across the identity groups and how they are associated with observers' intentions to intervene. Because Study 1's artificiality may or may not reflect the real experiences of observers in harassment incidents, we conducted a second study examining actual intervention (versus intervention intentions) in true harassment incidents.

Study 2 Methods

In addition to replicating Study 1 findings (H1-H6), the goal of Study 2 was to examine contextual and individual difference factors that may relate to observer intervention across sexual, sexual orientation, and religious harassment (H7-H9). To fulfill this goal, we examined *actual* helping behaviors (observer intervention) by employing a critical incident recall technique in which participants were asked to think

³ Additional exploratory analyses (see bottom half of Table 3) showed that across all the religious identities examined, disruptiveness was negatively related to intervention intentions, and peril and stability were related for most groups.

of and to describe an incident that they witnessed in the workplace within the last 12 months where an individual had been targeted due to his/her gender, sexual orientation, or religion. Participants then completed an online questionnaire regarding observer intervention, stigma dimensions, and other contextual factors pertaining to the incident recalled, followed by a second online survey on individual differences and demographic questions a week later.

Participants

Three-hundred twenty-one participants (43% male) were recruited from MTurk and compensated \$4.50 for their time. Sample sizes were calculated based on the correlation effect size benchmarks set forward by previous research (Bosco et al., 2015); our sample size was at the 50th percentile of effect sizes for 0.80 power for a behavior outcome. The mean age of the sample was 32.58 years, ranging from 18 to 75 years old. Regarding ethnicity, 74.4% were Caucasian, 10.3% African American, 4.7% Hispanic, 7.8% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 2.8% other. The religious affiliations for the participants were 41.9% Christian, 31.6% Atheist/Agnostic, 21.3% other, 2.5% Jewish, 2.5% Buddhist, and 0.3% Muslim. Regarding sexual orientation, 89.7% were predominately to exclusively heterosexual, 4.1% equally heterosexual and homosexual, 5% predominately to exclusively homosexual, and 1.3% nonsexual. Regarding work, 79.8% of the participants reported working full time at their current job and had an average organization and position tenure of 4.67 and 3.45 years, respectively.

Procedure

Participants for Study 2 were recruited through HITs posted on MTurk. In addition to having been currently employed for at least 3 months within the same organization, be living in the U.S. for the past 5 years or more, having an above-average English language proficiency, being of at least 18 years of age, and not having participated in our Study 1, participants also had to have witnessed and to be able to recall either a sexual, sexual orientation, or religious harassment incident⁴ at work that was being directed at another colleague within the last 12 months. The maximum number of participants recruited for each of these harassment conditions was set at 110.

Two online surveys separated over the course of a week were used to partially alleviate common method bias concerns by temporally separating some of the variables (See

Podsakoff et al., 2003). In the first survey, participants described a workplace harassment incident and answered questions pertaining to the incident. The second survey measured individual differences and demographic questions.

Of the 576 participants who accepted the Study 2 HIT, 381 participants passed the screening questions, of which 345 completed the first survey and 324 participants completed the second survey. Two coders determined whether the incidents recalled by the participants were (1) work-related, (2) constituted the respective harassment type, and that the (3) participants were witnesses of these incidents and not targets or perpetrators themselves. The inter-rater percentage agreement on these three factors was 99%, 98%, and 99%, respectively; cases where disagreement occurred were discussed and resolved. Three of the reported incidents did not fit one or more of these conditions and were dropped, yielding a total of 321 participants [sexual harassment ($n = 109$), sexual orientation harassment ($n = 107$), and religious harassment ($N = 105$)].

Measures

Observer intervention was measured using a single-item question, “*Did you get involved in this incident?*” on a yes/no scale, which was coded 1 and 0, respectively.⁵

Contextual Factors and Individual Differences

Intent to harm was measured by a modified 5-item intent to harm scale (Swim et al., 2003). The items (e.g., *Perpetrator intended to harm the target*) were rated on a 1 (Not at all) to 6 (Very much) scale ($\alpha = 0.87$). *Position authority* was measured using Schieman and Reid (2008) job authority scale. Participants were asked on a yes/no scale if at the time of the harassment incident, they could (1) *influence or set the rate of pay received by others*, had (2) *authority to hire and fire others*, or could (3) *supervise or manage anyone as part of job*. Responses were coded 0 (no) and 1 (yes) and a final position authority score was calculated by tallying all the items; $\alpha = 0.78$. *Bystander Efficacy* was assessed using a 10-item efficacy scale on preventing violence (Ward, 2001), modified to reflect efficacy regarding harassment prevention in the workplace. Responses to items (e.g., *I can help prevent harassment against coworkers in my workplace*) ranged from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree; $\alpha = 0.86$).

⁴ If the participants stated they were able to describe incidents for more than one of these harassment types, then they were randomly assigned to one of the conditions.

⁵ We also coded the *level of immediacy* and *level of involvement* based on a 5-option multiple choice observer intervention question developed by Ryan and Wessel (2012). There were no differences across harassment types in level of involvement, and the only difference in level immediacy was a lower level of immediacy for sexual harassment versus religious harassment ($F(2, 203) = 5.68, p = .00, \eta^2 = .05$).

Stigma Dimensions

Similar measures to those in Study 1 were used to assess onset controllability ($\alpha=0.84$), personal controllability ($\alpha=0.95$), stability ($\alpha=0.85$), visibility ($\alpha=0.92$), disruptiveness ($\alpha=0.92$), and peril ($\alpha=0.95$), but were revised to refer to the target of the harassment. (e.g., “Please rate the extent to which the target’s religion/sexual orientation/gender made the person difficult to work with”).

Study 2 Results

Demographic data revealed that 5.6% of the targets were younger than 20 years of age, 32.1% between the ages of 20 and 25, 29.6% between the ages of 26 and 30, 15.6% between the ages of 31 and 35, 5.9% between the ages of 36 and 40, 7.5% between the ages of 41 and 45, 1.9% between the ages of 46 and 50, and 1.9% older than 50 years of age. Regarding ethnicity, 66.6% of the targets were Caucasian, 8.8% African American, 8.1% Hispanic, 4.1% Asian/Pacific Islander, 6.6% multi-racial, 4.7% other, and 1.3% of the participants reported not knowing the ethnicity of the target. Females comprised 90.7% of the targets within the sexual harassment incidents. The religious affiliations of the targets from the religious harassment incidents were 24.7% Christian, 22.9% Muslim, 9.6% Atheist/Agnostic, 21.9% other, 14.3% Jewish, 4.8% Hindu, 1% Buddhist, and 1% participants reported not knowing the religion of the target. Regarding sexual orientation harassment, 82.2% of the targets were identified as homosexual, 5.6% heterosexual, 4.7% bisexual, 2.8% other, and 4.7% of the participants reported not knowing the sexual orientation of the target. Using a drop-down list option, the harassment incidents recalled were identified by the participants as being verbal (74%), exclusionary (3%), physical (9%), combined (13%), or other (1%).

One-Way ANOVA Analyses

Table 4 provides means, standard deviations, and correlations. Figure 1B shows a graphical representation of the data for the three harassment types across observer intervention and the stigma dimensions. Across all harassment types, 53.8% reported not intervening while 46.2% intervened. Although not hypothesized, the chi-square analysis was significant, $\chi^2(2, N=321)=13.74, p=0.00$, indicating observer intervention was most likely to occur for religious (58.1%), followed by sexual orientation (48.1%), and sexual harassment (33%).

To assess H1-H5, one-way ANOVAs were conducted to compare the effect of different harassment types (sexual, sexual orientation, and religious harassment) on each of the stigma dimensions, followed by pairwise comparisons

using the Tukey HSD test. As can be seen in Table 5, there was a significant effect on onset controllability ($F(2, 318)=35.10, p=0.00$). Targets of religious harassment ($M=4.55, SD=2.33$) were rated as having greater onset controllability than targets of sexual ($M=2.08, SD=1.84$) and sexual orientation harassment ($M=2.83, SD=2.41$). Regarding personal controllability, the means of the three harassment type targets were significantly different ($F(2, 318)=41.63, p=0.00$). Targets of religious harassment ($M=6.51, SD=2.23$) were rated as having greater personal controllability than the targets of sexual ($M=3.28, SD=2.77$) and sexual orientation harassment ($M=4.02, SD=3.05$). Hypotheses 1a and 1b were supported.

While there was a significant effect of being a target of different harassment types on stability ($F(2, 318)=3.284, p=0.04$), follow-up comparisons did not reveal any significant differences on stability between targets of religious ($M=7.39, SD=1.59$), sexual ($M=7.89, SD=1.68$), and sexual orientation harassment ($M=7.92, SD=1.74$). Hypothesis 2 was not supported.

Regarding visibility, a significant effect of being a target of different harassment types was found ($F(2, 318)=70.98, p=0.00$). Targets of sexual harassment ($M=8.26, SD=1.24$) were rated as more visible than targets of sexual orientation ($M=6.57, SD=2.25$) and religious harassment ($M=5.06, SD=2.25$). Hypothesis 3 was supported.

There was a significant effect of being a target of different harassment types on disruptiveness ($F(2, 318)=4.89, p=0.01$). However, targets of religious harassment ($M=2.18, SD=1.28$) were not rated more disruptive than targets of sexual ($M=1.85, SD=1.17$) or sexual orientation harassment ($M=2.39, SD=1.40$) as expected. Additionally, we did not find a significant effect for harassment type on peril ($F(2, 318)=0.39, p=0.68$). Hypotheses 4 and 5 were not supported.

Logistic Regression Analysis

To test H6 to H9, three separate logistic regression analyses were conducted for each harassment type (sexual, sexual orientation, and religious) by regressing observer intervention on the stigma dimensions, contextual (intent to harm, position authority), and individual difference (bystander efficacy) factors (see Table 6). No control variables were used.

For sexual harassment, intervention was more likely when bystander efficacy ($b=0.82, p=0.01$) and position authority ($b=0.69, p=0.03$) were high but onset controllability ($b=-0.68, p=0.12$), personal controllability ($b=0.21, p=0.47$), stability ($b=0.37, p=0.28$), visibility ($b=-0.41, p=0.47$), disruptiveness ($b=0.61, p=0.11$), peril ($b=-0.05, p=0.88$), and intent to harm ($b=0.29, p=0.25$) did not relate to intervention. A similar pattern of results emerged for religious harassment, in that intervention

Table 4 Study 2: descriptive statistics and correlations of stigma dimensions, harassment type, and contextual variables

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1 Age	32.58	10.54	–														
2 Gender	1.57	0.50	0.10	–													
3 Observer Intervention	0.46	0.50	–0.05	0.04	–												
4 Sexual Harassment	0.34	0.47	–0.01	0.02	–0.19**	–											
5 Sexual Orientation Harassment	0.33	0.47	0.03	0.05	0.03	–0.51**	–										
6 Religious Harassment	0.33	0.47	–0.02	–0.08	0.17**	–0.50**	–0.49**	–									
7 Onset Control-lability	3.14	2.43	0.06	–0.02	0.02	–0.31**	–0.09	0.41**	(0.84)								
8 Personal Control-lability	4.58	3.03	0.04	0.01	0.06	–0.31**	–0.13*	0.44**	0.60**	(0.95)							
9 Stability	7.74	1.68	0.02	0.04	0.08	0.07	0.08	–0.14*	–0.40**	–0.34**	(0.85)						
10 Visibility	6.65	2.36	0.03	0.07	–0.10	0.49**	–0.02	–0.47**	–0.24**	–0.28**	0.19**	(0.92)					
11 Disruptiveness	2.14	1.30	0.02	–0.06	–0.07	–0.16**	0.14*	0.02	0.32**	0.24**	–0.23**	–0.04	(0.92)				
12 Peril	1.57	1.38	–0.20**	–0.12*	–0.02	0.04	–0.04	0.00	0.06	0.05	–0.30**	–0.07	0.40**	(0.95)			
13 Intention to Harm	4.52	1.17	0.01	0.11	0.17**	–0.19**	0.25**	–0.06	–0.07	–0.12*	0.22**	0.01	–0.06	–0.16**	(0.87)		
14 Bystander Self Efficacy	3.52	0.67	0.07	–0.08	0.33**	–0.12*	0.18**	–0.06	–0.07	–0.03	0.21**	0.01	–0.27**	–0.19**	0.25**	(0.86)	
15 Position Authority	0.43	0.86	0.06	–0.09	0.27**	–0.09	0.05	0.04	0.04	–0.03	0.02	0.08	0.05	–0.03	0.09	0.12*	(0.78)

N=321. Gender coded as male = 1, female = 2. Observer Intervention coded as no = 0, yes = 1. Alphas reported on the diagonal

*p < .05, **p < .01

Table 5 Study 2: results for one-way anova analyses and pairwise comparisons using the tukey hsd tests for stigma dimensions by harassment type onset

Harassment Type	Controllability		Controllability		Stability		Visibility		Disruptiveness		Peril	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Sexual Harassment	2.08	1.84	3.28	2.77	7.89	1.68	8.26	1.24	1.85	1.17	1.66	1.48
Sexual Orientation Harassment	2.83	2.41	4.02	3.05	7.92	1.74	6.57	2.25	2.39	1.40	1.49	1.36
Religious Harassment	4.55	2.33	6.51	2.23	7.39	1.59	5.06	2.25	2.18	1.28	1.57	1.28
<i>ANOVA F(2, 318) =</i>	35.10, <i>p</i> = .000		41.63, <i>p</i> = .000		3.284, <i>p</i> = .04		70.98, <i>p</i> = .000		4.89, <i>p</i> = .01		0.39, <i>p</i> = .68	
<i>η</i> ² =	0.18		0.21		0.02		0.31		0.03		0.00	

Note. *N* = 321. Brackets indicate differences between conditions that were not significant. All other conditions showed significant differences

Table 6 Study 2: logistic regression weights for observer intervention for sexual, sexual orientation, and religious harassment

Variable	<i>b</i>	SE _{<i>b</i>}	Wald's χ^2	<i>p</i>	<i>e</i> ^{<i>b</i>} (odds ratio)	Lower C.I	Upper C.I
Sexual harassment							
<i>Stigma Dimensions</i>							
Onset Controllability	-0.68	0.43	2.47	0.12	0.51	0.22	1.18
Personal Controllability	0.21	0.30	0.52	0.47	1.24	0.69	2.21
Stability	0.37	0.34	1.17	0.28	1.45	0.74	2.82
Visibility	-0.41	0.56	0.52	0.47	0.67	0.22	2.01
Disruptiveness	0.61	0.38	2.52	0.11	1.84	0.87	3.9
Peril	-0.05	0.30	0.02	0.88	0.96	0.53	1.72
<i>Additional Predictors</i>							
Intent to Harm	0.29	0.25	1.32	0.25	1.34	0.81	2.2
Bystander Self Efficacy	0.82**	0.30	7.70	0.01	2.27	1.27	4.06
Position Authority	0.69*	0.31	4.81	0.03	1.99	1.08	3.69
Sexual Orientation Harassment							
<i>Stigma Dimensions</i>							
Onset Controllability	0.29	0.33	0.79	0.37	1.34	0.7	2.56
Personal Controllability	0.22	0.29	0.54	0.46	1.24	0.7	2.21
Stability	0.23	0.32	0.51	0.47	1.26	0.67	2.39
Visibility	0.04	0.24	0.02	0.88	1.04	0.65	1.65
Disruptiveness	-0.61*	0.29	4.33	0.04	0.54	0.3	0.96
Peril	0.50	0.28	3.32	0.07	1.65	0.96	2.84
<i>Additional Predictors</i>							
Intent to Harm	0.71*	0.34	4.34	0.04	2.03	1.04	3.97
Bystander Self Efficacy	0.82**	0.29	7.76	0.01	2.26	1.27	4.02
Position Authority	0.42	0.24	3.10	0.08	1.53	0.95	2.45
Religious Harassment							
<i>Stigma Dimensions</i>							
Onset Controllability	-0.03	0.30	0.01	0.91	0.97	0.54	1.74
Personal Controllability	-0.23	0.36	0.39	0.53	0.80	0.39	1.62
Stability	-0.29	0.31	0.88	0.35	0.75	0.41	1.37
Visibility	0.05	0.27	0.04	0.85	1.05	0.63	1.77
Disruptiveness	-0.05	0.26	0.04	0.84	0.95	0.56	1.59
Peril	0.04	0.32	0.02	0.89	1.05	0.55	1.98
<i>Additional Predictors</i>							
Intent to Harm	0.17	0.24	0.52	0.47	1.19	0.75	1.89
Bystander Self Efficacy	0.55*	0.25	4.64	0.03	1.73	1.05	2.84
Position Authority	0.90*	0.36	6.16	0.01	2.47	1.21	5.03

N = 109 (sexual harassment), 107 (sexual orientation harassment), 105 (religious harassment)

p* < .05, *p* < .01. 95% Confidence Interval

was more likely when bystander efficacy ($b=0.55, p=0.03$) and position authority ($b=0.90, p=0.01$) were high. However, onset controllability ($b=-0.03, p=0.91$), personal controllability ($b=-0.23, p=0.53$), stability ($b=-0.29, p=0.35$), visibility ($b=0.05, p=0.85$), disruptiveness ($b=-0.05, p=0.84$), peril ($b=0.04, p=0.89$), and intent to harm ($b=0.17, p=0.47$) did not relate to intervention. For sexual orientation harassment, intervention was more likely when there was low disruptiveness ($b=-0.61, p=0.04$) and when intent to harm ($b=0.71, p=0.04$) and bystander efficacy ($b=0.82, p=0.01$) were high. However, onset controllability ($b=0.29, p=0.37$), personal controllability ($b=0.22, p=0.46$), stability ($b=0.23, p=0.47$), visibility ($b=0.04, p=0.88$), peril ($b=0.50, p=0.07$), and position authority ($b=0.42, p=0.08$) did not relate to intervention.

Overall, Hypotheses 6a (onset controllability), 6b (personal controllability), 6c (course), 6d (visibility), and 6f (peril) were not supported across the harassment types. Hypothesis 6e (disruptiveness) and Hypothesis 7 (intent to harm) were partially supported for sexual orientation harassment, but not for religious and sexual harassment. Hypothesis 8 (bystander efficacy) was supported across all harassment types. Hypothesis 9 (position authority) was partially supported for religious and sexual harassment, but not for sexual orientation harassment.

Exploratory Analyses

As in Study 1, we explored whether observer characteristics may influence intervention. Gender of observer was not a significant predictor of intervention for sexual harassment or sexual orientation harassment, but it was a significant predictor for religious harassment ($b=1.09, p=0.03$). Majority religion and sexual orientation of observer were not significant predictors across any of the harassment types. We also examined whether the nature of the harassment (verbal, exclusionary, physical, combined, or other) impacted intervention; there were no significant differences in intervention rates overall or by type of stigma (sexual harassment, sexual orientation harassment, religious harassment) due to the form of harassment.

Study 2 Discussion

Study 2 replicates many of the findings in Study 1 regarding differences in stigma dimensions across gender, sexual orientation, and religion. Religion was seen as more onset controllable and more personally controllable than gender and sexual orientation, whereas gender was seen as more visible than sexual orientation and religion. In contrast to Study 1, religion was not seen as significantly less stable or

more disruptive, and gender also was not perceived as less perilous than the other stigmas. It is possible that because Study 2 represented actual victims of harassment versus a hypothetical victim in Study 1, it was more difficult for participants to see these real people as being able to change their group attributes or to perceive them as truly disruptive and dangerous.

We replicated the negative association of disruptiveness and intervention for sexual orientation harassment, which is in line with previous research linking disruptiveness with negative reactions (Feldman & Crandall, 2007; Levey & Howells, 1995). However, we did not find other links to intervention. Bystander efficacy was a correlate of intervention across all harassment types. Observer's position authority also positively related to intervention for religious and sexual but not for sexual orientation harassment, consistent with previous research (O'Leary-Kelly et al., 2004; Paetzold & O'Leary-Kelly, 1994).

For sexual orientation harassment, intent to harm positively related to intervention, in line with previous research (Ryan & Wessel, 2012). However, intent to harm was not a significant correlate of intervention for religious or sexual harassment. One potential reason for this might be that harassers' intentions for engaging in sexual and religious harassment are seen as less harmful than their intentions for engaging in sexual orientation harassment. A post-hoc ANOVA comparing the effect of being a target of the different harassment types on intent to harm revealed a significant effect ($F(2, 318)=11.31, p=0.00$) with subsequent pairwise comparisons showing that participants rated sexual orientation harassers ($M=4.93, SD=1.02$) as having a greater intent to harm than sexual ($M=4.22, SD=1.15$) and religious harassers ($M=4.42, SD=1.22$).

Table 7 provides a summary overview of our findings across Study 1 and Study 2. In summary, Study 2 replicated some of the findings of Study 1, particularly regarding religion being perceived as having higher onset controllability and personal controllability than gender and sexual orientation, and gender being more visible than sexual orientation and religion. However, we found limited support for the association of stigma dimensions with intervention, with the exception of disruptiveness for sexual orientation harassment. Regarding contextual and individual difference factors, bystander efficacy and position authority had a positive relationship with intervention in most cases, whereas intent to harm was only a significant correlate of intervention for sexual orientation harassment, suggesting that while some influences on intervention are generalizable, other aspects may only be applicable to certain types of harassment.

Table 7 Overview of study 1 and study 2 findings

Hypotheses	Study 1			Study 2		
<i>Stigma Dimensions Differences</i>						
1a. Onset Controllability	S			S		
1b. Personal Controllability	S			S		
2. Stability	S			NS		
3. Visibility	S			S		
4. Disruptiveness	PS*			NS		
5. Peril	S			NS		
<i>Predictors of Observer Intervention**</i>						
	Female	Homosexual	Religious Person	Sexual Harassment	Sexual Orientation Harassment	Religious Harassment
6a. Onset Controllability	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
6b. Personal Controllability	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
6c. Stability	NS	NS	S	NS	NS	NS
6d. Visibility	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
6e. Disruptiveness	S	S	S	NS	S	NS
6f. Peril	S	S	S	NS	NS	NS
7. Intent to Harm	--	--	--	NS	S	NS
8. Bystander Self Efficacy	--	--	--	S	S	S
9. Position Authority	--	--	--	S	NS	S

Note. S = supported, NS = not supported, PS = partially supported. *Religion was statistically different than gender but was not statistically different than sexual orientation on the respective stigma dimension. ** Study 1 measured observer intervention *intentions* whereas Study 2 measured observer *intention*

General Discussion

Given research suggesting that one way to prevent harassment in the workplace is to have third parties intervene (Bowes-Sperry & O'Leary-Kelly, 2005; Ryan & Wessel, 2012) and this is also an emphasis of much allyship training (Martinez et al., 2017; Sabat et al., 2013), the focus of this paper was to examine differences across the various dimensions of stigma and whether and how these differences may influence observer intervention. While participants reported having high intervention intentions in our within-subjects experiment, observer *non*-intervention (53.8%) was more likely than intervention in our retrospective study, similar to previous research showing discrepancy between reported intentions and actual actions (Ghumman et al., 2016; Fishbein et al., 2003; Swim & Hyer, 1999). Although females elicited higher intervention intentions than religious persons and homosexuals in Study 1, Study 2 revealed that sexual harassment yielded the least amount of actual intervention (33%), followed by sexual orientation (48.1%), and then religious harassment (58.1%). Overall, these findings suggest that there are dissimilarities in the rate of intervention across the different forms of harassment and that intentions and behavior are more misaligned for sexual harassment.

Across both studies, we found that religion was considered more onset and personally controllable than gender and sexual orientation, whereas gender was considered more visible than sexual orientation and religion. Religion was also considered more disruptive than gender, while gender was considered less perilous than sexual orientation and religion, but these findings were limited to Study 1. These inconsistent findings are in line with research that suggests stereotyping is greater when individuating information is lacking

(Kunda & Sherman-Williams, 1993); in the hypothetical case, the only information available is group membership, whereas targets are known to at least some extent in the retrospective study.

In applying Weiner et al.'s (1988) attribution analysis of stigma dimensions to helping behaviors, we find that disruptiveness and perilousness negatively related to observer intervention intentions across all types of harassment in Study 1, and that personal controllability, stability, and visibility positively influenced intervention intentions for religious harassment. However, no such effects were found in Study 2 except for the relationship of disruptiveness to intervention for sexual orientation harassment. These inconsistent findings may be reflective of participants overestimating these aspects (i.e., disruptiveness, peril) and relying more on stereotypes in the within-subjects experiment than in the actual workplace. Indeed, the well-supported contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954) establishes that one of the best ways to reduce prejudice is contact between group members. Nevertheless, Study 1 findings regarding observers being more likely to report intentions to intervene when disruptiveness and peril are high should not be overlooked, as they are in line with previous research (Feldman & Crandall, 2007; Levey & Howells, 1995) and may be reflective of contexts where third parties have no or a minimal relationship with harassment targets. Similarly, the finding that personal controllability, visibility, and stability each positively influence observer intervention intentions for religious harassment in Study 1 is not only supported by previous research (Covey, 1998; Crandall & Moriarty, 1995; Weiner et al., 1988) but also suggests that there are certain dissimilarities in observer intervention intentions across the different harassment types. Our exploratory analyses in Study 1 also revealed several similarities (i.e., disruptiveness, peril, stability) and differences (i.e., personal controllability, visibility) in intentions

to intervene across religious identities, highlighting the value of considering religion of target when examining religious harassment.

In Study 2, bystander efficacy and position authority positively related to intervention across the different harassment types; however, intent to harm was only shown to be a significant correlate of intervention for sexual orientation harassment. This notion was also confirmed by the significant differences in intent to harm that we found for sexual orientation harassment in comparison to sexual and religious harassment. Overall, given these similarities and dissimilarities in predicting observer intervention across sexual, sexual orientation, and religious harassment, it is important to continue to fine-tune models of observer intervention and work on allyship to encompass distinct types of harassment.

Theoretical Implications

This research extends theory and previous empirical work on observer intervention (Bowes-Sperry & O'Leary-Kelly, 2005) by incorporating Jones et al.'s (1984) classic model of stigma characteristics and related research (Summers et al., 2018; Weiner et al., 1988) to show that stigma dimensions are relevant to the study of observer intervention in harassment in the workplace. Because not all stigma dimensions showed significant relationships with intervention across the different harassment types, we also contribute to the intervention as well as the general harassment literature by highlighting these distinctions. The difference in intervention rates for different forms of harassment indicates the importance of understanding motivators of and constraints on intervention that are unique. Specifically, researchers should consider the type of harassment being examined as it is possible that certain factors may be more applicable to the harassment of certain stigmatized groups and less relevant for others.

While previous research on observer intervention in the workplace has usually limited its investigation to one form of harassment (e.g., Bowes-Sperry & O'Leary-Kelly, 2005; Ghumman et al., 2016; Ryan & Wessel, 2012), we focused on three types of harassment. As allies exist across various minority groups beyond the three which we explore in our research (Sabat et al., 2013), ideally this research should be extended by looking at ethnic harassment, harassment of individuals with disabilities, and other forms of workplace harassment. This research also highlights the importance of considering subgroups of identities being targeted, as these specific identities (e.g., Atheist, Christian, Jewish, Muslim) may prompt different levels of observer intervention. Finally, our findings regarding the significant effects of bystander efficacy and position authority on intervention also extend theory on observer intervention (e.g., Bowes-Sperry &

O'Leary-Kelly, 2005) by suggesting that there are several predictors of observer intervention that can be generalized across harassment types. As such, it is important for research to also continue to consider such parallels across various identities when developing a model of observer intervention for workplace harassment incidents.

As observer intervention also constitutes an advocacy behavior noted by the allyship literature (Sabat et al., 2013), our work also extends the current theory on advocacy behaviors related to confrontation as another tool which allies can employ to support marginalized group members. Allyship literature has noted that anticipated negativity from both non-stigmatized perpetrators and the target themselves can influence whether allies confront perpetrators (Martinez et al., 2017). Ryan and Wessel (2012) also reported that not knowing which intervention strategy to employ for sexual harassment victims made participants more likely to remain silent. Our research serves to suggest additional boundary conditions (bystander efficacy, position authority) that can influence confrontation strategies employed by allies.

Practical Implications

Given that harassment has negative consequences for both victims and organizations (Gutek & Koss, 1993), it is important to find ways to prevent it. Ideally, victims reporting such behaviors would be optimal, but it is not feasible to expect that they will do so (U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, 1995). Encouraging colleagues to intervene on the victims' behalf and to report harassment to proper authorities can serve to promote harassment-free work zones (O'Leary-Kelly et al., 2000). Such non-stigmatized allies have been not only influential in improving the diversity climate of organizations, but have proven to be effective in changing attitudes via confrontation (Sabat et al., 2013), as they are seen as objective interjectors as they themselves do not have vested interest in the confrontation (Martinez et al., 2017).

The results of our research can inform organizations seeking to reduce harassment in the workplace as to what promotes observer intervention. Educational efforts about stigma dimensions may decrease perceptions that lead to stigmatization. Organizations can directly address other factors (i.e., increasing bystander efficacy) by creating pro-social role expectations, and offering behavioral guidelines on how to intervene in workplace harassment incidents.

Limitations and Future Research

Although within-subjects experiments have been used in previous studies on bystander intervention in harassment incidences (Weiner et al., 1988), they introduce ecological

validity concerns. Bystanders are more likely to help in hypothetical than in actual situations (Fishbein et al., 2003; Ryan & Wessel, 2012; Swim & Hyers, 1999). However, controlling for extraneous variables that may be introduced in actual situations provides stronger internal validity (Pierce et al., 2004). Unlike previous bystander research that relies exclusively on college student samples (Benavides-Espinoza & Cunningham, 2010), our participants were an average of 37.41 years of age and were all employed, suggesting that they would have had enough work experience to build from in addressing the hypothetical intervention question. While response bias may pose a challenge when using critical incident recall methodology (Edvardsson & Roos, 2001), it is important to note that our retrospective study mimicked a varied retrieval technique suggested by Tanur (1992) to overcome memory distortion issues present in retrospective studies. Despite some of the strengths of the within-subjects experiment and the retrospective study, the methodological concerns reflected in each of these two methods can be ameliorated by using them in combination.

Other methodological limitations of our paper should also be acknowledged. Specifically, there was participant attrition in Study 1. High attrition rates have been reported as a common feature of MTurk (Aguinis et al., 2021), and the topic and length of our survey may have led some participants to forgo completing the survey. The survey also automatically timed out after 30 min, thus forcing an exit of some of our participants before they were able to complete the full survey. Additionally, the non-randomized order (e.g., Atheist, Christian, etc.) in which group attributes were presented as well as the ordering of the measures (observer intervention, stigma dimensions) in Study 1 could have potentially primed participants' responses. Although one identity group was used for gender and sexual orientation each, religious identity was further parsed into four religious identity groups (Atheist, Christian, Jewish, Muslim) in subsequent questions, perhaps increasing the saliency of religious stigma as a focus of the research. Though we separated religious identity in our study to account for the potential blurriness surrounding a "religious person," it is important for future studies to be aware of these issues to tease out such complications.

Related to this, our operationalization of sexual harassment and sexual orientation in Study 1 focused on only one primary target group (i.e., females, homosexuals) and fails to account for harassment toward other identifications of gender (e.g., trans, non-binary) and sexual orientation (e.g., bisexual, asexual). Although we did not limit harassment to main target groups alone in our Study 2, we also do not explore these harassment subgroups differences further due to the very small numbers of related incidents that were recalled. As our religious harassment subgroups did yield differences in observer intervention, future research should examine how target subgroups within sexual and sexual

orientation harassment may also be treated differently in terms of stigma characteristics and observer intervention.

In addition to the type of harassment (sexual, religion, etc.), the nature of the harassment itself (microaggressions, physical assault) could also have impacted observer interventions. Previous research suggests that certain forms of harassment elicit stronger observer intervention depending on their severity (e.g., verbal harassment versus exclusion; Ghumman et al., 2016). Although Study 2 indirectly examined the severity of harassment by gauging the *intent to harm* and our exploratory analyses on the nature of harassment did not indicate any effects, future research should directly examine how different manifestations of harassment across the different stigma groups can strengthen or weaken observer interventions.

Another avenue for future research to explore would be the intersectionality of the various stigmas (e.g., Muslim female vs. Muslim male), as the existing intersectionality research would suggest that intersectional categories can influence stereotypes and experiences of discrimination (Collins, 1990; Crenshaw, 1989; Hall et al., 2019). We presented our stigmatized attributes independently and did not cue participants to any additional group identity attributes in Study 1, and to present all intersections for the three categories studied would have made the survey too lengthy and fatiguing for participants. However, future exploration of intersectionality in the observer intervention literature will require large samples and focused designs.

While we examined all of the stigma dimensions (excluding *aesthetics*) that were proposed by Jones et al. (1984), many of which were also used in Summers et al. (2018) typology (i.e., visibility, controllability), our dimensions were by no means exhaustive and future research should consider the role of additional aspects of stigmas and their relevance to observer intervention research. For example, there may be stigmas beyond those studied here that have no legal protections (Summers et al., 2018), or where the level of legal protection varies by state.

Future research should also investigate how shared characteristics between observers and targets influence observer intervention. For example, Ghumman et al. (2016) found a link between the interaction of shared religious and religious commitment in the likelihood of observer's intervening on behalf of religious harassment victims. Similarly, the positive significant correlations between participant's gender and observer intervention in our Study 1 hint at the role bystander's gender can have on observer interventions. Although previous research has already suggested that females tend to be more sympathetic to harassment victims than male observers (Yule et al., 2022), more systematic research is warranted on this topic in the observer intervention literature.

Due to the complexity of our studies, we solely focused on reporting observers' intentions to intervene or actual intervention in this paper (see the footnote in Study 2). However, observers also make decisions regarding when to intervene and how much to get involved (Ghumman et al., 2016; Ryan & Wessel, 2012), decision factors which can each have a profound impact on combatting harassment. Allyship research also suggests various styles of confrontation (hostile vs calm or direct vs indirect) exist and elicit a varying degree of reaction, with non-hostile direct confrontation being most positively rated from third-party witnesses (Martinez et al., 2017). Future inquiries diving deeper into the examination of these additional decisions and confrontational styles may prove fruitful. Finally, because we chose to focus on types of harassment and how stigmas differ, we could not account for all variables identified in the observer intervention literature as influential (e.g., perceived costs and benefits), as participants already had a complex, lengthy rating task. There may be a need to examine relationships for their generalizability across harassment types. Examination of harassment prevention-focused organizational policies also warrants future research.

Conclusion

Our research extends the observer intervention literature by identifying stigmatization aspects, contextual factors, and individual differences that influence observers' decision to intervene across various harassment types. As observer intervention can reduce harassment and signal zero-tolerance for such behaviors, it is important to continue to identify factors that influence observers' likelihood to intervene for all forms of workplace harassment.

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Data availability Data available on request from the authors.

Declarations

Conflict of Interest The authors declare they have no conflict of interest.

Ethical Approval All procedures performed in the studies were approved and in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

Consent to Participate Informed consent was obtained from all participants included in the studies.

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