

**FROM IMPULSE TO INTENTION: THE AGE AND GENDER SPECTRUM OF
BYSTANDER INTERVENTION DURING EVE-TEASING**

A report submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN PSYCHOLOGY

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Abstract

This dissertation investigates bystander behaviour in the context of eve-teasing, a prevalent gender-based harassment. Using a mixed-methods approach, it combines survey-based data with qualitative information gained from in-depth interviews. The research investigates male witnesses (passive and active witnesses) and women who have encountered eve-teasing along with bystander roles. 40 participants were recruited: 10 males (18–25), 10 males (35–45), 10 females (17–22), and 10 females (35–45). Data collection commenced with a Google Forms survey recording demographic information and personal experiences of eve-teasing. Interviewees were chosen on the basis of the richness of their answers. Semi-structured interviews (mean duration: 45 minutes) probed emotional responses, decision-making processes, and socio-psychological determinants of intervention. Primary themes were social norms, perceived risk, and institutional influences.

Alongside interviews, a subsample of 10 males participated in a third phase under the Repertory Grid Technique (RGT). This constructivist technique retrieved participants' individual meaning systems by determining the manner in which they sort and appraise different bystander situations. RGT provided richer insight into their internal cognitive structures; to break down how personal belief systems influence intervention choices. All of the interviews were transcribed with the aid of cutting-edge software and analysed through the use of Atlas.ti, utilizing thematic coding over stages including observation of the event, taking responsibility, and acting to intervene. The study also critiques existing legal and institutional reaction limitations and makes specific recommendations.

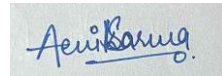
Ultimately, this work contributes to social psychology and gender studies by offering a nuanced, multi-layered understanding of bystander intervention during eve-teasing. It advocates for cultural change and systemic reform to foster proactive bystander behavior and enhance gender-based safety.

Keywords:

Bystander intervention, Eve-teasing, Intervention strategies, Repertory Grid Technique (RGT), Personal constructs, Thematic analysis, Gender dynamics

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled, “From impulse to intention: the age and gender spectrum of bystander intervention during eve-teasing” is being submitted in partial fulfilment of requirements for the award the of the degree of Master of Arts in Psychology, presented in the Thapar School of Liberal Arts & Sciences, Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology, Patiala is a Bonafide work carried out under the supervision of Dr.Ipshita Chowdhury, Assistant Professor, Thapar School of Liberal Arts & Sciences, Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology, Patiala and that no part of this project has been submitted for the award of any other degree.



(AENIKA SHARMA)

This is to certify that the above statement made by the student concerned is correct and true to the best of my knowledge.



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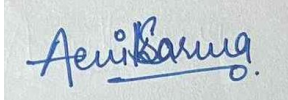
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CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work presented in this thesis entitled “From impulse to intention: the age and gender spectrum of bystander intervention during eve-teasing” submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for the award the of the degree Master of Arts in Psychology, presented in the Thapar School of Liberal Arts & Sciences, Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology, Patiala, is an authentic record of my work carried out under the supervision and guidance of Dr. Ipshita Chowdhury, Assistant Professor, Thapar School of Liberal Arts & Sciences, Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology, Patiala and refers other researchers’ work which are duly listed in the reference section.

The matter embodied in this thesis has not formed the basis for awarding any other degree at this or any other university.

Date- June, 2025



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This is to certify that the above statement made by the student concerned is correct and true to the best of my knowledge.



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Definition of Eve-Teasing

We cannot, however, dismiss as merely an innocent recreation the multifaceted phenomenon of eve-teasing. Offenders use the pleasant, carefree connotation as an excuse to justify themselves. It spares them from feeling the stigma of being potential sex offenders. And it is this likelihood of acts escalating into sexual offenses, and the effects eve-teasing has on its victims, which give the term its true significance. All too frequently, eve-teasing infringes into sexual harassment and assault, and thus it serves as a precursor to sex offenses. Victims of eve-teasing have also reported a great deal of emotional distress and change in behaviour as a result of their experiences.

However, trying to define a simple threshold between a lewd comment and a sexual advance is at best ambiguous. Thus, eve-teasing is an umbrella term for a complex set of behaviours based on sex and gender, which combine elements of sexuality and control, in the public and private sphere in different cultural settings. The semantics of the term mean it can be used to describe anything from a light-hearted innuendo to sexual assault, and the shift in the intentions of the perpetrator can still deny a concrete definition to the term.

'Eve-teasing', a term borrowed from the Indian vernacular, is not in reference to a subtle form of mockery – namely, the taunting of Eve by the serpent in Milton's *Paradise Lost* where 'teasing' may be seen as one of the mildest forms of provocation. On the contrary, 'eve-teasing' denotes a variety of behaviors used to harass, molest, and in some instances assault women. The lower-level intensity of the

act in comparison to that of a sexual offense is such that eve-teasing is often dismissed and perceived as a somewhat jovial transgression, a youthful rite of passage deemed harmless with time [Israa, S. & Ijaz, T. (2021). Development of Street Harassment Scale for women in universities. Pakistan journal of psychological research]

1.2. Understanding the Bystander Effect

The bystander effect refers to a psychological phenomenon in which people are less likely to respond to an emergency situation when others are around [Latané, B., & Darley, J. M. (1968). Group inhibition of bystander intervention in emergencies. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 10(3), 215–221.]. This phenomenon has been widely researched ever since its first probe after the notorious murder of Kitty Genovese in 1964, when several witnesses did not intervene despite her pleas for help [Manning, R., Levine, M., & Collins, A. (2007). The Kitty Genovese murder and the social psychology of helping: The parable of the 38 witnesses. *American Psychologist*, 62(6), 555–562.]. Since then, research has been trying to investigate the underlying processes and factors of the bystander effect in order to shed light on its complex nature and applicability to social behavior. Studying the historic context is essential while analysing the phenomenon of the bystander effect. The Kitty Genovese case is especially relevant in this regard since it was a catalyst that triggered great interest and research into this psychological phenomenon, inviting psychologists to explore why people tend not to assist others in need, particularly when there are bystanders present. Early research emphasized the diffusion of responsibility theory, where people perceive that they are less personally responsible to act if there are others around to share the responsibility with, hence a bystander apathy effect [Darley, J. M., & Latané, B. (1968). Bystander intervention in emergencies: Diffusion of responsibility. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 8(4), 377–383].

several variables control the occurrence of bystander intervention in emergency situations. These are:

- 1. Perceived Pluralistic Ignorance:** People turn to others for cues on what to do and thereby share misperceptions about the situation. If others appear unconcerned or passive, individuals may assume that the situation is not an emergency, inhibiting their own response [Fischer, P., Krueger, J. I., Greitemeyer, T., Vogrincic, C., Kastenmüller, A., Frey, D., & Kainbacher, M. (2011). The bystander-effect: A meta-analytic review on bystander intervention in dangerous and non-dangerous emergencies. *Psychological Bulletin*].
- 2. Audience Inhibition:** Individuals may be reluctant to act due to fear of embarrassment, social scrutiny, or potential negative evaluation from others. This fear of making a mistake or standing out in a crowd can deter bystanders from taking action (Levine, M., & Crowther, S. (2008). The responsive bystander: How social group membership and group size can encourage as well as inhibit bystander intervention. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*)
- 3. Diffusion of Responsibility:** Bystanders may experience a diffusion of responsibility, believing that someone else will intervene or that their individual contribution is unnecessary. This diffusion of responsibility can lead to a diffusion of guilt, where individuals feel less accountable for their inaction [Latané, B., & Nida, S. (1981). Ten years of research on group size and helping. *Psychological Bulletin*].
- 4. Group Size:** The number of bystanders present can influence the bystander effect, with larger groups often associated with a decreased likelihood of intervention. As the number of bystanders increases, individuals may feel less personally responsible and more likely to defer

action to others [Clark, R. D., & Word, L. E. (1972). Where is the apathy in the bystander-ape phenomenon? *Psychological Review*].

- 5. Relationship to Victim:** Bystanders are more likely to intervene in emergency situations when they have a personal connection to the victim or perceive them as deserving of help. Factors such as empathy, compassion, and perceived similarity can increase the likelihood of intervention [Fischer, P., Greitemeyer, T., Pollozek, F., & Frey, D. (2006). The unresponsive bystander: Are bystanders more responsive in dangerous emergencies? *European Journal of Social Psychology*].

The bystander effect has important social implications, as it illustrates the strong impact of the social context on the individual's decision-making process. Understanding the factors causing the bystander effect will allow researchers to construct intervention programs for stimulating bystander intervention while preventing bystander apathy in situations where help is needed.

1.3 Influences on Bystander Intervention

An understanding of the bystander processes is significant in comprehending the complexity of the bystander effect. Many factors, from social norms to personal perceptions of responsibility and fear, influence whether bystanders will intervene in emergencies. In this, we explore three of the most important factors surrounding bystander intervention: social norms and conformity, diffusion of responsibility, and fear of retaliation.

- **Social Norms and Conformity:** Social norms have enormous power to determine the behaviour of individuals in a social setting, teaching people what to do and how to do it and what is acceptable in a situation [Cialdini, R. B., & Goldstein, N. J. (2004). *Social influence:*

Compliance and conformity. Annual Review of Psychology]. Bystanders tend to conform to these norms, and their actions are brought in line with perceived group standards. Studies have established that people are likely to act when helping behavior is normal and socially encouraged [Paluck, E. L., Shepherd, H., & Aronow, P. M. (2016). Changing climates of conflict: A social network experiment in 56 schools. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences]. The effect of social norms on bystander intervention goes beyond simple conformity.

In addition to explicit social norms, implicit norms and perceived social cues can also shape bystander behavior. Studies have highlighted the role of descriptive norms, which reflect perceptions of what others typically do in a given situation [Schultz, P. W., Nolan, J. M., Cialdini, R. B., Goldstein, N. J., & Griskevicius, V. (2007). The constructive, destructive, and reconstructive power of social norms. Psychological Science]. Based on these perceptions, bystanders can make decisions resulting in conformity even in the absence of direct normative influence.

In addition, social cues are interpretable on the part of the bystander. Research indicates that individuals are more likely to intervene when they perceive others as supportive or when they believe intervention aligns with group expectations [Latané, B., & Rodin, J. (1969). A lady in distress: Inhibiting effects of friends and strangers on bystander intervention. Journal of Experimental Social Psychology.] Conversely, bystanders may hesitate to act if they perceive others as indifferent or unsupportive, contributing to the bystander effect.

- **Diffusion of Responsibility:** Diffusion of responsibility is the phenomenon where the person feels less responsible for acting on a problem in a group when assuming others will act [Darley, J. M., & Latané, B. (1968). Bystander intervention in emergencies: Diffusion of responsibility.

Journal of Personality and Social Psychology]. Although prior research has examined the effect of group size on diffusion of responsibility, contemporary studies have gone further to investigate individual differences in susceptibility to this effect. An emerging body of research works on personality traits that determine how prone individuals are to diffusion of responsibility. For instance, people with high agreeableness levels or collectivist values are more likely to fall into diffusion of responsibility because they value harmony within groups and rely on other people's judgments [Twenge, J. M., Zhang, L., Im, C., & Cundiff, J. M. (2016). Changes in women's assertiveness in response to status and roles: A cross-temporal meta-analysis, 1931–1993. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*]. In contrast, those who have stronger internal locus of control might not find themselves as prone to diffusion of responsibility since they hold themselves accountable for their actions irrespective of whether others are around or not.

In addition, situational constraints can influence the impact of diffusion of responsibility on bystander behaviour. Some current research has examined the influence of perceived expertise in dictating bystanders' perceptions of responsibility. Bystanders are more likely to help if they feel capable or expert in the situation, whether others are around or not [Beaman, A. L., Barnes, P. J., Klentz, B., & McQuirk, B. (1978). Increasing helping rates through information dissemination: Teaching pays. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*]. On the other hand, people may defer to experts or authority, resulting in diffusion of responsibility and lower rates of helping.

- **Fear of Retaliation:** Fear of retaliation or punishment is a strong deterrent to bystander intervention, especially in situations of possible harm or conflict [Fischer, P., Krueger, J. I.,

Greitemeyer, T., Vogrincic, C., Kastenmüller, A., Frey, D., & Kainbacher, M. (2011). The bystander effect: A meta-analytic review on bystander intervention in dangerous and non-dangerous emergencies. *Psychological Bulletin*. Though past research has investigated how fear affects bystanders' behaviour, recent research has identified the mechanisms and moderators behind this phenomenon. One of the most important dimensions of fear of retaliation is the perception of safety and vulnerability at the individual level. Bystanders might not step in if the situation is thought to be risky or if they feel vulnerable to attacks themselves [LeDoux, J. E. (2014). Coming to terms with fear. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*]. Current research has investigated individual variations in threat sensitivity and its effect on bystander behaviour, with the finding that those high on trait anxiety or threat sensitivity might be less likely to act as bystanders to avoid hurting themselves.

In addition, situational circumstances like weapon presence or threat severity can heighten fear of retaliation and discourage bystander intervention. The current research has examined the influence of perceived risk and perceived severity on bystanders' reactions to emergency situations. Bystanders can be more likely to intervene if they think the threat of harm is low or if they feel intervention is needed in order to avoid severe outcomes [Levine, M., & Thompson, K. (2004). Identity, place, and bystander intervention: Social categories and helping after natural disasters. *Journal of Social Psychology*].

1.4 Repertory Grid Technique

The repertory grid technique (RGT), developed by George Kelly, was initially introduced to support his Personal Construct Theory with empirical evidence. It later evolved into a practical method used in both

research and clinical psychotherapy. The technique helps explore how individuals perceive and differentiate concepts within their mental frameworks, particularly by focusing on their dual nature, reflecting Kelly's construction and dichotomy corollaries.

In practice, participants are asked to articulate their understanding of specific construct concepts often relevant in therapeutic contexts. The researcher works with the participant in demarcating and specifying these structures, placing definite limits on them. Using guided interviews with the grid, the method gains insights into how people construct meaning from what happened to them, and it identifies underlying systems of belief or worldviews.

The repertory grid is essentially a structured method for gathering and analysing a person's conceptual understanding and how various constructs relate to each other (Bannister & Fransella, 1985; Dalton & Dunnet, 1992; Landfield & Leitner, 1980). It has proven useful across multiple disciplines such as clinical psychology, education, organizational behavior, and the development of knowledge-based systems (Boose & Gaines, 1988; Shaw, 1980; Shaw & Gaines, 1983, 1987).

Rooted in Kelly's (1955) theory, RGT is grounded in the belief that our interpretation of reality is shaped by bipolar personal constructs (e.g., friendly vs. hostile, strong vs. weak). These constructs act as cognitive filters through which we perceive the world. According to Kelly, individuals judge others based on such oppositional constructs, which allow them to identify similarities between two things while distinguishing them from a third (Bannister & Fransella, 1985). Multiple interacting constructs give rise to an individual's lived experience.

1.5 What is a Repertory Grid?

A repertory grid is the outcome of using the RGT method to capture an individual's personal constructs. It is usually expressed in matrix or tabular form, where the constructs are represented as columns and elements (objects or individuals under examination) as rows. A rating system, usually numerical in nature or scale, is employed to link each element to the corresponding construct and allow qualitative insights to be analysed quantitatively.

The process begins with construct elicitation, where participants generate their own bipolar constructs and dimensions, they consider most meaningful for describing the study's elements. A common technique involves presenting triads (sets of three elements) and asking the participant to explain how one differs from the other two, which helps uncover their internal constructs.

After establishing constructs, the participant then rates each item relative to these constructs on a binary or Likert scale. Each repertory grid, therefore, is individual-specific and comprises two fundamental elements: constructs and elements, which are quantitatively interrelated through these ratings.

Constructs capture the participant's own language and view, which gives insight into what they mean by the elements in question (Fransella & Bannister, 1977). They are the individual's subjective meaning and experience.

In our investigation of how various large language models interpret information, we used the repertory grid method because of its central position in Kelly's theory. This method fits into the larger sense making process of understanding how we learn, become aware of this, and use it.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Eve-Teasing as Gender-Based Harassment

Eve-teasing is the commonly used informal term in South Asia and specifically in India for the act of sexual harassment of women in public. Eve-teasing involves everything from catcalls, lewd remarks, and staring to more aggressive actions like groping and stalking (Khan, 2014). "Eve-teasing" as a name for the act of sexual harassment might seem light-hearted at first glance. However, it hides the severity of the act and its gendered nature. "Eve-teasing" suggests that the woman ("Eve") is soliciting the attention of the male by her presence in public and hence deflects attention from the perpetrator to the victim (Nair, 2013). This naming mirrors and sustains the patriarchal culture in many South Asian countries where the presence of a woman in public life is monitored and regulated.

The Indian socio-cultural context plays an important part in normalising such attitudes. Deep-rooted gender stereotypes, the objectification of women in popular media, and rigid expectations of female modesty all contribute to a culture where harassment is both tolerated and minimized (Banerjee, 2021). Public spaces streets, buses, parks, and marketplaces often become arenas where power dynamics between genders are asserted and contested, with eve-teasing functioning as a form of control over women's mobility and autonomy (Phadke, 2005). Historically, women stepping into public domains have been perceived as challenging traditional gender roles, and their very presence is often considered provocative or

inappropriate. This has led to a widespread societal tendency to moralize and police women's behaviour in the guise of protecting them from harassment, rather than addressing the root causes male entitlement and systemic gender inequality (Sen, 2016). Furthermore, the urban landscape itself is gendered; the unequal access to and control over public space often mirrors the broader inequalities that structure Indian society (Phadke, Khan, & Ranade, 2011).

The term "eve-teasing" also reflects a linguistic and legal gap in Indian discourse on sexual violence. In contrast to the internationally recognized and legally codified "sexual harassment," "eve-teasing" minimizes the offense committed by the transgressor as playful and flirtatious. This terminological avoidance waters down the severity of the offense to the point where victims are unable to clearly describe what happened as grievances for which they should be given legal as well as social redress (Nair, 2013; Chakraborty & Basu, 2020).

In addition to all of the above, cultural narratives of masculinity and honour also complicate the issue. Harassers derive power and dominance from these actions and see them as an expression of masculinity or peer approval (Roy, 2012). Simultaneously, women face the obligation to not bring dis-honour to their families and are normally silenced and blamed for reporting harassment. This twinned dynamic not only guarantees persistent silence on the matter but also produces an internalized shame and victim-blaming pattern.

In addition, the media has both contributed to and attacked these discourses. Although some TV shows and movies have started discussing the issue of public harassment in a critical manner, others have continued to romanticize violent pursuit as love, obfuscating the distinction between coercion and consent (Dasgupta, 2017). Thus, the social construction of eve-teasing

has remained in limbo neither fully stigmatized and condemned nor fully accepted and normalized, but uncertainly tolerated.

The normalization of eve-teasing also pervades responses from bystanders and institutions in everyday life. Women are often told to ignore the harassers, take alternate routes, or dress "modestly," all of which implies, it is their behavior rather than the perpetrator's that is in need of change (Chaudhuri, 2007). Not only does it put the onus of safety on the victims but also erases the harasser's responsibility. The apathetic or lackadaisical response of the police also makes women hesitant to report such incidents, leading to gross underreporting and absence of credible data to guide policy (Kumar, 2020).

Thus, eve-teasing is not merely an individual act; it is a manifestation of more profound gendered power relations that run deep in Indian society. It is an expression of a continuum of violence against women that spans from verbal taunt to physical violence and, finally, to more general forms of structural discrimination. Comprehending eve-teasing, thus, entails going beyond its conceptualization as a disturbance and realizing it as gender violence that violates women's freedom, security, and dignity in public space.

2.2 Prevalence in South Asia and India

Eve-teasing is a widespread, deeply ingrained phenomenon in the South Asian continent, particularly in India, where cultural, structural, and institutional forces intersect to produce settings that tend to be adversarial towards women in public space. The practice is neither specific to a single geographical context nor demographic group but crosses urban/rural boundaries, class lines, and generations. Public sexual harassment, such as verbal abuse,

inappropriate comments, stalking, leering, and unwelcome physical contact, is an almost accepted norm in daily life for a large number of women in the Indian subcontinent.

As per a detailed report submitted by ActionAid (2016), nearly 79% of Indian women claimed to have faced some kind of harassment in public places. These include transportation terminals, markets, schools, colleges, and even religious places. The statistics not only quantify the number of such occurrences but also indicate how much women feel pressured to change their behaviour to evade them. The National Family Health Survey-5 (NFHS-5, 2021) also confirms these results, with many women indicating that they had limited their movement or adjusted their routes to travel at a different time to escape harassment. This spatial limitation not only confines the mobility of women and denies them freedom and autonomy but also solidifies gendered accessibility to public space.

The trend is most evident in urban landscapes, where anonymity and dense population tend to embolden offenders. Metropolises like Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, and Kolkata continually record high rates of public harassment. For example, Delhi, notoriously labeled the "rape capital" by media after the 2012 Nirbhaya gang rape case, still possesses one of the highest crime rates against women, and eve-teasing constitutes a considerable portion of reported cases (National Crime Records Bureau [NCRB], 2020). A research conducted by Jagori and UN Women in 2011, "Safe Cities Free of Violence Against Women and Girls," documented the lives of women in Delhi and identified that more than 88% of women experienced some type of sexual harassment while in public, such as while walking to work or school.

In addition to the physical and emotional toll it takes on women, eve-teasing has also led to the normalization of 'survival strategies' that women adopt to protect themselves. These include

walking in groups, pretending to talk on the phone, carrying sharp objects like safety pins, wearing certain types of clothing deemed “less provocative,” and avoiding eye contact with male strangers. While these tactics may offer short-term safety, they reflect the larger systemic failure to address the root causes of the problem namely, unchecked male entitlement and weak enforcement of laws (Phadke, Khan, & Ranade, 2011).

Moreover, the prevalence of eve-teasing remains significantly underreported due to multiple socio-cultural and institutional barriers. Fear of victim-blaming, reputational damage, disbelief, and a general lack of trust in the criminal justice system deter many women from filing complaints. Research by Chakraborty and Basu (2020) found that even among women who had faced repeated harassment, the majority refrained from lodging formal complaints, citing concerns about being judged or not taken seriously by police officers. In some cases, the onus is placed on the victim to “avoid trouble” rather than on institutions to ensure justice and safety. In rural settings, the issue is further complicated by a shortage of infrastructure like street lighting and public transport, combined with strict patriarchal norms that strongly limit women's mobility. In these settings, harassment tends to go unseen or be normalised as a "normal" aspect of becoming female. Even schools are not spared. A study conducted by Plan India (2018) revealed that numerous girls encountered harassment when commuting to school, leading some of them to drop out completely, hence perpetuating gender inequalities in mobility and education.

Throughout the region, the anxiety of public harassment also crosses class and caste divisions. Working women, domestic workers, and women who belong to marginalized castes are particularly at risk, frequently subjected to intersectional forms of violence and discrimination

(Roy, 2012). Their access to justice is further blocked by socio-economic impediments and systemic exclusion from legal mechanisms.

In short, the ubiquity of eve-teasing in India and South Asia shows how public sexual harassment is both gendered and intersectional. It's not just about personal action but also an expression of deeper societal attitudes, institutional complacency, and the gendered ordering of public space. The normalized and regular frequency of such harassment has very real consequences for women's psychological well-being, autonomy and participation in public life.

2.3 Psychological and Social Consequences for Victims

Eve-teasing, even with the apparently euphemistic designation, is a gendered form of violence that holds deep and lasting psychological and social implications. It uses not only to be an occasional annoyance but also a traumatic event that interferes with victims' emotional health, informs their social practice, and enforces gendered constraints upon public existence.

Psychologically, victims of eve-teasing tend to have a compounded mixture of feelings of shame, guilt, anger, helplessness, and fear, which can progress to chronic anxiety, depression, sleep disorders, low self-worth, and in extreme cases, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Pathak & Tripathi, 2017). The unpredictability and repetition of such harassment render it a chronic cause of stress, especially for adolescent girls and young women who are in stages of vital identity formation. Chronic exposure to public harassment can create a culture of hypervigilance, whereby the victim is in perpetual fear of danger and thus prepared for attack at any moment, and this causes emotional exhaustion and lower psychological resilience (Baxi, 2014).

This state of constant anxiety has been conceptualized as “spatial anxiety,” referring to the heightened fear and psychological unease that women experience in public spaces (Phadke, Khan, & Ranade, 2011). It affects not only their ability to move freely in society but also how they experience urban life. Women begin to internalize restrictions such as avoiding certain streets after dark or always being accompanied by a male relative, necessary for survival. This contributes to a “culture of fear” where women’s autonomy is shaped not by choice, but by the threat of gendered violence (Viswanath & Mehrotra, 2007).

The social consequences of eve-teasing also add to these psychological effects. In South Asian cultures, in which perceptions of honour and modesty are intensely gendered, the responsibility of upholding 'respectability' is usually placed on women. Thus, when a woman is victimized by eve-teasing, the centre of attention often shifts from worrying about how to end the eve-teaser's behaviour to managing the victims. Families can restrict women's dress, movement, social interactions, and even education or jobs as a misdirected way to avoid future incidents (Sen, 2016; Rajan, 2019). Such reactions communicate an insidious message that women, and not society, are responsible for safety.

Such blaming of the victim can cause internalized blame and silence, in particular from girls who may not have established social and emotional skills to articulate their experiences. Victims are discouraged from coming forward, either out of anticipation of social stigma or further consequences from family or members of their communities. Such silencing maintains a climate in which harassment is normal and resistance is not common.

In addition, the long-term social cost can be particularly debilitating for marginalized communities, such as Dalit women, LGBTQ+ individuals, or lower socio-economic groups,

who have intersectional vulnerabilities. For instance, Dalit women tend to face both caste-ist and gendered abuse in common spaces, with fewer options to seek redress because of entrenched discrimination (Rege, 1998).

Educational trajectories are also disrupted. Girls may drop out of school or college due to safety concerns, particularly in rural areas where travel to educational institutions involves long or unsafe commutes. In doing so, eve-teasing indirectly helps to increase the gender imbalance in education and employment and in the process contributes to the cycles of disempowerment and inequality (Plan India, 2018).

Professionally speaking, women tend to shy away from job postings where career advancement requires travelling, shift work at night, or public interaction. As highlighted by Chakraborty and Basu (2020), some women even report avoiding public spaces entirely, restaurants, gyms, movie theatres, or parks, leading to social isolation and reduced quality of life. These constraints gradually erode women's fundamental right to safety, inclusion, and participation in public life (Koskela, 1997).

In sum, eve-teasing is not an isolated or trivial behaviourist is a form of structural violence that conditions women's psyches, restricts their freedoms, and sustains patriarchal dominance in everyday life. Addressing its psychological and social consequences requires not just legal action but a societal transformation that shifts the narrative from controlling women to confronting the root causes of male entitlement and public impunity.

2.4 Legal and Institutional Frameworks

In response to the persistent and pervasive issue of eve-teasing and broader forms of sexual harassment, India has developed a range of legal and institutional mechanisms aimed at safeguarding women's rights and ensuring justice.

These frameworks mirror the developing awareness of public harassment as a breach of basic human rights, although the chasm between law and life continues to be great.

The Indian Constitution makes strong provisions for gender equality and protection against violence.

Key articles include:

- **Article 14:** Guarantees equality before the law.
- **Article 15(3):** Permits the state to make special provisions for women and children.
- **Article 21:** Protects the right to life and personal liberty, including the right to live with dignity.

One of the most significant legal milestones in addressing sexual harassment was the Vishakha Guidelines issued by the Supreme Court of India in 1997 (*Vishakha v. State of Rajasthan*, AIR 1997 SC 3011). Although these guidelines were prompted by a case of workplace sexual violence, they laid the groundwork for recognizing all forms of sexual harassment as a violation of women's constitutional rights. The Court emphasized that gender-based violence impairs equality and dignity, making it not only a private grievance but a public concern that demands institutional intervention.

These guidelines remained in place until the enactment of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, which codified many of the

Vishakha principles. While this act focuses on professional settings, its spirit is relevant to public harassment, as both involve the infringement of women's bodily autonomy and right to safe spaces.

Relevant Provisions in the Indian Penal Code (IPC): Specific sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) address actions commonly associated with eve-teasing:

- **Section 354:** Criminalizes assault or use of criminal force on a woman with intent to outrage her modesty. Punishable by up to 5 years of imprisonment and fine.
- **Section 354A:** Defines and penalizes sexual harassment, including unwelcome physical contact, sexually colored remarks, showing pornography, and other unwelcome sexual advances.
- **Section 354B–D:** Cover more severe acts such as disrobing (354B), voyeurism (354C), and stalking (354D), all of which are often part of the continuum of public sexual harassment.
- **Section 509:** Addresses words, gestures, or acts intended to insult the modesty of a woman, including verbal abuse and lewd comments, typical elements of eve-teasing.

These laws signal a clear legal condemnation of harassment in public and private spheres.

Following the Nirbhaya case in 2012, public outrage led to the Justice Verma Committee Report, which played a crucial role in expanding and amending existing laws, resulting in more stringent punishments and broader definitions of sexual crimes under the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013.

While these legal provisions are comprehensive on paper, implementation remains a major challenge. Law enforcement agencies often lack gender-sensitive training and may trivialize complaints of eve-teasing, treating them as “petty issues” rather than recognizing them as precursors to more serious gender-based crimes (Kumar, 2020).

Women frequently face re-traumatization at the police station, where they are asked invasive questions or discouraged from filing formal complaints. Furthermore, many women do not report harassment due to fear of retaliation, social stigma, or lack of faith in the justice system (Chakraborty & Basu, 2020). In rural and semi-urban areas, the lack of accessible and trustworthy institutional support further compounds the problem.

To improve access to justice, several state governments have introduced women’s helplines (e.g., 181), women-only police stations, and mobile applications such as 'Himmat' (Delhi Police) to facilitate quicker reporting. Yet, these efforts tend to be poorly publicized, plagued by technical problems, or limited to small regions.

Additionally, institutional mechanisms for accountability are feeble. For example, convictions for sexual harassment-related crimes are low, and the trial process is usually long. The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) reports that most of the cases are pending for years, which deters victims from seeking legal remedies.

2.5 Causes of Eve-Teasing: Theoretical Explanations

Comprehending the root causes of eve-teasing and public harassment demands an interdisciplinary theoretical approach. Social scientists from different disciplines have enunciated numerous explanations based on social, psychological, and cultural paradigms.

One of the initial models is the male bonding theory formulated by Benard and Schlaffer (1996) that suggests that public harassment may act as a tool to enable men to form camaraderie and group identity. This perspective holds that men tend to view harassment acts as recreational or amusing, especially when in the company of male peers. Their conduct, as a group task, reduces when alone, reflecting a performative role to be validated by others. Likewise, Gardener (1995) noted that some men who describe themselves as gay, use harassment as a means of fitting into heteronormative expectations and being accepted among male peer groups.

Drawing from sociological frameworks, Lenton et al. (1999) developed three fundamental frameworks for describing public harassment: social-structural, socio-cultural, and social control theories.

The social-structural theory considers harassment as a manifestation of larger power disparities within society. It posits that men, under their disproportionate access to material, legal, and social resources, hold a position of dominance in the hierarchical structure. Such dominance is frequently practiced through harassment activities, which serve the purpose of reinforcing structural gender inequality and female subordination.

The socio-cultural theory redirects attention to the internalized norms and roles attributed by society to various genders. It focuses on the way patriarchal gender norms not only prescribe different behaviours to men and women but also idealize male dominance and female

submissiveness. Therefore, public harassment tends to be minimized or sensualized. This view also attacks dominant stories in society promoting toxic masculinity, the objectification of women, and victim-blaming. Gardner (1995) pointed out how male violence tends to get sexualized and rationalized as a component of normal gender relations.

Social control theory, as described by Fitzgerald (1993) and Goodman et al. (1994), explains public harassment as a mechanism employed to patrol and restrict women's use of public space. Harassment serves as a deterrence, indicating that the public space remains a male-dominated domain. Through the process of intimidating, such behaviour enforces patriarchal dominance, in effect quarantining women within private, domestic spaces. Lenton et al.'s (1999) empirical study confirms this theory, with the researchers discovering that most women had changed their public behaviour such as taking alternative routes or dressing modestly because they feared harassment.

Building on this, Amartya Sen (1984) underlined that patriarchal societies control women's sexuality and autonomy by controlling their physical mobility. The conception of the public sphere as largely male results in conditional toleration of women's presence often based on conformity to strict behavioural and aesthetic rules. Variations from these rules are regularly punished with harassment.

Aside from the above, Connell's (1995) hegemonic masculinity theory provides an insightful perspective. It postulates that some masculinities are given more privilege than others, specifically those exemplified by dominance, aggression, and male control over women. Eve-teasing, in this context, is a performative discourse that reiterates hegemonic masculine values and reaffirms male authority.

In addition, Bandura's social learning theory (1977) proposes that harassment-type behaviours are learned via observation and reinforcement. When young men see such behaviour being accepted or even rewarded in peer or media contexts, they tend to imitate it. The lack of legal repercussions and the normalization of these behaviours add further reinforcement to these patterns.

Together, they propose that public harassment is more than just an isolated aberration but a behaviour grounded in socio-cultural contexts that helps maintain patriarchal standards. Although each model contributes unique explanatory power, they are highly interrelated and mutually reinforcing, which offers a holistic appreciation of the motivations and structural contexts for eve-teasing.

2.6 Impact of eve-teasing and bystander intervention

Chakraborty (2016) explores in "Eve-Teasing and Education Mobility: Young Women's Experiences in the Urban Slums of India" the nexus of educational mobility and gendered harassment among young women in urban slums, and specifically on the enduring problem of eve-teasing. The research illustrates how street harassment functions as an important hindrance to women's access to education and freedom of movement in general. Eve-teasing is not a solitary experience but a very common one that has a deep impact on women's day-to-day life, particularly in marginalized communities. Numerous young women avoid going out of their homes for fear of harassment and limit their exposure to public places, thus restricting their education and social interactions. The study discloses that these women end up having to change their way of life to stay away from public areas where eve-teasing is prevalent, leading to a decrease in social mobility and access to educational institutions. By focusing on the

normalization of eve-teasing, Chakraborty highlights the importance of youth-oriented research in order to foreground young women's voices and to comprehend more clearly how gendered violence affects their education and social prospects. The research demands an expanded focus in combating gender violence, proposing that ensuring gender equality in education must be followed by tackling the ubiquitous harassment culture hampering women's entry into public space.

Viswanath's (2016) "Rapid Assessment of Eve Teasing (Sexual Harassment) of Young Women in Public Places in Chennai, India" work is concentrated on the prevalence and impact of eve-teasing in Chennai, more so among young female college-goers. The study provides an effective snapshot of how common cases of harassment not just deny women a sense of security but also curtail their freedom of movement. The report highlights that, in most instances, women are compelled to modify their path, transport, or daytime schedules to evade planned harassment. This subsequently cuts down on their opportunities to engage freely in educational or vocational pursuits. Viswanath's findings reveal that, though legal provisions are made to combat sexual harassment, the attitudes of society toward gender violence continue to remain practically undisturbed. Such ingrained attitudes result in women continuing to encounter substantial impediments to mobility and security in the public sphere. The study calls for the adoption of culturally appropriate interventions and education programs to counteract the criminalization of harassment. It emphasizes the necessity of creating a society where women feel empowered to counter harassment and lends support to the call for societal transformation in mitigating the incidence of eve-teasing. {Cares, A. C., Banyard, V. L., Moynihan, M. M., Williams, L. M., Potter, S. J., & Stapleton, J. G. (2014)}. "Changing Attitudes About Being a Bystander to

Violence: Translating an In-Person Sexual Violence Prevention Program to a New Campus."

This Cares et al. (2014) study investigates the efficacy of a program aimed at altering bystander attitudes and enhancing intervention in sexual violence scenarios, in this case within a college setting. The researchers determined that bystander intervention behaviours were significantly enhanced through the use of both in-person workshops and a social marketing campaign to educate students about how to intervene when they see violence. One novel feature of this research was the inclusion of video games specifically adventure games to encourage bystander behaviours and maintain students' interest over time. The research points out that interventions become most effective if they have interactive and immersive components, making the problem of bystander intervention more appealing and available to young adults. The findings also indicate that such programs are highly effective in inducing long-term behavioural change among participants. Through promoting pro-active intervention, the study emphasizes the necessity of bystander-centered education to make spaces safer in places where there is much harassment and violence, including on campus.

Jenkins and Nickerson (2019) emphasize the "Bystander Intervention in Bullying: Role of Social Skills and Gender" role of social ability and gender in bystander intervention in bullying attacks, extracting useful insights applicable to understanding bystanders' reactions towards eve-teasing and public harassment.

They find in their research that people with greater social skills that is, people who are more skilled at handling tricky social situations are more likely to intervene when they observe bullying. The research also underscores a dramatic gender difference in bystander actions. Women are more likely to act, but at the same time tend to feel greater anxiety or fear, which

discourages them from acting. The research therefore highlights the role of social skills in facilitating the intervention potential of bystanders and advocates for specially designed interventions that give people the social tools they need to intervene in instances of harassment. Furthermore, through the exploration of gender's impact on intervention behaviour, this research highlights the intricate nature of bystander decision-making and the necessity of gender-sensitive strategies to foster intervention in harassment contexts. Levine and Thompson (2004) "Cultural Variations in Bystander Intervention: A Comparative Review." offer a comparative review of cultural differences in bystander intervention, with an emphasis on how aspects of culture including individualism vs. collectivism, power distance, and gender norms predict the likelihood of intervention in public harassment or violence.

The research discovers that cultural values are essential in influencing how bystanders view and behave towards harassment incidents. In collectivist societies, in which group harmony takes precedence, bystanders will intervene to defend social norms and uphold group integrity. On the other hand, in societies characterized by high power distance, with great emphasis on authority and hierarchy, bystanders are less likely to oppose the behaviour of figures of authority or disrupt harassment. The study highlights the necessity of culturally responsive approaches to encouraging bystander intervention, acknowledging that intervention programs need to be adapted to the unique cultural context within which they are administered. This discovery is important for the creation of effective interventions to prevent eve-teasing because social structures and cultural norms can either support or thwart the willingness of people to act in defence of victims of harassment.

2.7 Repertory Grid Technique (RGT) in Qualitative Research:

The Repertory Grid Technique (RGT), created by George Kelly in 1955 as part of his Personal Construct Theory (PCT), is a novel and versatile instrument that has come to be used more frequently in qualitative research contexts. PCT's central idea is that people make sense of the world by using bipolar dimensions like "strong–weak" or "trustworthy," personal constructs, to understand others and themselves. RGT offers a methodological approach to eliciting, mapping, and analysing such constructs using structured interviews or questionnaires. The grid consists of three main elements: elements (people or objects being rated), constructs (bipolar scales by which these elements are judged), and ratings (participant judgments of each element on each construct), thus being quantitative in form and qualitative in meaning.

In qualitative research, RGT provides a priceless tool for obtaining subjective meaning systems free from external assumption and pre-set categories. As opposed to traditional survey methods that might compel participants to select pre-set response alternatives, RGT allows them to create their own value dimensions, which tend to yield unanticipated findings. This renders the technique well-fitted for investigation into sensitive topics like gender-based harassment, for which personal meanings, implicit assumptions, and affectively charged judgments are at the forefront. In these situations, RGT facilitates mapping of how victims, witnesses, or even offenders interpret social encounters, bystanders, and institutions (e.g., family, police, school administration). For example, a respondent will define terms such as "protective–neglectful" or "safe–vulnerable" to define different actors or environments involved in their experience of harassment. These researcher-generated constructs give researchers rich, detailed insight into lived experiences and the psychosocial environment within which experiences are lived.

Empirical research has proven the applicability of RGT in the study of gendered violence and interpersonal trauma. Garcia-Martínez et al. (2019) used RGT to see how victims of domestic violence perceived men and women in their lives as important others. With the use of Euclidean distance analysis, the study found remarkable inconsistencies between how victims viewed men and women, which was an indication of internalized gendered perceptions formed through abusive relationships. The psychological distances derived from comparisons between such constructs as "supportive" and "aggressive" were indicative of long-held fears and ways of coping. Similarly, Burr, King, and Heckmann (2014) set forth an interpretive clustering method for qualitatively analysing repertory grids. Using the approach, researchers were able to categorize personal constructs into themes and hence uncover patterns of meaning-making within and across participants without compromising individual variation.

RGT has further been applied in identity construction research, intergroup perception, and moral judgment analysis all of which are intrinsically connected to bystander behaviour and gendered violence. For instance, in organizational and educational contexts, RGT has been employed by researchers to determine how people view power structures, exclusion, and support networks (Jankowicz, 2004). Such contexts are similar to bystander decision-making situations in public places where people are harassed. A research work done by Hardcastle et al. (2011) applied RGT to measure how youth define violence in their communities, and how their internal definitions determined how likely they were to intervene or back out from threatening situations.

With your focus on research whether women's active bystander intervention is influenced by past experience of eve-teasing by severity of the incident, RGT may be particularly useful for

revealing how participants make sense around terms like "courage," "risk," "blame," "loyalty," or "intervention." This would yield a rich understanding of psychological and social variables which might not be captured by quantitative surveys. The structured flexibility of RGT also allows for comparison between victims and non-victims, and low-severity versus high-severity incident situations to ultimately enrich interpretation.

In general, the Repertory Grid Technique is a strong yet malleable tool for researching the subjective worlds of people who have been affected by gender-based harassment. It offers room for the complex interplay of personal, relational, and cultural elements that construct experiences of safety, support, and responsibility. By recording individual cognitive-emotional maps, RGT makes empathetic and rooted analysis possible, which is essential for creating responsive interventions, education, and support systems. The history of the application of the technique in domestic violence, trauma studies, and community safety attests to its value in qualitative psychological research, especially in investigating how people make sense of emotionally and morally loaded experiences like bystander intervention and harassment.

The Repertory Grid Technique (RGT) has been used in qualitative research to examine how people construct meaning for life's complex and sometimes sensitive events. The early use of RGT in the social work field was illustrated by Borell, Espwall, Pryce, and Brenner in 2003. These researchers were concerned with understanding how people who were receiving or working in social services think about their social worlds. By inviting participants to create their own bipolar constructs such as "judgmental vs. supportive" or "dismissive vs. trustworthy" the researchers were able to access personal meanings that organized participants' experiences

with relationships and institutions. The research uncovered wide discrepancies between the perceptions of the same social interactions by service users and professionals. RGT facilitated a more profound understanding of such perceptions, offering rich insights into aspects such as power relations, emotional safety, and relational distance. This use of RGT not only underscored the technique's utility in augmenting reflective practice among professionals but also highlighted its potency in lending voice to marginalized views in a non-intrusive and respectful manner.

Kitson-Boyce, Wheatley, and Blagden (2020) applied RGT to examine the internal belief repertoires of sexual offenders in forensic psychology. The research sought to transcend typical assessments by investigating how the offenders interpreted themselves, others, and their crimes. By applying personalized grids, the researchers revealed constructions such as "ashamed vs. proud" or "controlling vs. vulnerable" that shed light on the cognitive and affective frameworks of these individuals. These personal constructions tended to be in conflict with societal categorizations, which exposed inner tensions and psychological defences. This research illustrated the potential of RGT to be utilized ethically and efficiently in vulnerable populations to capture the participants' subjective realities more clearly where they might not be willing to share openly in conventional designs. These observations are not only critical to forensic profiling but also to individualizing therapeutic treatments to engage in rehabilitation and risk reduction. The success of the study shows how RGT can enter deeper levels of meaning in groups where traditional interviews may be lacking.

In education, Rozenszajn, Zer-Kavod, and Machluf (2021) used RGT to explore teachers' tacit assumptions about science education. The aim was to reach the tacit, frequently implicit notions

that drive teachers' approaches to teaching and their interactions with students. By asking teachers to contrast and compare various educational situations, the researchers found constructs like "inquiry-based versus passive learning" and "student-centered versus teacher-dominated teaching." These internal cognitive structures permitted a better understanding of the conflict between curriculum standards and individual pedagogical values. The research indicated that professional development programs might be more effective if they were better attuned to these internal cognitive structures, as opposed to using imposed frameworks. This research reaffirmed RGT's applicability in exposing cognitive scaffolding in decision-making within educational contexts, identifying potential discrepancies between teachers' beliefs and instructional delivery.

Dobosz-Bourne and Jankowicz (2006) used RGT in organizational studies to investigate why people resist change in the workplace. This research did not view resistance as simple obstinacy or behaviour-based defiance but analysed it as an expression of strongly entrenched personal constructs regarding the organization, leadership, and identity. Participants came up with constructs such as "authentic vs. manipulative," "transparent vs. secretive," and "empowering vs. controlling," which allowed the researchers to chart the affective and cognitive terrain of employee reactions to organizational transformation. The research established that resistance typically has its roots in a sense of threat to personal values and professional identity, and thus is an emotional and meaning-based response. By clarifying these constructs, the organization was able to more effectively plan change strategies that take into account employee views, enhancing morale and engagement. This instance demonstrated how RGT can uncover deep psychological resistance that may not be apparent from conventional organizational surveys.

Combined, the studies illustrate the richness and generalizability of the Repertory Grid Technique in tapping human processes of meaning-making. The fact that the technique allows the participant to define their own constructs makes it particularly appropriate for issues surrounding social injustice, including eve-teasing. Victims of eve-teasing, for instance, may employ RGT to describe how they understand perpetrators, bystanders, familial reaction, and institutional support with categories such as "protective vs. neglectful," "empowered vs. silenced," or "guilty vs. innocent." This would enable researchers to chart the internal affective and cognitive changes that follow harassment. Likewise, bystanders might be researched to learn about their own personal constructs concerning moral responsibility, security, and social pressure, which would be useful in developing bystander training programs. Even organizations, like schools or police forces, might be analysed based on the personal constructs of individuals dealing with them during or after harassment incidents. Direct studies of eve-teasing based on RGT, while currently non-existent, only highlight the potential of the technique in this area. They confirm that RGT is not just a method of data gathering but also a powerful means of exploring the richness of living experience, belief systems, and social meaning, especially in contexts in which voice, agency, and emotion are central.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH GAP, OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH STATEMENT, AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Research Gap:

Despite the large body of research on bystander intervention in sexual harassment and bullying situations, there is a significant lack of adequate research directly focused on eve-teasing. Eve-teasing is a distinct category of harassment in which women are primarily targeted by gender. It usually takes place in public areas. In contrast to bullying, which can include power disparities between peers, or sexual harassment, which is usually found in workplace or school environments, eve-teasing is distinguished by the fact that it occurs commonly in public spaces like streets, parks, and buses [Kapoor, S., & Agrawal, A. (2008). Eve teasing: A ubiquitous social malaise. *Indian Journal of Psychiatry*]. This particular context presents certain opportunities and challenges for bystander intervention.

3.2 Research Questions

This study aims to find out the psychological, social, and experiential variables behind the intervention of bystanders in incidents of eve-teasing. It is concerned with how gender, age, personal harassment history, affective barriers, and personality variables influence one's choice of acting or being passive in public harassment situations. By studying male and female bystanders of all ages, the study aims to explore the reasons behind intervention, internal and external obstacles that deter it, and how bystanders'

views of risk, responsibility, and social relationships differ in these scenarios. The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. How do intervention behaviours differ between younger and older male bystanders, and how can these differences be explained through the lens of the Bystander Intervention Model (Latane & Darley, 1970)?
2. What are the primary motivations for male bystanders to intervene in incidents of eve-teasing, and how do these motivations vary across age groups?
3. How do intervention behaviours vary between younger and older female bystanders, and in what ways does the Bystander Intervention Model account for these differences?
4. To what extent does the severity of an eve-teasing incident influence the likelihood of intervention by female bystanders, and how do their past experiences with harassment inform their responses?
5. What emotional and psychological barriers, such as feelings of helplessness, vulnerability, fear, or shame, affect women's willingness to intervene in instances of eve-teasing?
6. How do male bystanders construct and differentiate various forms of eve-teasing, and in what ways do these personal constructs elicited through the Repertory Grid Technique influence their likelihood of intervention?

3.3 Theoretical Framework Used:

Comprehending the cognition and emotional processes underlying bystander intervention is key to crafting effective interventions to overcome bystander apathy—concretely in the context of public harassment and gender violence. Dr. Victoria Banyard built upon previous models by Latané and Darley (1968) by detailing more nuanced psychological and situational factors in the bystander's process of moving from observing to intervening. Banyard's model is especially applicable in multifaceted social situations such as eve-teasing where ambiguity, social pressure, and perceived risk tend to deter response. Her model describes decision-making in five stages where each stage has possible psychological or situational barriers for intervention.

Stage 1: Notice the Event

The initial stage involves detecting that something unusual or potentially harmful is happening. In busy or crowded settings, such as marketplaces or public transport common locations for eve-teasing incidents distractions, multitasking, and sensory overload may impair a bystander's ability to notice an event. Latané and Darley (1968) emphasized that noticing is a prerequisite for intervention, yet is easily disrupted by situational factors like anonymity in crowds or desensitization to public conflict. Additionally, cultural norms and gendered expectations may influence who pays attention to harassment and who filters it out as 'normal' public behaviour.

Stage 2: Interpret the Event as a Problem

Once the bystanders have observed the occurrence, they have to interpret it as something in need of intervention. This process is usually shrouded in ambiguity as well as social cues. For instances of eve-teasing, actions can be misinterpreted as friendly teasing, romantic advances, and in some cases just

ignored on account of normalized gender scripts. Manning, Levine, and Collins (2007) pointed out how pluralistic ignorance where people expect other people to help them read situations can cause inaction on the part of bystanders. If nobody else does something about it, the bystanders conclude intervention is not needed or appropriate, further decreasing the chances of intervention.

Stage 3: Assume Responsibility

Taking on responsibilities is an important psychological milestone. The diffusion of responsibility in group settings makes individuals feel less accountable for intervening, especially if others are present. In gendered contexts, men may feel less compelled to intervene if they perceive harassment as a “women’s issue,” while women may hesitate due to fears of retaliation or being dismissed. Fischer et al. (2006) demonstrated that the sense of personal responsibility increases intervention likelihood, especially when the bystander believes that their action could alter the outcome or provide meaningful support.

Stage 4: Decide How to Help

This phase calls for the bystander to consider the viability and suitability of various intervention methods. In public harassment cases, possibilities could be confronting the harasser directly, diverting or separating the victim, or involving authorities. But fear of escalation, low self-efficacy, or social disapproval may interfere with this choice. Darley and Batson (1973) found that time pressure and perceived competence significantly affected whether bystanders chose to act, illustrating how real-world constraints often obstruct good intentions.

Stage 5: Implement the Intervention

The last stage is the actual implementation of the selected type of intervention. External action must now be the result of internal motivation, which is facilitated by the assertiveness of the bystander, previous experience, and situational support. Levine and Thompson (2004) explained that interventions occur more frequently in cases where the bystander feels a sense of identification with the victim or is empowered by social support. In the case of eve-teasing, exposure to the same kind of situation in the past, professional training (e.g., gender sensitivity training), or the availability of other active bystanders can increase intervention behaviour.

Banyard's extended model provides a strong framework for making sense of the layered and frequently conflicted decision-making process that bystanders experience. Its applicability is especially significant in studies of gender-based harassment, where the moral urgency to intervene collides with social danger, uncertainty, and emotional unease. By charting each phase and identifying particular barriers, researchers and policymakers can create specific interventions in the form of awareness campaigns, skills-building workshops, and community support systems that encourage active bystander intervention in incidents of public harassment.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

4.1 Participants

The process of data collection was conducted in two main phases, each on different participant groups. Phase 1 conducted investigations on male participants who were segregated into two age groups: 18–25 and 35–45 years. Phase 2 investigated female participants belonging to the same age groups. The criteria for selecting males needed them to have had experience being witnesses to cases of eve-teasing where they were either too afraid to step in actively or were passive. Female respondents were chosen on the twin grounds of being victims of eve-teasing and bystanders who had intervened or not intervened in such incidents.

Semi-structured interviews were used, each running for about 60 minutes ($M = 60$, $SD = \pm 5$), with sufficient depth for qualitative investigation. There were 40 participants in the study:

- 10 males (18–25 years)
- 10 males (35–45 years)
- 10 females (17–22 years)
- 10 females (35–45 years)

Following the completion of the interview phase, a third phase of data collection was implemented using the Repertory Grid Technique (RGT). A purposive subsample of participants was used for this

stage to further explore their personal constructs around bystander intervention. The RGT permitted participants to state how they saw and conceptualized intervention-related circumstances, providing a structured but idiographic perspective to comprehend their inner cognitive systems. This approach complemented the entire qualitative depth of the study by revealing subjective meanings and decision-making patterns in real-life social environments (Kelly, 1955; Fransella, Bell, & Bannister, 2004).

4.2 Initial Data Collection via Google Forms

The first phase of data gathering was conducted via a Google Forms survey, which acted as a screening tool to locate appropriate participants for the study. The questionnaire was crafted with diligence to elicit both qualitative and quantitative information, including closed-ended demographic items like age, gender, location, and education level and open-ended questions that invited participants to describe actual incidents of eve-teasing they had either witnessed or personally encountered. To assess ethical compliance and be transparent, the form also had a consent section in which respondents were requested to give consent to be contacted for follow-up interviews. The process filtered for cases that were of interest while also valuing respondents' autonomy and privacy.

4.3 Group Filtering and Categorization

After the pilot collection of responses, participants were divided into two separate age groups 18–25 years and 35–45 years in both male and female categories. This segmentation was done to allow for a comparative analysis of whether age and generational context could affect bystander behavior and attitudes towards intervention in eve-teasing cases. The average age of volunteers in the younger group (Group 1) was around 22 years, and that of the older group (Group 2) was around 36 years. The

filtering process ensured that the study could investigate developmental, sociocultural, and experience differences in response patterns between age groups.

From the pool of questionnaire respondents, those expressing a desire to be involved in subsequent stages of the study were identified and shortlisted for interview. A purposeful sampling strategy was utilized to achieve diversity and representativeness in the qualitative sample with consideration to variations in gender, age category, and geographic origin. This purposeful sampling exercise was important in achieving a broad coverage of lived experiences and viewpoints on eve-teasing and bystander intervention, thus maximizing the depth, richness, and contextual meaning of the data obtained in the interview stage.

4.4 Inclusion Criteria

Participants were included for follow-up interviews based on the following criteria:

1. The victim in the described event had to be a woman, and the perpetrator a male.
2. The bystanders and the victim were not related by blood or close familial ties; however, they could be acquaintances or strangers.
3. The incident must have taken place in a public setting, such as a marketplace, street, or public transport.
4. The perpetrator(s) could be a single individual or a group of males.
5. Educational qualification of pursuing graduation or higher was required to ensure that participants could comprehend the survey questions and scenario-based tasks accurately.

4.5 Tools Used

A combination of digital tools and manual techniques were employed to facilitate comprehensive data collection, transcription, analysis, and interpretation:

- **Audio Recorder:** Used to capture verbal responses during interviews, ensuring the preservation of participants' narratives for later transcription and analysis.
- **Transcription Tools:** Interviews were transcribed using a combination of Deeping.ai (AI-based transcription software) and iPhone Notes voice-to-text functionality, enabling accurate and efficient conversion of spoken content into text.
- **Atlas.ti:** This qualitative analysis software was used to code and thematically analyze the interview transcripts. It helped identify key patterns, themes, and categories based on Banyard's Bystander Intervention Model.
- **Microsoft Excel:** Employed for data management, creating visual charts, frequency tables, and organizing participant responses and demographics.
- **Pen and Paper:** Basic materials were used for note-taking during interviews and for administering paper-based tools such as the Repertory Grid.
- **Repertory Grid Sheet (RGT):** Used during the third phase of data collection to capture participants' cognitive constructs related to eve-teasing scenarios.
- **R Studio with OpenRepGrid Package:** R Studio was used for analyzing repertory grid data, including cluster analysis, principal component analysis (PCA), and heatmap generation. The

OpenRepGrid package enabled structured visualization and exploration of cognitive patterns across participants, supporting the identification of key perceptual differences.

4.6 Interview Process

Semi-structured interviews were administered to each of the participants, which ranged from 45 to 60 minutes (Group 1: $M = 51.03$ minutes, $SD = 16.5$). Participants were asked to report certain real-life eve-teasing incidents involving them or their friends. They reported the setting of the incident, their immediate emotional response, and their own thought process at the time of the incident as well as afterward. Special interest was paid to their intervention decision-making if they delayed, acted at once, or did not act and the motivations for such decisions. This part of the interview was particularly useful in determining internal hindrances and external situational factors that guided their response.

To begin to separate the motivations and deterrents of bystander intervention further, follow-up questions were phrased with respect to three key areas considered in the literature: (1) social norms, that is, perceived societal expectations and peer influence (Cislaghi & Heise, 2019); (2) concerns about individual safety related to fear of retaliation or physical harm (Fischer et al., 2011); and (3) bystander apathy, where less personal responsibility is related to being in groups (Latané & Darley, 1970). These dimensions facilitated the grounding of participants' choices and feelings within sociocultural expectation and actual or imagined danger.

Female participants were subjected to a second level of questioning. In order to be included within this section, they had to have experienced both: having been a direct victim of eve-teasing and being a bystander in such a situation. This two-pronged approach enabled a richer understanding of how individual victimization can influence empathy, agency, or reluctance in responding to others'

suffering. Following the initial story segment, female participants were exposed to a 30-second video clip showing a series of eve-teasing situations. The video was deliberately shown to yield an emotional reaction in the participants and provoke reflective interaction with the topic. After this, they were given the following scenario-based choice task:

Scenario:

You're in a crowded marketplace on a weekend afternoon, browsing through the stalls. As you're looking at some items, you overhear a commotion a few steps away. A young girl, probably in her late teens, is trying to walk past a group of men standing near a food stall.

One of the guys gets up and says, "Kahan jaa rahi ho, sweetheart? Thodi der baat toh karo humse."

The girl doesn't acknowledge him and attempts to proceed, but another guy stands in front of her and says, "Itni rude mat bano, hum toh bas friendly ho rahe hain." The others chuckle, obviously enjoying her unease. The girl tries to look around for an escape, but men are surrounding her, so she cannot move ahead. She also appears frightened but is attempting not to be. Others in the vicinity are observing, but nobody has intervened to assist yet.

As a bystander, what do you do?

1. **Option 1:** You confront the men immediately, telling them to leave the girl alone. You speak loudly, alerting others to what is happening in the hopes that they will support you.
2. **Option 2:** You walk up to the girl, politely inquiring if she requires assistance and walking with her to a safer location. You attempt to divert their attention by speaking with her and leading her away from the men.

3. **Option 3:** You quietly pull out your phone to take a recording of the event or pictures, planning to utilize the evidence to report the harassment to the authorities.
4. **Option 4:** You opt to warn a local shopkeeper or security officer, drawing their attention to the situation and requesting they intervene.
5. **Option 5:** You decide to do nothing, thinking that confronting the men might create a scene and attract unwanted attention. You hope that if no one gives them attention, the boys will probably leave in some time.

After choosing one of the five predefined intervention strategies, participants were asked to elaborate on the reasons for their choice. These responses were later coded and analyzed using Atlas.ti to uncover thematic patterns in their reasoning. Throughout the interview process, participants were encouraged to reflect on their emotional responses, including fear, shame, guilt, helplessness, or anger and how these may have influenced their behaviour. Interviewers also explored the external social context: participants were asked about the presence and reactions of other bystanders, their expectations of community or institutional support (e.g., police intervention), and the role of media representations of public harassment and heroism. Some participants spoke of moments of internal conflict shaped by cultural scripts of propriety, while others reflected on how previous experiences, especially those involving trauma, influenced their later behavior in public spaces.

Toward the end of the session, participants were asked to reflect on what structural changes or community-level initiatives might reduce instances of eve-teasing and strengthen bystander intervention. Many provided thoughtful recommendations based on their lived experiences, such as school-based education, public awareness campaigns, support groups, or improved legal

responsiveness. This stage ended the interview by moving from individual reflection to shared vision, providing an opportunity for seeing mechanisms of individual and social change.

Female participants were further required to fill out the NEO Personality Inventory–Revised (NEO-PI-R) immediately after the interview, a 240-item questionnaire used to measure five broad dimensions of personality: Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to Experience, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness. This numerical measure permitted another level of analysis to consider whether personality factors within women contributed to the formation of their responses as bystanders.

4.7 Data Transcription

All the interview sessions that were recorded were transcribed from voice to text with the help of a mixture of high-end transcription software, such as Deeping.ai, and voice-to-text through the iPhone Notes application. This mixed approach helped in being both flexible and efficient in transcribing oral content to written text, particularly where real-time transcription was necessary or technological limitations were encountered. This transcription process was critical in guaranteeing that the rich, textured specifics of participants' accounts were well maintained in their entirety and easily accessible for systematic qualitative assessment. The presence of verbatim transcripts facilitated exhaustive scrutiny of recurring motifs, emotional overtones, and context-related issues, hence augmenting the credibility, transparency, and richness of the research outcomes.

4.8 Data Analysis using Atlas.ti

In Atlas.ti, qualitative analysis began with an inductive coding procedure, where brief and meaningful codes were created directly from an extensive reading of the interview transcripts. The codes were not pre-established but arose naturally to seize participants' essential thoughts, feelings, and choice

moments regarding bystander intervention. For instance, narrative pieces of hesitation or doubt were most often coded "Uncertainty," "Fear of Judgment," or "Lack of Confidence," all of which align with evidenced barriers detailed in the thematic framework (see Table 1: Thematic Codebook for Bystander Intervention Responses). In the same vein, statements of emotional empathy with victims were coded as "Empathy" and reflections of duty or moral responsibility as "Moral Responsibility." Whenever participants discussed salient experiences or thinking processes, quotations were attentively noted and coded verbatim within the program so that analysis did not lose its touch base in the genuine language and attitudes of the responders.

Once a comprehensive collection of codes had been established, they were also grouped into more general categories and code groups, representative of phases from the Bystander Intervention Model (Latane & Darley, 1970) as well as primary motivational and inhibitory factors. Such codes as "Noticing," "Interpreting," "Responsibility," "Deciding," and "Intervening" were classified based on the five sequential stages of bystander behaviour. Motivational codes such as "Empathy," "Moral Responsibility," "Social Norms," and "Self-Efficacy" were placed under internal and external motivators, whereas inhibitors like "Fear of Retaliation," "Diffusion of Responsibility," "Legal Concerns," and "Cultural Norms" were placed under inhibitory factors. This framework enabled the data to be both conceptually structured and theoretically aligned, allowing for a precise analysis of what helps or hinders intervention.

To further explore relationships between codes and the relative salience of specific experiences, Atlas.ti's Tree-map feature was employed. This visual tool depicted the frequency and distribution of codes across the dataset, with larger tiles representing codes that appeared more consistently across participants. For instance, "Social Conformity" and "Fear of Retaliation" surfaced highly among the

responses of younger female participants, while "Self-Efficacy" and "Moral Responsibility" surfaced most among older male participants. This visual insight allowed comparative analysis by gender and age groups.

Code Co-occurrence Tables and Network Views were also used to investigate the frequency of appearance of certain codes within the same quotations, indicating cognitive or emotional overlap. For example, "Lack of Institutional Support" tended to co-occur with "Helplessness" and "Diffusion of Responsibility," suggesting a pattern in which institutional failure reduced personal agency. In the same manner, "Prior Experience" tended to overlap with "Self-Efficacy," as those who had previously intervened felt more likely to do so again. These intersections afforded the analytic richness required to sharpen early themes and sub-themes, including Internal Conflict in Bystander Decisions, Normative Pressures, and Fear-Based Inhibition augmenting the conceptual specificity and theoretical density of the end findings.

Finally, the organized use of codes, code groups, thematic coding, and visual tools like treemaps, code co-occurrence tables, and network diagrams facilitated a systematic and rich examination of the data. These instruments did not just record what participants saw, felt, or did, but also shed light on the underlying drivers of their actions and inactions. Through the categorization of the data around both the sequential steps of the Bystander Intervention Model and psychosocial motivators and barriers in a systematic fashion, the analysis revealed the emotional, cognitive, and social factors that drive bystander reactions to acts of eve-teasing.

This tiered strategy enabled the specification of internal contradictions, moral justifications, social fears, and situational limitations, creating a richly nuanced understanding of the actors' choice-making

processes. By combining the qualitative coding and visual representation, the research attained not only methodological sophistication but also a profoundly interpretive, participant-focused understanding of how people make sense of and react to quotidian injustices. In so doing, it illuminated the moral and emotional landscape traversed by bystanders in real-life situations, providing the insights necessary for crafting effective, demographically responsive intervention strategies.

Code	Category	Meaning
Noticing	Stage 1: Notice the Event	This code is used when a bystander witnesses an occurrence or event. It is akin to the initial realization of the event as needing to be attended to.
Interpreting	Stage 2: Interpret the Situation	This code is the evaluation process that a bystander goes through to determine if the situation is an emergency or needs to be intervened in.
Responsibility	Stage 3: Assume Responsibility	This code is the perception by the bystander or sense that they need to intervene in the situation. Personal responsibility is taken into consideration here.
Deciding	Stage 4: Decide How to Help	This code is utilized when the bystander determines the most effective way to intervene (e.g., challenging the perpetrator, calling the police).
Intervening	Stage 5: Take Action	This code is employed when the bystander acts physically or verbally to stop the action.
Empathy	Motivations	This code is used when the bystander feels an emotional connection or empathy with the victim and this encourages them to act.
Moral Responsibility	Motivations	This code reflects a duty or sense of obligation to behave in a morally correct manner, inciting the bystander to act.
Social Norms	Motivations	This code reflects the impact of peer or social pressure, whereby the bystander responds because social norms push the individual towards assisting others.
Perceived Severity	Motivations	This code reflects the estimation of the seriousness of the event. The more serious the event, the more probable the intervention.
Self-Efficacy	Motivations	This code addresses the bystander's belief in their capacity to act successfully and safely, motivating them to intervene.
Fear of Retaliation	Barriers	This code is in force when a bystander is afraid of personal injury or retaliation on the part of the perpetrator or others if they step in.
Lack of Confidence	Barriers	This code is applied when a bystander is uncertain about how to intervene, either through ignorance or doubt regarding their capacity to manage the situation.
Diffusion of Responsibility	Barriers	This code illustrates the psychological phenomenon of people in a group feeling less obligated to act, expecting others to do so.
Fear of Judgment	Barriers	This code illustrates the fear of being judged by others, especially if one is in a public area, resulting in doing nothing.
Social Conformity	Barriers	This code applies when a bystander follows the behaviour of the majority, especially if nobody else is acting.
Legal Concerns	Barriers	This code encompasses the apprehension of facing legal repercussions, e.g., being accused of provoking the situation or legal penalty for intervening.
Cultural Norms	Barriers	This code is used when cultural or societal norms dissuade direct intervention, particularly in situations felt to be private or among family/community issues.
Uncertainty	Barriers	This code speaks to the uncertainty of the bystander as to whether the conduct amounts to harassment or whether intervention is necessary.
Personal Safety Concerns	Barriers	This code is an expression of the fear of physical injury or harm by a bystander to themselves while intervening, especially for aggressive situations.
Bystander Effect	Barriers	This code comes into play where several witnesses present make the possibility less likely for one person to act, assuming that other people will act.
Victim Relationship	Other Factors	This code applies when a bystander's connection to the victim influences their decision to intervene. Stronger relationships with the victim may lead to higher intervention rates.
Public Space	Other Factors	This code refers to the location of the event, with public spaces being more conducive to intervention due to social visibility and possible support from others.
Social Support	Other Factors	This code captures the presence of other potential interveners, where a bystander may be more likely to act if they perceive that others will support their intervention.
Prior Experience	Other Factors	This code is used when a bystander's previous experiences, such as prior involvement in similar situations, influence their likelihood of intervening.

Table 1: Thematic Codebook for Bystander Intervention Responses

Part 2: Repertory Grid Technique

4.9 Repertory Grid Analysis

To incorporate a comparative framework into our bystander intervention research, we undertook a preliminary step of identifying and organizing various forms of eve-teasing based on perceived severity.

This step was essential for constructing the *elements* necessary for the Repertory Grid Technique (RGT), which relies on participants comparing and contrasting specific instances (or elements) to elicit their constructs. Drawing from the interview data previously collected during the qualitative phase, we compiled a comprehensive list of all the distinct eve-teasing scenarios mentioned by participants. These included various experiences, reflecting the multifaceted nature of harassment faced by young women in contemporary settings.

To structure these incidents in terms of severity, ranging from the least to the most distressing, we designed a Google Form survey that was distributed to 75 female participants aged 18–25. The survey featured ten scenarios of eve-teasing, each representing a common form of harassment that had emerged from the interviews.

These included:

- (1) staring or leering,
- (2) catcalling or whistling,
- (3) making obscene gestures,
- (4) following or stalking physically,
- (5) brushing against someone without consent,

- (6) blocking one's path,
- (7) groping around hips, chest, or other sensitive areas,
- (8) sending unsolicited explicit messages or content,
- (9) spreading rumors or private information online, and
- (10) Stalking or monitoring activities.

Participants were asked to rate each scenario on a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 indicated "Not at all severe" and 5 indicated "Extremely severe."

This quantitative exercise served two critical purposes:

1. This allowed us to anchor the perceived severity of each scenario in real, lived perceptions of young women, thereby grounding our elements in authentic and socially relevant data.
2. Second, the resulting severity scores enabled us to construct a continuum of eve-teasing incidents that ranged from seemingly 'minor' violations like staring, to highly invasive and psychologically damaging acts like groping or online harassment.

These ranked elements were then used in our Repertory Grid design, where participants could be asked to compare triads of scenarios (e.g., "Which two of these are similar in terms of how likely you would be to intervene, and which one is different?"), thus revealing their underlying cognitive and emotional constructs around intervention decisions.

By operationalizing this severity-based framework, we not only enhanced the validity and ecological sensitivity of our RGT implementation but also created a methodologically sound bridge between narrative data and structured elicitation techniques.

4.10 Prerequisites

1. Explain the purpose of the interview, making it clear why both the interviewer and the interviewee are participating in the study.
2. Confirm that the interviewee understands the reason for the interview.
3. Provide a brief description of the Repertory Grid Technique (RGT) in the following terms:
 - It is a structured interview (the concept of being interviewed is familiar to everyone).
 - Rather than seeking “right answers,” the aim is to understand the participant's perspective and experiences on their terms.
 - RGT ensures high precision while allowing the interviewee the freedom to share as much or as little data as they feel comfortable with, which helps to build trust.
 - The interviewer will ask the participant to make a series of systematic comparisons trial by trial, which will help guide the process and get the conversation started.
4. Explain the conditions of confidentiality and, where applicable, anonymity, detailing how both will be preserved throughout the study.
5. Confirm that the interviewee understands and agrees to these conditions before proceeding.

4.11 Element Familiarization: Exploring the different eve-teasing scenarios

The study participants were selected from Thapar University in Patiala and were invited to take part in the research. The purpose of the study was clearly explained to them, and they were provided with all necessary instructions. They then signed a consent form, acknowledging their understanding of the study's objectives and the voluntary nature of their involvement.

At the beginning of each of the ten sessions, participants were introduced to a series of bystander scenarios related to eve-teasing, including whistling, making obscene gestures, stalking, brushing against, blocking one's path, groping, and catcalling. These seven scenarios were presented to each participant one at a time.

A brief (5–7 minutes) introduction was provided at the start of each session, outlining the specific scenarios included in the study and the overall goals of the research. The event organizer was readily available to answer any questions and address any concerns raised by the participants, ensuring a comfortable and informative environment throughout the sessions.

4.12 Construct Elicitation for Eve-Teasing Scenarios

After finishing the element familiarization phase, the subsequent step was the elicitation of constructs by each participant pertaining to different eve-teasing situations. Prior to posing questions to the participants, we presented them with a video-based stimulus containing real-life enactments of the situations in public places. The videos were carefully designed to ensure authenticity and maintain ethical guidelines, including the use of actors who agreed to take part in the study. The process started with the placement of the participant opposite to the interviewer, where the latter introduced the various eve-teasing experiences: whistling, obscene gestures, stalking, brushing, blocking one's way, groping, and catcalling. These situations were to be used as the attributes to compare with the repertory grid technique (RGT).

The procedure followed a 10-step process for each session:

1. Element Presentation: Seven scenarios of eve-teasing were given to the participant: whistling, obscene gestures, stalking, brushing against, blocking path, groping, and catcalling. These were typed along the diagonals at the top of the grid sheet so that they could be easily read.
2. Explanation of Process: The interviewer told the participant that the purpose was to learn how they viewed these various scenarios with regard to their severity and emotional impact. The participant was told that they would be asked to compare these scenarios in a systematic way.
3. Triading: The interviewer picked three eve-teasing situations randomly and asked the subject, "Which two of these situations are alike in some way, and how do they differ from the third?" This "triading" was conducted for every set of situations. For example, a set might consist of whistling, obscene gestures, and catcalling.
4. Rationale for Comparison: The respondent was asked to explain why two conditions appeared similar and how the third was different. For instance, "What do catcalling and whistling have in common, and how is groping different?" The interviewer recorded the contrasts outlined by the participant, making sure to capture a genuinely bipolar expression, which constituted the respondent's construct.
5. Refining Constructs: The interviewer clarified the construct by asking the participant to elaborate on their reasoning at length, employing the "pyramiding technique" and "ladder down" technique. This enabled the interviewer to ask probing questions on the reasoning of the participant, thereby ensuring that a rich understanding of his/her views on the eve-teasing situations was gained.

6. Construct Clarification: The interviewer verified the participant's constructs for accuracy, clarifying any unclear statements and making sure the constructs were adequate with respect to the participant's subjective experience and knowledge.
7. Construct Rating: After identifying a construct, the participant was assisted by the interviewer in converting it into a rating scale. For example, if the construct referred to severity, whistling may be rated as 2 out of a scale of 1, where 1 was the least severe situation and 5 was the most severe.
8. Element Rating: The subject was instructed to score each of the three situations on the scale. For instance, in the collection of obscene gestures, whistling, and catcalling, they would place a number between 1 and 5 to represent how bad each situation appeared to them.
9. Ranking Remaining Scenarios: Following the rating of the three chosen scenarios, the participant was asked to rank the remaining scenarios on the same scale. This guaranteed that all scenarios were being assessed in terms of the construct.
10. Repeat Process: The same process was repeated for a period of ten trials, with a new set of three eve-teasing situations being presented each time. In every trial, the subject would then give a new construct based on their comparison between the scenarios. The intention was to create 8 to 12 distinct constructs, offering a rich understanding of how various forms of eve-teasing were being viewed across subjects.

By comparing systematically across the scenarios and eliciting constructs, this method enabled a sophisticated understanding of the ways in which young women see the severity of different eve-teasing

acts, and it laid the foundation for additional exploration of bystander intervention and its association with perceived severity.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

5.1 Findings: Male Participant

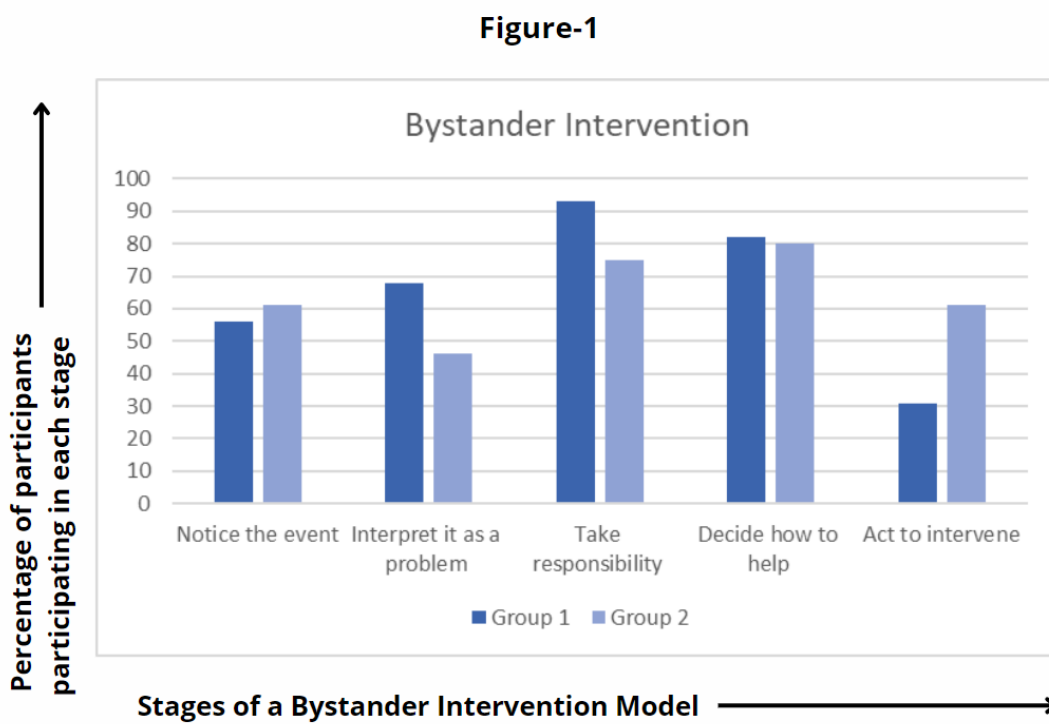


Figure 5.1: Stages of Bystander Intervention Model- Males

The findings shown in Figure 5.1 present a subtle and detailed description of the distribution of codes for various stages of bystander intervention, providing important insights into the heterogeneity of individual responses to occurrences of eve-teasing. By measuring the percentage of codes at each stage, from observing the event to taking tangible steps, the

analysis reflects the complex nature of the bystander process

and underscores the way multiple cognitive, emotional, and social considerations intersect at each stage.

One especially interesting result is the differing patterns seen between the two cohorts of males, Group 1 (younger males) and Group 2 (older males). Group 1 testees show a relatively greater sense of awareness in regard to problematic situations, in addition to a higher level of desire to take responsibility for intervention. This trend would imply that younger men will be more likely to take a more active and socially responsive approach, demonstrating an internalized moral responsibility and preparedness to act when faced with harassment. In contrast, Group 2 members have a lower self-stated level of willingness to take responsibility but paradoxically have a higher incidence of actual intervention behaviors. This disconnect between action and intention reveals that although older men might be more cautious or thoughtful in taking responsibility, other variables like confidence, experience, or social perceptions might help them choose to intervene more forcefully. This is a dynamic that highlights the intricate dance between personal attitudes, situational perception, and social norms that actually guides bystander behaviour.

Furthermore, both groups exhibit comparable patterns at the start of intervention, most notably in attending to the event and considering potential means of assisting. This similarity indicates that the early cognitive appraisal processes involved in bystander interventions as perceiving a situation to be problematic and considering how to assist are comparatively consistent across age groups. However, the divergence observed in later stages, especially regarding the assumption of responsibility and the actual taking of action, highlights the influence of developmental, social, and psychological factors that modulate whether intention translates into behavior. These findings point to the importance of targeted

strategies that address specific barriers at different intervention stages, tailored to the unique motivational and contextual realities of each demographic group.

Table 2: Differences in Bystander Intervention Behaviours Between Younger and Older Males

Question	Younger Males (18–25 years old)	Older Males (35–45 years old)
Have you ever witnessed an incident of eve-teasing? What went through your mind?	<i>"Yeah, a few times. Honestly, my first thought was, 'Is this really my place to step in?' I wanted to do something, but I kept looking around to see if someone else would act first." (Age 21)</i>	<i>"Yes, a couple of times. When you've lived long enough, you realize that waiting for someone else to act doesn't work. If I see something wrong, I step in." (Age 40)</i>
What factors influence your decision to intervene?	<i>"It depends on who else is around. If my friends are with me, I feel more confident. But if I'm alone, I get nervous like, what if the guy gets aggressive?" (Age 19)</i>	<i>"I always consider the situation how many people are involved, whether I can handle it alone, or if I should call for help first. Experience teaches you to think before jumping in." (Age 38)</i>
Have you ever hesitated to intervene? Why?	<i>"Yeah, I was with a group once, and we saw a guy harassing a girl on the metro. We all noticed it, but no one really did anything at first. I guess we assumed someone else would step in." (Age 23)</i>	<i>"Life experience. I know how to handle conflict better now. When I was younger, I worried about what people would think. Now, I focus on what's right." (Age 42)</i>
Do you think social norms influence how younger men respond in such situations?	<i>"For sure. If you step in and your friends think you're overreacting, it makes you second-guess yourself. But if they support you, it's easier to take action." (Age 22)</i>	<i>"Absolutely. At my age, I feel a responsibility to set an example. If I don't act, I can't expect younger men to either." (Age 44)</i>
What would make you more likely to intervene in the future?	<i>"Maybe if I had a clear idea of what to do. Like, should I confront the guy or call security? Sometimes I just don't know the best way to handle it." (Age 20)</i>	<i>"Trust your instincts, but also be smart about it. If you're unsure, ask for help call someone, alert security. Doing something is always better than doing nothing." (Age 37)</i>

RQ 1: How do intervention behaviours differ between younger and older male bystanders, and what role does the Bystander Intervention Model play in explaining these differences?

The Bystander Intervention Model, which outlines the stages of noticing an event, identifying it as intervention-appropriate, assuming responsibility, deciding how to help, and taking action (Latané & Darley, 1968). Both groups exhibit similar patterns in the initial cognitive processes such as event recognition and deliberation on intervention strategies. However, the divergence in later stages,

particularly in assuming responsibility and taking action, highlights the influence of age-related factors such as risk assessment, social norms, and perceived self-efficacy. This is evident in the participant narratives presented in Table 2, where younger participants often express internal conflict and hesitation, while older participants emphasize measured judgment and confidence.

Young bystanders are likely to be indecisive based on uncertainty, social consequences, anxiety, or perceived threat, even though they had originally planned to intervene. Research has established that young people are more controlled by peer approval and social support, which tends to discourage them from intervening in unclear cases (Baumert et al., 2013; Chekroun & Brauer, 2002). Further, diffusion of responsibility will be more prominent in younger populations, who believe that someone else will act (Fischer et al., 2011). Older bystanders, however, even though they are less inclined to show an immediate sense of responsibility, would probably be more assured of their effectiveness in acting because they have greater life experience and social autonomy (Piliavin & Charng, 1990). Some of the statements in Table 1 are representative of this reluctance, with the younger participants mentioning fear of being judged or retaliated against. Furthermore, responsibility diffusion can be more prominent in younger groups because they believe someone else will respond (Fischer et al., 2011).

In addition, it has been found through studies that older adults might consider the personal costs and dangers of intervening differently. Their reaction could be more deliberative, based on previous experiences of successful or unsuccessful interventions in similar circumstances (Greitemeyer & Mugge, 2015). As seen in Table 2, older participants tend to cite previous experience and the need for doing "what's right," indicating a more pragmatic style of intervention. In addition, social norms regarding masculinity and accountability might influence older men's propensity to act in public disputes (Levine et al., 2002).

By using Latané and Darley's (1968) theory insights and participant testimonies in Table 2, we may conclude that age differences in responsibility taking and action taking play an important role in shaping intervention behaviours in eve-teasing situations. These observations underscore the need for age-based bystander training programs that cover the unique psychological and social impediments confronting younger and older individuals in deciding to intervene.

To interpret these findings, insights from previous research by Latané and Darley (1968) are invoked. Their seminal work on bystander intervention theory posits that individuals may face internal and external barriers in assuming responsibility or deciding how to help when confronted with problematic situations. This aligns with the observed differences in intervention rates between Group 1 and Group 2 participants, suggesting that varying levels of perceived responsibility and efficacy may influence the likelihood of intervention.

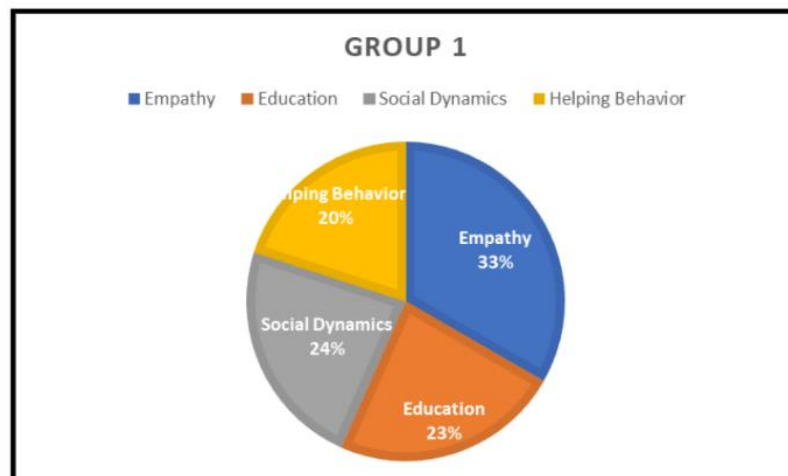


Figure- 5.2 Motivators for Bystander Intervention Among Younger Male Participants

RQ2: What are the Primary Motivations for Male Bystanders to intervene in Incidents of Eve-Teasing, and how do these motivations vary across age groups?

Young and older male bystanders express different motivations in intervening during cases of eve-teasing. These motivations are not only governed by individual values and personal experience but also by wider psychological and sociocultural contexts. Examination of participants' responses indicated that age significantly influenced these motivations and produced differences in emotional reasoning, sense of responsibility, and risk perception.

Group 1, made up of younger male participants, in Figure 5.2 shows an interesting trend towards intervention, based chiefly on empathy. This result implies that members of this age group cohort are powered predominantly by a greater sensitivity to other people's emotional pain and an honest intent to reduce suffering. Such a tendency aligns with developmental psychology frameworks, which propose that emerging adulthood is marked by increased emotional awareness, identity exploration, and a growing orientation toward social responsibility (Arnett, 2000). Younger individuals often demonstrate a heightened receptiveness to social cues and injustices, which may explain their emotional engagement in bystander situations.

From the study of Batson (2011), the empathy-based motivation finds support from the empathy–altruism hypothesis, which asserts that empathic concern for another individual in distress elicits an altruistic motivation to assist. According to Batson, these kinds of responses are other-focused, as opposed to egoistic reactions to avoid personal discomfort. In this situation, the younger men in Group 1 seem to do what they do not because of duty or fear of social disapproval, but because of an internalized regard for the welfare of the victim.

In addition, theory for prosocial development states that young adulthood and adolescence are key times for developing moral identity and prosocial values (Eisenberg et al., 2006). Empathy expression in bystander choices may thus be understood within a larger context of psychosocial development, where young people start to internalize ethical thinking and social responsibility. The tendency to step in during cases of eve teasing, therefore, might be an integration of both empathic emotional activation and a nascent sense of moral responsibility.

This affect-motivational model emphasizes the significance of affective education and interventions designed to build empathy among young adults. It implies that developing empathic consciousness in these early adult years could markedly increase the chances of initiative-taking bystander behavior, particularly in the context of gender-based harassment or social injustice.

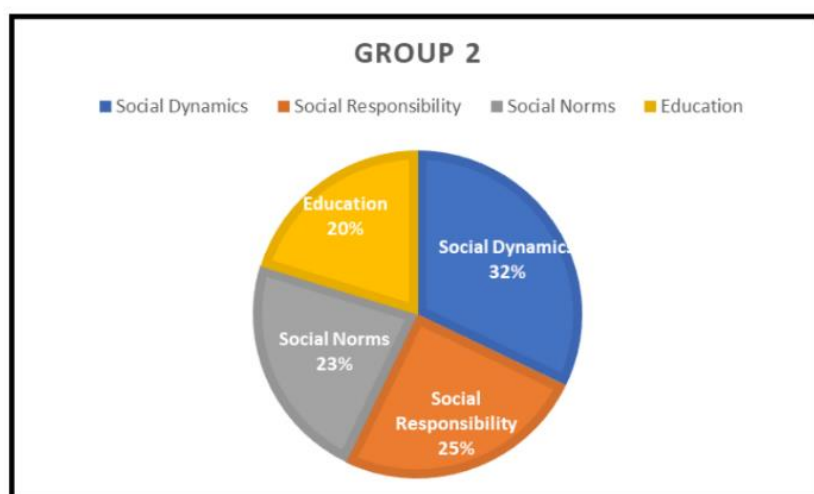


Figure 5.3 Motivators for Bystander Intervention Among Older Male Participants

On the other hand, Group 2, represented in Figure 5.3, consisting of older male respondents, shows a clear pattern of motivation, one which is significantly influenced by social context and normative

considerations. In contrast to their younger peers, these respondents seem more responsive to social expectations, cultural narratives, and maintaining order within the community, more often than not providing social duty or moral obligation as the main reason for intervention in cases of eve-teasing. This change implies that their motivation is less based on emotional connection and more determined by external social roles and expectations associated with them.

This finding is in agreement with Burn, Deutsch, and Fox (2018), where they highlight the influence of traditional masculine norms as well as perceived social support in moulding men's reactions to bystander issues. According to their study, men's intentions to intervene in acts of violence or harassment correlate with the level of conformity to societal-endorsed norms of masculinity, such as protecting, leading, and being responsible. In this context, the older men in Group 2 would not be driven solely by empathy, but perhaps more so by a culturally internalized sense of masculine obligation the belief that they are responsible for maintaining communal security and attending to violations of social order.

This is supplemented by role theory, where it is argued that behaviour is regularly controlled by internalized social roles and the need to comply with expectations related to those roles (Biddle, 1986). For aging men who might have spent more time holding roles as fathers, authority figures, or leaders in the community, intervention might be a way of reaffirming their social identity and staying in line with civic values or protective masculinity. This trend may also be attributed to norm activation theory (Schwartz, 1977), which supposes that a norm's perceived relevance and personal responsibility awareness affect a person's behaviour towards a prosocial action.

Therefore, Group 2's motivation to intervene seems to be based on a socially learned sense of obligation, more than direct emotional involvement. These results illustrate the complexity of motivations underlying bystander intervention and the need to carefully design awareness programs to target various age-based and identity-based motivational schemes. Whereas younger men might be reached by empathy-based messages, older men are potentially more responsive to calls to community values, social leadership, and normative pressures.

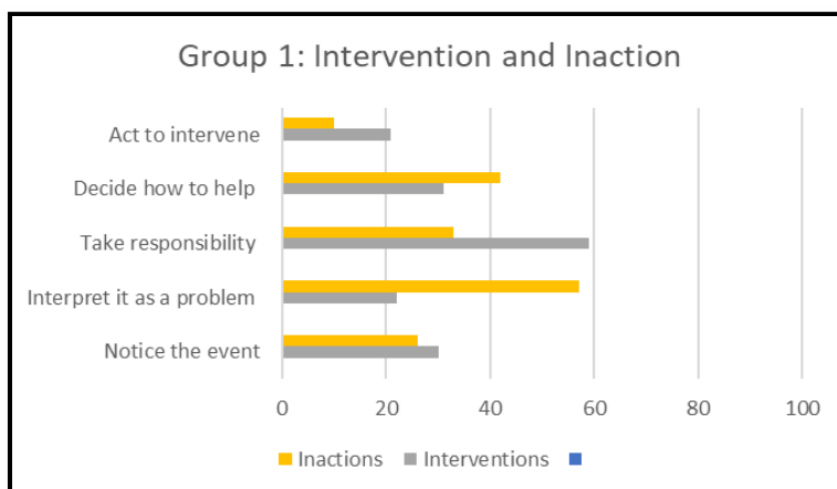


Figure - 5.4 Patterns of Bystander Action and Inaction Among Younger Male Participants

The findings from Figure 5.4 indicate that Group 1, comprising younger male participants, exhibited higher levels of bystander inaction, particularly during the early stages of intervention, such as interpreting an event as problematic and deciding how to assist. This trend indicates that younger males might have cognitive and affective obstacles to assessing the gravity of a situation and deciding how to respond effectively. These difficulties may be the product of limited life experience, immature conflict resolution ability, or ambiguity in high-stress social situations. The impediment to advancing from

awareness to action underscores the necessity for specialized educational interventions to enhance situational awareness and decision-making self-efficacy in this age group.

This trend is also reinforced by the contribution of Jackson, Bussey, and Myers (2021), who posit that both adolescents and younger people feel more pressure to conform to gender norms, which becomes a determining factor in their behaviours in social places. In the case of younger males, internalized masculine ideals such as emotional restraint, avoidance of confrontation, or fear of appearing weak may inhibit their willingness to intervene. As self-regulation is still developing during adolescence, these individuals may lack the internal resources to navigate complex social expectations, leading to hesitation or withdrawal in moments that call for action.

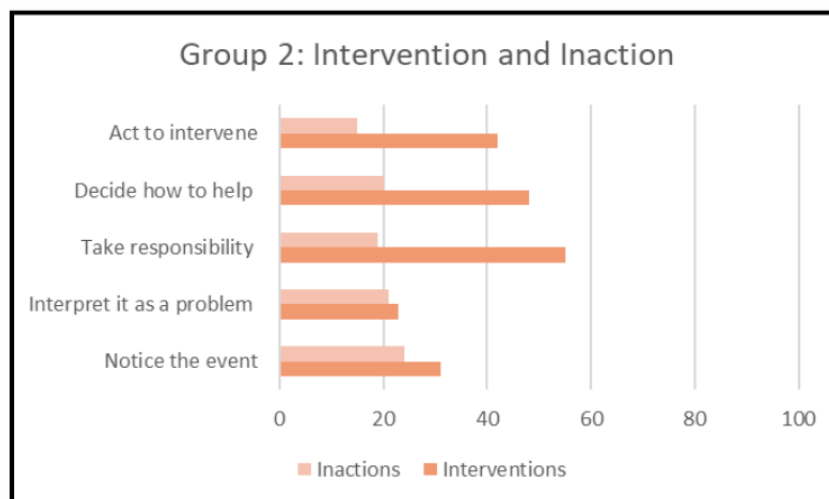


Figure - 5.5 Patterns of Bystander Action and Inaction Among Older Male Participants

In contrast, Figure 5.5 reveals that Group 2, consisting of older male participants, demonstrated lower rates of bystander inaction, particularly in interpreting events as problematic and deciding how to respond. This group appeared to engage more consistently across the stages of intervention, indicating

a greater readiness to act when witnessing instances of eve-teasing. Their responses suggest stronger situational judgment and a clearer sense of how to assist effectively. This may be attributed to greater life experience, social maturity, and more defined internalized roles particularly those emphasizing responsibility and protection.

Additionally, as suggested by Jackson et al. (2021), older males tend to experience increased self-regulatory capacity, allowing them to better navigate the tension between social norms and personal values. Their actions might be influenced by more secure identity formation and increased confidence in their roles within society. In most situations, older men might view intervention not only as a possibility, but as a social responsibility attached to gendered expectations of protection or authority. Through this, their lower rates of inaction might be a result not just of confidence and clarity, but of a felt moral responsibility to maintain community norms.

The results from Figures 5.4 and 5.5 indicate differing patterns of inaction among bystanders in Group 1 (younger men) and Group 2 (older men). Group 1 is found to have higher rates of inaction, specifically in the early parts of intervention, like understanding events as problematic and making a decision on how to help, compared to their older equivalents. This incongruity implies that younger men might be faced with certain situational and cognitive difficulties which interfere with their capacity to identify dangerous situations and develop effective intervention strategies, thus leading to high levels of non-intervention.

The struggles evidenced in Group 1 highlight the need for specially designed intervention programs that specifically target the impediments of younger males. Improving their skill at understanding ambiguous situations and enhancing their self-assurance when responding appropriately can have a

substantial impact on their tendency to intervene in such key moments. Educating this population through training in empathy, scenario-based training, and educational campaigns could close the gap between knowing and doing, promoting more active bystander intervention.

These results can be placed in the context of gender norms and self-regulation, as described by Jackson, Bussey, and Myers (2021). Their analysis predicts that people become increasingly under pressure to conform to traditional gender roles throughout their lifespan, with the self-regulatory abilities being built up through gradual development throughout childhood and adolescence. Using this lens, it is possible that the older men in Group 2 have a stronger internalized sense of duty to uphold expectations of masculinity, such as the expectation of becoming guardians in cases of harassment or violence. The combination of this normative pressure along with more mature self-regulation could be why there was more intervention found in Group 2.

The research calls attention to the need for understanding how individual developmental variables like age, internalization of gender role, and self-regulation ability influence bystander behavior. Identifying the specific challenges that various demographic groups face allows for the creation of specific strategies for decreasing paralysis and fostering a culture of active and responsible bystander-ism.

5.2 Findings: Female Participant

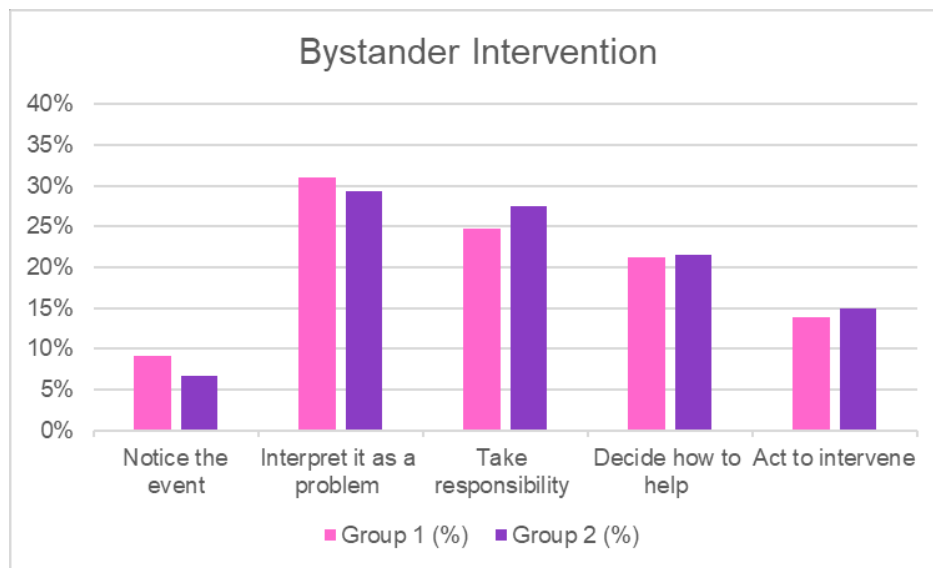


Figure 5.6: Stages of Bystander Intervention Model- Females

RQ 3: How do intervention behaviours vary between younger and older female bystanders, and how does the Bystander Intervention Model account for these differences?

The intervention behaviours of young and old female bystanders vary significantly in their nature, frequency, and underlying explanation. Such differences can be meaningfully explained using the Bystander Intervention Model, which offers a step-by-step psychological formulation of how people perceive, judge, and intervene in situations calling for intervention. The findings shown in Figure 5.6 offer a close analysis of how female respondents in Group 1 (younger females) and Group 2 (older females) go through the five stages of the Bystander Intervention Model when reacting to eve-teasing situations. The frequency of responses at these stages provides worthwhile information regarding differences between the two groups in cognitive processing and intervention action.

A central note is that younger female onlookers have a greater propensity to register the incident and identify it as problematic, indicating increased sensitivity to social cues and heightened knowledge of possible harm. Such attention is likely influenced by changing social narratives around gender-based harassment and individual experiences. Yet, while recognizing early on, younger women are less inclined to take responsibility and act directly. Obstacles like fear of being retaliated against, anxiety for their own safety, and doubt about the most effective intervention strategies commonly discourage them from advancing to active participation (Banyard, 2015; Powell, 2011).

In contrast, older female participants, while sometimes slower to label incidents as problematic, demonstrate a higher propensity to assume responsibility and make concrete decisions about how to intervene. This greater willingness to act may stem from increased life experience, a stronger sense of social responsibility, and enhanced confidence in managing challenging situations (Burn, 2009). Thus, older women appear more decisive once they acknowledge the need to intervene, even if their initial event recognition is less immediate.

The Bystander Intervention Model (Latané & Darley, 1968) effectively explains these differences through its sequential stages: noticing the event, interpreting it as an emergency, assuming responsibility, deciding how to help, and taking action. Both younger and older female bystanders process the early stages similarly, particularly in noticing and deliberating on possible responses. However, divergence emerges at the later stages of assuming responsibility and taking action, where older females are more likely to intervene (Bennett et al., 2014).

Contrary to male bystanders whose intervention rates are largely affected by age female participants show less variation based on age. This indicates that age is not a strong determinant in female

intervention behaviour. Rather, their responses are influenced more by personal feelings of safety, past experience with harassment, and socialization (Casey & Ohler, 2012; Hamby et al., 2016). Tackling these barriers by providing focused education and empowerment programs could be central to increasing intervention rates among younger women.

Other research identifies clear intervention style differences between the groups. Younger women are more likely to exhibit impulsive and spontaneous responses, including confronting harassers directly (30% compared to 25%) or recording episodes secretly (25% compared to 17%). Such behaviors are indicative of increased emotional arousal and high personal investment in fighting harassment (Batson, 2011). Even so, such strategies may also put them at greater risk, which highlights the importance of interventions that support balanced reactions focusing on safety (Eisenberg et al., 2006).

In contrast, older women tend to use more calculated and strategic responses, for example, warning shopkeepers or security staff (33% compared to 25%) and helping victims to evacuate the area safely (33% compared to 25%). Such reactions evidence a risk-conscious approach that is probably influenced by the cumulative life experience and past experience of harassment (Feeney & Hamilton, 1999). Instead of direct confrontation, they concentrate on limiting harm and guaranteeing victim protection in line with research that finds lower impulsivity is associated with cautious risk assessment prior to intervention (Piliavin et al., 1981).

In addition, women who have themselves been subjected to harassment tend to display multifaceted intervention patterns, ranging from greater proactivity to increased vigilance because of fear of retaliation (Banyard et al., 2005). Such variability highlights the need to create bystander training

programs that will empower women with both immediate intervention skills and sound risk management techniques (Banyard, 2011).

These results illuminate the subtle manner in which younger and older women bystanders view, make sense of, and react to eve-teasing events. While younger women are more likely to exhibit high levels of situational awareness, older women are typically more assertive and risk-sensitive in their interventions. The Bystander Intervention Model (Latané & Darley, 1968) accurately summarizes these dynamics by referencing key decision nodes where training and support can improve bystander effectiveness by age group.

In addition, the lack of significant age differences in intervention rates between female respondents indicates that perceived barriers, including fear, social norms, and concerns regarding personal safety, as well as social conditioning, are more likely to influence intervention than age. These complicated interactions must be understood in order to establish targeted interventions that encourage both increased awareness and active participation in stopping eve-teasing and like behavior.

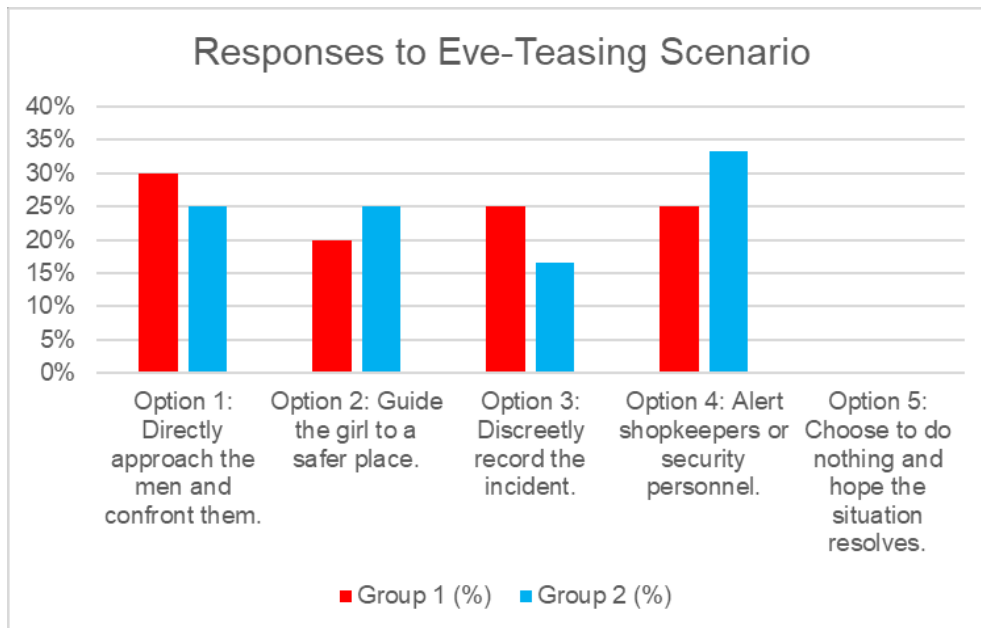


Figure 5.7: Female Responses to Eve-Teasing Scenarios

RQ 4: How much does the severity of an eve-teasing situation determine the possibility of intervention by female bystanders, and how do their experiences of harassment in the past shape their responses?

To see how female participants would react if they were eve-teased, we exhibited a short video showing different types of eve-teasing to them in the first instance. The reason behind the video was to create an emotional response and make the participants think about how they would react in a similar situation in real life.

After the video, participants were given a structured scenario, for which they had to select one of five potential intervention strategies and explain their rationale.

Scenario:

You're in a crowded marketplace on a weekend afternoon, browsing through the stalls. Nearby, a young girl, likely in her late teens, attempts to walk past a group of men gathered near a food stall.

One of the men leans in and says, "*Kahan jaa rahi ho, sweetheart? Thodi der baat toh karo humse.*"

The girl ignores him and tries to move forward, but another man blocks her path, saying, "*Itni rude mat bano, hum toh bas friendly ho rahe hain.*" The rest of the group laughs, enjoying her discomfort.

She looks around, clearly distressed, searching for an escape route, but the men's crowding behavior restricts her movement. Passersby notice the situation, yet no one has intervened so far.

As a bystander, what do you do?

1. **Direct Confrontation:** You firmly address the harassers, telling them to stop. You raise your voice, hoping to draw attention and encourage others to intervene.
2. **Assist the Girl Directly:** You approach the girl and ask if she needs help, offering to walk her to a safer place. You create a distraction by engaging her in conversation and guiding her away.
3. **Record the Incident:** You discreetly take out your phone to record or photograph the incident, intending to report it to the authorities.
4. **Seek External Help:** You alert a nearby shopkeeper or security personnel, explaining the situation and requesting their intervention.
5. **Do Nothing:** You avoid involvement, fearing that stepping in may escalate the situation. Instead, you hope the men lose interest and leave.

Findings:

The data indicates distinct response patterns between Group 1 and Group 2 in their approach to intervention.

- Group 1 characterized by higher impulsivity and less experience is more likely to take immediate, direct action, including:
 - Confronting the harassers directly (30% vs. 25%).
 - Recording the incident discreetly (25% vs. 17%).

- Group 2, which exhibits greater maturity and caution, is more inclined toward strategic interventions, such as:
 - Alerting shopkeepers/security personnel (33% vs. 25%).
 - Helping the girl escape the situation safely (33% vs. 25%).

Unlike male participants significant differences in intervention rates between younger and older groups were evident. Female participants across both age groups display more consistent response patterns. This suggests that factors such as perceived personal safety, social conditioning, and prior experiences with harassment exert a stronger influence on female bystander behavior than chronological age.

These findings align with the study by Feeney and Hamilton (1999) on Personality Predictors of Helping in Emergencies, which posits that individuals with higher impulsivity are prone to immediate, direct interventions, while those with lower impulsivity engage in more deliberate risk assessments, favoring less confrontational yet effective strategies. The data thus reveal a shared commitment to intervention among females, with neither group opting for inaction. This underscores the importance of bystander intervention training programs that accommodate both spontaneous, immediate responses and calculated, strategic actions, ensuring interventions are both effective and safe.

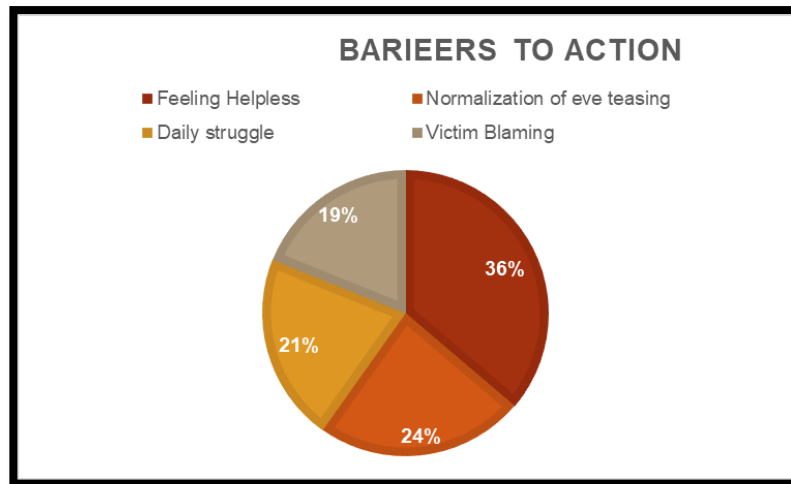


Figure 5.8: Barriers to Action Among Female Bystanders

In Figure 5.8, the most significant barrier to intervention identified among female participants is a pervasive feeling of helplessness, reported by 36% of respondents. Many females perceive themselves as powerless in the face of eve-teasing, especially when confronted with multiple harassers or when fearful of escalation. This feeling of powerlessness is usually augmented by other bystanders' lack of assistance, which intensifies hesitation and inactivity. This has been the case with the widely documented psychological phenomenon of diffusion of responsibility, whereby the fact that there are many witnesses makes people think someone else will act, thus leading to passive response.

The other strong obstacle, mentioned by 24% of the sample, is the normalisation of eve-teasing in public places. A lot of women have accepted that this harassment is an unavoidable, nearly normal, part of everyday life. This desensitisation reduces the sense of urgency or need to act, creating a societal context where harassment can be socially accepted. As such, when eve-teasing is perceived as

the norm as opposed to unacceptable, witnesses are less inclined to intervene or disrupt such acts, maintaining a vicious cycle of silence and erasure of the phenomenon.

The daily struggle of many women that has been reported by 21% is also a key factor in restricting intervention. The mental and emotional stress associated with handling multiple duties, such as work, school, home, and social obligations, tends to leave one exhausted and less inclined to venture into further stress-provoking situations like dealing with harassment. The psychological strain of playing the role in high-stress or potentially dangerous situations may become too overwhelming, and thus, many tend to choose personal well-being over intervention.

Finally, victim blaming, noted by 19% of respondents, serves as a significant deterrent to action.

Societal attitudes that attribute harassment to the victim's clothing, behavior, or mere presence in certain spaces create an environment where bystanders hesitate to intervene out of fear of social backlash or being associated with the victim. This lack of solidarity not only discourages supportive behavior but also reinforces harmful stereotypes and stigmatization of victims, thereby undermining collective efforts to address eve-teasing effectively.

Together, these barriers illustrate the complex interplay of psychological, social, and cultural factors that inhibit female bystanders from intervening in eve-teasing incidents. Addressing these challenges requires multifaceted interventions that build empowerment, shift social norms, and foster supportive community responses.

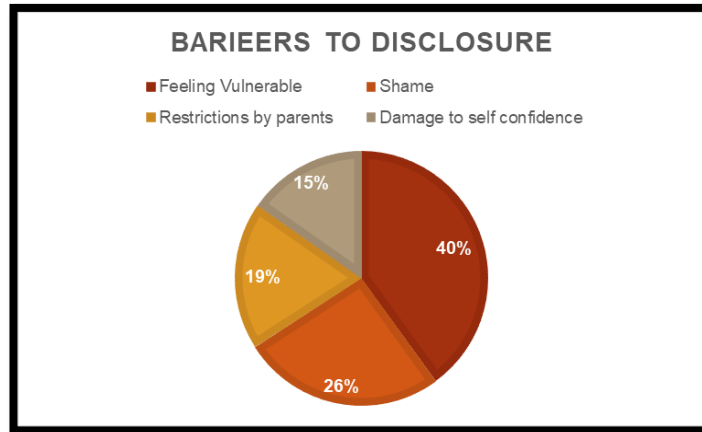


Figure 5.9: Barriers to Disclosure Among Female Bystanders

The most salient disincentive to reporting eve-teasing experiences among female respondents, as shown in Figure 5.9, is the general sense of vulnerability felt by 40%. Numerous women are afraid of retribution from their tormentors, especially in situations where police are seen to be ineffective, unsympathetic, or partisan. This gives rise to a culture of silence, since the victims are more likely to cover up their experiences because they feel that keeping quiet is safer than continuing to be hurt by talking. The fear of adverse outcomes such as escalation of harassment, social exclusion, or even physical attacks discourages reporting and further isolates survivors.

Shame, as endorsed by 26% of respondents, is another strong obstacle to reporting. Internalized stigma causes victims to attribute guilt to themselves, wondering if their behavior, looks, or presence was the precipitant of the harassment. Such self-blame is deeply rooted in cultural discourse that relocates responsibility to women, reinforcing damaging stereotypes and cycles of silence. Shame's psychological weight not only prevents disclosure but also heightens long-term emotional pain, allowing helplessness and lowered self-esteem to grow.

For young women, parental limits are a major hindrance, mentioned by 19%. Most fear that disclosure of harassment experience will lead to greater control by parents and restriction on their own freedoms like not being allowed to go out alone or dress as they please rather than hold the perpetrators accountable. Such apprehension of loss of autonomy generally outweighs the expected advantage of coming out, deterring young women from reporting and leaving matters unresolved.

Moreover, destruction of self-esteem, indicated by 15%, testifies to the deep emotional cost repeatedly incurred by eve-teasing. Survivors eventually develop a sense of resignation and erosion of self-esteem over time, questioning whether coming forward will bring any sustainable change. Emotional draining perpetuates this silence, as victims retreat within themselves further isolating their experiences and hindering healing.

All these barriers reflect the complex psychological, social, and cultural impediments to making harassment known that numerous women face. Overcoming these challenges involves holistic support systems in the form of accessible and credible reporting routes, community-based education to destigmatize harassment, and involving families to create supportive environments, particularly for younger women who are embroiled in parental control arrangements.

Table 2: Interview Excerpts Illustrating Bystander and Victim Responses Among Younger and Older Females

Question	Younger Females (18–25 years old)	Older Females (35–45 years old)
Have you experienced eve-teasing?	"Many times. On buses, on streets. I've stopped wearing certain clothes because I feel eyes on me constantly." (Age 21)	"Yes, repeatedly when I was younger. Now, it's less frequent but still happens. Men just stare longer instead of saying anything." (Age 42)
How do you navigate such situations?	"I avoid eye contact, plug in earphones even without music just to feel safe." (Age 19)	"I act assertive. I hold my bag tightly, look straight ahead, and sometimes speak up if it crosses a line." (Age 37)
What goes through your mind when witnessing someone else being harassed?	"I want to help, but I freeze. What if he turns on me too?" (Age 22)	"I assess the situation. If I can support the girl by standing next to her or calling someone do it." (Age 39)
Do you fear retaliation for intervening?	"Yes, I worry he might follow me or find me on social media." (Age 20)	"Not as much now. I'm cautious, but I know how to handle confrontation better than before." (Age 41)
What risks do you consider before intervening?	"If I'm alone, I won't. I always think, what if he gets violent?" (Age 23)	"Risk matters, of course. But silence feels worse sometimes. I'd rather say something and regret it than regret staying silent." (Age 38)

RQ5: What emotional and psychological barriers, such as helplessness, vulnerability, or shame, affect women's willingness to intervene in eve-teasing incidents?

As shown in Figure 5.9 and supported by qualitative data in Table 2, several emotional and psychological barriers hinder women's ability or willingness to intervene during incidents of eve-teasing.

The most commonly reported barrier was helplessness, with 46% of participants indicating that they felt frozen or incapable of acting in the moment. One younger participant (age 22) captured this experience succinctly: *"I want to help, but I freeze. What if he turns on me too?"* This emotional paralysis illustrates how fear and uncertainty can override the intent to help, especially in situations perceived as dangerous or unpredictable.

Normalization of eve-teasing emerged as another significant barrier, with 30% of women stating that such behavior is often treated as a routine part of public life. This was echoed by a 21-year-old who shared, *“Many times. On buses, on streets. I’ve stopped wearing certain clothes because I feel eyes on me constantly.”* Such internalized acceptance of harassment discourages resistance and minimizes the perceived need for intervention.

Daily stress and personal burdens were also frequently mentioned, with 27% of participants expressing difficulty focusing on others’ distress due to their own emotional load. An older participant (age 39) stated, *“I already juggle so much kids, work, home. In the moment, I feel like I can’t add another thing to my plate, even if it’s the right thing.”* This reflects how competing demands and emotional fatigue can limit one’s psychological capacity to intervene.

Victim-blaming attitudes were cited by 24% of women, further inhibiting action. A participant (age 25) noted, *“People look at you like you’re making a big deal out of nothing. Once, someone asked if the girl brought it upon herself by the way she was dressed.”* These attitudes create a hostile environment for intervention, as bystanders may fear social judgment or feel uncertain about the victim's credibility.

Fear of reprisal was also a common theme in the interviews, especially among younger women. One participant (20 years old) said, *“Yes. I’m afraid he may track me or trace me on social media.”* This fear is a symptom of a larger concern about personal safety that prevents public confrontation or reporting.

Furthermore, 16% of the younger group mentioned parental limits as a reason for not speaking up or acting, fearing not only punishment from the harasser but also closer monitoring or less freedom from their families. One of the participants (23 years old) said, *“If I’m by myself, I won’t. I always think, what if he gets violent?”*

Finally, 13% of participants spoke about the effect of harassment on their self-esteem. One interviewee (20) confessed, "I kept thinking, what if it was me next time? I feel so weak after the last time I was followed home." This is a picture of how being repeatedly exposed to harassment can chip away at agency and reinforce the cycle of silence and doubt.

The results from Table 2 show that women's intervention decisions are influenced not only by situational awareness but by a variety of psychological and affective factors foremost among them helplessness, fear of backlash, normalization of the harassment, victim-blaming, and loss of self-confidence. These obstacles need to be overcome through systemic interventions involving psychosocial support, public education, and structural changes to provide greater safety for public spaces and to create a culture of active, empowered bystanders.

5.3 ANALYSIS OF REPERTORY GRID DATA

RQ 6: How do male bystanders construct and differentiate various forms of eve-teasing, and in what ways do these personal constructs elicited through the Repertory Grid Technique influence their likelihood of intervention?

To explore this question, the study employed the Repertory Grid Technique (RGT), a qualitative method rooted in personal construct theory. RGT is an open-ended approach that allows for the generation of individualized grid tables, capturing how participants personally perceive and evaluate different situations. While each participant's table is unique, the method used in this study followed a common structure: each grid contained a fixed number of elements (7), bipolar constructs (e.g., harmless–threatening), and a shared rating scale from 1 to 5. These grids allowed for a structured yet personalized representation of how male bystanders differentiate various forms of eve-teasing. The

data were then analyzed interpersonally by examining the relationships between elements (types of incidents) and constructs (ways of interpreting them). This analysis helped reveal how certain interpretations such as perceiving an incident as "serious" versus "casual" influenced their reported willingness to intervene. In doing so, the study sheds light on the cognitive and emotional filters through which men assess such situations and make decisions about taking action.

5.3.1 Simple Relationship

After eliciting the grid, inspecting it through eyeball analysis, and understanding the constructs, noticeable relationships are found within it. Some elements received similar ratings across constructs, while others were interpreted differently. Perhaps some constructs have ratings that are nearly identical across all elements, indicating similar meanings. Establishing these relationships is done in 2 stages

1. Relationships between elements.
2. Relationships between constructs.

5.3.2 Simple Relationships Between Elements

Table 3: An extract from a grid interview

1	Whistling	Making observation gestures	Stalking	Brushing against	Blocking one's path	Grouping	Catcalling	5
Indirect	2	3	5	5	5	5	4	Direct
Ambiguous	4	2	4	2	5	5	4	Certain
Distance	1	2	4	5	4	5	2	Physical proximity
Intentional	1	3	2	3	2	1	1	Unintentional
Expressive	3	3	4	2	1	1	3	Poker face
Possible movement	1	2	2	3	5	5	1	Obstruction
Verbal involvement	1	3	5	5	5	5	1	Physical strength

After constructing the repertory grid and reviewing it visually, it became evident that certain harassment behaviours, particularly Whistling and Catcalling, received very similar ratings across several constructs. This suggested that the respondent perceived them in closely related ways. In contrast, other behaviors, such as Whistling and Groping, appeared to be rated quite differently.

This was first observed through eyeball analysis, but to confirm it, we proceeded by calculating the sum of differences through a series of simple steps and calculations:

1. We started by comparing the ratings of the first pair of eve-teasing scenarios on the first construct. For example, consider Column 1 (Whistling) and Column 2 (Making Obscene

Gestures). We calculated the absolute difference between the two ratings on the first construct by subtracting the smaller rating from the larger one, regardless of which behavior had the higher score.

2. This process was repeated for the second and all following constructs, summing the differences as we went down the grid. Once done, the total sum of differences for that pair was recorded.
3. This method was applied to all combinations of element pairs: for example, Whistling and Stalking, Whistling and Brushing Against, Whistling and Groping, etc. The total difference for each pair was recorded.

These differences were then compared across the grid as shown in Table. This helped identify the most similar and most dissimilar behaviors. For example, the smallest difference (6) was between Whistling and Catcalling, suggesting they are perceived as highly similar. The largest difference (23) was between Whistling and Groping, indicating they were seen as very different in nature. Similarly, Stalking and Blocking One's Path were found to be closely rated and are likely to be perceived in a similar way.

After analyzing the grids from all participants, it was observed that 6 out of 10 participants (about 60%) thought Whistling and Groping were the least similar behaviours. Furthermore, 20% of participants believed Making Obscene Gestures and Brushing Against were the least alike. About 40% of participants said Whistling and Catcalling were more similar when it came to how they experienced or evaluated them, showing that these two behaviors were seen as less severe and more verbal. Additionally, 30% of participants thought Whistling and Making Obscene Gestures were quite similar.

These findings reveal how individuals perceive different forms of eve-teasing, showing meaningful differences in how verbal, physical, direct, or indirect the behaviors are seen to be.

However, directly comparing all 10 grids with different numbers of constructs would not be valid, as the construct count varied across grids. To fix this and make the comparisons fair, we calculated the percentage similarity scores based on the sums of differences. This normalization allows for a clearer comparison of each behavior pair across different participants' grids, regardless of construct count.

To calculate this, we used the following logic:

- The largest possible difference on a single construct is the maximum rating on the scale (e.g., 5 on a 5-point scale) minus 1, that is, $(LR - 1)$.
- This maximum difference occurs as many times as there are constructs in the grid. Let C represent the number of constructs. Therefore, the maximum possible sum of differences in a grid is:

$$(LR-1) \times C$$

- To convert an actual sum of differences (SD) to a percentage:

$$\frac{SD}{(LR-1) \times C} \times 100$$

- Finally, subtract this value from 100 to get the percentage similarity score:

$$100 - \left(\frac{SD}{(LR-1) \times C} \times 100 \right)$$

This method ensures that all comparisons are fair and meaningful, giving insight into how different forms of eve-teasing are perceived relative to one another across individuals.

Table 4: An extract from a grid interview showing element % similarity scores

1	Whistling	Making observation gestures	Stalking	Brushing against	Blocking one's path	Grouping	Catcalling	5
Indirect	2	3	5	5	5	5	4	Direct
Ambiguous	4	2	4	2	5	5	4	Certain
Distance	1	2	4	5	4	5	2	Physical proximity
Intentional	1	3	2	3	2	1	1	Unintentional
Expressive	3	3	4	2	1	1	3	Poker face
Possible movement	1	2	2	3	5	5	1	Obstruction
Verbal involvement	1	3	5	5	5	5	1	Physical strength

Simple Element Analysis	Whistling	Making observation gestures	Stalking	Brushing against	Blocking one's path	Grouping	Catcalling
%Similarity score							
Whistling	-	82.92	86.23	69.29	77.54	75.69	95.48
Making observation gestures	82.92	-	95.33	93.35	87.91	84.53	85.42
Stalking	86.23	95.33	-	94.71	91.83	91.36	91.13
Brushing against	69.29	93.35	94.71	-	93.17	92.71	78.99
Blocking one's path	77.54	87.91	91.83	93.17	-	99.22	82.67
Grouping	75.69	84.53	91.36	92.71	99.22	-	81.97
Catcalling	95.48	85.42	91.13	78.99	82.67	81.97	-

The highest similarity was observed between Blocking One’s Path and Grouping (99.22%), indicating these two behaviors are perceived almost identically. Stalking also showed high similarity with most behaviors (above 91%), suggesting it is centrally perceived across different constructs.

Whistling and Catcalling had a high similarity score (95.48%), supporting their association as primarily verbal and less physically invasive forms of eve-teasing. On the other hand, Whistling and Brushing Against had the lowest similarity (69.29%), reflecting a strong distinction, likely due to differences in physical proximity and severity.

Participants differentiated between verbal/indirect acts (e.g., Whistling, Catcalling) and physical/intrusive behaviours (e.g., Grouping, Brushing Against), indicating meaningful perceptual categorization in how they experience or judge different forms of harassment.

5.3.3 Simple Relationships Between Constructs

Table 5: Simple Relationships Between Constructs

1	Whistling	Making observation gestures	Stalking	Brushing against	Blocking one's path	Grouping	Catcalling	5
Indirect	2	3	5	5	5	5	4	Direct
Ambiguous	4	2	4	2	5	5	4	Certain
Distance	1	2	4	5	4	5	2	Physical proximity
Intentional	1	3	2	3	2	1	1	Unintentional
Expressive	3	3	4	2	1	1	3	Poker face
Possible movement	1	2	2	3	5	5	1	Obstruction
Verbal involvement	1	3	5	5	5	5	1	Physical strength

To explore how constructs relate to one another, a simple method was applied to compare the ratings of each pair of constructs across all elements (eve-teasing scenarios). This involved three steps:

1. First, we calculated the absolute difference in ratings for the first element (Whistling) across the first two constructs. For example, from Table 4, the rating for Whistling under Construct 1

(Indirect–Direct) is 2, and under Construct 2 (Ambiguous–Certain) is 4, giving a difference of $|2-4| = 2$.

2. This process was repeated across all constructs for each element, summing the differences from left to right.
3. The same procedure was applied to all construct pairs (e.g., Constructs 1 and 3, 1 and 4, 2 and 3, etc.), and the total difference for each pair was recorded.

We can observe in the Table:

- Construct 1 (Indirect–Direct) has a total difference of 7 with Construct 2 (Ambiguous–Certain)
- 8 with Construct 3 (Distance–Physical proximity), and
- 8 with Construct 4 (Intentional–Unintentional).

For example, the difference between Construct 1 and 3 includes:

$$|2-1|+|3-2|+|5-4|+|5-5|+|5-4|+|5-5|+|4-2|=8|2-1| + |3-2| + |5-4| + |5-5| + |5-4| + |5-5| + |4-2| = 8|2-1|+|3-2|+|5-4|+|5-5|+|5-4|+|5-5|+|4-2|=8$$

The lowest differences (4) were observed between:

- Construct 4 (Intentional–Unintentional) and Construct 5 (Expressive–Poker face)
- Construct 5 (Expressive–Poker face) and Construct 6 (Possible Movement–Obstruction)
- Construct 6 (Possible Movement–Obstruction) and Construct 7 (Verbal Involvement–Physical Strength)

These findings suggest that the participant viewed intentionality, expressiveness, physical movement, and force as strongly related aspects of behavior, indicating a shared underlying dimension, likely focused on perceived physicality and forcefulness in the harassment experience.

In contrast, the largest differences (13–15) were found between:

- Construct 2 (Ambiguous–Certain) and Construct 6 (Possible Movement–Obstruction)
- Construct 2 and Construct 7 (Verbal Involvement–Physical Strength)

This indicates that the participant viewed certainty as a very different dimension from obstruction or force, likely distinguishing between cognitive clarity of the event and bodily intrusion or physical threat.

Table 6: An extract from a grid interview showing construct % similarity scores

1	Whistling	Making observation gestures	Stalking	Brushing against	Blocking one's path	Grouping	Catcalling	5
Indirect	2	3	5	5	5	5	4	Direct
Ambiguous	4	2	4	2	5	5	4	Certain
Distance	1	2	4	5	4	5	2	Physical proximity
Intentional	1	3	2	3	2	1	1	Unintentional
Expressive	3	3	4	2	1	1	3	Poker face
Possible movement	1	2	2	3	5	5	1	Obstruction
Verbal involvement	1	3	5	5	5	5	1	Physical strength

Similarity Score	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7
C1	1	0.25	0.917	0.174	-0.415	0.667	0.824
C2	0.25	1	0.13	-0.781	-0.369	0.423	0.08
C3	0.917	0.13	1	0.264	-0.537	0.767	0.921
C4	0.174	-0.781	0.264	1	0.07	0.078	0.445
C5	-0.415	-0.369	-0.537	0.07	1	-0.875	-0.442
C6	0.667	0.423	0.767	0.078	-0.875	1	0.681
C7	0.824	0.08	0.921	0.445	-0.442	0.681	1

The sum of differences (SD) between constructs was converted to percentage similarity scores by using the formula:

$$\text{Percentage Similarity} = 100 - \left(\frac{\text{SD}}{(\text{LR} - 1) \times E} \times 200 \right)$$

Here, LR is the largest rating (5), so LR - 1 = 4, and E is the number of elements (7 in this case). The formula allows us to standardize the scores and convert raw difference values into interpretable similarity percentages.

Looking at the resulting matrix of similarity scores between constructs (Table 7), the highest similarity is observed between Construct 3 (Distance-Physical proximity) and Construct 7 (Verbal Involvement-Physical Strength), with a score of 0.921. This indicates that reversing one of these constructs (e.g., interpreting verbal involvement as a kind of proximity-based force) makes them highly similar, with a corresponding percentage similarity of approximately 96.05%.

Another high similarity score is found between Construct 1 (Indirect-Direct) and Construct 3, with 0.917 similarity (≈95.85%). This shows that participants often rated these constructs very similarly across behaviors, and they likely tap into a shared perception of how immediate, physical, or confrontational the behavior is.

Similarly, construct 1 and Construct 7 show a strong score of 0.824 (≈91.2%), suggesting that the idea of directness and physical strength are closely associated in the participants' construct systems.

On the other hand, the lowest similarity in fact, a negative relationship is observed between Construct 5 (Expressive-Poker Face) and Construct 6 (Possible Movement-Obstruction), with a score of -0.875.

This translates to a negative percentage similarity score, roughly -109.37%, indicating very strong

dissimilarity. This implies that expressive behaviors (e.g., facial cues) are viewed as fundamentally different from physically blocking or obstructive behaviors.

Other construct pairs with low or negative similarity include:

- Construct 2 (Ambiguous–Certain) and Construct 4 (Intentional–Unintentional), similarity score -0.781
- Construct 3 and Construct 5, score -0.537
- Construct 1 and Construct 5, score -0.415

These negative scores suggest that cognitive constructs (like ambiguity and intention) are perceived as fundamentally separate from constructs related to physicality, space, and strength.

Thus, two major clusters of meaning emerge:

- One centered around physical feature (Constructs 1, 3, 6, 7), such as proximity, directness, movement, and strength
- Another around interpretive or psychological features (Constructs 2, 4, 5), such as ambiguity, intention, and expression

This pattern highlights how participants differentiate between physical vs. mental dimensions of harassment, supporting previous findings from grid and cluster analysis. The conversion to percentage similarity makes these relationships easier to compare and interpret across constructs and participants.

5.2.4 Cluster Analysis

Cluster analysis provides a quick visual overview of the relationships within a repertory grid. It helps identify which elements (such as behaviours or scenarios) and constructs (ways of interpreting them) are perceived as similar by the respondent. In this analysis, both elements and constructs were grouped based on percentage similarity scores, calculated using the same method applied in simple relationships.

To perform the cluster analysis, three key steps were followed:

- First, the columns of the grid were reordered to bring together those elements that had high similarity scores. This helped in identifying clusters among the eve-teasing scenarios.
- Second, the rows of the grid were rearranged to cluster related constructs together based on how similarly they were used across the elements. This two-dimensional reordering allowed for clearer interpretation of relationships between both constructs and elements.

The result is a grid where both constructs and elements naturally form clusters, offering insight into the way the participant organizes and differentiates between various forms of harassment and the psychological dimensions used to understand them.

Table 7: Same grid for cluster analysis

1	Whistling	Making observation gestures	Stalking	Brushing against	Blocking one's path	Grouping	Catcalling	5
Indirect	2	3	5	5	5	5	4	Direct
Ambiguous	4	2	4	2	5	5	4	Certain
Distance	1	2	4	5	4	5	2	Physical proximity
Intentional	1	3	2	3	2	1	1	Unintentional
Expressive	3	3	4	2	1	1	3	Poker face
Possible movement	1	2	2	3	5	5	1	Obstruction
Verbal involvement	1	3	5	5	5	5	1	Physical strength

A total of 10 participants contributed to the repertory grid data, using the following eve-teasing scenarios as elements: Whistling, Making Obscene Gestures, Stalking, Brushing Against, Blocking One's Path, Grouping, and Catcalling.

Cluster analysis was performed to explore how participants grouped these scenarios and constructs based on similarity. In the example shown in Table 9, Whistling and Catcalling formed a clear cluster, as they received similar ratings across multiple constructs—particularly on Indirect–Direct, Distance–Proximity, and Verbal Involvement–Physical Strength. Both are verbal, indirect, and low-contact behaviors, which explains why they were placed close together in the column clustering.

Similarly, behaviors such as Blocking One's Path, Grouping, and Brushing Against also clustered together. These behaviors shared high ratings on proximity, physical strength, and obstruction, indicating they were perceived as more direct, intentional, and physically invasive. This cluster appeared clearly in the column-wise arrangement, highlighting participants shared understanding of these as high-threat or intrusive behaviors.

On the construct side (rows), Distance–Proximity and Verbal Involvement–Physical Strength were found to be highly similar, as they followed nearly identical rating patterns across elements. These were reordered together in the dendrogram to form a construct cluster emphasizing bodily closeness and force. Likewise, Ambiguous–Certain and Intentional–Unintentional also aligned closely, suggesting a cognitive dimension related to how clearly an act is interpreted or understood by the participant. These constructs were moved together to form meaningful visual groupings.

In some cases, to improve the visual clustering and align constructs more accurately, certain rows (constructs) were reversed in polarity. For instance, Expressive–Poker Face was flipped in a few grids where high ratings on “Poker Face” aligned more closely with other physically intrusive behaviors, improving the cohesion of clusters.

This three-step clustering process involved:

1. Reordering columns (elements) to group similar behaviors,
2. Reordering rows (constructs) to align similar psychological interpretations,
3. Reversing rows where necessary to achieve better alignment between constructs and elements.

All data was entered into OpenRepGrid (an open-source R package for repertory grid analysis: <https://docs.openrepgrid.org>), which helped visualize and analyze the grids efficiently.

The repertory grid technique (RGT), developed by George Kelly (1955), was originally designed to uncover individuals' personal constructs in psychotherapy. It has since been widely used in education, organizational psychology, consumer behavior, and social research (Fransella, Bell, & Bannister, 2004). The RGT captures both qualitative and quantitative data by eliciting bipolar constructs (e.g., *Indirect–Direct*) and requiring participants to rate each element (e.g., *Whistling, Stalking*) on each construct. The resulting matrix forms the basis for statistical and visual analysis.

Each participant's data was visualized using three primary methods:

1. Dendrograms to reveal clusters among constructs and elements (Figure 1),
2. Heatmaps of reordered grids showing similarity-based groupings (Figure 2),
3. PCA (Principal Component Analysis) biplots in 2D and 3D to visualize core psychological dimensions (Figure 3).

Together, these methods helped reveal how participants organized their perceptions of various eve-teasing scenarios, highlighting both shared understandings and individual differences.

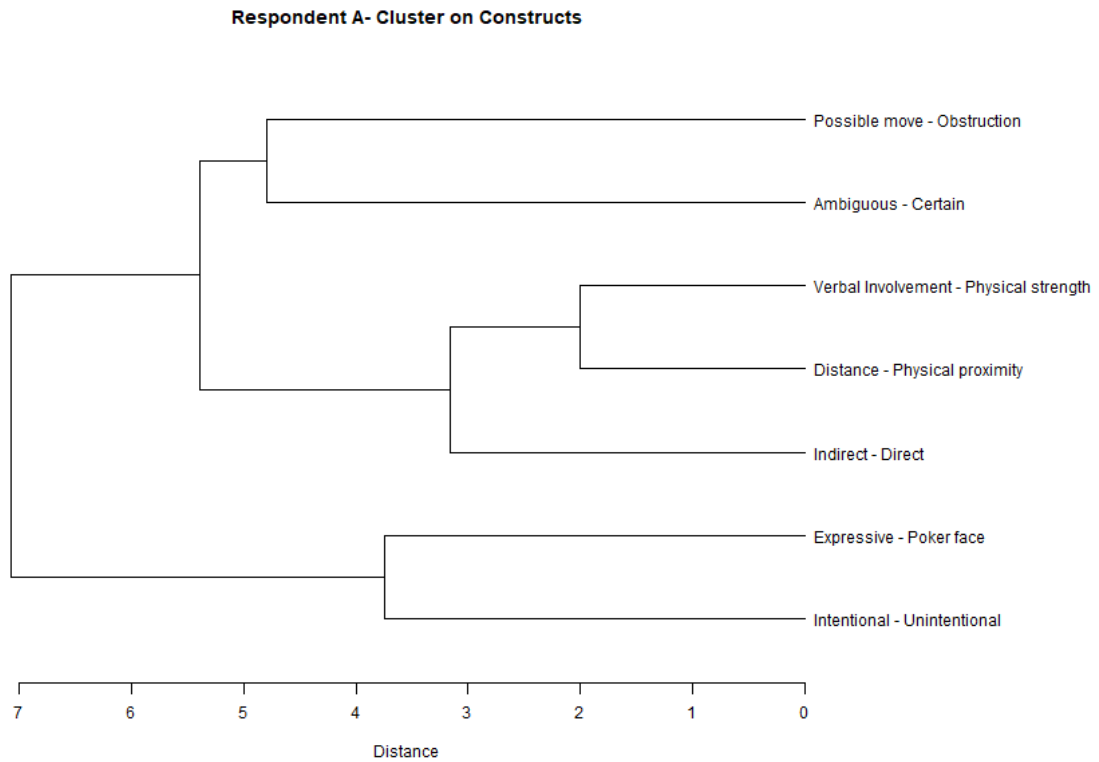


Figure 5.10: Cluster analysis of Respondent A's Constructs

Figure 5.10, provides a clear understanding of how this participant organized their interpretation of various eve-teasing behaviors using personal constructs. The construct clustering dendrogram (top) reveals two major groupings. The first cluster includes Distance–Physical Proximity, Verbal Involvement, Physical Strength, and Indirect–Direct, with Possible Movement–Obstruction also closely linked. These constructs appear to represent a shared underlying theme related to physical intensity, confrontation, and spatial control. For this participant, behaviors that are more direct, physically close, or involve movement restriction seem to be interpreted similarly.

The second cluster of constructs includes Ambiguous–Certain, Intentional–Unintentional, and Expressive–Poker Face. These constructs reflect a cognitive-emotional dimension, focusing more on

the interpretability of the behavior, the perceived intent behind it, and the presence (or absence) of emotional cues. The fact that these constructs cluster separately from the physical ones suggests that Respondent 2 distinguishes clearly between external, bodily aspects of harassment and internal, interpretive aspects, such as motive or clarity of action.

The element clustering dendrogram (bottom) further supports this distinction. Brushing Against and Stalking form one cluster, suggesting that these behaviors are seen as highly intrusive, direct, and threatening. Another cluster includes Grouping and Blocking One's Path, both of which involve controlling or invading someone's movement or personal space, indicating that the participant perceived these as physically coercive actions.

In contrast, Catcalling, Whistling, and Making Obscene Gestures formed a separate cluster. These behaviors were likely viewed as more verbal, indirect, or less physically invasive, yet still inappropriate and harassing. This clear separation shows that Respondent 2 cognitively groups eve-teasing behaviors into two broad categories: one comprising direct physical harassment, and the other consisting of verbal or symbolic actions that may still carry emotional or psychological impact.

Overall, the clustering results suggest that Respondent 2 differentiates eve-teasing scenarios primarily along two dimensions: physical proximity and force versus psychological interpretation and ambiguity. This dual structure offers meaningful insight into the respondent's worldview, indicating how individuals may frame harassment experiences through both bodily presence and emotional or cognitive appraisal.

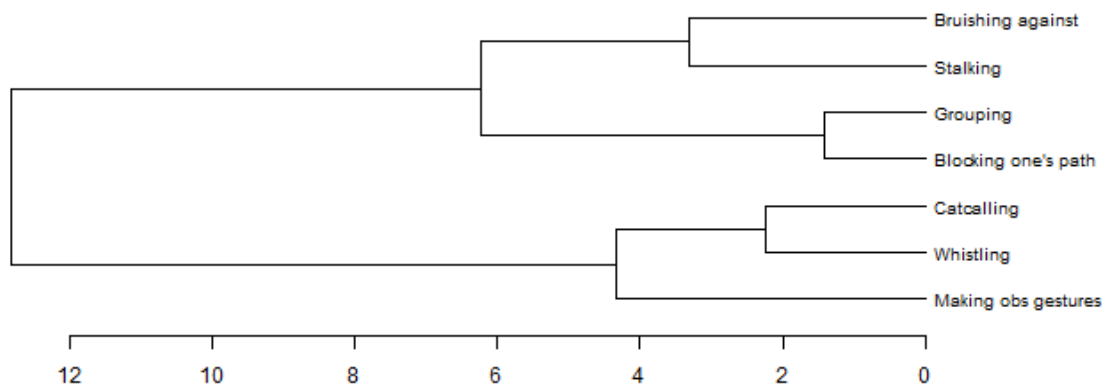


Figure 5.11: Cluster analysis of Respondent A's Elements

The Respondent A's element clustering, Figure 5.11, demonstrates clear groupings in terms of perception of different types of eve-teasing. The closest cluster of two involves Brushing Against and Stalking, which indicates these two acts were considered most alike and perhaps most bodily intrusive. Both share space, persistence, and direct bodily danger, which may be why they are closely paired. They were further grouped with Grouping and Blocking One's Path, behaviors that restrict movement and imply spatial domination or physical control. This broader cluster reflects how the respondent associates physical contact, personal space violation, and intimidation under a common interpretive theme.

In contrast, Catcalling, Whistling, and Making Obscene Gestures form a separate cluster. These behaviors are likely perceived as verbal, indirect, and emotionally charged, but less physically threatening. Their grouping suggests that the participant views these actions as symbolic forms of harassment more about vocal or gestural intrusion rather than bodily proximity or physical obstruction.

The overall structure of the element clustering suggests that Respondent 2 distinguishes direct, physical, space-invading forms of harassment from verbal or non-contact forms. This indicates a dual cognitive

framework: one organized around physical severity and bodily threat, and the other around socially inappropriate yet non-physical actions. Such clustering helps us understand how the respondent categorizes different eve-teasing experiences, reflecting meaningful patterns in their perception and evaluation of public harassment scenarios.

The heatmap for Respondent A, provides a clear visual representation of how different eve-teasing scenarios were evaluated across a set of psychological constructs. The behaviours that involved direct contact and physical obstruction, such as Stalking, Brushing Against, Blocking One's Path, and Grouping, received consistently high ratings (indicated in darker red shades) on constructs like Distance–Proximity, Verbal Involvement–Physical Strength, and Possible Movement–Obstruction. This suggests that the respondent perceived these scenarios as highly intrusive, physically close, and threatening, aligning them with a more severe form of harassment.

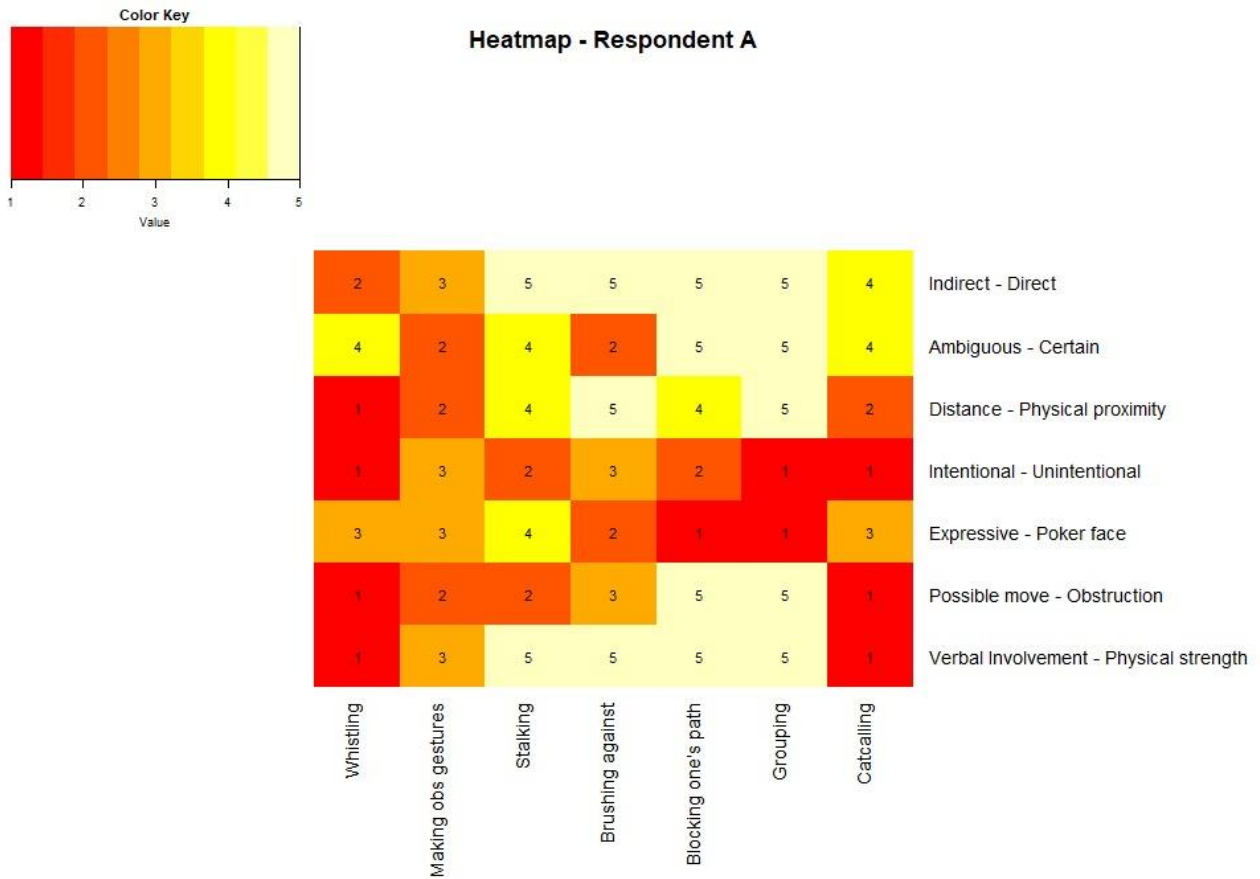


Figure 5.12: Heatmap for Respondent A

In contrast, Whistling, Catcalling, and Making Obscene Gestures were generally rated lower (darker blue shades) on these physical constructs, particularly on Proximity, Obstruction, and Physical Strength, indicating they were viewed as less physically invasive, possibly more verbal or symbolic in nature. However, they were still rated moderately on constructs such as Indirect–Direct and Ambiguous–Certain, reflecting a recognition of their inappropriateness and social impact.

This pattern reinforces the earlier cluster analysis by showing a clear separation in the respondent's mind between verbal/indirect behaviors and those that physically invade space or control movement. The construct Intentional–Unintentional also shows variability, suggesting differing views on whether these behaviors are seen as deliberate acts or spontaneous gestures. Overall, the heatmap highlights the participant's cognitive structure in categorizing eve-teasing behaviors, separating them based on physical proximity, directness, strength, and clarity of intent.

5.3.5 Principal Component Analysis (PCA) Biplot.

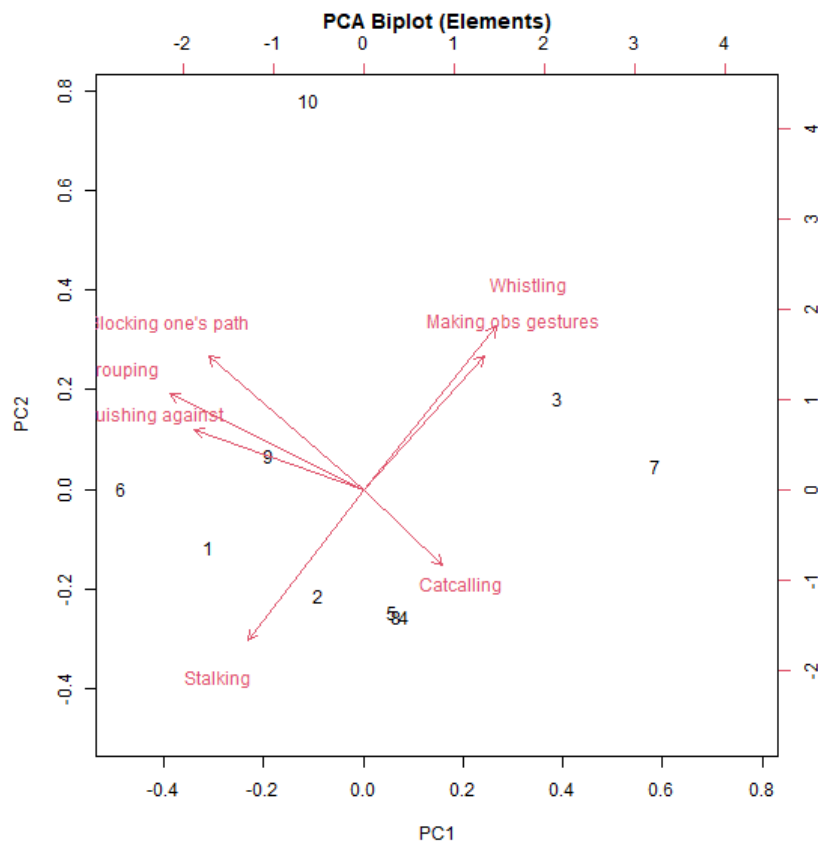


Figure 5.13: The Principal Component Analysis biplot

Figure 5.13, offers a visual representation of the relationships among various forms of harassment behaviors and the positioning of individual observations (such as survey respondents or specific instances) in relation to those behaviors. Principal Component Analysis (PCA) is employed here as a dimensionality reduction technique that simplifies complex, multivariate data by projecting it onto a lower-dimensional space while preserving as much of the original variance as possible. The axes, labeled PC1 and PC2, represent the first and second principal components, respectively. These components are linear combinations of the original variables and are selected because they account for the greatest proportion of variance in the dataset.

In the biplot, the pink arrows represent the original variables i.e., distinct harassment behaviors such as Whistling, Making Obscene Gestures, Catcalling, Stalking, Blocking One's Path, Groping, and Brushing Against. The direction and length of each arrow indicate the degree and direction of each behavior's contribution to the principal components. Longer arrows denote a stronger influence on the overall variance explained by the component space. For example, Whistling and Making Obscene Gestures appear oriented in similar directions with relatively long vectors, suggesting these behaviors are closely related and account for a significant portion of the variance captured by PC1 and PC2. Their proximity implies that respondents may perceive or experience these behaviors in similar ways. Conversely, behaviors such as Blocking One's Path, Groping, and Brushing Against form a separate cluster, indicating a distinct behavioral grouping that contrasts with more verbal or indirect forms.

The plot corresponds to individual observations. Their location in the biplot reflects how they relate to the various harassment behaviors. For instance, an observation plotted near the vector for Whistling likely aligns closely with that behavior, indicating either endorsement or association in the respondent's grid. Observations located closer to more physically intrusive actions, like Groping or Blocking One's

Path, might signal a various evaluative or experiential trend. In particular, Stalking is found in a different part of the plot, with the implication that it is considered qualitatively distinct, perhaps because it is persistent or threatening.

In general, the PCA biplot makes it easier to group similar behaviours and illustrates the manner in which single observations are located in relation to such groupings. This method is particularly useful in psychological and social science work where knowing the underlying patterns among categorical variables such as harassment types, reveal important information on how behaviour is understood, classified, and perceived. Such information may further be used in developing interventions, classifications, and policy rulings that address harassment more adequately.

CHAPTER 6:

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

6.1 Conclusions:

In order to comprehend not just the choices people make in the face of public harassment, but also the emotional, psychological, and social foundations of those choices, this study examined the complex nature of bystander intervention in eve-teasing instances. The study discovered how people assess severity, weigh danger, create meaning around their experiences, and negotiate the ethical and social landscape of intervention through a combination of qualitative interviews and the Repertory Grid Technique (RGT).

The gap between awareness and action was a crucial realisation for all participant groups. While many individuals especially younger participants were quick to notice and recognize incidents as problematic, a significant proportion struggled to act due to internal barriers such as helplessness, fear of retaliation, uncertainty, and shame. These barriers were particularly pronounced among women, who also faced added pressures like victim-blaming, parental restrictions, and loss of confidence, which often discouraged both intervention and disclosure. For many, the emotional burden of navigating harassment whether as a witness or a victim created a psychological weight that dulled responsiveness over time.

Interestingly, the study also found that older participants, across genders, were more likely to take measured action often by involving others, alerting authorities, or supporting the victim indirectly. This reflects a potential growth in risk assessment, emotional regulation, and social responsibility that may develop with age and experience. However, age was not always a decisive factor, particularly among

female participants, where perceived safety, social conditioning, and previous harassment experiences played a more prominent role than age itself.

The Repertory Grid Technique provided a new window into how participants cognitively classified various harassment situations and how their personal constructs like whether an action seemed intentional, ambiguous, or physically intrusive impacted their responses. The grids captured patterns that may not be discernible through more orthodox qualitative approaches, enabling us to map intervention propensities as well as avoidance strategies in relation to particular activities like catcalling, groping, or stalking.

Aside from intervention, the research also illuminated disclosure patterns, finding that emotional considerations such as vulnerability, fear of judgment, and social stigma dissuaded others from speaking out. Hesitation to report, particularly among younger women, not only indicated individualized barriers but also a larger cultural environment that socializes harassment and silences open conversation.

In combination, the results highlight that bystander behavior is not so much a function of awareness, but rather a result of deeply ingrained emotional, cognitive, and societal processes. To enable individuals to act, in turn, more than information is necessary; culturally sensitive interventions that enhance confidence, minimize fear, promote solidarity, and disrupt the normalization of harassment are needed. Structural barriers must also be addressed by enhancing legal literacy, support networks, and public accountability mechanisms so that bystanders and victims can feel safe and supported.

Finally, this study points to the pressing need for individual as well as collective change. Whether through education, community programs, or policy reform, we must create spaces where bystanders are not just witnesses to injustice, but active agents of change.

6.2 Limitations:

Despite the valuable insights generated by this study, several limitations must be acknowledged that may affect the interpretation and generalizability of the findings.

- The geographical and socio-economic backgrounds of participants were not systematically varied or deeply explored. As a result, the perspectives captured may reflect the experiences of individuals from relatively similar urban, educational, or socio-cultural environments. This limits the extent to which the findings can be generalized to women from rural regions, different cultural communities, or those with varying access to social resources and support systems. Intersectional factors such as caste, religion, and economic status known to influence both vulnerability to harassment and responses to it were not incorporated into the analysis, leaving a gap in understanding the broader structural dynamics at play.
- The use of convenience sampling and a relatively small sample size introduces potential sampling bias, as participants who chose to take part may have had stronger opinions or more direct experiences related to eve-teasing. This self-selection may skew the data and limit the external validity of the results. Furthermore, the sample may not reflect the full diversity of perspectives across age, education level, or lived experiences with bystander intervention.
- While efforts were made to include both younger and older participants, the age group divisions were somewhat arbitrary, and overlapping developmental stages (e.g., late adolescence vs. early adulthood) may blur distinctions between groups. Additionally, gender dynamics were analyzed primarily within binary male/female categories, without accounting for non-binary or queer-identifying individuals who may experience and respond to harassment differently. Their exclusion limits the inclusivity and depth of the study's findings.

- Although, the Repertory Grid Technique (RGT) and qualitative interviews provided rich cognitive and emotional data, the reliance on self-reported information introduces the possibility of recall bias and social desirability bias. Participants may have underreported instances of inaction or overemphasized socially acceptable responses, which could affect the authenticity of the data. Moreover, cultural taboos and internalized stigma may have further shaped what participants felt comfortable disclosing, especially in sensitive areas like victim-blaming or fear of parental restriction.
- The study's cross-sectional design captures participant attitudes and behaviors at a single point in time, offering a snapshot rather than a dynamic, evolving understanding of bystander intervention. Longitudinal research would be better suited to examining how interventions, awareness programs, or personal experiences shift individuals' responses over time.
- The absence of a quantitative experimental component means causal relationships between constructs (e.g., perceived safety and willingness to intervene) could not be firmly established. While the study reveals meaningful correlations and themes, further mixed-method or experimental studies are necessary to explore causality and test the effectiveness of interventions tailored to identified barriers.

These limitations underscore the importance of future research involving more demographically diverse samples, intersectional analyses, and methodological triangulation to deepen our understanding of bystander dynamics and to develop interventions that are both inclusive and contextually relevant

6.3 Future Research

To build upon the insights of the present study and address its limitations, future research should adopt a more holistic, inclusive, and intersectional lens to deepen our understanding of bystander intervention in the context of eve-teasing and gender-based harassment.

One key direction is to systematically examine how the perceived severity of harassment incidents influences bystander intervention, especially across different gender, age, and socio-cultural groups. For example, are physical forms of harassment more likely to elicit action than verbal or non-contact forms? How does perception of severity shift based on lived experiences, media exposure, or personal trauma histories? Such inquiries can help unpack the nuanced decision-making processes that drive (or hinder) intervention.

Further, future research should delve deeper into psychological barriers such as fear of retaliation, internalized helplessness, the normalization of harassment, self-efficacy, and moral disengagement. Understanding these factors through both qualitative and quantitative lenses will provide richer data on how individuals interpret risk, responsibility, and social pressure. Integrating psychometric tools and validated scales could enable more rigorous measurement of these constructs and their relationship with intervention behavior.

Expanding research to include cultural and regional contexts is equally essential. Bystander responses are often shaped by societal norms, gender expectations, and community-specific moral codes. Comparative studies across urban and rural settings, or between different religious and linguistic communities, could illuminate the role of collectivism, honor cultures, and intergenerational beliefs in enabling or inhibiting intervention. Such research should also aim to include voices from marginalized

groups, such as LGBTQIA+ individuals or those from lower socio-economic or caste backgrounds, whose experiences of both harassment and intervention may differ significantly from dominant narratives.

A further area of inquiry involves the role of education and structural support systems. Future studies should investigate how awareness campaigns, legal literacy, school-based programs, and access to institutional resources (e.g., helplines, women's cells, public CCTV, and legal aid) influence not just awareness, but action. Evaluating the effectiveness of existing bystander intervention training programs including their content, delivery, and long-term impact can inform the development of contextually relevant and scalable interventions.

In addition, longitudinal and mixed-method studies could track how individual attitudes and behaviors evolve over time in response to life experiences, policy changes, or exposure to public discourse on gender justice. This would provide a dynamic understanding of how bystander behavior is shaped by developmental, situational, and socio-political influences.

There is also an urgent need to explore digital bystander intervention, given the increasing prevalence of online harassment and cyberbullying. Understanding how individuals respond or fail to respond when witnessing harassment in virtual spaces is critical in today's digital age, especially among younger populations.

Finally, future research would benefit from interdisciplinary collaboration, incorporating insights from psychology, sociology, gender studies, criminology, and public health. Such integrative approaches can foster more comprehensive models of intervention that account for the interplay between personal agency, social environment, and systemic structures.

By addressing these diverse and intersecting domains, future research can help develop more effective, inclusive, and culturally sensitive bystander intervention strategies, ultimately contributing to safer public spaces and stronger community accountability in combating gender-based harassment.

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APPENDIX A: Consent Form for Experiment

You are invited to participate in a research study exploring how and why individuals choose to intervene when witnessing **eve-teasing** term referring to verbal or physical harassment of women in public spaces through comments, gestures, or actions intended to provoke, embarrass, or annoy.

This study focuses on **bystanders** those present during such incidents who are not directly involved. We aim to understand what factors influence their decision to intervene.

We are particularly interested in determining factors which affect an individual to intervene. In this study we have assumed the harasser and harassed have the following characteristics:

1. Victim is a woman and perpetrator is male
2. People witnessing the event and the victim are not related to each other. They might be acquaintances
3. The event has occurred at a public space.
4. Perpetrator can be singular or plural
5. People witnessing the event are in a group (More than 2)

You can participate in the study if:

1. You belong to one of the 3 age brackets; 18-25; 35-45; 55-65; males and Females as bystanders.
2. You have witnessed eve-teasing happening in public/ open space

What is going to happen in the interview?

1. You are expected to meet the researcher at a pre-decided time and place. The researcher will probe you to recall an eve teasing incident you have witnessed as a bystander. This might lead you to recall a traumatic event. Therefore, at any point if your uncomfortable you can leave the study. Your participation is completely voluntary.
2. Please be assured the data we collect will be stored without any potentially identifying information. We aim to maintain complete confidentiality and privacy of the data we collect from you. . The information you will supply will only be utilized for educational purposes.
3. The duration of the interview will be between 40-50 minutes. It will be audio recorded. Although the data gathered may not directly assist you, the knowledge gained from this study should have broader positive effects.

In case of any further queries feel free to connect with me -

Ms Aenika Sharma – asharma_blas20@thapar.edu

I understand the purpose, my rights as a participant and risks (if at all any) associated with the study.

Signature of the participant

Name - _____

Age - _____

APPENDIX B : Consent Form for Repertory Grid Technique

You are invited to participate in a research study that aims to explore how individuals perceive and make sense of eve-teasing incidents they have witnessed as bystanders. This study uses the Repertory Grid Technique (RGT) a tool derived from George Kelly's Personal Construct Theory to examine how people construct meaning around such incidents and how these constructs influence their likelihood of intervention.

The core focus of the study is to understand the personal constructs (i.e., your underlying beliefs and mental frameworks) that shape your interpretation and response to witnessing harassment in public spaces. These constructs are elicited and rated through a structured process using a repertory grid matrix where columns represent specific eve-teasing scenarios and rows capture your psychological constructs about them (e.g., "harmless vs. threatening," "verbal vs. physical").

What Participation Involves:

- You will take part in an individual session lasting approximately 90 to 120 minutes.
- During the session, you will be asked to recall incidents of eve-teasing that you have witnessed and rate them across different psychological dimensions.
- This process will help reveal the patterns and factors that influence how bystanders interpret and respond to these situations.
- There are no right or wrong answers; we are interested in your perceptions and reasoning.

Confidentiality and Voluntary Participation:

- All data will remain strictly confidential and used only for academic and educational purposes.
- Your name will not be recorded or linked to any data.
- Data will be securely stored and accessible only to the research team.
- Participation is completely voluntary. You may withdraw at any time without any consequences. If you choose to withdraw, your data will not be included in the final analysis.

If you have any questions or concerns at any point, please feel free to contact:

Ms. Aenika Sharma

Email: asharmama23_ma24@thapar.edu

Consent Statement:

I have read and understood the purpose of this study, the procedures involved, and my rights as a participant. I voluntarily agree to take part in the study.

Signature of Participant: _____

Name: _____

Age: _____

Date: _____

