BMC Psychology

RESEARCH

Open Access

Breaking the silence: How male and female bystanders influence victims of gender prejudice

Wanting Yang[1], Yuanni Duan[2] and Zongqing Liao[1*]

Abstract

Purpose This study aims to explore the specific psychological mechanisms of female victims coping with gender bias in bystander intervention (Study 1) and bystander neglect (Study 2), as well as the influence of bystander gender.

Methodology Two experiments recruited 208 participants who, after watching a first-person video of their experience of gender prejudice, filled out questionnaires measuring emotions, feelings of power, evaluation of the perpetrator and willingness to confront. A moderated mediation model was set up, and the bootstrapping method were applied.

Findings We found that the victim's feeling of power significantly mediated the relationship between anger and confrontation intention in bystander intervention. The victim's negative evaluation of the perpetrator significantly mediated between anger and confrontation intention in bystander neglect. Notably, both mediation models could be constructed only when the bystander was male rather than female.

Implications This study has important implications for gender bias. The results reveal the psychological mechanism of victims coping with gender bias, and call for groups of all genders to join in the anti-gender bias alliance.

Keywords Gender prejudice, Gender, Bystander intervention, Confronting prejudice

Introduction

Research has shown that most gender stereotypes about women are consistent across cultures [1], which means that women all over the world may experience similar gender prejudice. Gender prejudice, often implicit, subtly permeates daily life, limiting women's opportunities and posing significant risks to their physical and mental health. What makes it especially concerning is its ubiquity and the fact that it frequently goes unrecognized. For instance, researchers found that college students encounter gender prejudice twice a day on average, yet they often fail to identify it [2]. This bias is not only confined to personal interactions, but also prevalent in professional environments. Gender prejudice is widespread in the workplace [3] and is reinforced by the media, which subtly shapes societal views on women [4, 5]. Furthermore, gender bias extends into the family setting, influencing parental attitudes and, consequently, the ambitions of their children [6]. In essence, gender prejudice infiltrates every aspect of women's lives, leading to significant harm. It has been shown to cause distress and anger [2]while also undermining self-esteem and overall well-being [7, 8]. To effectively address these adverse outcomes, it is crucial to deepen our understanding of gender prejudice. This paper aims to contribute to that understanding and

*Correspondence:
Zongqing Liao
zongqing.liao@sicnu.edu.cn
[1] School of Psychology, Sichuan Normal University, 610066 Chengdu, China
[2] Faculty of Educational Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400 Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia

support women in overcoming the challenges posed by gender bias.

Gender Prejudice

Gender prejudice is "the attitude that a group should have a lower social status due to gender-related classifications" [1]. Similarly, sexism is defined as "the oppression or suppression of women via a large network of daily habits, attitudes, assumptions, behaviors, and institutional rules" [9].

Previous researchers proposed the Ambivalent Sexism Theory (AST), which categorizes sexism into two types [10]. One is Hostile Sexism (HS), which denigrates women challenging male dominance and uses misogynistic language to describe women as manipulative, devious, and inferior to men. The other is Benevolent Sexism (BS), which praises and affirms women adhering to traditional roles, depicting them as gentle, beautiful, and worthy of male protection and financial support. The ambivalent sexist attitude, a product of patriarchal internalization, functions to maintain society-wide gender inequality [10]. Such beliefs affect the perception of gender bias and weaken women's resistance to it [11].

Gender prejudice often manifests through complex interactions involving perpetrators, victims, and bystanders [12, 13]. Female victims, as the primary targets, tend to suffer more severe psychological consequences. However, the impact of these negative outcomes can vary depending on how victims respond. When women choose to remain silent, their passive coping can result in poorer mental health and even lead to depression [14].

On the other hand, perpetrators frequently fail to recognize their biased attitudes, making it difficult for them to change their behavior [15]. When women confront their aggressors, they generally experience fewer negative physical and psychological effects than when they remain silent. Confrontation can lead to higher self-esteem and a sense of empowerment among victims [16]. This supports existing research, which indicates that positive responses to stress can mitigate adverse psychological outcomes [17]. Thus, confrontation can be a beneficial coping strategy for women. However, confronting perpetrators can also result in negative social consequences. Women who confront are often perceived as complainers [18, 19], and their social evaluations may become more negative [19, 20]. This suggests that while direct confrontation can reduce negative physical and psychological effects for victims, it may also come with significant interpersonal costs [13].

As a result, many women find themselves torn between conflicting desires and actions. While they often wish to confront their aggressors, they rarely do so. Researchers identified a gap in 34% of the events ($N=265$) between what women said they wanted to do and how they actually responded [14]. Similarly, researchers found that only 45% of women chose to confront, with just 15% doing so directly [21]. Scholars also observed that few women engaged in confrontational behavior [22]. This hesitancy may stem from the substantial costs and risks associated with confronting gender prejudice alone, leading many women to avoid it. Even those who choose to confront must carefully consider the potential consequences to safeguard themselves [14]. In conclusion, women seldom use confrontation as a means of relief, leaving them often feeling powerless in the face of gender bias and reliant on others for support.

Bystander intervention

Victims of gender prejudice often struggle to change their circumstances alone, making bystander intervention a more effective approach. Bystanders who confront perpetrators offer several advantages over victims who try to do so themselves. For one, bystanders who take action are often seen as more prestigious and reputable [13]. Additionally, these bystanders tend to feel a greater sense of self-worth and well-being. Their intervention also makes perpetrators reflect on their behavior, particularly when the bystander is part of an indirect target group or entirely outside the target group [15, 20].

However, there are significant gender differences in how bystanders intervene in gender-biased situations [12, 19, 23]. Female bystanders, who often share the dual identity of both bystander and indirect target [24], may feel just as powerless as the victims themselves. Female bystanders, like victims, are more likely to experience negative outcomes, including lower self-esteem based on their performance compared to male bystanders [25]. As a result, female bystanders must weigh the risks of confrontation carefully to avoid greater harm [12]. In contrast, male bystanders, who are usually not part of the targeted group, often hold higher social status and have a stronger voice [26]. This difference gives male bystanders certain advantages and faces fewer risks in these situations. Their interventions are more likely to be well-received by perpetrators and seen as legitimate rather than as complaints [19, 20].

Although many studies have highlighted the differences in how male and female bystanders respond to gender bias, there has been little exploration of how these differences affect the victims. This study seeks to determine whether interventions by male bystanders have a more positive impact on the victims themselves. In addition, bystander intervention can also affect victims' self-perception. On the one hand this involves being aware of your own anger. Researchers frequently use anger as a crucial indicator of the

psychological state of victims [23, 27]. Researchers found that anger can predict a victim's willingness to confront future threats, particularly when supported by bystander intervention [27]. Anger, as an externalized emotion, has been shown to drive behaviors that can alter one's environment [28, 29]. This emotion not only signals dissatisfaction with the external world but also fuels subsequent behavior. As such, anger is closely tied to behavioral tendencies and is a key psychological experience of victims examined in this study. On the other hand, bystander intervention can also affect an individual's experience of empowerment. Empowerment, involves an internal process where individuals connect with their strengths and capabilities, fostering a belief in their potential to navigate challenging situations [30]. Research has shown a positive correlation between confrontation and women's self-esteem and empowerment [16]. Additionally, when bystanders confront perpetrators, female victims experience an increased sense of social support and empowerment. This empowerment, in turn, influences the victim's willingness to engage in future confrontations [27].

Confrontation intentions

Numerous studies have shown that bystander intervention can help female victims avoid or mitigate negative outcomes [12, 13, 15, 19, 27]. However, female victims often benefit more from confronting the perpetrator themselves rather than relying on bystanders to do so. Self-confrontation tends to provide greater empowerment than when bystanders intervene on their behalf [27]. Victimized women are more likely to react angrily to paternalistic interactions than to egalitarian ones, and this anger often fuels their intention to confront future injustices, indicating a strong desire to regain control and agency. Despite this, the emotional and psychological costs of confronting alone can be significant [21]. Thus, we propose that with the support of bystanders, female victims can most effectively confront perpetrators by forming an alliance against gender bias. This collaborative approach not only amplifies the benefits of bystander intervention but also preserves the victim's sense of agency.

To date, many studies have explored the willingness of victims to confront. Some studies have focused on intentions for future confrontations [27], while others focused the timely willingness to act [31]. We believe that when victims join the confrontation soon after bystander intervention, it can help restore their sense of agency. Therefore, this study examines the immediacy of victims' intentions to confront, rather than their future intentions.

Gender prejudice coping model

The previous researchers pointed out that facing discrimination is essentially a process of coping with stress [32], and women's responses to gender prejudice are often influenced by psychological processes such as emotion, cognition, and volition. After analyzing the positive confrontational behaviors, the researchers proposed a stress-coping model [17]. According to this model, coping is a process involving volition, which requires the mobilization of personal resources to regulate emotions, cognition, behavior, physiology, and the environment, so as to achieve the purpose of coping with stress-related events or environments. On this basis, our research aims to construct the gender prejudice coping models, clarify the relationships between emotions, cognition, and behavioral tendencies, as well as the influence pattern of environmental factors (the gender and intervention behavior of bystanders).

Emotion, as a "hot system", is characterized by high speed and automation [33], and it will influence people's subsequent cognitive evaluations and behavioral tendencies. Among them, anger is often regarded as one of the main emotional responses of victims of gender bias and also a key predictor of confronting gender prejudice [23, 27]. Therefore, we constructed anger as the initial variable in the gender prejudice coping models.

Cognitive evaluation is an important intermediate process in coping with bias [17]. In the context of gender bias, the cognitive evaluation of victims can be divided into two parts. One part is directed at the victims themselves, evaluating their internal resources (such as ability) to cope with bias events. The other part is directed outward, evaluating the external environment (such as interpersonal cost, interpersonal evaluation [34]). We believed that bystander intervention could help victims form positive cognitive evaluations. Specifically, the intervention behavior of bystanders could empower the victims [27], so that the victims had sufficient internal resources (such as a sense of power) to confront gender bias. On the contrary, bystander neglect would cause victims to make negative cognitive evaluations of the external situation. At this time, the victims had to depreciate the perpetrators to gain the courage and motivation to confront gender bias.

Since confronting gender prejudice could bring many positive results to the victims [16], consistent with previous research, we explored confrontational coping as the outcome variable in the gender prejudice coping model. In summary, on the basis of the stress coping model, we propose the gender prejudice coping models of emotion (anger) → cognitive evaluation (internal: sense of power / external: evaluation of the perpetrator) → behavioral tendency (willingness to confront).

Present study

This study aimed to explore the gender prejudice coping models experienced by victims under conditions of bystander intervention and neglect. Specifically, we focused on the psychological responses of victims and the influence of bystander gender in situations of gender bias. Moreover, since ambivalent sexist attitudes among victims can affect their psychological and behavioral responses following gender bias experiences, we measured and controlled this crucial confounding variable in both Studies 1 and 2. In Study 1, we examined bystander intervention. Previous research has predominantly centered on how bystanders perceive and assess biased situations [19], as well as the factors influencing their willingness to intervene [12]. Some studies suggest that bystanders of different genders may have varying impacts on gender-biased scenarios. For instance, researchers found that non-target group members (e.g., White individuals confronting racism) are more persuasive than target group members (e.g., Black individuals confronting racism) [19]. Drawing from this parallel between gender and racial bias, we hypothesized that male bystanders, as non-target group members, would be more persuasive and impactful in their intervention than female bystanders, who are part of the target group. We further hypothesized that male bystander intervention would empower victims and enhance their willingness to confront the perpetrator.

Additionally, the emotional responses of victims play a crucial role in the psychological process of coping with gender bias. Scholars showed that women who experienced sexual harassment with emotional distress were more likely to confront their harassers compared to those who experienced less severe harassment [35]. Similarly, other scholars identified anger as a critical predictor of confrontation intentions in intergroup contexts [36]. In gender bias research, anger is frequently measured as a key indicator of victims' psychological reactions [23, 27]. For example, researchers modeled anger as a predictor of victims' willingness to confront perpetrators [27]. In this study, we also used anger as a central variable to construct the gender prejudice coping models at play and paid particular attention to the victim's willingness to confront, in line with previous research.

Study 2 complemented Study 1 by examining scenarios without bystander intervention. By comparing the two studies, we aimed to assess the effect of bystander intervention on victims. We constructed two gender prejudice coping models (see Fig. 1 and Fig. 2) to understand victims' responses under different conditions (bystander intervention versus neglect). When bystanders ignored the perpetrator, the biased situation became more oppressive and harmful, leading victims to display dissatisfaction, such as lowering their opinion of the perpetrator [34]. We also explored whether the gender of the bystander influenced victim responses in these scenarios.

Study 1

Although a few studies [12] have found gender differences in bystanders in helping victims, no researchers have examined how these differences affect victims differently. Similarly, although many researchers have focused on coping patterns and physical and psychological consequences of victims of gender bias [14], no research has proposed a specific psychological mechanism model of victims under bystander intervention. In summary, Study

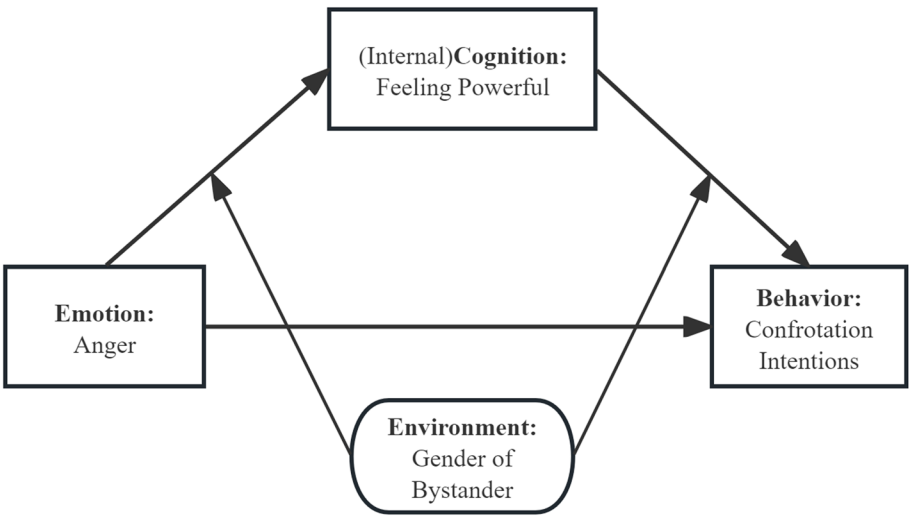

Fig. 1 Gender prejudice coping model during bystander intervention

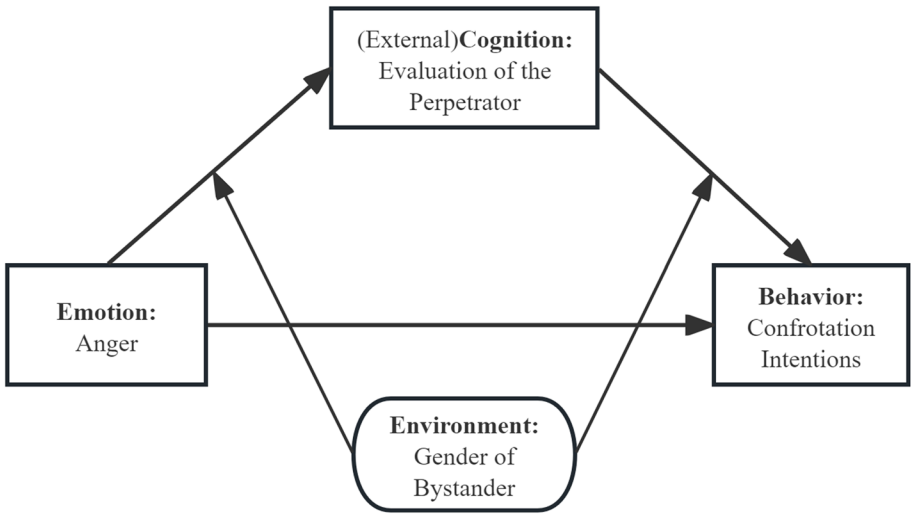

Fig. 2 Gender prejudice coping model during bystander neglect

1 suggested a moderated mediation model (see Fig. 1) to systematically explore the gender prejudice coping model of victims and the impact of the gender of bystanders. In line with the theorizing outlined in the section above, the following hypotheses were advanced:

H1: Victims' feelings of power would mediate the link between anger and confrontation intentions.

H2: The gender of the bystander would moderate the pathway between anger and feeling powerful, such that male bystanders reinforce the positive association in the first half of the mediation model.

H3: The gender of the bystander would moderate the pathway between feeling powerful and the intention of confrontation, such that male bystanders reinforce the positive association in the second half of the mediation model.

Method

Participants

To calculate the sample size, we considered the sample size requirements for the mediation path and the moderation path separately, and used the requirement for the larger sample size as the basis.

Moderation effects were typically tested through regression analysis for the significance of the interaction term. A G*Power analysis [37] showed that at least 68 participants were needed to detect a medium effect size ($f^2 = 0.15$) for a multiple linear regression with a power of 0.80 ($\alpha = 0.05$). The mediation effect test relied on path analysis. According to the empirical formula provided by the previous researchers [38], we needed at least 71 participants to detect both medium effects of the mediation paths (path a and path b). To ensure robustness and to account for possible non-normal distributions or missing data, we finally recruited 81 subjects.

Through homogeneous convenience sampling, a population and therefore sample were chosen that were similar in terms of one or more sociodemographic features (the entire population is made up of Asian female students at the same university). The goal was to limit the risk of sampling bias by constraining the sample frame to reduce sociodemographic variability and make it more comparable to the target population's sociodemographic characteristics [39]. 81 female students from a large university in mainland China were initially recruited for the study. According to self-reports, all subjects were identified as female by their biological sex and social gender. All participants completed an informed consent form before participating in the experiment. One participant was excluded due to incomplete responses, leaving a final sample of 80 female participants. The participants' ages ranged from 17 to 29 years, with a mean age of 19.35 years ($SD = 1.62$). For the experiment, participants were randomly assigned to two groups (male bystander condition / female bystander condition). They watched a video and completed a paper-and-pencil questionnaire based on its content. At the end of the study, all participants received small rewards as a token of appreciation.

Procedure and measures

Videos Materials: Bystander against gender prejudice.

We recruited two male actors and one female actress to create two video scenarios for the experiment. Both videos depicted a college girl experiencing gender prejudice from a first-person perspective. The assistant recorded the scenes using a video camera, incorporating subtitles

to enhance the first-person experience for participants. The video began with the following instructions: "Thank you for participating in this experiment. You will watch some clips depicting campus life from a first-person view. Please try to imagine that these events are happening to you." The video material contained two main scenes:

Scene 1: "I (the viewer) wake up in the morning, put on a skirt, and head out feeling happy."

Scene 2: "I enter the elevator in an academic building. Two people join me: a man (the perpetrator) on my left and either a man or a woman (depending on the group, representing the bystander) standing in front of me. Inside the elevator, the perpetrator stares at me and maliciously comments: 'Women today are disgusting. They dress so scantily just to seduce others.' The bystander then defends me, replying, 'You shouldn't say that. People are free to wear what they want.'".

Anger.

We assessed participant's anger using a single-item measure: "How angry did you feel after watching the video?" Responses were rated on a 7-point scale, with 1 indicating "not at all" and 7 indicating "very much."

Feeling powerful

We assessed participants' feelings of power using a single-item measure: "How powerful did you feel after watching the video?" Responses were rated on a 10-point scale, with 1 indicating "not at all" and 10 indicating "very much."

Confrontation intentions

Researchers have differing perspectives on how female victims of gender bias react. Scholars identified three types of responses: assertive, nonassertive, and psychological [40]. Other scholars later expanded this framework, categorizing reactions into four types: ignoring, psychological, non-confrontational, and confrontational [14]. However, participants often report experiencing more than one type of response simultaneously, making it difficult to measure all reaction types on a continuous scale. To address this, we developed six response categories based on the scenarios depicted in the video materials, ranking them by intensity from lowest to highest. This approach allows for continuous measurement of participants' confrontation intentions.

We measured participants' confrontation intentions with one item ("How strong a pattern of reaction do you take after experiencing this event?"). Responses were recorded on a scale ranging from 1 (nothing) to 6 (very much). An example of behavior follows each number. 1 (e.g., "Ignore it and feel nothing inside"), 2 (e.g., "Feeling uncomfortable inside but not doing anything"), 3 (e.g., "Press the nearest floor to exit the elevator as soon as possible"), 4 (e.g., "Expression of dissatisfaction without saying anything"), 5 (e.g., "Talkback gently"), 6 (e.g., "Make a fierce verbal confrontation"). A higher score indicates a stronger intention to confront.

Hostile sexism and benevolent sexism

We used the simplified Chinese version of the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI) [10] which was translated locally [41]. This version consists of 16 items divided into two subscales: Hostile Sexism (HS) and Benevolent Sexism (BS). Each item is rated on a 6-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree), with higher scores indicating stronger sexist beliefs. The overall score is the average of all 16 items, with higher scores reflecting higher levels of sexism ($\alpha_{HS} = 0.71$; $\alpha_{BS} = 0.79$; $\alpha_{Total} = 0.80$).

Results

In Table 1, we present descriptive statistics and correlations between the main variables. Both anger and feeling powerful were positively associated with confrontation intentions ($p < 0.01$). Hostile sexism was significantly related to benevolent sexism ($p < 0.01$).

An independent samples t-test revealed that participants in the female bystander condition reported significantly higher intentions to confront ($M = 4.85$, $SD = 0.90$)

Table 1 Descriptive analysis and pearson correlations of main variables for the total sample (Study 1)

Variables	Female Bystanders M (SD)	Male Bystanders *M* (*SD*)	1	2	3	4	5
1. Anger	5.54(1.32)	5.59(1.28)	-	.162	.249	-.129	.334*
2. Feeling Powerful	6.90(2.13)	6.59(2.67)	.466**	-	.087	-.047	.057
3. Confrontation Intentions	4.85(0.90)	4.07(1.27)	.356*	.421**	-	.087	.255
4. HS	2.06(0.63)	2.21(0.77)	-.123	-.080	-.281	-	.351*
5. BS	2.89(0.79)	2.80(0.78)	-.074	.179	.178	.414**	-

*$p < .05$; **$p < .01$. Anger (range 1–7), feeling powerful (range 1–10), confrontation intentions (range 1–6), HS (range 1–6), BS (range 1–6). Correlations for female bystanders ($n = 39$) are above the diagonal, and correlations for male bystanders ($n = 41$) are below the diagonal

compared to those in the male bystander condition ($M = 4.07$, $SD = 1.27$), t (72.30) = 3.14, $p < 0.01$.

Mediation analyses

We used PROCESS [42] macro (Model 4) to test our simple mediation models, with HS and BS entered as covariates. The analysis revealed that anger significantly predicted confrontation intentions, $b = 0.20$, $p = 0.048$. Anger was also positively associated with feeling powerful, $b = 0.57$, $p < 0.01$, though feeling powerful was not significantly related to confrontation intentions, $b = 0.10$, $p = 0.064$. The indirect effect of anger on confrontation intentions via feeling powerful was 0.057 ($SE = 0.04$, 95%CI = [0.004, 0.15]). As the empirical 95% CI did not include zero, this indicates that anger significantly and indirectly influenced confrontation intentions through feelings of power, thus supporting H1.

Moderated mediation analyses.

We conducted a moderated mediation analysis using Model 58 of PROCESS macro [42], with 5,000 bootstrap samples to test our hypothesis. In this model, feeling powerful was the mediator, while the gender of the bystander served as the moderator. We coded the female bystander as 0 and the male bystander as 1. The analysis examined the moderating effect of bystander gender on two relationships: (1) between anger and feeling powerful, and (2) between feeling powerful and confrontation intentions. Hostile Sexism (HS) and Benevolent Sexism (BS) were included as covariates.

As shown in Table 2, the relationship between anger and feeling powerful was not significant ($b = 0.14$, $p = 0.64$). However, the interaction between anger and the gender of the bystander significantly predicted feelings of power ($b = 0.83$, $p = 0.04$), indicating that bystander gender moderated this relationship. To clarify this interaction, we plotted feelings of power against anger for both female and male bystanders (Fig. 3). Simple slope tests revealed that anger was not significantly related to feeling powerful when the bystander was female ($b_{simple} = 0.14$, $p = 0.64$). However, when the bystander was male, anger was strongly and significantly associated with feeling powerful ($b_{simple} = 0.97$, $p < 0.001$).

Table 2 The moderated mediation effect of anger on confrontation intentions

Predictors	Model 1 (Feeling Powerful)		Model 2 (Confrontation Intentions)	
	b	t	b	t
HS	−0.32	−0.79	−0.32	−1.76
BS	0.52	1.40	0.32	1.99*
Anger (A)	0.14	0.47	0.14	1.50
Gender of Bystander (GB)	−0.24	−0.48	−0.68	−2.95**
A × GB	0.83	2.05*		
Feeling Powerful (FP)			0.01	0.15
FP × GB			0.13	1.34
R^2	.17		.30	
F	3.07*		5.29***	

*$p < .05$, ***$p < .001$

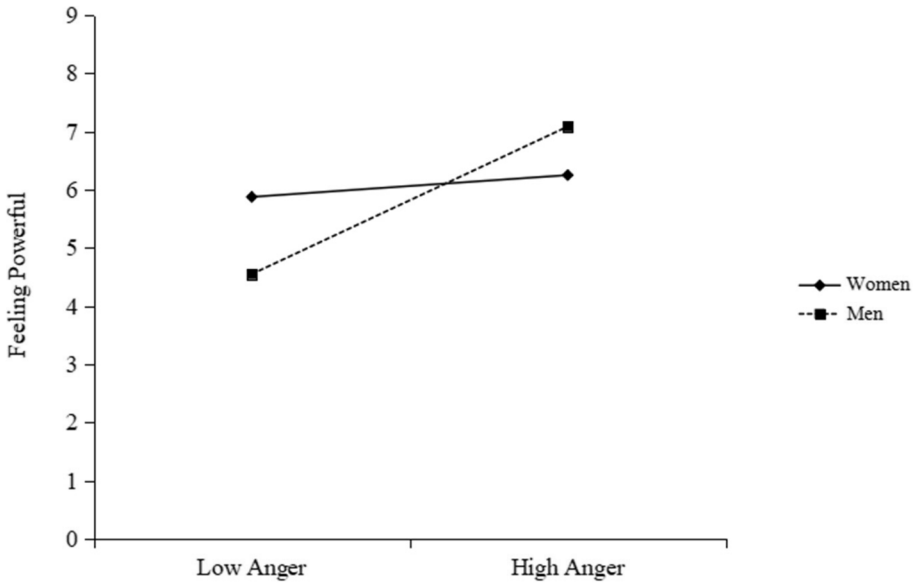

Fig. 3 The interaction between anger and the gender of the bystander on feeling powerful

Additionally, the relationship between feeling powerful and confrontation intentions was not significant ($b = 0.01$, $p = 0.15$). The interaction between feeling powerful and the gender of the bystander on confrontation intentions was also nonsignificant ($b = 0.13$, $p = 0.18$). This suggests that the association between feeling powerful and confrontation intentions was not moderated by the bystander's gender.

The bias-corrected percentile bootstrap analysis further confirmed that the indirect effect of anger on confrontation intentions, mediated by feeling powerful, was moderated by the bystander's gender. When the bystander was female, the indirect effect of anger on confrontation intentions was nonsignificant ($b = 0.002$, $SE = 0.02$, 95%CI = [−0.03, 0.06]). However, when the bystander was male, the indirect effect was significant ($b = 0.14$, $SE = 0.08$, 95%CI = [0.02, 0.35]). These results indicate that the gender of the bystander moderated the first stage of the mediation process—the path from anger to feeling powerful—supporting only H2.

Discussion

The results of our first study partially confirmed our hypotheses. In situations involving gender bias, female victims' anger was found to predict their willingness to confront through their feelings of power, supporting H1. Moreover, the positive link between anger and feelings of power was observed only when the bystander was male, confirming H2. Contrary to H3, the association between victims' feelings of power and their intention to confront was not moderated by the bystander's gender. Nevertheless, the entire indirect pathway—anger leading to confrontation intentions through feelings of power—was significant only when the bystander was male. This matches findings from intergroup studies, where male bystanders, as part of the dominant group, can help victims from marginalized groups feel more supported and encouraged to join movements against gender bias and other social injustices [43].

In summary, the results of Study 1 illustrated the psychological mechanism experienced by victims in positive situations—specifically when a bystander confronts the perpetrator of gender bias. These findings also highlight the unique and irreplaceable role men play in combating gender prejudice. However, we lack insight into how victims respond in adverse situations, such as when bystanders choose not to intervene. Study 2 aims to address this gap. In addition, considering that bystander behavior can influence how victims perceive the situation, which in turn affects their willingness to confront, Study 2 incorporates the victims' evaluation of the perpetrator.

Study 2

The evaluation of perpetrators, particularly in recognizing their biased attitudes, can lead others to impose social consequences on the perpetrator, such as distancing, reduced respect, or even open antagonism, prompting reflection, apologies, and potentially a reduction in harmful behavior [44]. These consequences highlight how evaluating the perpetrator is a critical factor in addressing gender bias, as it can directly influence the actions of those involved. Moreover, research suggests that victims' behavior also impacts their evaluation of the perpetrator. Cognitive dissonance theory [13] explains that when women choose not to confront a sexist individual, they tend to rate the perpetrator more favorably and downplay the significance of the encounter [22]. Additionally, when individuals from non-target groups confront sexism, it becomes easier for others to recognize and evaluate the perpetrator's biased behavior, which affects their level of respect and affection for the perpetrator [34].

Study 2 explores the psychological mechanisms of victims in situations where bystanders neglect to intervene. In these instances, victims may channel their anger by negatively reassessing the perpetrator. Building on previous findings, we propose a moderated mediation model (see Fig. 4) to systematically investigate the gender prejudice coping model of victims and how the gender of the bystander influences this model. We make the following hypothesis:

H4: Victims' negative evaluation of the perpetrator will mediate the relationship between anger and confrontation intentions.

H5: The gender of the bystander will moderate the link between anger and the negative evaluation of the perpetrator, with male bystanders strengthening the positive association in the first half of the mediation model.

H6: The gender of the bystander will moderate the link between the negative evaluation of the perpetrator and confrontation intentions, with male bystanders strengthening the positive association in the second half of the mediation model.

Method

Participants

Through homogeneous convenience sampling, a population and therefore sample were chosen that were similar in terms of one or more sociodemographic features (the entire population is made up of Asian female students at the same university). The goal was to limit the risk of sampling bias by constraining the sample frame to reduce sociodemographic variability and make it more comparable to the target population's sociodemographic characteristics [39]. We recruited an additional 127 women

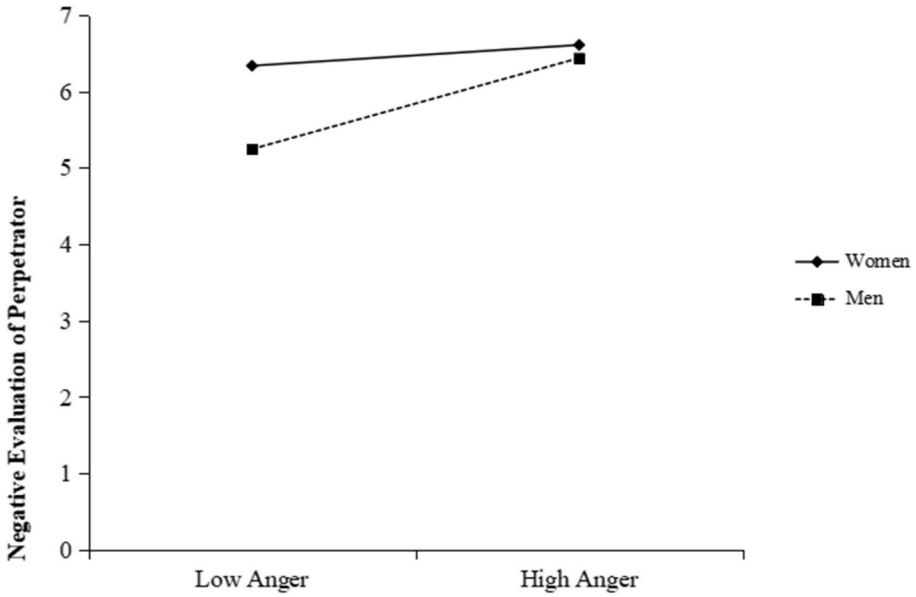

Fig. 4 The interaction between anger and the gender of the bystander on the negative evaluation of the perpetrator

from the same university, none of whom had participated in the previous study. According to self-reports, all subjects were identified as female by their biological sex and social gender. All participants completed an informed consent form before participating in the experiment. Participants had a mean age of 19.17 years ($SD = 1.21$), with ages ranging from 17 to 23. The procedures used in this study were consistent with those of Study 1.

Procedure and measures

Videos Materials: Bystander ignored gender prejudice.

We used the same actors from Study 1 to create similar video material. The only difference between the videos was that, in this version, the bystander (man or woman) in the elevator ignored everyone and remained focused on their mobile phone.

Anger.

We measured participants' anger with the same item as Study 1.

Evaluation of the perpetrator

We assessed participants' negative evaluation of the perpetrator using a single item: "The man who verbally attacked you is a bad person." Responses were rated on a 7-point scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), with higher scores indicating a more negative evaluation of the perpetrator.

Confrontation intentions

We measured participants' confrontation intentions with the same item as Study 1.

Hostile sexism and benevolent sexism

Hostile and benevolent sexism were assessed using the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI) [10] translated into Chinese [41] consistent with Study 1. ($\alpha_{HS} = 0.65$; $\alpha_{BS} = 0.80$; $\alpha_{Total} = 0.79$).

Results

As shown in Table 3, both anger and negative evaluations of the perpetrator were positively correlated with intentions to confront ($p < 0.01$). Hostile sexism was also significantly related to benevolent sexism ($p < 0.01$). An independent sample *t*-test revealed no significant difference in confrontation intentions between the female and male bystander conditions. However, participants in the female bystander condition rated the perpetrator more negatively ($M = 6.48$, $SD = 0.88$) than those in the male bystander condition ($M = 5.84$, $SD = 1.34$), $t(109.01) = 3.16$, $p < 0.01$.

Mediation analyses

To test the hypothesis in H4, which proposed that a negative evaluation of the perpetrator mediates the link between anger and confrontation intentions, we applied the PROCESS macro (Model 4) in SPSS [42]. Hostile Sexism (HS) and Benevolent Sexism (BS) were included as covariates in the analysis. The results showed that anger was a positive predictor of confrontation intentions ($b = 0.41$, $p < 0.001$). Anger was also positively associated with a negative evaluation of the perpetrator ($b = 0.31$, $p < 0.001$), and this evaluation, in turn, was positively linked to confrontation intentions ($b = 0.27$, $p < 0.05$).

Table 3 Descriptive analysis and pearson correlations of main variables for the total sample (Study 2)

Variables	Female Bystanders *M* (*SD*)	Male Bystanders *M* (*SD*)	1	2	3	4	5
1. Anger	5.33(1.21)	5.36(1.41)	-	.153	.329**	-.069	.155
Negative Evaluation of the Perpetrator	6.48(0.88)	5.84(1.34)	.478**	-	-.025	-.125	-.095
3. Confrontation Intentions	3.97(1.49)	3.91(1.44)	.368**	.552**	-	-.167	-.089
4. HS	2.27(0.71)	2.38(0.77)	.168	.068	.109	-	.286*
5. BS	2.86(0.86)	2.88(0.76)	.261*	.197	.056	.418**	-

Note. *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$. Anger (range 1–7), the bad evaluation of the perpetrator (range 1–7), confrontation intentions (range 1–6), HS (range 1–6), BS (range 1–6). Correlations for female bystanders ($n = 63$) are presented above the diagonal, and correlations for male bystanders ($n = 64$) are presented below the diagonal

The indirect effect of anger on confrontation intentions, through the negative evaluation of the perpetrator, was 0.08 (SE = 0.05, 95%CI = [0.01, 0.18]). Since the confidence interval did not include zero, the findings confirm that anger significantly influenced confrontation intentions via the negative evaluation of the perpetrator. Thus, H4 was supported.

Moderated analyses

In H5 and H6, we expected that the gender of the bystander would moderate the indirect relations between anger and confrontation intentions via the bad evaluation of the perpetrator. Model 58 of a moderate mediation of the PROCESS macro [42] with 5,000 bootstrap samples was performed to examine the moderated mediation hypothesis. The negative evaluation of the perpetrator served as the mediator, and the gender of the bystander was the moderator. Female bystanders were coded as 0, and male bystanders as 1. We specifically examined how the bystander's gender moderated two relationships: (1) between anger and the negative evaluation of the perpetrator, and (2) between the negative evaluation of the perpetrator and confrontation intentions. Hostile Sexism (HS) and Benevolent Sexism (BS) were included as covariates.

As shown in Table 4, anger was not significantly related to the negative evaluation of the perpetrator ($b = 0.10$, $p = 0.35$). However, the interaction between anger and the gender of the bystander was significant ($b = 0.35$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that the bystander's gender moderated the relationship between anger and the evaluation of the perpetrator. We plotted the relationship between anger and the negative evaluation of the perpetrator for male and female bystanders separately (Fig. 4). Simple slope analysis revealed that when the bystander was female, anger was not significantly related to the negative evaluation of the perpetrator ($b_{simple} = 0.10$, $p = 0.35$). In contrast, when the bystander was male, anger was significantly associated with a negative evaluation of the perpetrator ($b_{simple} = 0.46$, $p < 0.001$).

Table 4 The moderated mediation effect of anger and NEP on confrontation intentions

Predictors	Model 1 (Negative Evaluation of the Perpetrator)		Model 2 (Confrontation Intentions)	
	b	t	b	t
HS	−0.09	−0.67	−0.04	−0.25
BS	0.04	0.27	−0.23	−1.25
Anger (A)	0.10	0.93	0.30	3.01**
Gender of Bystander (GB)	−0.63	−3.38**	0.05	0.19
A × GB	0.35	2.42*		
Negative Evaluation of the Perpetrator (NEP)			−0.13	−0.65
NEP × GB			0.60	2.57*
R^2	.23		.21	
F	7.28***		5.45***	

Note. *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$

In addition, the relationship between the negative evaluation of the perpetrator and confrontation intentions was not significant ($b = -0.13$, $p = 0.52$). The interaction between the negative evaluation of the perpetrator and the gender of the bystander was significant ($b = 0.60$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that the gender of the bystander moderated this relationship as well. We plotted confrontation intentions by the negative evaluation of the perpetrator for male and female bystanders (Fig. 5). Simple slope tests revealed that for female bystanders, the negative evaluation of the perpetrator was unrelated to confrontation intentions ($b_{simple} = -0.13$, $p = 0.52$), while for male bystanders, this relationship was significant ($b_{simple} = 0.47$, $p < 0.001$).

The bias-corrected percentile bootstrap results further demonstrated that the indirect effect of anger on confrontation intentions via the negative evaluation

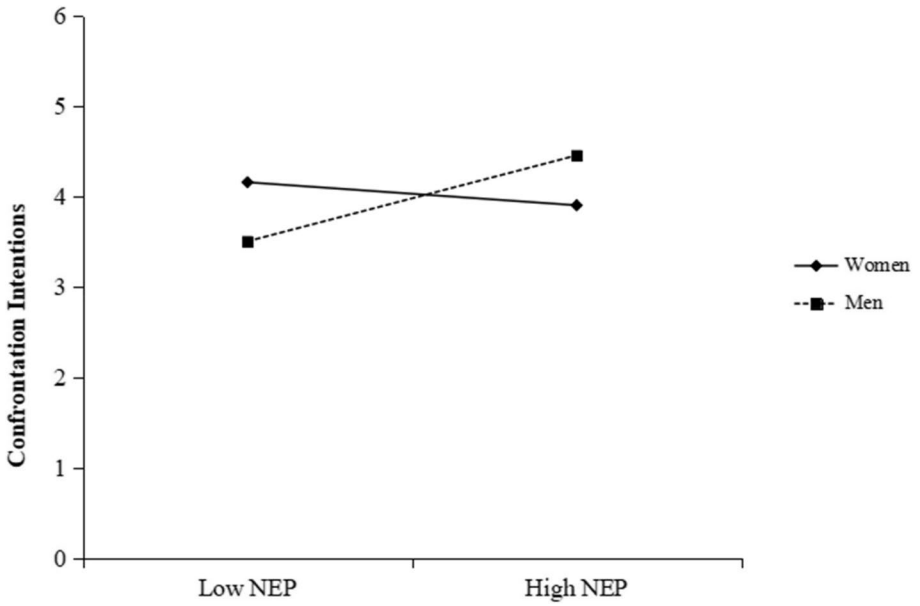

Fig. 5 The interaction between the negative evaluation of the perpetrator and the gender of the bystander on confrontation intentions. Note. NEP: Negative evaluation of the perpetrator

of the perpetrator was moderated by the gender of the bystander. When the bystander was a female, the indirect effect was nonsignificant ($b = -0.01$, $SE = 0.03$, 95%CI = [−0.08, 0.06]). However, when the bystander was a male, the indirect effect was significant ($b = 0.22$, $SE = 0.08$, 95%CI = [0.08, 0.37]). This shows that the gender of the bystander influenced both stages of the mediation: the path from anger to the negative evaluation of the perpetrator (supporting H5) and the path from the negative evaluation to confrontation intentions (supporting H6).

Discussion

The findings from Study 2 expanded on the results of Study 1, providing a more complete understanding of the psychological mechanisms at play for victims in different gender prejudice situations. Female victims' anger was shown to predict their willingness to confront the perpetrator, mediated by their negative evaluation of the perpetrator (H4). Additionally, the positive relationship between anger and the negative evaluation of the perpetrator was only present when the bystander was male (H5). Similarly, the link between the negative evaluation of the perpetrator and the intention to confront also held only when the bystander was male (H6). As in Study 1, female bystanders had no significant impact on the psychological processes of victims.

General discussion

Our research further explores the psychological mechanisms of female victims in gender-biased situations. When the bystander was male, we identified two clear psychological pathways for victims: anger and confrontation intentions (Studies 1 and 2). However, we were unable to establish a clear pathway for the victim's psychological response when the bystander was female. The findings underline the importance of bystanders in gender-biased scenarios [12, 20, 34]. Bystanders can shape how victims interpret the situation, their emotional responses, and their subsequent actions [27]. Our results also indicated that victims' psychological processes shifted depending on the gender of the bystander. Moreover, bystander behavior played a crucial role: confrontation was more beneficial for victims compared to neglect. Both the gender and actions of bystanders shaped the victim's experience and the following behavior.

Previous studies have highlighted gender differences in responses to gender bias. Research has shown distinct neural pathways for implicit gender bias attitudes that vary between men and women [45]. Additionally, male and female bystanders experience gender bias situations differently in terms of psychological response, evaluation, and behavior patterns [12, 25]. Even perpetrators perceive the behavior of male and female bystanders differently [20]. In line with these findings, our research revealed that victims' psychological processes vary based on the bystander's gender. Specifically, anger predicted

the victim's intent to confront the perpetrator only when the bystander was male, a relationship that disappeared when the bystander was female.

One potential explanation for this gender difference can be understood through the lens of social dominance theory [46]. Social dominance theory emphasizes the status and power relations of different groups in society. In this framework, anger can be seen as an emotional response of disadvantaged victims to their social role and expectations of being violated by the dominant individual [47]. Anger provides oppressed individuals with the motivation to fight against oppression and compete for more resources, and can well predict individuals' willingness to participate in collective action [48]. Our research has found that interventions by male bystanders can help female victims transform their anger into feeling powerful resources for coping with gender bias. Female bystanders had no similar effect. This discrepancy may reflect a phenomenon known as "behavioral asymmetry." As members of the dominant group, men hold higher social power. Their intervention may essentially be an act of "charity" (the temporary "bestowal" of power and social resources by a dominant group upon an aggrieved and oppressed group). The aim of this "charity behavior" is to defuse the conflict between the subordinate group and the dominant group, thereby maintaining the original system of inter-group oppression [47]. In other words, some men might offer help to female victims with the intention of quelling women's anger towards the male group, thus diminishing women's eagerness to engage in affirmative action. Males may intervene to uphold traditional notions of masculinity [49] and a belief in benevolent sexism, where men feel they should protect women [50]. While this assistance might provide short-term relief for female victims, it reinforces the gender hierarchy and deepens the divide between men and women. What makes this explanation particularly compelling is the contradiction it reveals: female victims, oppressed by a male-dominated society, find themselves dependent on "male heroes" for rescue. This reliance is, in itself, a reflection of gender inequality. When women face gender discrimination, they also depend on another form of inequality for relief. Consequently, it is crucial to approach support from male allies with caution, as their aid may inadvertently reinforce existing gender imbalances.

An alternative explanation can be drawn from social identity theory [51]. Compared to male bystanders, the presence of female bystanders may cause victims to focus more on their gender identity rather than their personal identity. This shift toward gender identity can make victims more attuned to sexist remarks from the perpetrator [52], interpreting the situation as an intergroup conflict. In such cases, victims may perceive the perpetrator's attack as directed not only at them personally but at women as a collective, leading them to rate the perpetrator more negatively when female bystanders are present (Study 2). Additionally, the activation of gender role identity may heighten victims' sense of in-group homogeneity [53], influencing their response based on the behavior of other in-group members, such as female bystanders. Social identity plays a key role in predicting collective action [29]. For example, when a female bystander who sympathized with the victim chose to confront the perpetrator, the victim might mirror this behavior and feel more empowered to confront as well (Study 1). These findings suggest that female bystander intervention could have a different, potentially positive impact on victims compared to male bystanders, though this aspect was not explored further in the study.

Victims experienced more positive psychological outcomes when bystanders intervened compared to when they remained passive, regardless of the bystander's gender. Our research highlights the beneficial impact of bystander intervention from the victim's perspective. Bystander assistance acts as a form of interpersonal social support for the victim. Numerous studies have shown that strong social support is linked to improved physical and mental health [54]. Similarly, our research found that bystander intervention offers victims psychological reinforcement, empowering them to confront the perpetrator—particularly when a male bystander steps in. When bystanders remained indifferent, however, victims reported more negative psychological responses, such as a harsher evaluation of the perpetrator. Notably, intergroup studies suggest that this hostility can extend beyond the individual perpetrator to the entire male group, triggering negative emotions and avoidance behaviors towards men in general [23]. In this sense, passive bystanders contribute to the escalation of gender conflicts by failing to intervene.

Our research was conducted in non-Anglo-Saxon countries. Cultural factors seem to influence women's confrontational behavior. Compared to China, the Anglo-Saxon countries have experienced much larger and longer feminist movements. These feminist movements promoted the social emphasis on women's rights, the identification of gender discrimination and sexual harassment, and created a good social atmosphere to help women fight against it [55]. Therefore, we infer that women in non-Anglo-Saxon countries, such as China, show a lower willingness to confront sexism and sexual harassment than women in Anglo-Saxon countries. In addition, social environment has an impact on bystander intervention [56], which may be reflected in the intervention motivation. Anglo-Saxon culture has shaped a social environment that

emphasizes individualism. When faced with gender prejudice, bystanders may be more inclined to intervene in terms of personal values and beliefs (e.g. gender equality beliefs). In some collectivism-emphasizing countries, bystanders seem to be motivated to intervene for the sake of maintaining group or community harmony. However, our study does not give direct evidence of cultural differences. Future research could further explore the impact of cultural differences on the patterns of coping with gender bias.

To the best of our knowledge, our research is one of the first to adopt the victim's perspective in examining the differential impact of bystander confrontation versus neglect. In summary, our findings demonstrate the irreplaceable positive effects of bystander intervention on victims, while also highlighting the distinct influence of the bystander's gender. These results extend previous theories and deepen the understanding of gender bias situations, offering new insights into the dynamics of bystander involvement.

Practice Implications.

Our research highlights the positive impact of bystander intervention. Perpetrators are often unaware of their gender-biased behaviors and need clear external feedback, such as confrontation, to recognize and reconsider their actions [44]. Additionally, female victims may experience greater self-esteem and well-being when confronting the perpetrator directly, compared to relying on bystander intervention [27]. Both male and female bystanders can play distinct, positive roles in these situations. Therefore, we encourage both men and women to actively participate in anti-gender bias efforts to foster healthier intergroup dynamics. We also urge victims to take an active role in standing up to perpetrators, empowered by a supportive environment. Victims can safeguard themselves by enhancing their preventive awareness and learning self-defense techniques. At the same time, we had also stressed the critical role of support systems and the importance of seeking help. When victims are actively engaged in self—protection, external support systems (such as family, friends, social organizations, etc.) are able to offer them necessary assistance and strength, and seeking help is also an effective positive-response measure.

Secondly, we emphasize that the gender of the bystander plays a significant role in how victims perceive and respond to gender bias situations. We found that the gender of the bystander influenced female victims to adopt different coping mechanisms. This discovery promoted our understanding of gender prejudice. Additionally, it highlights the importance of collaborative efforts from both men and women in combating and reducing gender bias.

Our research has also contributed to some practical applications. For instance, in terms of resisting and preventing sexual harassment, our research indicates that bystanders play a vital role, and their gender and identity may be subtly influencing the situation. Sexual harassment is more common in male-dominated workplaces [57]. In such cases, male bystander intervention might be equivalent to the "rescue" by a high-power individual. Consequently, businesses and organizations should provide bystander intervention training courses, particularly for male employees. The training should cover recognizing gender-biased behavior, appropriate intervention methods, and ways to support victims. Through training, male bystanders can play their part more effectively in gender-biased situations, strengthening the victim's psychological resilience and their willingness to confront the issue. Schools, universities, and other public places should have clear anti-harassment policies and ensure that all members are informed of them. These policies should stress the responsibility of bystanders and encourage everyone to actively engage in anti-harassment efforts.

Limitations and future directions

There are some limitations to the current study. Firstly, when designing sexist scenarios, we focused solely on hostile sexism, where the male perpetrator's comments were intended to attack and demean women. We did not account for benevolent sexism, which restricts women's growth and is more subtle and harder to recognize [10]. Different forms of gender bias may lead victims to adopt distinct psychological mechanisms and behavioral responses. Future research should address this gap.

Secondly, we primarily examined female victims, excluding male victims, as women typically experience more severe physical and psychological harm in gender-biased situations compared to men [2]. The inclusion of male victims in future studies may provide valuable insights into the complexities of gender bias. They could be victims of restrictive gender norms while also expressing gender prejudice as a way to assert their masculinity and restore self-esteem [58]. Future studies could explore these complex dynamics by investigating how individuals navigate gender bias from multiple perspectives.

Third, this study mainly explored the gender prejudice in campus life, and did not include other scenarios (such as work scenarios). However, research showed that gender prejudice in the workplace is also common and has a profound impact on women [3, 59]. Moreover, the power structure in the workplace is more prominent than campus, which may be an important factor affecting women's willingness to confront. Future research could further explore different bias scenarios.

Fourthly, an obvious limitation of this study is that no other demographic variables were collected in our study. Having a more complete description of socialcategories would certainly enable a clearer understanding of the gender prejudice coping models. For instance, taking sexual orientation into account, sexual minorities may encounter greater challenges in the face of discrimination because of the influence of multiple marginalized identities [60]. Still, our Study provided insight into the gender prejudice coping models in the lives of college students. Future studies can expand on our proposed gender prejudice coping model to investigate the influence of other variables, such as sexual orientation and romantic-relationship status.

Conclusion

Our research highlighted the significant role of bystander gender and behavior in shaping victims' psychological mechanisms. Specifically, we identified two distinct pathways when male bystanders were involved. If the male bystander intervened, the victim's psychological progression followed this sequence: anger → feelings of power → intentions to confront. When the male bystander remained passive, the pathway shifted to: anger → negative evaluation of the perpetrator → intentions to confront. However, no clear psychological pathway emerged for situations involving female bystanders. This study reinforces the positive effects of bystander intervention and underscores the importance of widespread involvement in combating gender bias.

Abbreviations

AST	Ambivalent Sexism Theory
HS	Hostile Sexism
BS	Benevolent Sexism
ASI	Ambivalent Sexism Inventory
A	Anger
GB	Gender of Bystander
FP	Feeling Powerful
NEP	Negative Evaluation of the Perpetrator

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Shuang Ding for her great help in raising the research questions and collecting data.
Declarations of pictures, tables, and data
Thanks to Shuang Ding for her great help in raising the research questions and collecting data.

Authors' contributions

WTY is mainly responsible for designing experiments and collecting data as well as writing articles. ZQL made significant contributions to the experimental design and data analysis as well as to the revision of the article sections. YND provided valuable suggestions for the experimental design and was responsible for revising and polishing the articles.

Funding

This study was supported by the Sichuan Sex Sociology and Sex Education Research Center Project (SXJYB2308), the National Social Science Foundation of China (Grant No. 23BSH143). We appreciated this support both in finance and in spirit.

Data availability

The datasets and materials used and/or analysed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

Declarations

Ethics approval and consent to participate

Our study was approved by Ethics Review Committee of Sichuan Normal University (approval number: 2024LS059). All procedures involving human participants were carried out in strict accordance with the ethical guidelines of this committee and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.
We had obtained the informed consent of all the subjects before the experiment began. All participants completed an informed consent form before participating in the experiment, they understood the procedure and agreed to participate in the experiment.

Consent for publication

Not applicable.

Competing interests

The authors declare no competing interests.

Received: 14 October 2024 Accepted: 20 February 2025
Published online: 27 February 2025

References

1. Fiske ST. Prejudices in cultural contexts: Shared stereotypes (gender, age) versus variable stereotypes (race, ethnicity, religion). Perspect Psychol Sci. 2017;12(5):791–9. https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691617708204.
2. Brinkman BG, Rickard KM. College students' descriptions of everyday gender prejudice. Sex Roles. 2009;61(7–8):461–75. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-009-9643-3.
3. Ryan MK, Haslam SA, Morgenroth T, Rink F, Stoker J, Peters K. Getting on top of the glass cliff: Reviewing a decade of evidence, explanations, and impact. Leadersh Q. 2016;27(3):446–55. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2015.10.008.
4. Haraldsson A, Wängnerud L. The effect of media sexism on women's political ambition: Evidence from a worldwide study. Fem Media Stud. 2019;19(4):525–41. https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2018.1468797.
5. Ward LM. Does television exposure affect emerging adults' attitudes and assumptions about sexual relationships? Correlational and experimental confirmation. J Youth Adolesc. 2002;31(1):1–15. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1014068031532.
6. Barni D, Fiorilli C, Romano L, Zagrean I, Alfieri S, Russo C. Gender prejudice within the family: The relation between parents' sexism and their socialization values. Front Psychol. 2022;24(13):846016. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.846016.
7. Breines JG, Crocker J, Garcia JA. Self-objectification and well-being in women's daily lives. Pers Soc Psychol Bull. 2008;34(5):583–98. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167207313727.
8. Oswald DL, Baalbaki M, Kirkman M. Experiences with benevolent sexism: Scale development and associations with women's well-being. Sex Roles. 2019;80(5–6):362–80. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-018-0933-5.
9. Lott B. Distancing from women: interpersonal sexist discrimination. In: Lott B, Maluso D, editors. Combating sexual harassment in higher education. Washington, DC: National Education Association; 1995. p. 229–44.
10. Glick P, Fiske ST. Hostile and benevolent sexism: Measuring ambivalent sexist attitudes toward women. Psychol Women Q. 1997;21:119–35. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-6402.1997.tb00104.x.
11. Hammond MD, Sibley CG. Why are benevolent sexists happier? Sex Roles. 2011;65(5–6):332–43. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-011-0017-2.
12. Brinkman BG, Dean AM, Simpson CK, McGinley M, Rosén LA. Bystander intervention during college women's experiences of gender prejudice. Sex Roles. 2015;72(11–12):485–98. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-015-0485-x.

13. Czopp AM. The consequences of confronting prejudice. In: Confronting prejudice and discrimination. Elsevier; 2019. p. 201–221. https://linkinghub.elsevier.com/retrieve/pii/B9780128147153000059
14. Brinkman BG, Garcia K, Rickard KM. "What I wanted to do was…" Discrepancies between college women's desired and reported responses to gender prejudice. Sex Roles. 2011;65(5–6):344–55. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-011-0020-7.
15. Czopp AM, Monteith MJ, Mark AY. Standing up for a change: Reducing bias through interpersonal confrontation. J Pers Soc Psychol. 2006;90(5):784–803. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.90.5.784.
16. Gervais SJ, Hillard AL, Vescio TK. Confronting sexism: The role of relationship orientation and gender. Sex Roles. 2010;63(7–8):463–74. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-010-9838-7.
17. Kaiser CR, Miller CT. A stress and coping perspective on confronting sexism. Psychol Women Q. 2004;28(2):168–78. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-6402.2004.00133.x.
18. Gulker JE, Mark AY, Monteith MJ. Confronting prejudice: The who, what, and why of confrontation effectiveness. Soc Influ. 2013;8(4):280–93. https://doi.org/10.1080/15534510.2012.736879.
19. Rasinski HM, Czopp AM. The effect of target status on witnesses' reactions to confrontations of bias. Basic Appl Soc Psychol. 2010;32(1):8–16. https://doi.org/10.1080/01973530903539754.
20. Czopp AM, Monteith MJ. Confronting prejudice (Literally): Reactions to confrontations of racial and gender bias. Pers Soc Psychol Bull. 2003;29(4):532–44. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167202250923.
21. Swim JK, Hyers LL. Excuse me—What did you just say?!: Women's public and private responses to sexist remarks. J Exp Soc Psychol. 1999;35(1):68–88. https://doi.org/10.1006/jesp.1998.1370.
22. Rasinski HM, Geers AL, Czopp AM. "I guess what he said wasn't that bad": Dissonance in nonconfronting targets of prejudice. Pers Soc Psychol Bull. 2013;39(7):856–69. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167213484769.
23. Chaudoir SR, Quinn DM. Bystander sexism in the intergroup context: The impact of cat-calls on women's reactions towards men. Sex Roles. 2010;62(9–10):623–34. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-009-9735-0.
24. David EM, Volpone SD, Avery DR, Johnson LU, Crepeau L. Am I next? Men and women's divergent justice perceptions following vicarious mistreatment. J Appl Psychol. 2024;109(7):1039–58. https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0001109.
25. Bradley-Geist JC, Rivera I, Geringer SD. The collateral damage of ambient sexism: Observing sexism impacts bystander self-esteem and career aspirations. Sex Roles. 2015;73(1–2):29–42. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-015-0512-y.
26. Civile C, Obhi SS. Power, objectification, and recognition of sexualized women and men. Psychol Women Q. 2016;40(2):199–212. https://doi.org/10.1177/0361684315604820.
27. Estevan-Reina L, de Lemus S, Megías JL, Kutlaca M, Belmonte-García M, Becker J. Allies against sexism: The impact of men's egalitarian versus paternalistic confrontation on women's empowerment and well-being. Sex Roles. 2021;84(9–10):536–53. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-020-01184-4.
28. Iyer A, Schmader T, Lickel B. Why individuals protest the perceived transgressions of their country: The role of anger, shame, and guilt. Pers Soc Psychol Bull. 2007;33(4):572–87. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167206297402.
29. Van Zomeren M, Postmes T, Spears R. Toward an integrative social identity model of collective action: A quantitative research synthesis of three socio-psychological perspectives. Psychol Bull. 2008;134(4):504–35. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.134.4.504.
30. Moya-Garófano A, Rodríguez-Bailón R, Moya M, Megías JL. Stranger harassment ("piropo") and women's self-objectification: The role of anger, happiness, and empowerment. J Interpers Violence. 2021;36(5–6):2306–26. https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260518760258.
31. Shepherd L. Responding to sexual objectification: The role of emotions in influencing willingness to undertake different types of action. Sex Roles. 2019;80(1–2):25–40. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-018-0912-x.
32. Kaiser CR, Miller CT. Stop Complaining! The Social Costs of Making Attributions to Discrimination. Pers Soc Psychol Bull. 2001;27(2):254–63. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167201272010.
33. Luo J, Yu R. Follow the heart or the head? The interactive influence model of emotion and cognition. Front Psychol. 201;6:573. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2015.00573
34. Dickter CL, Kittel JA, Gyurovski II. Perceptions of non-target confronters in response to racist and heterosexist remarks: Perceptions of confronters. Eur J Soc Psychol. 2012;42(1):112–9. https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.855.
35. Fitzgerald LF, Swan S, Fischer K. Why didn't she just report him? The psychological and legal implications of women's responses to sexual harassment. J Soc Issues. 1995;51(1):117–38. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.1995.tb01312.x.
36. Mackie DM, Devos T, Smith ER. Intergroup emotions: Explaining offensive action tendencies in an intergroup context. J Pers Soc Psychol. 2000;79(4):602–16. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.79.4.602.
37. Faul F, Erdfelder E, Lang AG, Buchner A. G*power 3: A flexible statistical power analysis program for the social, behavioral, and biomedical sciences. Behav Res Methods. 2007;39(2):175–91. https://doi.org/10.3758/BF03193146.
38. Fritz MS, MacKinnon DP. Required sample size to detect the mediated effect. Psychol Sci. 2007;18(3):233–9. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9280.2007.01882.x.
39. Jager J, Putnick DL, Bornstein MH. More than just convenient: The scientific merits of homogeneous convenience samples. Dev Meth. 2017;82(2):13–30. https://doi.org/10.1111/mono.12296.
40. Swim JK, Cohen LL, & Hyers LL. Experiencing everyday prejudice and discrimination. In Swim JK, & Stangor, editors. Prejudice: The target's perspective. Academic; 1998. p. 37–60. https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-012679130-3/50037-5
41. Chen ZX, & He FL. The correlation of ambivalent sexism and marital power related gender role ideology on marriage. In Gender sociology committee of the Chinese sociological association. Collection of papers from the forum on social change and women's development in China at the 2009 China sociology annual conference. Wuhan: academic; 2009. p. 66–67. (in Chinese)
42. Hayes AF. Introduction to mediation, moderation, and conditional process analysis: A regression-based approach (Methodology in the Social Sciences) (2nd ed.). Guilford Press; 2018.
43. Shnabel N, Nadler A. The role of agency and morality in reconciliation processes: The perspective of the needs-based model. Curr Dir Psychol Sci. 2015;24(6):477–83. https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721415601625.
44. Burns MD, Granz EL. Confronting sexism: Promoting confrontation acceptance and reducing stereotyping through stereotype framing. Sex Roles. 2021;84(9–10):503–21. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-020-01183-5.
45. Wang S, Wang J, Guo W, Ye H, Lu X, Luo J, et al. Gender difference in gender bias: Transcranial direct current stimulation reduces male's gender stereotypes. Front Hum Neurosci. 2019;13:403. https://doi.org/10.3389/fnhum.2019.00403.
46. Pratto F, Sidanius J, Levin S. Social dominance theory and the dynamics of intergroup relations: Taking stock and looking forward. Eur Rev Soc Psychol. 2010;17:271–320. https://doi.org/10.1080/10463280601055772.
47. Kteily NS, McClanahan KJ. Incorporating insights about intergroup power and dominance to help increase harmony and equality between groups in conflict. Curr Opin Psychol. 2020;33:80–5. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2019.06.030.
48. Saeri AK, Iyer A, Louis WR. Right-wing authoritarianism and social dominance orientation predict outsiders' responses to an external group conflict: Implications for identification, anger, and collective action. Anal Soc Iss & Public Policy. 2015;15(1):303–32. https://doi.org/10.1111/asap.12081.
49. Carlson M. I'd rather go along and be considered a man: Masculinity and bystander intervention. The Journal of Men's Studies. 2008;16(1):3–17. https://doi.org/10.3149/jms.1601.3.
50. Leone RM, Schipani-McLaughlin AM, Haikalis M, Parrott DJ. The "white knight" effect: Benevolent sexism accounts for bystander intervention in party situations among high status men. Psychology of Men & Masculinities. 2020;21(4):704–9. https://doi.org/10.1037/men0000314.
51. Cameron J. Social identity, modern sexism, and perceptions of personal and group discrimination by women and men. Sex Roles. 2001;45:743–66. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1015636318953.
52. Wang K, Dovidio JF. Perceiving and confronting sexism: The causal role of gender identity salience. Psychol Women Q. 2017;41(1):65–76. https://doi.org/10.1177/0361684316670628.

53. Brown R. Social identity theory: Past achievements, current problems and future challenges. Eur J Soc Psychol. 2000;30(6):745–78. https://doi.org/10.1002/1099-0992(200011/12)30:6%3c745::AID-EJSP24%3e3.0.CO;2-O.
54. Eagle DE, Hybels CF, Proeschold-Bell RJ. Perceived social support, received social support, and depression among clergy. J Soc Pers Relat. 2019;36(7):2055–73. https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407518776134.
55. Minkina N. Can #MeToo abolish sexual harassment and discrimination in medicine? The Lancet. 2019;394(10196):383–4. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(19)31731-3.
56. McMahon S. Call for research on bystander intervention to prevent sexual violence: The role of campus environments. American J of Comm Psychol. 2015;55(3–4):472–89. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10464-015-9724-0.
57. Liang T. Sexual harassment at work: Scoping review of reviews. PRBM. 2024;17:1635–60. https://doi.org/10.2147/PRBM.S455753.
58. Konopka K, Rajchert J, Dominiak-Kochanek M, Roszak J. The role of masculinity threat in homonegativity and transphobia. J Homosexuality. 2021;68(5):802–29. https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2019.1661728.
59. Yesilirmak AC, TayfurEkmekci O, Bayhan KP. Desire to work with woman manager: interplay between sexism and organizational culture. GM. 2023;38(5):581–98. https://doi.org/10.1108/GM-07-2021-0225.
60. Rabinovitch AE, Perrin PB, Tabaac AR, Brewster ME. Coping styles and suicide in racially and ethnically diverse lesbian, bisexual, and queer women. Psychol Sex Orientat Gender Divers. 2015;2(4):497–504. https://doi.org/10.1037/sgd0000137.

Publisher's Note