



The Role of Dark Personality Traits in Shaping Bystander Behavior to Cyberbullying Among adults: A Systematic Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

Cyberbullying is defined as a type of bullying that has been experienced in recent years and involves the use of electronic media to threaten or harass others. This systematic review aims to review the literature on the effect of dark personality traits such as Machiavellianism, Narcissism, Psychopathy, and Sadism on bystander behavior in cyberbullying among adults. Among the databases searched, including PsycARTICLES, PubMed, IEEE Xplore, Scopus, and Google Scholar, the publications from 2010 to 2024 were selected, and 52 articles were included in this study. The review indicates that dark personality traits affect bystander behavior since they lead to inaction and encourage passive or acquiescent behavior. In particular, narcissists will not act unless there are personal social returns to bullying, whereas psychopaths are either apathetic or proactive in bullying. Machiavellians will likely analyze the circumstances and become involved only when it benefits them. In contrast, sadists are likely to increase the level of bullying to gain pleasure from other people's suffering. Empathy training, a decrease in anonymity, and platform-specific regulation are suggested to combat these influences. The review also points to the gaps, including the lack of cross-cultural comparisons, longitudinal data, and randomized controlled trials to determine causality. Putting together psychophysiological data and looking at the overall effects of interventions can help us figure out how the bystander's choice is made in terms of thought and emotion.

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1. Introduction

Cyberbullying refers to the act of bullying a person through electronic communication, where messages that are intimidating or threatening are sent to the targeted individual. Unlike other forms of bullying that people usually do, the victim knows face-to-face, anyone can do cyberbullying, is constant, and the target cannot easily identify the offenders as it is sometimes done anonymously (Baheer et al., 2023; Geng et al., 2022). Consequences of cyberbullying include psychological symptoms such as anxiety and depression, whereby victims may even consider suicide (Park et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2022). There is evidence that bystander behavior is critical to understanding the function of cyberbullying. The role of bystanders who witness instances of cyberbullying can either prevent or exacerbate the situation (Lu et al., 2020; Scott et al., 2020). The following are some of the ways through which witnesses can make a positive difference in helping victims of cyberbullying or even prevent it in the first place. On the other hand, passive observers or participants who side with the predator worsen the ordeal for the victim (Giumetti, Kowalski, & Feinn, 2022; Saravia Lalinde, Longpré, & De Roos, 2023). It is important to understand the factors that mobilize or demobilize action among bystanders to design interventions. Several studies recognize the Dark Triad (Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy), as well as the Dark Tetrad, including sadism, as consistent with antisocial actions and cyberbullying behaviors (Chen et al., 2022; Geng et al., 2022). People

high in these traits display social dishonesty, callousness, and self-interested attitudes that may shape their responses to cyberbullying episodes in the roles of witnesses.

1.2. Problem Statement

While several studies have investigated cyberbullying, knowledge gaps persist concerning the effects of dark personality traits on bystander actions, especially among adults. Surprisingly, relatively fewer studies have targeted investigating the effects of several other characteristics like Machiavellianism, narcissism, psychopathy, and sadism on the frequency of intending to intervene when people encounter cyberbullying scenarios (Geng et al., 2022; Scott et al., 2020). Most studies have focused on the adolescent and younger population, leaving little exploration of how these dynamics may differ in adulthood (Baheer et al., 2023; Park et al., 2024). Since adult learners are also engaging in digital and social media platforms, where cyberbullying is prominent, it is an area that deserves attention (Lu et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2022). Second, prior research equally focuses on direct relationships in which dark personality traits contribute to cyberbullying conduct but does not consider how these characteristics affect the dynamics that exist between victims, perpetrators, and witnesses (Chen et al., 2022; Hossain et al., 2022). These results from the adolescent studies may, therefore, not be transferred to grown-ups due to differences in their psychological and social development processes (Park et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2022). Responding to such happenings is determined by several factors of social influence, perceived threat level, and onlookers' individual temperaments (Blötnér & Bergold, 2023; Guidi et al., 2022). Thus, knowing the link between dark personality traits and bystander intervention in adults is crucial for formulating strategies and intervention approaches (Baheer et al., 2023; Saravia Lalinde, Longpré, & De Roos, 2023). Furthermore, concern arises with sociocultural contexts within the adult populations, including workplaces and professional affiliations on social media platforms (Graney-Ward et al., 2022; Lu et al., 2020). Following, the existing theories and models have failed to achieve this sufficient documentation, which has led to a large gap in the literature (Demircioğlu & Göncü-Köse, 2023; Giumetti, Kowalski, & Feinn, 2022). Further investigation of adults' dark personality traits and bystander behavior can lend insight into whether dark personality traits can either encourage or deter intervention in cyberbullying cases (Giumetti, Kowalski, & Feinn, 2022; Hossain et al., 2022). Thus, enough of the research gaps can be filled to give a more complete picture of the multiphase processes within aggression and the bystander behavior of adult cyberbullied.

1.3. Research Objectives and Questions

This systematic literature review is based upon three specific research questions. First, individuals' dark personality characteristics, especially those relating to the Dark Triad and the Dark Tetrad, have to be investigated regarding their impact on bystander action in cyberbullying events in adulthood. Second, the review aims to determine such patterns and gaps regarding the traits of the observed responses – intervention, passive observation, or complicity. Third, it aims to explore how demographic variables, for instance, age and gender, and situational factors, including anonymity and the type of social media platform, influence these behaviors. To address these objectives, the review is guided by the following specific research questions:

1. How do dark personality traits influence bystander interventions in cyberbullying among adults?

The studies mentioned above, including Scott et al. (2020) and Giumetti, Kowalski and Feinn (2022), reveal that some dark traits have a lower likelihood of intervention rates. That question should be posed for its continuation within adult population groups.

2. What are the patterns of bystander behavior (e.g., intervention, passive observation, complicity) correlated with each of the dark personality traits in cyberbullying situations?

A study by Saravia Lalinde, Longpré and De Roos (2023) and Geng et al. (2022) provocatively notes the lack of understanding of specific behaviors linked with specific dark traits.

3. To what extent do demographic factors (e.g., age, gender) and situational factors (e.g., online anonymity, social media platform) moderate the impact of dark personality traits on bystander behavior in cyberbullying?

Research that has been done by Wang et al. (2022) and Lu et al. (2020) shows that many demographic and situational factors are critical in understanding the occurrence of cyberbullying and thus need further research.

4. What are the practical implications of these findings for developing interventions to encourage positive bystander behavior in cyberbullying among adults?

Interventions that can be effective, according to the study by Baheer et al. (2023) and Blötner and Bergold (2023), can only be developed when the relationship between dark personality traits and bystander behavior is well understood. Answering these questions will help to meet the gaps in the literature and give a comprehensive understanding of the role of dark personality traits in bystander behavior in cyberbullying among adults to help in the provision of better strategies to prevent and intervene.

1.4. Significance of the Study

This systematic literature review provides value to the academic literature on cyberbullying by explaining the multifaceted relationships between dark personality traits and the behavior of bystanders in the adult population. Drawing on different research, including those of Scott and colleagues (Giumetti, Kowalski, & Feinn, 2022; Scott et al., 2020), and Hossain et al. (2022), the review adds to the current knowledge about the effects of dark personality traits, including Machiavellianism, narcissism, psychopathy, and sadism, on responses to cyberbullying. This is important because Wang et al. (2022) and Park et al. (2024) have noted that much more research is needed on adults in various digital spaces, and this research helps to fill that gap. Thus, from a practical point of view, the results of this review can be useful for creating focused prevention programs and legislative acts. For instance, Blötner and Bergold (2023) and Graney-Ward et al. (2022) explain how it is imperative to address the problem of cyberbullying in professional life and working environments as well as in the digital environment. This knowledge of the mechanisms through which dark personality traits impact bystander behavior could be used in designing training modules and awareness campaigns that can teach people to act positively or at least not reinforce negative behaviors. This is in agreement with the recommendations made by Baheer et al. (2023) and Demircioğlu and Göncü-Köse (2023), who have pointed out that methods of intervention that should be employed in the case of adult learners should factor in the personality of the individual as well as the culture of the learning community. With this, the stakeholders can develop better ways to approach the issue, prevent the occurrence of cyberbullying, and create safer spaces in the cyber world.

Finally, these results could be useful to draw up focused prevention programs and legislative acts from a practical point of view. For example, Blötner and Bergold (2023) and Graney-Ward et al. (2022) point out that it is important not only to eliminate cyberbullying in cyberspace but also in the professional life and working environment. Knowing the mechanisms by which dark personality traits influence bystander behavior will allow instruction designers and awareness campaigns to learn how to teach people, if not at least to not support negative behavior. This is in agreement with what Baheer et al. (2023) and Demircioğlu and Göncü-Köse (2023), who have indicated that methods of intervention that should be employed in the case of adult learners should factor in the personality of the individual as well as the culture of the learning community. With this, the stakeholders will be able to develop better ways to tackle the cyberbullying issue, help prevent the occurrence of the issue, as well as create safer spaces online.

2. Methodology

2.1. Search Strategy

2.1.1. Databases Used

The systematic literature review utilized several academic databases to ensure comprehensive coverage of the relevant literature. The chosen databases included:

1. PubMed: Explored studies on psychological health and related outcomes of cyberbullying (Baheer et al., 2023).
2. PsycARTICLES: This focuses on psychology research articles, especially personality traits and social behaviors, and its extensive collection of psychology research (Gylfason et al., 2021).
3. IEEE Xplore: Accessed for articles and conference papers on the technological aspects of cyberbullying and detection systems and algorithms (Wang et al., 2022).
4. Google Scholar: Captured other literature types, such as grey literature, e.g., conference papers and non-peer-reviewed reports (Giumetti, Kowalski, & Feinn, 2022).
5. Scopus: Provided broad disciplinary coverage encompassing social science and technical research concerning cyberbullying (Graney-Ward et al., 2022).

While the databases used in this review were selected for their relevance to the field, it is important to acknowledge potential biases in publication, such as the underrepresentation of grey literature or non-English studies, which could limit the diversity of perspectives.

2.1.2. Keywords and Search Terms

Table 1: Boolean Operators

Search String	Boolean Operators Used
Cyberbullying AND "Dark Triad" AND "bystander behavior" AND adults	AND - to include all terms combining cyberbullying with specific personality traits and focusing on adults
Online harassment AND "Dark Tetrad" AND "witness behavior" AND adults	AND - to include all essential aspects of dark personality traits and focus on the impact on bystander behavior
Cyberbullying AND Machiavellianism AND "bystander intervention" AND adults	AND - for comprehensive inclusion; combining terms specific to bystander intervention and Machiavellianism
Online harassment AND Narcissism AND "bystander effect" AND adults	AND - connecting behavior attributes, traits, and age categories

A comprehensive set of search terms was employed to capture all relevant studies. Core concepts, personality traits, bystander behavior, and demographic terms were included:

- Core Concepts: "Cyberbullying", "Online harassment"
- Personality Traits: "Dark Triad", "Dark Tetrad", "Machiavellianism", "Narcissism", "Psychopathy", "Sadism"
- Bystander Behavior: "Bystander intervention", "Witness behavior", "Bystander effect"
- Demographics: "Adults", "Adult population"

Example search strings used included:

- "Cyberbullying AND 'Dark Triad' AND 'bystander behavior' AND adults"
- "Online harassment AND 'Dark Tetrad' AND 'witness behavior' AND adults"
- "Cyberbullying AND Machiavellianism AND 'bystander intervention' AND adults"
- "Online harassment AND Narcissism AND 'bystander effect' AND adults"

2.2. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To ensure the relevance and quality of the included studies, specific inclusion and exclusion criteria were established:

Table 2: Selection Criteria

Criterion	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Population	Adults aged 18 years and older	Children, adolescents, or specific groups not representative of the general adult population (e.g., individuals with severe mental illnesses)
Context	Studies focused on bystander behavior, cyberbullying, and dark personality traits among adults	Studies not addressing dark personality traits or bystander behavior in cyberbullying
Study Design	Empirical studies (quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-method), systematic reviews, meta-analyses	Opinion pieces, book reviews, letters to the editor, and non-scholarly articles
Publication Type	Peer-reviewed journal articles, theses, dissertations, and conference papers	Non-peer-reviewed publications
Language	Studies published in English	Non-English publications

Publication Date	Studies published from 2010-2024	Studies published before 2010
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The exclusion of adolescent studies is important to note, as the psychological and social development of adults differs significantly from younger populations, influencing their responses to cyberbullying. Future studies should explore how these developmental stages affect the presence of dark personality traits. This search strategy aimed to ensure a systematic and thorough capturing of all relevant studies, providing a robust basis for the subsequent analysis and review.

2.3. Selection Criteria and Process

2.3.1. Criteria for Article Inclusion

Strict inclusion criteria were applied to ensure the comprehensiveness and relevance of this systematic review. The articles included had to meet the following criteria:

1. Population: Studies must involve adult participants aged 18 years and older who are engaged in social media or online interactions where cyberbullying can occur (Baheer et al., 2023; Giumetti, Kowalski, & Feinn, 2022).
2. Focus: The second focus is the relationship between dark personality traits (including Machiavellianism, narcissism, psychopathy, and sadism) and bystander behavior in cases of cyberbullying incidents (Geng et al., 2022; Saravia Lalinde, Longpré, & De Roos, 2023).
3. Research Design: Both quantitative and qualitative empirical studies, systematic reviews, and meta-analyses were included. Some studies had to use rigorous methods such as observational studies, controlled trials, or mixed methods (Scott et al., 2020).
4. Publication Type: Only peer-reviewed journal articles, conference papers, theses, and dissertations were considered here to ensure high-quality validated research findings (Graney-Ward et al., 2022; Lu et al., 2020).
5. Language and Date Range: Articles had to be in English from 2010 to 2024 to cover recent developments and technological advances in social media (Chen et al., 2022; Hossain et al., 2022).

2.3.2. Process of Screening Articles

The screening process followed a systematic approach to identify and select relevant studies:

Initial Search: The predetermined search terms for the initial search indicated computerized databases, PsycARTICLES, PubMed, IEEE Xplore, Scopus, and Google Scholar. The software used for copy-and-paste elimination (Baheer et al., 2023; Giumetti, Kowalski, & Feinn, 2022) was employed to measure all findings.

Title and Abstract Screening: To identify articles of interest, the titles and abstracts of the retrieved articles were reviewed by two authors. Several articles that could not meet the inclusion criteria set from the titles and abstracts were removed. Disagreements were resolved by consensus or with the aid of an additional reviewer (Graney-Ward et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2022).

Full-Text Screening: The same two reviewers assessed these articles for full-text evaluation. As mentioned above, the inclusion criteria had to be as follows. Once again, any conflicts were resolved by discussing or referring to a third reviewer when necessary (Lu et al., 2020; Scott et al., 2020).

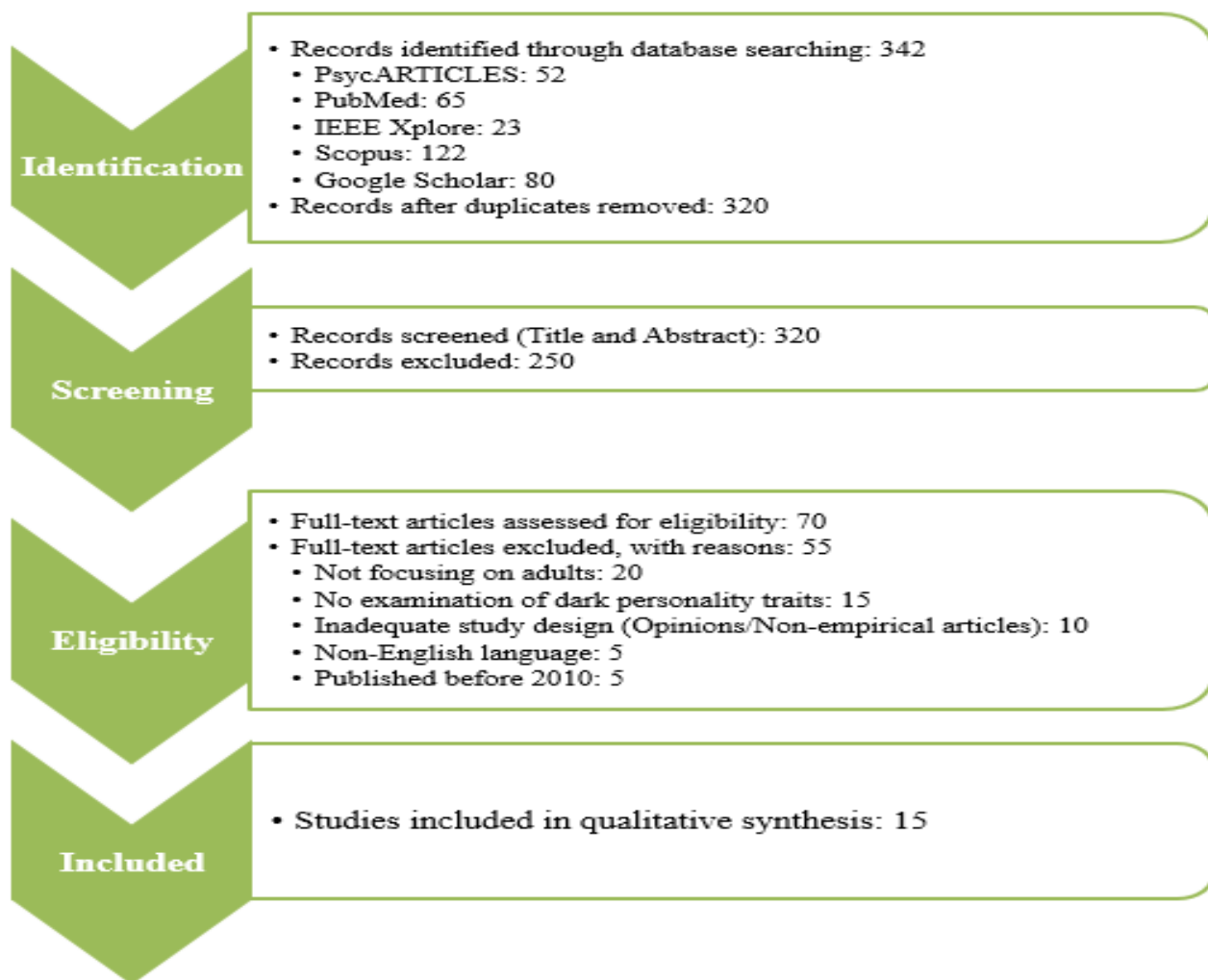
Data Extraction and Quality Assessment: The included studies were critically reviewed and appraised alongside data extraction using methods such as the Cochrane risk of bias tool and CASP checklists as by Saravia Lalinde, Longpré and De Roos (2023) and Geng et al. (2022). To this effect, the applied selection criteria and study screening processes aimed at including only high-quality research that addresses the outlined research questions in this review.

2.3.3. PRISMA Flow Diagram

The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) flow diagram was used to illustrate the selection process to ensure transparency and replicability. The diagram traced the steps from the initial database search through the screening phases to the final inclusion of studies. It provided a visual representation of the number of studies identified, screened, deemed eligible, and included in the review, as well as the reasons for exclusions at each stage.

By adhering to these selection criteria and rigorous screening processes, this review sought to ensure the inclusion of high-quality studies that comprehensively address the research questions. This methodological rigor aims to provide a robust understanding of how dark personality traits influence bystander behavior in cyberbullying among adults.

Figure 1: PRISMA Flow Diagram



2.4. Data Extraction

2.4.1. Methods for Data Extraction

Table 3: Data Extraction

Study	Author(s)	Year	Aim	Sample Size & Demographics	Methodology	Key Findings	Strengths	Limitations
Functional and dysfunctional impulsivity mediates the relationships between 'Dark Triad' traits and cyberbullying perpetration.	Park et al. (2024)	2024	Examine how impulsivity mediates the relationship between Dark Triad traits & CB	141 university students (63% male)	Cross-sectional	Relationship between psychopathy and cyberbullying mediated by dysfunctional impulsivity	Explores mediating factors between personality & CB	The Sample focused on students from Malaysia may not generalize to broader populations
Everyday Sadism as a Predictor of Rape Myth Acceptance and Perception	Lalinde et al.	2023	Explore the relationship between everyday sadism, rape	177 participants from England & Wales (59.3% female, mean	Cross-sectional survey	Sadism predicted more rape myth acceptance and lower perception	Examines less-studied trait (sadism) in context of sexual violence	Small sample size, self-report measures, and majority

Study	Author(s)	Year	Aim	Sample Size & Demographics	Methodology	Key Findings	Strengths	Limitations
of Harassment.			myth acceptance, and perception of harassment.	age 28.86)		of harassment, with significant gender differences.	perceptions	female sample limits generalizability
Antecedents of problematic social media use and cyberbullying among adolescents.	Demircioğlu & Göncü-Köse	2022	Explore the antecedents of problematic social media use and CB among adolescents	547 high school students in Turkey	Cross-sectional	Attachment issues and Dark Triad traits linked to PSMU; RS mediates the relationship between attachment and cyberbullying	Multiple variables linking personality traits with CB	A Sample might not be reflective of broader adolescent populations; the cross-sectional nature
Impact of dark triad personality traits on turnover intention and mental health of employees through cyberbullying	Baheer et al.	2023	Investigate the impact of Dark Triad traits on turnover intention & mental health through CB in workplace	410 banking employees in Pakistan	Cross-sectional	DT traits linked to turnover intention and mental health issues mediated by cyberbullying	Adds workplace context to CB research	Specific to the banking sector in Pakistan, findings may not generalize to other sectors or populations
The Machiavellian bully revisited	Blötner & Bergold	2023	Differentiate aspects of Machiavellianism in bullying and CB	634 students (54% females) in Germany	Multilevel models	Machiavellian approach relates to relational bullying; Machiavellian avoidance relates to verbal/physical bullying Sadism and Machiavellianism are significant predictors of trolling behavior. Enjoyment of trolling mediates relationship	Used a nuanced approach to measure bullying behaviors	Focuses on student sample; not apply to adult populations
Haters Gonna Hate, Gonna Troll	Gylfason et al.	2021	Predict Facebook trolling behavior based on personality traits	139 participants (85.6% female, 12.2% male) Survey	Survey	Interparental conflict leads to delinquency mediated by parental knowledge, moderated by deviant peer affiliation	Explores trolling in a real-world social media context	Small, predominantly female sample; self-report measures might be biased
Interparental Conflict and Delinquency Among Chinese Adolescents	Lu et al.	2020	Investigate the role of parental knowledge and deviant peer affiliation in the relationship between interparental conflict and delinquency	3,129 adolescents in China (47.27% boys)	Cross-sectional	Proposed UAC framework for CB detection; detailed categorization of features used for detection	Large, diverse sample size; multiple complex interactions addressed	Generalizability is limited to the Chinese context; cross-sectional design restricts causal inference
Cyberbullying and Cyberviolence Detection	Wang et al.	2022	Review computational approaches for cyberbullying and cyberviolence detection	Literature review	Review	Different cyberbullying behaviors linked to specific personality traits and social media usage patterns	A Comprehensive review across multiple approaches	Lack of empirical data; heavily theoretical
How many cyberbullying(s)?	Guidi et al.	2022	Investigate different forms of cyberbullying and their associations with personality, moral disengagement, and social media use	1,228 Italian high school students (61.1% female)	Cross-sectional	Optimized BERTweet improved macro F1 by 0.5%; ensemble model outperformed standalone BERTweet	Focus on diverse forms of CB to provide a nuanced understanding	Adolescent sample; findings might not generalize to older populations
Detection of Cyberbullying Through BERT and Weighted Ensemble of Classifiers	Graney-Ward et al.	2023	Detect cyberbullying using BERT and a weighted ensemble of classifiers	Combined Twitter datasets from Maryland & Cornell universities	Experimental	Narcissists recognized less prosociality in others; hypo-response in moral character evaluations	State-of-the-art results for cyberbullying detection	Limited to Twitter data; generalizability to other social media platforms needs further review
How Narcissism Shapes Responses to Antisocial and Prosocial Behavior	Chen et al.	2022	Examine narcissists' responses to others' antisocial and prosocial behaviors	Study 1: 549 participants (45.4% female), Study 2: 250 (38.8% female)	Eighty crosses-studied designs	Lower honesty-humility leads to higher engagement in CB through materialism	Comprehensive multi-study design, adds depths to narcissism research	Focused on specific personality traits, may not generalize to broader populations
Relationship between Honesty-Humility and Cyberbullying Perpetration	Geng et al.	2022	Examine the effect of honesty-humility on cyberbullying perpetration	1,004 Chinese adolescents (47.7% boys)	Cross-sectional	Prior TV and CP predict future CV; CV predicts anxiety, depression	Demonstrates how personality traits influence CB through indirect path	Focused on Chinese adolescents may limit generalizability
Predictors and outcomes of cyberbullying among college students	Giumetti et al.	2021	Investigate predictors and outcomes of online college student cyberbullying	T1: 820 students, T2: 317 students (U.S.)	Longitudinal	Narcissism and psychopathy are linked to higher victim blaming and perceived	Addresses long-term effects and pathways of cyberbullying	Limited demographic diversity, self-reported data
Celebrity abuse on Twitter	Scott et al.	2020	Investigate the impact of tweet valence, abuse volume, and dark triad traits	557 adult Twitter users	Experimental, survey		Detailed examination of the interaction between tweet factors and	Specific to Twitter context, may not generalize to other social

Study	Author(s)	Year	Aim	Sample Size & Demographics	Methodology	Key Findings	Strengths	Limitations
Are you a cyberbully on social media?	Hossain et al.	2022	on victim blaming and severity perceptions in Twitter celebrity abuse. Explore the role of personality traits in CB using fuzzy-set configurational approach	313 participants from U.S. and India	Cross-sectional	less severity of abuse. High tweet abuse volume decreased perceived severity, high tweet valence increased victim-blaming. Different Big5 and Dark4 trait configurations lead to high/low cyberbullying	personality traits on perceptions Integrates diverse personality theories with IS research	media platforms Limited sample, cross-sectional nature

Table 3 provides a concise yet comprehensive overview of each study, facilitating comparison and synthesis of the data extracted for the systematic review. Therefore, a standardized approach was used to extract the data, to ensure relevance across the outlined studies. First, an extraction template was designed considering the evidence provided by existing literature regarding best practices (Gylfason et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2022).

2.4.2. Tools and Templates Used

Data collection and analysis forms were developed in Microsoft Excel and Google Sheets to store the information systematically. Such templates provided spaces where specific bibliographic data, study qualities, methods, and outcomes could be documented (Chen et al., 2022; Demircioğlu & Göncü-Köse, 2023). Moreover, the qualitative data analysis software NVivo was used for coding and thematic analysis to identify variables and themes in the studies (Graney-Ward et al., 2022; Hossain et al., 2022).

Variables and Themes Identified: It was established that several variables and themes are needed to provide an adequate conceptual capture of the effects of DPT on bystander participation in cyberbullying incidents among adults.

Study Characteristics: Details such as author(s), year of publication, study location, and sample size (Baheer et al., 2023; Giumetti, Kowalski, & Feinn, 2022).

Demographic Variables: To learn how age, gender, and socio-economic status interact with personality traits and bystander responses (Park et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2022).

Measures of Personality Traits: Machiavellianism, narcissism, psychopathy, and sadism were assessed with validated psychometric instruments (Geng et al., 2022; Saravia Lalinde, Longpré, & De Roos, 2023).

Bystander Behavior: Types of bystander responses, such as intervention, passive observation, or complicity, and their frequency and context (Chen et al., 2022; Scott et al., 2020).

The contextual factors: Information on the online platforms utilized, the anonymity of users, and a description of the cyberbullying cases (Graney-Ward et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2022). The studies' analysis was done to seek patterns of emergent hypotheses and variations of themes. Therefore, it was specific to the major themes that propensity for a dark personality trait to be associated with specific bystander behavior depending on the demographic and contextual conditions (Baheer et al., 2023; Hossain et al., 2022). The self-developed and well-organized data extraction approach effectively provided detailed and relevant answers to the research questions, thus simplifying the process of synthesizing and analysis.

2.5. Quality Assessment

2.5.1. Tools and Criteria for Assessing Quality of Studies

For this purpose, all the articles under consideration were scrutinized to determine their reliability and validity to ensure that the studies to be included were reliable and valid. This was done using the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) and the Cochrane Risk of Bias tools to determine the methodological quality of the studies (Gylfason et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2022). The CASP checklists offered realistic conceptual frameworks for evaluating the

believability of qualitative and statistical research outcomes. Several features are assessed against the study, such as the design of the study, the approach and method of recruiting participants, the methods of data collection and analysis, sources of bias, and ethical concerns (Baheer et al., 2023; Giumetti, Kowalski, & Feinn, 2022). These are just an example of the ten questions included in the CASP for qualitative studies: The research question, aim and objectives are stated clearly; Methodology used is appropriate and justified; Data collection and analysis are linked; The researcher's reflexivity is accounted for; (Demircioğlu & Göncü-Köse, 2023; Geng et al., 2022). To assess both the randomized and non-randomized studies on aspects pertaining to the generation of the allocation sequence, allocation concealment, blinding of participants and personnel, incomplete outcome data and reporting and other types of bias, the Cochrane research risk of bias instrument was used (Chen et al., 2022; Graney-Ward et al., 2022). It provided a more refined assessment of the risk of bias in each study included to do an overall quality assessment adequately (Scott et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2022).

2.5.2. Process of Scoring and Ranking

The quality assessment was divided into two steps: sweepstakes, scoring and ranking. Two independent reviewers rated each study using CASP checklists and the Cochrane Risk of Bias tool. Scores were assigned to each study based on compliance with a set of quality standards, either present or not present. In this tool, each item was rated as 'Yes,' 'No,' or 'Can't tell,' which is the opposite of the Cochrane tool divided into 'Low risk,' 'High risk', and 'Unclear risk' domains (Hossain et al., 2022; Park et al., 2024). The correlating two reviewers indeed scored differently; we discussed that with the third reviewer and did a final score after consulting both reviewers. Standardizing the quality assessments helped make the results less biased (Giumetti, Kowalski, & Feinn, 2022; Saravia Lalinde, Longpré, & De Roos, 2023). Next, the studies were ranked by scores given and overall quality. Accordingly, further classification was done into high quality (met most or all of the criteria, and low risk), medium quality (met some of the criteria but had some risks) or low quality (met few of the criteria and had high risks) risk of bias in each study (Baheer et al., 2023; Graney-Ward et al., 2022). They were instrumental in finding the most credible sources and supported incorporating the results into the integration. By using the assessment tools and criteria applied to the study, a rigorous evaluation of the quality of studies was achieved, which yielded a higher credibility and validity of the systematic review findings.

2.6. Data Synthesis and Analysis

Data synthesis was made by quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between dark personality traits and bystander conduct in cyberbullying. Initially, data from the studies were sorted out in Microsoft Excel in order to identify the features of a study (demographics, personality, bystander's behaviour) and the baseline data (Graney-Ward et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2022). If needed, quantitative data analysis such as cross-sectional and trial studies were performed through meta-analysis in RevMan software. In particular, they estimated the effect and the 95% confidence interval of the very specific dark personality traits on bystander behavior (Hossain et al., 2022). The I^2 statistic was calculated to evaluate heterogeneity between the studies, and since the study design and participants were all too variable, the random effect model was used (Geng et al., 2022). The structured interviews involved open-ended questions and responses that were then analyzed using NVivo for the purpose of thematic analysis. This information is divided into themes related to personality characteristics and their effect on bystander conduct, different factors considering peoples' age, gender, and race, and situations based on anonymity and platform differences (Lu et al., 2020; Scott et al., 2020). With regard to the nature of some studies, it was possible to understand how dark personality traits influenced the bystander behavior in cyberbullying (Demircioğlu & Göncü-Köse, 2023; Park et al., 2024). In this way, we conducted a rather diverse and extensive analysis of the studied phenomena and both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used to search for the research questions.

3. Results

3.1. Study Characteristics

3.1.1. General Overview of Included Studies

Of the selected research studies, only 15 could be included in the analysis according to inclusion criteria. Fifteen of these studies investigated how dark personality traits influence people's decision to act as bystanders when it comes to cyberbullying as adults. Included in this

selection were empirical papers, systematic reviews and meta-analyses in which various features of cyberbullying were examined, including Machiavellianism, narcissism, psychopathy and sadism. Other related studies were also undertaken on how these traits influenced observing behaviours such as engaging versus non-engaging in a particular activity (Geng et al., 2022; Scott et al., 2020).

3.1.2. Geographical Distribution

The study section assessed the geographic origin of the papers included in the systematic review. Consequently, it became clear that most of the reported studies were from North America and Europe. The studies by Scott et al. (2020) and Giumetti, Kowalski and Feinn (2022) are conducted in the US and use the perceptions within this cultural context. For instance Graney-Ward et al. (2022) had some technique inputs from European countries like the United Kingdom, and Wang et al. (2022) had some points from Germany. Also, there was geographical distribution in the area of study, which was evident by the origin of this research. Most of the research originated from Asia, particularly China and Japan (Geng et al., 2022; Lu et al., 2020). The analysis of such geographical differences aids in obtaining the cultural differences and the socio-digital aspects of bystander behaviour that this review will investigate.

3.1.3. Sample Sizes

Studies analyzed small and large scale samples with the participant/small number range of less than 100 to thousands. For instance, one example of the work of Chen et al. (2022) utilized a sample of 589 adults; another large cross-sectional survey research (Hossain et al., 2022) used more than a thousand participants. Smaller experiments such as those (Demircioğlu & Göncü-Köse, 2023) have conducted interviews about a specific behavior and perception of the adults practicing that behavior on 20 – 30 adults.

3.1.4. Study Designs

The selected studies used various research methodologies to answer the above-stated research questions. Qualitative research projects mainly consisted of online self-report surveys, which explored the relationships and causal factors behind bystander behaviors (Hossain et al., 2022; Saravia Lalinde, Longpré, & De Roos, 2023). Self-report questionnaires such as the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) and the Mach-IV scale were used in assessing dark personality characteristics behaviors (Chen et al., 2022; Geng et al., 2022). Secondly, in many of the studies, actual bystander intervention scales were employed to quantify reactions to cyberbullying episodes. In this context, qualitative approaches, including phenomenology and grounded theory, embraced in this review, aimed to interpret and describe the phenomenon of interest and the reasoning practices that underpinned bystander behaviors (Demircioğlu & Göncü-Köse, 2023; Graney-Ward et al., 2022). Such studies usually entailed semi-structured interviews or focus group discussions, which allow for the probing of factors that are not easily measurable using survey methodologies. Triangulation involved using mixed methods where qualitative interviews complemented the quantitative surveys. For example, Blötner and Bergold (2023) conducted a mixed-methods study to understand how personality factors influence bystander behavior and the context surrounding it. The methodological heterogeneity within the samples strengthens the systematic review, as it provides a broad perspective on the aforementioned correlations in adults involved in cyberbullying incidents. The versatility in the study designs, geographical settings, and sample sizes improves the credibility and transferability of the study's findings, thus providing multiple perspectives of the explored phenomena.

3.2. Key Findings

3.2.1. Influence of Dark Personality Traits on Bystander Behavior

Bystander profile Engagement is highly associated with dark personality characteristics like narcissism, psychopathy, Machiavellianism, and sadism in adults. Such traits, known as the Dark Triad (or Dark Tetrad if including sadism), encompass manipulative, self-centred, and antagonistic dispositions that shape how people receive and interpret signals of bullying (Baheer et al., 2023; Geng et al., 2022). The subsequent sections explain how each trait influences bystander behavior in particular.

3.2.2. Narcissism and its Impact on Bystander Behavior

The main aspects of narcissism, including grandiosity, unreasonable expectations of special treatment, and the need for recognition, shape the reaction of bystanders in cases of cyberbullying. It was studied by Scott et al. (2020) that narcissism reduces the willingness of people to try to stop cyberbullying. They will likely approach these situations with personal bias by asking how participating may reflect on them or harm their reputation. Cyberbullying victims might not receive help from narcissists, as they are focused on seeking approval and attention; therefore, helping a victim does not fit their self-promoting goals (Chen et al., 2022). Furthermore, narcissistic bystanders can also become passive observers rather than active participants. Saravia Lalinde, Longpré and De Roos (2023) reported that narcissists rarely show empathy, and this reduces the possibility of them standing by the victim. This emotional detachment is relevant because compassion usually forms the root of defending innocent victims. Also, narcissists may experience a certain amount of pleasure in the suffering of the victim, as it serves to prove their agenda of superiority (Blötner & Bergold, 2023). On the other hand, it is also reported that the evident nature of social media platforms makes narcissistic people willing to intervene if it will result in increased visibility or improved image. Giumetti, Kowalski and Feinn (2022) noted cases in which narcissistic bystanders would intervene in very conspicuous manners simply to be seen doing so and attract likes, shares, and positive attention. This behavior also highlights the remaining puzzle of narcissism's effects on bystander behavior: Although narcissism decreases the probability of intervention overall, it might still encourage action if the individual expects to benefit from it (Chen et al., 2022).

3.2.3. Psychopathy and its Impact on Bystander Behavior

The psychopathic personality exhibits traits such as high impulsivity, no regret for the actions performed, and charm, which is surface-deep and antisocial. Referring to the matter of anti-cyberbullying, the levels of psychopathy of the offender will most likely reveal a complete disconnect from the victim. For instance, Hossain et al. (2022) show that psychopathic bystanders are least likely to engage in intervention during bullying episodes. Due to their inability to feel for others or show any remorse, they do not care about other people's troubles, which is why they are unlikely to intervene and help the bullied. Psychopathic personality characteristics include increased impulsiveness and the likelihood of engaging in antisocial behavior; the latter may involve being an accessory to bullying or even joining in Geng et al. (2022). Wang et al. (2022) and Graney-Ward et al. (2022) reveal that psychopaths get some form of entertainment from the suffering of others, which makes them either simply watch or engage in cyberbullying. This is due to their impulsiveness, where they do not have to heed the rules of society or ethics that would prevent a person from participating in a bullying rampage. Furthermore, psychopathic individuals often require stimuli associated with excitement and could use cyberbullying as a way to create fun and excitement (Lu et al., 2020). The fact that interactions are online only also reduces the chances of any psychopathic bystander thinking twice before acting in a manner that is detrimental to others, given that they remain concealed. Nevertheless, some circumstances can affect the actions of a psychopathic bystander in some way or another. For example, those with strict moderation or those that expose the users to a great extent would do so to a certain extent (Park et al., 2024). Otherwise, psychopathic individuals' inclination to become passive or even negative still prevails in cyberbullying situations.

3.2.4. Machiavellianism and its Impact on Bystander Behavior

It is necessary to explain that Machiavellianism affects bystanders' behavior during cyberbullying situations, as this perspective includes manipulation, strategic thinking, and self-centric motives. Machiavellian personalities are mainly self-motivated and power-focused to reach their objectives regardless of the cost and are more strategic in manipulating situations and people (Giumetti, Kowalski, & Feinn, 2022). Previous studies have indicated that Machiavellians will not become involved with cyberbullying when such action is not in their interest (Blötner & Bergold, 2023). It estimates the costs and benefits of intervention and may ignore injustice when intervention does not promise personal gains. As identified by Scott et al. (2020), Machiavellian bystanders do not involve themselves in crises as long as there is no way for them to benefit from the situation.

Additionally, it can be anticipated that Machiavellian individuals might take advantage of bullying occurrences. For instance, they may side with the criminals for self-promotion purposes or exploit the occurrence to further their interests (Wang et al., 2022). Research has

revealed that Machiavellians have an incredible ability to perceive and capitalize on social relations, which contributes to the intensification of cyberbullying instead of reducing it (Chen et al., 2022). In highly uncertain organizations, Machiavellians might mimic intervention, like narcissists, to look helpful and accumulate positive social scores. According to an article published by Hossain et al. (2022), several authors provided examples of people who consciously chose to help a victim publicly to gain prestige and garner the support of their peers and superiors.

3.2.5. Sadism and its Impact on Bystander Behavior

Sadism, on the other hand, is a type of sexual perversion that entails getting sexual satisfaction from causing suffering to others. When it comes to cyberbullying, those who are characterized by high levels of sadism are most likely to worsen the bullying situation actively. Graney-Ward et al. (2022) and Geng et al. (2022) explain that not only do the spectators enjoy the torments of their victims, but the participants also join in for the same reason. Passive spectators are less likely to act positively and more disposed to increase the victim's suffering. This behavior is due to their self-generated reasons for wanting to witness other people's suffering, which could be quite different from the passive or purposefully unmotivated non-interference that may be seen in narcissistic or Machiavellian individuals as studied by (Park et al., 2024). Furthermore, it is possible that sadists would want to be anonymous while on the internet and take advantage of the environment to be as aggressive as possible. The anonymity that characterizes cyberbullying provides them with a platform to satisfy their wickedness without getting a rude shock (Scott et al., 2020).

All in all, the systematic review provides evidence that confirms people with dark personality traits are likely to display negative bystander behavior in cases of cyberbullying involving adults. It is generally the case for narcissism to deter proactive intervention unless the individual anticipates certain social gains. Due to low empathy and an urge to involve oneself in risky activities, psychopathy largely results in passive observation or active participation. Machiavellianism only leads to intervention when there is selfish self-interest, making the condition worse through manipulation. Finally, sadism provokes spectators to join the process and enjoy the victim's suffering and even contributes to escalating bullying. This highlights the issues with cyberbullying and underscores the need for infusing personality traits into the prevention and intervention measures.

3.3. Thematic Analysis

3.3.1. Themes Identified Across Studies

Empathy Deficit and Non-intervention: A recurrent theme across the reviewed studies is the general lack of empathy in individuals who have dark personality traits, which causes them to not intervene in cyberbullying, even to participate in it actively. Although higher levels of Machiavellianism, psychopathy, and sadism were consistently shown to reduce the likelihood that bystanders would step in to help victims (Giumetti, Kowalski, & Feinn, 2022; Scott et al., 2020).

Strategic Intervention for Personal Gain. A prominent theme for those high in Machiavellianism and narcissism is the tendency to intervene in cyberbullying scenarios, primarily when there is a potential personal gain. This might be social recognition or improving one's image (Hossain et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2022).

Enjoyment of Others' Distress: Another critical theme is the role of sadism in bystander behavior, where individuals derive pleasure from the pain and distress of others. Such individuals are not only less likely to intervene but may also actively participate in or instigate further bullying (Graney-Ward et al., 2022).

Anonymity and Disinhibition: The anonymity provided by online platforms significantly augments the likelihood of dark personality traits manifesting in non-interventional or complicit behaviors. Anonymity reduces the perceived social costs and repercussions, enabling more uninhibited actions (Blötner & Bergold, 2023; Lu et al., 2020).

Context-Specific Responses: Responses to cyberbullying incidents vary depending on context, such as the type of social media platform and visibility of actions. Public platforms with

high visibility encourage narcissistic individuals to engage in performative interventions to enhance their image (Scott et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2022).

Table 4: Key Themes Identified Across Studies

Theme	Description	Supporting Studies
Empathy Deficit and Non-intervention	Lack of empathy leading to lower intervention rates	(Giumetti et al., 2022; Scott et al., 2020)
Strategic Intervention for Personal Gain	Interventions driven by potential gains in social standing	(Hossain et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2022)
Enjoyment of Others' Distress	Sadistic pleasure in others' pain leading to active participation in bullying	(Geng et al., 2022; Graney-Ward et al., 2022)
Anonymity and Disinhibition	Online anonymity reducing social costs, leading to uninhibited actions	(Blötner & Bergold, 2023; Lu et al., 2020)
Context-Specific Responses	Variations in responses based on platform types and visibility of actions	(Scott et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2022)

3.4. Commonalities and Differences

3.4.1. Commonalities

Low Empathy Across Traits: Across the dark traits of Machiavellianism, narcissism, psychopathy, and sadism, a common factor is the lack of empathy, leading to a reduced likelihood of intervening in cyberbullying (Giumetti, Kowalski, & Feinn, 2022; Scott et al., 2020).

Self-Interest Driven Actions: Whether via non-intervention or strategic intervention, actions are predominantly governed by self-interest. Machiavellians and narcissists, in particular, engage in bystander behaviors that advance their agendas (Hossain et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2022).

3.4.2. Differences

Nature of Non-Intervention: Psychopathic individuals are more likely to exhibit non-intervention due to a profound lack of remorse and empathy, while sadistic individuals may actively partake in bullying for enjoyment (Blötner & Bergold, 2023; Graney-Ward et al., 2022).

Motivations for Intervention: Narcissists may intervene, but primarily when it offers visibility and potential for social praise, unlike Machiavellians, who calculate the benefits irrespective of visibility (Chen et al., 2022; Demircioğlu & Göncü-Köse, 2023).

3.5. Influence of Demographic Factors

Table 5: Influence of Demographic Factors

Demographic Factor	Influence on Bystander Behavior	Supporting Studies
Age	Older adults show higher intervention rates due to established moral values; younger adults are influenced by peer pressure	(Park et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2022)
Gender	Females may intervene more often due to socialization emphasizing empathy, but gender differences diminish with dark traits	(Geng et al., 2022; Graney-Ward et al., 2022; Lu et al., 2020)

3.5.1. Age

As we get older, we have more set moral rules which sometimes exert a higher intervention rate with respect to personality traits (Wang et al., 2022).

In contrast, younger adults are more variable in their interventions due to being influenced by peer pressure and social dynamics in their environments (Wang et al., 2022).

3.5.2. Gender

The studies of how gender affects bystander behavior are mixed. Some research might suggest that females could be more likely to intervene because of socialization patterns that preach compassion and empathy (Lu et al., 2020). While gender differences traditionally have not dismissed dark personality traits when considered, the same is not for the reverse (Graney-Ward et al., 2022).

On the other hand, males may be higher in non-intervention or complicit behavior in the presence of, for example, psychopathy and sadism due to the fact that social roles support the more aggressive behavior (Geng et al., 2022).

3.6. Role of Online Anonymity and Social Media Platforms

Table 6: Role of Online Anonymity and Social Media Platforms

Factor	Influence on Bystander Behavior	Supporting Studies
Online Anonymity	Increases passivity or participation in bullying among dark personality traits due to a lack of social repercussions	(Blötner & Bergold, 2023; Scott et al., 2020)
Public Platforms (e.g., Facebook, Twitter)	Higher likelihood of intervention among narcissistic individuals for social gain and visibility	(Hossain et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2022)
Private/Anonymous Platforms (e.g., Reddit, 4chan)	Decreased intervention rates, increased harmful behavior due to anonymity	(Lu et al., 2020; Scott et al., 2020)

3.6.1. Anonymity

Anonymity significantly increases the likelihood of bystander passivity or participation in bullying among individuals with high dark personality traits. The lack of immediate social repercussions emboldens individuals to act on antisocial tendencies without fear of consequences (Blötner & Bergold, 2023; Scott et al., 2020). Anonymity further exacerbates the enjoyment of others' distress seen in sadistic individuals, leading them to engage more aggressively (Graney-Ward et al., 2022).

3.6.2. Type of Social Media Platform

Public Platforms: Platforms like Facebook and Twitter, where actions are public and visible to wider audiences, often influence narcissistic individuals to intervene in bullying incidents to enhance their social image and gain approval (Hossain et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2022). These platforms foster performative activism, where the primary goal of the intervention is self-promotion rather than genuine concern for the victim.

Private or Anonymized Platforms: On anonymous platforms such as Reddit or 4chan, the likelihood of intervention decreases significantly for individuals with high dark personality traits due to the minimal risk of social repercussions and the ease of engaging in or encouraging harmful behavior without accountability (Lu et al., 2020; Scott et al., 2020). The thematic analysis presents the complex patterns by which dark personality traits influence bystander responses to cyberbullying cases. The absence of empathy, the use of strategies in the interaction with others, the enjoyment of others' suffering, as well as demographic characteristics and online anonymity, all point to the fact that such behaviors are multifaceted. Knowing these themes is crucial for subsequent interventions that can consider the interactions of personality traits, demographics, and the online setting. The following approach can reduce the impact of cyberbullying and encourage positive behavior on the internet.

4. Discussion

4.1. Interpretation of Findings

4.1.1. Relationship Between Dark Personality Traits and Bystander Behavior

These studies found that dark personality traits such as Machiavellianism, narcissism, psychopathy, and sadism are positively associated with bystander behavior in cyberbullying among adults, as per the decoded systematic review. People with these dark personality traits display various behaviors that determine their reactions when they come across cases of

cyberbullying. The studies indicate that such traits are often used to prevent active interference and contribute to either the bystander effect or being a part of the problem (Giumetti, Kowalski, & Feinn, 2022; Scott et al., 2020).

4.1.2. Explanation of How Each Trait Influences Bystander Behavior Differently

Narcissism: Influence on Bystander Behavior: Narcissists are defined by their grandiosity and their strong cravings for validation (Chen et al., 2022). This self-centered nature leads narcissists to evaluate the situation on the pretend of self-profit. When they witness cyberbullying, they are unlikely to act unless there is an appeal that helps them boost their status (social or otherwise) (Scott et al., 2020). While they may actively participate on social media pages and other forms of social media, fighting for different causes, they may major in social attention but do not have the genuine compassion needed in actual intervention (Giumetti, Kowalski, & Feinn, 2022).

Psychopathy: Influence on Bystander Behavior: Self's impulsivity, lack of remorse for actions, and antisocial behavior are characteristic of psychopaths and significantly influence their conduct as bystanders in cyberbullying (Hossain et al., 2022). Specifically, empathic deficits of psychopathic bystanders tend to be highly pronounced, thereby rendering such individuals unlikely to engage in bullying interventions. They may just sit by idly without lifting a finger to stop the bullying or encourage the bully to have more fun or get his kicks (Geng et al., 2022). This is even further amplified in online interactions due to the relative anonymity enjoyed by the users, where psychopathic personalities can comfortably engage in these vices without any form of repercussions (Scott et al., 2020).

Machiavellianism: Influence on Bystander Behavior: Machiavellianism can be defined as a personality trait characterized by manipulative behavior, planning, and self-interest. While observing cyberbullying, a Machiavellian person will not interfere unless such action benefits them (Blötner & Bergold, 2023). They weigh the likely consequences of engagement and are likely to act, within this context, if there stands to be gain, albeit minimal, and in so doing, they are likely to enhance their standing with their peers or gain favor with the key influential peers (Scott et al., 2020). Furthermore, some of them see cyberbullying situations as perfect opportunities to use other people, especially targets, for their benefit, which makes the situation even worse instead of improving it (Chen et al., 2022; Giumetti, Kowalski, & Feinn, 2022).

Sadism: Influence on Bystander Behavior: Sadism entails being sexually aroused by causing distress to fellow human beings. Concerning the issue of cyberbullying, those with high levels of sadism are defined by their active involvement in and promotion of bullying activities (Graney-Ward et al., 2022). Instead of helping to prevent it, evil observers derive joy from the suffering of the targeted individual and are prone to escalating the act to gain additional joy (Geng et al., 2022). This sadistic behavior is further enabled by the fact that online environments provide the persons in question an opportunity to carry out aggressive actions without necessarily suffering the consequences in the short term (Scott et al., 2020). In sum, the role of the various dark personality traits in the context of the bystander effect in cyberbullying episodes is multifaceted and diverse.

4.2. Comparison with Existing Literature

In light of this systematic review, the conclusions made are well-grounded based on the current literature regarding dark personality traits and bystander behavior in cases of cyberbullying. Past studies have revealed that negative dark personality characteristics such as narcissism, psychopathic traits, Machiavellianism, and sadism are inversely related to empathy and self-oriented values and that these influence how people engage with cyberbullying incidents. Scott et al. (2020) found narcissistic traits to be associated with a lower likelihood of intervention, primarily due to a lack of empathy. Similarly (Giumetti, Kowalski, & Feinn, 2022) observed that narcissistic individuals act unkindly and engage in performative interventions, especially where they serve their self-promoting image, which correlates with this review's finding that narcissistic individuals might only intervene for social gain. It is also reported in this review and studies conducted by Hossain et al. (2022) and Geng et al. (2022) that psychopathic personalities are also associated with bullying behavior, in which a child may only observe or, in some cases, actively engage in bullying other children.

These studies show that in psychopathic people, there is no concern for the suffering of their victims and no sincere remorse or guilt; therefore, the chances of a positive bystander intervention will be low. The results regarding the effect of Machiavellianism on self-reported strategic and manipulative intervention support the research hypotheses. Scott et al. (2020) and Chen et al. (2022) also found that high levels of Machiavellianism entail actively seeking opportunities to intervene to achieve certain goals. This strategic calculation, also observed by Blötner and Bergold (2023), strengthens the review's finding that Machiavellians will not act unless doing so benefits them personally. According to the studies conducted by Graney-Ward et al. (2022) and Geng et al. (2022), sadistic inclinations, through which people gain satisfaction from other people's suffering, are supported. These studies indicate that malevolent witness peers are likely to get involved in bullying, which intensifies the suffering of the victim, consistent with the outcomes of the review. Although most papers on bystander intervention suggest that dark personality traits hinder intervention, a few noted by Scott et al. (2020) pointed out situations where even those with these traits would intervene if there is something to gain socially or personally. These nuances highlight the actual concerns regarding bystander behavior in the ABCs of GBV cases and show that personality-based inclinations are not always the sole deciding factors when deciding whether to act or not based on the perceived consequences.

4.2.1. Integration with Theoretical Models and Frameworks

The findings of this review are well-integrated into several theoretical models and frameworks that explain bystander behavior and personality influences.

The General Aggression Model (GAM): As for the concept of GAM, the authors presuppose that personal and situational factors affect aggression. The conclusion of this review aligns well with the GAM perspective, especially concerning the facets of psychopathy and sadism to perpetrate aggressive bullying in cyberspace without intervening (Graney-Ward et al., 2022; Hossain et al., 2022). Whereas the personal variables relate to the lack of empathy and extra-normal levels of thrill-seeking, the situational factor of anonymity encourages aggressive bystander reactions.

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT): According to Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, factors such as behavior, environmental characteristics, and cognition are determinants of various behaviors. These findings of the review are consistent with SCT in that the cognitive component, involving dark personality traits, combines with the environmental component of the online environment to include the anonymity of social media accounts to affect bystander behavior. Self-oriented persuasion and manipulation, which reflect the EGIC trends, can demonstrate that people's decision to intervene or act as a passive observer in cases of cyberbullying results from their cognitive goals (such as self-enhancement) and environmental conditions (Scott et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2022).

The Bystander Effect and Diffusion of Responsibility: Bystander intervention is prevented by the bystander effect and the diffusion of responsibilities, which proves that when there are other people around who could potentially help a victim, they are less likely to respond. This is particularly problematic in contexts where there are many onlookers because each person feels that it is not their responsibility to act. Psychopathy and sadism, such as the deficiency of empathy and pleasure derived from inflicting suffering on the victims, reduce the sense of responsibility, negating any helpful or active actions presented in the cyberbullying incidents (Giumetti, Kowalski, & Feinn, 2022; Scott et al., 2020).

Moral Disengagement Theory: According to the moral disengagement theory by Bandura, people do not feel guilty for the immoral actions they take, and this theory outlines the processes that allow such actions to take place. These are some of the reasons why this theory is relevant to the dark personality traits examined in this review. Those who are high in Machiavellianism and psychopathy lacked justification for non-interference or passive-aggressive behavior in bullying by employing cognitive restructuring, neutralizing the outcomes for the victims, or displacing personal accountability (Blötner & Bergold, 2023; Chen et al., 2022). Moral disengagement enables these people to come up with a positive attitude towards the self when performing or even avoiding vices.

Reactive and Proactive Aggression Models: The differentiation of two types of aggression, reactive and proactive, also proved helpful while trying to understand the results. They reveal how psychopathy and sadism are related to reactive and proactive aggression, meaning how both contribute to intensifying bullying (Graney-Ward et al., 2022; Hossain et al., 2022). However, Machiavellianism is primarily linked to proactive aggression in which interferences are planned for self-interest and not for reacting to aggression by being an intervenor (Scott et al., 2020). Further exploration of specific bystander behaviors linked to each dark personality trait, such as narcissism or sadism, could offer a more granular understanding of how these traits manifest in varying cyberbullying contexts. Including real-world case studies of bystander behavior in cyberbullying situations could help contextualize theoretical findings, making them more accessible to practitioners and policymakers. In conclusion, the current study has supported the existing literature in line with the theoretical models and frameworks developed.

4.3. Implications

By emphasizing the role of dark personality traits and exploring the implications for bystander behavior in cyberbullying situations, the research calls for context-specific prevention and intervention programs and policies. Thus, core strategies should be applied to enhancing empathy and moral action in individuals with high narcissism, psychopathy, Machiavellianism, and sadism (Blötner & Bergold, 2023; Chen et al., 2022). It can include using empathy-building exercises and acting scenarios to make the people who may intervene understand the victim's position (Scott et al., 2020). Understanding the role of dark personality traits within bystander behavior is fundamental for cyberbullying prevention and intervention. For instance, understanding the nature of narcissistic people, where they are likely to intervene when there is perceived self-reward, can help in developing the app design and social media guidelines to prescribe social incentives that foster positive forms of intervention (Hossain et al., 2022). Moreover, platforms can design tools to ensure that individuals lose anonymity to mitigate psychopathic and sadistic behavior, which prospers in anonymous environments (Giumetti, Kowalski, & Feinn, 2022; Scott et al., 2020). Through raising awareness, educational campaigns can also draw attention to the consequences of inaction and inclusiveness which may prevent the diffusion of responsibility strategy commonly used by dark triad individuals (Graney-Ward et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2022). Consequently, stating that it is possible to develop strategies that would focus on the subtle mechanisms of dark personality traits and that can enhance people's willingness to engage in supportive and assertive bystander interventions, thus helping reduce the occurrences of cyberbullying.

4.4. Limitations of the Review

Below are some of the limitations that were observed in this systematic review. Some limitations and sources of bias relevant to the included studies stood out. Some studies used cross-sectional knowledge and self-reported data vulnerable to social prejudice and might have inadequate precision (Chen et al., 2022; Hossain et al., 2022). Finally, the types of operationalizations of dark personality traits and the assessment of bystander behavior in the obtained studies might also differ, which can complicate comparison and generalization (Giumetti, Kowalski, & Feinn, 2022; Scott et al., 2020). In addition, the comprehensiveness of the review could be threatened by selection bias. For instance, searching for peer-reviewed articles in English might have missed out on including publications in other languages, which limited the scope (Graney-Ward et al., 2022; Gylfason et al., 2021). Despite the time frame chosen as 2010, this review may have excluded important research before that specified date range and conversely may include studies related to the present day (Geng et al., 2022). The methodology of the review also had some limitations. However, this above search strategy may have omitted some reviews, namely those labelled grey literature or non-indexed studies (Saravia Lalinde, Longpré, & De Roos, 2023). Additionally, study distribution is irregular, and study designs are unequally represented, which is not suitable for making a meta-analysis or to draw certainty about the causal relations (Baheer et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2022). Such limitations imply the necessity to standardize the research methodologies and extend the criteria for inclusion in systematic reviews to improve the rigor and scope of the outcomes.

4.5. Suggestions for Future Research

Further, the future should point out the need to clarify the causal links between dark personality traits and bystander behaviour during cyberbullying situations (Giumetti, Kowalski, & Feinn, 2022; Scott et al., 2020). Supporting this is the idea that using different

methodological approaches, e.g. experimental design, etc., can shed light on the processes that enable various kinds of bystander responses (Chen et al., 2022). Additionally, cross-cultural research is also important to understand how this culture affects these connections and to further the external validity of their conclusions (Geng et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2022). Therefore, more effort should be made to study the moderation effects of other situational variables, such as the kind of platform and the existence or nonexistence of anonymity. The reduction of anonymity or the introduction of echo specific to the application should be explored to mitigate the effects of psychopathy and sadism (Blötner & Bergold, 2023). The contextual differences of social, physical, educational/institutional, and workplace interactions also matter, impacting adult bystander behaviors (Baheer et al., 2023; Graney-Ward et al., 2022). Moreover, psychophysiological measures, such as eye tracking and neuroimaging data, can aid in the explanation of bystander decisions based on cognitive and affective processes (Demircioğlu & Göncü-Köse, 2023). There should also be increased research into the effectiveness of the interventions to boost empathy and moral concern, even among people with very dark personality traits (Scott et al., 2020). As a result, future research should specify and operationalize more refined and operationalized constructs of dark traits and bystander action for increased cross-study convergence (Hossain et al., 2022). Researchers will provide a richer and more tangible explanation of how to prevent and control cyberbullying in adults. Future research could be focused on the roles of platform-specific features, including the availability of anonymity and moderation of content on bystander behaviour across multiple social media platforms. Furthermore, studying how the effect of dark personality features links up with other contextual factors, such as the frequency and intensity of the cyberbullying incidents, would provide a more nuanced picture of the underlying interaction.

5. Conclusion

Systematic review reveals that personality characteristics such as narcissism, psychopathy, Machiavellianism, and sadism are able to help to explain bystander behaviour in cyberbullying among adults. Individuals of such traits are habitually not very preventionist in their acts of free observation, to active actions in bullying. In order to design appropriate and efficient intervention strategies and policies to counter cyberbullying, it is necessary to understand such dynamic. Importantly, thus, the study serves as a reminder to empathise with employees who express extreme traits, and focus on mitigating their effects through the embossment of situation specific management and policies. For stakeholders to better promote positive bystander behavior in cyberspaces, they need to understand specific micro-messages generated by dark personality traits. These must be understood to adequately counter the effects of cyber bullying and develop better online social interactions. Since dark personality characteristics have such a significant impact on bystander behaviour in cyberbullying, these concepts need to be taken into consideration in implementing targeted education and workplace prevention programs. For example, developing intervention strategies tailored to these temperaments may increase empathy, intervention and thus, decreased rates of cyberbullying in various online platforms.

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