Behind the Stigma: An Examination of the Impact of Gender and College Adjustment on Attitudes Towards Mental Health Disorders

Follow this and additional works at: https://ecommons.udayton.edu/stander_posters

Recommended Citation
https://ecommons.udayton.edu/stander_posters/892
Behind the Stigma: The Impact of Gender and College Adjustment on Attitudes Toward Mental Health Disorders

Maggie Inman
Advisor: Dr. Melissa Layman-Guadalupe

Introduction
- Stigma exists surrounding mental health disorders and psychological services.
- Research has explored the impact of demographic variables, such as age, culture, and gender.
- Gender research has been limited to a binary self-report, but current conceptions are more complex.
- Research has not focused on social variables, such as college adjustment.
- This study investigates the impact of gender role identification and college adjustment on attitudes towards mental health disorders.

Hypotheses

1. Endorsement of more feminine gender role traits will correlate with positive attitudes towards mental health disorders.

2. Poorer college adjustment will correlate with positive attitudes toward mental health disorders.

Methods
- Participants were 97 University of Dayton students (62 women and 35 men) from PSY 101 and other classes.
- Participants completed the following measures:
  - Attitudes Towards Mental Health Problems Scale (ATMHP; Gilbert et al., 2007).
  - College Adjustment Scale (CAS; Anton & Reed, 1991).
  - Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI; Bem 1981).
  - Demographics questionnaire
- CAS and BSRI were counterbalanced

Table 1
Correlations of Main Study Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. BSRI T-Score</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. ATMHP Total</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. CAS Average</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.44**</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. ** p < .001 level

Results

1. Gender role identification did not correlate significantly with ATMHP score (Table 1)
2. College adjustment correlated significantly with ATMHP score, r = 0.44, p < .001 (Table 1)
3. Moderation model was not significant; the correlation between CAS and ATMHP scores did not change with additional of BSRI t-score

Discussion
- Gender was not found to play a role in attitudes towards mental health disorders. This could be because of increasing gender equality and more acceptance of non-stereotypical traits.
- College adjustment does play a role. Research supports this in that shared experience may actually increase negative evaluation of others (Rutten, McDonnell, & Nordgren, 2015).
- These results have important implications for stigma prevention; we should target poor college adjustment instead of gender identity.

Selected References