

Religious Discrimination as a Predictor of Bystander Intervention

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INTRODUCTION

- Bystander intervention is the act of witnessing and aiding a victim or person in need.
- Being an active bystander is not limited to situations such as sexual assault. It could also be applied to religious discrimination.
- Within the last decade, religious discrimination claims rose more rapidly compared to most other protected categories under the Civil Rights Act (CRA; Barclay, Ghumman, Markel, & Ryan, 2013).
- There is a gap in the literature regarding bystander intervention in cases of religious discrimination.

HYPOTHESES

- Hypothesis 1:** Participants will be more likely to intervene in the Christian scenarios than in the Jewish scenarios.
- Hypothesis 2:** Participants who experienced higher levels of offense will be more likely to intervene than those who experienced lower levels of offense. There will be a positive relationship between extent of offense and likelihood to intervene.

METHODS

- Design:** Cross-sectional survey
- Participants:** 138 students in the Equal Opportunity Advisor Course (EOAC)
- Setting:** Classroom
- Materials:** Two types of religious scenarios (Christian and Jewish) + survey questions
 - Quantitative questions: Respondents indicate how likely they would intervene and how offended they would be on a 10-point Likert scale (0 = not at all, 10 = definitely)
 - Qualitative question: Respondents write how they would intervene in the scenario.
- Analyses:** t-test and linear regression

SAMPLE SCENARIOS

Scenario 1, Jewish

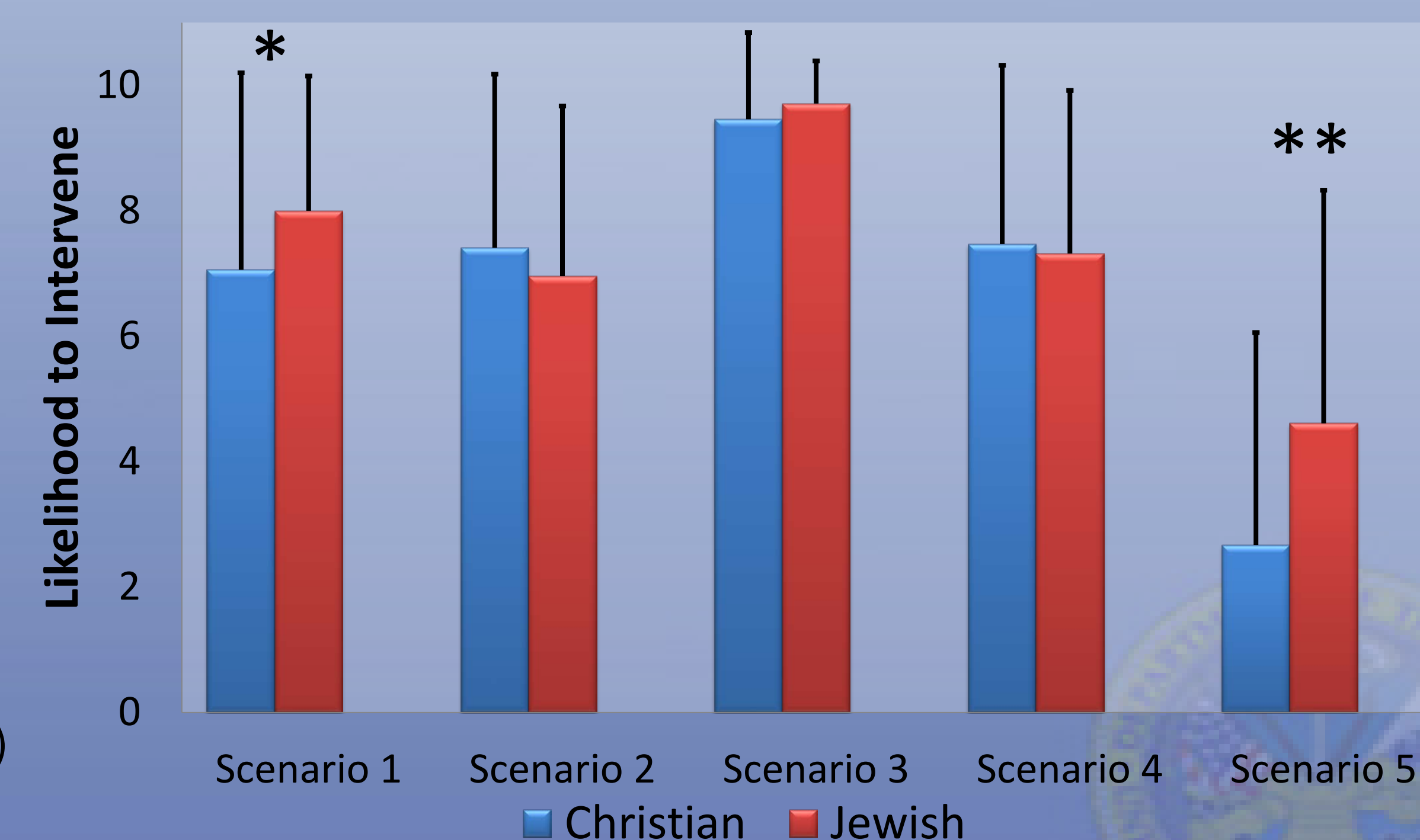
You are sitting at your desk. Your close friend, Sam, comes by and says hello. While chatting with you, Sam leans in and quietly says "Why do Jews have such big noses? Because air is free!"

Scenario 5, Christian

Your supervisor has several books on their desk including *Nailed: Ten Christian Myths That Show Jesus Never Existed at All*, *God No! Signs You May Already Be An Atheist* and *Other Magical Tales*, and *Why I Became an Atheist: A Former Preacher Rejects Christianity*. Your supervisor also has a picture of himself with Richard Dawkins wearing a shirt that says "Religion: Together we can find the cure." Neither you nor your colleagues have ever spoken with your supervisor regarding religion or beliefs and your supervisor has never volunteered their beliefs or inquired regarding your beliefs or those of your co-workers.

RESULTS

Figure 1
Average likelihood to intervene based on scenario



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

Table 1

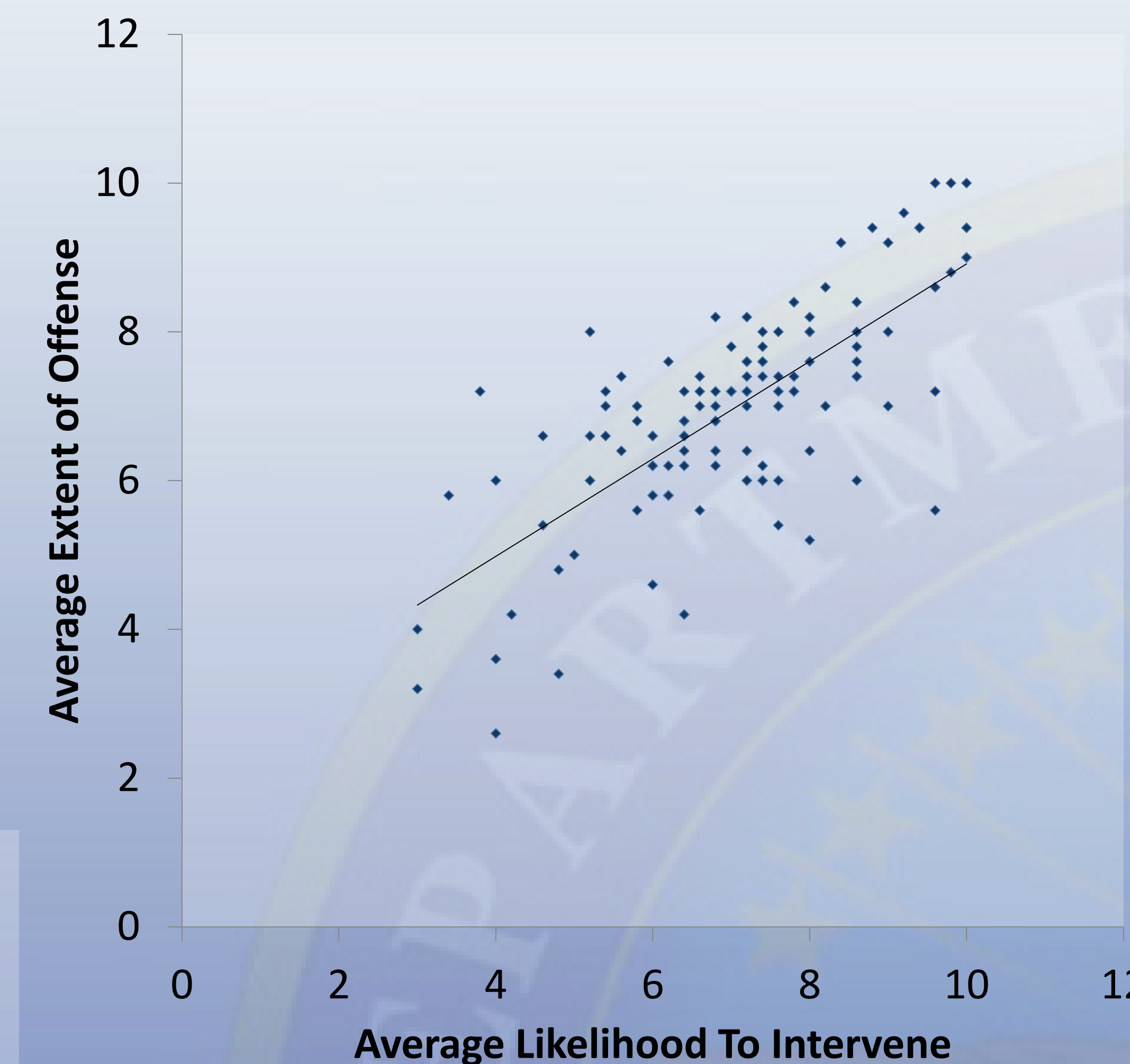
Linear regression correlation table

	M	SD	Extent Of Offense
Extent of Offense	6.95	1.37	-
Likelihood to Intervene	7.11	1.51	.738***

M=mean, SD=standard deviation * $p < .00$

Figure 2

Linear regression of average extent of offense to average likelihood to intervene



SUMMARY OF RESULTS

- Hypothesis 1 was not supported.
- Of the five analyzed, scenarios 2, 3, and 4 were not statistically significant, which showed no favoritism toward Christians.
- Interestingly, in scenarios 1 and 5, participants were more likely to intervene in Jewish scenarios (see Table 1 and Figure 1).
- Hypothesis 2 was supported. Participants were more likely to intervene when they felt there was a higher extent of offense (see Figure 2).

CONCLUSIONS

- Hypothesis 1 may not have been supported due to respondent level of personal empathy for persons in the scenarios or even whether respondents felt the Jewish scenarios were more severe than the Christian scenarios.
- It cannot be concluded that Christians receive special treatment in bystander intervention situations with respect to religious discrimination.
- Hypothesis 2 was supported which explains that when people feel more offended, they are more likely to intervene.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- Limitations:** Participants were all taken from the EOA class, which means they have a certain level of understanding of diversity.
- Future Directions:** Sampling other populations of active duty service members across the armed services may yield insights to further understand the level of bystander intervention with respect to religious discrimination.

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References

- Ghumman, S., Ryan, A. M., Barclay, L. A., & Markel, K. S. (2013). Religious discrimination in the workplace: A review and examination of current and future trends. *Journal of Business and Psychology, 28*(4), 439-454. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10869-013-9290-0
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