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Actor, Empathy, Perception of Interpersonal Thoughtlessness, and Grounds for the Perception

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The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between empathy and perception of thoughtlessness, in the context of acts by friends and acquaintances. One hundred and thirteen (113) students completed a questionnaire designed to measure the respondent's empathy, perception of interpersonal thoughtlessness in acts of an acquaintance, such perception in acts of a friend, and grounds for the perception ratings they made. Results partially supported the hypothesis that individuals low in trait empathy were quicker to perceive thoughtlessness in the acts of others than those high. In addition, individuals high in situational empathy appeared to temper perception of thoughtlessness with the actor's perspective. Finally, our study confirmed that thoughtlessness of an acquaintance was perceived more negatively than that of a friend, and situational empathy scores were higher when the actor was a friend than an acquaintance.

Keywords: interpersonal thoughtlessness, empathy, relationships, friends, acquaintances

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