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Polish adaptation of the Trigger Warning Attitudes Scale: Examining correlations with trauma-related measures

Abstract: Trigger warnings are precautionary messages designed to help individuals prepare for potentially upsetting content. Originally developed in fan communities and support groups, they have evolved to serve as protective measures against traumatic material in educational environments. While recent studies suggest their clinical effectiveness may be limited, the broader sociopolitical impact remains unclear. This study investigates attitudes toward trigger warnings in Poland, aiming to adapt and validate the Trigger Warning Attitudes Scale (TWAS) and explore its relationship with trauma-related factors in academic contexts. A total of 196 students participated (134 online, 62 via paper-and-pencil), with the two-factor model showing an excellent fit (RMSEA = 0.039) and good internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha = .86). Measurement stability (test-retest over 3 weeks) and construct validity (correlations with trauma-related constructs: The Impact of Event Scale Revised, Disclosure of Trauma Questionnaire, and Posttraumatic Cognitions Inventory) were confirmed. The Polish version of TWAS demonstrates strong psychometric properties, making it a reliable tool for assessing attitudes toward trigger warnings. The identification of a two-factor structure – Institutional Expectations and Personal Relevance – provides preliminary evidence that attitudes toward trigger warnings are multidimensional, a distinction that may inform future research on their role in educational settings.

Keywords: *trigger warnings, higher education, students, trauma*

Trigger warnings are precautionary notices that appear before material to allow individuals to prepare for content that might trigger reactions or memories of past traumatic events (Bridgland et al., 2023). In recent years, they have become part of a broader discussion on the nature of education, particularly higher education. Originally emerging from fan communities as a means of enhancing reading enjoyment by helping individuals avoid potentially undesired content (Lothian, 2016), they later gained popularity in online support groups and evolved into a strategy aimed at protecting individuals who have endured potentially traumatic experiences from exposure to material that could provoke intense discomfort or stress reactions. Some argue trigger warnings align with the broader framework of trauma-informed care (Stout & Martin, 2022), which emphasizes recognizing the impact of trauma on students' lives, identifying its symptoms, and responding by applying existing knowledge to mitigate potential negative effects. Critics have referred to trigger warnings as part of a so-called "victimhood culture" (Campbell & Manning, 2018), which prioritizes avoiding discomfort over fostering psychological resilience. Critics with those concerns argue that this approach may contribute to increased caution in educational settings and potentially limit academic engagement with complex but significant topics.

The ongoing debate has not led to definitive conclusions regarding the effectiveness of trigger warnings in educational settings, although the recent meta-analysis by Bridgland et al. (2023) suggests that trigger warnings are generally ineffective. This meta-analysis indicates that trigger warnings have no effect on affective responses, do not influence whether people avoid the material or engage with it, and do not improve comprehension, but they do increase anticipatory anxiety, although the authors highlight

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the need for further research. It is still unclear how factors such as cultural context, individual differences, and the nature of the content being warned about influence their effectiveness. This gap highlights the need for further empirical research to determine whether trigger warnings achieve their intended goals or if alternative strategies could better support students' well-being and academic engagement. To date, research on trigger warnings has not been conducted in Poland, despite the topic emerging on the fringes of the Polish public debate (Uhl, 2024), nor, to the authors' knowledge, in countries of the former Eastern Bloc. Similar to Western discourse, this discussion is primarily driven by students rather than instructors and appears to be met with less enthusiasm, with trigger warnings gaining more noticeable traction in fields related to the arts, such as literature and theater, rather than in education.

Emerging evidence suggests that attitudes toward trigger warnings are more closely tied to the severity of posttraumatic stress symptoms than to mere trauma exposure. Previous research has demonstrated that individuals with more severe PTSD symptoms are more receptive to trigger warnings (Bruce & Stasik-O'Brien, 2023). This distinction between symptom severity and trauma exposure is meaningful – trigger warnings may function differently for individuals experiencing clinical levels of distress compared to non-clinical populations (Boysen, 2017). Beyond symptom severity, posttraumatic cognitions - such as beliefs about the world as dangerous or the self as vulnerable (Foa et al., 1999) – may shape how individuals approach potential trauma reminders, including their receptivity to safety-oriented measures like trigger warnings. Patterns of trauma disclosure, particularly reluctance to discuss traumatic experiences (a pattern associated with greater PTSD symptom severity; Mueller et al., 2008), may relate to how individuals perceive trigger warnings as a means of managing exposure to distressing content without requiring explicit disclosure.

Thus, this study aimed to investigate attitudes toward trigger warnings in the Polish academic context and their relationship with trauma-related factors. By adapting and validating the Trigger Warning Attitudes Scale (TWAS, Bruce & Roberts, 2020) within the Polish academic setting, we aimed to provide a reliable tool for measuring these attitudes and contribute to the broader discussion on the role of trigger warnings in higher education. This study provides insights into the cultural context of trigger warnings in Poland and their potential impact on students' well-being and academic engagement. We hypothesize that individuals with higher levels of trauma exposure or symptoms of posttraumatic stress will express more favorable attitudes toward trigger warnings, viewing them as a necessary protective measure.

METHOD

Participants

The study involved 196 students from Polish universities. 134 participants completed the survey online with the survey link being shared among acquaintances and social networks, while 62 students received physical questionnaires and filled them out using the paper-and-pencil method during the principal investigator's classes. Participation in the study was voluntary and not associated with any course-related benefits. The sample included 143 women, 48 men, 3 non-binary individuals, and 2 participants declined to answer the gender question. The participants' ages ranged from 19 to 51 years (M = 23.88; SD = 5.64).

We examined whether the measured variables differed between the online and offline groups; the only statistically significant differences pertained to age, level of education and place of residence. The online group (M = 25.22; SD = 6.3) was older by 4.24 years, t(167.52) = 7.27, p < .001 than paper-and-pencil group (M = 20.98; SD = 1.65). The online group was also, on average, better educated, $X^2(4, 194) = 35.3$, $p < .001$, and lived in larger cities, $X^2(3, 194) = 32.0$, p <.001. There were no part-time students in the paper-and-pencil group. We determined that these differences do not preclude a combined analysis as these differences are theoretically not implicated in trigger warning attitudes. A detailed group comparison (age excluded) is provided in Table 1.

Procedure

The TWAS questionnaire was translated from English into Polish by three independent psychologists, one of whom also had a background in English studies. Each item was then analyzed, and the final version of the tool was created. A native English speaker retranslated it back into English, and the tool was sent to the original author for approval, who accepted it with minor changes. For this study, we recruited undergraduate students from [redacted for peer review] (online and paper-and-pencil version) and from other Polish Universities (online). Participants received information about the study, including its aim of adapting the Trigger Warning Attitudes Scale (TWAS) to Polish, the voluntary nature of participation, the option to withdraw at any time, and the anonymity of collected data (available in supplementary materials on OSF) and consented to participate. The study was conducted in accordance with the ethical principles of the Declaration of Helsinki. Participants "coded" their questionnaires by marking them with individually generated codes instead of names, ensuring anonymity. The questionnaires included the Polish adaptation of TWAS, The Life Events Checklist for DSM-5 (LEC-5), Disclosure of Trauma Questionnaire (DTQ), Posttraumatic Cognitions Inventory (PTCI), and The Impact of Events Scale Revised (IES-R), along with a basic sociodemographic survey. Participants who expressed interest in taking part in the second phase of the study received the Polish adaptation of TWAS again after a 3-week interval. This process lasted from July to October 2024.

Measures

Trigger Warning Attitudes Scale (TWAS; Bruce & Roberts, 2020). The TWAS is a brief, 9-item questionnaire assessing students' support for implementing

Table 1. Sociodemographic variables (age excluded)

Characteristic	Online (n = 134)	Paper-and-pencil (n = 62)	X^2 (df)
Sex			1.46(2)
Women	98	45	
Men	32	16	
Non-binary	3	0	
No response	2	0	
Place of residency			32.00(3)*
Village less than 10k inhabitants	25	35	
Town up to 10k inhabitants	4	2	
Town between 10k to 100k inhabitants	21	7	
City over 100k inhabitants	84	16	
Education			35.30(4)*
Secondary	65	54	
Vocational	1	2	
Bachelor's/Engineering	44	2	
Master's	21	2	
Doctoral	3	0	
Mode of study			13.03(1)*
Full-time	103	62	
Part-time	31	0	

Note: $*p < .001$

trigger warnings. The items are assessed using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*). The total score is obtained by summing the 9 items, with higher scores indicating more positive attitudes and a greater frequency of trigger warning use reported by the participant. The psychometric properties for the original English version feature acceptable internal consistency, ranging from α = .74 (Bruce & Stasik, 2023) to α = .76 (Bruce & Roberts, 2020), and convergent validity with expected relationships with avoidance (Bruce & Roberts, 2020) as well as PTSD symptoms and trauma centrality (Bruce & O'Brien, 2023).

The Life Events Checklist - Fifth Version (LEC-5; Weathers et al., 2013). The LEC-5 was appropriately translated to Polish (Rzeszutek et al., 2017) and is a 17-item self-report tool assessing exposure to potentially traumatic events. The LEC-5 has good psychometric properties (Gray et al., 2004). The participants refer to 17 types of potentially traumatic events, allowing them to provide a comprehensive trauma history, as well as detail how they experienced each event, such as: "I experienced it personally," "I witnessed it," "I learned about it," "It is part of my job," "I'm not sure," or "Not applicable."

The Impact of Event Scale – Revised (IES-R; Weiss & Marmar, 1997). The IES-R was adapted to Polish (Juczyński & Ogińska-Bulik, 2009), and is a tool used to measure the impact of traumatic events. It consists of 22 items rated on a 5-point scale (0 = *not at all*, 4 = *extremely*) and includes three symptom-cluster subscales: intrusion, hyperarousal, and avoidance. The questionnaire provides a total score, calculated as the average of all items, along with separate scores for each subscale, calculated as the average of items specific to each dimension. The IES-R showed good internal consistency in this present sample, with Cronbach's alpha values of α = .90 for intrusion, α = .88 for hyperarousal, α = .82 for avoidance, and α = .95 for the general score.

Posttraumatic Cognitions Inventory (PTCI; Foa et al., 1999). The PTCI, which has been successfully translated to Polish (Kucharska, 2018), is a 36-item questionnaire assessing cognitions across 3 subscales: negative cognitions about the self, negative cognitions about the world, and self-blame. Participants respond on a 7-point scale (1 = *totally disagree*, 7 = *totally agree*). The questionnaire provides a total score, calculated as the sum of all items, and three subscale scores, each representing the sum of items specific to that subscale. The PTCI showed good internal consistency in this sample, with Cronbach's alpha values of α = .95 (negative-self), α = .90 (negative-world), and α = .80 (blame) for its factors and α = .95 for general score.

The Disclosure of Trauma Questionnaire (DTQ; Mueller et al., 2000). The DTQ, having been translated to Polish (Rzeszutek et al., 2020), is a self-report ques-

tionnaire to measure disclosure of traumatic experience with three subscales (reluctance to talk, urge to talk, and emotional reactions) and general score evaluated by summing all items. Participants respond to 34 items, indicating how much they agree on a 6-point scale from 1 = *not at all* to 6 = *completely*. The questionnaire yields a total score, calculated as the sum of all items, and also provides separate scores for each of the three subscales, each representing the sum of items specific to that subscale. The DTQ showed good internal consistency in this sample, with Cronbach's alpha values of α = .87 (reluctance to talk), α = .77 (urge to talk), and α = .89 (emotional reactions) for its factors and α = .90 for general score.

Sociodemographic data. Participants also provided their gender, age, place of residence, field of study, study mode, and university.

Data Analysis

All analyses were conducted in R (version 4.5.2) using the RStudio environment, with the psych package (Revelle, 2025) for factor analysis and reliability estimation. Missing data ranged from 0% to 1.5% for all variables and were deemed random. Thus, imputation (mean substitution) was used to replace missing data. Before conducting the main analyses, we examined whether the online and paper-and-pencil groups differed in their scores on the TWAS, IES-R, PTCI, and DTQ questionnaires. We used the t-test to assess these differences, applying Welch's correction in three cases of heterogeneity of variances. No statistically significant differences were observed, so we combined both groups for further analyses. Detailed results are provided in the Table 2. To determine the factor structure of the adapted tool, exploratory factor analysis was conducted using the minimum residual (minres) extraction method with oblimin rotation. The number of factors was determined using Horn's parallel analysis (Horn, 1965). Cronbach's alpha was used to assess internal consistency reliability, supplemented by item-level analysis (corrected item-total correlations and alpha-if-item-deleted). Pearson's correlation was used to assess test-retest reliability. Pearson's r was also used to examine correlations related to construct validity.

RESULTS

Factor analysis with oblimin rotation was conducted to examine the factor structure of the adaptation. Parallel analysis was used to determine the optimal number of factors, as it provides more accurate results than Kaiser's criterion (Horn, 1965). The minimum residual (minres) extraction method was selected due to significant departures from normality across all items (Shapiro-Wilk tests: all $p < .001$). Oblimin rotation was employed given the substantial correlation between factors ($r = .59$). Parallel analysis indicated a two-factor solution. The two-factor model demonstrated excellent fit (RMSEA = 0.039, 90% CI [0.00, 0.078]; TLI = 0.983; $\chi^2(19) = 24.61$, $p = .174$; RMSR = 0.03), while the one-factor model (as obtained in the original paper) showed poor fit (RMSEA = 0.114, 90% CI [0.090, 0.139]; TLI = 0.857; $\chi^2(27) = 95.61$, $p < .001$; RMSR = 0.075). The two-factor model accounted for 50.5% of the total variance. Factor loadings are presented in Table 3. The strong support for the two-factor model led

Table 2. Comparison of questionnaire scores between online and paper-and-pencil groups

Variable	Online		Paper-And-Pencil			
	M	***SD***	***M***	***SD***	***t(df)***	***p***
TWAS total score	25.19	8.64	25.53	5.96	.31(166)	.75
IES-R total score	1.73	1.06	2.04	.91	1.59(142)	.12
Intrusion	1.80	1.13	2.14	1.06	1.63(142)	.11
Hyperarousal	1.59	1.21	1.94	.98	1.77(77)	.08
Avoidance	1.79	1.06	2.02	.99	1.14(142)	.26
PTCI general score	80.64	29.82	83.00	29.23	.42(143)	.67
negative cognitions about the self	46.94	20.60	46.55	20.93	.10(143)	.92
negative cognitions about world	23.49	8.61	25.92	7.93	1.53(143)	.13
self-blame	10.21	5.21	10.53	5.27	.32(143)	.75
DTQ general score	61.32	29.47	61.32	21.21	.00(90)	.99
reluctance to talk	20.97	13.64	20.79	13.47	.07(143)	.94
urge to talk	16.73	9.00	15.47	8.09	-.75(143)	.49
emotional reactions	19.54	12.3	20.92	11.04	.61(143)	.54

Note: TWAS – Trigger Warning Attitudes Scale, IES-R – The Impact of Event Scale – Revised, PTCI - Posttraumatic Cognitions Inventory, DTQ – The Disclosure of Trauma Questionnaire. t(df) represents the t-student test statistic (with degrees of freedom in parentheses). In cases of unequal variances, Welch's correction was applied.

Table 3. Factor loadings for the TWAS models

TWAS item in English	One factor	Two factor	
	1	1	2
I pay attention to trigger warnings when they are posted.	.63	.82	
If a trigger warning is posted, I consider whether I want to read/watch/ listen to the material.	.65	.77	
Trigger warnings are a good way to help me in class.	.76	.37	.47
I would ask the presenter to put trigger warnings before some of the material.	.80		.69
Being "triggered" can ruin my ability to work in class.	.53	.30	
I would not solicit trigger warnings. If they are not there, I would not ask for them.*	.47		.59
If the presenter had not placed a trigger warning before the material that I found offensive, I would have asked him to do so.	.64		.83
If the presenter had not placed a trigger warning before the material that I found offensive, I would have considered him insensitive.	.60		.61
We should teach social media users to use trigger warnings with the content they share.	.71	.51	

Note: Factor loadings below 0.30 are omitted for clarity. In the two-factor model, Factor 1 reflects Personal Relevance and Factor 2 reflects Institutional Expectations. *is reverse coded.

us to conduct further analyses for both individual factors as well as the total score. Factor 1 was labeled Personal Relevance and Factor 2 Institutional Expectations (see Discussion for detailed interpretation).

To assess internal reliability, Cronbach's alpha was calculated. The overall score demonstrated good internal consistency, α = .86. Both factors also showed good internal consistency, with α = .77 for Factor 1 and α = .82 for Factor 2. Item-level analysis (Table 4) revealed that all corrected item-total correlations exceeded .30 (range: .43–.74), and no item deletion would improve overall internal consistency (α = .86), indicating that all items contribute meaningfully to the scale. Measurement stability was assessed by conducting two measurements three weeks apart, involving 43 participants: 32 women and 11 men, aged 19 to 51 years (M = 22.4; SD = 5.25). This group did not differ significantly in any key variable in the study. Pearson's r was computed for the general score and both factors. A very strong correlation was found between the general score at the two time points, $rtt(41) = .84$, $p < .001$, indicating high measurement stability. Factor 2 showed similarly high stability ($rtt(41) = .84$, $p < .001$), while Factor 1 demonstrated moderate-to-good stability ($rtt(41) = .69$, $p < .001$).

To assess construct validity, correlations were examined between the overall TWAS score and its factors, as well as tools measuring symptoms associated with experiencing traumatic events. All results are presented in Table 5. Generally, there were significant, positive correlations of moderate strength between the TWAS, IES-R, PTCI, and DTQ. Additionally, to examine whether the personal experience of events (categorized by The Life

Table 4. Item-level statistics for the TWAS

Item	*M*	*SD*	Corrected item-total *r*	*α* if item deleted
1	3.49	1.28	.58	.85
2	3.03	1.38	.60	.85
3	2.79	1.22	.70	.84
4	2.77	1.36	.74	.83
5	2.61	1.25	.49	.86
6	2.32	1.22	.43	.86
7	2.26	1.23	.59	.85
8	2.29	1.22	.56	.85
9	3.74	1.23	.65	.84

Note: Overall Cronbach's α =.86.

Table 5. Correlations between the TWAS factors and other variables

Variable	TWAS – Total		TWAS - Factor 1		TWAS - Factor 2	
	r	*p*	*r*	*p*	*r*	*p*
IES-R total score	.41**	<.001	.37**	<.001	.37**	<.001
Intrusion	.37**	<.001	.32**	<.001	.35**	<.001
Hyperarousal	.42**	<.001	.40**	<.001	.37**	<.001
Avoidance	.34**	<.001	.31**	<.001	.30**	<.001
PTCI total score	.24*	.004	.18*	.027	.24*	.004
Negative cognitions about the self	.23*	.005	.18*	.031	.23*	.005
Negative cognitions about the world	.16	.057	.11	.190	.17*	.039
Self-blame	.17*	.041	.16	.056	.15	.071
DTQ total score	.37**	<.001	.32**	<.001	.35**	<.001
Reluctance to talk	.31**	<.001	.28**	.001	.29**	<.001
Urge to talk	.13	.114	.08	.366	.16	.062
Emotional reactions	.35**	<.001	.33**	<.001	.31**	<.001

Note: TWAS – Trigger Warning Attitudes Scale, IES-R – The Impact of Event Scale – Revised, PTCI – Posttraumatic Cognitions Inventory, DTQ – The Disclosure of Trauma Questionnaire. *$p < .05$; **$p < .001$.

Events Checklist) differentiates attitudes toward trigger warnings, a series of t-tests were conducted. After applying the Holm correction for multiple comparisons, no significant differences were found between individuals who experienced any specific traumatic event type and those who did not.

DISCUSSION

The focus of this study is adaptation and validation of the Polish version of the TWAS. The results revealed a two-dimensional structure of the scale. Factor 1 was interpreted as Personal Relevance (individual utility and coping strategies related to trigger warnings), while Factor 2 was interpreted as Institutional Expectations (demands placed on educational settings regarding trigger warnings). Both the overall score and the subscale scores demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency, temporal stability, and construct validity, as evidenced by correlations with trauma-related measures.

In previous studies using the TWAS, attitudes toward trigger warnings were treated as a unidimensional variable (Bruce & Roberts, 2020; Bruce & Stasik-O'Brien, 2023). In the present study, factor analysis with parallel analysis (Horn, 1965) indicated that a two-factor model provided a substantially better fit to the data than the original one-factor solution. Examination of item content suggests that the two factors reflect distinct aspects of trigger warning attitudes. The substantial correlation between factors indicates that while these dimensions are related, they capture meaningfully distinct aspects of trigger warning attitudes.

Factor 2, labeled Institutional Expectations, comprises items that share a common theme of placing demands on educational settings. Item 3 (cross-loading on both factors) frames trigger warnings as something the educational environment should provide. Item 4 describes requesting instructors to include trigger warnings, items 7 and 8 address evaluating instructors who fail to provide them (requesting action or judging insensitivity, respectively), and the reverse-coded item 6 captures (non-) solicitation of trigger warnings in educational contexts. The unifying theme is an expectation directed at educational institutions and their representatives to implement protective measures. Some items in this factor show moderate loadings, which likely reflects the limitations of the original 9-item scale designed as unidimensional rather than a problem with the factor structure itself. Factor 1, labeled Personal Relevance, comprises items reflecting the individual's own engagement with and perceived utility of trigger warnings. Item 1 describes paying attention to trigger warnings when posted, item 2 captures personal deliberation about whether to engage with warned material, and item 5 acknowledges that being triggered affects one's own ability to work. Item 9 ("We should teach social media users to use trigger warnings"), while referring to others' behavior, loaded on this factor – this may reflect an extension of personal engagement with trigger warnings: individuals who find them personally relevant may also endorse their broader application in digital spaces they personally inhabit. The unifying theme is the personal, self-referential relationship with trigger warnings as a tool for managing one's own exposure to potentially distressing content.

A multifactorial model of attitudes toward trigger warnings has also been identified in other studies. Cares et al. (2018), in their study on students of a victimology course, derived a three-factor model encompassing general attitudes, as well as two specific factors related to the individual and the course: behavioral and attitudinal. The

longer scale used in their study (29 items) may have allowed for a more detailed differentiation of the attitudinal dimensions identified in this study into more specific components, which the shorter 9-item TWAS did not permit. The distinction between institutional-level expectations and personal-level engagement with trigger warnings finds some support in the literature, although empirical studies remain scarce. In the study by Cebula et al. (2022), the potential distress (how stressful the course could be for other students) related to students' coursework was reported to be approximately twice as high as the personal distress associated with the same coursework; these findings were further corroborated by qualitative research. The sentiment of protecting individuals with a history of traumatic events is often noted in qualitative studies on trigger warnings (Cares et al., 2018; Nolan & Roberts, 2022), with both positive and negative aspects being highlighted. Some authors suggest that this protection can constitute a problematic accommodation (Bruce, 2023), promote maladaptive behaviors (Bryce et al., 2022), reinforce the stereotype that individuals with mental disorders are more vulnerable to harm (Copoc, 2021), or lead to over-interpreting one's experiences as pathological despite their normative nature (Foulkes & Andrews, 2023). Positive effects of this phenomenon include inclusivity (Kafer, 2016) and the normalization of living with a trauma history (Byron, 2017). Regardless of the outcome of this debate, it is clear that attitudes toward trigger warnings operate at both the institutional level (what educational settings should provide) and the personal level (how individuals engage with trigger warnings for their own benefit), a distinction captured by the two-factor structure identified in this study. The distinction between Institutional Expectations and Personal Relevance in trigger warning attitudes is crucial as it allows for a deeper understanding of the complexity of these attitudes and their potential consequences. Considering both dimensions enables identification of possible discrepancies between demands placed on educational institutions and the personal utility individuals derive from trigger warnings, which may hold implications for designing evidence-informed educational policies. From a theoretical perspective, examining these two dimensions can contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the mechanisms underlying attitudes toward phenomena related to trauma and mental health protection, while simultaneously accounting for institutional and personal determinants of these attitudes.

Notably, item 9 ('We should teach social media users to use trigger warnings') loaded on the Personal Relevance factor. Although its content refers to others' behavior, this loading may reflect an extension of personal engagement with trigger warnings beyond the classroom – individuals who find trigger warnings personally relevant may also endorse their broader application in digital spaces they personally inhabit. This cross-domain loading warrants further investigation into whether personal engagement with trigger warnings generalizes to advocacy for their use in other contexts. While this is not the focus of the current study, it could serve as an interesting avenue for future research.

The internal consistency measured by Cronbach's alpha of the adapted tool was higher than in the original study, with Cronbach's alpha being $\alpha = 0.86$ compared to $\alpha = 0.76$ in the work by Bruce & Roberts (2020). This difference may result from greater homogeneity among Polish students compared to American students, where the diversity of experiences or interpretations of questions is higher, potentially affecting the uniformity of responses. The overall score and the Institutional Expectations subscale demonstrated excellent temporal stability ($r = .84$), while the Personal Relevance subscale showed moderate-to-good stability ($r = .69$).

The results indicate a significant relationship between attitudes toward trigger warnings and reactions to stressful events, both in terms of symptoms measured by the IES-R and beliefs assessed by the PTCI. The relationship between self-reported PTSD symptoms and attitudes toward trigger warnings was also observed by Bruce and Stasik-O'Brien (2023). This may be related to the findings of Kimble et al. (2021), where it was not the occurrence of a traumatic event, but the intensity of PTSD symptoms, that was associated with greater distress after reading a triggering text excerpt, which may also contribute to a more favorable attitude toward trigger warnings. Additionally, these findings align with the need to distinguish the effectiveness of trigger warnings for individuals with PTSD symptoms and their limited effectiveness in non-clinical populations (Boysen, 2017). Notably, recent studies suggest a discrepancy between the endorsement of trigger warnings and their demonstrated effects. Pratt et al. (2025) found that a large majority of students supported the use of trigger warnings, yet this support was not accompanied by differences in how warned content was perceived. Sevincer et al. (2024) reported that a considerable proportion of respondents believed trigger warnings reduce negative emotions, a belief that finds limited support in the existing literature (Bridgland et al., 2023). These observations provide important context for interpreting the correlations reported in this study – the association between trauma-related symptoms and more favorable attitudes toward trigger warnings may reflect perceived utility rather than empirically supported effectiveness. At the subscale level of the PTCI, negative cognitions about the self were associated with more positive attitudes toward trigger warnings as measured by the full TWAS, whereas the association with negative cognitions about the world approached but did not reach significance. Self-blame was also weakly associated with the overall TWAS score. An interesting pattern emerged at the factor level. Both Institutional Expectations and Personal Relevance showed significant associations with negative cognitions about the self. However, only Personal Both factors were associated with negative cognitions about the self. However, only Institutional Expectations (Factor 2) was significantly associated with negative cognitions about the world, while Personal Relevance (Factor 1) was not. Neither factor was

significantly associated with self-blame. These differential patterns provide preliminary support for the theoretical distinction between the two factors. Individuals who place demands on educational institutions (Institutional Expectations) appear to be influenced by a broader set of posttraumatic cognitions, encompassing both negative self-appraisals and the perception of the world as dangerous.. In contrast, Personal Relevance was associated only with negative self-cognitions, suggesting that this dimension may be more narrowly linked to self-referential vulnerability rather than generalized threat appraisal. However, these correlations are small in magnitude and based on unadjusted p-values across multiple comparisons (acknowledged as a limitation), and should therefore be interpreted with caution. The available literature suggests that the semantic scope of harm is expanding (see: Haslam et al., 2021), which may be contributing to the increased support for trigger warnings. In this study, only every fourth participant (26.53%) had not personally experienced or witnessed a traumatic event listed in The Life Events Checklist for DSM-5.

This is the first study, to the authors' knowledge, that examines the relationship between attitudes toward trigger warnings and trauma disclosure. As expected, more positive attitudes toward trigger warnings were associated with the subscales "reluctance to talk" and "emotional reactions" from the Disclosure of Trauma Questionnaire, and were not associated with the "urge to talk" subscale. These results may support the argument that trigger warnings are a form of problematic accommodation, a maladaptive or dysfunctional adjustment, or response that may seem appropriate in the short term but is ultimately harmful or reinforces negative patterns (Bruce, 2023), as reluctance to talk is associated with greater symptom severity in PTSD (Mueller et al., 2008).

LIMITATIONS

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, regarding statistical approach, the Holm correction was applied for the exploratory t-tests examining trauma exposure differences. For the correlation analyses examining construct validity, we report unadjusted p-values alongside effect sizes, allowing readers to evaluate the practical significance of observed relationships; however, the increased risk of Type I error in these analyses should be noted. Second, the sample was non-clinical and lacked formal diagnostic assessment for PTSD or other trauma-related disorders, which limits the generalizability of the findings. Although online data collection encompassed students from various regions of Poland, the sample remains non-representative. Third, the evidence for validity in this study is limited to correlations with trauma-related constructs. Fourth, the three-week test-retest interval, while demonstrating strong stability, may be insufficient for evaluating long-term consistency. Finally, the study did not account for variables such as prior exposure to trigger warnings, educational background, or familiarity with trauma-related concepts, all of which could have influenced participants' attitudes and responses.

CONCLUSIONS

In summary, the Polish version of the TWAS is a tool with good psychometric properties that can be used in scientific research. Its application allows for measurement of attitudes toward trigger warnings, which may contribute to a better understanding of their role in psychological and social contexts. The two-factor structure identified in this study – distinguishing between institutional expectations and personal relevance – suggests that attitudes toward trigger warnings are not unidimensional, which may be worth considering when designing mental health interventions or educational policies.

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