

# Analyzing the Bystander Effect in Bullying: Unraveling Factors that Influence Action and Inaction among Selected University Students

<sup>1</sup>Timothy John DC. Libiran; <sup>2</sup>Jim Exequiel C. Lacanlale; <sup>3</sup>Austen Peter M. Tallara; <sup>4</sup>Paula Maryvette M. Del Rosario; <sup>5</sup>Ameya N. Dela Cruz

<sup>12345</sup>School of Education, Arts, and Sciences, Department of Psychology, National University Philippines- Bulacan

<sup>1</sup>Corresponding Author: [libirantdc@students.nu-baliwag.edu.ph](mailto:libirantdc@students.nu-baliwag.edu.ph)

**Abstract:** *This study explored the Bystander Effect in Bullying and the influencing factors shaping the actions and inactions of selected university students. Its aim is to uncover the determinants affecting the bystander behaviors of Filipino students amidst bullying scenarios. Employing a true experimental design within quantitative research, the study utilizes various statistical methods including percentage, mean, standard deviation, independent sample t-test, and One-way ANOVA, coupled with exposure to different types of bullying (physical, verbal, social) social experiments, to collect data from 310 randomly selected students. After applying convenience sampling techniques, the number of participants is narrowed down to 90, ensuring diversity in age, sex, and socio-economic status among the university students. The findings of the study reveal that male victims are less likely to receive bystander intervention compared to their female counterparts in bullying situations, suggesting a significant association between the victim's sex and the likelihood of bystander intervention. Additionally, it is observed that the control group demonstrates a higher propensity to intervene in bullying situations compared to the experimental group exposed to such scenarios. These results underscore the significance of sex disparities in intervention likelihood and highlight the varying degrees of bullying, including physical, verbal, and social aspects. Furthermore, they shed light on the contributing factors that influence bystander actions and inactions in bullying scenarios, offering valuable insights into addressing and mitigating bullying behaviors within educational environments.*

**Keywords**— Bystander effect, Intervention, Action, Inaction, Bullying, Physical, Verbal, Social, Control Group, and Experimental Group.

## INTRODUCTION

The incident labeled "Bugbog o Dignidad," where individuals faced the choice between preserving physical well-being or risking their dignity, gained widespread attention after a bully's infamous actions in an Ateneo de Manila University Junior high school restroom were recorded and circulated on social media and various news platforms (Rappler, 2018). Despite multiple bystanders witnessing the victim's distress, no one intervened as the perpetrator continued his assault. This disturbing trend of bystander inaction prompts questions about societal values regarding intervention in bullying incidents, particularly in educational settings.

Moreover, Salo et al. (2015) examined how Filipino values, such as "pakikisangkot," influence bystander behavior in emergencies but didn't explore their impact on different types of bullying incidents. Accordingly, the reluctance of bystanders to intervene in bullying situations, despite recognizing the harm being inflicted on the victim, raises significant concerns. This phenomenon highlights a potential decline in empathy and concern for the welfare of others, especially in emergency situations where action is warranted (Hortensius & de Gelder, 2018; Fisher et al., 2011). Understanding the factors contributing to bystander inaction is crucial in addressing the root causes of bullying and fostering a culture of empathy and support

This study aims to investigate the factors influencing bystander behavior in bullying incidents, focusing on Filipino university students. Specifically, the study seeks to identify why bystanders choose not to intervene and examine the impact of different types of bullying, such as physical, verbal, and social, on bystander responses. Additionally, the study aims to explore gender differences in bystander behavior and their implications for intervention strategies

By Exploring the underlying factors influencing bystander behavior in bullying incidents, this study aims to contribute to the existing literature on bullying prevention and intervention. The findings may inform the development of targeted intervention strategies aimed at promoting bystander intervention and reducing the prevalence of bullying in educational settings. Furthermore, the study's focus on Filipino bystander behavior fills a gap in the literature and provides insights into cultural nuances that may influence bystander responses. Ultimately, this research aims to contribute to creating safer and more supportive environments for individuals vulnerable to bullying.

## Statement of the Problem

To identify the factors that lead to the bystander action and inaction among Students at selected university students. The following should be answered by the research:

1. What is the level of attitudes and perceptions of the controlled group in terms of intervention in bullying?
2. What is the level of attitudes and perceptions of the experimental group in terms of intervention in bullying?
3. How do the sex variations of the bully and victim impact an individual bystander's likelihood to intervene in a bullying situation?
4. What are the significant differences in the bystander's likelihood to intervene between the experimental group exposed to the bullying social experiment and the control group?
5. What are the factors influencing the action and inaction of students in intervening during instances of bullying between the experimental group and the control group?
6. Is there a significant sex difference in intervening during incidents of bullying in terms of:
  - a. Physical
  - b. Verbal
  - c. Social

### Hypothesis

Ho: There is no significant difference in the likelihood of intervention by individual bystanders based on the sex variations of the bully and victim in a bullying situation.

Ho: There is no significant sex difference in the likelihood of intervening during incidents of physical bullying.

Ho: There is no significant sex difference in the likelihood of intervening during incidents of verbal bullying.

Ho: There is no significant sex difference in the likelihood of intervening during incidents of social bullying.

Ho: There is no significant difference in the bystander's likelihood to intervene between the experimental group exposed to the bullying social experiment and the control group.

Ho: There are no significant differences in factors influencing the action and inaction of students in intervening during instances of bullying between the experimental group and the control group.

### Theoretical Framework

This study is underpinned by the Bystander Effect, Diffusion of Responsibility, and Social Influence Theory, which collectively elucidate the behavior of bystanders in bullying situations. The Bystander Effect, as articulated by Hortensius and de Gelder, posits that individuals may refrain from intervening in emergencies. This concept underscores the focus of our study on bystander behavior. Studies have revealed that adolescents generally condemn bullying yet may avoid intervening when witnessing it, influenced by perceived peer pressure and fear, as Fluke suggests. Darryl and Latané's Diffusion of Responsibility

theory further elucidates why bystanders might refrain from helping when others are present. Social Influence Theory, as proposed by Kelman, delineates how individuals are influenced by their social environment. Our research aims to decipher how these theories manifest in the context of bullying scenarios, particularly among Filipino university students. Studies indicate that bystanders' attitudes towards bullying, influenced by societal norms, significantly impact their likelihood of intervention. Additionally, the type of bullying and the gender of those involved also play a role in bystander behavior. By drawing on these theories, we seek to provide insights into the complex dynamics of bystander responses in bullying situations, shedding light on potential motivations and rationalizations for intervention or inaction.

### Conceptual Framework

According to Fluke (2016), there are various types of bullying namely, physical, verbal, and social bullying which is then called vignette. Each vignette described a setting, what behavior is being performed by the perpetrator, and what others, if any, are also present. The researchers deconstructed Fluke (2016) conceptual framework, as sex is added to further fit the nature of this study. Following Figure 1 depicts the modified framework of this study.

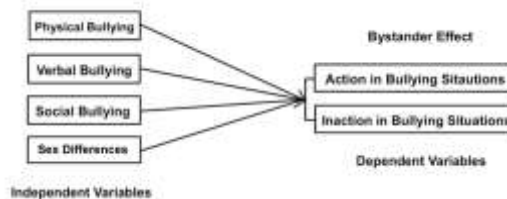


Figure 1

The present study investigates factors influencing individuals' actions and inactions in bullying situations, with the dependent variable being the response to bullying and independent variables including physical, verbal, and social bullying, along with sex differences. Adapted from Fluke (2016), this conceptual framework underpins the model, with modifications made to incorporate sex as an independent variable. Physical bullying involves direct physical harm or damage to property, such as pushing or stealing, while verbal bullying encompasses verbal assaults like mocking or threats. Social bullying, a covert behavior, targets victims' interpersonal relationships through gossiping or exclusion. Additionally, sex differences may influence bystander responses, with evidence suggesting same-sex victims receive more assistance due to in-group biases. This phenomenon aligns with traditional gender norms dictating "heroic" actions for males and empathetic responses for females. Fluke (2016) asserts that males are more likely to intervene in physically threatening situations, whereas females tend to show compassion in emotionally charged scenarios. The relationship between these variables will be explored through the Bystander Effect by Hortensius and de Gelder (2018) and Diffusion of Responsibility by Darryl and Latané (1968).

### Scope and Delimitation

The study focused on two main variables: three types of bullying (physical, verbal, and social) and the actions (helping behavior) and inactions (bystander effect) of selected university students. This study aims to determine the relationship between these independent and dependent variables and how the first variable influences the other.

In addition students' actions and inactions in three types of bullying scenarios were measured based on their perceptions of these scenarios using bystander vignette survey questionnaires for the controlled groups and a Five-point Likert Scale for the experimental group. However, only the experimental group underwent social experiments, during which structured observation was used to measure their responses.

Moreover, the study was limited to term three (3) students enrolled in a selected university. The respondents from the university were chosen for the convenience of both the researchers and the participants. Lastly, the scarcity of data gathered in this study posed limitations on the included review of related literature.

### Significance of The Study

Data Gathered in this study will be beneficial to the following:

*Learners*, specifically students who experienced being bullied and those who witnessed bullying, will benefit from this study as they can utilize information from this study as a reference on how to act accordingly by taking action against bullying and promoting empathy and kindness to combat unjustified aggression.

*The Instructors and School Administrators* may get the opportunity to use the study's findings as a topic for seminars about bullying prevention and bystander effect in bullying. Furthermore, develop an intervention program to address the challenges and promote a safer and more positive campus environment.

*For future Researchers*, the results of this study may also be used as a reference in conducting new research or checking the validity of other related findings. This study may also be used as their cross-reference to give them background on Analyzing the Bystander Effect in Bullying: Unraveling Factors that Influence Action and Inaction among Students at selected university students.

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND STUDIES

In this chapter, all of the included literature and studies were meticulously chosen by the researchers based on their relevance, interconnectedness, and legitimacy. All listed studies and literature stand as the researchers' foundation and basis to further support their investigation. Lastly, it aims to describe the bystander effect of students in terms of sex and types of bullying .

#### Foreign

The amalgamation of research findings from various studies provides nuanced insights into the intricate dynamics of bullying and bystander behavior. Firstly,

Jungert (2020) exploration delineates the multifaceted roles within bullying scenarios, elucidating the distinct positions occupied by perpetrators, victims, and bystanders. It underscores the differential motivations of bystanders in direct bullying versus cyberbullying incidents, wherein bystanders exhibit a heightened propensity to defend victims in cyber contexts. This underscores a critical aspect of contemporary bullying dynamics, where the online realm presents unique challenges and opportunities for bystander intervention.

Building upon this foundation, Spadafora et al. (2018) delves into the profound impact of bystander intervention on the prevalence and perpetuation of bullying behaviors. By elucidating the correlation between bystander actions and bullying outcomes, the study underscores the pivotal role bystanders play in shaping the social dynamics of bullying scenarios. Specifically, it highlights that interventions serve to mitigate bullying when bystanders opt to defend victims, while conversely exacerbating the issue when bystanders reinforce the bullying through inaction or tacit approval.

Furthermore, Lambe et al. (2017) contribute significant insights into the prevalence and complexities of bullying within the youth demographic. Their research underscores the prevalence of bullying among youth cohorts and the intricate interplay between bystander intervention and psychosocial outcomes. By highlighting the complex nexus between defending behavior, psychosocial well-being, and contextual factors, the study underscores the nuanced nature of bystander dynamics in bullying scenarios.

Moreover, Fischer et al. (2011) deepen our understanding by elucidating the cognitive and situational factors that influence bystander intervention. Their findings underscore the pivotal role of perception in shaping bystander behavior, particularly in situations perceived as inherently harmful or threatening. Additionally, the study identifies demographic and relational variables, such as gender and interpersonal dynamics among bystanders, as crucial determinants of intervention behavior.

Finally, Gini et al. (2008) contribute valuable insights into the innate propensity towards prosocial behavior among individuals when confronted with bullying scenarios. Their findings underscore a general inclination towards altruistic action, particularly among younger children and girls, challenging conventional assumptions regarding bystander passivity. By elucidating the factors that shape bystander responses, the study sheds light on the underlying motivations and cognitive processes driving intervention behavior.

Collectively, these research studies illuminate the multifaceted nature of bystander dynamics in bullying scenarios, underscoring the interplay between individual cognition, situational factors, and social dynamics. By deepening our understanding of these complexities, researchers can inform the development of targeted interventions aimed at fostering positive bystander behavior

and mitigating the prevalence of bullying within social contexts.

### **Local**

The extensive research on bystander behavior in bullying incidents reveals a complex interplay of individual, cultural, and situational factors. While Western-oriented studies have dominated the literature, recent efforts have aimed to contextualize these findings within the Philippine cultural framework. The results highlight a nuanced understanding of bystander apathy among Filipinos, indicating that cultural beliefs and gender perceptions shape their responses to bullying situations. The modified Bystander Attitudes Scale (BAS) was employed to gauge the level of apathy among Filipinos, revealing intriguing insights. Contrary to expectations, Filipinos were found to be less apathetic when the victim was female, suggesting a potential influence of traditional masculinity norms. However, cultural concepts such as "pakikipagkapwa" underscore the innate inclination of Filipinos to maintain positive interpersonal relationships, contributing to a proclivity for intervention in bullying incidents. Furthermore, the notion of "Bahala na" highlights a fatalistic acceptance of circumstances, which paradoxically serves to diminish bystander apathy by instilling a sense of collective responsibility. Nevertheless, this same cultural trait may also contribute to bystander apathy as it can be interpreted as an avoidance of individual responsibility. Thus, addressing bystander apathy requires a multifaceted approach that encompasses ethical and moral education, beginning in the familial, educational, and workplace environments. By fostering a culture of empathy and responsibility, individuals can be empowered to intervene and support victims of violence, ultimately fostering a safer and more inclusive society (Salo et al., 2015).

### **Synthesis**

The related studies offer crucial insights into the bystander effect, particularly in bullying incidents. Jungert (2020) found that bystanders are more likely to help victims in online bullying scenarios, contrasting Fisher et al. (2011) and Fluke (2016), who noted increased likelihood of intervention in physical bullying situations. Thornberg et al. (2012) highlighted that helping behavior depends on bystanders' perception and empathy, consistent with Fluke (2016) findings. Additionally, Thornberg et al. (2012) and Fluke (2016) both identified social pressure and fear as factors inhibiting bystander intervention. Fluke (2016) also noted that male bystanders are more likely to help, while Gini et al. (2008) found high levels of helping behavior among young females. Moreover, Fluke (2016) and Thornberg et al. (2012) observed decreased intervention when the victim is a stranger or not known personally by bystanders, contrasting Salo et al. (2015), who emphasized the concept of "kapwa" in the Philippine context as a motivator for helping behavior. This study aims to investigate how bystander characteristics and the type of

bullying event influence their response, addressing gaps in existing research primarily focused on Western contexts.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

In order to answer the research questions on this paper, the researchers employed True Experimental design under Quantitative research mode since there is a manipulation of variables. Specifically, the researchers utilized the Post-test Only Control Group design. In this design, participants are randomly assigned to two groups: an experimental group which is the one that will be subjected to an intervention, which in the case of this research, is the bullying social experiment, and a control group that does not receive the intervention. Both groups were then subjected through a posttest survey that assessed the outcome measure (dependent variable) after the intervention was administered. The primary benefit of this design is that it enables comparison of the posttest results between the experimental and control groups in order to assess the causal impact of the intervention. Any variations in posttest results between the two groups were ascribed by the researchers to the intervention they implemented in the experiment. Results and conclusions were drawn by comparing the effects of each level of the independent variable to the dependent variable, which is the college students' likelihood to intervene in various degrees of bullying.

### **Research Locale**

The study was conducted among selected university students, specifically at a different location within the SM Baliwag Complex in Pagala, Baliwag, Bulacan, 3006. The researchers selected this university as the research locale due to its large population and convenience for the researchers. Additionally, since most of the selected university students attended classes onsite, it was important to measure their bystander behavior in bullying situations, which is the major variable in this study.

### **Respondents of the Study**

The respondents for this study comprised randomly selected college students from the Philippines. These respondents were chosen to be heterogeneous in terms of age, sex, and socio-economic status, providing accessibility and making them ideal for the research. Psychology students were deliberately excluded from the potential respondent pool to mitigate potential biases arising from their familiarity with social experiments, which could introduce inaccuracies in the data. The total population of potential respondents was 2,586 students, with the researchers selecting 350 of them for the study using Slovin's formula. The researchers employed a simple random sampling technique, known for its effectiveness in providing a complete dataset and ensuring that every member of the population had an equal chance of being selected for the sample.

### **Sampling Technique**

After establishing the desired sample size from the population, the researchers opted for Convenience

Sampling Technique to select the study's actual respondents who were readily available, thus saving time and simplifying the data collection process. Convenience Sampling involves randomly selecting students who are present at the time of data collection based on their availability.

#### **Instrumentation**

**Demographics.** The demographics were collected by the researchers using a brief self-report at the beginning of the questionnaire, the demographic section consists of selected items from the 2014 Bystander Intervention Survey, wherein participants were asked to state their sex, age, and grade.

Regarding the Bystander Vignette, the control group, not exposed to social experiments, received bystander vignettes portraying various degrees of bullying scenarios acted out by the researchers. Each participant within the control group read and responded to physical, verbal, and social bullying vignettes, presented in order. Each vignette described a setting and actions between aggressors and victims, with variations in the sex of both parties. This strategy, based on previous studies on the bystander effect (Levine & Crowther, 2008) and bystander behavior in bullying situations (Bellmore et al., 2012; Fluke, S. M., 2016), was adapted to align with the modified 2014 Bystander Intervention Survey used in this study.

In assessing attitudes and perceptions towards bullying intervention, a modified 26-item questionnaire, derived from selected items of the 2014 Bystander Intervention Survey developed by Nickerson et al. (2014), was employed. Participants read statements explaining why individuals would or would not intervene in bullying situations and rated them using a 6-point Likert scale, ranging from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (6).

#### **Ethical Considerations**

Prior to conducting the research study, strict ethical considerations were observed and implemented to ensure the utmost safety and integrity of the participants and the study.

*Institutional approval* was sought from the University administrative staff or officers to explain the facts and nature of the experiment thoroughly. This step aimed to ensure the utmost safety of the participants and to guarantee that the research study followed specific ethical standards and did not violate any rules and regulations.

The nature of the study involved the use of a deceptive technique to obtain accurate information without causing any physical or verbal harm. All treatment conditions were controlled with consideration for the safety of the actors and participants.

*Informed consent* was not advisable for the experimental group participants before or during the experimental procedures. Instead, it was provided after the experiment. However, the control group received informed consent before the survey proper, which included

information about the nature of the research, benefits, limitations, and their rights to participate or withdraw.

*Debriefing* was conducted immediately after the experiment or data collection from the experimental group to address any inappropriate actions, words, or information perceived by the participants.

*Confidentiality and anonymity* of the obtained information were assured to the participants, with the researchers handling the information with utmost care and confidentiality. This implied that all identities and personal information of the respondents would be kept confidential, with no names disclosed to readers.

*Honesty, sympathy, and respect* were ensured throughout the research process to maintain ethical standards and create rapport between the researchers and the participants. The participants' involvement was characterized by transparency, and they were neither exploited nor harmed in any way. Finally, the recorded data were discussed with the participants, who were given the rights to participate or withdraw from the study.

#### **Data Implementation/Analysis Plan**

The study involved collecting data from college students in a selected university using face-to-face surveys. Two types of questionnaires were utilized to measure the participants' attitudes and perceptions towards bullying intervention. Reenactments of bullying scenarios were also conducted as part of the intervention for the experimental group. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, including Unpaired t-tests and ANOVA. Results indicating 0.05 p-value or below means there is a significant difference. Results were compared between the experimental and control groups to assess the impact of exposure to bullying scenarios on bystander intervention. The study aimed to understand factors influencing bystander behavior in bullying situations.

#### **Process of Experimentation**

The researchers randomly assigned half of the selected university students to participate in a series of social experiments testing the bystander effect. These experiments involved reenacting bullying scenarios of varying degrees (verbal, physical, and social) in front of the participants. To minimize inaccuracies, the experiments were conducted with different groups, locations, and days. The other half of the sample size served as the control group and did not participate in the experiments, receiving a standard survey instead.

The variations of the social experiments were as follows:

*Physical Bullying Experiment:* Two researchers acted as aggressors, teasing and pulling the victim's hair in front of the participants. The intensity of the hair pulling increased gradually. The experiment was repeated with different researchers and roles swapped, while bystander reactions were observed.

*Verbal Bullying Experiment:* Two researchers made fun of the victim's appearance in front of the participants. The teasing escalated over time, and the

experiment was repeated with roles swapped, while bystander reactions were observed.

*Social Bullying Experiment:* Two researchers coerced the victim into giving up their lunch in front of the participants. The extortion increased gradually, and the experiment was repeated with roles swapped, while bystander reactions were observed.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This chapter contains the tables that present the findings and interpretations of the data collected utilizing the survey questionnaire. To calculate frequency and percentage, mean and standard deviation, the data from the survey forms were entered into a spreadsheet program and tabulated using the SPSS Statistics program.

**Table 1.** Mean, Standard Deviation, and One-Way Anova of Sex variation of Bully and Victim

Sex Variations of the Bully and Victim	N	Mean	Std. Dev
M to F	45	5.400	.654
F to F	45	5.356	.679
M to M	45	3.067	1.338
F to M	45	3.578	1.252

Table 1. Presents the mean scores for various gender combinations in bully-victim scenarios: Male bully to Female victim (M=5.400), Female bully to Female victim (M=5.356), Male bully to Male victim (M=3.067), and Female bully to Male victim (M=3.578)..

**Table 2.** Mean and Standard Deviation for Attitudes and Perceptions of the Controlled and Experimental Group

I Intervened because:	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. I want to preserve the reputation of my organization / institution.	4.38	0.50	Agree
2. It was the right thing to do.	5.42	0.30	Strongly Agree
3. So, a friend wouldn't get in trouble.	4.84	0.36	Agree
4. So, the situation wouldn't escalate.	5.07	0.07	Agree
5. Someone needed help.	5.31	0.13	Strongly Agree
6. It was easy to help.	4.93	0.40	Agree
7. Because others expected me to.	3.26	0.50	Somehow Disagree
8. It makes me feel good to help	4.78	0.56	Agree
9. I would want someone to help me in that situation	4.49	0.47	Agree
10. I related to the person's experience.	4.13	0.46	Somehow Agree
11. To impress others.	1.96	0.44	Disagree
12. I think people should look out for each other.	5.29	0.37	Strongly Agree
<b>Overall Weighted Mean</b>	4.49		Agree

Table 2. displays the Attitudes and Perceptions of the Control Group. Statements eliciting Strongly Agree

responses with respective weighted means include: "It was the right thing to do" (5.42), "Someone needed help" (5.31),

and "I think people should look out for each other" (5.29), all falling under Personality Factors. Meanwhile, statements generating Agree responses include: "So, the situation wouldn't escalate" (5.07), "It was easy to help" (4.93), "So, a friend wouldn't get in trouble" (4.84), "It makes me feel good to help and I would want someone to help me in that situation" (4.78), and "I want to preserve the reputation of my organization/institution" (4.38). The only factor garnering Somehow Agree responses is "I related to the person's experience" (4.13). Moreover, factors eliciting Disagree and Strongly disagree responses are "Because others expected me to" (3.26) and "to impress others" (1.96), respectively.

Overall, the statements related to Intervening Attitudes and Perceptions yielded a mean of 4.49. This indicates that the Control Group generally agrees that the likelihood of intervening factors primarily stems from personal characteristics and perceived consequences. Supporting this result, a study by Thornberg et al. (2012) highlighted the influence of emotional reactions, particularly empathy, on bystanders' inclination to intervene in bullying situations and aid the victim. Additionally, the benefits of intervening in a bullying situation include feeling good about oneself (Spadafora et al., 2018).

**Table 2.1.** Attitudes and Perceptions of the Experimental Group

I Intervened because:	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. I want to preserve the reputation of my organization / institution.	4.24	0.67	Somehow Agree
2. It was the right thing to do.	5.15	0.23	Agree
3. So, a friend wouldn't get in trouble.	4.78	0.08	Agree
4. So, the situation wouldn't escalate.	5.02	0.17	Agree
5. Someone needed help.	5.07	0.35	Agree
6. It was easy to help.	3.71	0.19	Somehow Agree
7. Because others expected me to.	3.27	0.53	Somehow Disagree
8. It makes me feel good to help	4.27	0.37	Somehow Agree
9. I would want someone to help me in that situation	4.44	0.30	Agree
10. I related to the person's experience.	4.07	0.64	Somehow Agree
11. To impress others.	1.87	0.52	Disagree
12. I think people should look out for each other.	5	0.35	Agree
<b>Overall Weighted Mean</b>	4.24		Somehow Agree

Table 2.1 presents the Attitudes and Perceptions of the Experimental Group. Statements eliciting Agree responses include: "It was the right thing to do" (5.15), "Someone needed help" (5.07), "So, the situation wouldn't escalate" (5.02), "I think people should look out for each other" (5.00), "So, a friend wouldn't get in trouble" (4.78), and "I would want someone to help me in that situation" (4.44). Statements generating Somehow Agree responses are: "While it makes me feel good to help" (4.27), "I want to preserve the reputation of my organization/institution" (4.24), "I related to the person's experience" (4.07), and "It

was easy to help" (3.71). Conversely, statements eliciting Somehow Disagree and Disagree responses are: "Because others expected me to" (3.27) and "To impress others" (1.87).

Overall, the Intervening Attitudes and Perceptions statements yielded an overall weighted mean of 4.24. This indicates that the Experimental Group somewhat agreed that the likelihood of taking action in a bullying situation is primarily influenced by personal characteristics and perceived consequences. Supporting this result, a qualitative study by Thornberg et al. (2012) revealed that

the decision whether participants would help a bullying victim depended on how they perceived the situation, the context, and their own beliefs.

**Table 2.2.** Attitudes and Perceptions of the Control Group.

<b>I did not Intervened because I:</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Verbal Interpretation</b>
1. Assumed it wasn't a problem	2.71	0.07	Somehow Disagree
2. Was afraid of embarrassing myself.	3.11	0.53	Somehow Disagree
3. Assumed someone else would do something.	3.49	0.57	Somehow Agree
4. Believed others weren't bothered	2.71	0.67	Somehow Disagree
5. Was afraid my friends / teammates / group members would not approve / support me.	2.87	0.66	Somehow Disagree
6. Felt that my involvement could put my safety at risk.	3.31	0.68	Somehow Disagree
7. Didn't know when to intervene	3.55	0.51	Somehow Agree
8. Didn't know how to intervene	3.47	0.42	Somehow Disagree
9. Lack of confidence to intervene	3.46	0.44	Somehow Disagree
10. It was none of my business	2.86	0.58	Somehow Disagree
11. Fear of retaliation	3.13	0.67	Somehow Disagree
<b>Overall Weighted Mean</b>	<b>2.89</b>		<b>Disagree</b>

Table 2.2 illustrates the Attitudes and Perceptions of the Control Group. Statements generating Somehow Agree responses with respected weighted means include: "Didn't know when to intervene" (3.55) and "Assumed someone else would do something" (3.49). Conversely, statements eliciting Somehow Disagree responses with respected weighted means are: "Didn't know how to intervene" (3.47), "Lack of confidence to intervene" (3.46), "Felt that my involvement could put my safety at risk" (3.31), "Fear of retaliation" (3.13), "Was afraid of embarrassing myself" (3.11), "Was afraid my friends/teammates/group members would not approve/support me" (2.87), "It was none of my business" (2.86), "Believed others weren't bothered" (2.71), and "Assumed it wasn't a problem" (2.71).

Overall, the Non-intervening Attitudes and Perceptions statements yielded an overall weighted mean of

2.14. This suggests that the Control Group generally disagrees. Hence, it implies that their perception of inaction is not due to pluralistic ignorance or the failure to scrutinize the situation, but rather the knowledge of when to intervene and depending on the situational cues. Supporting this result, Rettew et al. (2016) found that with sufficient knowledge of the law on bullying and anti-bullying seminars can aid in lowering bullying incidents. Relatedly, a study conducted by Berkowitz (2013), as cited by Spadafora (2018), suggests that although a majority of students have a negative view of bullying, bystanders may choose to ignore and remain passive in a bullying incident. However, when faced with actual bullying, these same students who do not support violence and bullying may choose to stay passive and not intervene.

**Table 2.3.** Attitudes and Perception of the Experimental Group.



I did not Intervened because I:	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. Assumed it wasn't a problem	3.35	0.31	Somehow Disagree
2. Was afraid of embarrassing myself.	3.38	0.57	Somehow Disagree
3. Assumed someone else would do something.	3.96	0.43	Somehow Agree
4. Believed others weren't bothered	3.22	0.50	Somehow Disagree
5. Was afraid my friends, teammates / group members would not approve / support me.	2.6	0.53	Disagree
6. Felt that my involvement could put my safety at risk.	3.82	0.67	Somehow Agree
7. Didn't know when to intervene	4.47	0.2	Agree
8. Didn't know how to intervene	4.26	0.14	Somehow Agree
9. Lack of confidence to intervene	4.13	0.31	Somehow Agree
10. It was none of my business	3.58	0.14	Somehow Agree
11. Fear of retaliation	3.53	0.24	Somehow Agree
<b>Overall Weighted Mean</b>	3.36		Somehow Disagree

Table 2.3 illustrates the Attitudes and Perceptions of the Experimental Group. The statement generating the Agree response is: "Didn't know when to intervene" (4.47). Meanwhile, statements generating Somehow Agree responses are: "Didn't know how to intervene" (4.26), "Lack of confidence to intervene" (4.13), "Assumed someone else would do something" (3.96), "Felt that my involvement could put my safety at risk" (3.82), "It was none of my business" (3.58), and "Fear of retaliation" (3.53). On the other hand, statements generating Somehow Disagree responses are: "Was afraid of embarrassing myself" (3.38), "Assumed it wasn't a problem" (3.35), and "Believed others weren't bothered" (3.22). The only statement generating a Disagree response is: "Was afraid

my friends/teammates/group members would not approve/support me" (2.6).

Overall, the Non-intervening Attitudes and Perceptions statements yielded an overall weighted mean of 3.36. This indicates that the experimental group Somehow Disagrees. Thus, it implies that their perception of inaction is primarily precipitated by a knowledge gap – a situation where they want to do something but lack the necessary knowledge. Moreover, personal characteristics and perceived consequences are also emphasized. To support this result, according to Rettew et al. (2016) as cited by Sansait et al. (2023), students who receive and attend more anti-bullying and knowledge of the law on bullying can aid in lowering bullying incidents

**Table 3.** One-way ANOVA of Sex Variations of Victim and the Bully  
*One-Way ANOVA of Sex Variations of Victim and Bully*

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit	Decision
Between Groups	196.061	3	65.354	61.546	.000	2.65593889	Reject Ho
Within Groups	186.889	176	1.062				
Total	382.950	179					

Table 3 shows the mean scores for different bully-victim gender combinations: Male bully to Female victim

(M=5.400), Female bully to Female victim (M=5.356), Male bully to Male victim (M=3.067), and Female bully to

Male victim (M=3.578). These results suggest that male victims of bullying are less likely to receive intervention from bystanders compared to female victims.

In Table 3. The obtained F value (F=61.546) exceeds the Critical F value (Fcrit=2.65593889), with a p-value of  $p.000 < .05$ . This indicates a significant difference between the gender of the bully and victim and the likelihood of intervention. Therefore, the researchers reject the null hypothesis (Ho).

These findings align with Salo et al. (2015) study on bystander apathy among Filipino adolescents and young adults, which found that Filipinos are less likely to be apathetic when the victim is female due to cultural factors related to masculinity. Conversely, Fluke (2016) found that female victims of bullying receive more intervention compared to male victims, supporting the observed gender differences in bystander intervention.

**Table 4.** Mean, Standard Deviation, and Unpaired t-test of Physical, Verbal, and Social Bullying Between Two Sexes

Unpaired t-test of Physical Bullying			
	Male Bystander	Female Bystander	Decision
Mean	5.3281	4.0625	Reject Ho
Std. Deviation	.6801	.6565	
Mean Difference	1.2656		
df	30		
t Stat	5.356		
t Critical two-tail	1.697		
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		

Table 4. presents sex differences in intervening during incidents of bullying, focusing on physical interventions. The scores underwent t-test analysis with an alpha level of 5% ( $\alpha=0.05$ ). The findings indicate that male bystanders had a mean and standard deviation of M=5.3281, SD=.6801, while female bystanders had a mean and standard deviation of M=4.0625, SD=.6565. Out of the three degrees of bullying, physical bullying garnered the highest mean for both sexes, suggesting that individuals,

regardless of sex, are more inclined to help during incidents of physical bullying.

The computed t-stat value is 5.356, with a critical value of 1.697 and  $p=0.000 < .05$ . This indicates a significant difference between sex differences in intervening in physical bullying. Specifically, based on the computed data, male bystanders are more likely to intervene than female bystanders in physical bullying situations. Therefore, the researchers reject the null hypothesis (Ho).

**Table 4.1.** T-test Analysis of Verbal Bullying

	Male Bystander	Female Bystander	Decision
Mean	4.0313	2.5625	Reject Ho
Std. Deviation	1.7745	1.3150	
Mean Difference	1.4688		
df	30		
t Stat	2.660		
t Critical two-tail	1.697		
Sig. (2-tailed)	.012		

Table 4.1 displays sex differences in intervening during incidents of bullying, focusing on verbal interventions. The scores underwent t-test analysis with an alpha level of 5% ( $\alpha=0.05$ ). The findings indicate that in terms of verbal bullying, male bystanders had a mean and standard deviation of  $M=4.0313$ ,  $SD=1.7745$ , while female bystanders had a mean and standard deviation of  $M=2.5625$ ,  $SD=1.3150$ .

The computed t-stat value is 2.660, with a critical value of 1.697 and  $p=.012 < .05$ . This suggests a significant difference between sex differences in intervening in verbal bullying. Specifically, based on the computed data, male bystanders are more likely to intervene than female bystanders in verbal bullying situations. Therefore, the researchers reject the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ).

**Table 4.2.** T-test Analysis of Social Bullying

	Male Bystander	Female Bystander	
Mean	3.5938	2.6563	Decision
Std. Deviation	1.2277	1.1250	Reject $H_0$
Std. Deviation	1.2277	1.1250	
Mean Difference	.9375		
df	30		
t Stat	2.252		
t Critical two-tail	1.697		
Sig. (2-tailed)	.032		

Table 4.2 illustrates sex differences in intervening during incidents of bullying, focusing on social interventions. The scores underwent t-test analysis with an alpha level of 5% ( $\alpha=0.05$ ). The findings indicate that in terms of social bullying, male bystanders had a mean and standard deviation of  $M=3.5938$ ,  $SD=1.2277$ , while female bystanders had a mean and standard deviation of  $M=2.6563$ ,  $SD=1.1250$ .

than female bystanders in social bullying situations. Therefore, the researchers reject the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ).

The computed t-stat value is 2.252, with a critical value of 1.697 and  $p=.032 < .05$ . This suggests a significant difference between sex differences in intervening in social bullying. Specifically, based on the computed data, male bystanders are more likely to intervene

To support these findings, Salo et al. (2015) noted that male bystanders are more likely to help due to their masculinity factor, while Fluke (2016) found that males are inclined to assist in situations requiring physical intervention, whereas females are more likely to assist in situations requiring compassion. However, Fluke (2016) also found that females are more likely to intervene in all forms of bullying due to their higher empathy levels. Additionally, Gini et al. (2008) observed that girls exhibit a higher level of helping behavior, especially in younger children.

**Table 5.** Unpaired T-Test for Two Independent Samples (Experimental and Control Group) using Bystander Intervention Survey

Groups	df	Mean	Std. Dev.	T	p-value	T crit	Decision
Post-Assessment Bystander Intervention Survey							
With Exposure to Bullying Social Experiment	88	4.3500	1.6733	4.636	0.000	1.988	Reject $H_0$
Without Exposure	88	3.1333	.5472				

Table 5 presents the t-test results comparing two distinct samples: the experimental group exposed to bullying situations and the control group without exposure to bullying situations. A significant p-value of  $< 0.05$  would indicate a notable difference in the likelihood to intervene among students between these groups. As indicated in the table, the mean and standard deviation of the experimental

group exposed to bullying social experiments are  $M=4.3500$  and  $SD=1.6733$ , respectively, while those of the control group not exposed to social bullying experiments are  $M=3.1333$  and  $SD=0.5472$ , respectively. The computed p-value is  $p=0.000 < 0.05$  in the post-assessment of the Bystander Intervention Scale, leading the researchers to reject the null hypothesis: there is a significant difference in

the bystanders' likelihood to intervene between the experimental group exposed to the bullying social experiment and the control group not exposed to the social experiment.

To support these findings, a study by Gini et al. (2008) titled "The role of bystanders in students' perception of bullying and sense of safety" found that participants overwhelmingly displayed a readiness to help victims after exposure to various bullying scenarios. Their responses were predominantly inclined toward prosocial behavior rather than pro-violence, indicating a willingness to assist victims rather than perpetuate bullying.

**Table 5.1.** Unpaired- T-Test for Two Independent Samples (Experimental and Control Group) using Bystander Attitudes and Perceptions Scale

Groups	df	Mean	Std. Dev.	T	p-value	T crit	Decision
Post-Assessment Bystander Attitudes and Perceptions Scale							
With Exposure to Bullying Social Experiment	44	3.8491	1.0062	.428	.671	1.68	Accept Ho
Without Exposure	44	3.9648	.8170				

As shown in Table 5.1. the scores underwent t-test analysis with an alpha level of 5% ( $\alpha=0.05$ ). The findings revealed the following: the control group ( $M=3.9648$ ,  $SD=1.0062$ ) is not significantly higher than that of the experimental group ( $M=3.8491$ ,  $SD=0.8170$ ),  $t(88) = 0.428$ ,  $p=0.671 > 0.05$ . This implies that there is no difference between the Bystander Attitudes and Perceptions of those with exposure to bullying social experiments and those without exposure. Thus, it is not statistically significant. Conclusively, there is no significant difference in factors influencing the action and inaction. Therefore, the researchers accepted the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ).

In contradiction to the findings that there is no significant difference in factors influencing the action and inaction of bystanders between the control group and experimental group, the study conducted by Gini et al. (2008) showed that after presenting various scenarios of bullying, both indirect and direct, participants primarily inclined toward helping the victim or displaying prosocial behavior rather than endorsing violence. Furthermore, according to Thornberg et al. (2012), the decision of whether participants will help a bullying victim depends solely on how they perceive the situation, the context, and their own beliefs. Additionally, a study conducted by Berkowitz (2013), as cited by Spadafora (2018), suggests that while a majority of students have a negative view of bullying, when faced with actual incidents, bystanders may choose to remain passive and not intervene, despite not supporting violence and bullying.

**SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter presents a summary of the research, the major findings, conclusions drawn from these findings, and the corresponding recommendations. The overarching

In contrast, Fisher et al. (2011) in their study "The bystander-effect: A meta-analytic review on bystander intervention in dangerous and non-dangerous emergencies" found that in situations where the violence is physical and the only way to help the victim is through physical intervention, there is a decrease in bystander effect, leading to an increase in helping behavior. This finding aligns with the arousal cost reward model, suggesting that the severity of the situation increases arousal levels, prompting bystanders to recognize the emergency and offer assistance.

objective of this experimental study was to elucidate the factors influencing bystander behavior in various bullying scenarios, with a specific focus on the impact of gender on bystander helping behavior. The insights gleaned from this study can potentially assist the university in understanding student helping behavior and devising interventions to enhance their response, particularly in instances of bullying.

The research employed a true experimental design and adopted a quantitative research methodology. It was conducted among selected university students, specifically targeting enrolled third-trimester students constituting a population of 2586 individuals. Utilizing Slovin's formula, the study identified a total of 310 participants, selected through a convenience sampling procedure. Prior to administration, the modified instruments comprising six-point Likert Scales underwent validation by registered psychometricians. Data analysis was performed using SPSS software, employing numerical functions such as mean and standard deviation, independent t-test, and one-way ANOVA to interpret the data and derive the findings.

**Conclusions**

The results indicate a significant disparity between the sex of the victim and the likelihood of intervention, with male victims receiving less assistance or intervention from bystanders compared to female victims. Furthermore, the findings demonstrate a notable sex difference in intervening during incidents of bullying across verbal, social, and physical contexts, with male bystanders exhibiting a greater inclination to intervene than their female counterparts. Additionally, the study identifies a significant contrast in the likelihood of bystander intervention between the experimental group exposed to bullying scenarios and the control group not exposed to such scenarios. Specifically, the control group, devoid of exposure to social bullying

experiments, displays a higher propensity to intervene in bullying situations compared to the experimental group subjected to such experiments.

In concluding, the researchers note that both the control and experimental groups express agreement, either directly or somewhat, regarding the influence of personal characteristics (such as empathy, values, and beliefs) and perceived consequences on bullying intervention or direct exposure to bullying. Conversely, both groups show disagreement, either somewhat or directly, with the notion that inaction stems from a knowledge gap that impedes intervention despite the desire to act. Furthermore, the study concludes that the difference in attitudes and perceptions between bystanders exposed to bullying social experiments and those without exposure is not statistically significant. Consequently, the researchers accept the null hypothesis positing no significant difference in the factors influencing the action and inaction of the control and experimental groups.

### Recommendations

Based on the gathered data and statistical analyses, several recommendations are proposed:

Firstly, the university is advised to organize a values reorientation seminar focused on promoting prosocial behavior. This seminar should emphasize the importance of helping others regardless of gender, aiming to instill a culture of mutual support among students.

Secondly, the university should prioritize prevention over intervention by collaborating with speakers and organizations dedicated to anti-bullying initiatives. By fostering a proactive approach, the university can foster a culture of empathy and support among students, irrespective of gender.

Thirdly, integrating anti-bullying projects and discussions into the National Service Training Program (NSTP) curriculum is recommended. This will provide students with a deeper understanding of how to respond effectively to bullying situations, empowering them to take constructive action when needed.

Additionally, university personnel are encouraged to rotate presence within campus facilities during school hours. This rotational approach can enhance authority and supervision, particularly in situations where students fail to intervene in bullying incidents.

In addition to the recommendations for stakeholders, the researchers offer suggestions for future studies:

Future researchers conducting similar studies should explore additional types of bullying scenarios and hypothetical situations. Expanding the scope of bullying contexts will provide a more comprehensive understanding of bystander behavior.

Furthermore, it is advisable for future researchers to conduct multiple social experiments within the university setting to enrich the comparative data. This approach can yield deeper insights into the factors influencing bystander intervention.

Lastly, future studies should aim to include a larger sample size and encompass a broader population. Given that the current study was limited to enrolled third-trimester students at a selected university, expanding the research scope to include a more diverse population will yield more generalizable results.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This study owes its completion to the dedication of numerous individuals, and the authors extend their deepest gratitude to each one. They begin by acknowledging their personal beliefs, irrespective of religion, for providing the wisdom, courage, and strength needed to undertake this endeavor. Special thanks are given to their research adviser for his support throughout the study. Appreciation is also extended to the College Dean, Program Chairperson, and administrative staff for their assistance. Additionally, gratitude is expressed to those who participated and supported the research financially and morally.

### REFERENCES

- Bellmore, A., Ma, T., You, J., & Hughes, M. (2012). A two-method investigation of early adolescents' responses upon witnessing peer victimization in school. *Journal of Adolescence*, 35, 1265-1276. doi: 10.1016/j.adolescence.2012.04.012
- Darley, J. (1968). When Will People Help in Crisis. [https://www.psy.miami.edu/\\_assets/pdf/rpo-articles/darley.pdf](https://www.psy.miami.edu/_assets/pdf/rpo-articles/darley.pdf)
- Fischer, P., Krueger, J. I., Greitemeyer, T., Vogrincic, C., Kastenmüller, A., Frey, D., Heene, M., Wicher, M., & Kainbacher, M. (2011). The bystander-effect: A meta-analytic review on bystander intervention in dangerous and non-dangerous emergencies. *Psychological Bulletin*, 137(4), 517-537. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0023304>
- Fluke, S. M. (2016). *Standing Up or Standing By: Examining the Bystander Effect in School Bullying*. UNL Digital Commons. Retrieved May 21, 2023, from <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1269&context=cehdsdiss>
- Gini G, Pozzoli T, Borghi F, Franzoni L. (2008). The role of bystanders in students' perception of bullying and sense of safety. *J Sch Psychol*. 2008 Dec;46(6):617-38. doi: 10.1016/j.jsp.2008.02.001. Epub 2008 Apr 10. PMID: 19083376.
- Hortensius, R., & de Gelder, B. (2018). From Empathy to Apathy: The Bystander Effect Revisited. *Sage Journals*, 27(4). <https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721417749653>
- Jungert, T., Karatas, P., Lotti, N., & Perrin, S. (2021). *Direct Bullying and Cyberbullying: Experimental Study of Bystanders' Motivation to*

*Defend Victims and the Role of Anxiety and Identification With the Bully.* National

Kelman, H. (1958). TheoryHub - Academic theories reviews for research and T&L. Open.ncl.ac.uk. <https://open.ncl.ac.uk/academic-theories/12/social-influence-theory/#:~:text=Social%20Influence%20Theory%2C%20developed%20by>

Khammar, A., Yarahmadi, M., & Madadzadeh, F. (2020). *What Is Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) and How to Correctly Report Its Results in Medical Research?* NCBI. Retrieved May 21, 2023, from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7475615/>

Levine, M., & Crowther, S. (2008). The responsive bystander: How social group membership and group size can encourage as well as inhibit bystander intervention. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 95, 1429-1439. doi:10.1037/a0012634

Lambe, L. J., Hudson, C. C., Craig, W. M., & Pepler, D. (2017). Does defending come with a cost? Examining the psychosocial correlates of defending behaviour among bystanders of bullying in a Canadian sample. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 65, 112-123. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2017.01.012>

Marini, Z., Spadafora, N., & Volk, A. (2018). *Should I Defend or Should I go? An Adaptive, Qualitative Examination of the Personal Costs and Benefits Associated With Bullying Intervention.* *Canadian Journal of School Psychology*. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0829573518793752>

Nickerson, A., Aloe, A., Livingston, J., & Feeley, T. (2014). Measurement of the bystander intervention model for bullying and sexual harassment. *National Library of Medicine*. 10.1016/j.adolescence.2014.03.003

Rappler. (2018, December 23). Ateneo dismisses student caught bullying. *Rappler*. <https://www.rappler.com/nation/219512-ateneo-dismisses-student-caught-bullying-december-2018/>

Salo, R. S., Acedo, S., Maglinte, A. V., & Pescador, X. (2015). An exploratory study on bystander apathy among Filipino adolescents and young adults. *Research Gate*. DOI:10.13140/RG.2.1.3210.7284

Sansait, J. R. M., Aguilin-Saldaña, G. F., & Retiracion, P. M. A. (2023). Does the type of school matter in preventing bullying? Knowledge, experience, and readiness to face bullying by students enrolled in public and private schools in the Philippines. *Social Sciences & Humanities*

*Open*, 8(1), 100530.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2023.100530>

Spadafora, N., Marini, Z. A., & Volk, A. A. (2018). Should I Defend or Should I Go? An Adaptive, Qualitative Examination of the Personal Costs and Benefits Associated With Bullying Intervention. *Canadian Journal of School Psychology*, 082957351879375. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0829573518793752>

Thornberg, R., Tenenbaum, L., Varjas, K., Meyers, J., Jungert, T., & Vanegas, G. (2012). Bystander Motivation in Bullying Incidents: To Intervene or Not to Intervene? *National Library of Medicine*, 3. 10.5811/westjem.2012.3.11792

---