Jan 1st, 12:00 AM - 12:00 AM

Understanding Factors related to Bystander Intervention in Bullying

Astrid Hernandez
Montclair State University, hernandeza28@montclair.edu

Gaby Davila
Montclair State University, davilag2@montclair.edu

Mariam Hanna
Montclair State University, hannam5@montclair.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.montclair.edu/student-research-symposium

Part of the School Psychology Commons, and the Social Psychology Commons

Hernandez, Astrid; Davila, Gaby; and Hanna, Mariam, "Understanding Factors related to Bystander Intervention in Bullying" (2020). Student Research Symposium. 11.
https://digitalcommons.montclair.edu/student-research-symposium/2020/2020/11

This Open Access is brought to you for free and open access by the Conferences, Symposia and Events at Montclair State University Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Student Research Symposium by an authorized administrator of Montclair State University Digital Commons. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@montclair.edu.
Bullying in school begins to take place in elementary school but its prevalence drops after middle school (Ali, Gharabeih, & Masadeh, 2017). Students are more likely than their male peers to notice a bullying event (Ma, 2002). Evidence suggests that female students have a higher ability to recognize the harm caused by bullying and sympathy with victims (Jenkins, 2008). A school-wide online survey was distributed to the students as part of a school-wide bullying assessment to support school improvement planning. An opt out consent approach was used. Qualtrics was used to collect and analyze all data.

Participants were asked 12 items to analyze how much they agreed with various statements at each stage of bystander intervention. A 5-point Likert scale was utilized with 1 representing “strongly disagree” and 5 representing “strongly agree,” in response to the statements.

Materials

Bystander Intervention Model (Nickerson, Aloe, Livingston, & Feeley, 2014)

- Assess the five steps a bystander must use to respond to an event. Notice the situation, Interpret the event as an emergency that requires assistance, Accept Responsibility, Plan to intervene, and Lastly, Intervene in the event. Participants in the current study were asked 12 items to analyze how much they agreed with various statements at each stage of bystander intervention. A 5-point Likert scale was utilized with 1 representing “strongly disagree” and 5 representing “strongly agree,” in response to the statements.

Demographic Questionnaire

- Assessed gender, grade and ethnicity of participants.

Participants and Procedure

199 students from fifth to eighth grade participated in the study.

- 57% Male and 42% Female
- 20% Fifth, 26% Sixth, 24% Seventh, and 29% Eighth grade
- 34.31 % White, 30.88% Hispanic or Latinx, 15.20% Other, 7.35% Multiracial, 6.86% Asian
- 57% Male and 42% Female

Results

One Two-way MANOVAs was conducted to investigate whether there are Gender and Grade level differences in the Five Steps of Bystander Intervention.

- The Two-way MANOVAs revealed a marginally significant multivariate main effect of Gender in Bystander Intervention, λ = 0.815, F(5, 15, 160) = 2.194, p = .057. There was a significant multivariate main effect of Grade, λ = 0.815, F(5, 15, 442) = 2.27, p = .004.
- Significant main effects of Gender were found for the Notice (F(1, 160) = 5.337, p = .022 and Interpret (F(1, 160) = 5.701, p = .018) scales. Girls scored significantly higher on the Notice and the Interpret scales.
- There was a significant Grade level difference between Know (F(3, 160) = 4.876, p = .003 and Intervention (F(3, 160) = 4.438, p = .005 scales.
- Post hoc analyses found that 5th grade students were significantly different from all other grades on both the Know and the Intervene scales, with 5th graders reporting higher scores than all other grades.

Discussion

- Female students are more likely than their male peers to notice a bullying event and interpret the event as an emergency.
- Girls have often been found to have a higher ability to recognize the harm of bullying and sympathizing with victims (i.e moral sensitivity), and lower moral disengagement than males (Tornberg & Jungert, 2013).
- Greater empathy in females is likely linked to their ability to notice and interpret a bullying event, increasing empathy in males will likely increase their knowledge in these two steps (Menolascino, N., & Jenkins 2018).
- Fifth-grade students are more likely to know what to do in a bullying situation and intervene than older middle school students.
- Fifth graders have more supervision and teacher support, which leads to less passive or negative bystander roles (Evans, & Smokowski, 2015).
- Fifth-graders have more stable structure throughout their day, with fewer classroom changes between periods, making bullying events easier to intervene.
- Older students who are less supervised may need to be provided with more social-emotional support to increase self-efficacy as a way to know how to protect themselves and others from bullying situations (Frey, Hirschlstein, Edstrom, & Snell, 2009).

Implications and Future Directions

- Male students would benefit from training in recognizing bullying and having more empathy for victims.
- Studies should look into interventions that increase moral-sensitivity and social-emotional support particularly in older students.
- Impact of socialization patterns on grade level differences in grade level differences.

Limitations:

- Small Sample Size
- Self-report questionnaire
- Class structure differences

Research Questions

1. Are there gender differences in the different stages of bystander intervention?
2. Are there grade level differences in the different stages of bystander intervention?