

The perceived role of bullying bystanders in Mexican secondary school settings

María Eugenia López Romero

PhD

University of York

Education

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Abstract

Bystanders play an important role in school bullying dynamics, having the power to provide or withhold the social rewards bullies seek. Bystander support is also beneficial for bullying victims, who experience less social and mental health problems if they have defenders. Even though bystanders generally disapprove of bullying, they rarely intervene in bullying incidents. Research suggests that two factors closely related to bystander intervention in bullying are moral disengagement and self-efficacy. Cultural influences and gender may also play a part in bullying and bystander dynamics.

The main aim of this study was to explore Mexican secondary school students' perceptions of their role in bullying situations. The study focused on gender differences in these perceptions, students' levels of self-efficacy, students' use of moral disengagement dynamics, and student receptivity to material that encourages prosocial bystander behaviour. A questionnaire was developed to gauge students' views on these topics, and administered to a sample of 186 secondary school students. Focus groups were also conducted to gain insight on group understandings and norms. A six-session workshop was designed and implemented to expose students to material on prosocial bystander behaviour.

Results suggested that most students feel empathy towards bullying victims and acknowledge that they have the power to make a difference. However, participants are reluctant to put ideas into action for fear of bully retaliation and the belief that they cannot rely on support from other peers and school staff. This sense of powerlessness seems to have a cultural component to it, and is more common in male students. Other gender differences were observed: females displayed higher self-efficacy to help and lower moral disengagement levels.

Research on cultural influences on bullying and bystander behaviour worldwide is needed, as well as further research on the implications, obstacles and opportunities of gender differences in this regard. Studies on what bystanders need to feel safe when helping bullying victims would also be a valuable resource for anti-bullying intervention efforts

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Declaration

I hereby declare that no portion of the work referred to in this thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning. I further declare that this thesis is my own original work, except where reference is made in the text of the thesis to the work of others.

Introduction

Bullying, the most common form of school violence, is a problem that affects a high percentage of students worldwide. A cross-national study of 66 countries found that between 30% and 40% of secondary school students reported having been bullied at some point in the two months prior to the study's data collection stage (Due & Holstein, 2008). Data analysis from another study, this one conducted in 40 countries, found that high bullying levels are consistently related to low emotional wellbeing in youths (Harel-Fisch, 2011). Being involved in bullying situations can have negative effects on students' mental and physical health, their self-esteem, their school attendance, and their academic performance (Kowalski & Limber, 2013). The negative consequences of bullying not only harm students for the duration of the incident, but they can continue to hinder individuals long after their school years are over. A study on the neurology of bullying discovered that experiences of victimisation can affect an individual's development, putting them at risk for life-long poor mental and physical health (Vaillancourt et al., 2013).

Due to its persistence and pervasiveness, bullying was perceived as a normal part of childhood and adolescence for many years. Students who complained of bullying were dismissed or pushed to stand up to their tormentors on their own, and bullies were routinely excused under the idea that their behaviour was just "what children do". It was not until the 1970s that bullying started being researched formally. Around a decade later, the very first anti-bullying campaign was launched by the Norwegian Ministry of Education in 1983, following a well-publicised suicide case (Olweus, 1993). This interest, which started in Scandinavian countries, has progressively kindled in school systems worldwide and started to attract the attention it deserves. Bullying research is now being conducted worldwide.

However, different countries have different amounts of allocated funds destined for this area of educational research. Hence, the volume of publications and depth of research on bullying varies widely from country to country.

In the specific case of Mexico, concern was sparked in good part, as in Norway, by notorious cases of suicide covered by the press. In 2010, the National Statistics and Geography Institute released a report stating that, in 2009 alone, around 190 cases of suicides in Mexico City could be attributed to bullying (INEGI, 2010). Early Mexican studies on bullying focused in its prevalence, revealing that between 40% and 44% of the secondary school population claimed to have been a bullying victim in the past (Aguilera, 2007; Camacho, 2014; Valadez, 2014). This new information raised alarm among Mexican school communities, giving way to debates and congress hearings on anti-bullying policy and legislation, the like of which continue to the present day.

Still, only limited resources are being devoted to the study of bullying and the design of anti-bullying programmes in Mexico. Anti-bullying legislation varies from state to state and it is mostly unsupervised, which makes for dissimilar guidelines across the country (Zurita, 2012). An additional concern is that there is little communication between researchers and legislators, making for the design of underinformed measures and regulations (Gomez Nashiki, 2013).

My personal interest in bullying started when I was working on my Master's degree and interning at a New Jersey primary and secondary school. In the beginning of my internship year, governor Chris Christie signed a law that required all public schools to have anti-bullying programmes in place, following the infamous suicide of 18-year-old Tyler Clementi (Crimesider, 2011). The state, however, did not indicate what these programs should consist of or how they should be implemented. Schools were then forced to swiftly create anti-bullying interventions, and the school where I was doing my internship tasked me

with the job. I went to the literature and considered that, given the resources the inner-city school had, the best choice we had was a school policy and curriculum intervention. The curriculum I designed for the intervention focused on awareness, resilience, and assertiveness for victims, conflict resolution for bullies, and teaching different helping strategies to bystanders. New anti-bullying rules were drafted with students being involved in the process, and seventh, eighth, and ninth graders (the age gap that reported the most bullying) received curriculum material on the topic twice a week for a month.

Students were receptive to the material covered and provided a good amount of insight regarding their experiences in their inner-city crime ridden hometown. However, the most interesting reaction came when a group of students volunteered to present the material to primary school students, believing that all students should be exposed to the material. The school approved the project and, after interviewing 62 volunteers, 16 students were trained to deliver the adapted material under the counselling office staff's supervision. When the project ended, those 16 students remained in volunteer roles as anti-bullying officers, tasked with informing staff of incidents and to mediate disputes among their peers. Comparing results from the Allan Beane questionnaire (2009) that students had answered at the beginning of the school year, bullying levels in the school declined up to 34% by the end of the year.

This experience brought to my attention the power that bystanders hold over bullying situations. The students who raised the concern, came up with the idea of bringing the material to primary school students, delivered it, and took the responsibility of being anti-bullying officers were not victims of bullying, but bystanders. Many make the mistake of thinking that bullying concerns only aggressors and their victims, but it is an issue which involves every individual in the school community. Bullying negatively affects bystanders as well. A school environment that is permissive of bullying predicts a lower sense of school safety for all students (Gini et al., 2008) and it makes them more prone to social anxiety

(Karna, 2010). There is also the risk of normalisation of violence, where young people believe that violence is an inevitable part of life and that they need to tolerate it (Castillo Rocha & Pacheco Espejel, 2008).

Bystanders are affected by bullying, but they also have substantial influence over it. While they cannot control bullies' behaviour directly, they have a choice on how they respond to bullying, and their response matters. Bystanders' can provide or withhold the approval and social status that bullies seek, and can convey the message that the group either endorses or condemns bullying behaviour (Salmivalli, 2014). Victims' interpretation of bullying incidents can also depend on bystander behaviour, since they can find indifference or care in their peers (Sainio et al., 2011).

Bystander involvement is also highly effective in reducing bullying: 50% of bullying incidents end immediately when bystanders intervene (Hawkins et al., 2011), and there are visible decreases in bullying incidents when bystander involvement increases in a group (Salmivalli, 2011). Bystanders are also far easier to reach than bullies (Salmivalli et al., 2011), and working with bystanders prevents placing responsibility on victims, a risk that exists when focusing on social and coping skills for victims. Researchers have found benefits to including bystander intervention in the design of anti-bullying programmes as well. Many anti-bullying programmes that emphasise bystander responsibility and action have been successful in reducing bullying and improving school climate (Frey et al., 2005; Ross & Horner, 2009; Sarento et al., 2015; Yang & Salmivalli, 2015). Working with bystanders seems to be both relevant and promising.

Knowing how valuable bystander involvement is in bullying situations, it should be encouraging to know that students in general disapprove of bullying (Craig et al., 2000; Salmivalli, 2001). Students think of it as immoral (Thornberg, 2010), and rank it as more serious than school norm and etiquette violations (Thornberg et al., 2016). Still, bystander

involvement is relatively rare. Most bystanders remain passive when they witness bullying (Craig et al., 2000), and students are more likely to encourage bullying than to try to stop it (Salmivalli et al., 1996). This raises the important question of which are the obstacles that stop these anti-bullying attitudes from being translated into victim-defending behaviour.

Two factors that research suggests are linked to students' bystander behaviour are the social-cognitive concepts of self-efficacy and moral disengagement. Self-efficacy refers to how efficacious individuals believe themselves to be at a given task (Bandura, 1997). Self-efficacy to intervene has been found to predict helping behaviour in bullying bystanders (Ribgy & Johnson, 2006; Capadoccia et al., 2012; Pöyhönen, et al., 2010; Peets et al., 2015; Chen, Chang, Cheng, 2016). Moral disengagement strategies are cognitive processes through which individuals detach themselves from the discomfort of doing things they believe to be morally wrong and from refraining from doing things that they believe to be morally right (Bandura et al., 1996). Moral disengagement seems to be positively related with bullying, bully reinforcing, and passive bystander behaviour (Hymel & Bonanno, 2014; Thornberg & Jungert, 2014; Doramajian & Bukowski, 2015). Reducing moral disengagement and increasing self-efficacy could be a good start towards encouraging students to take action to help their victimised peers.

It is noteworthy that research worldwide has found significant gender differences regarding bullying behaviour. Males are overrepresented among bullies (Naidoo et al., 2016), display higher aggression scores (Gini et al., 2015), and have weaker anti-bullying attitudes than girls (Salmivalli et al., 2012). Differences between male and female students have been found in bystander behaviour as well; females are more likely to defend bullying victims (Pozzoli & Gini, 2012; Pronk et al., 2016) and males are more likely to support bullies (Lodge & Frydenberg, 2005). While there is a literature gap on the role of bystanders in the Mexican context, a 2011 study found that out of a sample of 1092 Mexican students, only

13% of the participants that reported having been involved in bullying incidents were female. Even though gender differences have been widely documented, there is a need for research that explores the origin, nature and implications of this phenomenon.

The main aim of the present study was to explore the perception that students have on the role that they play as bullying bystanders in Mexican secondary school settings. Their level of receptiveness to change the part they play to a more active prosocial role was also a focus of study. The secondary school age gap was selected because bullying is more prevalent during the secondary school years (Pellegrini & Bartini, 2001; Rigby, 2002; Nation et al., 2008; Chapin & Brayack, 2016; Valadez, 2016). To explore gender differences, gender was a controlled variable. The specific research questions that guided this study were the following:

- 1) What are students' perceptions of their role as bullying bystanders?
- 2) Are bystanders morally responsive to witnessed bullying incidents (moral engagement)?
- 3) Do bystanders think they have the power to alleviate bullying situations (self-efficacy)?
- 4) Are there gender differences in perceptions on bullying and bystander behaviour?
- 5) Does addressing moral disengagement dynamics help students morally re-engage?
- 6) Does introducing a variety of prosocial bystander roles increase self-efficacy to help in bullying situations?
- 7) Are students receptive to material aimed to encourage them to become prosocial bystanders?

To address these questions, a mixed method study was designed. Student perception of their peers' behaviour as bullying bystanders was assessed through a Likert scale. This type of scale was also used to gauge students' level of self-efficacy to help in bullying situations and the level to which they morally disengage from bullying situations they witness, and the

moral disengagement mechanisms they most commonly use. Participants were asked to react to hypothetical scenarios of bystanders witnessing bullying incidents to explore their views on the role of bystander, their perception of the extent to which bystanders can help bullied peers, and whether they believe they have a moral responsibility to do so. Focus groups were employed to delve into group consensus, norms, and dynamics when it comes to bullying and bystander behaviour. As mentioned before, response differences between male and female participants were compared.

This study provides an insight on the role that bystanders play in Mexican bullying dynamics and on the perceptions and expectations that student have of this role, thus filling this gap in Mexican bullying research. It also endeavours to inform intervention efforts about potential opportunities and obstacles towards designing and implementing bystander based anti-bullying programmes in Mexican settings. Exploring dynamics and implications of gender differences is also pursued.

The first chapter of this work reviews the relevant literature on basic bullying dynamics, bystander roles, the bystander effect, self-efficacy, moral disengagement, anti-bullying interventions, and the Mexican context. The methodology design, ethical considerations, and study limitations are described in chapter two. Results from the data analysis process are presented in chapter three. Chapter four consists of the discussion of the results and the way they fit into the state of the literature. Finally, the conclusion and further opportunities for research are discussed in chapter five.

Chapter 1. Literature review

This chapter presents an overview of the relevant literature pertaining to the key issues and concepts that this study focuses on. Bullying dynamics, bullying types and the different roles that students play in bullying situations are described. The importance of the role of bullying bystanders is highlighted, and the advantages of bystander intervention are considered. The social cognitive concepts of self-efficacy and moral disengagement are explained, along with how they influence bullying and bystander behaviour. Major interventions and programmes that have been designed to address bullying in schools are also discussed. Finally, the Mexican setting is depicted, covering cultural ideas on helping and violence, anti-bullying legislation, anti-bullying programmes, and bullying research conducted in Mexico.

1.1 Bullying

1.1.1 A definition of bullying

The first known use of the word “bully” was in 1538. Surprisingly, the word did not originally have a negative connotation, being used as a term of endearment for friends. However, since the 1600’s, it has been used to describe individuals who are cruel, threatening, aggressive, or coercive towards others (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Different definitions have been coined and different implications have been attributed to bullying, both for colloquial and for academic use. Still, for the purpose of this study, bullying is defined as a type of aggression in which an individual is victimized intentionally and repeatedly over time by a more powerful (mainly physically or socially) peer or group of peers (Neuman et al., 2000). This definition covers three important aspects: intentionality, repetition, and power imbalance. An isolated incident of aggression cannot be considered bullying; neither is one where the social transgression was unintentional. This is not to say that isolated or accidental

instances lack importance; they just follow different dynamics from bullying, and should be addressed differently as well.

The key feature of bullying, though, is power imbalance (Olweus, 1993). This inequity can manifest itself as a marked difference in physical strength, a lack of social support on the victim's side, or a contrast in the perceived social status between bully and victim. This power disparity makes the bully feel safe and the victim feel helpless in front of the stronger peer. This kind of peer violence has been found to be more prevalent during the secondary school years, or between the ages of 13 and 15 (Quirk & Campbell, 2015; Nation, et al., 2008; Seals & Young, 2003). A reason for this might be that, as students enter secondary school, they go from being the oldest in the familiar social setting of primary school, to being the youngest in a new environment. When facing this situation, many students try to position themselves in an advantageous social place. This struggle for status fosters a situation in which engaging in domination dynamics can seem convenient, or even perceived as necessary (Seals & Young, 2003; Pellegrini & Bartini, 2000).

Evans and Smokowski (2015) explain this socialization process through the social capital theory. Social capital refers to the advantages individuals gain from socialisation, chiefly information, influence, social credentials, and reinforcement of identity. These perks are very important to secondary school students, and play an important part in bullying and bystander behaviour. Students try to socialise in a way that they believe will bring them a certain degree of social privilege, personal recognition, and a sense of belonging. To many, this can be achieved through fostering camaraderie with their new peers. However, other students learn that social power can be reached through bullying dynamics.

1.1.2 Traditional bullying and cyberbullying

Over the years that this phenomenon has been a subject of study, different taxonomies of bullying have been discussed. In 1993, Olweus described the difference between “direct

bullying” and “indirect bullying”. Visible attacks on victims, such as physical assaults and overt insults, were labelled as “direct bullying”, while concealed aggression, such as social exclusion, was defined as “indirect bullying”. Olweus stressed the need to address indirect bullying as intensively as direct bullying situations since, while indirect bullying is more difficult to detect, it is seriously damaging as well.

The bullying taxonomy adopted for this study was similar to that that followed by Bauman and Del Rio (2006), Jacobsen and Bauman (2007), Barchia and Bussey (2011), Capadoccia et al., (2012), and Chen et al (2016), among others. This taxonomy classifies bullying into three categories: physical, verbal, and relational. Physical bullying refers to any kind of bodily harm inflicted upon a student, such as hitting, punching, kicking, or shoving. Verbal bullying involves spoken attacks, such as insults, taunts, or threats. Social bullying consists in isolating students through excluding them from activities, gossiping, or spreading rumours about them to limit peers willingness to socialise with them (Jacobsen & Bauman, 2007). It is important to mention that while bullying types often coexist (students can be verbally and socially bullied in a given period of time, for instance), different bullying types follow different dynamics (Olweus, 1993). They are also perceived differently by students and staff members (Bauman & Del Rio, 2006; Thornberg et al, 2016). Therefore, it was considered important to adopt a taxonomy instead of speaking of bullying as an umbrella term that could refer to different types of aggression.

It is worth noting that there are other categories present in other bullying taxonomies, such as property infringement, dating violence, and other types of sexual harassment (Turner, et al., 2011). However, for the design and implementation of the present study it was necessary to take into consideration that there is a high level of delinquency and of gender violence in the Mexican area where data was collected (Rodriguez, 2010). In addressing property aggression and sexual harassment, the study would have risked losing focus in

bullying dynamics, and opening the scope of the study to crime and gender violence. These types of violence follow different dynamics and are addressed differently. Hence, in this study bullying will be categorised as physical, social, relational, and cyberbullying, which is relatively recent, but has become increasingly relevant.

Cyberbullying can be defined as peer harassment that is not perpetrated through the conventional ways physical, verbal, or relational bullying is carried out, but through electronic means (Smith, et al., 2008). Using instant messaging, social media websites, and mobile applications to disseminate insulting or threatening messages or media are examples of cyberbullying. An important distinction between traditional bullying and cyberbullying is that the repetition works differently in the conventional and electronic environments. While one of the staple elements in traditional bullying is for the aggressors to engage in repeated incidents, a single online publication can be accessed by any given number of people, and then shared for an indefinite amount of time. Thus, a single posting is all that is required to achieve the harmful effects of repeated traditional bullying events (Kyriacou & Zuin, 2016).

Bullying roles seem to carry from the traditional environment to the electronic environment. In their bibliographical analysis of cyberbullying, Cowie and Colietty (2010) found that cyberbullying victims are often also bullying victims in the classroom, and that bullies are likely to use both mediums as well. Still, it is very difficult to determine the real extent of cyberbullying, since its definition and nature are still unclear to several members of educational communities. Numerous students and staff members are unsure about what cyberbullying is and, as Cowie and Colietty noted, many schools do not address it in their anti-bullying curriculum. Additionally, cyberbullying victims can be reluctant to report the attacks for shame of admitting their victimization, and for fear of having social media access restricted in an attempt to shield them from further incidents (Kyriacou & Zuin, 2016).

These obstacles to address cyberbullying are concerning, since this type of harassment can be very harmful. In their longitudinal study, Fahy et al. (2016) measured the levels of depression and social anxiety of 2480 UK teens, and then re-tested them one year later. Results showed that students who were victims of cyberbullying had significantly higher levels of depression and social anxiety. These results are unsurprising; cyberbullying features all elements that make traditional bullying distressing, and adds a few new concerns. Sticca and Perren (2013) studied 838 Swiss adolescents' views on the severity of traditional and cyberbullying incidents. Students rated the severity of cyberbullying incidents as higher, particularly because it made incidents more public and because the bully could remain anonymous, which was perceived to be more threatening than knowing the identity of bullies.

Cyberbullying is more prevalent in some student groups than others. For instance, Bussey et al. (2015) found that students in the later years of secondary school are exposed to more cyberbullying than their younger counterparts. They also found that older students are more confident in their capacity to cyberbully. This suggests that, even if cyberbullying and the new secondary school social dynamics are new to young students, cyberbullying is something that they quickly get to practice and become proficient.

Gender might also have an influence on cyberbullying behaviours and perceptions. Cowie and Colietty (2010) found that girls are more likely to report being cyberbullied. Similarly, Quirk and Campbell (2015) found that girls are more likely than boys to have witnessed cyberbullying, and no direct bullying. However, it is important to be careful when interpreting these results. While Quirk and Campbell's results showed that females are more likely to have seen cyberbullying exclusively and males are more likely to have seen a combination of the two, the researchers concluded that cyberbullying might be a form of verbal or relational aggression which is seen more often in females. However, their results do not necessarily mean that females engage in cyberbullying more, only that they are more

likely to have seen it in isolation from traditional bullying. Further research devoted to cyberbullying and influence of gender in indirect aggression is necessary to determine the relationship between gender and cyberbullying.

1.1.3 Student roles in bullying

In their seminal study on the roles of bullying bystanders, Salmivalli et al. (1996) surveyed 573 Finnish sixth grade students on their behaviour when witnessing bullying to identify student roles in bullying situations, other than the those of the bully and the victim. To reduce the social desirability, a concern when asking students to describe their own behaviour, Salmivalli et al. used peer report surveys in addition to self-reports. This allowed the researchers to get a clearer view on each student's role in bullying dynamics. As a result, Salmivalli et al. identified six roles that students can adopt in bullying situation: bullies, victims, bully assistants, bully-reinforcing bystanders, passive bystander and victim-defending bystanders. Bullies are the perpetrators of the aggression. Bully assistants aid bullies directly, joining the aggression or ensuring convenient conditions for the bully. Bully reinforcers reward the bully socially through laughing, making emboldening comments or serving as an approving audience. Passive bystanders witness bullying, but ignore it and take no action. Victim defenders, on the other hand, actively seek to stop bullies, help victims, and/or alert an adult (Salmivalli et al., 1996). It is important to note that these roles are not clearly divided or stable over time. Someone's bully can in other instances be someone else's victim (known as a "bully-victim") and all students, even the ones who are bullies or victims in other incidents, are sometimes bullying bystanders, and they chose a bystander role. This is one of the reasons why bullying is so complex and why interventions might aim to address bullying from many different angles.

a) Bullies

Contrary to popular belief, bullies are not necessarily socially inept; bullies often have high social status within their group. They might have different social drives though. Olweus (1993) found that bullies seem to have what he called “the three interrelated motives”: a need for power and dominance, seeking a direct benefit from the aggression, and a certain degree of hostility toward the environment. Bullies tend to have a more negative outlook on school (Harel-Fisch et al., 2011), are often highly concerned with their image within the group, and are overly sensitive to criticism and dissent (Baumeister, 2001).

Because bullies are typically not only aggressive towards peers, but towards parents and teachers as well (Olweus, 1993), they are seldom seen as a vulnerable population. Still, bullies have a higher incidence of mental health problems (Cowie & Colietty, 2016) compared to their non-bully counterparts. Albores Gallo et al. (2011) surveyed 1092 Mexican students on their behaviour regarding bullying, and asked their parents to fill the Child Behaviour Checklist (Achenbach, 2000) to explore the relationship between bullying roles and psychiatric disorders. Results showed that bullies and bully-victims had the highest levels of conduct and oppositional disorder, ADHD, anxiety, and somatic symptoms, surpassing those displayed by bullying victims. This shows that bullies not only need controlling or disciplining, they need to be cared for as well.

In addition to the problems bullies face during their school years, there are also long term negative consequences associated with being a bully. If students learn that victimizing others will help them achieve their goals, they can develop poor social skills and low regard for social rules. In their longitudinal study, Kumpulainen et al. (1999) followed 1268 primary school students, surveying them on their bullying roles and psychiatric symptoms in second grade. Four year later they surveyed their participants again, when they were in sixth grade. Results found that bullies and bully-victims had a high chance of still being involved in

bullying situations, of having psychiatric symptoms, and of developing deviant behaviour by the end of primary school. Later in life, they are also more likely to have failed interpersonal relationships and failed careers (Coloroso, 2003). Former bullies also have a significantly higher probability to have official criminal records as young adults (Olweus, 1993). The risks bullies face stress the need for schools, policy makers, and families to get involved in addressing bullying. Reducing bullying is not only beneficial for the immediate sake of the victims, but for the wellbeing of the bullies and the educational community in general.

b) Victims

Victims are the people on the receiving end of bullies' aggression. Many studies have focused on what causes students to be at risk of becoming bullying victims. Although students (and sometimes teachers and parents) often believe that what Olweus (1993) referred to as "external deviations" (characteristics that stand out) causes students to be bullied, this is not the case. Olweus (1993) found that the proportion of students with "deviant" traits among students who are bullied is just as high as the proportion of students with "deviant" traits among students who are not bullied. However, he found that victims tend to be more anxious and insecure, and react visibly to bullying. Arguably though, anxiety and insecurity could be a result of bullying instead of being a cause. It is also understandable that victims will react visibly when they are being attacked. It is difficult to determine whether anxiety and a proneness to react visibly can cause a student to be targeted.

Of course, there are some populations that are more vulnerable to being targeted than others. Eisenberg et al. (2015) examined the relationship between bullying and weight, sexual orientation, and disabilities. Results from this study found that LGBT students, overweight students, and students with socio-emotional disabilities were more likely to be bullies and more likely to be victims. This might happen because students who consider themselves at

higher risk, or who have been targeted in the past, feel pressured to enter domination dynamics to ensure a socially advantageous place within their peer group.

In the Mexican school setting, a lack of social support seems to be the biggest predictor of bullying. Vega et al. (2013) had 1706 Mexican students answer questionnaires on their demographic information, personality traits, health issues, and victimisation levels. Results showed that personality traits or health issues were not important predictors of bullying, but lack of social support was. An explanation for this might be that students who are cared for and protected by a group are seen as off-limits, while students who are isolated are perceived as easy targets. This phenomenon can put new pupils at risk. If they are not quickly welcomed into a group of friends, they could become the scapegoats to the group's power and dominance dynamics. Peers that would otherwise be happy to socialise with them might choose to avoid them instead, for fear of being targeted for associating with a victim.

Understandably, bullying brings a wide array of negative consequences to its targets. Victims are highly likely to experience anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, and feelings of inadequacy, since they perceive themselves to be rejected by their peers (Paul & Cillessen, 2003). A group of researchers in the United States who studied the relationship between self-esteem and body image appraisal found that being teased about body weight had a stronger impact on self-esteem than being overweight (Kutob et al., 2010). This exemplifies how much power bullies have over their victims. Bullied students also tend to feel less empowered, and find it harder to communicate, not only with their peers but with their parents and teachers as well (Nation et al., 2008).

Bullying is also negatively correlated with victim academic achievement: victimization hinders student motivation and promotes absenteeism, since the bullied student wants to avoid the violent scenario as much as possible (Coloroso, 2003). This correlation can last longer than the victimisation incidents. In their study on college students'

experiences with bullying and academic motivation, Young-Jones et al. (2015) found that students who were being bullied and students who had been bullied in the past reported lower levels of academic motivation and sense of competence. Mental health issues persist long after bullying ceases. Arseneault's (2017) review of longitudinal bullying studies observed that people who had been bullied in their childhood had higher rates of anxiety, depression, panic disorders, and suicidality in adulthood. Former victims were also more likely to struggle with their finances, physical health, and social relationships. Young-Jones et al.'s study and Arseneault's analysis shed light on the fact that the effects of bullying go far beyond the unpleasantness of the moment: it has the potential to change students' perception of school, socialisation, and themselves.

Obviously, the dynamics between bullies, victims and bully-victims are very complex. There is, however, another element to consider, and it is that bullying incidents tend to happen in the presence of bystanders. Their role and influence in the bullying phenomenon is discussed in the following section.

1.2 Bullying Bystanders

1.2.1 Bystander relevance in bullying dynamics

Although students, and many times teachers, administrators and families, often feel that bystanders do not play a part in bullying dynamics, this is far from true. Bullying is a group phenomenon, and for bullying to be prevalent in an environment some group mechanisms need to be in place (Olweus, 1993). In their 1999 study, O'Connell et al. observed naturalistic interactions at a Toronto playground and recorded bullying incidents and the type of bystander interventions that followed. Upon analysing these interactions, they found that most bullying incidents happen in the presence of bystanders, who are more likely to behave in ways that reinforce the bully than in ways that support the victim. This behaviour allows them to share the bullies' power, and protects them from being targeted.

Half of bullying incidents also have passive bystanders who not to get involved. The study authors concluded that bullying is made possible by bullies having social power and by bystander pro-social involvement being limited due to fear of challenging bullies (O'Connell et al., 1999). O'Connell et al.'s observations provided a glimpse into how, even though most bystanders disapprove of bullying (Craig et al., 2000), they often react in ways that help bullies maintain their social dominance. This phenomenon seems to be prevalent in Mexican populations, where themes of power imbalance, resignation to bullying, and the need to belong are common when students speak of bullying (Velazquez Reyes, 2005).

However, bullies depend on bystanders to maintain this dominance as well. For instance, bullies need social rewards such as attention and approval from bystanders to secure their position in the group (Salmivalli, 2014). Salmivalli et al. (2011) surveyed students from 77 Finnish schools on self-reported bullying behaviour, peer-reported bullying behaviour, attitudes towards bullying, and levels of empathy towards victims. Results showed that defending behaviour was significantly and negatively correlated with bullying levels in a given class: the more defending bystanders a class has, the less bullying incidents it faces (Salmivalli et al., 2011). Salmivalli et al.'s 2011 study showed that bystanders have power over bullying situations, and that the bystander role that they choose when witnessing bullying incidents can make a difference.

Bystander intervention is not only powerful, but also efficient. Hawkins et al. (2001) performed naturalistic observations of 58 primary school students who acted as victim defenders. Their results found that 57% of the bullying incidents in which a defender stepped in ended immediately. However, they also observed that while there were bystanders present in most bullying situations, they only intervened in 20% of the incidents. Studies that rely on naturalistic observations like O'Connell et al.'s (1999) and Hawkins et al.'s (2001) provided important information on the nature of bystander intervention. Studies of this nature would be

valuable in secondary school settings. However, naturalistic observations of older students could be challenging; it is more difficult to observe older students with their consent without importantly altering their behaviour.

Bystander intervention not only has a positive effect on bullies' behaviour, but also on victims' emotional wellbeing. Sainio et al. (2011) analysed questionnaire responses of 4614 Finnish students on victimisation levels, defender nominations, and self-esteem among peers in order to study victim-defender dyads. Results found that being bullied is negatively correlated with popularity and self-esteem, but that having a defender can curb these effects. Victims who have at least one defender also have less anxiety and depression symptoms, and are better adjusted than their counterparts who lack social support (Sainio et al., 2011). On the other hand, bystanders reacting negatively towards the victim, as in the case of bully assisting and reinforcing, results in a greater likelihood of negative emotional consequences for victims (Jones et al., 2015).

The way bystanders react also has an influence on how other students perceive bullying situations. Forsberg et al. (2014) interviewed 43 students on their peers' bystander behaviour and their interpretations of why they act the way they do. Defending behaviour was related to believing the victim was innocent or interpreting the situation having as serious. Reinforcing and passive behaviour was explained by perceiving that the situation did not require intervention, or by blaming the victim for having done something wrong or generally being unfriendly. These results were consistent with Gini et al.'s (2008) study, which found that students tolerating bullying increases victim blaming since the student body justifies their lack of action by concluding that bullying victims have done something to deserve being abused. Witnessing others being indifferent to bullying leads students to believe that the situation warrants indifference.

Bystander involvement is beneficial for the general school climate as well. Active defending behaviour is a significant predictor of lower bullying levels and of a higher general sense of school safety. This is not only true for bullying victims, but for all students (Gini et al., 2008; Salmivalli et al., 2011). If schoolchildren see that when a peer is bullied someone will step in and defend them, they will count on being aided if they ever find themselves in that situation. This helps students feel they are in a safer and more caring environment. Levels of victim blaming are also lower if peers intervene to defend victims. Seeing other bystanders react to bullying prompts students to identify the situation as a social injustice (Gini et al., 2008).

On the other hand, social anxiety is significantly higher in classrooms where people reinforce the bully and do not defend the victim (Karna, 2010). If students see that their peers allow bullying, they will learn that bullying victims are left to their own devices, and they will come to fear being a target. As stated before, the bystander role which students choose (bully reinforcer, passive bystander or victim defender) matters. It gives out a clear message; either that the student body will tolerate to the bully's behaviour and will remain indifferent to the victim's pain, or that they will support abused classmates and will confront bullies.

Another reason why bystanders can be of great help in bullying is because bystanders have a clear view on their group's social dynamics and can easily recognise intent to harm, while teachers often find it difficult to distinguish between bullying and consensual teasing situations. Also, while many students are reluctant to discuss their own victimization, students feel more comfortable talking to teachers about their peers' problems (Dixon et al., 2004). The stigma of the "tattletale" is diminished when instead of denouncing wrongs done to themselves, students feel they are standing up for a peer.

Bystander behaviour is also vital in cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is difficult for schools and families to address, since the boundaries of privacy and jurisdiction are unclear

when it comes to the world wide web. It is often the case that adults are just unaware of bullying incidents that happen online, but the student body is very much conscious of them. Quirk and Campbell's (2015) study on cyberbullying bystanders found that while students are aware of cyberbullying situations, they are more reluctant to report aggression they have witnessed online than aggression witnessed personally. This makes passive bystanders behaviour predominant in cyberbullying situations (Quirk, 2005). However, peers are a palpable presence in cyberbullying, and their participation can make a big difference if students are educated on prosocial bystander techniques suited for the electronic setting (Wong-Lo & Bullock, 2014). More research on the cyberbullying bystanders and on how they can intervene is needed.

1.2.2 Prosocial behaviour and the bystander effect

When we talk about students who choose to defend or comfort peers who are being bullied, we are talking about student prosocial behaviour. Prosocial behaviour can be defined as acts that result in the benefit or well-being of other people. However, the acts can be considered prosocial behaviour vary widely culturally and even personally (Dovidio et al., 2006). It is important to differentiate between prosocial behaviour, helping behaviour, and altruism. Helping behaviour includes acts performed as a professional activity, such as nursing and counselling. Altruism refers to helping others without expecting any benefits for oneself. Prosocial behaviour is not contractually mandated and it does not exclude the desire to assist oneself along with the rest of the community (Levine & Manning, 2016).

There are different types of prosocial behaviour as well, such as cooperation (working together as a group in pursuit of a collective good), volunteering (giving time and working for the advancement of a group one does not belong to), emergency intervention (helping in an urgent, unanticipated, dangerous situation), and bystander intervention

(assisting in a crisis one is witnessing). Intervening to help bullying victims is considered prosocial bystander intervention (Levine & Manning, 2016).

It is not implausible to assume most students see defending victims as prosocial behaviour since most students consider bullying to be deviant behaviour (Thornberg, 2010). Thornberg et al. (2016) asked 307 elementary school children to rate a series of vignettes according to how good or bad they believed the depicted behaviour was. These vignettes described students breaking structural norms (like raising hands before speaking), breaking etiquette norms (like removing hats inside the classroom), and bullying situations. Schoolchildren considered bullying to be worse than transgressions of structural norms and etiquette rules. Student reasoning for disapproving of bullying revolved around moral themes, while disapproval of structural and etiquette rules revolves around ideas of order and subjective personal choice. Even relational bullying, which is more difficult for children to identify as a social infringement than physical bullying, was considered to be more serious than breaching structural and etiquette rules (Thornberg et al., 2016). This suggests that many children disapprove of bullying for reasons that are deeper-seated than simply being told that it should not be done. Research has shown that most of the student population claims to disapprove of bullying situations (Craig et al., 2000; Salmivalli, 2001), up to 83% find it unpleasant (O'Connell, 1997), and up to 43% state that they would definitely or probably intervene if they witnessed bullying (Rigby & Johnson, 2006).

Even so, and while students tend to have a positive opinion on peers who do defend victims, there is a far larger number of passive bystanders than of students who do something to alleviate bullying incidents (Craig et al., 2000). In fact, student bystander behaviour is much more likely to endorse bullying than to help reduce it (Salmivalli et al. 1996). In their study on American teenagers, Chapin and Brayack (2016) had 1741 students answer a questionnaire on whether they had been bullied, if they had helped someone who was bullied,

if they would help students who were bullied, and if they knew of any resources that could offer help on this matter. Results showed that while Hispanic students were the most likely to intervene in bullying situations, there was a wide gap between the Hispanic students who said they would intervene in a bullying situation (100%) and the ones who had intervened in the past (60%). This could suggest that while most students like to think that they would help, this does not always translate into actual behaviour. It can also point toward cultural implications. Since Hispanic culture is community-oriented and strongly encourages cooperation, social desirability bias might be stronger among Hispanic teens, who believe that they are expected to say that they would help, even if they feel reluctant to act when faced with bullying situations in reality.

Part of this might be explained by the bystander effect. The bystander effect can be defined as the inhibition of helping behaviour in individuals who witness emergencies, caused by the presence of other bystanders (Fischer et al., 2011). It was first described by social psychologists Latané & Darley (1970), who did a series of experiments to gain insight on this phenomenon after the infamous murder of Kitty Genovese, a young woman who died after being stabbed outside her apartment within earshot of at least 42 of her neighbours. Genovese's murder lasted for about 30 minutes, during which she audibly called for help. The killer also walked away from the scene twice, and then returned to attack his victim again. Still, none of the witnesses attempted to help. This incident sparked American psychologists Latané and Darley's interest in what makes bystanders help or refrain from helping people in need. This interest was the origin of their research on bystander behaviour, in which they examined the behaviour of bystanders in different staged conditions and interviewed subjects about their behaviour immediately after the incident unfolded. Even though their research on bystander behaviour was published decades ago, Latané and Darley's seminal work is still relevant, and researchers use their bystander intervention

model and cite their results extensively. Of course, their experiments, conducted in 1970, would not meet the ethical standards that social science experiments follow today. Most of Latané and Darley's experiments involved deception and participants did not offer their consent prior to being involved in the experiments. However, results of the Latané and Darley experiments set the grounds for further bystander behaviour research.

It is noteworthy that Latané and Darley's experiments found that lack of action was seldom a result of apathy. However, they did find a clash between the social encouragement to help others and the consensus that people should not get involved in other people's business and should not trouble others with their own problems. They also found a series of factors which affect bystanders' willingness to help. These factors can be environmental, personal or victim related (Latané & Darley, 1970).

Latané and Darley found that there is a five-step process through which a bystander either intervenes in an emergency situation or disregards the event. First, the person needs to notice the incident; if bystanders do not notice anything out of the ordinary in the event, they will not even enter the dilemma of whether or not to help. Once noticed, they need to identify the event as an emergency, and evaluate the risk for those involved. Bystanders who believe that the consequences of the event are not important will be more likely to disregard the event. Then, bystanders need to evaluate the degree of their own responsibility in the incident. If the person determines it is his or her place to act, an intervention plan will be chosen and then carried out. Obstacles that hinder the likelihood of intervention can happen at any of these stages (Latané & Darley, 1970).

Similar steps have been found in bullying bystander dynamics. Chen et al. (2016) conducted semi-structured interviews with 24 Taiwanese secondary school students (12 defenders and 12 passive bystanders) to explore the factors that they considered before deciding to defend or to refrain from intervening. Results suggested that when faced with a

bullying situation, bystanders first assess the severity of the incident, their degree of personal responsibility in the situation, and their relationship with victims and bullies. They then select a strategy, carry it out, and reassess its results and consequences. One weakness of Chen et al.'s study is that their sample was relatively small; only 24 students were interviewed, 12 defenders and 12 passive bystanders. Replications of this study with larger samples and in different cultural settings would be necessary for confirmation of the relevance of the the Latané and Darley model in bullying bystanders.

However, there is research that supports that students who defend bullying victims in bullying situations respond to similar stimuli and go through similar thought process as those described by Latané and Darley (1970). Jenkins and Nickerson (2017) conducted a study with 299 secondary school participants in which the role that students assume when faced with bullying situations and the steps for bystander intervention that they reported to have engaged in were studied. The results showed that bullying victims and defending bystanders are significantly more likely to report to notice bullying events than bullies, bully reinforcers, and passive bystanders. Defending bystanders were also significantly more likely to interpret these events as emergencies, assume responsibility to help, and to evaluate helping strategies than any of their peers, including victims. Hence, it is possible that defending bystanders experience social situations in a different way than bystanders who do not defend.

For instance, there is research that suggests that some students do not identify harm, which is the first step for bystander intervention. In their open-ended student interviews on what leads bystanders to intervene or not, Thornberg et al. (2012) found that students sometimes fail to identify the risk in bullying situations and perceive the damage to be inconsequential. If this occurs, students do not even reach the point where they must decide

whether they should intervene or how to intervene, because they do not see the need for action.

There are also hurdles to students acknowledging their own responsibility in bullying incidents, such as diffusion of responsibility. Diffusion of responsibility is discounting or diluting our own responsibility due to the presence of others who could assume it or share it (Bandura, et al., 1996). In their experiments, Latané and Darley (1970) found that subjects who thought they were alone in witnessing an event where schoolchildren were fighting were more likely to intervene than subjects who knew other bystanders were present. Participants who intervened explained this behaviour by saying that, being the only bystander, they believed that if they did not help, nobody would. Participants who were with other bystanders said they did not intervene because they assumed that someone else was already intervening, and their action would be a duplication of efforts.

Diffusion of responsibility is not uncommon amongst bullying bystanders. Olweus (1993) listed diffusion of responsibility, inhibition to aggressive behaviour, and distorted perceptions on the victims as the three group phenomena which enable bullying dynamics. And as Latané and Darley found, diffusion of responsibility is negatively related to bystander intervention. This is also true for bullying: students believe that someone should help their bullied peers, but being in a group they do not accept that responsibility as their own (Thornberg & Jungert, 2014). Still, bystanders might also refrain from helping when they are the only witnesses of bullying. Song and Oh (2017) conducted a study which in correlations were sought between students' experiences as bystanders and the roles they play when they face bullying situations. Their results suggested that there is no correlation between being the only bystander and being more likely to help bullied peers. While Song and Oh concluded that there is no evidence to support that the bystander effect is present in bullying situations, it could be argued that it would be difficult for students to feel they are truly alone when they

witness bullying. In the end, bullying perpetrators are also students' peers, and their presence might be enough to inhibit prosocial responses in bystanders.

The characteristics of the person in need of help can also influence bystanders' willingness to help. Latané and Darley (1970) found that people are more likely to help victims if they are attractive, if they are clean-cut, or if they share a visible affiliation with them. In the case of bullying bystanders, relationship with the victim also plays an important role on whether help is provided. In their 2014 study, Forsberg et al. interviewed 43 students about their own and their peers' reactions to bullying, and their ideas on why they reacted that way. Responses suggested that students were more likely to intervene if they thought that the situation was serious, if they believed that the victim was undeserving of the attack, and if they had a good relationship with the victim. Students were also more likely to help if they had a good social position and if they played a prosocial role within their group (Forsberg et al., 2014). This is consistent with Pöyhönen et al.'s (2012) findings, which suggested that the perceived likelihood of successful intervention, strengthened by a good social position, diminishes the cost of helping and increases students' willingness to defend peers. These results could be useful for bystander based anti-bullying intervention design. If students with higher social status and prosocial roles are more likely to defend because they can afford the social risk, they could be approached for helping positions within groups.

Another process that Latané and Darley (1970) identified for bystanders considering whether to intervene was a cost-benefit appraisal. They found that before intervening, bystanders evaluate what the costs and benefits of intervening are, and what the costs and benefits of refraining from action could be. Some costs for intervening include varying degrees of personal risk and possible social judgment for losing composure, overreacting, or intervening ineffectively. Benefits for intervening involve personal satisfaction for having helped, gratitude from victims, and praise from other onlookers. Costs for failing to intervene

include discomfort over the victim's suffering and guilt for not having tried to alleviate it, while its main benefit is avoiding disruption of activities and potential social embarrassment. The easiest way out of this dilemma is to disregard the situation as a non-emergency, or shirk the responsibility of helping by attributing it to someone else (Latané & Darley, 1970).

The cost-benefit appraisal described by Latané and Darley is important for bullying bystanders too. Victim defending as a risky situation, especially socially, since bullies are often aggressive students with advantageous social positions. Students fear social penalties for intervening, such being excluded or even becoming bullying victims themselves. Therefore, as mentioned before, popular students feel more at ease getting involved in bullying situations than students who feel unconfident of their social position within the group, since the potential social costs they face are less severe (Peets et al., 2015; Pöyhönen et al., 2010).

Latané and Darley (1970) also identified that social requirements or even perceived social expectations influence the behaviour of bystanders. They found that the behaviour of subjects in their experiments was heavily swayed by the behaviour of other people present. Peer expectation heavily influences students' reactions to bullying as well. Pozzoli and Gini (2012) used the self-reports and teacher reports of 462 Italian adolescents to study the influence that personal characteristics and peer pressure have on bystander behaviour. Their findings showed that, while self-reliance, pro-victim attitudes and problem-solving skills play a part in bystander behaviour, the biggest predictor of defending behaviour was students' perceptions of whether their peers expected them to intervene. Based on Pozzoli and Gini's findings, it could be argued that a good way to change bystander behaviour would be to foster a school culture in which having defending behaviour is socially expected, instead of a risk students rarely take.

However, individuals often model other people's behaviour in the belief that it is what is expected of them. Through their experiments, Latané and Darley (1970) found that in staged emergencies, subjects were highly likely to follow the lead of other people present. If other bystanders did not react to these emergencies, subjects assumed that they were unconcerned by the incident and imitated their reaction. Even in staged settings where the situation could be believed to endanger the subjects themselves, if the planted bystanders remained impassive, so did the subjects. The belief that one is the only one who cares about a situation, in light of the absence a visible reaction in others, is called pluralistic ignorance (Latané & Darley, 1970).

Pluralistic ignorance is one of the phenomena which keep bullying bystanders from attempting helping strategies, even if they have noticed the event and assume certain responsibility over it. Students believe that if their peers do not react to bullying they must not be bothered by it, and therefore, they will have no support from the group if they try to defend a victim (Salmivalli, 2014). Capadoccia et al. (2012) surveyed 108 Canadian children on whether they had intervened in bullying in the past. Students were also surveyed on the reasoning behind choosing to intervene or not, and on individual social motivations and characteristics. Results showed that, while there are personal traits and processes that are significantly related to defending behaviour, when peers do not intervene other students tend to model their behaviour. This modelling creates a group norm that is difficult for some children to challenge. Results like these suggest that addressing pluralistic ignorance, working with group norms, and taking measures to turn existing empathetic attitudes into actual helping behaviour could be highly beneficial when working with bullying bystanders.

1.2.3 Gender, personality and bystander behaviour

Many studies have been devoted to different factors that have an influence on bystander behaviour. Some of these studies point at personality patterns. When they studied 232 students' responses to the Participant Role Scale (Sutton & Smith, 1999) and the Big Five personality questionnaire (Barbaranelli et al., 1998), Tani et al. (2003) found that passive bystanders have the lowest energy levels, defenders have the highest levels of friendliness and lowest levels of emotional instability, and victims and bullies are the most instable. On the other hand, Pronk et al. (2014), found that while both defenders and passive bystanders can have high levels of agreeableness, defenders tend to be more extroverted, while passive bystanders are more sensitive to punishment and have stronger impulse control. Thus, many students may feel compelled to do something about bullying, but their personal social interaction patterns might be inconsistent with their idea of how to stand up to bullies. Additionally, high levels of friendliness, agreeableness, and extroversion might mean that defenders possess higher levels of popularity, and therefore are in a better social position to help victimised peers.

Other studies have found that empathy plays a big role in whether students choose to help bullied peers, being one of the biggest predictors of defending behaviour (Barchia & Bussey 2011; Capadoccia et al., 2012; Nickerson et al., 2008). High empathy can be a predictor of defending bystander behaviour even in classes where bullying levels are high (Peets et al., 2015). In their 2014 study, Nickerson and Mele-Taylor found that both empathy and prosocial affiliations are correlated to defending bystander behaviour, and inversely correlated with bullying. These findings hint at the role that moral disengagement has in bystander behaviour; if students can stop themselves from empathising, it will be easier for them to remain passive or even reinforce bullies. However, if students feel empathy for bullying victims they will be more likely to attempt intervention.

There are also marked gender differences in how students experience bullying and bystanding. Part of this might be explained by the differences that males and females have in their notions of morality that Gilligan found in her review of Kohlberg's work regarding moral development. Kohlberg's idea of moral development referred to a person being able to answer to moral dilemmas based on ideas of duties and what is morally right, following objective ideas of justice. Under this concept, Kohlberg found females to have lower levels of moral reasoning than males (Kohlberg, 1981).

However, in her critique of Kohlberg's research, Gilligan was struck by the lack of females in Kohlberg's samples. Upon conducting research on women's moral reasoning, Gilligan found that women are more prone to viewing morality in the context of life experiences and relationships with others, rather than unchanging objective ideals of right and wrong. Gilligan challenged this idea of morality stating that a male dominated tradition of morality views moral development in terms of rights and obligations, while it is more common for females to view morality as a response to other people's needs, acting within the context of specific relationships (Gilligan, 1982). Gilligan proposed that this side of morality, what she calls "ethics of care", had been historically overlooked due to the devaluation of female thinking as emotional and irrational. Hence, the "ethics of justice", seen as more objective, served as the basis of the philosophy of morality for many years. Still, the ethics of justice limit morality to treating people fairly seeing them as an undistinguished part of humanity, instead of attempting to understand their individual human experience (Flanagan & Jackson, 1993).

It is noteworthy that while Gilligan found that there is a marked gender difference in these two different constructions of morality, she proposed that neither way of addressing moral dilemmas is exclusive to one gender, being that most people use both standpoints at different times of their lives (Gilligan, 1982).

Many studies have found that girls are more likely to display prosocial bystander behaviour than boys (Pozzoli & Gini, 2010; Rigby & Johnson, 2006; Salmivalli, 2011). Research has also found an overrepresentation of male students within bullies and bully reinforcers (Craig et al., 2000; Pellegrini & Bartini, 2000; Pellegrini & Bartini, 2001; Seals & Young, 2003). This difference seems to be especially marked in Mexican settings. Albores Gallo (2014) surveyed 2092 primary school students on their roles in bullying and found that from the students who reported to be involved in bullying situations, only 13% were female, most of them in the role of the victim. More research is still needed in Mexico to gain a better understanding of gender differences in bullying, but these results hint at Mexican males and females having vastly dissimilar experiences with violence in school.

While gender differences are routinely found in bullying research, very few studies have focused on the dynamics behind this phenomenon. However, some researchers have hypothesised about potential causes for these differences. For instance, Evans and Smokowski's (2015) research on social capital found that females and students with good grades were more likely to engage in prosocial behaviour. Evans and Smokowski attributed this difference to different socialisation processes, in which females and academically proficient students gain the social rewards and credentials that they seek through behaviour that does not involve domination. Evans and Smokowski (2017)'s research on social capital deprivation and anti-social capital shed more light on differences between males and females. Their results suggested that males are more likely than females to suffer social-capital deprivation (a lack of a supportive social network) and more likely to be exposed to anti-social capital (being immersed in social dynamics in which social perks are earned through anti-social behaviour). Differences in social attitudes that are desirable from males and females might be causing more males to feel pressured to imitate their peers' anti-social behaviour to preserve social ties.

Another explanation for the difference between male and female aggressive behaviour could be that gender roles encourage girls to be sensitive to other people's feelings and nurturing those around them. Boys, on the other hand, are taught that emotionality is a sign of weakness (Cowie & Collietty, 2016). In their study on the kind of social acceptance students seek when they engage in bullying behaviour, Olthof and Goossens (2008) found that male students engage in bullying-related behaviour to earn the acceptance of antisocial males and females engage in bullying-related behaviour to earn the acceptance of male peers in general. This might suggest that females do not engage in bullying-related behaviour to be accepted by females because strength and dominance is not generally rewarded among females. It is, however, rewarded among males (Cowie & Collietty, 2016). This does not mean that males are uncaring. Boys might feel as empathetic towards their distressed peers as female students, but because of societal pressures, they are more reluctant to display it. Furthermore, young boys are pushed into aggression to address disputes instead being taught prosocial conflict-solving strategies. This can be one the starting points of the phenomenon referred to as lad culture (Cowie & Collietty, 2016).

Obviously, the experience, role, and influence of bullying bystanders on peer victimisation is an intricate issue. However, their power to allow bullying to happen or to restrict school violence is very important. In her 2010 review, Salmivalli pointed out that while many acknowledge that bullying is a group process and the group should be addressed to tackle the problem, there is not much clarity on what exactly should be changed and why. A further section focuses on how bystanders can be and have been involved in anti-bullying interventions.

1.3 Self-efficacy and moral disengagement

1.3.1 Social cognitive theory and human agency

Two concepts that many researchers have found to be linked to the behaviour of bullying bystanders are self-efficacy and moral disengagement. These constructs were described by psychologist Albert Bandura as a part of his social cognitive theory. Bandura's social cognitive theory suggests that human motivation and action are the result of the interaction of cognitive, behavioural and environmental (chiefly social) factors. When behaviours are socially modelled, individuals have cognitions on how efficacious they could be if they acted that way and what the outcomes of such behaviours would be. This will lead to certain levels of motivation and eventually, to behaviour. Individuals will then receive social feedback on those actions, which will lead to new cognitions. These processes are closely related to learning, decision making and social interaction patterns (Bandura, 1986).

Social cognitive theory suggests that while environmental influences are undoubtedly important, they do not shape a person's life; individuals have the capacity to react to events and mould their own development. The concept of people contributing to their circumstances, instead of being results of them, is called human agency. Human agency views individuals as proactive, self-organizing and self-regulating (Bandura, 2006).

According to Bandura (2016), people can shape their circumstances in three ways: exercising individual agency, proxy agency, and collective agency. Individual agency refers to using our own means to reach objectives. Proxy agency means finding the way to access people who have the resources or expertise to achieve our goals. Collective agency is working alongside other individuals, putting every person's skills together to meet a shared purpose (Bandura, 2016). For example, a pupil who studies at home for an exam is using individual agency to reach the goal of a good mark. If they consider their skill or knowledge

will not suffice, they can use proxy agency to reach out to a teacher or tutor who can be of assistance. If a few students form a study group and gather to help each other prepare for an exam, they will be exercising their collective agency.

Human agency manifests itself through forethought, self-reactiveness and self-reflectiveness. Forethought is the capacity to visualise potential courses of action and picturing outcomes for them. This ability allows individuals to bring potential behaviours and the consequences they could have to the present, aiding decision making. Legal, social and moral rules are considered in forethought, and they restrict the enactment of some visualised scenarios (Bandura, 2016). A student might not feel the desire to revise for an exam, but visualising what would happen if they fail to prepare can influence her towards choosing a different course of action that will bring a more favourable situation.

Self-reactiveness allows individuals to create plans, harness motivation to carry them out and regulate their execution. It helps translate forethought into behaviour and enables adjustments to be made taking into consideration cognitive and environmental information in the present. A student who is sitting down to revise might notice that the environment they are in is too noisy, and therefore adjust the plan towards studying in a silent room.

Self-reflectiveness is the human capacity to evaluate our actions. It is in this process that we assess our task efficacy and the achievements and penalties that our acts might have incurred (Bandura, 2016). After a student takes an exam and receives the results, they will be able to assess if their revising was sufficient, if the outcome is favourable, and if there should be any changes in similar situations in the future.

1.3.2 Self-efficacy

One of the most important mechanisms of human agency is self-efficacy (Bandura, 2006). Self-efficacy can be defined as the perception we have of our own capabilities to

successfully perform tasks and address situations. The beliefs we hold about our own abilities are central for motivation since how efficacious we consider ourselves to be at performing different tasks will often determine how much effort we put into them, how long we persist at a task, and even if we engage in a task at all. We are generally unlikely to participate in activities we believe we will be unsuccessful at (Bandura, 1982).

Self-efficacy is also key to individuals' quality of life and mental health, since it is a necessary resource to adapt and develop. Whether or not we think we have the ability to address difficulties and seize opportunities will determine if we conduct ourselves in self-enhancing or self-debilitating ways. (Bandura, 2006). High self-efficacy will allow us to approach goals, while low self-efficacy can lead us to take an avoidant stance, erring on the side of perceived safety.

There is also a relationship between interest, skill and self-efficacy, in which interest will lead to attempting a task and succeeding will lead to feeling efficacious, which will encourage persisting at the task. This will in turn result in an increase in skill and further interest in the area. Conversely, people who develop poor self-efficacy will focus on negative experiences and personal shortcomings, judging the task to be more challenging than it might be, and creating further stress. This can also cause people to see themselves as incapable and to have them give up, considering the task to be an impossible feat and an unpleasant experience (Bandura, 1992).

Fortunately, self-efficacy can be developed and exercised. Bandura (1997) described four ways to attain self-efficacy. Enactive mastery experience, the highest source of self-efficacy, refers to personally trying to perform a task, persevering at it, and finally succeeding. This yields objective proof of efficacy that can then be translated to similar scenarios. Frequent success will lead to higher self-efficacy, while failure will lead

individuals to have a lower perception of their own ability. However, the evaluation of success or failure is not objective, but rather judged personally in the light of one's own goals and self-evaluation mechanisms (Zimmerman & Cleary, 2006). Unrealistically high expectations or overly severe self-demands can lead to lower self-efficacy, even if progress was achieved in performing an assignment.

The second way of developing self-efficacy is vicarious experience, which means to bear witness to someone else succeeding at the task. The impact of vicarious experience is particularly effective if we consider that the person who carried out the task has similar competence to ours (Bandura, 1997). In the case of children and adolescents, self-efficacy is more likely to be enhanced vicariously if a subject close in age and skill level is victorious at the given task (Schunk, 1987).

The third way to develop self-efficacy is verbal persuasion, which means being told that our skills are enough to be successful at a task (Bandura, 1997). This is especially valuable if the person sharing positive perceptions on the individual's efficacy is someone important for the individual or someone whose judgment is respected by them. Parents, teachers, counsellors and peers are likely to be able to verbally persuade a child or adolescent to try their hand at a new endeavour (Zimmerman & Cleary, 2006).

The fourth way to develop self-efficacy relates to physical and physiological states of the individual when the task is attempted (Bandura, 1997). The possibility to develop self-efficacy opens the possibility to have individuals attempt tasks, exercise abilities and increase their chances of successful performance. These roads to developing self-efficacy were an area of focus in this study, having used them to assess the levels of self-efficacy to help bullied peers that participants have built.

It is important to note that self-efficacy is not a global trait that can be applied to all abilities; it is domain, context and task specific (Zimmerman & Cleary, 2006). A student can feel highly efficacious in Mathematics, but have low self-efficacy regarding their literacy skills. They can feel efficacious at classroom assignments but inefficacious at standardized testing and efficacious at geometry, but not so much at calculus. However, self-efficacy does have a degree of generality, which refers to how much individuals believe their ability can be transferred to similar tasks (Zimmerman, 1995). If a student has been successful at arithmetic tasks before, they are more likely to be willing to try a new one, as compared to a student who has struggled with arithmetic in the past.

Again, a good part of the appraisal of efficacy at different tasks and how much this efficacy can be generalised is subjectively evaluated by each individual. Bandura recognised that there are specific physical and psychological circumstances that can aid or obstruct attaining self-efficacy, and that there are developmental, familial, and peer influences at play. Still, self-efficacy can be re-evaluated and changed at different times during a person's life (Bandura, 1997).

Bandura's theory of self-efficacy has earned an important place in the study of behaviour. In the educational research field, self-efficacy is considered to be related to academic motivation (Schunk, 1991), student self-esteem (Lane et al., 2004), academic performance (Zimmerman et al., 1992) and pro-social behaviour in schools (Caprara & Steca, 2007). The role of self-efficacy in defending behaviour in bullying bystanders will be discussed in a further section.

1.3.3 Moral disengagement

Bandura's social cognitive theory also addresses the development and inner workings of morality. Like many other aspects of human behaviour, social cognitive theory views

morality from an agentic perspective in which moral reasoning is translated into action through the proactive self-regulatory processes of moral agency (Bandura, 2001).

Moral agency allows individuals to use their criteria on what is morally right and morally wrong to guide their behaviour. It directs them towards actions they consider to be moral to achieve a feeling of satisfaction and self-worth, and deters them from immoral behaviour to avoid guilt and self-condemnation. Moving towards “right”, prosocial actions is called proactive moral agency, while avoiding “wrong” deeds would be proof of inhibitive moral agency in action (Bandura, 2016). These guidelines of right and wrong are developed as a part of an individual’s social and moral development. (Bandura, 2002).

Theoretically, these moral standards steer individuals towards behaviour they see as decent and avoid behaviour they see as indecorous. In reality, individuals do not always behave in a manner they consider to be commendable and the moral transgressions they commit cause them cognitive discomfort. This is when moral disengagement is used. Moral disengagement dynamics are cognitive processes used to avoid the self-criticism and self-inflicted moral penalties related to engaging in activities that individuals consider to be morally wrong or refraining from actions that they consider to be morally right (Bandura, et al., 1996).

There are four loci, or sites of operation, from which self-censure can be disengaged from unacceptable behaviour: behavioural locus, agency locus, effect locus, and victim locus. Each loci of disengagement disengages at a different stage, uses different dynamics, and has different implications.

Disengaging at the behavioural locus consists of reconstructing the deed so it does not seem as harmful, or can even be portrayed as positive (Bandura, et al., 1996). One of the moral disengagement mechanisms that disengages at the behavioural locus is using

euphemistic language, which is labelling inhumane acts with sanitised language, complicated terms, specialised jargon from another field, or even using passive voice to set aside the involvement of the culprit. This changes the way the public perceives the event, thinking of it as something less harmful, something unfortunate but necessary, a complicated process that members of the public cannot relate to, or an unlucky situation that occurred with nobody at fault. This is often seen in military descriptions of attacks, where bombings can be spoken about as “coercive diplomacy” and civilian deaths are called “outside current security requirements” (Bandura, 2016). In bullying, students often speak of bullying as “joking”, “playing” or “bantering”, which cleanses victimisation of any damaging intent or consequences.

Another moral disengagement mechanism at the behavioural locus is advantageous comparison. To compare advantageously is to compare an inhumane act with a worse one in order to make the first one seem innocuous or sufferable in comparison. This “lesser” inhumane act can also be argued to have been performed to avoid a more harmful fate. This kind of thinking was used by the Bush administration to justify the US attacks on Iraq and Afghanistan, saying that the costs of the so called “War on Terror” were less than the risk of allowing the Taliban to take over the free world (Bandura, 1999). In school settings, students often minimise verbal and social bullying by comparing it to physical bullying, which in their view would be considerably worse.

Morally disengagement can also happen at the behavioural locus through moral justification. Moral justification excuses damaging deeds by declaring noble and praiseworthy purposes to it. This tends to happen when recruiting individuals to go to war, encouraging them to defend social, religious, or patriotic ideals (Bandura, 1999). In Mexican schools, it is very common to have students, parents and staff claim that bullying helps students (particularly males) become stronger and learn to deal with difficulties in life.

Believing this justifies bullying to the extent where people can perceive that victims are not being wronged and they are actually benefitting from victimisation.

Moral justification and advantageous comparison can be very effective and dangerous, since they do not only mitigate the immorality inherent to the action, but they even argue that there is worthiness in it. This prevents the public from objecting to immoralities and allows them to continue and escalate (Bandura, 2016).

The next locus of moral disengagement is the agency locus. Moral disengagement at the agency locus refers to disengaging from the responsibility of planning an immoral act or executing it (Bandura, et al., 1996). People can disengage at the agency locus displacing and diffusing responsibility. Displacement of responsibility means minimising or altogether denying our role in an immoral act, placing it on somebody else to avoid censure. War criminals have tried to disengage from their deeds by displacing responsibility, either by claiming they were only following orders (displacing responsibility to those with higher authority), that their orders were misunderstood by employees or that they did not know what was happening (displacing responsibility to their subordinates) (Bandura, 2016). Bully assistants or reinforcing bystanders frequently disengage morally by stating that they were not the ones actually bullying the person; they were just holding them, watching out for staff or laughing at the bully's antics.

Another way to morally disengage at the agency locus is diffusion of responsibility, which means to dilute our agency or degree of responsibility over our involvement in a harmful act, stating that there were other individuals involved (Bandura, et al., 1996). People are capable of acting more cruelly when they are in a group, since it provides a sense of protection and anonymity. Prison employees who are in charge of executing death row inmates often see their tasks limited to small actions. This has the purpose of allowing the

employee to morally disengage, letting them believe that they did not actually kill a person, as they just did one small thing, and others in the group carried out the lethal task (Bandura, 2016). In schools, it is quite common for students to excuse their bullying behaviour by stating ideas such as “we were all doing it” or “everyone was laughing”, diffusing their agency among their group of peers.

Another site of operation for moral disengagement is the victim locus. One mechanism that disengages at the victim locus is dehumanization, in which perpetrators regard the victim as somehow inferior and unworthy of the treatment their fellow human beings deserve, diminishing self-censure for mistreating them (Bandura, et al., 1996). Dehumanization was commonly used by the early European colonisers of the Americas. In their written accounts of their experiences in the colonies, colonisers referred to the indigenous population as “natives” or “savages”. When they described their cultures as rudimentary and brutal, the impact of the violence and exploitation to which the local population had been subjected was reduced. Had they acknowledged them as equals, their readers (and the writers themselves) would have been compelled by a sense of shared human experience to empathise with the victims, and censure these abuses (Bandura, 1992). Similarly, bullies (and often bystanders) dehumanize victims describing them as “weird”, “teacher’s pets” or “cry-babies”. By doing so, they separate victims from the group labelling them as inferior, and therefore, undeserving of the treatment they reserve for the rest of their peers.

Morality can also be disengaged at the victim locus through attribution of blame, which where the acts of the perpetrator are excused by blaming the victims for bringing their situation on themselves (Bandura, 1999). This mechanism is similar to displacement of responsibility, except that instead of displacing the responsibility to other culprits, it is loaded on the sufferers. This is more dangerous than displacing responsibility, because blaming

victims for a regrettable situation demonises them, fostering hostility and eliminating empathy towards them, and therefore, encouraging further mistreatment. For instance, a recent Mexican social media and street art movement named “*Si me matan*” (If I am killed), attempts to raise awareness on how blaming female murder victims perpetrates violence towards women. “*Si me matan*” points out that the type of statements the government and the press have made about female victims’ sexual lives, relationship status, mental health and social behaviour end up being echoed by members of the public, and applied to other cases. Hence, these victim-blaming ideas are not only used to damage the image of the victim and make her responsible for the crime that took her life, but to censure the behaviour of other women and excuse other abusers as well (Lotto Persio, 2017). In Mexican schools, bullying victims are often blamed for provoking the abuse by being socially inadequate, being overdefensive or informing the school authorities of their peers’ disruptive behaviour, which is seen as a grave social violation.

Finally, moral disengagement can happen at the effect locus. This means disregarding, minimising or even denying the harm of an immoral act. Denying the harm is the ideal way to morally disengage, since if nobody was harmed there is no moral conflict to begin with. If this is not possible, perpetrators can disengage by reconstructing events to seem less damaging. This mechanism has been used by Nazi Holocaust and climate change deniers, who claim that the damage denounced is not real (Bandura, 2016). Bullies often brush off bullying incidents by claiming that their victims “are fine” or “they don’t mind”.

It is noteworthy that moral disengagement dynamics do not suppress or modify people’s moral guidelines; they just selectively create loopholes so that people can avoid moral consequences while violating their own guidelines. Most people hold high moral standards, and believe themselves to be compliant to them. For example, as Bandura’s

(2016) research has found many people who commit heinous acts are capable of behaving quite pro-socially in other areas of their lives.

Moral disengagement dynamics do not happen suddenly and they are not involuntary moral lapses. Rather, they are processes that require cognitive reconstruction of facts and circumstances, and the use of persuasive skills to self-exonerate. The repetition of these processes strengthens them, and facilitates further disengagement from self-censure. This leads to escalation through which individuals can disengage from increasingly reprehensible acts. It is also important to note that moral disengagement happens at every level of unacceptable behaviour, from seemingly innocent wrongdoings to veritable atrocities, especially in the case of collective disengagement (Bandura, 2002).

Moral disengagement starts from an early age. Displacing responsibility to others, morally reconstructing behaviour to portray it as commendable and deprecating victims of maltreatment are the first moral disengagement mechanisms individuals develop. Still, by adolescence, individuals are capable of cognitive restructuring through all moral disengagement mechanisms (Bandura, 2016). Secondary school students, the age group selected for this study, use moral disengagement dynamics at all loci proficiently, and therefore, mechanisms related to all four loci were analysed.

While no gender difference is observed between genders at an early age, boys quickly become more prone to moral disengagement (Bandura, 2016). Thornberg and Jungert (2014) asked 213 children among the ages of 10 and 14 to complete the Moral Disengagement in Bullying Scale (Thornberg & Jungert, 2013). Results suggested that by early adolescence boys are significantly more likely than girls to use euphemistic language to sanitise misbehaviour, to morally justify acts to portray them as worthy, to blame victims, and to minimise the hurtful consequences of transgressions. Boys are not only more prone to moral

disengagement, but to overt aggression as well. Bussey et al. (2015) analysed the responses of 1152 students ages 12 to 16 to surveys on aggression, empathy and moral disengagement. Their analysis showed that boys scored higher in moral disengagement and aggression and that these variables were positively correlated to each other and negatively correlated to empathy. In contrast, their female peers scored higher in empathy, which was negatively correlated to both moral disengagement and aggression. These marked differences might be explained different early experiences with aggression. For males, aggression is more extensively modelled, tolerated and even praised (Bandura, 2016). This has also been found in the Mexican context, where boys are encouraged to be able to “defend themselves” and “stand their ground”, and females are more likely to be steered towards conciliatory social interactions (Diaz Guerrero, 1994).

1.3.4 Role of self-efficacy and moral disengagement in bullying and bystander behaviour

Numerous studies have examined the influence that self-efficacy and moral disengagement have on students’ bullying dynamics. Gini, et al. (2014) conducted a meta-analysis of 27 studies which explored the relationship between moral disengagement and aggressive behaviour among children and adolescents. A significant correlation was found; the higher the levels of moral disengagement, the higher the probability of aggressive behaviour. This was especially marked in adolescent population

Obermann (2013) encountered similar results in his study on moral disengagement in school bullying. When analysing the responses of 567 secondary school students to self-reports of bullying behaviour and moral disengagement along with teacher reports of the students bullying behaviour, Obermann found that moral disengagement is positively correlated to bullying and other types of aggressive behaviour. Furthermore, since the data was collected again one year after the date of first collection, evidence was found to suggest

that moral disengagement does not fluctuate, but it is an increasingly stable crystallised cognitive process (Obermann, 2013). Hymel and Bonano (2014) also found moral disengagement to be highly correlated to bullying and that repeated use of moral disengagement leads to crystallisation. This would indicate that once students employ a moral disengagement mechanism to cope with specific bullying situations, this mechanism is maintained, ready to be utilised in the face of similar incidents. Crystallisation of moral disengagement developed to alleviate guilt from bullying, reinforcing bullying or remaining passive could potentially have an influence on the way individuals respond to antisocial behaviour through their life.

Moral disengagement is common among bullying perpetrators, who reconstruct their behaviour as morally worthy, blame victims and minimise the injury they cause to self-exonerate (Hymel et al., 2010). However, there seem to be variations regarding the moral disengagement mechanisms used in traditional bullying and cyberbullying. In their 2013 study with Australian secondary school students, Robson and Witenberg (2013) found that diffusion of responsibility is common in both traditional and cyberbullying, but moral justification is more frequent in traditional bullying. On the other hand, students are more likely to blame victims of cyberbullying.

Another way in which cyberbullying differs from traditional bullying is that perpetrators of cyberbullying seem to need lower moral disengagement levels to avoid self-censure. Pornari and Wood (2010) studied the relationship between moral disengagement and the perpetration of traditional and cyberbullying, and found that while that moral disengagement is positively correlated to both bullying types, less moral disengagement dynamics were used to excuse cyberbullying behaviour, compared to traditional bullying. The researchers speculated that this difference can be attributed to traditional bullying requiring higher levels of moral disengagement than cyberbullying (Pornari & Wood, 2010).

Kyriacou and Zuin (2016) suggest a possible explanation for these differences. Unlike traditional bullies, cyberbullies are not there to witness the outcome of the aggression and do not see the effects that their actions had on victims. This phenomenon reduces empathy for the victims and makes it easier for bullies to morally disengage. Social disapproval, even if present, feels distant from the perpetrator, making it less likely to be an obstacle to moral disengagement (Kyriacou & Zuin, 2016). Because of this, it might be easier for them to disengage at the victim locus (victim blaming), and less necessary to disengage at other loci, as Robson and Witenberg (2013) found. It is easier to vilify a victim they cannot see and less urgent to excuse a behaviour that has no visible sufferers.

Still, moral disengagement is an important predictor of cyberbullying, more so than self-efficacy to bully. Bussey, et al. (2015) designed a Cyber Bullying Participant Roles Scale, the Self-Efficacy to Cyber-bully Scale the Cyber Bullying Moral Disengagement Scale and the Cyber Bullying Moral Disengagement Scale (adapted from Bandura et al.'s (1996) Moral Disengagement Scale) to survey 967 Australian secondary school students. Results found that there is a positive correlation between cyberbullying, moral disengagement and self-efficacy to bully. However, self-efficacy to bully does not automatically become bullying. Even if students consider themselves capable to cyberbully, they will be more likely to act on it if they are successful in disengaging from the moral censure of doing so. This is understandable considering that most students could be potentially capable of cyberbullying, but there are factors that will make some students more inclined to bully and others that will discourage this behaviour. Further research on important motivators and deterrents to cyberbullying is necessary to better understand the relationship between cyberbullying, self-efficacy and moral disengagement, which would be useful information for bully-centred intervention.

Bullies are not the only ones who morally disengage from bullying; bullying bystanders do it too. For bullying to be prevalent, a group-wide phenomenon of diffusion of responsibility and distorted perceptions of victims must be in place (Olweus, 1993). About 50% of the student population exhibit morally disengaging cognitions embedded in their ideas on peer victimisation (Hymel & Bonano, 2014). In their study on individual motivations associated with bystander intervention in bullying situations, Capadoccia et.al.(2012) found that students who say they would help victimised peers explain their decision with arguments such as “nobody deserves to be bullied”, “it is not fair”, and “bullied students need my help.” On the other side, most students who decided to remain passive justified themselves with responsibility displacing or harm minimising arguments such as “the bullying was not so bad” and “it is not my problem”.

Moral disengagement does not only play an important part on student’s ideas on bullying, but also the bystander role they choose. Moral disengagement can be used by bully reinforcers to justify their role in the incident, or by passive bystanders to reduce the moral discomfort of allowing peers to continue to be bullied. In their 2013 study, Thornberg and Jungert found a positive correlation between moral disengagement and pro-bullying behaviour: students who exhibit high levels of moral disengagement are more likely to cheer bullies on.

Moral disengagement can also be used to assuage guilt related to passive bystander behaviour. In their longitudinal study, Doramajian and Bukowski (2015) had 130 Canadian fourth, fifth and sixth graders answer moral disengagement questionnaires, self-reports and peer reports on passive and defensive bystander behaviour. These measures were applied three times over four months. Results suggested that moral disengagement is positively correlated to passive bystander behaviour and negatively correlated to defending behaviour. Additionally, the relationship between moral disengagement and passive bystanding seemed

to grow more stable over time; the more that students used moral disengagement mechanisms the less they considered helping bullied peers. Doramajian and Bukowski's results are surprising considering that they only followed students over four months, which limited monitoring changes in attitudes. Longitudinal research spanning longer periods of time would be useful to study crystallisation of moral disengagement in passive bystanders.

Consistently with Doramajian and Bukowski's (2015) findings, Thornberg and Jungert (2014) also found a negative correlation between defending behaviour and moral disengagement. Analysis of their participants' moral disengagement, bullying and defending scale answers showed that this correlation is particularly strong in the cases of responsibility diffusion and victim blaming. Song and Oh (2017) conducted a similar study to find factors that correlate to helping bystander behaviour. Their findings suggested that while there is no correlation between number of bystanders present in bullying situations and the likelihood that the student will defend the bullied peer, there is a significant negative correlation between helping behaviour and moral disengagement. Studies that focus on the different types of moral disengagement are useful to understand the cognitive processes that students employ to avoid moral censure related to their reactions to bullying. This information can help address common moral disengagement dynamics in intervention. For instance, the workshop designed for this study addressed moral disengagement dynamics in the context of school bullying.

Since bullying is a group phenomenon, it is also relevant to address how moral disengagement affects bullying dynamics at a group level. Socially, we tend to choose to build friendships with people with similar moral guidelines to ours; this ensures that we will regard them positively, and that we will have their validation when making self-evaluations (Bandura, 2016). Sijtsema et al. (2014) conducted a longitudinal study to examine the influence of friendships over moral disengagement, bullying and defending behaviour. For

this, they followed 133 children (ages 9 and 10) and 236 young adolescents (ages 11 to 14) for a year, monitoring their bullying and defending behaviour, friendship choices, and morally disengaging cognitions. Results suggested that while both children and adolescents tend to make friends who behave in a similar way to themselves, early adolescents were more likely to increasingly imitate their friends' behaviour with time. Students with higher moral disengagement levels were more susceptible to change their behaviour for their peers. These results show the importance of friendship groups in early adolescence and provide insight into the dynamics of peer pressure in bullying.

Taking into consideration the effects of the group in moral disengagement, Gini, et al. (2015) conducted a study on the effects of individual and collective moral disengagement on bullying and bystander behaviour. Collective moral disengagement is similar to individual moral disengagement, except for that instead of exonerating an individual's agency over the misconduct, it exonerates a group of individuals. Collective moral disengagement is a collective trait that emerges from the group's culture, experiences and interaction (Gini et al., 2015). Gini et al.'s results found that while both individual and perceived collective moral disengagement are predictors of aggression and passive bystander behaviour, only individual moral disengagement is negatively correlated with defending. Students who feel individually engaged will be compelled to defend victimised peers, regardless of whether they perceive the group to feel engaged. This could suggest that morally engaged students are also more resilient to group pressures and expectations, which is another argument to work towards strengthening moral engagement in children.

The importance of individual moral disengagement over collective moral disengagement might be explained by the concept of moral identity, which is the degree to which a person's moral behaviour is important for their self-perception (Hardy et al, 2015). Hardy et al. (2015) surveyed 384 American adolescents to study the influence of moral

identity over moral disengagement, and the relationship of self-regulation with prosocial and antisocial behaviour. Results suggested that moral identity can moderate the effects of moral disengagement and low self-regulation over aggression. Students who morally disengage and have low self-regulation are less likely to engage in aggressive behaviour if they have high levels of moral identity (Hardy, et al, 2015). These findings are relevant because they point to a protective factor that can be encouraged from early childhood to make children resilient to the influence of pervasive moral disengagement within their school environment.

Being morally engaged is necessary for prosocial bystander intervention, but not sufficient. Thornberg and Jungert (2013) found that students can be morally engaged and remain passive. In their study of why students choose the role of passive bystanders, Capadoccia et al. (2012) found that while many students who remain passive in bullying situations do excuse their behaviour through moral disengagement, some state that they do not help because they are afraid or they do not know what to do. This suggests that it is important not only to encourage students to help bullied peers, but also instruct them on ways they can assist victims. This need is addressed in the current study through the anti-bullying roles demonstrated in the workshop.

Adequate self-efficacy is also important to turn intent into action. Rigby and Johnson (2006) studied the reactions of 400 students ranging from sixth to eighth grade when being shown videos depicting bullying situations. After seeing the videos, participants completed a questionnaire about their attitudes towards victims, their perceptions of other students' expectations of their behaviour and their self-efficacy. While around 43% of students said that they would definitely or probably intervene in bullying situations, the percentage of students who do help bullied peers is significantly lower. Still, high self-efficacy and the perception that peers expect them to intervene were predictors of readiness to intervene (Rigby & Johnson, 2006).

Students' perception of their own popularity also has an impact on their self-efficacy to intervene. Pöyhönen et al. (2010) found that along with self-efficacy and empathy, perception of having a high social status within the group makes students more likely to defend. These results were supported by Peets et. al. (2015)'s study which used data collected from the participants of the wide-spread Finnish anti-bullying program KiVa, which concluded that self-efficacy, affective empathy and social popularity were predictors of defending behaviour. This might be because students who believe their social position is safe are more likely to take the social risk of defending. Additionally, students who believe that their intervention will be well regarded due to their level of influence in the group, may feel more confident in their ability to help.

The opinions and attitudes of other peers are very important for bullying bystanders. Rigby and Johnson (2006) found that while teacher expectations do not predict defending behaviour, the perception that peers expect students to intervene does predict students choosing to defend bullying victims. Social factors also influence how students choose to help victims. Chen et al.'s (2016) study suggested that students who are friends with bullies or do not fear being socially ostracised are more likely to dare to defend bullying victims more publicly, while students who are concerned with the loss of their social status or bully retaliation prefer to comfort in private.

Sitjsema et al. (2014) also found that seeing other students defend bullying victims can encourage bullying bystanders to follow their lead, since the more common that defending becomes in a group, the less that students will fear retaliation. This can help embolden more students to help, until seeing peers defending victimised students is perceived as the norma. This idea is consistent with Barchia and Bussey's (2011) collective efficacy findings. Collective efficacy is the belief that a group has the ability to come together and combine abilities and resources to achieve a common goal (Bandura, 2006). While self-

efficacy was not a big predictor of defending in Barchia and Bussey's study, collective efficacy was. Students in their study did not focus so much on whether they could individually help victims, but on whether the group had the potential to change bullying behaviour and to curb the bullies' influence (Barchia & Bussey, 2011).

However, it might be difficult to isolate the influence of self-efficacy to defend bullied peers from other social and environmental factors. Chen, et al. (2016)'s study on why students choose to be defenders or passive bystanders suggested that some youngsters refrain from helping peers because they fear ostracism and because they are afraid that it might not work. While Chen et al. referred to this fear that the intervention would not work as low self-efficacy, it could be argued that fearing that the helping attempt will not be successful has a strong circumstantial component. Students could be confident that they are able to carry out a helping technique accurately, but still be fearful that the outcome will not improve the victim's situation because of elements out of the helper's control. For this reason, exploratory studies that investigate how self-efficacy works in bullying settings are important to better comprehend this phenomenon. Therefore, the present study sought to examine both self-efficacy and moral disengagement in the context of bullying bystanders.

1.4 Anti-bullying interventions

A question commonly asked by bullying researchers and members of educational communities is: what can we do to reduce, if not eliminate, bullying? Three decades after Norway implemented the first anti-bullying campaign (Olweus, 1993), bullying is still as pervasive and harmful as ever. Still, research on the topic and intervention design to target bullying dynamics has persisted worldwide, and it has produced invaluable information. The following section aims to provide a review of the current anti-bullying interventions and evaluate their strengths and weaknesses.

1.4.1 Disciplinary approach

The oldest and one of the most commonly used methods to address bullying is the disciplinary approach, which involves penalising perpetrators. The idea behind this kind of intervention is that if bullies know that bullying leads to punishment, it will deter them from this type of behaviour (Rigby, 2014). In their 2008 study, Bauman et al. (2008) surveyed 750 teachers and counsellors on which strategies they would be likely to use if faced with a bullying situation among their students. The online survey depicted a verbal and social bullying scenario, and the participants had to choose how likely they would be to ignore the incident, work with bullies, work with victims, consult with other adults, or discipline bullies. While ignoring the incident was the option teachers and counsellors would be least likely to use, disciplining the bully was the strategy most participants said they would use. A similar study has yet to be completed on Mexican population, but it is probable that the results would be similar; penalising bullies is the first choice of possible solutions schools employ when facing bullying incidents.

It is easy to understand why disciplinary approaches are so popular. Having students suspended or lose privileges has virtually no cost and requires no time from staff, while detention can be arranged daily with one or few members to staff to supervise all detained students. It is a fast, easy and straightforward method to address a bullying incident. However, the effectiveness of disciplinary approaches might be limited. Ayers et al. (2012) conducted a study using data from the School-Wide information system, a database of all the behaviour referral forms in seven states of the US. The study examined 11, 950 bullying related referrals, the type of disciplinary consequences students faced (detention, in-school suspension, out of school suspension, loss of privilege, parent contact, parent-teacher conference, time in office) and whether students had subsequent behaviour referrals. Their

results showed that only loss of privilege and parent-teacher conferences reduced the likelihood of having further bullying referrals.

While the study Ayers and contributors conducted shed light on which disciplinary consequences yield better results, it is worth considering that having taken their sample from an online database there is not much information about how these penalties were executed. For disciplinary approaches to be appropriately implemented, everyone in the school community needs to have a clear idea of what is understood by different types of bullying and which consequences will follow bullying instances. It is also important to get students to acknowledge these guidelines, to make sure have negative consequences are proportional to the severity of bullying behaviour, have the negative consequences happen immediately after the incident and explain clearly why they are being carried out (Ribgy, 2010).

There is some fundamental criticism to disciplinary approaches, such as the fact that it be interpreted as an “eye for an eye” punishment rationale (Ribgy, 2010) or that it does not promote any real engagement or problem-solving attitudes among students or between students and teachers (Ribgy, 2014). Another consideration is that reprimanding bullies can cultivate further hostilities between bullies and victims, and this concern might discourage victims from reporting bullying incidents.

However, these risks could be curbed with other types of intervention. An American study found that when combined with student support, authoritarian discipline contributes to an increase of student sense of safety and a decrease in bullying and victimization (Gregory et al., 2010). Having clear anti-bullying rules and penalties for infringing them can be a useful tool if the troubles and needs of students are being supervised and addressed as well.

1.4.2 Social skills for victims

In their 2007 study, Craig et al. surveyed 1852 Canadian students on their experiences with bullying, what they did to address bullying when they were victims and how well the strategies they adopted worked for them. Around 20% of the participants who had been bullying victims said that they had not done anything to try to improve their situation. Of the students who said they had employed a strategy, close to 50% said that their tactic had been to ignore the bullies. Female participants were more likely to go to their families or staff for support, and reported that staff were the most effective at helping them. Male students were more likely to have resorted to aggression or revenge tactics, and counted these as helpful as well.

However, these strategies have been argued to be ineffectual and even counterintuitive. Aggressive strategies can aggravate hostilities and lead to escalation in attacks in the struggle for power. Passive strategies can be appropriate and sensible in some contexts, but their generalisation leads to avoidant behaviour in bullying victims (Sharp & Cowie, 2002). With these considerations in mind, there are programmes that focus on victims' responses to bullies and their interactions with their peer group. These interventions aim to teach students social skills to decrease their vulnerability to becoming bullying victims and to provide them with useful tools if they do find themselves in that position again.

Many of these programmes rely on assertiveness training, which provides students with coping skills and a "script" tailored to their bullying situation. The idea behind the assertiveness "script" is that students can rehearse it to prepare themselves, know what they can answer if they are faced with a bully, and feel more confident (Sharp & Cowie, 2002). One of the most popular assertiveness training programmes is Fields' (2007) *Bully-blocking*, which teaches parents how to train their children to counter bullying by building support networks, improving their self-esteem, and working on their confidence and assertiveness.

Still, these assertiveness techniques are not helpful if the power imbalance is too steep and the bully has ample resources to retort and hurt the victim despite the training (Rigby, 2010). Moreover, while support networks and an increased self-esteem are undoubtedly helpful for bullying victims, teaching them that they need to be “assertive” and “confident” can give the message that they need to alter their confrontation styles and personality to avoid bullying. Rehearsing scripts can feel unnatural and make students feel unprotected when they have exhausted their lines. Another obstacle for victim assertiveness and social skills training is that bullying is an intensely emotional experience for victims, which makes it difficult to keep an undisturbed façade. Fox and Boulton (2003) assessed their social skills training programme in four British schools. The content of the programme aimed to reduce behaviours that make students easy targets, such as crying or other demonstrations of fear, anger or sadness and to teach skills to make and maintain friendships. Results showed no evidence that the training made a difference in the participants’ victim status. Authors theorised that students failed to generalise the behaviours learned in training sessions to real bullying situations due to the sensitive nature of the events.

Another potential risk of relying too heavily on these type of strategies is that the idea that students need to do something to prevent being bullied or to stop the harassment; this can be interpreted as them having brought the problem upon themselves through poor social skills or unwise responses to bullying. This can result in victim blaming, making students feel responsible for eliciting the situation, and therefore, for ending it. Furthermore, advising students to control or suppress their emotional reactions and to confront their bullies unassisted might be too much to ask from them. Thus, when using victim strengthening techniques, it is important to stress that while there are measures students can take to protect themselves and reduce harm, bullying is not happening because of a fault of their own, and that they can, and should, rely on their educational community to support them.

1.4.3 Restorative approaches

One criticism of both the disciplinary and the assertiveness training methods is that neither of them foster an improvement in the relations between bullies and victims.

Restorative approaches attempt to provide a space for victims and perpetrators to communicate and reach an agreement on how aggressors can repair the damage they have inflicted. This method was found very satisfactory among juvenile offender crime victims (Umbreit et al., 2004) and has since been adapted to bullying situations.

Restorative practices in schools start with a meeting being held with set questions for both victim and bullies. Bullies are asked to share what happened, what they thought at the time, if what they think has changed and who they believe has been affected by the incident. The victim is then asked what they think, how it affected them and what can be done to make things right. After, both students are asked to brainstorm ideas on how to repair the harm done and to ensure that similar incidents do not happen again in the future (Rigby, 2010). Long term, the aim of restorative practices is to mend student relationships and to create a positive and caring environment to prevent bullying. For this, it is important to involve as many parties as possible in the restorative agreements (Wong et al., 2011).

In their 2012 study, Grossi and Santos did a series of questionnaires, interviews and focus groups with 158 Brazilian students and 242 teachers to discuss their views on bullying and restorative interventions. Students shared that restorative practices made them feel listened to and respected, and that they gave them the opportunity to calm themselves before interacting. Students also welcomed the staff effort to help them to understand each other and problem solve. Teachers stated that the technique enabled students to express themselves and provided teachers with a new way to work with student conflict as well as understand their students' social dynamics better. All in all, teachers found that participating in restorative sessions was a rewarding experience.

To assess the long-term merit of restorative approaches, Wong et al. (2011) conducted a longitudinal study comparing a school which implemented restorative approaches school-wide to deal with bullying incidents, two which implemented them partially when it was deemed possible and one school which did not implement restorative practices at all. Results showed that schools which partially implemented restorative approaches had some benefits compared to the school that did not introduce them at all, but the difference was not significant. Not surprisingly, the school that enforced restorative practices school-wide had the strongest decreases in bullying. These results suggest that implementing restorative practices comprehensively is required for the intervention results to reach their highest potential, but that partial implementation is still better than no implementation at all.

Restorative practices are not without criticism. In her 2002 study, Morrison evaluated a restorative justice programme which, besides the conflict resolution model, featured a workshop on responsible citizenship and the fundamentals of restorative justice. Curriculum was delivered to year 5 students twice a week for five weeks, through techniques such as poster making and role play. While the comparison of the survey that participants filled in before and after programme implementation showed a significant increase in feelings of safety among the student body, the other main measure is controversial. Morrison reported a significant decrease in use of “maladaptive shame” management mechanisms (feelings of rejection in the victim and displacement of shame to anger in bullies), and its replacement with “adaptive shame” (taking responsibility for transgression and working to repair the damage). This focus on shame has been met with disapproval by some who argue that shame stigmatizes bullies and leads to resentment and further violence (Rigby, 2010).

Another possible obstacle for restorative practices, as Rigby (2010) points out, is that it relies on bullies feeling genuinely repentant for having mistreated victims, which does not

always occur. For bullies to take responsibility for their actions and actively contribute to mend the harm done, they need to introspect, find a sense of personal accountability and forfeit the social advantage they were pursuing in the first place. This might not be feasible in cases of severe bullying or in groups where bullying is very pervasive.

1.4.4 Curriculum-based programmes

Recognising that bullying is a group-wide phenomenon, some programmes try to involve the entire school community instead of isolating victims and perpetrators to address the issue. To reach all students, many schools have implemented bullying related curriculum, such as lectures, videotapes and activities.

Some early interventions, such as the early versions of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (Olweus, 1999), included curriculum components that aimed to raise awareness of bullying dynamics and risks. However, it was not possible to isolate the effects of the curriculum implementation to analyse them, as these programmes had other intervention elements in place. The Sheffield Anti-Bullying Project was another one of these types of programmes. It included playground interventions, work with individuals and work with small groups, as well as classroom curriculum. However, schools could select all or only some aspects of the programme to implement, as they saw fit. This allowed independent analysis of different programme features. In the case of the curriculum, it was found that curriculum work is beneficial, but its effects were short-term and probably best utilised as an introductory part of a broader intervention (Smith, 1997).

Since then, other researchers have explored the effectiveness of curriculum based anti-bullying approaches. In their 2007 systematic review of 26 studies on school-based interventions, Vreeman and Carrol analysed ten curriculum interventions and found that they had limited success. Six out of ten studies showed no significant improvement in bullying

levels and in three out of the four that did, there was an increase in self-reported victimization among certain populations.

Still, the low level of improvement found in curriculum-based interventions might be related to what is being measured as evidence of success. Most programmes look for changes in overt behaviour, overlooking shifts in attitudes and thought processes. In their 2016 study, Naidoo et al. evaluated their intervention aimed to decrease gender violence and bullying. The programme was implemented on 434 students (mean age 16) and consisted of weekly modules led by trained facilitators. These modules concentrated on topics such as human rights, different types of bullying, gender issues and healthy relationships. Sessions were delivered through group discussions, role plays, videos and creative projects. Even though the experimental group did not fare better than the control group in terms of bullying levels, the main result of this programme was significant improvement in knowledge about bullying, attitudes towards bullying prevention, a decrease of intention to bully and action plans against bullying in the future.

We might be misguided to dismiss changes in cognitions and attitudes as unimportant. Numerous studies support the idea that involuntary automatic perceptions, controlled thought processes and their interaction cause behaviour (Van Goethem et al., 2010). In the case of something as hard-wired into culture as human rights, gender roles and violence, results like Naidoo et al.'s (2016) are very promising. This is relevant for the current study, since it seeks to expose students to new ideas on bullying and the role of bystanders through curriculum and exploring if this exposure facilitates a change in students' perceptions, cognitions and attitudes. A change on students' views and attitudes on bullying and being a bystander could contribute to the possibility of change in the group culture and its behaviour.

1.4.5 Peer-based programmes

Trying to involve as many parties as possible and in taking into consideration the wealth of research that highlights the importance of peer involvement in bullying situations, some programmes have made bystanders a main component of anti-bullying interventions. As discussed before, bystanders have power in bullying dynamics and can be extremely useful in addressing this issue. They are also easier to reach than active bullies, who are gaining status and social dominance from bullying situations (Salmivalli, 2014). Bully-based interventions can be challenging, since bullies do not have anything to win from a change in social interactions, quite the opposite, they are likely to fear the loss of their social status. On the other side, victim-based interventions have the risk of perpetrating the idea that victims are to blame for their being bullied, and that they are responsible for changing their behaviour in order for the bullying to stop.

Working with bystanders reduces the stigma of singling bullies and victims out to work with them. Having bystanders have an active role sends the message to bullies that their behaviour might be resisted by their peers, and to victims that they are not alone when facing victimisation. Furthermore, it helps create a school culture in which it is understood that bullying is a group-wide issue that affects everybody and that everybody can help solve.

Bystanders can be trained to monitor social interactions, report bullying, support victims and teach social skills to their peers. This does not only help address and prevent bullying incidents, but it also creates a school environment where emotional awareness and psychological health are prioritised (Cowie, 2005). In a 1999 paper, Salmivalli describes three steps necessary to encourage student participation in peer-led interventions: raising awareness, encouraging students to reflect on their responses to bullying and assisting them in trying out new roles. Salmivalli states that bystander roles are perpetuated through a self-fulfilling prophecy, which in turn is fuelled by fear of being socially punished for straying

away from the established social role. Hence, it is important to make students aware of what bullying is and the dynamics it follows, help them to identify their own role in the problem and present them with alternatives to challenge their part in maintaining school harassment.

Some interventions have followed Salmivalli's (1999) steps towards bystander participation, such as Hong Kong's Project P.A.T.H.S., which was based on Salmivalli's (1999) steps for facilitating bystander involvement. The aim of this was to educate students to be prosocial bystanders through curriculum designed to increase student self-efficacy, positive self-identity and self-determination. This curriculum focused on understanding bullying and its consequences, understanding bullies, understanding bystander roles, learning new possible paths of action when witnessing bullying, learning to be a prosocial bystander and learning what to do when faced with cyberbullying. On the units that concentrated on self-efficacy, P.A.T.H.S. encouraged students to recognize their successful past experiences and to take control of their future behaviour through goal setting and self-regulation (Tsang et al., 2011). The workshop designed for this study follows the three steps for bystander intervention proposed by Salmivalli (1999) in a similar way to project P.A.T.H.S., making students aware of their role in bullying dynamics, the power for change they hold and the responsibility they have towards their peers.

Cowie (2011) suggests that bystanders can also take more directive roles such as mediators and peer counsellors. Mediators are students trained in communication skills and emotional management; they help bullies and victims to talk to each other, deal with their conflicts and find solutions in constructive ways. Mediators can be very useful, especially in cases of mild bullying or when there is a provocative victim and a compromise can be found. However, mediation is challenging if the power imbalance is too steep (Rigby, 2010). As in the case of restorative justice, in peer mediation bullies are expected to work towards a

solution, which can be improbable if they have the upper hand and nothing to win from mediation.

Peer counsellors are students coached to use basic listening and counselling skills to help students in need of support, such as bullying victims. Having peer counsellors in schools helps students feel safer and it contributes to a better school climate (Cowie & Hutson, 2005). A more informal version of peer counselling is befriending. In befriending schemes, students are also taught simple listening skills and counselling skills, but it is less structured. In a 2003 study, Menessini et al. evaluated the effects of a befriending peer support model implemented in two Italian secondary schools. Nine groups (178 students) had the befriending intervention implemented, and five classes (115 students) formed the control group. The befriending scheme was in place for a school year and students' roles in bullying and their attitudes towards bullying were measured before and after its implementation. While Menessini et al., did not find significant post intervention changes regarding students taking the role of bully, victim, reinforcer or defender, a significant decrease in passive bystanders was found. More importantly, there were significant differences between the experimental and the control group; reported bullying and reinforcing behaviour increased among the control group students. There were no significant differences regarding pro-violence and anti-bullying attitudes, but while the pro-victim attitudes decreased slightly in the experimental group, there was a significant difference between the experimental and the control group, where pro-victim attitudes decreased sharply. It is worth mentioning that in a study like Menessini et al.'s (2003), where the experimental and the control groups spent the school year together, there is bound to be some degree of contamination between groups. Whether in school activities or after-school social time, secondary school students who go to the same school will interact. There is no way to control social interactions between experimental and control

groups outside of class; protective effects might have been passed on to the control group and violent behaviour from the control group can affect students in the experimental group.

There is more qualitative data that supports the effectiveness of peer support systems. In a 2002 study, Cowie et al. interviewed 34 teachers in charge of peer support systems, 80 trained peer supporters and 413 students who had been users of the peer support system. In these interviews, teachers shared that they believe peer support systems to be useful because bystanders can identify bullying faster than adults and students are more likely to speak to peers than to members of staff. Student users for the most part approved of peer support systems as well, with 82% saying that they found them useful since they provided them with someone to rely on and it made them feel their school environment cares about them. Trained peer supporters also benefited from their role, gaining social skills and self-confidence, and even considering careers in helping professions.

However, Cowie et al. reported some difficulties recruiting and keeping male supporters. The researchers attributed this to the cultural stigma that activities devoted to the care of others are more suitable for females, rather than males. This bias has implications for the current study since, especially in the Mexican scenario, males are told that showing vulnerability is not acceptable. Such a notion could not only affect the likelihood of males helping, but of males asking for or even accepting help. This should be taken into consideration when exploring male students' ideas on bullying and being bystanders.

Another program that aims to involve bystanders in addressing bullying is Committee for Children's (2001) Steps for Respect program. Steps to Respect is based on the idea that positive relationships between all members of the student community help decrease bullying levels. This positive environment is pursued by encouraging bystander and staff cooperation towards a better school climate where all students will feel safe. Steps to Respect provides

curriculum content on how to recognize and report bullying, a literature unit on the topic and coaching on how to respond to bullying. Additionally, it provides training for staff and material for parents.

One of the first evaluations of Steps to Respect was carried out by Frey et al. in 2005. A survey on student responses to bullying was completed by 1226 students in grades three to six, and then completed again a year after, when programme implementation was finalised. Results found a decrease in bullying and bullying reinforcing attitudes. Bullying defending attitudes did not see a significant increase.

Modest results have been also found in later evaluations. In a 2011 study, Brown et al. worked with a sample of 2940 students and 1297 staff members to assess the effects of the Steps to Respect programme. Students completed surveys on school climate, student support, school connectedness, attitudes towards bullying and staff involvement in bullying prevention, while staff completed a survey on student behaviour. Both students and staff completed an additional survey on school environment. All surveys were completed before and after the implementation of Steps to Respect. Results showed a significant increase in anti-bullying strategies and decreases in bullying-related problems and student involvement in bullying. Steps to respect also helped improve school climate and staff climate However, the effects of the intervention were not dramatic. The researchers attribute this to the short duration of the programme; longer exposure to the programme content would have yielded better results.

Partial results are expected for an intervention that has limited amount of time to interact with students and specific areas of operation. When releasing Steps to Respect, Committee for Children advised that the programme had limitations dealing with severe and ongoing cases of bullying (2001). An extensive, wide-spread intervention with clear

regulations, well-defined roles and different levels of operation is necessary to achieve optimal results in managing bullying. Still, in her review of different meta-analysis of anti-bullying programmes, Bradshaw (2015) concluded that while benefits are increased through the cooperation and commitment of all parties in the educational community, and by longer and more intensive interventions, bystander based programmes are generally effective at reducing bullying behaviours.

Some comprehensive programmes such as the KiVa programme are based on the idea that bystander reaction to bullying is a crucial tool to counter bullying (Salmivalli et al., 2011). However, their wide-ranging components make it impossible to isolate the effects of peer intervention from the benefits of other programme elements. For this reason, such programmes will be considered in the next section.

1.4.6 Comprehensive programmes

The first documented programme specifically aimed to target bullying was the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program in Norway, launched in 1983 by the Norwegian Ministry of Education (Olweus, 1993). The Olweus Program sought to reduce bullying by raising awareness on the issue, informing the community about how bullying works, setting clear rules regarding bullying behaviour, providing support for victims, and involving students, staff and families in the anti-bullying efforts (Olweus et al., 1999). To achieve this, the Olweus Program designed and implemented a wide variety of actions aimed at three levels: individual students, classes and the whole school. Individually, bullied students received support from staff and help from bystanders, involving their parents in the process. At a class level, students were made aware of behaviours that were considered to be bullying, the rules aimed to restrict those behaviours and the measures taken in case they were violated. Class and parent/teacher meetings on the subject were held and bullying related content such as literature, role playing and other activities were added to the curriculum. At a whole-

school level, groups and circles were formed for staff and families to understand and manage bullying issues. Playground supervision was also implemented, bullying conference days were organised and bullying levels in the school were measured through questionnaires (Olweus, 1993). All these measures resulted in reported bullying reductions of over 50% over the two years after the programme implementation, significant decline of general antisocial behaviour and significant improvement of school climate (Olweus et al., 1999)

However, those encouraging results were found only at the schools where the researchers were directly involved in the program implementation. In a sample of Norwegian schools where the researchers were not in contact with the student body, the results were less promising, and victimization even increased in some populations (Vreeman & Carroll, 2007). This might point to important differences in programme implementation and to the need to carefully train staff members who will be delivering the programme. That being said, the Olweus model is still one of the most effective anti-bullying approaches available. In their analysis of 44 anti-bullying programmes, Farrington and Ttofi (2009) found that programmes which are conceptually based in the Olweus programme are the most successful.

An adaptation of the Olweus program was the Expect Respect program, aimed to tackle both bullying and sexual harassment among students by creating a positive school climate. Expect Respect program included policy development, twelve weekly sessions in classrooms, staff training, parent education, and support services (such as specialized training for school counsellors). Initial findings showed an increase in bullying awareness and improved staff responses (Meraviglia et al., 2003). Further implementations that have been adapted to particular school cultures after focus groups with staff and students showed that Expect Respect yielded a promising 68% to 78% decrease in reported bullying, but no significant change in bystander behaviour. (Nese et al., 2014).

Another widely approved anti-bullying programme is Salmivalli, et al.'s KiVa programme, commissioned to the University of Turku by the Finnish Ministry of Education in 2006 (Salmivalli, et al. 2011). As mentioned before, KiVa sees bullying as a group phenomenon, and bystanders as a key element to change group dynamics. Its goal is to change bystanders' response to bullying situations, so that instead of rewarding the bullies, they defend and support bullying victims (Salmivalli et al., 2010). This is accomplished by helping students feel empathy for bullying victims and develop efficacy to intervene in ways that will not put them at risk (Sarento et al., 2015). Many people would look at change in direct bully behaviour as the only measure of failure and success, but as Sarento et al. (2015) point out, overall outcomes are not easily changed, so it is sensible to work with proximal factors that are related to said outcome. In the case of bullying, an important proximal factor is the reaction of the group to bullying; how bystanders feel about bullying, the thoughts they have on the topic and how they react to it. Bystander support for the victim considerably improves the situation for bullied students, and sets a change in motion where the group dynamics stop allowing bullying (Salmivalli, 2014).

In the same way as the Olweus programme, KiVa operates at different levels: universal and indicated. "Universal actions" refer to programme components that are aimed at the entire student body, such as the annual survey, computer vests, posters, informative sessions for all parents, staff supervision, and curriculum delivered through ten 3 hour lessons. These lessons cover topics such as bullying dynamics and consequences, management of emotions, and peer pressure, which are addressed through media, discussions and role playing. "Indicated actions" are aimed towards existing bullying situations, and they involve face to face meeting between bullies, victims and trained KiVa staff and peer mediators. Additional measures include designated staff members with detailed manuals to

intervention, a leaflet for parents, informative sessions for parents and an annual survey (Salmivalli et al., 2010).

KiVa has had very encouraging results. In a 2012 study where 28,000 students were followed longitudinally, 98% of the cases that received individual attention improved, and in 86% of these cases bullying stopped completely. Other positive changes were increases in school-liking, empathy, self-efficacy and even academic achievement (Salmivalli & Poskiparta, 2012). KiVa also yielded benefits for students categorised as bully-victims. Yang and Salmivalli (2015) studied the effects on 23,520 who self-reported and had peers identify them as bully-victims. Results found that a 35% decrease in students self-reporting being bully-victims and a 40% decrease in students being identified as bully-victims by peers. Of the students who had been labelled as bully-victims before the intervention, 60% self-reported to be uninvolved in bullying situations after the intervention, and 29% were categorised as uninvolved by their peers.

Not surprisingly, comprehensive programmes have been found to yield the most favourable results. In her review of meta-analysis of anti-bullying programmes, Bradshaw (2015) found that the most effective anti-bullying programmes were those that used the three-tiered system proposed by Olweus (universal, selective and indicated), as well as the ones that were comprised of wide-ranging intervention components, such as actions to raise awareness, introduction of bullying-related curriculum in class, social emotional training and classroom management strategies. Bradshaw also concluded that intensive and sustained commitment from students, staff and families is necessary to reach an intervention's potential. Bradshaw's findings are consistent with Farrington and Ttofi's (2009), who found that time invested in training and intervention are correlated with higher success.

A good example of what Bradshaw and Farrington and Ttofi found is the case of the Sheffield Anti-Bullying Project. Besides the core feature of the programme, (a well communicated, implemented, supervised and reviewed anti-bullying policy) the Sheffield Anti-Bullying Project offered a wide variety of optional intervention components that schools could choose to implement. These interventions included anti-bullying curriculum, anti-bullying media, playground interventions, peer counselling, school tribunals and restorative interventions. The 24 British schools that took part in the Sheffield Project were monitored through surveys over 18 months. Predictably, there was a wide variation in results, resulting from the variation in programme components and differences in implementation. However, schools that devoted more time and effort to the program and that had the commitment of at least one member of staff as coordinator saw better results (Smith, 1997).

Including a wider variety of measures and allocating more time and energy to anti-bullying programmes might seem like an obvious and feasible way to achieve better results when implementing interventions. The obstacle that comprehensive programmes face is that they do require a larger investment of financial and human resources, and schools might not be willing to devote them to anti-bullying efforts. Comprehensive programmes can also be met with some resistance by staff members, since they require time that is regularly dedicated to other activities and they indicate re-structuring of classroom rules and dynamics. These changes might seem like an overwhelming change and effort for staff members. However, quick and superficial implementation of anti-bullying programmes might be the actual waste of time; in order to have a true chance at reducing bullying, it is necessary for the whole educational community to be involved and ready to make changes.

1.5. The case of Mexico

1.5.1 Mexican psychology

Mexico is the 13th biggest independent state in the world, covering almost two million square kilometres. Its 32 states and one federal district are home to over 120 million citizens who, besides Spanish, speak 68 Pre-Hispanic dialects (Inegi, 2017). Obviously, the Mexican experience is vastly diverse, but there are some cultural elements that are considered to be common to most Mexican sub-groups. In particular, the experience of the Spanish invasion and subsequent colonisation is thought to have had lasting impact on Mexican identity, and on Mexico's relationship with power and vulnerability (Diaz Guerrero, 2004).

Mexico has a very complicated relationship with power and violence. While Mexican citizens probably complain about violence and abuse of power more than any other national problem, they seem to be habituated to both issues. In the United Nations' Ranking of Happiness, Mexico was found to be the 25th happiest country in the world from the years 2014 to 2016, ranking higher than countries with stronger economies and much better human rights records (SDSN, 2007). This is surprising considering that in the last eight years, apart from its usual battle with poverty and corruption, Mexico has been in the middle of intense organised crime conflicts which have resulted in abductions, disappearances and murder rates of up to 56 cases per day (Ureste, 2016). Mexicans tend to be good at adapting to their circumstances (Diaz Guerrero, 1994), which is both a resource and a hindrance, since it makes it easy for violence and exploitation to be carried out with little or no consequence.

To understand this, it is necessary to look at the origin of Hispanic Mexican culture. This topic was written about extensively during the 60's and the 70's, when many psychoanalysts took an interest in Mexican psychology, basing their work on the study of the psychodynamic effects of Mexico being born from a clash of cultures. As the interest in

psychoanalysis dwindled, so did the amount of work in what Diaz-Guerrero (1994) calls “ethnopsychology”. For this reason, many of the references in the following section will seem very dated. However, their ground-breaking analysis is still extensively cited when Mexican culture is discussed academically.

The invasion and colonisation of Mexico, and most of Latin America, was different from other occupations in that the ethnic amalgamation was extensive relatively early on. Being that nearly all Spanish colonisers were male and that countless indigenous men were killed in the conquest war, the first truly Mexican families were the result of the union of a native woman and a Spanish man. The children of these marriages, called *mestizos*, were in a unique social position; regarded as superior than their mothers but inferior than their fathers, they were somehow alien to both of their cultures of origin. *Mestizo* children grew up in an environment of derision against their mothers’ defeated ethos and glorification of their fathers’ dominating culture (Segura Millán, 1964). The mothers of these *mestizo* children were indigenous women who were trying to adapt to their new circumstances after being torn from their environment. For this reason, they were commonly passive and accommodating to Spanish invaders, an attitude that gave them an image of weakness and submissive defeat to the eyes of the new Mexican society (Loreto, 1961). The Spanish man, on the other hand, was seen as a figure of great social, political and economic power who had come to forcibly take what he wanted and was now able to provide for himself and his own. Understanding this situation and trying to make a place for themselves in their communities, *mestizos* tried to identify with their fathers’ culture, condoning the exploitation of their mothers’ civilisations and reproaching them for having allowed it (Ramirez, 1959). This situation might have had an effect on the tendency to glorify aggressors and victim blame and on the chauvinism experienced in Mexico until these days.

Shortly after Mexico won its independence from Spain, it was invaded by France. While many European countries and Japan supported the French intervention, the United States aided Mexico in the process of becoming a republic. Still, Mexico had to battle its former ally soon after, in the Mexican-American war in which Mexico had to yield close to one third of its territory. The U.S.A, which started as a big brother of sorts, eventually became Mexico's bully nation. Even in present days, the silent but ever present oppression of the U.S.A. is an important part of Mexican culture. Mexico feels close to the U.S.A and admires it for its power, but also resents the fact that the relationship between the two countries is not reciprocal (Ramirez, 1959).

Mexico cannot remember a time when it was not dominated by foreign countries or the domestic powerful few, and that has affected Mexican views on power and aggression (Ramirez, 1959). Mexicans tend to be defensive and untrusting because of the constant uncertainty of their position, and feel justified to use violence to defend what is theirs. Mexican families endorse their children's use of violence as well, thinking that if they do not dominate they will be dominated by others (Ramos, 1951). Bullies often have not only their families' permission but their encouragement, and victims are often blamed for the violence they are subject to; their incapacity (or refusal) to respond to attacks is perceived as a flaw of character (Diaz Guerrero, 1994).

This historical background has also influenced Mexico's ideas on gender. One cultural assumption that rules gender roles and interactions is that men are superior to women. Traditional Mexican families are based on the father's authority and the mother's sacrifice (Diaz-Guerrero, 1994). Boys are raised to be unquestioned by others (especially females), and girls are raised to tend to other people's needs. This makes Mexican females more likely to engage in prosocial behaviour, since it is not only something desirable, but

their duty. Males, on the other side, are more likely to disregard prosocial behaviour as something that should not concern males.

Another factor that relates to the bullying phenomenon is Mexico's relationship with suffering. Mexico's experience with colonisation, the compliance of those who merged with Spain and the quiet retreat of those who did not, created a deep-rooted attitude of helplessness in the face of adversity. Mexicans do not believe in their ability to shape their environment, so they prefer not to resist it. This sense of resignation was strengthened by the Spanish introduction of catholic values. Abnegation and obedience are socially valued in females, while stoicism and light-heartedness are required from males. Suffering must be endured without complaining since any sign of weakness, especially in males, is perceived as a vulnerable spot that will bring upon domination (Diaz-Guerrero, 1998). Mexicans are encouraged to laugh about their own misfortunes, then accept them and be grateful that their circumstances are not worse. For this reason, bullying victims are unlikely to come forth, not only because of their specific personalities and group dynamics, but because of a cultural frame of mind in which complaining is not allowed. An example of this is Castillo-Rocha and Pacheco-Espejel's research in Yucatán (2008) in which they found that even though bullying is an extremely common occurrence in the 18 Mexican middle schools they studied, students are very tolerant to bullying and very rarely complain.

Despite of these cultural traits that make challenging violence difficult, Mexico has an important resource that opens a window of opportunity. Mexicans are highly community oriented and regard themselves more as a part of a group than as individuals. A good part of a Mexican person's self-worth relies on the ways in which they contribute to their community and those close to them. Mexicans value interpersonal relationships more than anything else and they take genuine pleasure in bonding. While they have a fatalist view on environmental circumstances and assume they cannot change them, Mexicans have the idea that

interpersonal interactions can be easily moulded. Friendliness and solidarity are not seen as formalities, but as spontaneous expressions of support. (Diaz-Guerrero, 1994) Bystander involvement might be particularly suited to address bullying within the Mexican school system, considering that students are discouraged from expressing their own discomfort, but they are expected to aid their peers.

1.5.2 Mexican anti-bullying legal framework

Mexico has experienced very high levels of violence in the last decade, and school contexts are not an exception. A report released by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) stated that Mexico has the highest bullying rates out of its 35 member countries, with 40.25% of secondary school students having been bullied before (Valadez, 2014). Mexico's National Human Rights Commission (CNDH) confirmed OCDE's claim, revealing that National Family Development System (DIF) statistics found that 44% of all Mexican students report to have been subject to school violence at some point in their lives (Camacho Servin, 2014). A later OECD report counted 18 million bullying reports per year in Mexico, most of them involving students between the ages of 12 and 18 (Valadez, 2016).

OECD reports also exposed the relationship that bullying has with other national problems. According to its 2016 report, Mexican bullying victims have a higher risk of developing substance abuse problems as a coping mechanism to manage anxiety and depression symptoms than peers who have not been victimised. On the other hand, bullying perpetrators are more likely to engage in delinquency, having learned that antisocial acts will be met with impunity (Valadez, 2016). Additionally, studies done by the National Institute for Statistics (INEGI), linked 190 suicide cases in Mexico City to bullying in a single year, with up to 60% of suicide cases in Mexican minors being related to bullying (Maldonado, 2016).

After the release of those reports, and the notoriety gained by some well-publicised cases of suicide, manslaughter and retaliatory violence happening in Mexico and other places of the world, bullying started being noticed by the Mexican people. It started being a topic of conversation and concern in educational environments and the press, where whether the government was going to take measures to prevent it started being discussed..

The Mexican government first responded to such concerns by stating that Mexican law already inherently outlaws bullying. In the release of its “Juridical Framework regarding School Harassment” document, the Chamber of Representatives stated that Article one of the Political Constitution of the United States of Mexico bans any form of discrimination, while Article three states that education should encourage harmony, solidarity and justice, while promoting dignity, fraternity and equality of all people. The document added that the General Bill of Education also covers the definition of bullying, declaring in Article seven that education should promote an environment of peace, inform minors of the rights they have, and carry out educational preventive activities to avoid illicit acts committed against minors. The Chamber of Representatives also cited Article eight, which affirms that education should fight prejudice, discrimination and violence, and Article 30, which requires all schools to create a system to prove their progress in fighting discrimination and violence (CEAMEG, 2013).

While the principles expressed by the Political Constitution of the United States of Mexico and the Mexican General Bill of Education are commendable, the articles that the Chamber of Representatives cited as proof of national action against bullying are ambiguous at best. Clear descriptions of the ideals the laws claim to pursue and of the ills they wish to avoid are not provided. More to the point, none of the articles require specific policy to be in place to ensure their content is observed. It is also worth mentioning that Mexico is a federalist country, which means that while states are required to abide by federal law, they

are free to interpret decrees, draft their own legislation and use autonomous mechanisms to implement it. Every state has different definitions of bullying and different measures to prevent it and address it. For example, the state of Puebla decreed the creation of School Safety Brigades, but it only recognises cyberbullying carried out through the use of school computers. On the other hand, the state of Veracruz's definition of cyberbullying covers all electronic harassment regardless of the location of the device, and adopted a system of registration of all cases of school bullying as a control measure. Mexico City did not adopt any bullying prevention or intervention policy, focusing on human rights, gender equality and peace culture curriculum content instead (Zurita, 2012).

The vast differences between state legislations and lack of federal supervision over them has been a cause of concern for educational researchers for some time. In his 2005 paper, Gomez-Nashiki claimed that if the Mexican educational legislation is based on fostering values such as tolerance, respect and civility, it has been unsuccessful, since the daily experience of the Mexican student is very far removed from the citizenship ideals Mexican education is supposed to prioritise. Vega-Baez (2013) also discussed the distance between legislation and practice regarding school violence, arguing that under the current system, there is no regulatory body supervising the states' efforts to address school violence, and no procedure in place to assure that student wellbeing is being pursued.

A year after the publication of the legal framework for school harassment, a federal law regarding bullying was proposed by the Presidency. The Chamber of Representatives and the Senatorial Chamber reviewed the law, but believed that the document drafted by the Presidency relied too heavily on public aid, instead of the human rights focus that characterises Mexican educational legislation. After modifying 80% of its original content, the Federal Law on School Harassment was passed. This law reiterates that children have the right to education, to equality, to expression, to participation, to living in healthy

environments, to live free of violence and to be prioritised by the Mexican people. As policy to prevent bullying, the Federal Law on School Harassment instated a fine of up to 100,000 Mexican pesos (around 4,500 GBP) for school staff who tolerate, enable or do not report bullying. Recurrent claims can result in a fine of up to 200,000 Mexican pesos (Torres, 2014).

The Federal Law on School Harassment has not been reviewed or critiqued by experts and has not been the focus of educational research. However, fining teachers is unlikely to have a positive impact on student aggression dynamics, and it only adds up to the recent educational trend of making teachers responsible, and liable, for all educational outcomes. It is reasonable to assume that the law was appealing for the Chambers because it gives the public the impression that an important change was made and it has no cost for any government instances or public schools; it even is a potential source of revenue. Additionally, the teacher-blaming approach has been useful in a campaign to push a controversial educational reform that would dissolve teacher syndicates and subject teachers to yearly testing to keep their positions (Villafranco, 2016).

This is a systemic problem in Mexico; legislation and policy are more likely to protect and benefit political agenda than the needs of the population. This is also visible when appraising some of the government funded bullying programmes that have been published in recent years. These will be described in the following section.

1.5.3 Mexican anti-bullying programmes

Along with the need for school harassment legislation, the Mexican public identified a need for interventions aimed at preventing and addressing bullying incidents. However, state-run efforts to tackle bullying have been somewhat lacking. In an appraisal of “Escuela Segura (Safe School)”, a public anti-bullying, anti-delinquency and anti-drug

program launched in areas with high crime levels, Zurita Riviera (2011) found little to no improvement in bullying levels. This was attributed to the fact that bullying had to share programme content (curriculum and classroom activities) with substance abuse and delinquency. While lack of time and effort devoted to a programme component is bound to have a detrimental effect on results, it is important to note that there was also no monitoring of the implementation and that many schools did not comply with all of the programme components, which hindered programme fidelity as well. Zurita Rivera concluded that half-hearted implementations in only a handful of schools inserted in a very complex violence situation will bring only meagre results. Careless programme implementation and subsequent discouraging results can cause more harm than good; students might come to believe that school concern on the problem is only superficial and that any efforts to curb violence are futile.

Gomez Nashiki (2013) identified this problem, pointing out that mandatory Mexican bullying initiatives tend to be informative at best and mostly ineffective, calling for communication between researchers and legislators. A case in point is the Mexico City Public Safety Ministry's Bullying Prevention Workshop Handbook, published in 2012. This handbook, made available to the public, consists of a section on preventive measures for victims, parents and school staff and the description of an anti-bullying workshop. While this kind of material could undoubtedly be useful, it is evident that its content is not research-based, but rather devised through the authors' personal understanding of the problem. For instance, preventive measures for students (such as "do not be alone" or "make the negative into something positive") might be unfeasible and vague, and preventive measures aimed for parents (such as "pay attention to your children" and "learn to listen") places blame on students' families. The bullying workshop does not seem to rely on peer-reviewed material either. Instructions for an informative anti-bullying session are included, directing facilitators

on how much time they should devote to the introduction, body, conclusion and Q&A session, and advising them to make the content age-appropriate and appealing. However, there is no information on the actual information that should be delivered. The workshop ends with an anti-bullying game, which is merely described as a team knowledge competition, which ends with students saying “United against bullying” at the end. The game does not mention bullying or is related to bullying at any point (SPPC, 2012). This suggests that workshop was not designed by a bullying expert, and that its authors, which are not identified anywhere in the document, did not carry out extensive research on the topic before designing the intervention.

Another example is the launch of SEP’s human rights education program “Contra la violencia, eduquemos para la paz (Against violence, education for peace)” in 2006. This program, implemented in 2000 primary and secondary schools in the Mexico City area, aimed to teach students to deal with everyday conflicts in a creative non-violent way. It consisted of 19 sessions covering topics such as self-esteem, empathy, respect, trust, cooperation and communication, critical thinking and conflict resolution. While results varied greatly among schools, students were generally more likely to inform teachers of bullying incidents, but they were also more likely to join fights after the program (SEP, 2006). A look at the program’s curriculum sheds light on why it might have been ineffective. Of the 16 items that conformed the pre/post-test survey to assess program effectiveness, only six revolved around bullying, which is not enough to scrutinise the phenomenon. Of these items, many of them were confusing and inappropriate. Social bullying was measured asking students if they reject peers who had a one parent household or make fun of students with disabilities, neither of which have been found to be common basis for bullying in Mexico. Some other items were insensitive to gender equality issues, asking students (males and females) if they refuse to let girls join games during break, call a boy who does not enjoy

rough play “effeminate” or call a girl who likes to join in “boy games” a “tomboy”. While it is easy to tell that these items meant to tackle gender bullying, speaking about “boy games” and using derogative terms is not appropriate. Additionally, Iztapalapa, a Mexico County city with high violence levels (Garcia & Stettin, 2017), was not included in the project for reasons undisclosed. This supports Gomez Nashiki’s request for bullying initiatives being designed and monitored by people who are educated on the subject. Poor outcomes in anti-bullying interventions not only fail to alleviate the problem, but also strengthen the idea that bullying, and violence in general, is unavoidable and unstoppable.

1.5.4 Mexican bullying research

Despite the national conversation regarding school harassment, educational research on bullying is at a very early stage. Since 2005 when Gomez Nashiki pointed out that bullying was almost absent from the Mexican educational research agenda, just a few dozen bullying research projects have been published. These studies have been primarily explorative in nature, revolving mostly around statistical prevalence in different states and basic bullying dynamics.

Research on the prevalence of students who are affected by bullying in Mexico has had dissimilar findings. Avilés Dorantes et al. (2012) surveyed students from a secondary school in the border city of Tijuana and found that 28% of students reported to be involved in bullying dynamics. This percentage may be higher, being that the survey used by this study covered physical, verbal and cyberbullying, but not social bullying. Another study carried out in Guadalajara (México’s second largest city) used questionnaires to find the prevalence and risk factors of bullying in the state and found that 17.6% students considered themselves to be bullied, and that the biggest risk factor was a lack of social support (Vega et al., 2013). The bullying percentages found in these two studies are inconsistent with the estimates of INEE (National Institute of Educational Evaluation), OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-

operation and Development) and DIF (Family Development System), which estimate the percentage of students bullied in Mexico between 40 and 44% (Aguilera et al., 2007; Camacho, 2014; Valadez, 2014). This difference can be accounted for considering that educational researchers used student self-reports, while official reports use statistics from public school records. Mexican students, especially those who live in high-violence areas such as Tijuana, may be unwilling to admit to being bullying victims.

Qualitative studies have also found bullying to be highly frequent in Mexico. In a 2005 study, Velazquez Reyes asked students from three Mexico City secondary schools to write the most meaningful stories they remembered from their school days. Even though students were not asked for stories regarding violence, 205 out of 346 involved bullying in some way. The bullying stories shared by students were thematically coded. Themes that emerged most frequently were resignation to harassment, power imbalance, trying to change to belong, anxiety over being rejected and shame over being bullied (Velazquez Reyes, 2005). These themes show that adapting to the dominant figure to avoid marginalisation, shame over being victimized and acceptance of violence are still prominent themes in Mexican psychology today, and they are relevant to bullying dynamics.

Regarding the bullying types that are most common in Mexico, the INEE (National Institute of Educational Evaluation) published a report in 2007 which stated that verbal and physical bullying were the most common types of bullying in Mexico City. According to INEE surveys, 14.1% of Mexico City secondary school students claimed they had been physically harmed, 13.6% had been mocked or insulted and 13.1% had received some kind of threat (Aguilera et al., 2007). A 2013 study carried out in 10 Mexican cities confirmed this, also finding that physical aggression, insults and threats were the most common types of bullying among the 1398 students surveyed (Del Tronco Paganelli & Ramirez, 2013).

Mexican bullying dynamics have also been studied. Gomez Nashiki (2013) analysed interviews with teachers, administrators, students and parents to investigate their thoughts on the inner workings of bullying. Most interviewees agreed on bullying being a means to achieve social status and that domination dynamics are learned soon after entering a school setting where harassment is customary. However, while parents and teachers believed that bullying can be addressed through disciplinary methods, students saw challenges that were more ingrained in student interaction. For instance, they expressed that it would be very risky for a student to stop bullying behaviours, since former bullies would be in a very vulnerable social position (Gomez Nashiki, 2013). The difference between the adult perspective and the student perspective in this study highlights the value of student insight and the need to involve all members of educational communities in bullying research and intervention.

Some recent studies recognise the relevance of student perceptions to understand bullying dynamics. Machillot (2017) used observations and student interviews to explore social norms on bullying in a Jalisco secondary school, finding that bullies expected and demanded that the group follow their lead. Students who had not been bullied before often saw this call for followers as entertaining, but non-bullies were more likely to interpret this behaviour as an imposition, and they perceived a threat from the bullies should they decide to withhold their support. While students with disabilities were accepted, students who did not accept class norms were ostracised. Reporting disruptive behaviour and bullying was especially condemned, under the argument that students “are supposed to stand together”. Machillot’s study provides insight on the pressures that students face when asked to stand up to bullying, and the influence that group norms and attitudes have on individual student behaviour. This is relevant for the current study, since it seeks to explore group norms

regarding what is expected from a bullying bystander and how that influences the role they adopt within bullying dynamics.

Even though research that focuses on bystanders is still mostly absent from the Mexican educational research agenda, different student roles are beginning to be recognised. Rodríguez Machain et al. (2016) carried out a study to explore students' views on bullying, depending on their gender and their role in bullying situations. For this purpose, separate focus groups were held with male bullies, male non-bullies, female bullies and female non-bullies, as assigned by staff. Focus group analysis found that attitudes towards victims are different between bullies and non-bullies. While bullies see victims as students who are not able to take jokes and “go crying” to teachers, non-bullies perceive that once bullies pick a victim they will not let go. Also, bullies claim that teasing is funny and that people who do not appreciate it are wrong, but non-bullies state that most students can separate humorous intent from hurtful intent. Non-bullies are also able to admit there are generators and recipients of aggression, while bullies claim that that type of aggression is “just the way we get along”, dismissing the existence of transgressors and victims.

Rodríguez Machain et al. (2016) also found noteworthy differences between male and female participants. Males were more likely to see teasing and even aggression as a normal part of interaction among classmates, while females generally disagreed with this idea. Female students expressed that there are limits to teasing even among friends, and aggression is not acceptable. Females also generally agreed that teasing someone who is not a friend is never appropriate, while males believed that, within some boundaries, teasing non-friends is innocuous classroom humour (Rodríguez Machain et al., 2016).

Rodríguez Machain et al. were not the only ones to find that male and female students display dissimilar attitudes behaviour when it comes to bullying. Gender differences, if common in research all over the world, are remarkable in the Mexican population. A 2011

study found that when 1092 students took a test to determine their role in bullying dynamics, only 13% of the students who reported being involved in bullying situations were female, and most of them in the role of the victim (Albores Gallo, et al., 2011) Consistently, Del Tronco Paganelli & Ramírez (2013) found that male students were significantly more likely to be aggressors than females. Still, in their narratives of bullying incidents, girls were much more likely to share having reported their bullying experiences than boys were (Velazquez Reyes, 2005). This might mean that the prevalence of bullying among Mexican males could be even higher than statistical studies would suggest.

There are also differences in the types of bullying that males and females face. Avilés Dorantes et al. (2012) found that males were twice as likely than females to be physically bullied and females were three times more likely than males to be cyberbullied (Avilés Dorantes et al., 2012). To explore aggression among female students, Mejía Hernández and Weiss (2011) conducted an ethnographic study on the female population of four Mexico City secondary schools. Findings revealed that the main forms of aggression among females were gossiping, insults and non-verbal derisive gestures. Female students often criticised female peers' personal appearance and would sexually shame them as well. This study also found that conflicts among secondary female students tended to revolve around rivalry over social status, competition for potential mates, and betrayal of social codes. However, bullying among females is not as common as feuds between different social clans. A perceived transgression towards a friend is interpreted by female students as a transgression against the entire friend group, and the group is quick to respond defensively. This might shed some light on the low levels of female presence in bullying incidents; girls are more likely to support friends who are being attacked and more likely to go to friends for support. This reduces the likelihood of someone being singled out and bullied and makes aggression among females more clique oriented.

Bystanders are often overlooked in Mexican research; they are hardly ever mentioned, and are often not considered to be a part of bullying dynamics. Albores Gallo (2011) conducted a study in which 1092 students answered a survey to identify their role in bullying. Students' answers were cross-referenced with their teachers' and parents' responses to the Child Behaviour Checklist, aimed to identify psychiatric symptoms. Results suggest that bullies and bully-victims have the highest levels of conduct problems and oppositional disorders. Predictably, victims display high levels of anxiety but bullies' anxiety and somatic disorder levels are even higher. A limitation to this study is that it considered bully, victim and bully-victim as bullying roles, but bystanders were omitted.

Studies on students' cognitive-emotional experience with bullying have neglected bystanders as well. A 2005 study surveyed 600 students on the types of bullying they have perpetrated, the types of bullying they been subjected to and their thoughts and feelings associated with these incidents. Thematic analysis of the responses found that even students who think of bullying as a part of normal interaction feel humiliation and anger when being bullied, as well as moral discomfort when bullying others (Prieto Quezada et al., 2005). This would suggest that even if Mexican students accept the idea of bullying as a typical occurrence, they do experience pain and discomfort as a result of bullying. As mentioned before, Prieto Quezada et al.'s study would have been more comprehensive if it had also examined bystander cognitions and emotions. This study seeks to fill this gap in the literature, recognising that every student is occasionally a bystander, and that their attitudes, thoughts and behaviours are crucial to bullying dynamics.

Chapter 2. Methodology

The present chapter describes the research methods selected to explore Mexican secondary school students' perceptions of their role as bullying bystanders, to gauge their levels of self-efficacy when assisting bullying victims, to examine moral disengagement dynamics used to justify reinforcing or passive behaviour, and to determine if there are gender differences in perceptions of bullying and bystander behaviour.

This chapter explains the rationale behind the research design selected for this study, the need for research in this area and the potential benefits that new understanding could provide. The specific aims of the study and the research questions are also outlined. This outline endeavours to serve as a reference to inform the reader of the reasoning behind methodological decisions made throughout this study.

Since a mixed methods design was selected for this study, it was considered necessary to provide context on this type of research design, and on how mixed methodology was applied to answer the research questions. Epistemological background behind the study is reviewed. Instruments and measures are presented as well, along with the thinking behind their selection, evidence of their effectiveness, and suitability for addressing the research questions. Ethical considerations when researching sensitive topics with student populations and efforts to reduce bias are also explored.

As a part of the research design, a six-session workshop was designed with the purpose of explaining basic bullying dynamics to students and raising awareness on the role that bystanders play in bullying situations. Since this topic is not commonly addressed in Mexican school settings, students might have never gotten a chance to reflect on it. Exposure to these concepts was considered necessary to encourage conversation on this topic. Additionally, the workshop implementation served the purpose of assessing how receptive

students were to material intended to raise awareness on the role of bystanders in bullying situations, expose moral disengagement mechanisms that are commonly used to excuse bullying behaviour, and to provide information about different options bystanders to assist bullied peers. The workshop outline and its implementation details are described in this chapter.

Finally, data collection tools and data analysis are discussed, starting with the pilot study, following the two stages of data collection of the main study, and the analysis methods considered appropriate to examine data. Finally, the present study's research design limitations are considered.

2.1 Rationale of the study

Over the last four decades of educational research, a wide variety of bullying-related topics has been explored through several different methods. However, the bulk of this research has been carried out in the United States, Canada, Australia and Europe; there are few studies on bullying coming from developing countries. In the case of Mexico, bullying research is not only limited but also relatively recent, with bullying only becoming a household term in the last two decades.

As a relatively new research area, Mexican bullying research has focused primarily on the prevalence of bullying and on basic bullying dynamics. While there is a good body of research on the role of the bystander and the importance of bystander involvement when dealing with bullying in developed cultures, there is a gap in the literature when it comes to bullying bystanders in developing countries. Exploring the role that bystanders play in bullying dynamics and their perceptions of this role could be especially enlightening in collectivist cultures, such as the Mexican culture. Understanding bystander attitudes, beliefs, and values is necessary to understand the full scope of bullying dynamics and to choose or

design successful anti-bullying interventions for Mexican school settings, and to inform anti-bullying policy.

Exploring student attitudes on school violence is also important to understand early experiences and messages students receive about violence in general. Addressing everyone's role, responsibility, and intervention options in bullying situations could be an important step towards a socially aware school community. Educating students on the duty they hold towards violence victims around them might make them more aware of their power to improve their communities as well.

2.2 Aim and research questions

This study aimed to explore Mexican secondary school students' perceptions of their role as bystanders in bullying situations. For this purpose, gender differences in these perceptions, students' levels of self-efficacy and moral disengagement, and student receptivity to material that encourages prosocial bystander behaviour were examined.

The research questions that guided this study are the following:

- 1) What are students' perceptions of their role as bullying bystanders?
- 2) Are bystanders morally responsive to witnessed bullying incidents (moral engagement)?
- 3) Do bystanders think they have the power to alleviate bullying situations (self-efficacy)?
- 4) Are there gender differences in perceptions on bullying and bystander behaviour?
- 5) Does addressing moral disengagement dynamics help students morally re-engage?
- 6) Does introducing a variety of prosocial bystander roles increase self-efficacy to help in bullying situations?
- 7) Are students receptive to material aimed to encourage them to become prosocial bystanders?

To address these questions, a mixed method study seeking both quantitative and qualitative data was designed.

2.3 Research design

Over the last four decades of bullying research, numerous approaches and methods have been used. These vary to accommodate the aspect of the phenomenon that is being explored, the nature of the research questions, the sociocultural context research is being conducted in, the type of population being studied, the resources the researcher has access to, the state of the literature and the research paradigms adopted. These factors will result in a specific research design that will determine the kind of data collected, the way the data are collected and analysed, and the types of conclusions that can be drawn from data analysis. This section describes the research design selected for this study and the reasoning behind it.

One of the elements that guides a research design is the paradigm that it follows. Paradigms can be described as ways to see and study the world that are shared by a group of people who see them as the norm (Kuhn, 1970). Different paradigms hold different views on the correct way to approach the world. The most basic one is ontology, which refers to the nature of reality and what is accepted as the truth. Another one is axiology, or what is given worth to and perceived as valuable. A third one, and the one that will be given priority for this study's purpose, is epistemology or the way a paradigm believes knowledge can be achieved (Coe, 2012).

Paradigms are different in different places and change across time. If a paradigm is faced with an obstacle, the community will see it as a dilemma and will strive to solve it. However, if there is no satisfactory solution to be found, a paradigm revolution will come and replace the paradigm with another one that covers a solution to the dilemma (Coe, 2012). For instance, for many years it was the worldwide norm to think that corporal punishment was

conducive to learning and necessary in school settings. Progressively though, researchers started studying how corporal punishment damages student-teacher rapport and hinders children in many ways (Dubanoski et al., 1983). Today, corporal punishment has become an illegal practice in many countries and seen as an abusive and ineffective pedagogical tool.

Grbich (2007) distinguishes between four main paradigms in the social sciences:

- a) Positivism. The most trusted method of inquiry during the 19th century, positivism claims that there is such a thing as an absolute, objective reality that can be discovered. This can be done by observing, understanding, reasoning and testing. Variables are to be identified and tested within experimental designs to unearth laws or facts that can be always relied on.
- b) Constructivism/interpretivism. Constructivist views see knowledge as a direct result of human thought, therefore reality is perceived as a socially and personally constructed idea. This reality is fluid, it changes with time, social change and interaction, which means that knowledge is always subjective.
- c) Critical emancipatory positions. Critical emancipatory paradigms focus on how knowledge has been historically shaped by the narrow view of a privileged few, leaving the experiences of most of the population outside. According to critical theory, reality as we know it is a construct made to serve those in power, so this paradigm seeks to give a voice to underrepresented populations.
- d) Postmodernism. Postmodern theory does not believe in one reality, but many realities which are unable to be accurately explained. Data collection and interpretation are approached with scepticism since truth, reason and logic are completely subjective.

In education, the main discrepancy comes between the positivist paradigm, which supports quantitative data and its analysis, and the constructivist paradigm, which favours

qualitative data analysis methods (Biesta, 2012). Both paradigms have supporters and opponents. Positivism devotees claim that social science should follow controlled methods and measure variables precisely to have the power to predict and claim causality, while its critics argue that focusing in precise measurement neglects the complicated nature human behaviour and neglects phenomena that cannot be quantified. Constructivist researchers stress the value of recognising human experience, finding rich and detailed data and being open to unexpected discoveries; its critics point out that constructivist research has limited replicability and its results cannot be generalised (Langdrige & Hagger-Johnson, 2009).

However, paradigms do not need be mutually exclusive. For example, early psychologists were extensively criticised under the positivist notion that the only worthy focus of study are observable phenomena. Still, psychological traits have been observed and measured in a positivist way through psychometric tests for many decades. Similarly, while Jean Piaget's own developmental theory had its genesis in the observation of a handful of children, a constructivist method that many disapproved of, his work has proved invaluable in the fields of psychology and education. Whereas some researchers believe it is necessary to pick an epistemological stance and adhere to methods consistent to it, others conduct their work under the idea that even if different paradigms seem mutually exclusive, the knowledge gained from is not. Data and methods that originated from different paradigms can in fact complement the other (Gage, 1989). Numerical data can help frame findings from the subjective reality of a sample, and information of how the sample perceives a phenomenon can be illustrative to explain the findings of a positivist study.

Mixed method studies, studies that use a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, brought some harmony to the so called "paradigm wars". They acknowledge that both methods have their strengths and limitations and that they can be used to better inform each other (Denzin, 2008). Almaki's (2016) bibliographical analysis of challenges and

benefits of mixed method studies concluded that the biggest downsides of mixed method studies are that they require a larger investment of time and resources, and are still often met with scepticism by positivist and constructivist purists. However, if this investment is feasible, mixed method studies can widen the scope of educational research (Almaki, 2016). In the end, the adopted approach should depend on the research question and the methods best suited to answer it, moving away from using research methods out of principle to using them according to their usefulness (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

Greene, et al. (1989) suggested that mixed research methods serve five main purposes:

- a) **Triangulation:** Corroborating results of one method by using a different method to analyse the same phenomenon.
- b) **Complementarity:** Using different methods to explore different aspects of the studied phenomenon.
- c) **Initiation:** Applying different methods to discover paradoxes and re-frame the phenomenon.
- d) **Development:** Using discoveries from one method to help inform the other method.
- e) **Expansion:** Expanding the scope of the study by using different methods to investigate different components of the phenomenon.

Apart from these methodological purposes, mixed research methods also help provide a wider context to purely quantitative studies and increase the generalizability of qualitative methods. Combining methods and techniques can also be used to increase the researchers' understanding of the topic, allowing for clearer analysis and sounder conclusions (Collins et al., 2006).

This study used a mixed method design mainly for triangulation, complementarity, and development purposes. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to gather

information on students' perceptions of the role of bullying bystanders, their level of self-efficacy, and the moral disengagement dynamics they used. While the scales gathered numerical data from self-reports of self-efficacy and moral disengagement levels, the scenarios explored students' individual ideas on these topics, and the focus groups probed group norms and understandings on bullying and bystander behaviour. The use of different methods to study the phenomenon from different angles provided complementarity. Each of these methods also provided information that aided the interpretation of data gathered through the other methods, which allowed for development. Still, being that there is significant overlap between the nature of the information gained from focus groups, scales and scenarios, mixed methods also provided triangulation: information from one method was consistent with findings from the other methods.

This study strives to understand how students in a Mexican secondary school setting view their role in bullying as bystanders, analysing students' subjective perceptions on this topic. However, it also seeks to identify variables (moral disengagement, self-efficacy and gender), describe them, and measure their relationship with each other. Thus, as mentioned before, it was decided that a mixed method approach was the most appropriate course of action. Questions such as "What are student's perceptions on their role as bystanders?", "Do bystanders feel moral responsibility when witnessing bullying incidents?", "Do bystanders think they have the power to alleviate bullying situations?" explore complex social attitudes. Therefore, to answer these questions it was necessary to delve into the social processes that lead to personal ideas and group consensus of what they should do as bystanders, if they have any responsibility towards their victimised peers, and whether they can change this situation. A qualitative method with social emphasis, such as the focus group, was considered suitable to examine these attitudes.

However, questions like “Does addressing moral disengagement dynamics help students morally reengage?”, “Does introducing a variety of prosocial bystander roles increase self-efficacy to help in bullying situations?”, “Can bystander based programmes aimed to reduce moral disengagement and increase self-efficacy change student’s perceptions on their role as bystanders?” and “Are there differences in bullying perceptions depending on gender or grade?”, seek to test for differences between gender categories and change in attitudes. While qualitative methods can provide some insight into gender specific attitudes and changes in personal views or group dynamics, measuring is useful to compare groups. Hence, it was considered necessary to design a quantitative instrument, a questionnaire, to gauge respondents’ attitudes, compare male and female responses, and determine whether a significant change in their perceptions occurred over time.

The bullying scenarios aimed to gauge differences in students’ self-efficacy and moral disengagement regarding different kinds of bullying through a combination of qualitative and quantitative data. While the questions “How do you think (the bystander) feels? Why?” and “Do you think (the bystander) can do something to help? What?” are open-ended, allowing students to express their views. These observations were thematically coded and the recurrence of themes in relation to each bullying type was quantified. Overall, the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods complemented each other and provided a broader landscape of the complex social attitudes this study endeavoured to research.

Considering that literature on bullying bystanders, moral disengagement and self-efficacy is scant in Mexico but substantial in other countries, this study could be considered both descriptive and exploratory. Descriptive studies use data to understand a certain population, while exploratory studies observe and interview social actors to develop explanations to make sense of a social phenomenon (Schutt, 2011). Hence, this study uses the questionnaire scales to describe the population in terms of the levels of moral

disengagement and self-efficacy (two concepts that research has found to be closely related to bystander behaviour). On the other hand, the focus groups and scenarios seek to comprehend the Mexican context, and the discourse and norms that frame the population's thoughts and behaviour on the power they hold over bullying and the responsibility they have towards their victimised peers.

Public attention to the bullying phenomenon is relatively recent in Mexico and the power of the bystander is rarely discussed. Therefore, it was considered possible that study participants had never reflected on their role as bullying bystanders, which could have resulted in confusion when answering the questionnaire. To address this potential obstacle, a workshop session was designed to expose students to the role of the bystander in bullying situations. This session was delivered to students before they worked on the questionnaire and before focus groups were conducted. Five additional workshop sessions were designed to raise awareness regarding bullying dynamics and issues regarding self-efficacy and moral disengagement in the context of bullying. The aim of these sessions was to evaluate if study participants were receptive to material that addressed the influence that bystanders have over bullying situations and discussed moral disengagement dynamics often used in this context. Receptiveness to the material was evaluated by drawing a comparison between the pre-workshop and post-workshop responses. Further information on the workshop is provided in the following section of this chapter.

Since three of the research questions focus on the effects of exposure to the workshop, it was necessary to draw a comparison between a sample that was exposed to the workshop and a sample that was not. The option of having a control group was ruled out taking in consideration three factors. First, finding two schools with similar student body characteristics within a similar demographic context would have been problematic, and having a control group within the same school would have very high risk of group

contamination since students have Physical Education, recess and other activities together. Second, there would be ethical implications to depriving one group from the intervention, and taking the time to provide the workshop to the control group after the main study was not possible due to time constraints within the time allocated for field work in Mexico. Third, the type of before-after data this study hopes to examine would provide enough information on the effects of exposing students to moral disengagement and self-efficacy concepts. For this reason, it was decided that the comparison would be drawn between the same cohort before and a few months after the implementation of the workshop. Figure 1.1 shows the study structure and the timeline it followed.

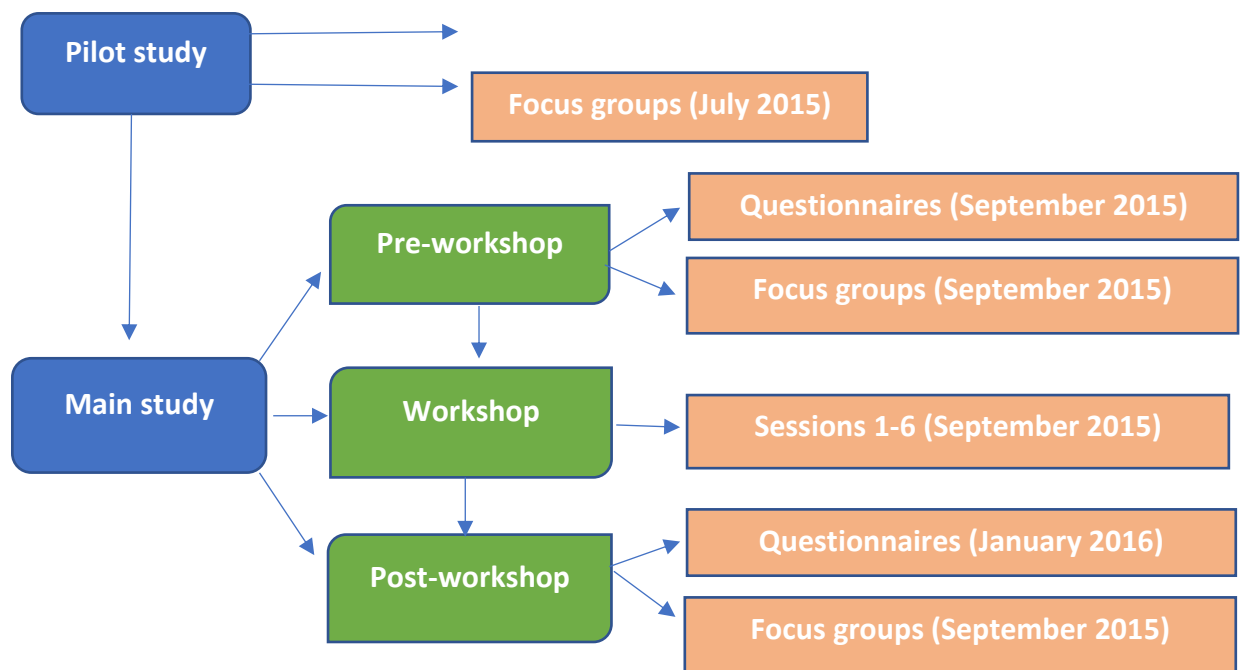


Figure 1.1 Study structure and timetable.

Attrition was kept to a minimum as the participants worked on questionnaires in their classrooms, and were sent to focus groups by their head teachers. Data collection was carried out at the beginning of the school year and four months after that, so only three participants were lost of attrition. This was considered a manageable loss that did not drastically affect results.

2.4 Instruments and measures

2.4.1 Focus groups

Two methods that are often used together for triangulation and complementarity, the two methods that will be used for this study's purpose, are focus groups and questionnaires. Focus groups are interactive collective discussions that focus on group processes, understandings and norms (Bloor, Frankland, Thomas & Robson, 2001). The emphasis of focus groups is not to reach an agreement, but to delve into group culture through the discourse, jokes, taboos and anecdotes that come up in conversation and debate. Focus groups need structure, and it is the facilitators' responsibility to keep them on topic (Kitzinger, 2005).

Focus groups were originally designed and initially used predominantly for marketing, but their usefulness to delve into social issues has since been recognized. Focus groups are now considered to be an appropriate research method in the social sciences; interactions that are seen in focus groups are often a reflection of the social background where participants come from (Kitzinger, 1994).

As any method, focus groups have strengths and weaknesses, as listed in the following table.

Table 1.1 Advantages and disadvantages of focus groups

Advantages	Disadvantages
Useful to synthesize collective perspectives	Limited value to gauge personal opinion
Allow for larger number of participants	Group interaction can be conflictive
Suitable to hear from marginalized groups	Poor moderation can lead to uneven participation

Allow to work with diverse groups	Potential for confidentiality issues
Rich group data	Data is difficult to interpret

Sources: Bloor et al. (2001), Halcomb (2007), Cousin (2009) and Gibbs (2012).

Letendre and Ranking Williams (2014) point out that focus groups are helpful when researching adolescent populations, given the importance that peer groups have for individuals during this developmental stage. As they point out, having a space for group expression is a good way to validate adolescents' opinions and to encourage them to share their experiences. In one of the focus groups discussed in their paper, Letendre and Ranking Williams describe how a focus group consisting of Mexican-American teenagers allowed participants to candidly share their views on gender, dating and sexual violence. This topic would have been much more challenging to explore through individual interviews.

Focus groups have also been successfully used in bullying research. In their 2011 adaptation of Ross and Horner's BP-PBS programme on secondary school students, Nese et al. used focus groups to explore student views on bullying and the existing anti-bullying protocols in their schools. This information, along with a survey on school climate, was used to gain insight on the bullying situation in the schools, to adapt the material to school culture and to design staff training (Nese et al., 2014). Focus groups have also been used to study group consensus on certain issues. In their study on what primary and secondary school students understand by bullying, Donoghue et al. (2015) conducted six focus groups with students from grade three to eight. This allowed the researchers to hear from 54 students, and to identify differences between age groups.

In this study, focus groups were used to explore group attitudes and group norms regarding the role, responsibility and power of bullying bystanders. This method was appropriate given its potential to give a voice to the experience of neglected populations;

bullying research tends to showcase the experience of victims and in occasions bullies, but it rarely concentrates on bystanders. Focus groups allowed students to discuss the issue beyond the socially expected disapproval of bullying, and to share their thoughts more openly. Additionally, being that the focus groups covered similar topics that the ones probed through the questionnaires, they allowed for complementarity and triangulation between individual quantitative and qualitative methods.

Focus groups using pre-existing groups bring additional confidentiality concerns, since facilitators have little control over the information that participants disclose after the session. However, they also benefit from previous rapport between participants, making people feel safer and increasing their willingness to participate (Bloor et al., 2001). In the case of the present study, it was believed that participants' previous relationship and shared experiences would encourage them to speak more candidly about bullying, which can be a sensitive topic. Topics probed in the pre-workshop focus groups revolved around their attitudes towards bullying, their thoughts on their role as bystanders, how morally engaged or disengaged they remain from bullying situations and how efficacious they feel at helping victims. These topics were revisited in the post-workshop focus groups, and questions regarding any perceived changes after the workshop were added.

Table 1.2 shows the questions asked in the pre-workshop focus groups and table 1.3 shows the questions asked in the post-workshop focus groups in relation to the research question they aim to answer.

Table 1.2 Pre-workshop focus group questions

Focus group question	Research question
Has everyone been a bullying bystander?	Opening question to clear potential doubts about what a bullying bystander is.

How do you feel when you see bullying happening?	Are bystanders morally responsive to witnessed bullying incidents (moral engagement)?
What do you think you should do when you see bullying happening?	What are students' perceptions of their role as bullying bystanders?
What do you think makes the difference between choosing to do this or choosing not to?	What are students' perceptions of their role as bullying bystanders?
Do you think it is your place as bystanders to do help bullied students?	What are students' perceptions of their role as bullying bystanders?
Do you think you can make a difference in bullying situations as a bystander?	1) Do bystanders think they have the power to alleviate bullying situations (self-efficacy)?

Table 1.3 Post-workshop focus group questions

Focus group questions	Research questions
How do you feel when you see bullying happening?	Does addressing moral disengagement dynamics help students morally re-engage?
What can you do when you see bullying happening?	Does introducing a variety of prosocial bystander roles increase self-efficacy to help in bullying situations?
Do you think it is your place as bystanders to do help bullied students?	What are students' perceptions of their role as bullying bystanders?
Do you think you can make a difference in bullying situations as a bystander?	Does introducing a variety of prosocial bystander roles increase self-efficacy to help in bullying situations?

Have you seen any difference in your classmates' attitude towards bullying since the last time I saw you?	Are students receptive to material aimed to encourage them to become prosocial bystanders?
Has the way you personally see bullying changed since the last time I saw you?	Are students receptive to material aimed to encourage them to become prosocial bystanders?

2.4.2 Questionnaires

Focus groups are often used in mixed method studies alongside another method which is given equal relevance, such as questionnaires (Morgan, 1997). While focus groups provide information on group dynamics, questionnaires are useful to gauge individual opinions. Data obtained through questionnaires can also be used to interpret data obtained through focus groups, and vice versa (Kitzinger, 1994). Even though it cannot be claimed that the two methods fully validate each other since the types of information they gather are too different to be compared directly, data that appears consistently in both methods can be triangulated (Bloor et al., 2001).

On their own accord, questionnaires can be used to explore a population, describe it, ask for feedback, and enquire on intervention outcomes and measure baseline-outcome data (Tymms, 2012). They are popular because they are convenient, time-efficient and cost-effective. However, questionnaires are often misused because of their apparent simplicity, which can lead to sloppy designs if developers see it a task that can be done easily and quickly (Gillham, 2000). Preparation is essential to make sure all important aspects of the construct that is to be measured are included, to contemplate clear and simple ways to turn them into items, to consider use of wording that could affect results and to eliminate unnecessary items that can make answering the questionnaire a cumbersome or confusing

task (Tymms, 2012). Pre-piloting with an expert population and piloting with a similar population to the one that will be studied is very important in this process (Gillham, 2000).

Additional strengths and weaknesses of focus groups are listed in the following table:

Table 1.4 Advantages and disadvantages of questionnaires

Advantages	Disadvantages
Simple and straightforward	Poor engagement is not detected
Versatile and adaptable	Potential non-response
Helpful in maintaining anonymity	Potential poor measurement (Caused by mis-design)
Reduce interviewer bias	Most people express themselves better orally than in writing
Reduce pressure for immediate response	Misunderstandings cannot be corrected

Sources: Gillham (2001), Schutt (2011) and Robson & McCartan (2016).

Questionnaires have been used extensively in bullying research gain insight on a variety of topics. For instance, the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire (1996) developed by Olweus to measure bullying levels, has been used by other researchers to assess students' level of victimisation and their level of participation in bullying other students. In her 1998 study, Craig used the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire along with social anxiety and depression scales to research the prevalence of these mental disorders in bullies and victims. Similarly, Wang et al., (2009) used the Olweus Questionnaire to find links between bullying and being bullied, parental support, friendships and certain demographic characteristics.

Questionnaires have also been used to gather information on subjective understandings on bullying. Nation et al. (2008) used questionnaires to survey 4386 secondary school students on their experiences of bullying and the empowerment they felt from their relationships with peers, teachers and families. Their findings suggested that bullies tend to feel less empowerment, and support, from their teachers than non-bullies. Questionnaires have also been useful for exploratory studies. In their 2012 paper on what makes bullying stop, Frisen et al. (2012) used a confidential online questionnaire to discover what former bullying victims perceived helped them in their experiences with bullying.

Bystander behaviour has also been studied through questionnaires. The Bullying Participant Role Questionnaire (Salmivalli, 1996) has been used by several researchers to research factors related to the role students play within bullying situations. Tani et al. (2013) combined Participant Role Questionnaire and the Big Five Personality Questionnaire to examine possible associations between the roles that students play in bullying situations and their personalities. Comparably, Evans and Smokowski (2015) applied the Participant Role Questionnaire on 5752 teenagers along with questionnaires on student perception on peer, teacher and parent support, optimism, self-esteem and school satisfaction to find student characteristics that are linked to prosocial bystander behaviour.

Other researchers have developed questionnaires specifically for their study or adapted existing questionnaires to suit their needs. In their study on predictors of defending behaviour Barchia and Bussey (2011) adapted the Participant Role Questionnaire to measure defending behaviour, used questionnaires to measure students' defending behaviour and Bryant's Empathy Index (1982), and designed questionnaires to measure moral disengagement, self-efficacy and collective efficacy. Capadoccia et al. (2012) carried out a similar study, and presented students with questionnaires on gender specific empathy and

responsiveness, self-efficacy, pro-victim and pro-bully attitudes; these questionnaires were a combination of previously existing tools, adapted questionnaires and new designs.

As mentioned before, questionnaires can be used to measure baseline-outcome data in interventions. This is particularly valuable when trying to determine causality or when having a control group is not possible or ethically questionable (Vignoles, 2012). For this reason, they are also a common tool to evaluate anti-bullying intervention outcomes. In the present study, the questionnaire was presented to participants before and after exposure to the workshop to gauge changes in students' moral disengagement and self-efficacy levels and their perceptions regarding being a bullying bystander.

The questionnaire used was specifically designed for this study. To start informing the study on the type of information that would be relevant for the questionnaire, five interviews with University of York students were held. Three of these students were enrolled in the PhD of Education programme, one in the PhD in Chemistry programme and one in the PhD in Economics programme. Three of the students interviewed were female and two were male, all of them were between 30 and 40 years of age. All interviewees were Mexican, had teaching experience at either secondary or higher-level education, and were recruited through convenience sampling. Topics examined in these conversations included motivations of students who defend, motivations of students who join the bully, motivations of students who remain passive and what makes the difference between choosing between the three bystander behaviours. Common themes that came up in the teacher conversations involved the capacity to morally disengage, gender differences, personality traits, social position within the group, safety concerns, fear of being socially penalized, levels of self-efficacy, sense of justice, sense of community and Mexican violence dynamics. Teachers perceived students who are more outgoing, have a stronger sense of community, a higher

sense of justice and a position of social respect within the group are more likely to defend bullied peers. Girls were also perceived to be more likely to help bullied students than boys. Taking these topics into consideration, a focus group was held at the Mexican secondary school where the research was conducted. The participants were five teachers (two male and three female) and the school counsellor (female). These members of staff volunteered to partake in the focus group, being made aware of this activity by the headmistress. All participants were between 30 and 50 years of age and work with the entire middle school population. Topics probed were usual bystander behaviour they witness, perceptions on pupils who defend, pupils who encourage the bully and pupils who remain passive and factors they believe to be involved in pupil decision on how to behave. Themes that came up regarding their views on their school's bystander behaviour were again, sense of justice, moral disengagement, gender differences, fear of being socially penalized, and social position within the group. Teachers perceive that high social position seems to shift from being gained through academic achievement in primary school to be gained by social competency and at the secondary level. They also noted that new students are most likely to be targeted as bullying victims.

With these data and information gathered through the literature review process, a four-section questionnaire was designed. Demographic information required from participants was limited to gender of the student, since it was a demographic variable relevant for the study and group, to aid organisation.

The first section of the questionnaire, the observed bystander behaviour scale, was centred in students' experience with bystander behaviour and how often they witness their peers reinforcing bullies, defending victims or remaining passive. A new scale was designed since scales that measure bullying levels in schools and student bystander behaviour were found,

but not scales to measure perceived bystander behaviour of peers. It is important to state that this scale did not endeavour to measure student behaviour; it was included to gain information on students' perceptions on what their peers typically do when someone is being bullied and to encourage reflection of their experiences as bystanders before answering the following sections of the questionnaire. In this scale, common reinforcing, passive, and defending bystander behaviours were presented to students, and they were then required to choose one from five options on a Likert scale ("Always", "Often", "Sometimes", "Rarely", and "Never"), depending on how frequently they saw peers engage in each behaviour. A comparison between pre-workshop and post-workshop responses to this scale was used to explore whether students perceived behavioural changes in their peers after the workshop. Hence, it contributed to answer the "Are students receptive to material aimed to encourage them to become prosocial bystanders?" research question. Table 1.5 shows observed bystander scale items and the type of bystander behaviour about which they provided information.

Table 1.5 Observed bystander behaviour items and bystander behaviour types

Item	Bystander behaviour
When bullying is happening, someone laughs at it.	Bully reinforcing behaviour.
When bullying is happening, someone pretends they do not see it.	Passive behaviour.
When bullying is happening, someone tries to stop the bully.	Victim defending behaviour.
When bullying is happening, someone joins the bully.	Bully reinforcing behaviour.

When bullying is happening, someone sees it, but tries to stay out of it.	Passive behaviour.
When bullying is happening, someone tries to make the victim feel better.	Victim defending behaviour.

The second section of the questionnaire consisted of the self-efficacy and moral disengagement scales. These scales contained a series of statements students were asked to react to, deciding how much they agreed with them. Answers were presented in a Likert scale as “Completely agree”, “Somewhat agree”, “Neither agree nor disagree”, “Somewhat disagree”, “Completely disagree”. These scales were designed specifically to be used in the present study.

The self-efficacy scale focused on five concepts related to the construct: overt self-efficacy, task mastery, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and interest in task (Bandura 1982, Bandura 1997). The first concept (Overt self-efficacy) refers to the overt expression of whether students believe they can help. The next three concepts (Task mastery, Vicarious experience and Verbal persuasion) were described by Bandura as the foundation of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). The last concept (Interest in task) inquired whether students were interested in trying the task. This concept is closely related to self-efficacy as well, since individuals lose interest in tasks in which they consider they will not be efficacious (Bandura, 1997). Self-efficacy scale items contributed to answering the “Do bystanders think they have the power to alleviate bullying situations (self-efficacy)?” and “Does introducing a variety of prosocial bystander roles increase self-efficacy to help in bullying situations?” research questions. Table 1.6 shows self-efficacy scale items and the self-efficacy concepts they endeavoured to measure.

Table 1.6 Self-efficacy scale items and self-efficacy concepts

Item	Concept
I believe I'm capable of helping someone who's being bullied.	Overt self- efficacy.
I have helped students who were bullied before.	Task mastery.
If I see how other people help in bullying situations, I can help too.	Vicarious experience.
If someone tells me what I can do when someone is being bullied, I can help.	Verbal persuasion.
I want to help bullied students more.	Interest in task.

The moral disengagement scale was based on six types of moral disengagement described by Bandura: Responsibility displacement, Dehumanization, Euphemistic labelling, Moral justification, Disregarding consequences, and Victim blaming (Bandura 2002, Bandura 2016). These moral disengagement mechanisms were written in common statements used to disengage from bullying situations. Moral disengagement scale items contributed to answering the “Are bystanders morally responsive to witnessed bullying incidents (moral engagement)?” and “Does addressing moral disengagement dynamics help students morally re-engage?” research questions. Table 1.7 shows moral disengagement scale items and the moral disengagement dynamics they endeavoured to measure.

Table 1.7 Moral disengagement scale items and moral disengagement dynamics

Item	Moral disengagement dynamic
I think someone should help bullied people, but not me.	Responsibility diffusion.
I see “bullying” as playing around or joking.	Euphemistic labelling.
I think that the victim probably deserved it.	Dehumanization.
I think bullying helps people become stronger.	Moral justification.
I really think it’s no big deal.	Disregarding consequences.
I think bullying happens because some people don’t know how to defend themselves.	Victim blaming.

It is worth noting that both Likert scale sections provided participants with five answer choices. Though it might be argued that Likert scales that present an even number of options force participants to make a choice, remaining passive to the situations and statements presented is important information within this study. It was considered that refraining from accepting or rejecting statements was an option that participants should have.

The last section of the questionnaire presented four scenarios which depicted bystanders witnessing different types of bullying, and asked participants questions related to the situation depicted. Scenarios are often used by researchers to explore students’ attitudes towards bullying without confronting them with real bullying incidents. For instance, Sticca and Perren (2013) used scenarios to have students rate the severity of various traditional and

cyberbullying situations. Similarly, Bauman and Del Rio (2006) used scenarios of different types of bullying to have teachers rate them for severity, the level of empathy they felt towards victims, and the level of willingness they would have to intervene. Scenarios have also been used to study students' thoughts on bystander behaviour. Gini et al. (2008) used scenarios in which bystanders acted in different ways when witnessing bullying situations to study participants' views on reinforcers, defenders and passive bystanders. Scenarios provide a safe way for students to react to bullying scenarios and openly share the viewpoints on the situation the scenario portrayed.

In the bullying scenarios used for this study, physical, verbal, social and cyberbullying situations were presented. The gender of the bullies was kept neutral and victim/bystander gender varied from male/male, to male/female, female/female and female/male; this was done to reduce gender bias in responses. Participants were asked to reflect on how they believed bystanders feel about what they are witnessing and on what they could do to help. Answers to the scenarios provided information on students' perceptions on bullying bystanders' role, the moral disengagement mechanisms they use when they think of bullying, and student self-efficacy to help bullied peers. Table 1.8 shows scenario questions in relation to the research question that they endeavour to answer.

Table 1.8 Scenario questions/ research questions

Scenario question	Research question
How do you think Jorge feels about Carlos being treated like that?	Are bystanders morally responsive to witnessed bullying incidents (moral engagement)?
Why do you think he feels this way?	What are students' perceptions of their role as bullying bystanders?

Do you think Jorge can help Carlos?	Do bystanders think they have the power to alleviate bullying situations (self-efficacy)?
If your answer is YES, How? If your answer is NO, Why?	What are students' perceptions of their role as bullying bystanders?

To ensure a fresh reaction to bullying scenarios and to avoid carryover effects, such as students remembering items they had been exposed to four months before, all bullying scenarios were changed for the second application of the questionnaire. Scenarios were kept within the same type of bullying, the same gender of victim and bystander and roughly the same severity of incidents. This was not considered necessary for the scale section of the questionnaire, since remembering their exact responses to Likert scale items is less likely than remembering their reaction to a hypothetical social scenario.

In all sections, differences between gender categories were examined to answer the “Are there gender differences in perceptions on bullying and bystander behaviour?” research question. Differences between the pre-workshop and post-workshop responses were examined to contribute to answer the “Does addressing moral disengagement dynamics help students morally re-engage?”, “Does introducing a variety of prosocial bystander roles increase self-efficacy to help in bullying situations?” and “Are students receptive to material aimed to encourage them to become prosocial bystanders?” research questions.

English and Spanish versions of the questionnaire can be found in the appendixes section.

2.4.3 Validity and reliability

To be confident that a measurement is effective and that the potential of error is kept to a minimum it is essential to test its validity and reliability. Validity refers to whether an

instrument is measuring what it is supposed to measure and reliability speaks of the instrument consistently getting similar results when administered in similar conditions (Field, 2013). The following section describes how validity and reliability was assessed in the self-efficacy and moral disengagement scales.

To ensure content validity, the questionnaire was developed around Bandura's self-efficacy (1997) and moral disengagement (1982) theories. Regarding self-efficacy, items were designed to reflect the description of the concepts of overt self-efficacy, vicarious experience, mastery of similar tasks, verbal persuasion and interest in task. Regarding moral disengagement, items were designed to reflect responsibility diffusion, victim blaming, dehumanization, disregard of injurious consequences, attribution of positive outcomes, and euphemistic labelling. All these concepts were considered to represent the phenomenon accurately.

Construct validity was measured by performing factor analysis tests on both the self-efficacy and the moral disengagement scales. A factor analysis is a test that seeks patterns of correlations in scores; a distinct pattern can be assumed to be caused by a specific influence, which we call a factor. In psychometrics, these factors are relevant for construct validity since patterns speak of items measuring the same concept, or component (Dancey & Reidy, 2007). In grouping questionnaire items in factors, factor analysis can be helpful in allowing us to get an idea of what the factors represented in our instrument are, and therefore, what the instrument is measuring. It can also be used for data reduction, sorting a large group of items aimed to measure a construct into different sub-constructs (Field, 2013). Results of the factor analyses performed on this study's scales are shown in tables 1.9 and 1.10.

Table 1.9 Self-efficacy scale factor analysis

Items	Component 1 *
Overt self-efficacy	.684
Task mastery	.549
Vicarious experience	.750
Verbal persuasion	.711
Wish to act	.840

*One component extracted.

Table 1.10 Moral disengagement scale factor analysis

Items	Component 1*
Responsibility diffusion	.627
Euphemistic labelling	.724
Dehumanization	.661
Moral justification	.715
Disregarding consequences	.783
Victim blaming	.540

*One component extracted.

Table 1.9 shows that the self-efficacy factor analysis yielded a single component, which all items contribute to measure. The weakest item of the scale was the item that refers to task

mastery, or whether students had engaged in a similar task before. This might be because bystander involvement was a newly introduced task for students, and they might not have had the opportunity to try their hands at the task yet. However, being an important part of the construct, it was decided to keep the item in the scale.

Table 1.10 shows that the moral disengagement factor analysis also yielded a single component to which all items contribute to measure. In this scale, the weakest item was victim blaming. This could be explained by different dynamics taking place when it comes to victim blaming, since it has specific cultural connotations in the Mexican context. Again, it was decided that the item represented a relevant part of the phenomenon, so it was decided to leave it as a part of the final instrument.

Scale internal reliability was tested through Cronbach's alpha. Cronbach's alpha, the most common measure of scale reliability, splits a set of scores into different sets and compares them. If a scale is reliable, those scores should highly correlate to each other (Field, 2013). The self-efficacy scale showed an alpha of .734, which indicates a sufficient correlation between split sets of scores, and acceptable internal reliability. Similarly, the moral disengagement scale has an alpha of .747, also at an acceptable reliability level.

2.5 The workshop

This study's design included the creation of a workshop that was delivered to the whole student population. There were two purposes to incorporate the workshop into the research design. One, to expose students to the concept of bystander intervention, which has not been addressed in Mexican anti-bullying curriculum. This exposure enabled students to have a conversation on the power and potential responsibility that bystanders hold over bullying situations, which would have been less fertile if students had not had the opportunity to reflect on this topic. The second purpose was to gauge how receptive students were to

material on the role bystanders play in bullying, common moral disengagement dynamics used to avoid accountability, and different prosocial bystander intervention options they have. Receptivity to this kind of material can be used to inform whether it can be a useful addition to anti-bullying programmes directed to Mexican populations.

The workshop had four main aims. First, to inform students on what bullying is, the types of bullying that exist and how peer harassment dynamics work. Second, to make students aware of the role bullies, victims and especially bystanders play in the problem and to make students aware of the power bystanders hold over bullying situations. Third, to reveal moral disengagement dynamics commonly used when dealing with bullying, the purpose that they serve to people who use them and the threat they pose to students who suffer bullying. Finally, to stress the importance of self-efficacy in dealing with this issue and introduce different options of prosocial behaviour that students can choose from when witnessing physical, verbal, social and cyberbullying respectively.

It is important to highlight that the workshop was not intended to be an anti-bullying programme: as mentioned in the review of literature on anti-bullying interventions, successful interventions need clear anti-bullying rules with set consequences, staff training and parental participation. However, this workshop could be of value as a part of a wider intervention, used to raise awareness and encourage bystander action.

Part of the workshop material was based on a workshop previously implemented by the researcher at LEAP Academy, a secondary and high school in Camden, New Jersey in 2010/2011. The material used at the LEAP Academy intervention was developed through bibliographic research and brainstorming sessions with students. For this study, this material was adapted to the current population, taking into consideration cultural information gained during the literature review, the staff interviews, and data from the pilot second stage. New

material was also designed, specifically material devoted to self-efficacy and moral disengagement dynamics, which was not addressed in the Camden workshops.

The final version of the workshop consisted of six sessions, each an hour long. All sessions had power point presentations covering the material and students were asked to bring a notebook for notes and activities.

The breakdown of the sessions was the following:

Session 1. Introduction to bullying

Aim: Reaching a general understanding on what bullying is, the different roles that students play in school violence situations and the different types of bullying that exist. Completing of the questionnaires.

The session opened with a discussion of what students understand by bullying and writing down key words on the board to construct a definition of bullying accepted by the group. Intentionality, repetition and power imbalance were stressed. Protagonists of school bullying were elicited until bullies, victims and bystanders were acknowledged. Students were asked to think of different types of bullying, until physical, verbal, social, and cyberbullying were brought up. Characteristics of these types of bullying were explained. Students were asked to come up with examples of each of these types of bullying.

After this foreword, students are given the questionnaire to fill out.

Session 2. Bullies and victims

Aim: Raising awareness of risks to both victims and bullies, understanding bully motivations and how victims are not the ones who incite incidents. Introducing moral engagement by reflecting on the suffering victims experience and the possibility of repairing some damage done by bullying.

This session opened showing yearbook pictures of celebrities who have spoken out about being bullied when they were young and pictures of them now, stressing how they overcame the situation and lived fulfilling lives. After that, pictures were shown students who have lost their lives to bullying, either by physical violence, suicide or retaliatory violence, stressing all the things they could have accomplished if they had grown up to be adults. Emphasis on the positive influence these celebrities have had on bullying awareness and respect for the victims was essential during this opening activity to make sure that it did not revolve around shock value, but served to bring student attention towards the severity of the issue. This activity also presents a first glimpse at moral engagement, mainly through humanization of the victims, and efficacy to make a difference, portrayed by the celebrity spokespeople.

Next, students were explained how bullying is not brought upon by victims, but rather happens due to bullies' needs and victims are picked out because they are perceived as vulnerable, often because of lack of social support. Common consequences for victims, such as anxiety, depression, isolation, absenteeism and low academic achievement are discussed.

A brainstorm of motivations people might have to bully others was elicited from the group, making it clear that bullies are not bad people, but they have learned that this type of behaviour works because they have been allowed them to believe that. Short term and long term negative consequences for bullies were discussed, from immediate academic problems to difficulty keeping employment. The case of a bully who apologised to his victim fifteen years after leaving school is presented.

As a closing activity, students were asked to write an apology letter to someone they might have hurt and take it home with them, leaving the decision of whether to deliver it at their discretion.

Session 3. Bystanders

Aim: Understanding the role that bystanders play in bullying dynamics, negative consequences for bystanders and the power that bystanders hold over bully dominance and victim experience.

In this session, common negative consequences for bystanders (such as being afraid to speak up in class or feeling pressured to befriend certain people) were described, asking students to make a mental note of how many of these they have suffered. Students were also introduced to the different bystander behaviours everyone chooses from when witnessing a bullying situation.

The power of bystanders was examined stressing the messages they give to bullies, victims and other bystanders with their behaviour. This was portrayed through a role play of a verbal bullying incident. Five students were selected to play the bully, victim, bully reinforcing bystander, passive bystander and defending bystander roles. Students were asked which messages the different bystanders gave to bullies, victims and other bystanders with their behaviour.

As a closing activity, students were asked to think of a situation when they were bystanders and the messages they might have unintentionally sent. Students were asked if anyone was willing to share their reflection.

Session 4. Should I?

Aim: Understanding moral disengagement mechanisms, why people use them and how they can prevent us from identifying serious risk in our environment and from helping others.

This session opened with an image of different superheroes and a debate on whether they have an obligation to help the people they help. Then, a discussion on whether people

have a duty to help others if they can, took place. This activity introduces the concept of bystander responsibility.

Next, the bystander phenomenon in Nazi Germany was depicted, stressing how when citizens could have done something to stop the incipient harassment on their neighbours they remained passive because they did not think the issue concerned them, and when they started being alarmed the problem had gotten out of control. This trend was compared to violence in communities and in schools.

Five moral disengagement mechanisms were discussed (euphemistic labelling, victim blaming, attribution of positive outcome, responsibility diffusion and detachment from the issue) in age-appropriate terms and with bullying-related examples. The part they played in the bystander phenomenon in Nazi Germany was described, eliciting its equivalent in bullying situations from the students.

To close, students were shown a series of statements commonly made about bullying, asking students to identify the moral disengagement dynamic that is being used in each one of them.

Session 5. Can I?

Aim: Understanding the importance of self-efficacy in bullying intervention and how it can be increased through experiences. Introducing different prosocial bystander roles students can choose from and getting students to identify the one they are most comfortable with.

The session started asking students about an accomplishment they are very proud of, emphasizing the moments of doubt and how confidence was gained. The three ways to acquire confidence described by Bandura (vicarious experience, verbal persuasion and mastery of similar tasks) were described in age-appropriate terms and related to the experiences described by students.

Using the story of “The Emperor’s New Clothing”, the pluralistic ignorance phenomenon was described, explaining students that while they might feel they would be alone standing against bullying, most students object to it.

Students were told that it is easier, and safer, to intervene in teams rather than individually. Four prosocial bystander roles were introduced, describing the kind of students who would be better suited for them:

- a) Messenger (getting help from adults). Good role for proactive students who have a strong sense of right and wrong.
- b) Mediator (talking to the bullies to get them to stop). Good role for students who have good social skills, an amicable relationship with the bully and who trust their ability to remain calm during confrontation.
- c) Companion (making eye or verbal contact with the victim or keeping the victim company during the incident). Good role for reserved students who do not want to talk to teachers or bullies, but want to make it known to the victim that they are not alone.
- d) Comforter (talking to the victim after the incident and helping them put it into perspective). Good role for empathetic students who are talented at talking to people about their thoughts and emotions.

Students were asked to seek the kind of role they identify with the most and to express it by a show of hands. They were encouraged to look around the room to recognise their classmates’ talents and to discuss forming anti-bullying teams in their own time.

Session 6. Intervening

Aim: Rehearsing bystander roles within different bullying contexts. Cover singularities to be considered in different bullying types.

The session started asking students what they would do if they saw a fire in their neighbourhood. The steps for bystander intervention described by Latané and Darley (1970) were described through bullying-related examples: noticing the situation is happening, deciding whether the situation merits attention, deciding whether we are equipped to help and finally intervening.

Taboos for bullying intervention (such as the idea of being a “tattletale”) and how they exist to serve the aggressors is explained. Students were reminded of the four bystander roles introduced in session five. A brainstorming session was led in which students shared their ideas on how a messenger, mediator, companion and comforter could help when witnessing physical, verbal, social and cyberbullying, acknowledging difference in dynamics. Singularities of each bullying type were addressed, such as how everyone’s immediate safety is priority in physical bullying, the importance of not laughing during verbal bullying, the power of inclusion in social bullying and how to involve school staff and parents with evidence in cyberbullying. A role play was performed for each type of bullying, using six students to play the roles of bully, victim, messenger, mediator, companion and comforter. Students who partook were volunteers.

The session closed with quotes on bystander intervention by Albert Einstein, Desmond Tutu, Martin Luther King Jr., and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, asking students to pick their favourite and write it down and encouraging them to take care of each other.

2.6 Ethical considerations

Conducting social research requires special attention to ethical issues, since it involves working with people or with information about people (Punch, 2013). Researching human

participants warrants taking measures to ensure their safety, comfort and wellbeing. When designing social research, it is vital to ensure that data collection, data analysis, data presentation, and any treatments that might be part of the study respect participant rights and pursue their welfare (Robson & McCartan, 2016).

As many other organisations, the American Sociological Association published a Code of Ethics (1997) to ensure ethical treatment of human subjects in social research. These guidelines are generally agreed on and followed by most social science organizations. The core of this regulations consists of the following:

- a) Researchers must fully disclose their identity.
- b) The research's benefits should outweigh potential drawbacks.
- c) Subjects must not be harmed in any way.
- d) Participation must be voluntary.
- e) Subject's confidentiality must be kept, unless the subject has willingly waived it.

For the conduction of this study, the following ethical issues were taken into account:

- a) The researcher fully disclosed her identity and academic affiliation, explaining the nature and purpose of the study to ensure transparency and informed consent.
- b) Being that the research participants were minors, a consent form was handed out to all the students' families a week before the main study began. This document informed families of the nature of the study, how data would be handled, the description of their children's potential participation, of their right to allow their children to take part in the study or not, and of their children's right to refuse to participate or withdraw at any moment. Having the form signed by a parent or guardian was a requisite for students' participation in the workshop.

- c) Even if parents had agreed to have their children participate in the study, students were reminded that they had the right to opt-out at any time. Opting-out was chosen over opting-in because the intervention was handled as a school-wide activity: the data-collection sessions and the treatment were aimed at the entire student body and administered within regular class times.
- d) All focus groups were audio recorded, which was explained in the consent form. Students were also asked if they were comfortable with the recording device before starting each focus group and assured that their participation would be anonymous and kept confidential.
- e) The identities of questionnaire respondents and focus groups participants was kept anonymous, gathering information only on their school year and gender.
- f) Since the topic was regarded as sensitive and potentially distressing, both the school counsellor and head teachers agreed to be present for all data collection and intervention procedures and to handle distressed and/or disruptive students.
- g) The time allocated for the intervention (six hours per group) was distributed along class time volunteered by teachers who considered the workshop beneficial.
- h) Only the researcher had access to the raw data and any report produced refrained from identifying either the institution or individual participants.

Another ethical issue that required consideration was that the researcher was also in charge of implementing the workshops, which raised the subject of dual roles in research. The main problems related with dual roles in research are matters of truly informed consent, confidentiality and conflicts of interest (Panel on Research Ethics, 2010). While informed consent and confidentiality have already been addressed in this section, the issue of conflicts of interest needed further reflection.

As the Panel of Research Ethics (2010) noted, “*dual roles of researchers...may create conflicts, undue influences, power imbalances or coercion that could affect relationships with others and affect decision-making procedures...researchers should be fully cognizant of conflicts of interest that may arise from their dual or multiple roles, their rights and responsibilities, and how they can manage the conflict*”. Hence, it was essential to reflect on possible conflicts of interest that might arise from facilitating the workshop, collecting the data and analysing the data.

In the case of this study, the role of the researcher as workshop facilitator could have conceivably increased social desirability bias in students. Students were aware that helping bullied peers is generally perceived as socially desirable behaviour before the workshop, and it continued to be presented as such during workshop sessions. Additionally, students were expressly told the researcher/facilitator about their influence and responsibility in bullying situations. It was obvious that the researcher’s work aimed to sway student attitudes towards increased willingness to help. However, this is expected in anti-bullying programmes directed to bystanders. Bullying is not a topic that should be discussed in a neutral tone, but within collective understanding that harassment is a trespass and that help is valuable. All anti-bullying programmes operate under this premise, and some social desirability bias is anticipated in student answers.

Another ethical issue to be considered was that since this study sought to approach the entire student population regarding their role as bullying bystanders, all students attended the workshops together. This meant that while all students had been bullying bystanders, some of them were bound to have been bullies or victims at the time the workshop was implemented, or sometime in the past. However, this study’s emphasis on addressing the entirety of the group regarding their responsibility as bystanders meant that singling out bullies or victims would have been counterintuitive, and even anti-ethical. It was considered

that the presence of the counsellor in all workshop sessions would suffice to supervise the group and address any potential incidents arising between bullies and victims.

Having addressed the aforementioned issues, ethical approval was granted by the University of York Department of Education. Spanish and English versions of the Consent Form and the Approved Ethical Issues Audit Form can be found in the appendixes section.

2.7 Pilot study

Pilot studies are often trial runs of a research study, in which methods are tested to ensure their suitability and feasibility. Pilots are very helpful, since they can help researchers identify obstacles and give them the opportunity to make adaptations that will result on a more successful study. Researchers can use pilot studies to develop and test research instruments, evaluate if the research design is realistic, identify issues that are likely to arise in the main study, gather preliminary data and assure stakeholders of the dependability of the study, among other purposes (Van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2002).

In mixed method studies, a pilot can consist of qualitative data collection that will be subsequently used to design the quantitative instrument. This is especially useful if the focus of the study is a relatively unexplored topic (Tashakkori & Teddlie 1998). Since bystander behaviour has not been a focus of research in the Mexican school setting, it was considered necessary to gather preliminary data for the design of the instrument and the workshop.

Thus, this study was initially informed by five interviews with Mexican PhD students with teaching experience on their understanding of bullying, the role of bystanders and what they believe makes bystanders help. These students were selected through convenience sampling. Themes revolving around gender differences, personality traits, social status, fear of being socially penalized, levels of self-efficacy, sense of justice and sense of community

emerged from these interviews. These themes were used in the selection of topics probed at a focus group held at the Mexican secondary school where the main study was conducted.

The five participants (four teachers and school counsellor) shared their experiences on the usual bystander behaviour they witness, perceptions on pupils who defend, pupils who reinforce the bully and pupils who remain passive and factors they believe to be involved in pupil decision on how to behave. Themes that came up regarding the school's bullying culture, sense of justice, moral disengagement, gender differences, fear of being socially penalized, and social status. Information gained in the interviews and focus group was used to write scale items and the bullying scenarios.

The questionnaire was piloted in two stages. The first stage was piloted with ten Mexican University of York students with teaching background, selected through convenience sampling. After the students completed the Spanish version of the instrument, a focus group was held to discuss length, clarity, wording and proper translation of the instrument. Amendments were made as a result of feedback received during this focus group.

The second stage was piloted with twenty third-year students at the Mexican school where the study was held (12 male, 8 female, all age 15). These students were volunteers recruited by the secondary school where the research was conducted, after their families were informed. Respondents completed the questionnaire at the end of their last year in secondary school and hence, were not students anymore at the time the main study was carried out. This second stage of the pilot was carried out to ensure that the wording was clear and age appropriate for secondary school students. A group discussion was held after students had finished the questionnaire to discuss clarity and student understanding of the material. No further modifications were considered necessary after this stage.

2.8 Main study

2.8.1 Population

The main study took place at a school in the State of Mexico, Mexico. The school is located at what is called a semi-urban area. State of Mexico semi-urban areas were until recently in a rural zone, but with the growth of Mexico City and the con-urban area, they ended up in pockets in the middle of urbanised communities. City planning was improvised and even though rural resources have disappeared, urban services are scarce. This makes self-urbanised areas deprived, but involved with their closest city. This means that while the community faces important economic hardships and infrastructure challenges, they also face urban problems that are relatively new to it. For instance, the area where this study was conducted is seeing increasing traffic on its narrow two-way streets. Where one dirt-road used to be sufficient to connect all corners of the town to its centre, now lines of cars facing each other have to manoeuvre their way around each other in a lane that is not big enough for two vehicles. While post used to be collected directly at the local post office, the increase in population has made home deliveries necessary. However, this has proven difficult, since residents named their own streets, and there are numerous duplications or even triplications in street names.

Self-urbanised areas also tend to be highly community oriented, a token of their previous rural status. There is a strong sense of cooperation among its members. Also, a lack of trust in authorities, while common in most Mexican settings, is stronger in self-urbanised communities. A good example is that in response to the increase of crime in the area where this study was conducted, a large printed sign was placed on the city square kiosk, threatening that any robbers caught by the community will be lynched. Residents do not believe that the authorities will help their crime problem, or that they will respond to their own threat to perform a crime.

The school was selected through convenience sampling, the researcher had visited school premises before as a part of a drug prevention project. The previous relationship the researcher had with the school facilitated staff and student participation in the research project.

Secondary school level students were selected for this study since bullying levels are at their highest between the ages of 11 and 15 (Nation, et al., 2008). Rigby (2002) argues that this is because of the social pressures of moving into a new environment after primary school, rather than heightened aggression being a feature of this developmental stage. This might be particularly true for males, for whom asserting dominance becomes important when going from being the oldest students in primary school to being the youngest in secondary (Pellegrini & Bartini, 2000). Mexican students' struggle for power has also been found to begin in the transition to secondary school (Diaz Guerrero, 1994).

Secondary school in Mexico consists of three years of mandatory education. After six years of primary school, students start secondary school around the age of 12. When completing secondary school, students progress to high school which consists of three more years of education before university.

The school where the study was conducted is supervised by the Mexican Public Education Board (SEP), but funded and managed privately by a non-profit organisation. This gives the school the opportunity to have access to all SEP materials and certifications, but freedom to implement their own programmes as well, which made it possible to implement the workshop as a school-wide activity. While using disadvantage indicators to provide aid to vulnerable students is not done by the Mexican school system, the area where the school is located was indicator enough for the non-profit organisation to consider students disadvantaged. However, it is important to note that 55.3 million Mexicans (42% of the

population) live below the national poverty line (Buitre, 2017). Disadvantage is representative of Mexico.

There are only six groups in the school: two first year groups, two second year groups and two third year groups. These groups divide students among male and female, so students only take class with peers of their gender. However, pupils socialize with all other groups during recess and with the other class of their school year in Physical Education and Art classes.

The whole student population partook in the study except for one student whose family refused to give consent to her participation in the study. This added up to 186 subjects, 90 males and 96 females. The student ages ranged from 12 to 15 years.

2.8.2 Implementation of the workshop

Even though it was considered to give out all sessions to the entire student population simultaneously in the school auditorium, it was decided to teach the workshop to each group separately so students felt more comfortable and free to participate, and to have the group's individual views on bullying be observable. Thus, each one of the six sessions were imparted to the two first, two second and two third grade classes adding up to 36 sessions in total. All sessions were completed within a three-week period.

Sessions were one hour long and held at the school's biology laboratory, since said room has projection equipment installed and good visibility from all desks. Class periods were taken from subjects whose teachers considered the content beneficial to their curriculum, such as History and Civic Education. Home Economics teachers volunteered some class periods as well. Each group sat through two sessions every week, at the times of the appropriate periods.

The head teacher of each group and the school counsellor were present during all sessions. Students were encouraged to participate by raising their hands. A handful of students became disruptive, and were sent to the prefect's office by their head teachers. Students who wished to talk about individual bullying situations were asked to wait until the end of the session and go to the counsellor's office. Input was given on the counsellor's request for researcher views on specific cases.

2.8.3 Data collection process

a) Questionnaires

Students answered the questionnaire twice during the first session of the workshop and four months after the workshop was completed.

The first application was carried out during the second half of the first session, after talking to students about what bullying is, which types of bullying exist and the roles that students play in bullying. This is a common practice before the application of bullying instruments to make sure all respondents are thinking about bullying in the same terms (Olweus, 1996). Questionnaires were filled out at the biology laboratory. Students were instructed to fill it out in ink and raise their hands if they had any questions.

The second application happened four months later, as a part of the post-test data collection process. Students were reminded of basic bullying concepts before they started working on their questionnaires. This time, they filled out the questionnaires out in their homeroom, since the projection equipment was not needed. As before, students were asked to fill the questionnaires in ink and raise their hands if they needed help.

b) Focus groups

Twelve focus groups were held in total. The first six were carried out at the beginning of the workshops, before exposure to the workshop. One focus group with female students and

one focus group with male students was held for each year, so the final composition was as follows: one group of first year females, one group of first year males, one group of second year females, one group of second year males, one group of third year females and one group of first year males. The same year and gender composition was kept for the last six focus groups, which were carried out four months after workshop implementation.

Participant ages ranged from 12 to 15 years. Each focus group had between five and six participants. Students who partook in the focus groups were list numbers 4, 8, 12, 16, 20 and 24 of every group to ensure random allocation of participants. All focus groups were held at the teacher conference room during the Home Economy period. Teachers were asked to send the students at the beginning of the period and students were asked to return to their normal activities after the focus group was completed. Focus groups lasted from 15:21 to 20:06 minutes.

The first set of focus groups was held on the first week, after the students had their first session. This was decided so that all participants had equal definitions of bullying and bystander intervention. Also, it was helpful that all participants had been exposed to the bullying scenarios in the questionnaires and they had had to think about bystander influence and responsibility over bullying situations, topics that were central to the focus groups. This helped students create better formed opinions on their roles as bystanders, and it was possible to refer to them during focus groups.

The second focus groups were carried out four months after the workshop implementation. It was decided to keep the same participants to have a clearer look at changes in attitude, which would have been difficult talking to different students.

2.9 Data analysis

The following section presents the methods used for the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data.

2.9.1 Quantitative data analysis

Quantitative data analysis for this study centred on frequencies (of observed bystander behaviour, moral disengagement dynamics, reactions to scenarios) and on mean score comparisons among groups. These comparisons had the purpose of establishing whether there are significant differences between the self-efficacy and moral disengagement levels of male and female students, and among different grade students before and after taking part in the workshop.

Associations between gender, pre-workshop and post-workshop scores and perceived bystander behaviour were measured through Pearson's chi-square test. The chi-square test can be used to assess whether there is a relationship between two categorical variables (Field, 2013). Chi-square tests are often used in bullying research to search for associations between bullying levels and other variables. Semerci (2016) used chi-square tests to search for associations between cyberbullying, gender, grade and frequency of internet usage in 252 Turkish secondary schools. Lewis et al. (2015) also employed chi-squares to establish associations between bullying, race and the frequency of student use of different school health centre services in California. The Pearson chi-square test is a sound method to examine associations between nominal variables.

Moral disengagement and self-efficacy scale differences between male and female responses, and between pre-workshop and post-workshop scores, were tested through Student's t. A Student's t, or t-test, is widely used to assess whether there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of two conditions (Dancey & Reidy, 2007).

For instance, Murphy et al. (2017) used t-tests to compare male and female students in terms of the role that they adopt in bullying, finding that males are more likely to bully and females are more likely to defend. On the other hand, Stoddard, et al. (2015) t-tests found no to gender differences in students' attitudes towards violence. T-tests have been used to compare the mean scores of the same population at different times. Pabian and Vandebosch (2016) employed t-tests to compare social anxiety levels in students who engaged in traditional and cyberbullying across the span of six months, and found no significant change.

After assessing the scope and limitations of the t-test and with evidence of said test having been used in similar ways in different studies, it was concluded that it was a robust measure to make the comparisons required for this study. All t-tests were performed using IBM SPSS Statistics 24 and the statistical significance threshold was set at a $<.05$ margin of error.

2.9.2 Qualitative data analysis

Thematic analysis, is a method through which it is possible to find, analyse and present patterns within qualitative data. This technique has the capacity to provide rich and detailed information which reflects different aspects of a research topic. However, since it is a flexible and accessible method, thematic analysis can sometimes be used loosely, and it is important to follow rigorous guidelines to ensure that the method is used appropriately (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Being one of the core methods of qualitative analysis, there is a wealth of bullying studies that have used thematic analysis to examine data. A case in point is O'Donoghue and Guerin's (2017) study on opportunities and obstacles that school staff have found in tackling homophobic and transphobic bullying. Semi-structured interviews with secondary school staff were thematically analysed and it was found that some of the main themes that emerged

were staff discomfort in discussing sexuality with students, perceived student discomfort when talking about sexuality with teachers and parental attitudes towards homosexuality and transgenderism. Thematic analysis has also been used in the largely qualitative Mexican literature on bullying. Velazquez Reyes (2005) thematically analysed student stories on significant moments in their education to find the role that violence plays in Mexican students' daily lives.

In this study, thematic analysis was used to examine focus group transcripts and bullying scenario responses. Focus groups were audio recorded, transcribed and translated into English before analysis. Bullying scenario responses were also translated from Spanish to English and then filed by gender, school year and bullying type depicted. Thematic analysis was completed with the aid of the QSR NVivo 11 software.

2.10 Research design limitations

As with any research project, this study's design had limitations that need to be taken into consideration. To begin with, it is very difficult to discuss bullying in a neutral tone since the damage that it causes is often spoken about. Hence, the researcher must acknowledge a bias against bullying behaviour and, considering research evidence and personal experience, in favour of bystander intervention. This bias was managed by studying bullying as socially learned behaviour (Bandura, 1977). This relieves bullying behaviour and bullying perpetrators from demonization, understanding the issue as maladaptive behaviour.

Expressed views on bullying involve a degree of social desirability bias for participants too; students are aware that researchers and staff see bullying behaviour as undesirable and that they are not expected to bully or to reinforce bullies. This may become particularly problematic when the information of a study comes directly from students, their prompted discussions, and self-reports. This bias was addressed in the observed bystander

behaviour scale by not asking students directly about their own behaviour as bystanders, but of what they observe from their bystander peers instead. The self-efficacy and moral disengagement scales did not enquire about personal student behaviour either, but asked students how much they agreed with different statements, offering five degrees of agreement as response options. The bystander behaviour scenarios were designed so that both the victim and the bystander were hypothetical characters, and bystanders' feelings about the situation and their possible course of action was left open for respondents to speculate about. However, this study's design's emphasis on anonymity to encourage candid responses excluded the possibilities of behavioural self-reports, teacher nominations, and peer nominations.

Another limitation was that, while it would have been ideal to have had more time with students to provide guidance on practicing the different bystander roles, time spent working on this topic was limited. This was both because of restrictions in terms of time that could be allocated to fieldwork on the researcher's part and because school staff are cautious about time taken out of regular classroom activities. Realistically, the change that can be expected from six workshop hours is modest, and best described as exposure to ideas, not as an intervention.

As mentioned before, the present study did not use a control group because of the impossibility to find two schools with the same demographic characteristics and the ethical issues of not providing the workshops to the control group. A control group within the same school population was ruled out because of the risk of contamination between two groups of students that socialise daily. However, this study does compare the experiences of males and females, who also attend the same school. While classes in the sample school are kept within-gender and bully-victim and defender-victim dyads tend to remain within-gender as well (Sainio et al., 2011), all students share the building and socialise during recess. Between-gender contaminations risks must be acknowledged.

Finally, while this study took into consideration Mexican Psychology theories, the limited scope of students in the sample restricts the generalisation of results. Mexican students in other geographic locations and who have developed with different socioeconomic conditions. In particular, under-researched indigenous populations with different relationships with power and dominance, are not considered in this study.

The next chapter presents this study's results. Pre-workshop and post-workshop results from the questionnaire scales, the questionnaire scenarios and the focus groups are presented and analysed.

Chapter 3. Results

This chapter presents the analysis of how the data gathered through the questionnaires and focus groups contribute to answering the research questions that guide this study. These research questions are as follows:

- 1) What are students' perceptions of their role as bullying bystanders?
- 2) Are bystanders morally responsive to witnessed bullying incidents (moral engagement)?
- 3) Do bystanders think they have the power to alleviate bullying situations (self-efficacy)?
- 4) Are there gender differences in perceptions on bullying and bystander behaviour?
- 5) Does addressing moral disengagement dynamics help students morally re-engage?
- 6) Does introducing a variety of prosocial bystander roles increase self-efficacy in bullying situations?
- 7) Are students receptive to material aimed to encourage them to become prosocial bystanders?

The data analysis is divided in six sections. The first section consists of the scores from the observed bystander behaviour items of the questionnaire. Score percentages are broken down by item, and comparisons are drawn between genders and before and after workshop implementation. This comparison sheds light on gender differences in perceived peer bystander behaviour and on whether students have perceived changes in bystander behaviour in their peers since the workshop was implemented.

The second section presents responses from the self-efficacy and moral disengagement scales of the questionnaire. These scales endeavoured to measure students' levels of self-efficacy and moral disengagement when they witness bullying. Answer frequencies for each item were analysed for this section.

The third section shows correlations between self-efficacy items and moral disengagement scale items. These correlations tested scale homogeneity and construct

validity. Item correlations also show how self-efficacy areas and moral disengagement dynamics interact with one another.

The fourth section includes descriptive and inferential statistics used to analyse self-efficacy and moral disengagement scale data. These analyses looked at differences between genders and between the pre-workshop and post-workshop questionnaire.

The fifth section is devoted to the analysis of student reactions to the bullying bystander scenarios. Analysis of these reactions explore students' ideas concerning the role of bullying bystanders, perceived bystander self-efficacy to defending bullied peers, and perceptions on whether bystanders morally engage or disengage from bullying incidents they witness. These reactions were thematically coded which allowed answer frequencies to be examined. Additionally, responses were studied through thematic analysis.

The last section comprises the thematic analysis of the focus group data. Focus group data analysis offered insights into group norms and consensuses of bullying and being a bystander, providing qualitative information relating to their self-efficacy to defend and the way moral disengagement dynamics are used.

All sections are subdivided into pre-workshop and post-workshop data analysis.

3.1 Questionnaire: observed bystander behaviour

The first part of the questionnaire gauges the types of bystander behaviour participants see their peers engage in. For this purpose, students were presented with different statements depicting certain common reinforcing, passive and defending bystander behaviours. Students were then required to choose one of five options from a Likert scale (always, often, sometimes, rarely and never), depending on how frequently they saw peers engage in each behaviour.

Incidence of perceived reinforcing behaviour is explored through two items: “When bullying happens, some people laugh” and “When bullying happens, some people join the bully”. The items “When bullying happens, some people pretend they don’t see it” and “When bullying happens, some people prefer not to get involved” explore passive bystander behaviour. Finally, “When bullying happens, someone tries to stop the bully” and “When bullying happens, someone tries to make the victim feel better” explore how often students see defending bystander behaviour.

Students were presented with these items before taking part in the workshop and again four months after being exposed to it. Responses were analysed on the basis of frequencies and comparisons between the workshop and post-workshop questionnaire.

3.1.1 Pre-workshop

This section presents student perceptions about how their bystander peers act when bullying situations arise from before the workshop. Students rated each type of response depending on how often they perceived peers to respond to bullying in those ways.

a) Reinforcing behaviour

The following table and figures show pre-workshop percentages of how often participants saw their peers engage in bully reinforcing behaviour, this is, responses that reward bullies and encourage them to continue harassing other students. Table 2.1 shows male, female and total percentages for the “When bullying happens, some people laugh at it” and “When bullying happens, some people join the bully” items. Figures 1, 2, 3 and 4 break down these percentages by item and by gender.

Table 2. 1 Perceived reinforcing bystander behaviour percentages (pre-workshop)

Frequency	Laugh			Join		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Never	3.3%	2.1%	2.7%	12.2%	12.6%	12.4%
Rarely	3.3%	12.6%	8.1%	15.6%	15.8%	15.7%
Sometimes	34.1%	29.5%	31.7%	33.3%	35.8%	34.6%
Often	27.5%	32.6%	30.1%	31.1%	23.2%	27.0%
Always	31.9%	23.2%	27.4%	7.8%	12.6%	10.3%

As shown in table 2.1, students expressed that reinforcing behaviours are more common than rare. Laughing at bullying was perceived as being frequent. 57.5% students claimed to see it “often” or “always”, and 31.7% said to see it at least sometimes. Students who claimed to witness it “rarely” or “never” made up 10.8% of the population. Joining bullies is perceived to be generally less prevalent than laughing when a student is victimised. 37.3% of students stated to see peers joining bullies “often” or “always” and 34.6% of students express to see it “sometimes”.

Figure 2.1 Observed bystander behaviour: “Some people laugh” answer frequencies (pre-workshop)

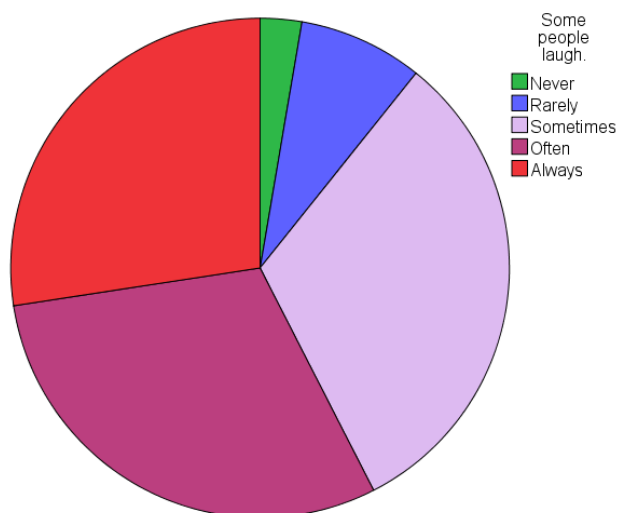


Figure 2.1 depicts how a similar proportion of students claimed to see peers laughing at bullying incidents “always”, “often” and “sometimes”. These students made up the majority of the population. There are less students who claimed to see it “rarely”, and there were very few students who claimed to “never” see this type of behaviour.

Figure 2.2 Observed bystander behaviour: “Some people laugh” gender differences in frequencies (pre-workshop)

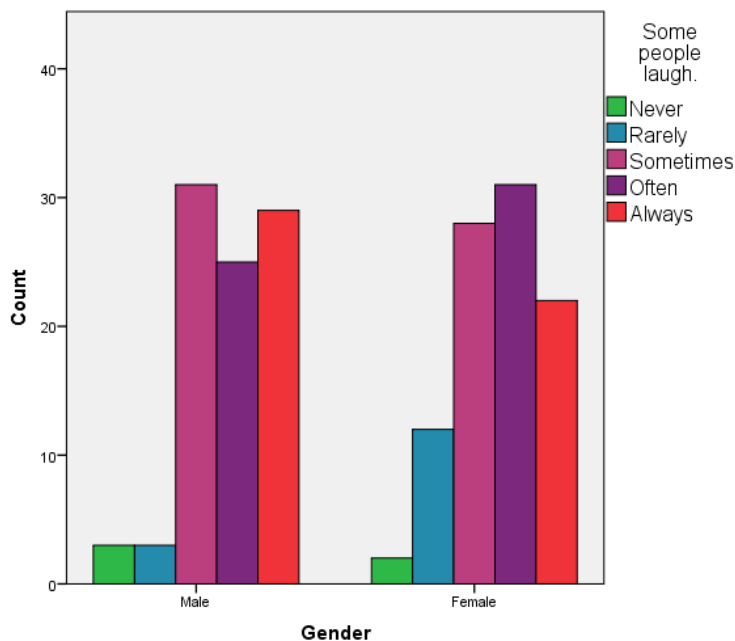


Figure 2 shows male and female answer frequencies to the “When bullying happens some people laugh” item. A chi-square analysis revealed that there is no significant relationship between gender and the perception of how often peers laugh at bullying situations ($X^2(4, N=186) = 7.27, p = .12$). However, more females than males claimed to see this type of behaviour “rarely”, and more males reported to see it “always”.

Figure 2.3 Observed bystander behaviour: “Some people join the bully” answer frequencies (pre-workshop)

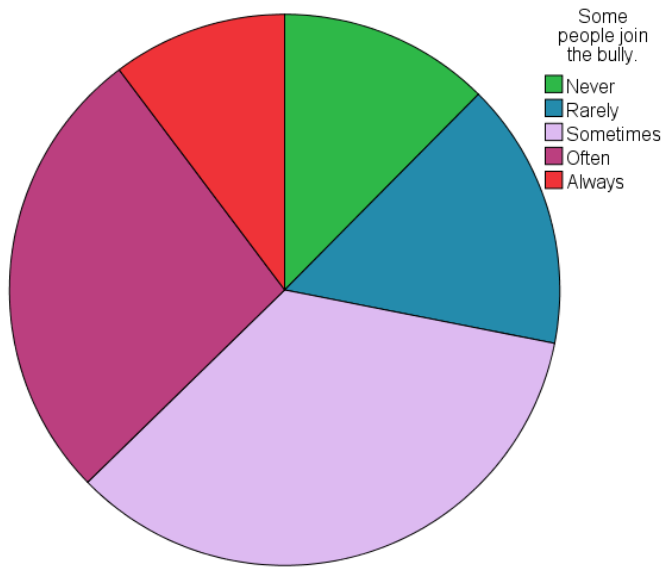
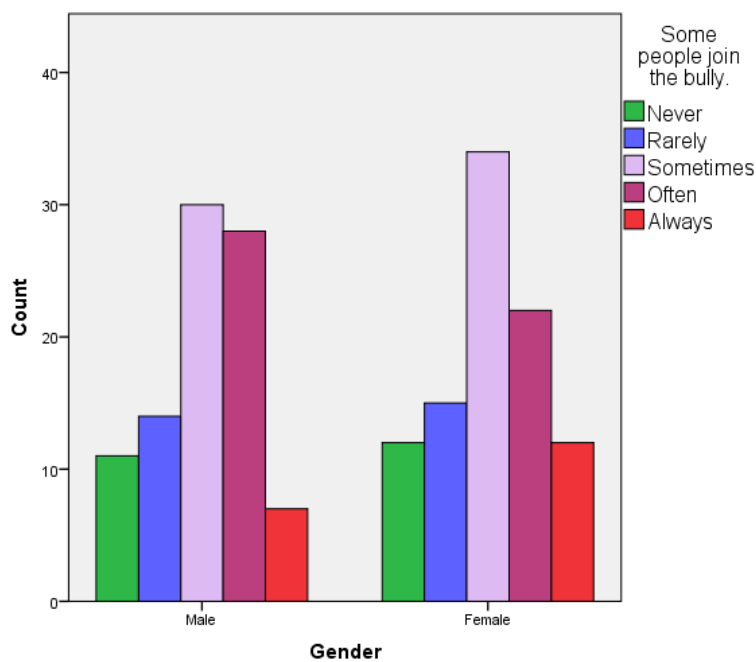


Figure 2.3 shows that there were more students who said they “never” or rarely” saw peers joining bullies than students who said that they “never” or “rarely” see them laughing at bullying situations. Students who claimed that someone joins the bully “always” was the smallest group, but there was a large proportion of students who saw students join “often” and “sometimes”. Students perceived that having peers join bullies is not uncommon.

Figure 2.4 Observed bystander behaviour: “Some people join the bully” gender differences in frequencies (pre-workshop)



A chi-square analysis revealed that there is no significant relationship between gender and perceptions about how often peers join bullies ($X^2 (4, N=186) = 2.23, p = .69$). The proportion of students who saw it “rarely” or “never” and the proportion of students who saw it “sometimes”, “often” and “always” are similar in males and females.

b) Passive behaviour

The following tables and figures show pre-workshop percentages of participant perceptions about how often their peers engage in passive bystander behaviour, that is, when they remain uninvolved when they witness peers being bullied. Table 2.2 shows male, female and total percentages for the “When bullying happens, some people pretend they do not see it” and “When bullying happens, some people prefer not to get involved” items. Figures 5, 6, 7 and 8 break down these percentages by item and by gender.

Table 2.2 Perceived passive bystander behaviour percentages (pre-workshop)

Frequency	Pretend not to see			Prefer not to get involved		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Never	6.6%	7.4%	7.0%	3.3%	5.3%	4.3%
Rarely	17.6%	14.7%	16.1%	5.5%	8.4%	7.0%
Sometimes	30.8%	29.5%	30.1%	29.7%	24.2%	26.9%
Often	28.6%	34.7%	31.7%	33.0%	40.0%	36.6%
Always	16.5%	13.7%	15.1%	28.6%	22.1%	25.3%

Table 2.2 shows that participants perceive passive bystander behaviour to be quite prevalent as well. 46.8% of students claimed to see students pretending not to see bullying situations “often” or “always” while 30.1% saw it “sometimes”. Preferring no to become involved with bullying incidents is perceived to be even more common. 61.9% of students

said their peers choose this option “often” or “always”, while only 11.3% claimed that they “rarely” or “never” see this type of behaviour.

Figure 2.5 Observed bystander behaviour: “Some people pretend not to see” answer frequencies (pre-workshop)

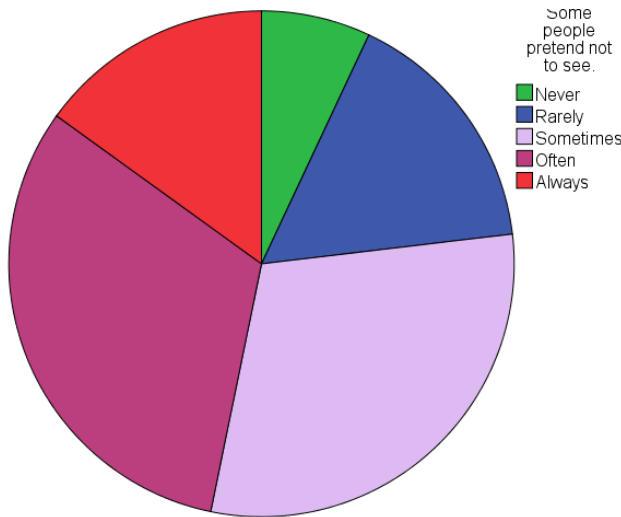
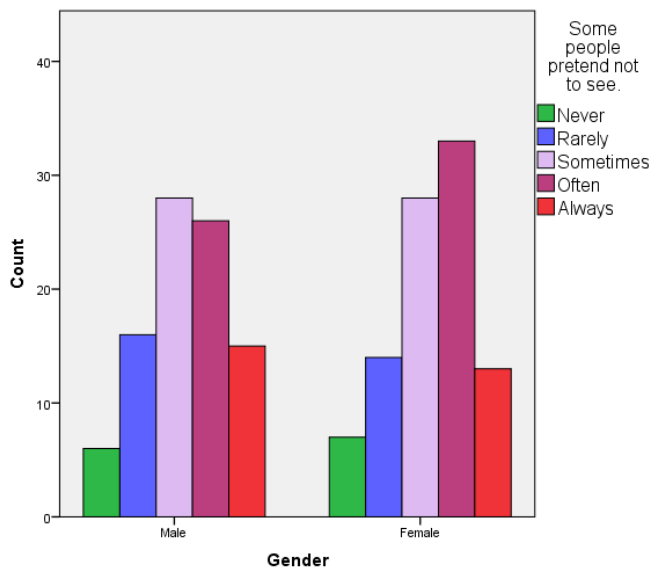


Figure 2.5 shows that there were more students who reported that peers pretend not to see when someone is being bullied “often” and “always” than students who see this type of behaviour “never” or “rarely”. There are also many students who report to see this “sometimes”.

Figure 2.6. Observed bystander behaviour: “Some people pretend not to see” gender differences in frequencies (pre-workshop)



A chi-square analysis revealed that there is no significant relationship between gender and the perception of how often peers pretend not to see when students are being bullied ($X^2(4, N=186) = 1.09, p = .89$). While there is little between the gender categories, females are more likely to perceive this happens “often” than their male counterparts.

Figure 2.7 Observed bystander behaviour: “Some people prefer not to get involved” answer frequencies (pre-workshop)

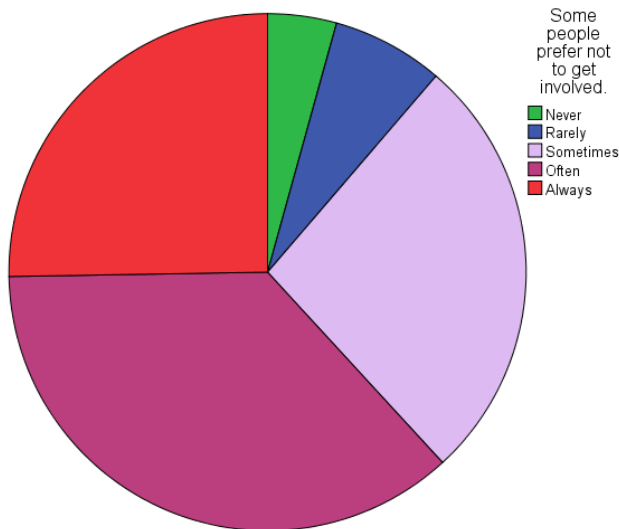
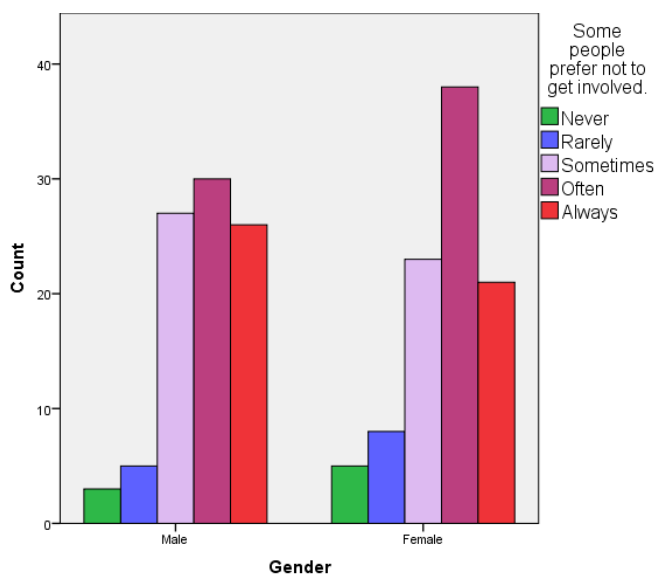


Figure 2.7 shows that the perception that peers prefer not to get involved is prevalent. Participants who claim to see this “often” and “always” make up the majority of the student population, while students who claim to see it “rarely” or “never” are few in comparison

Figure 2.8 Observed bystander behaviour: “Some prefer not to get involved” gender differences in frequencies (pre-workshop)



A chi-square analysis revealed that there is no significant relationship between gender and the perception of how often peers prefer not to be involved in bullying situations ($X^2(4, N=186) = 2.89, p = .57$). There is little gender difference when it comes to the perception of passive bystander behaviour of peers.

c) Defending behaviour

The following tables and figures show student perceptions of how often they see their peers engage in victim defending behaviour, that is, how often they actively support bullying victims. Table 2.3 shows male, female and total percentages for the “When bullying happens, someone tries to stop the bully” and “When bullying happens, someone tries to make the victim feel better” items. Figures 9, 10, 11 and 12 break down these percentages by item and by gender.

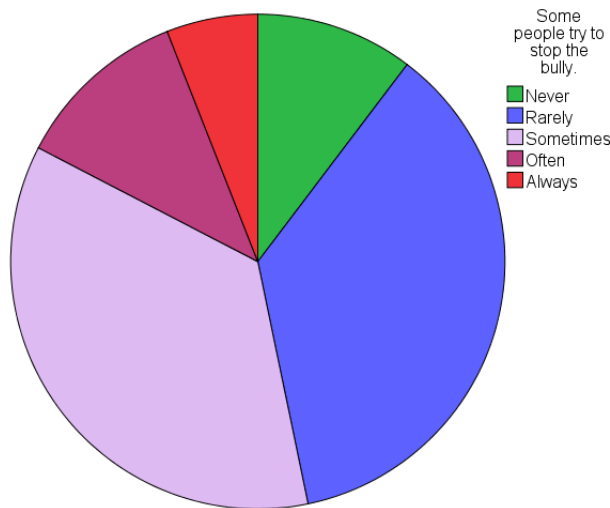
Table 2.3 Perceived defending bystander behaviour percentages (pre-workshop)

Frequency	Stop bully			Comfort victim		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Never	13.3%	7.4%	10.3%	5.5%	2.1%	3.8%
Rarely	41.1%	31.9%	36.4%	24.2%	10.5%	17.2%
Sometimes	28.9%	42.6%	35.9%	39.6%	40.0%	39.8%
Often	11.1%	11.7%	11.4%	17.6%	20.0%	18.8%
Always	5.6%	6.4%	6.0%	13.2%	27.4%	20.4%

Table 2.3 shows that students perceived defending behaviour to be less common than reinforcing and passive bystander behaviour. Peers trying to stop bullies is something that 17.4% of participants expressed to see “often” or “always”, while 46.7% see it “rarely” or

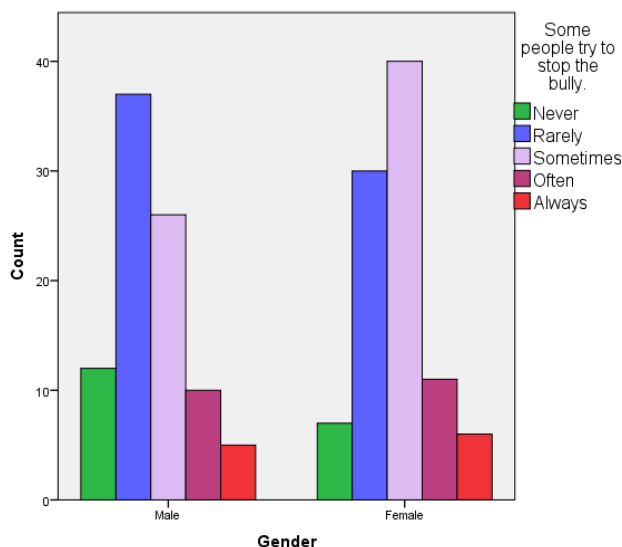
“never”. Students perceived peers comforting victims to be more common than confronting bullies, with 29.2% reporting to see it “often” or always” and 21% claiming to see it “rarely” or “never”.

Figure 2.9 Observed bystander behaviour: “Some people try to stop the bully” answer frequencies (pre-workshop)



Students who claimed to see peers trying to stop bullies “rarely” or “never” are more numerous than students who said to see it “often” or always”. A large proportion of students reported they seen this type of behaviour “sometimes”. While stopping bullies is not the most common response, more than half of the participants stated they have seen it happen.

Figure 2.10 Observed bystander behaviour: “Some people try to stop the bully” gender differences in frequencies (pre-workshop)



More males reported that they “never” or “rarely” see peers trying to stop bullies than their female counterparts. A chi-square analysis was performed to measure the relationship between gender and the perception of how often peers try to stop bullies. Results showed no significant relationship between these variables ($X^2(4, N=186) = 5.07, p = .28$).

Figure 2.11 Observed bystander behaviour: “Some people try to comfort the victim” answer frequencies (pre-workshop)

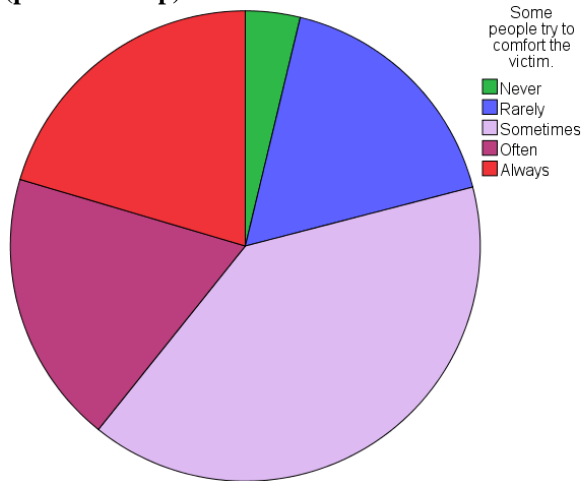
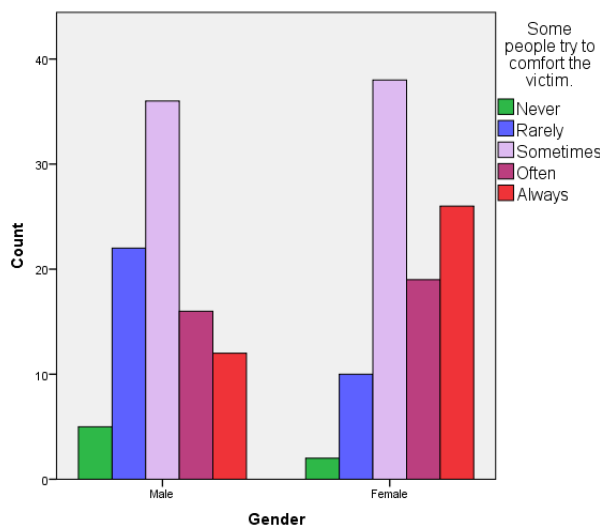


Figure 2.11 shows that comforting victims was perceived to be common student behaviour, with a large proportion of students claiming to see it “often” or “always”. On the other hand, the number of students who claim to “never” see it is low. Students who claim to see it “sometimes” make up the largest proportion. Many students do not perceive that comforting behaviour can be expected in any bullying situation.

Figure 2.12 Observed bystander behaviour: “Some people try to comfort the victim” gender differences in frequencies (pre-workshop)



A chi-square analysis was performed to measure the relationship between gender and the perception of how often peers engage in comforting behaviour. Results showed a significant relationship between these variables ($X^2(4, N=186) = 11.17, p = .02$). Being that 47.4% of females claimed to see comforting behaviour “always” or “often” versus 30.8% of males and only 12.5% of females say they see comforting behaviour “never” or “rarely” versus 29.7% of males, we can infer that girls perceive that they witness bystanders comforting victims more frequently than boys.

3.1.2 Post-workshop

This section presents after-workshop student perceptions of how their bystander peers act when bullying situations arise. As before, students rated each type of response depending on how often they perceived their peers to respond to bullying in those ways.

a) Reinforcing behaviour

The following tables and figures show percentages of how often participants perceived to see their peers engage in bully reinforcing behaviour, that is, responses that reward bullies and encourage them to continue harassing other students. Table 2.4 shows male, female and total percentages for the “When bullying happens, some people laugh at it” and “When bullying happens, some people join the bully” items. Figures 13, 14, 15 and 16 break down these percentages by item (comparing answers to the ones obtained during the pre-workshop questionnaire application) and by gender.

Table 2.4 Perceived reinforcing bystander behaviour percentages (post-workshop)

Frequency	Laugh			Join		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Never	2.4%	8.0%	5.2%	3.6%	10.2%	7.0%
Rarely	5.9%	9.1%	7.5%	17.9%	22.7%	20.3%
Sometimes	22.4%	33.0%	27.7%	29.8%	46.6%	38.4%
Often	36.5%	27.3%	31.8%	38.1%	18.2%	27.9%
Always	32.9%	22.7%	27.7%	10.7%	2.3%	6.4%

Reinforcing behaviour continued to be quite common after the workshop. 59.5% of students stated that they saw their peers laughing when bullying situations unfolded “often” or “always”, while 12.7% said they “rarely” or “never” saw it. Joining bullies was still perceived to be less common than laughing at bullying situations with 34.3% of students perceiving to see peers join bullying perpetrators “always” or “often” and 27.3% claiming to see it “rarely” or “never”.

Figure 2.13 Observed bystander behaviour: “Some people laugh”: answer frequencies (Pre-workshop vs post-workshop)

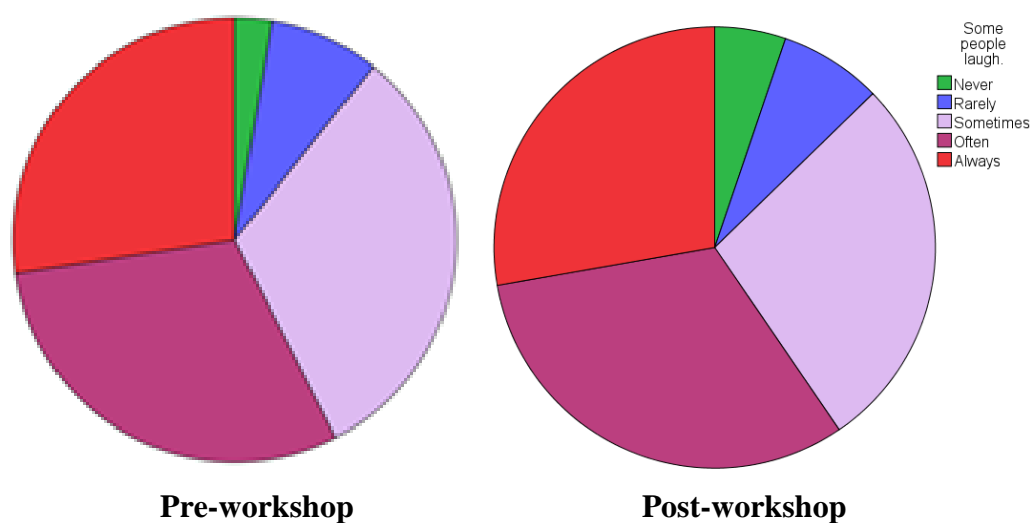
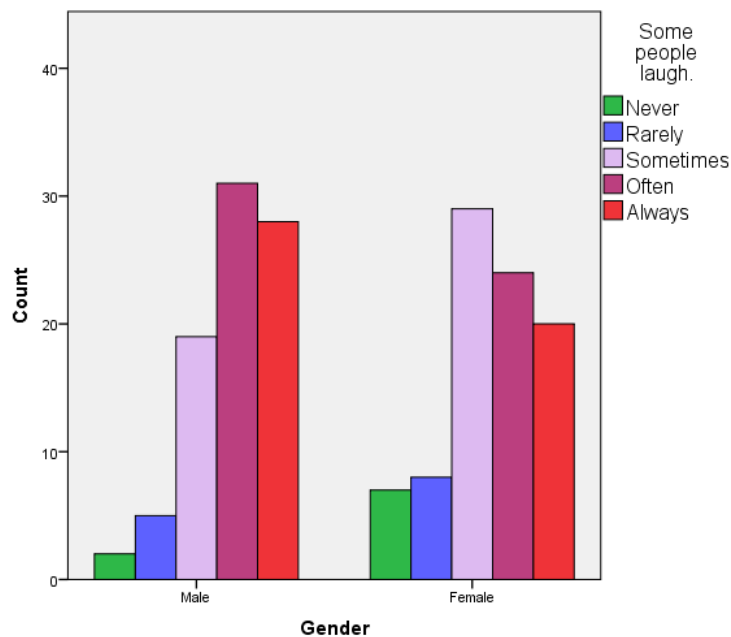


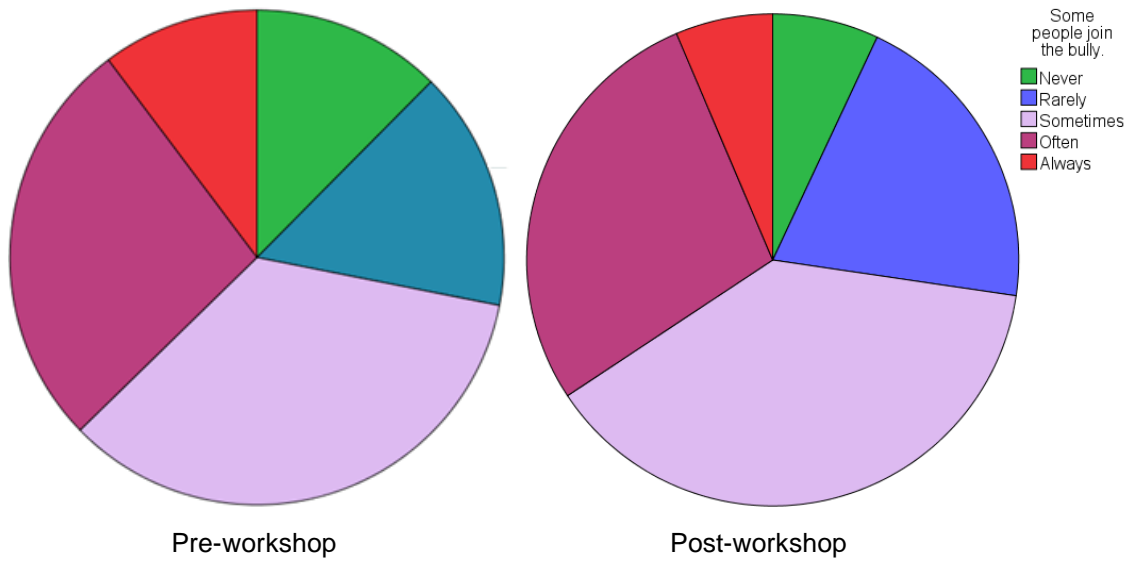
Figure 2.13 shows that, after the workshop, students still commonly saw peers laughing when bullying situations unfolded. The proportion of students who said to “rarely” or “never” see this kind of behaviour, while slightly smaller, is still a minority. A chi-square analysis was performed to measure the relationship between exposure to the workshop and the perception of how often peers try to stop bullies. Results showed no significant relationship between these variables ($X^2(4, N=183) = 2.04, p = .72$).

Figure 2.14. Observed bystander behaviour: “Some people laugh” gender differences in frequencies (Post-workshop)



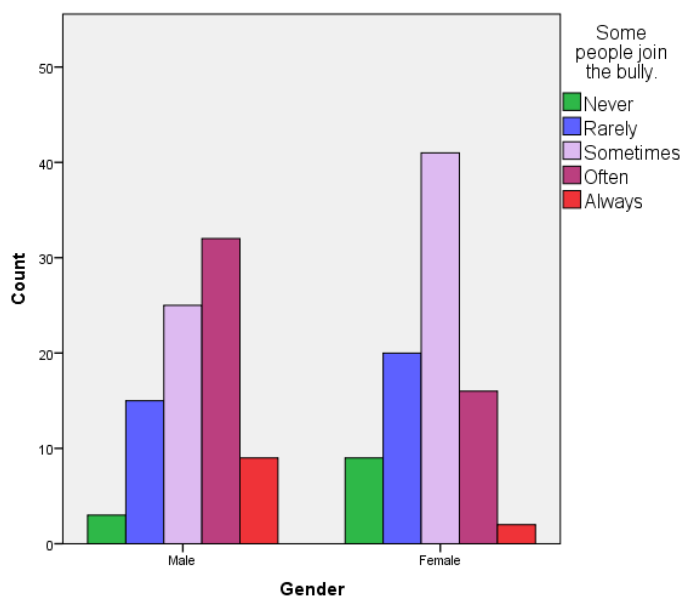
More male than female participants reported seeing people laughing at bullying incidents “often” and “always”. A chi-square analysis was performed to measure the relationship between gender and witnessing peers laughing at bullying. Results showed no significant relationship between these variables ($X^2(4, N=183) = 7.72, p = .102$).

Figure 2.15 Observed bystander behaviour: “Some people join the bully” answer frequencies (post-workshop vs pre-workshop)



Response frequencies for how often students see peers join bullies were very similar before and after the workshop. A chi-square analysis was performed to measure the relationship between having been exposed to the workshop or not. Results showed no significant relationship between these variables ($X^2(4, N=183) = 5.75, p = .21$).

Figure 2.16 Observed bystander behaviour: “Some people join the bully” gender differences in frequencies (post-workshop)



Gender differences were observed when it comes to students' perceptions of how often peers join bullies. A chi-square analysis was performed to explore the relationship between gender and joining bullies. Results showed a significant relationship between these variables ($X^2(4, N=183) = 17.29, p = .002$). Being that 48.8% of males claim to see students joining bullies "always" or "often" versus 20.5% of females, we can infer that this significance speaks of males perceiving their peers joining bullies more frequently than females do.

b) Passive behaviour

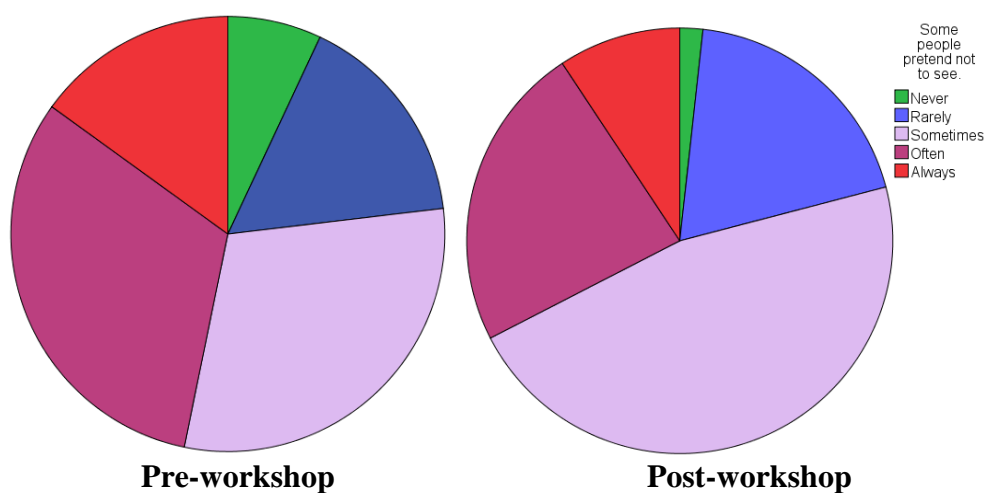
The following tables and figures show post-workshop perceptions of how often participants saw their peers engage in passive bystander behaviour, that is, remaining uninvolved when witnessing peers being bullied. Table 2.5 shows male, female and total percentages for the "When bullying happens, some people pretend they don't see it" and "When bullying happens, some people prefer not to get involved" items. Figures 17, 18, 19 and 20 break down these percentages by item (comparing them to pre-workshop responses) and by gender.

Table 2.5 Perceived passive bystander behaviour percentages (post-workshop)

Frequency	Pretend not to see			Prefer not to get involved		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Never	1.2%	2.3%	1.7%	3.7%	1.1%	2.4%
Rarely	19.0%	19.3%	19.2%	11.1%	17.0%	14.2%
Sometimes	48.8%	44.3%	46.5%	42.0%	26.1%	33.7%
Often	22.6%	23.9%	23.3%	28.4%	37.5%	33.1%
Always	8.3%	10.2%	9.3%	14.8%	18.2%	16.6%

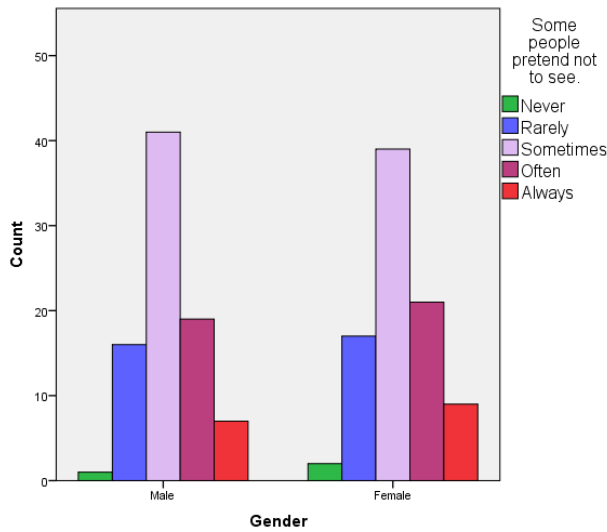
Regarding passive bystander behaviour, 32.6% of students reported that they saw their classmates pretending not to see that a peer is being bullied “often” or “always” and 20.9% said they saw it “rarely” or “never”. According to participants, peers preferring not to be involved was more frequent than peers pretending not to see, with 49.7% of students claiming to see it “often” or “always” and 16.6% “rarely” or “never”.

Figure 2.17 Observed bystander behaviour: “Some people pretend not to see” answer frequencies (post-workshop vs pre-workshop)



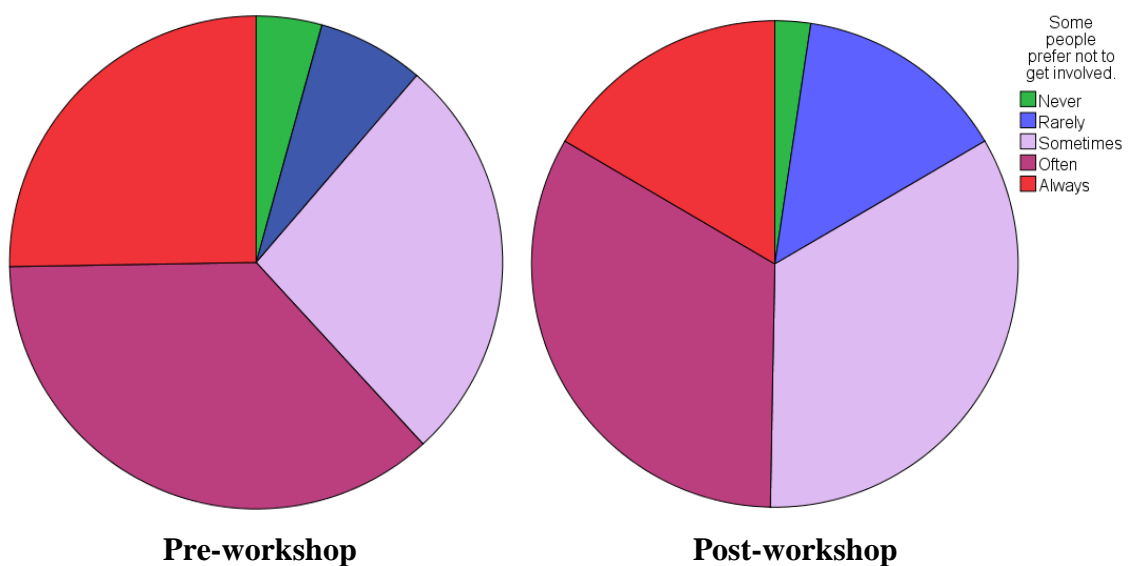
Post-workshop responses show that fewer students chose the extreme “always” or “never” responses, opting for “often”, “rarely” and “sometimes” instead. A chi-square analysis was performed to measure the relationship between having been exposed to the workshop and the perception of how often peers pretend not to see bullying incidents. Results showed a significant relationship between these variables ($X^2(4, N=183) = 17.01, p = .002$). Since the most evident change is an increase in students who chose the “sometimes” option, we can assume that students were more likely to choose moderate answers after the workshop.

Figure 2.18 Observed bystander behaviour: “Some people pretend not to see” gender differences in frequencies (post-workshop)



Male and female responses regarding how often they witnessed peers pretending not to see bullying are similar. A chi-square analysis was performed to measure the relationship between gender and the perception of how often peers pretend not to see bullying incidents. Results showed no significant relationship between these variables ($X^2(4, N=183) = .67, p = .95$).

Figure 2.19 Observed bystander behaviour: “Some people prefer not to get involved”: answer frequencies (post-workshop vs pre-workshop)



Post-workshop questionnaire responses show that student perceptions of peers preferring not to get involved in bullying situations “always” or “often” has declined. A chi-square analysis was performed to measure the relationship between having been exposed to the workshop and perceptions of how often peers prefer to stay uninvolved in bullying situations. Results showed no significant relationship between these variables ($X^2(4, N=183) = 10.24, p = .36$).

Figure 2.20 Observed bystander behaviour: “Some prefer not to get involved” gender differences in frequencies (post-workshop)

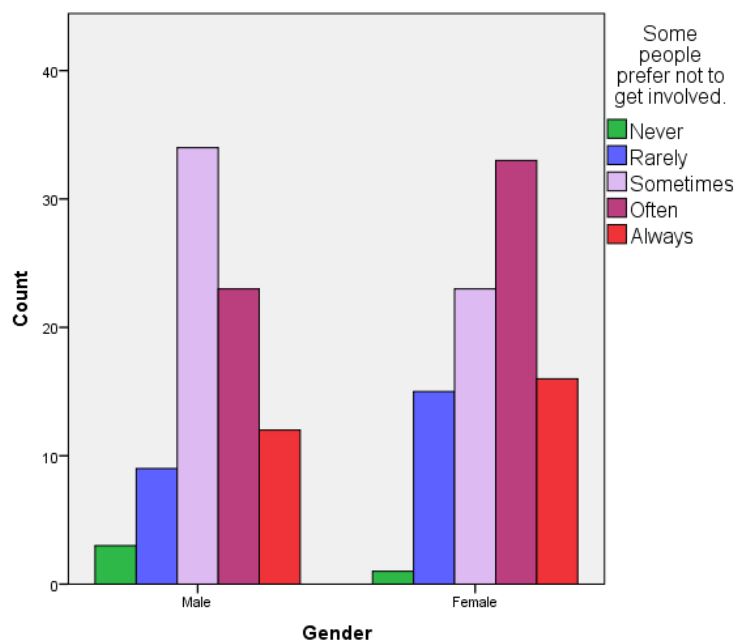


Figure 2.20 shows that more females than males reported to see peers preferring not to get involved in bullying “often” or “always”. A chi-square analysis was performed to measure the relationship between gender and witnessing peers not wanting to get involved. Results showed no significant relationship between these variables ($X^2(4, N=183) = 6.70, p = .15$).

c) Defending behaviour

The following tables and figures show post-workshop percentages of how often participants saw their peers engage in victim defending behaviour, that is, peers actively supporting bullying victims. Table 2.6 shows male, female and total percentages for the “When bullying happens, someone tries to stop the bully” and “When bullying happens, someone tries to make the victim feel better” items. Figures 21, 22, 23 and 24 break down these percentages by item (comparing them to pre-workshop responses) and by gender.

Table 2.6 Perceived defending bystander behaviour percentages (post-workshop)

Frequency	Stop bully			Comfort victim		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Never	9.5%	5.7%	7.6%	13.1%	1.1%	7.0%
Rarely	40.5%	28.7%	34.5%	29.8%	13.6%	21.5%
Sometimes	33.3%	39.1%	36.3%	26.2%	26.1%	26.2%
Often	6.0%	23.0%	14.6%	19.0%	34.1%	26.7%
Always	10.7%	3.4%	7.0%	11.9%	25.0%	18.6%

When asked how frequently they see peers trying to stop bullying perpetrators, 21.6% of students responded they saw it “often” or “always” and 42.1% “rarely” or “never”. Victim comforting is perceived to be more common than stopping bullies. 45.3% of the participants reported that they saw peers comforting victims “often” or “always” when a bullying incident occurs, and 28.5% said it happened “rarely” or “never”. Students see more victim comforting than bully confronting behaviours.

Figure 2.21 Observed bystander behaviour: “Some people try to stop the bully” answer frequencies (post-workshop vs pre-workshop)

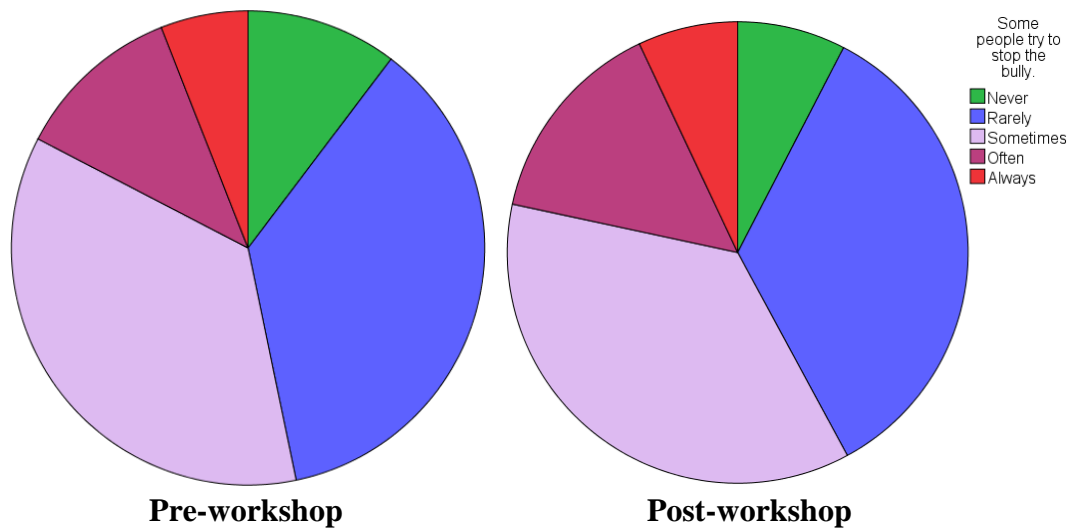
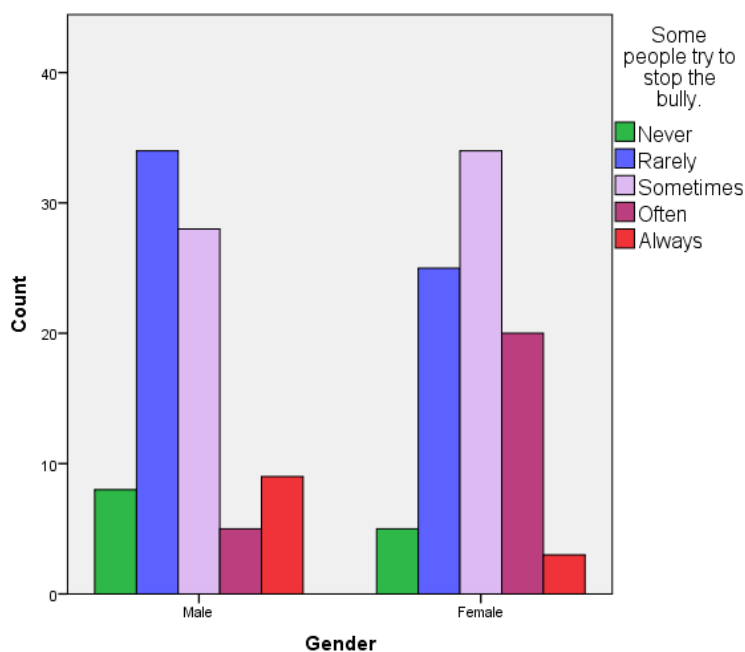


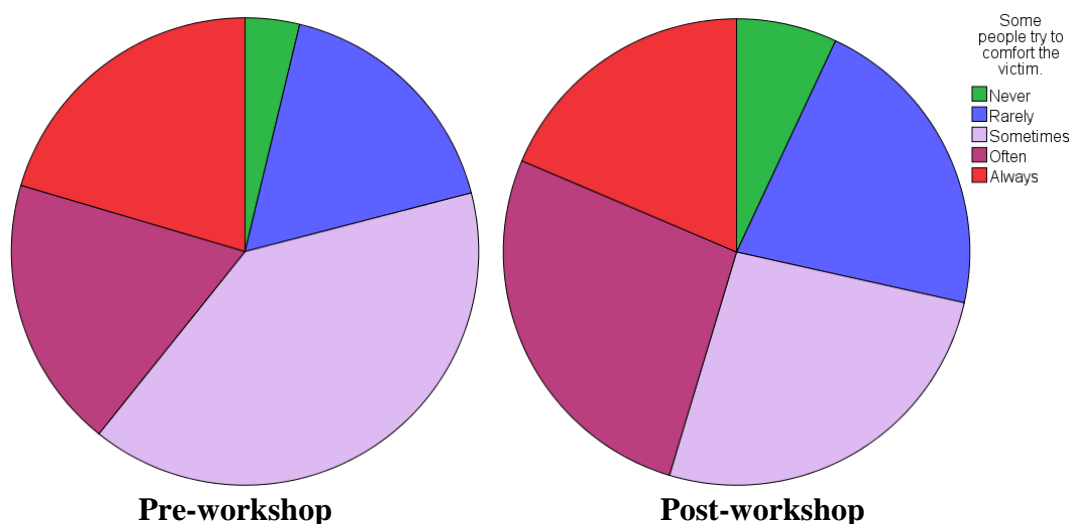
Figure 2.21 shows that pre-workshop and post-workshop responses to the “when bullying happens: some people try to stop the bully” item were similar. A chi-square analysis was performed to examine the relationship between witnessing peers trying to stop bullies and exposure to the workshop. Results showed no significant relationship between these variables ($X^2(4, N=183) = 1.67, p = .79$).

Figure 2.22. Observed bystander behaviour: “Some people try to stop the bully” gender differences in frequencies (post-workshop)



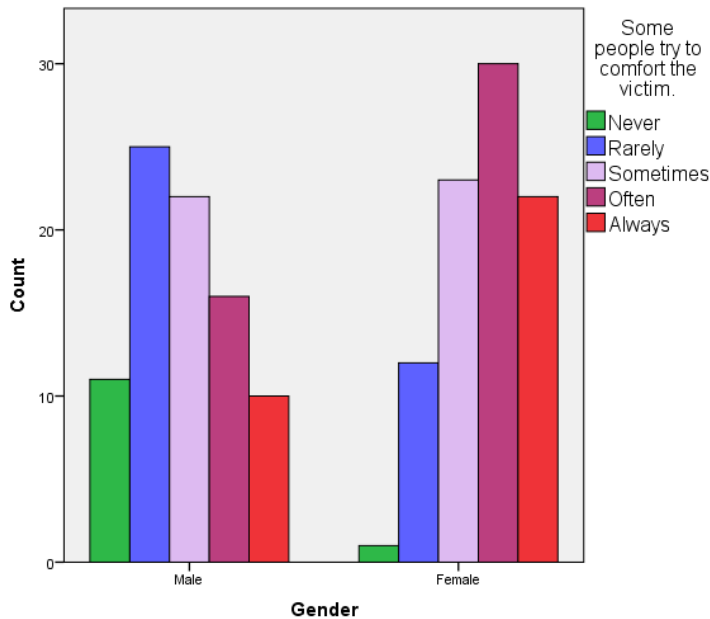
There are differences between male and female responses when it comes to perceptions of how frequently they see peers stopping bullies. A chi-square analysis was performed to measure the relationship between gender and stopping bullies. Results showed a significant relationship between these variables ($X^2(4, N=183) = 14.50, p = .006$). Since 50% of males claimed to see this behaviour “rarely” or “never” compared to 34.4% of females, and 16.7% of males say to see it “often” or “always” compared to 26.4% of females, we can infer that stopping bullying incidents perceived to be more common by females.

Figure 2.23 Observed bystander behaviour: “Some people try to comfort the victim”: answer frequencies (post-workshop vs pre-workshop)



While the percentage of students who claimed to see peers comforting bullying victims “always” is similar before and after the implementation of the workshop, fewer students reported to see this behaviour “sometimes” after the workshop, changing their answers to “often”, “rarely” and “never”. A chi-square analysis was performed to examine the relationship between seeing peers comforting bullying victims and exposure to the workshop. Results showed no significant relationship between these variables.

Figure 2.24 Observed bystander behaviour: “Some people try to comfort the victim” gender differences in frequencies (post-workshop)



Males and females had different responses to this item, with more females responding that they see peers comforting victims “often” and “always” and more males reporting to see this behaviour “rarely” or “never”. A chi-square analysis was performed to examine the relationship between gender and comforting behaviour. Results show a significant relationship between these variables $X^2(4, N=183) = 21.60, p < .001$. Since 30.9% of males said they see peers comfort victims “always” or “often” compared to 59.1% of females, and 42.9% males and 14.7% females said they witness this behaviour “rarely” or “never”, we can infer that this significance means that comforting behaviour is perceived to be more commonly by females.

3.2 Questionnaire: self-efficacy/moral disengagement scales

The second part of the questionnaire consisted of scales aimed to measure the level of student self-efficacy regarding their capacity to help bullying victims and the degree to which they morally disengage from bullying incidents. The self-efficacy scale measures five concepts related to the construct: overt self-efficacy (how efficacious participants state to

feel), task mastery (previous experience that participants have performing the task), vicarious experience (how efficacious students feel at imitating helping behaviour), verbal persuasion (how efficacious students feel at following instructions on how to help) and interest in task (degree to which students feel inclined to engage in helping behaviours).

The moral disengagement scale measures six moral disengagement mechanisms: Responsibility displacement (believing someone other than the participant is responsible for assisting victims), dehumanization (thinking of victims as undeserving of the treatment reserved to other peers), euphemistic labelling (calling bullying something else to reduce moral conflict), moral justification (attributing positive outcomes to bullying incidents), disregarding consequences (not acknowledging negative effects of bullying incidents) and victim blaming (stating that the victim somehow caused the incidents).

Students were asked to read statements related to these concepts and express how much they agreed with them, choosing one of five options from a Likert scale: completely agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree and completely disagree. Response percentages for these items were analysed. Answers were also coded numerically to calculate individual item and total construct scores. These numerical values were calculated by assigning numbers each to each degree that students could choose on the Likert scale.

3.2.1 Pre-workshop response percentages

This section outlines how students responded to the self-efficacy and moral disengagement scale items from the pre-workshop questionnaire application. All items are broken down by the percentage of participants that chose each option on the Likert scale.

a) Self-efficacy scale response percentages (pre-workshop)

The self-efficacy scale items explored how efficacious participants feel at helping bullied peers. Table 2.7 shows how they responded to each item on the pre-workshop questionnaire application, broken down by the percentage of students that chose each option on the Likert scale. Figure 23 shows frequencies for “completely agree” and “somewhat agree” responses for each item.

Table 2.7 Self-efficacy item answer percentages (pre-workshop)

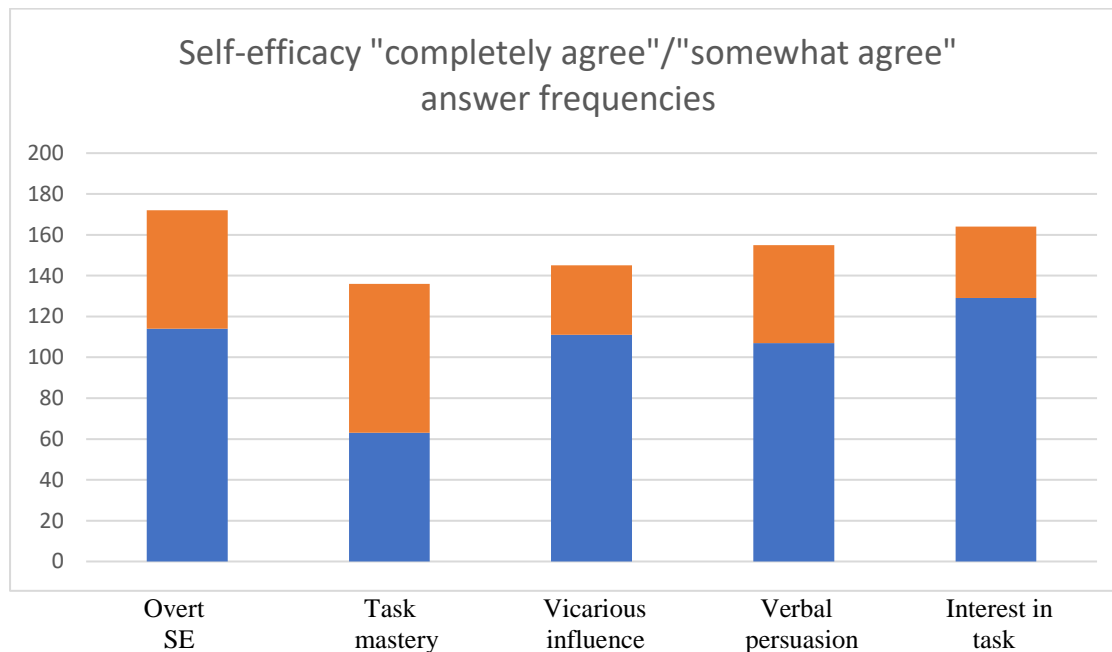
	Completely Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Completely disagree
I believe I'm capable of helping someone who's being bullied. (Overt self-efficacy)	61.3%	31.2%	5.9%	0	1.6%
I have helped students who were bullied before. (Task mastery)	34.1%	39.5%	16.8%	2.7%	7%
If I see how other people help in bullying situations, I can help too. (Vicarious influence)	61%	18.7%	14.8%	2.2%	3.3%
If someone tells me what I can do when someone is being bullied, I can help. (Verbal persuasion)	57.5%	25.8%	12.4%	2.7%	1.6%
I want to help bullied students. (Interest in task)	69.7%	18.9%	8.6%	1.6%	1.1%

When students were overtly asked if they believed they are able to help their victimised peers, they mostly expressed they think of themselves as efficacious in this respect, with 92.5% answering that they “completely” or “somewhat” agreed, while only

1.6% disagreed. When asked if they have helped a bullied peer before, 73.6% of students responded that they “completely” or “somewhat” agreed that they have, while 3.4% “completely” or “somewhat” disagreed.

Regarding other factors through which self-efficacy is enhanced, 79.7% of students said that they “completely” or “somewhat” agree that they feel efficacious at helping when they witness other peers’ helping behaviour, while 5.5% “completely” or “somewhat” disagreed. 83.3% of students said they “completely” or “somewhat” agreed that they feel efficacious at following verbal instructions on how to act, while 4.3% “completely” or “somewhat” disagreed with this statement. 88.6% “completely” or “somewhat” agreed that they would like to help bullied students more and 2.7% “completely” or “somewhat” disagreed with this statement.

Figure 2.25 Self-efficacy "completely agree"/"somewhat agree" answer frequencies (pre-workshop)*



***Out of 186 participants.**

Figure 2.25 shows that most students responded that they considered themselves able to help and wanted to help their bullied peers. They also considered themselves responsive to vicarious influence and verbal persuasion to enhance their self-efficacy. While reporting to

have engaged in the task before was less common, students who claimed to have helped bullied peers in the past were still a majority.

b) Moral disengagement scale response percentages (pre-workshop)

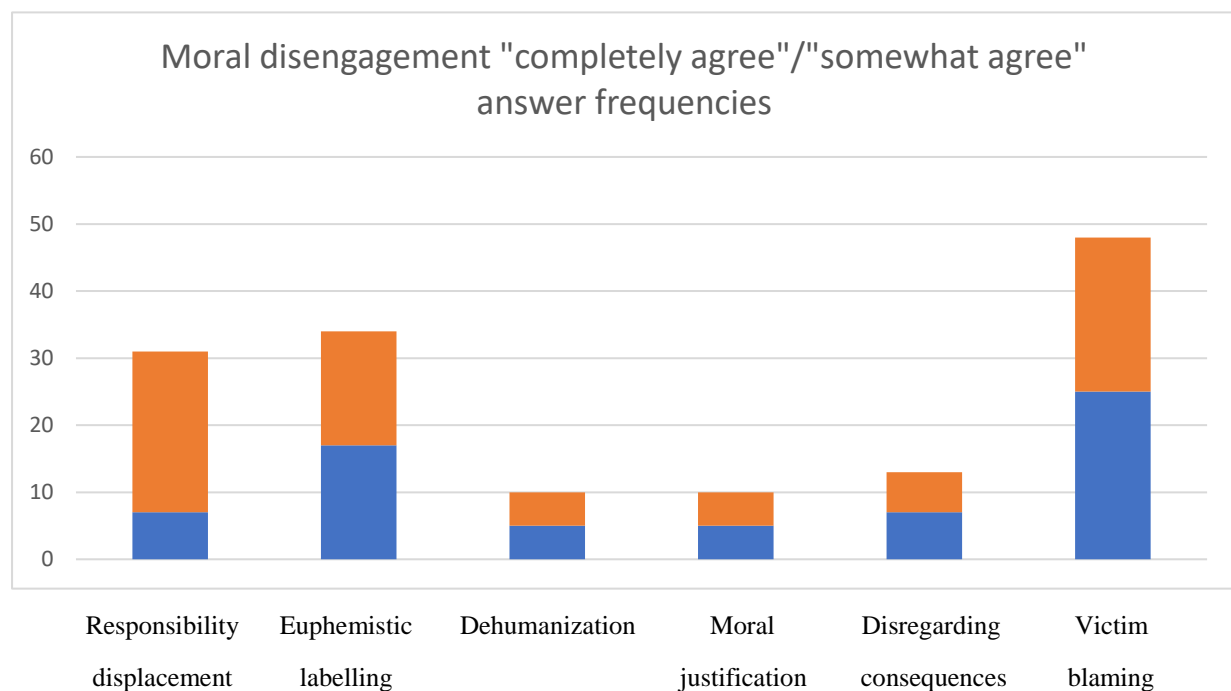
The moral disengagement scale explored how commonly different moral disengagement mechanisms were used by participants. Table 2.8 shows how they responded to each item on the pre-workshop questionnaire application, broken down by the percentage of students that chose each option on the Likert scale. Figure 24 shows frequencies for “completely agree” and “somewhat agree” responses for each item.

Table 2.8 Moral disengagement item answer percentages (pre-workshop)

	Completely Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Completely disagree
I think someone should help bullied people, but not me. (Responsibility displacement)	3.8%	13.1%	18.6%	21.9%	42.6%
I see bullying just as playing around or joking. (Euphemistic labelling)	9.1%	9.1%	16.1%	19.9%	45.7%
I think that the victim probably deserved it. (Dehumanization)	2.7%	2.7%	12%	14.1%	68.5%
I think bullying helps people become stronger. (Moral justification)	2.7%	2.7%	13.6%	11.4%	69.6%
I really think bullying is no big deal. (Disregarding consequences)	3.8%	3.3%	7.7%	15.8%	69.4%
I think bullying happens because some people don't know how to defend themselves. (Victim blaming)	13.5%	12.4%	20.5%	11.4%	42.2%

In general, more students seemed to be morally engaged than disengaged. The most common moral disengagement mechanism appeared to be victim blaming, with 25.9% of students saying they “completely” or “somewhat” agreed that bullying happens because some people do not know how to defend themselves. 18% of students were prone to euphemistic labelling, “completely” or “somewhat” agreeing that bullying is just playing around or joking. 16% of students displaced responsibility, stating that they “completely” or “somewhat” agree to the statement that someone should help bullied people, but not them. 7.1% of students disregarded injurious consequences of bullying, “completely” or “somewhat” agreeing that bullying “is no big deal”. Finally, only 5.4% of participants dehumanized and morally justified bullying, “completely” or “somewhat” agreeing with the statements that victims probably “deserved it” and that bullying “helps people become stronger”.

Figure 2.26 Moral disengagement "completely agree"/"somewhat agree" answer frequencies (pre-workshop)*



***Out of 186 participants.**

Figure 2.26 shows that the most commonly used moral disengagement mechanism among the participants before the workshop was victim blaming. Euphemistic labelling and responsibility displacement were less used, but also frequent. Dehumanization, moral justification and disregarding consequences were present, but uncommon among the scale respondents.

3.2.2 Post-workshop response percentages

This section outlines how students responded to the self-efficacy and moral disengagement scale items on the post-workshop questionnaire application. All items are broken down by the percentage of participants that chose each option on the Likert scale.

a) Self-efficacy scale response percentages (post-workshop)

The self-efficacy scale items explored how efficacious participants felt at helping bullied students and how efficacious they felt when responding to prompts aimed to develop self-efficacy. Table 2.9 shows how they responded to each item on the post-workshop questionnaire application, broken down by the percentage of students that chose each option on the Likert scale. Figure 25 shows frequencies for “completely agree” and “somewhat agree” responses to each item.

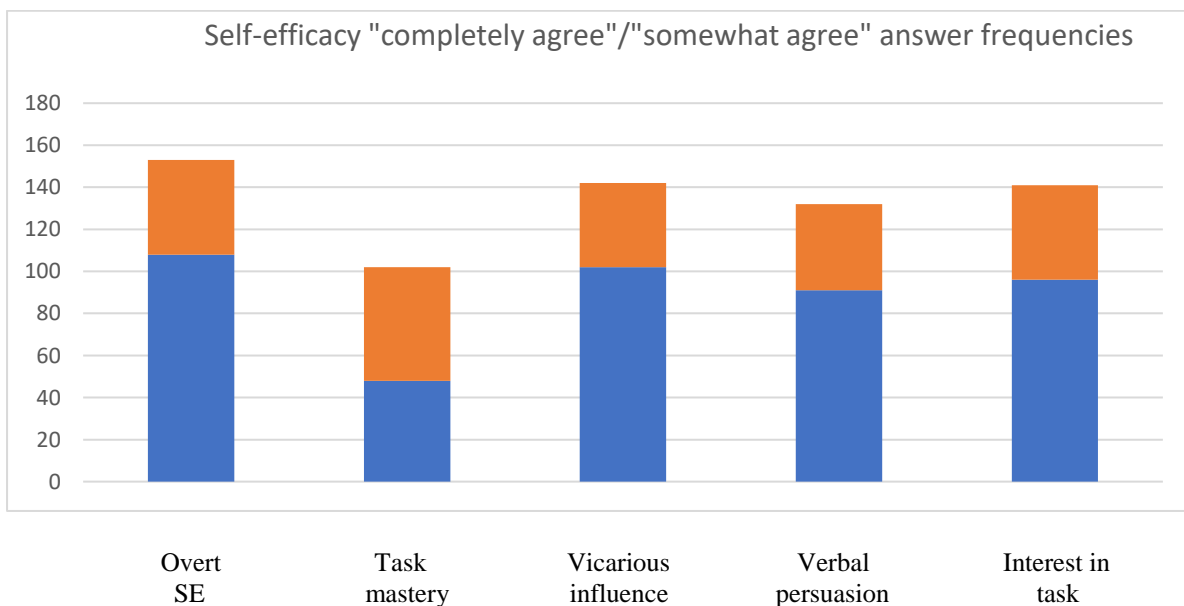
Table 2.9 Self-efficacy item answer percentages (post-workshop)

	Completely Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Completely disagree
I believe I'm capable of helping someone who's being bullied. (Overt self-efficacy)	62.8%	26.2%	8.1%	1.7	1.2%
I have helped students who were bullied before. (Task mastery)	2.7%	31.2%	22.0%	12.1%	6.9%
If I see how other people help in bullying situations, I can help too. (Vicarious influence)	59.6%	23.4%	12.3%	2.3%	2.3%

If someone tells me what I can do when someone is being bullied, I can help. (Verbal persuasion)	52.6%	23.7%	19.1%	3.5%	1.2%
I want to help bullied students more. (Interest in task)	56.1%	26.3%	14.6%	2.3%	.6%

Most students said that they considered themselves “completely” or “somewhat” capable of helping bullied peers (62.8%), while 2.9% “somewhat” or “completely” disagreed with this statement. 33.9% claimed to “completely” or “somewhat” agree that they have helped victimised students before, and 13% shared that they have not done so. The majority of students (83%) stated that they “completely” or “somewhat” agree that if they saw other people helping in bullying situations, they would be able to help as well, while 4.6% disagreed. 76.3% of students said they could help bullied peers if someone told them how to, and 4.7% would “somewhat” or “completely” disagree with that statement. 82.4% of the student body “completely” or “somewhat” expressed interest in helping bullied students more and 2.9% expressed to be “somewhat” or “completely” disinterested in helping.

Figure 27. Self-efficacy "completely agree"/"somewhat agree" answer frequencies (post-workshop)*



*Out of 183 participants.

Figure 2.27 shows that while most students still claimed that they “completely” or “somewhat” agree that they are capable of helping bullied peers and that they want to help, less students reported having helped victims after the workshop. Students still declared themselves receptive to vicarious influence and verbal persuasion to enhance their self-efficacy.

b) Moral disengagement scale response percentages (post-workshop)

The moral disengagement scale explored how commonly different moral disengagement mechanisms were used by participants in relation to witnessed bullying behaviour. Table 2.10 shows how they responded to each item on the post-workshop questionnaire application, broken down by the percentage of students that chose each option on the Likert scale. Figure 26 shows frequencies for “completely agree” and “somewhat agree” responses to each item.

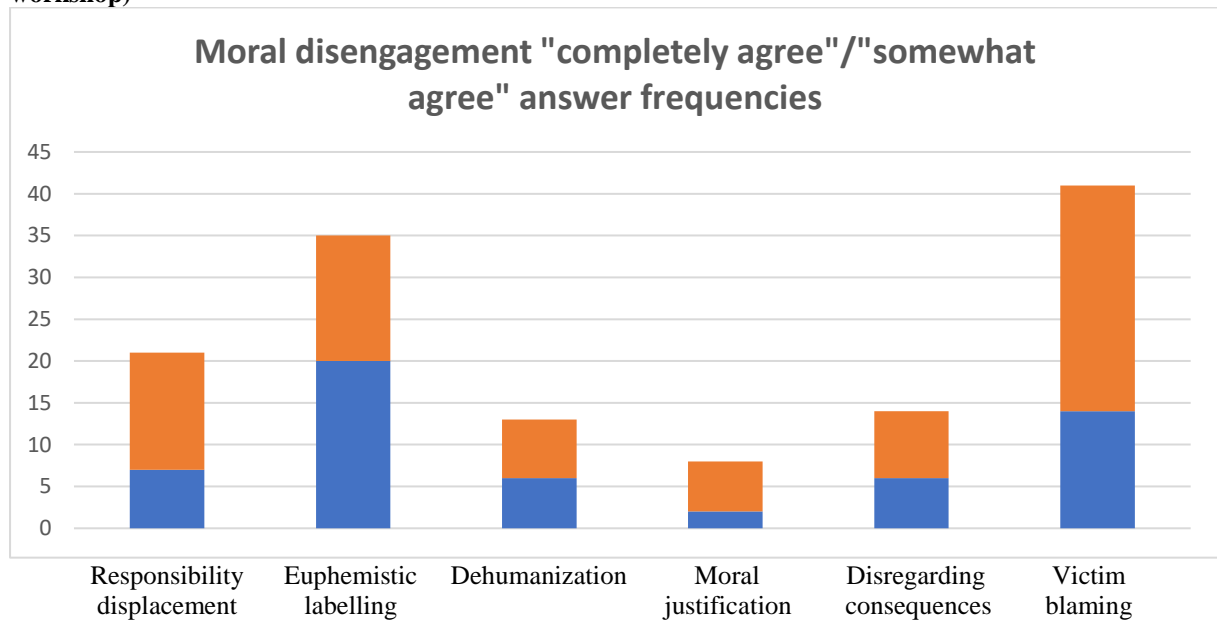
Table 2.10 Moral disengagement item answer percentages (post-workshop)

	Completely Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Completely disagree
I think someone should help bullied people, but not me. (Responsibility displacement)	4.1%	8.3%	13.6%	27.8%	46.2%
I see bullying just as playing around or joking. (Euphemistic labelling)	11.6%	8.7%	15.7%	19.2%	44.8%
I think that the victim probably deserved it. (Dehumanization)	3.5%	4.1%	11.7%	15.8%	64.9%
I think bullying helps people become stronger. (Moral justification)	1.2%	3.5%	11.6%	16.3%	67.4%

I really think bullying is no big deal. (Disregarding consequences)	1.8%	4.7%	11.2%	20.7%	61.5%
I think bullying happens because some people don't know how to defend themselves. (Victim blaming)	8.2%	15.8%	14.0%	21.6%	40.4%

While moral disengagement was present in the population, for the most part students remained morally engaged with bullying situations. 12.4% of students displaced responsibility of helping other students from themselves, agreeing that someone should help bullied people, but not themselves, while 74% of the population disagreed with this statement. 20.3% used euphemistic labelling, agreeing with the statement “bullying is just playing around or joking”, while 64% disagreed with this. 7.6% of students agreed with the idea that victims probably deserved to be bullied, and 80.7% disagreed with that notion. 4.7% of respondents morally justified bullying thinking that it helps people become stronger and 83.7% disagreed. 6.5% of students disregarded injurious consequences of bullying thinking that bullying is not serious. Victim blaming continued to be the most common moral disengagement mechanism with 24% of participants agreeing that bullying is the result of people not knowing how to defend themselves, while 62% disagreed with this idea.

Figure 2.28 Moral disengagement "completely agree"/"somewhat agree" answer frequencies (post-workshop)*



***Out of 183 participants.**

Figure 28 shows that victim blaming continued to be the most common moral disengagement mechanism that students used when thinking of bullying dynamics. Euphemistic labelling was also still common after the workshop. Responsibility displacement, dehumanization and disregarding of consequences when thinking of bullying situations were still present within the questionnaire responses, but were infrequent.

3.3 Correlations

This section shows how self-efficacy items and moral disengagement items correlate with each other within their respective scales and how the totals of each correlate with the other. Correlation analysis among scale items were performed to test scale homogeneity and for better understanding of the dynamics of both constructs in the present population. Correlations between measured self-efficacy and moral disengagement total scores were tested as an additional measure of construct validity.

3.3.1 Pre-workshop correlations

Correlations between the self-efficacy and moral disengagement total scores in the pre-workshop questionnaire responses are presented in this section. Self-efficacy questionnaire items and moral disengagement questionnaire items are also correlated among themselves to test for scale homogeneity. Correlations of .40 or higher (moderate or strong) are highlighted in tables 2.11 and 2.12.

3.3.1.1 Correlation between self-efficacy and moral disengagement (pre-workshop)

Self-efficacy and moral disengagement total scores were obtained averaging all the self-efficacy and moral disengagement scores, respectively. A significant ($<.001$) weak to moderate (-.332) negative correlation was found between these two scores. Students with high self-efficacy scores are more likely to have low moral disengagement scores. This is consistent with other studies which have found that self-efficacy to help is positively correlated to defending bullied peers, while moral disengagement has a negative correlation with this type of behaviour (Bussey et al, 2015; Doramajian & Bukowski, 2015; Pöyhönen et al, 2010; Rigby & Johnson, 2006; Sijtsema et al., 2014; Thornberg & Jungert, 2013).

3.3.1.2 Correlations among self-efficacy items (pre-workshop)

Table 2.11 shows correlations among self-efficacy items in the pre-workshop questionnaire application. Items were significantly ($<.001$) and positively correlated to each other, which suggests scale homogeneity. Feeling efficacious to follow verbal instructions to help bullied peers and interest in the task have the highest correlation (.619), followed by feeling efficacious at imitating helping behaviour and interest in task (.514). Overt self-efficacy and interest in the task (.494), and overt self-efficacy and having acted in the past are also significantly and moderately correlated (.404).

Table 2.11 Self-efficacy item correlations (pre-workshop)

Pearson Correlation	Task mastery	Vicarious experience	Verbal persuasion	Interest in task
Overt	.404**	.381**	.340**	.494**
Task mastery		.256**	.196**	.309**
Vicarious experience			.368**	.514**
Verbal persuasion				.619**

Correlations higher than .40 are highlighted in table.

****Items are significantly correlated (p<.001)**

3.3.1.3 Correlations between moral disengagement items (pre-workshop)

Table 2.12 shows correlations among moral disengagement items in the pre-workshop questionnaire application. All items were significantly (<.001) and positively correlated with each other, which suggests scale homogeneity. Disregarding the importance of the event has the strongest correlation to other moral disengagement mechanisms such as responsibility displacement, euphemistic labelling, dehumanization and moral justification.

Table 2.12 Moral disengagement item correlations (Pre-workshop)

Pearson Correlation	Euphemistic labelling	Dehumanization	Justification	Disregarding	Victim blaming
Responsibility displacement	.355**	.361**	.373**	.444**	.210**
Euphemistic labelling		.372**	.351**	.485**	.269**
Dehumanization			.353**	.423**	.207**

Justification				.507**	.294**
Disregarding					.327**

Correlations higher than .40 are highlighted in table.

****Items are significantly correlated (p<.001)**

3.3.2 Post-workshop correlations

Correlations between self-efficacy and moral disengagement total scores in the post-workshop questionnaire responses are presented in this section. Self-efficacy questionnaire items and moral disengagement questionnaire items are also correlated among themselves to unearth construct patterns. Correlations of .40 or higher (moderate or strong) are highlighted in tables 2.13 and 2.14.

3.3.2.1 Correlation between self-efficacy and moral disengagement (Post-workshop)

Self-efficacy and moral disengagement total scores were obtained averaging all of the self- efficacy and moral disengagement scores, respectively. A significant (<.001) weak to moderate (-.390) negative correlation was found between these two scores. Students with high self-efficacy scores are more likely to have lower moral disengagement scores.

3.3.2.2 Correlations between self-efficacy items (post-workshop)

Table 2.13 shows correlations among self-efficacy items in the post-workshop questionnaire application. All self-efficacy items were significantly (<.001) and positively correlated to each other. Interest in the task is the item that had most correlations with other items after the workshop, having a moderate to strong correlation efficaciousness to follow verbal instruction (.664), efficaciousness to intervene after witnessing someone else's actions

(.562) and overt self-efficacy (.500). Efficaciousness to follow verbal instruction is also correlated with efficaciousness to imitate witnessed behaviour (.573).

Table 2.13 Self-efficacy item correlations (Post-workshop)

Pearson Correlation	Task mastery	Vicarious experience	Verbal persuasion	Interest in task
Overt	.291**	.317**	.215**	.500**
Task mastery		.278**	.220**	.300**
Vicarious experience			.573**	.562**
Verbal persuasion				.664**

Correlations higher than .40 are highlighted in table.

****Items are significantly correlated (p<.001)**

3.3.2.3 Correlations between moral disengagement items

Table 2.14 shows correlations among moral disengagement items in the post-workshop questionnaire application. All moral disengagement items were significantly (<.001) and positively correlated with each other. Disregarding the importance of the event is moderately correlated with euphemistic labelling (.578) and moral justification (.451). Additionally, dehumanization is correlated with moral justification of events (.437).

Table 2.14 Moral disengagement item correlations

Pearson Correlation	Euphemistic labelling	Dehumanization	Justification	Disregarding	Victim blaming
Responsibility displacement	.324**	.298**	.336**	.298**	.089**
Euphemistic labelling		.397**	.346**	.578**	.310**
Dehumanization			.437**	.354**	.259**
Justification				.451**	.325**

Disregarding					.334**

Correlations higher than .40 are highlighted in table.

****Items are significantly correlated (p<.001)**

3.4 Descriptive and inferential statistics

Descriptive statistics were used to explore self-efficacy and moral disengagement scale data. This included the proportion of male and female respondents, the average (mean) score of each scale, and the how much responses differed from the mean score (standard deviation).

Inferential analyses were used to determine if there are significant differences between gender categories and between the pre-workshop and post-workshop applications in terms of the self-efficacy and moral disengagement scales. Total scores used for these tests were calculated by creating two new variables; self-efficacy and moral disengagement totals. These variables were computed by averaging all the items in the self-efficacy and moral disengagement sections of the questionnaire, respectively.

3.4.1 Pre-workshop

This section includes descriptive statistics for the pre-workshop self-efficacy and moral disengagement scales and inferential analyses to test for significant differences between male and female participants.

3.4.1.1 Gender differences in self-efficacy and moral disengagement (pre-workshop)

Descriptive statistics were used to explore data composition in terms of male and female participants, mean score and standard deviation. Student's t-tests were calculated to establish whether there were significant differences between genders in terms of responses to the self-efficacy and moral disengagement scales.

a) Self-efficacy

Table 2.15 shows descriptive statistics for the pre-workshop self-efficacy scale total by gender. The self-efficacy mean for females (4.47) is higher than the male mean (4.16). This suggests that females feel more efficacious at helping bullying victims. Standard deviation was less than one point out of the five Likert scale points, which indicates outlier responses were not prevalent in the sample.

Table 2.15 Self-efficacy total descriptive statistics by gender (pre-workshop)

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Male	91	4.16	.66
Female	95	4.47	.61

T-test

Results of a t-test yielded a t of 3.29 with a .001 significance; this indicated that there is a significant difference between male and female self-efficacy means. Females feel more efficacious to help bullying victims.

b) Moral disengagement

Table 2.16 shows descriptive statistics for the pre-workshop moral disengagement total by gender. The moral disengagement mean for females (1.73) is lower than the male mean (2.09). This suggests that males are more prone to using moral disengagement mechanisms when witnessing bullying incidents. Again, standard deviation was less than one point out of the five Likert scale points, which indicates outlier responses were not prevalent in the sample.

Table 2.16 Moral disengagement total descriptive statistics by gender (pre-workshop)

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Male	91	2.09	.79
Female	95	1.73	.75

T-test

The t-test produced a t of 3.2 with a .002 significance; this means that there is a significant difference between male and female moral disengagement scale response means. Males present higher levels of moral disengagement when witnessing bullying.

3.4.2 Post-workshop

This section presents descriptive statistics for post-workshop self-efficacy and moral disengagement totals and inferential analyses testing for significant differences between the responses from male and female participants.

3.4.2.1 Gender differences in self-efficacy and moral disengagement (post-workshop)

Descriptive statistics were used to explore scale data in terms of male and female participants, mean score and standard deviation. Student's t-tests were calculated to establish whether there are significant differences between genders categories in terms of self-efficacy and moral disengagement scale response

a) Self-efficacy

Table 2.17 shows descriptive statistics for the post-workshop self-efficacy total by gender. The self- efficacy mean for females (4.29) is higher than the male mean (4.08). This suggests that females feel more efficacious at helping bullying victims. Standard deviation was less than one point out of the five Likert scale points, which indicates outlier responses were not prevalent in the sample.

Table 2.17 Self-efficacy total descriptive statistics by gender (post-workshop)

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Male	90	4.08	.71
Female	93	4.29	.62

T-test

The t-test of produced a t of 2.11 with a .036 significance; this indicated that there is a significant difference between male and female self-efficacy scale response means. Females feel more efficacious at helping peers in bullying situations.

b) Moral disengagement

Table 2.18 shows descriptive statistics for the post-workshop moral disengagement scale total by gender. The moral disengagement mean for females (1.61) is lower than the male mean (2.17). This suggests that males are more prone to using moral disengagement mechanisms when witnessing bullying incidents. The standard deviation was less than one point out of the five Likert scale points, which indicates outlier responses were not prevalent in the sample. However, there is a wider range of scores among male than female respondents.

Table 2.18. Moral disengagement total descriptive statistics by gender (post-workshop)

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Male	90	2.17	.80
Female	93	1.61	.62

T-test

The t-test produced a t of 5.08 with a <.001 significance; there is a significant difference between male and female moral disengagement means. Males have higher moral disengagement levels when it comes to discussing bullying situations.

3.4.3 Differences between pre-workshop and post-workshop scale results

a) Self-efficacy

Table 2.19 shows the descriptive statistics for the self-efficacy scale total mean before and after the workshop was implemented. There was a small decline in the self-efficacy mean between the pre-workshop (4.32) and the post-workshop (4.19) questionnaire applications.

Table 2.19 Self-efficacy total descriptive statistics (pre-workshop vs post workshop)

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Self-Efficacy	Pre-workshop	186	4.32	.65
	Post.workshop	183	4.19	.67

T-test

A t-test to compare these means produced a t of 1.8 with a .064 significance; this indicates that there are no significant differences between the pre-workshop and the post workshop self-efficacy scale responses.

b) Moral disengagement

Table 2.20 shows the descriptive statistics for the moral disengagement scale total mean before and after the workshop was implemented. The moral disengagement mean declined very slightly (1.90 to 1.89).

Table 2.20 Moral disengagement total descriptive statistics (pre-workshop vs post workshop)

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Moral disengagement	Pre-workshop	186	1.90	.79
	Post-workshop	183	1.89	.76

T-test

The t-test produced a t of .21 with a .83 significance, which shows that there is no significant difference between the pre-workshop and post-workshop moral disengagement scale responses.

3.4.4 Differences between grades

a) Self-efficacy

The one-way ANOVA is an inferential test that can be used to compare means of two or more different groups when only one dependent variable and only one independent variable are being analysed (Field, 2013). A One-way ANOVA test was performed to assess if there were significant differences in self-efficacy between different secondary school grades. The results suggest that there is no significant difference in self-efficacy between first, second, and third grade students ($F=.345$, sig .393).

b) Moral disengagement

A One-way ANOVA test was performed to assess if there were significant differences in moral disengagement between different secondary school grades. The results suggest that there is no significant difference in self-efficacy between first, second, and third grade students ($F=.167$, sig .846).

3.5 Questionnaire: scenarios

The second part of the questionnaires consisted of four different bullying scenarios, one of physical bullying, one of verbal, one of social and one of cyberbullying. These scenarios portrayed a student being bullied and a bystander who witnessed the event. The gender of the bullies is kept neutral and victim/bystander dyad genders varied from male/male to male/female, female/female and female/male. This was done to reduce gender bias and to present participants with a variety of the bullying dynamics they may encounter in their daily lives. The whole student body answered the scenario items; there were 186 participants in the pre-workshop application (91 male/ 95 female) and 183 participants (90 male/93 female) in the post-workshop application. Student ages ranged from 12 to 15 years.

After reading the scenarios, students were asked how they thought the bystander felt about what they witnessed and why. Students were also asked if they thought bystanders can help the victimised peer and how. The first and second questions aimed to gauge students' moral engagement with different bullying situations. The second and third explored students' self-efficacy to help bullied peers and which courses of action they had in their bystander behaviour repertoire. Participant responses were thematically analysed and coded into categories following the best fit approach.

3.5.1 Pre-workshop

Scenarios used in the pre-workshop questionnaire were the following:

Physical bullying: "Jorge is walking through the schoolyard during recess and sees a group of students crowding around Carlos, a boy in Jorge's class. Two of the students have taken his lunch from him, and are slapping him while they laugh. Carlos is struggling to get his food back, but the two other students are much taller. It looks like Carlos won't will be able to eat before the bell rings."

Verbal bullying: “For an in-class assignment, Ana’s teacher divides her class into groups to answer some questions. Ana notices that a couple of the group members are making fun of everything Javier, another group member, is saying. They say that what Javier is saying is stupid and that he should just stay quiet. When Javier goes silent, they start making fun of him and ask him if he is going to cry.”

Social bullying: “Sandra notices that a new girl, Julia, has joined her class. The teacher asks Sandra to work with Julia in a paired assignment, and she seems to be very nice. Afterwards, some students in Sandra’s class tell her not to talk to Julia. They say they know her from outside the school and have a lot of negative things to say about her. By the end of the week, nobody in the class talks to Julia.”

Cyber bullying: “Arturo is on Facebook when he sees that his classmate Teresa’s page is being bombarded with really mean comments about the way she looks. She is deleting them, but more seem to be coming up. For what some of the posts say, it is obvious to Arturo that she is receiving insulting phone text messages from the same people too.”

3.5.1.1. Answer percentages (pre-workshop)

This section of the scenario data analysis focuses on examining answer percentages observed. Answer categories were created using common themes found in the thematic analysis process. All answers were assigned into categories following the best-fit approach.

a) Self-efficacy Answer Percentages

Table 2.21 shows the percentage of student answers that fell into each of the response categories for each bullying type. When it comes to what students believed bystanders can do when witnessing bullying situations, telling an adult was the most frequent answer for all bullying types, except for social bullying. After telling an adult, supporting victims and confronting bullies were also common answers. Responses including the combination of

telling a teacher and confronting bullies or telling a teacher and supporting the victim were also present.

Table 2.21 Self-efficacy scenario answer percentages (pre-workshop)

	Physical	Verbal	Social	Cyber
Telling adult	58.1%	48.9%	9.0%	36.6%
Confronting bullies	13.4%	20.3%	24.0%	15.6%
Supporting victim	2.2%	16.5%	49.7%	15.6%
Telling adult and confronting bullies	14.5%	6.6%	1.8%	3.8%
Telling adult and supporting victim	2.2%	2.2%	2.4%	2.2%
Refraining from bullying	0%	0%	5.4%	.5%
Unsure	0%	4.4%	.6%	2.2%
Lack of action (disinterest)	.5%	0%	4.8%	2.2%
Lack of action (risk for bystander)	5.9%	.5%	1.2%	2.2%
Lack of action (futility)	1.1%	.5%	1.2%	7.5%

However, some student responses reflected the belief that bystanders cannot do anything to help bullying victims. The most common reasoning for that thought was that intervening is futile and will not improve the victim's situation, and that bystanders are not able to intervene lest they put themselves at risk of being victimised as well. Open lack of interest in the bullying situation was uncommon.

There were differences regarding what students think bystanders can do to help in different scenarios

Physical bullying. Telling an adult was a common idea given of what bystanders can do to help victims in general, but this response was most prevalent in the case of physical bullying. Lack of intervention for fear of personal risk was also at its highest as a response to the physical bullying scenario. Thinking that it is possible to help by providing victims with support was less common in this scenario than in any other.

Verbal bullying. Students tended to be most unsure about what they could do to help verbal bullying victims. While they were less likely to perceive bystanders intervening as a risk compared to physical bullying, their most common response to how bystanders can help victims was still telling an adult. Respondents also commonly talked about confronting bullies and supporting victims as options of how to help verbal bullying victims.

Cyberbullying. Students were most likely to believe bystanders are unable to help cyberbullying victims. While just a handful of student answers involved disinterest or risk for the bystander as a reason for non-action, it was common for students to think that efforts to intervene in cyberbullying are futile. Students who considered acting to be helpful predominantly spoke about involving an adult. However, several students also spoke about the possibility of confronting bullies and supporting victims online.

Social bullying. Social bullying set itself apart from every other bullying type in a number of ways. While, as mentioned earlier, telling an adult was seen as the predominant way to help bullied peers in every other bullying type, students were the least likely to think of involving adults as a response to the social bullying scenario. The most common response to how students believed bystanders can help socially bullied peers involved supporting the bullied peer. There are also students who considered that simply not joining bullying is a way to actively help. Regarding reasons to refrain from intervening, students mentioned a lack of interest in that type of bullying as the main reason for not getting involved.

b) Moral Engagement/Disengagement Answer Percentages

Table 2.22 shows the percentage of student answers that fall in each of the response categories for each bullying type regarding students’ perceptions of bystander moral involvement. Most students reported to be morally engaged when witnessing bullying, with the highest level of engagement being with verbal bullying, followed by physical bullying, then social bullying and the lowest level being engagement with cyberbullying. Consistently with these results, the highest level of disengagement was seen as a response to the cyberbullying scenario, followed by the social bullying and the physical bullying one. The verbal bullying scenario has the least morally disengaged responses.

Table 2.22 Moral disengagement scenario answer percentages (pre-workshop)

	Physical	Verbal	Social	Cyber
Engaged (Empathetic)	42.9%	48.4%	31.9%	44.5%
Engaged (Disapproving)	15.9%	31.3%	39.2%	28.7%
Engaged (Wishing to help)	11.5%	3.8%	6.0%	4.3%

Engaged (Guilty)	7.1%	4.9%	4.2%	3.7%
Fearful of experiencing bullying too	12.1%	6.0%	1.8%	1.2%
Unsure	3.8%	1.6%	9.6%	5.5%
Disengaged (futility)	1.6%	.5%	1.2%	6.7%
Disengaged (distance from incident)	3.3%	2.7%	3.6%	2.4%
Disengaged (victim blaming)	1.1%	.5%	2.4%	1.2%
Disengaged (Entertained)	.5%	0%	0%	1.8%

The way students morally engage and disengage also varies among bullying scenarios.

Social bullying. While being empathetic to their peers' pain is the predominant way participants morally engage when witnessing bullying, this is not true for the case of social bullying; in that scenario students are most likely to disapprove because they believe the situation is morally wrong. Students are also more likely to not know what to make of the situation when exposed to social bullying. Victim blaming, though uncommon, is more often seen in social bullying as well. Students are also less likely to feel empathetic towards social bullying victims compared to victims from other bullying types.

Physical bullying. Wishing to help and guilt for witnessing and not helping are present in all bullying types, although they are more prevalent in the case of physical bullying. Witnessing physical bullying is also what makes students most fearful about then being bullied themselves. Distancing themselves from the incident is the most common disengagement technique in both physical and social bullying, but again, it is present in all types of bullying.

Verbal bullying. Levels of moral engagement are highest in the case of verbal bullying, and after social bullying, it is the type of bullying students morally disapprove of the most. Students are also least likely to be unsure on how they should feel when witnessing verbal bullying. Levels of guilt and fear of being bullied are the second highest, after physical bullying, for verbal bullying.

Cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is the type of bullying students feel less fearful of suffering when witnessing it and the one they feel less guilty about not helping peers who suffer it. They are also more likely to disengage from the incident because of the belief that their help will be futile when dealing with cyberbullying. Even though it is uncommon, students were most likely to find cyberbullying entertaining, as compared to other bullying types.

3.5.1.2 Thematic analysis (pre-workshop)

This section presents the thematic analysis broken down by research question. The pre-workshop questionnaire scenario result analysis centres around the following research questions: “What are student’s perceptions on their role as bystanders?”, “Are bystanders morally responsive to witnessed bullying incidents (moral engagement)?”, “Do bystanders think they have the power to alleviate bullying situations (self-efficacy)?” and “Are there gender differences in perceptions on bullying and bystander behaviour?”.

1) What are student's perceptions on their role as bystanders?

Pre-workshop student perception of their own role in bullying was often that bystanders are nothing but observers. Even though students displayed different levels of empathy, which will be discussed in the next question, it was common to have students talk about bullying from a distance. No answers suggested that students had awareness about how bystander behaviour influences bullying dynamics.

“(The bystander feels) Sad that some people get bullied, it must be very difficult for them.”

“He (the bystander) should just walk by, it is not his problem and he needs to get to class.”

“She (the bystander) doesn't understand why people bully others, maybe they don't have friends.”

This perceived distance from incidents was particularly common in the case of cyberbullying, since students see the internet as something out of anyone's jurisdiction, being that so many people can access to it and information posted is seen as permanent.

“I don't know, because she (the bystander) could tell someone, but then again, it is on Facebook.”

“No (the bystander cannot help), he can't do anything. That's out of his reach.”

“There is nothing to do, it was already uploaded to the internet and seen by too many people”.

Still, most participants also believed bystanders are in the position to assist bullying victims. While some students view this assistance as a good deed, others see it as a responsibility.

“He (the bystander) should step in and help his classmate out. It would be the right thing to do.”

“She could try to make friends with Julia (the victim), and introduce her to her friends so she will be happier.”

“He has to let someone know what he has seen, he owes it to his classmate.”

Even though telling a teacher is a common response for almost all bullying instances, it is frequently considered by participants as the only possible course of action a bystander can take when witnessing physical bullying. This might be because students view physical bullying as risky a situation that poses a threat to them. Potential risk is also used as justification to remain passive.

“(The bystander can) Tell a teacher. That’s all you can do in those situations, really.”

“He needs to tell a teacher. They are the ones who can deal with students hitting other students.”

“He might feel bad, but he has to just ignore it if he doesn’t want to get hurt himself”

Students respond differently to social bullying, though. Some participants identify bystanders as victims of social bullying as well, and being pressured to withdraw their friendship from other group members as a violation to their rights.

“That it is not right, because it is Sandra’s (the bystander’s) decision who she wants to hang out with and who she shouldn’t be hanging out with.”

“Bad, because that should be left to each person’s judgment, not to what a single person decided.”

“Sandra doesn’t have to listen to anyone, she can decide if she likes other people herself.”

While some students see social manipulation as something they should challenge, some see these kind of social mandates as something they have to abide by. The latter thought was more common in male students.

“She (the bystander) can keep talking to her and trying to get the others to see that Julia is a good classmate.”

“Yes (the bystander can help), not following the pack, getting to know Julia (the victim) and showing she has a mind of her own.”

“(The bystander feels) Bad, because maybe she really likes her but they won’t let her hang out with her.”

“Sandra should be alright because she will think that what she was told is true, but deep inside she wanted to get to know Julia.”

2) Are bystanders morally responsive to witnessed bullying incidents (moral engagement)?

Most students engage morally when they witness bullying situations. The most common response to the “How do you think (the bystander) feels?” items, revolved around empathy towards the bullying victim. While some students limited themselves to answer “He/she feels bad”, some participants gave answers which reflected deeper involvement with the scenarios.

“(The bystander feels) Bad, because they took his classmate’s food. What is he going to eat now? “

“He feels bad to see that his classmate is going through something neither Carlos nor anyone else would like to go through.”

“(The bystander feels) Bad for her, because he sees her (the victim’s) desperation to erase comments and avoid what is happening.”

In many instances, themes related to empathy were intertwined with students’ fear of being bullied, where students imagined the bystander in the scenario felt bad to see the victim’s suffering, but mainly because they imagined being in that situation themselves.

“(The bystander feels) Worried, because she can be next.”

“He is concerned, because they could do the same to him.”

“(The bystander feels) Bad, because it could happen to him the next day.”

Other students disapproved of bullying at an ideological moral level, perceiving the incidents to be abusive, unfair and wrong. One of the reasons most commonly given to disapprove of bullying, was that the victim did not do anything to deserve the abuse.

“Well (the bystander feels) bad, because the treatment they’re giving him (the victim) is not acceptable.”

“(The bystander feels) Mad, because we’re all free to give our opinion and say whatever we think is right. “

“He feels bad because he knows his classmate is suffering but he also feels angry because there are other people hurting someone who didn’t do anything to deserve it.”

Guilt is another recurring theme for students imagining how bystanders feel when being onlookers to victimization. Most of those students imagine the bystander as passive, but some (particularly in the social bullying scenario) assume the bystander was a reinforcer.

“He (the bystander) feels really bad, she’s seeing how they make fun of him (the victim) and he’s just staying silent.”

“I think she’s feeling sad because they are isolating her (the victim) and she also feels guilty not to be supporting her.”

“She feels guilty, because she’s playing along.”

“She feels in the middle, she didn’t know what to do, but since she chose not to talk to her anymore she feels really bad.”

Other students spoke about a dilemma between remaining and feeling guilty or defending the victim and risking social penalties for intervening. This was more often seen in the physical bullying scenario.

“He (the bystander) feels insecure because he doesn’t know what to do, if he helps they can beat him up but if he doesn’t, he’s letting them do more damage.”

“(The bystander feels) Bad, because if he helps, the others will go against him and if he doesn’t, he’ll feel guilty.”

Many students disapproved of bullying since victims are members of their community. For many of them, the argument “they are hurting a classmate” was reason enough to condemn bullying.

“He feels bad because he’s one of his classmates and they’re humiliating him.”

“She thinks it is wrong because they’re all classmates and they all have to support her (social bullying victim) through the change she is facing.”

“(She feels) Sad because he’s part of her team and nobody is listening to him.”

In some instances, the level of moral engagement depended on the bystander’s relationship to the victim. Students are more likely to morally engage if bullying incidents involve friends than if they involve classmates they have not bonded with.

“She (the bystander) will feel bad if he (the victim) is her friend, because when a friend is offended, answers to the situation must be looked for.”

“(The bystander feels) Bad, they might be friends. “

“I don’t know; it depends on how close she is to the girl who is being excluded.”

Many students disengage by distancing themselves from bullying incidents. They argue that since bystanders are not directly involved in the situation, they have no reason to have an emotional reaction to it.

“I think he (the bystander) doesn’t care, because it’s not happening to him.”

“(The bystander feels) Normal, it is not his problem.”

“I think he’s only watching and he feels nothing because it’s not his problem.”

One way students distance themselves from peer victimisation is through displacement of responsibility. They can empathise with victims and acknowledge that someone should help them, but do not think of themselves as viable candidates to do so.

“(The bystander feels) Bad, because they’re assaulting him (the victim) and nobody does anything.”

“She feels very sad that nobody is trying to make the new girl feel welcome in the group. “

Another common moral disengagement mechanism was victim blaming. Students blamed victims for what they go through by saying they are being bullied because they are not defending themselves. This implies that they have the power to stop their victimisation. but they are just not using this power.

“I don’t think she (the bystander) pities him (the victim). She trusts that he can handle it, and if he doesn’t, it means that he doesn’t know how to defend himself.”

“He doesn’t feel anything because Carlos (the victim) is being weak and is not fighting back.”

“She feels sad that Javier (the victim) doesn’t know how to defend himself.”

In the case of social bullying, victims can be perceived as deserving social alienation due to a previous action. When responding to the social bullying scenario, many students believed they had the right to ask victims to prove whether the gossip spread about them was true. Student attitudes towards the incident often depended on this.

“Yes, she (the bystander) can investigate the things they’re saying about her (the victim).”

“She can talk to Julia (the victim) and ask her if what she was told is true.”

“She can ignore the lies or asking Julia herself if it is true.”

However, moral engagement and disengagement is not necessarily black or white. Some students try to morally disengage by reminding themselves that they are not close to the victim, by thinking that they are not a part of the situation or trying to ignore what they see. This rational exercise is not always successful, and many students remain conflicted by the events they witness.

“I think Jorge (the bystander) feels almost nothing, maybe a little pity, but he’s just a classmate, he’s not even his friend, maybe they don’t even get along.”

“(The bystander feels) Indecisive because it is not his problem, but maybe he cares.”

“(The bystander feels) Bad, or maybe she just tries to ignore what’s happening for fear or for not feeling guilt about the way he’s being treated.”

3) Do bystanders think they have the power to alleviate bullying situations (self-efficacy)?

When asked if bystanders can help bullied peers, most of students answered affirmatively. When asked to elaborate on how they could help, the most common response was that bystanders can inform adults a student is being bullied. Many students believed adults have the tools and jurisdiction to help.

“Yes (the bystander can help), letting an adult know what’s going on, they are the ones who can help.”

“Yes, getting the teacher’s attention.”

“Yes, speaking to a teacher so Carlos (the victim) can be helped.”

Still, other participants considered telling a teacher as inaction. These students believed that bystanders cannot help, and that the only possible course of action was alerting an adult. This response was more frequent regarding the physical bullying scenario.

“Yes (the bystander can help) and no. He can talk to someone, but at the moment when they (the bullies) are doing it he can’t do anything or he can get hurt himself.”

“No (the bystander cannot help), because his other classmates are very abusive and the best thing would be to alert the authorities.”

“Not directly, but he can tell teachers and they will deal with it.”

Some participants thought that alerting a teacher was a good way to help used in combination with another helping strategy; this was usually confronting bullies or comforting victims.

“Yes (the bystander can help), calling someone who is around to call a teacher while he tries to help Carlos handle the bullies.”

“Yes, defending her (the victim) and telling on the other kids.”

“Yes, supporting her, hanging out with her and telling a teacher.”

Even though when students thought of notifying an adult they usually referred to a teacher, prefect, headmaster or some other member of staff, some students also considered talking to the victim’s parents. This was more frequent in the context of cyberbullying.

“Maybe (the bystander can help), she can let her parents know and see what they could do.”

“Yes, he can tell her parents so they can help her.”

“Yes, talking to Teresa’s (the victim’s) parents and their teachers and lodging a complaint.”

Bystanders also identified comforting bullying victims as a helping strategy . Comfort was often thought of as verbally acknowledging the situation and giving the victim support.

“Yes (the bystander can help), telling him (the victim) he as a right to give an opinion.”

“Yes, maybe telling her (the victim) positive things and telling her to ignore the comments.”

“Yes, speaking to Teresa (the victim) and telling her not to listen to those comments and just be herself.”

Students often also saw integrating victims into social groups and activities, or just offering friendship as a way of comforting someone who has been victimised.

“Yes (the bystander can help), integrating him (the victim) into her team.

“Yes, talking to her (the victim) and hanging out with her and getting to know her.”

“Yes, she can help because she doesn’t have to listen to what other people say. She can get to know her and welcome her the way she is.”

Students also believed that a good way to support bullied peers was to give them advice on how to handle the problem by themselves. This response was present in all bullying scenarios, and was more common among male students.

“Yes (the bystander can help), helping her (the victim) become more sociable.”

“Yes, she can help by advising him (the victim) so that he won’t be bullied anymore.”

“Yes, she can talk to him and try to discuss the problem so he learns how to defend himself.”

Having the bystander directly confront the bullies was also an option students considered to be a way of helping bullied peers. This was found as a response to all bullying scenarios.

“Yes (the bystander can help), telling them (the bullies) to leave her alone.”

“Yes, telling the classmates they’re wrong and making them offer an apology.”

“Yes, he can step in and break up the fight”.

Still, some students did not think bystanders have the power to help bullied peers. These students stated bystanders must resign themselves to the situation their classmates face.

“Nothing, there’s nothing he (the bystander) can do.”

“No (the bystander cannot help), the damage is irreversible.”

“Sometimes when your friends are mistreated you can’t do anything.”

In the case of the physical bullying scenario, students considered that disadvantages in strength can prevent bystanders from helping victims.

“If he (the bystander) is short like Carlos (the victim), he might feel angry and helpless, maybe he feels he can’t do anything about it.”

“No, he can’t help because they (the bullies) are taller than him.”

“No (the bystander cannot help), the tall boys are stronger.”

For other bullying scenarios, students assumed that to help, that bystanders would have to stand up not only to the bully, but to a larger number of their peers. Participants believed that this situation would render bystanders powerless.

“He (the bystander) can’t help, it’s too many people.”

“No, (the bystander cannot help) you can’t change the group’s opinion.”

“No, it’s just him against everyone else.”

Students often perceived that the biggest obstacle bystanders face when wanting to help bullying victims is the fear of being targeted by the bullies themselves if they oppose them. This response was frequently given for all bullying scenarios.

“He (the bystander) is powerless because he can’t do anything, he’s afraid that the same thing will happen to him.”

“She (the bystander) can’t help her (the victim) or they’ll make fun of her too.”

“He can’t do anything, because if he gets involved he’ll be insulted as well.”

Other participants considered that not knowing what to do about bullying is a reason for bystanders to refrain from taking action.

“No (the bystander cannot help), because she doesn’t know what to do, or how to react.”

“He (the bystander) would like to do something but he doesn’t know what.”

“He is indecisive, because he doesn’t know how to respond to the situation.”

4) Are there gender differences in perceptions on bullying and bystander behaviour?

Male and female students expressed empathy towards bullied peers in a different manner. Female students were more likely to convey empathy for the pain their classmates felt.

“(The bystander feels) Bad, because she can see how her classmate is ashamed.”

“(The bystander feels) Sad and worried because she sees her classmates are picking on Javier (the victim) and making him feel sad.”

“Bad, they’re not letting him (the victim) eat, they’re mistreating him and he will be hungry and feel bad.”

On the other hand, male students more frequently expressed to feel sympathy for peers they perceive as unable to defend themselves.

“He (the bystander) feels bad because the victim can’t do anything to defend himself because the bullies are taller.”

“He’s sad because he (the victim) is being attacked and he’s not defending himself.”

“She feels sad that Javier doesn’t know how to defend himself.”

While female participants often described bullying as “unfair” or “wrong”, male participants were more likely to perceive bullying as serious transgressive behaviour and to use stronger terms to describe it.

“He feels bad, and wanting to help because it is a very violent action.”

“She is worried, because they’re harassing a student. She wants them to stop.”

“He feels bad, because people are assaulting him, taking his food and kicking him.”

In the case of the social bullying scenario, some female students assumed that the bystander was a reinforcer. Male students did not make this assumption, neither was it observed as a reaction to other scenarios.

“She (the bystander) feels in the middle, she didn’t know what to do, but since she chose not to talk to her (the victim) anymore she feels really bad.”

“She feels guilty, because she’s playing along.”

“She feels bad, for having told gossip about her (the victim).”

Male and female students also had different responses regarding what bystanders are trying to accomplish when they inform adults that bullying is taking place. Female participants tended to think bystanders should go to adults and seek help for bullied peers.

“Yes (The bystander can help), telling the teacher to change Javier (the victim) to a different team and telling her what happened.”

“Yes, speaking to a teacher so Carlos (the victim) can be helped.”

“Yes, telling the teacher he (the victim) is being teased so she will encourage him to share his opinion.”

Male students more frequently believed that the benefit of alerting adults when bullying situations develop is to make sure bullies will face consequences for their actions.

“Yes (the bystander can help), telling a teacher and getting the bullies told off or punished.”

“Yes (the bystander can help) asking for the bullies to get extra homework.”

“Yes, they can get the teacher to tell off the students who are mistreating him and call their parents.”

3.5.2 Post-workshop

To avoid carryover effects from the pre-workshop application and to avoid answer repetition, scenarios were changed in the post-workshop questionnaire. The bullying type portrayed in the scenarios as well as the gender of the victim and bystander in them were kept the same as in the pre-workshop scenarios. The scenarios used in the post-workshop questionnaire were as follows:

Physical bullying: “Luis is about to leave school at the end of the day when he sees that in the corner of the schoolyard, his classmate Juan is being beaten up by an older student. Juan is trying to shield himself from the attack, but he is not hitting back and Luis notices that his glasses are lying on the floor and one of the crystals is shattered.”

Verbal bullying: “After the summer break, Elena walks into her classroom and notices that her classmate Raúl is wearing orthodontic headgear. A group of students are making fun of him, telling him they are horse reigns and making horse jokes all day. Raúl is very quiet and shy and he does not say anything, but Elena can see he is very upset.”

Social bullying: “Some classmates ask Rosa if she wants to go to a town fair. They tell her the whole class is going, except for Jimena, a girl in her class. Rosa thinks Jimena is nice, but she is told not to invite her. Later in the day, as some classmates are discussing what they are going to do in the fair, Rosa sees that Jimena looks teary-eyed.”

Cyberbullying: “José is doing homework when he gets a Whatsapp message. When he opens it, he sees that it is a meme with his classmate Liliana’s photo and an insulting comment.

After a while, he starts getting more memes from different people, all of them of Liliana, all

of them very rude. Some of his friends start commenting about the memes, which makes it clear to José that everybody has seen them.”

The post-workshop questionnaire scenario result analysis focused on the following research questions: “Are there gender differences in perceptions of bullying and bystander behaviour?”, “Does addressing moral disengagement dynamics help students morally re-engage?”, “Does introducing a variety of prosocial bystander roles increase self-efficacy in bullying situations?”, and “Are students receptive to material aimed to encourage them to become prosocial bystanders?”.

3.5.2.1. Answer percentages (post-workshop)

This section of the scenario data analysis focuses on examining answer percentages observed. Answer categories for self-efficacy and moral disengagement were created using common themes found in the thematic analysis process. All answers were assigned to categories following the best-fit approach. The percentage of students that answered within each category for different bullying types was analysed.

a) Self-efficacy Answer Percentages

While participants’ beliefs of what bystanders could be efficacious at doing when witnessing bullying situations varies widely from scenario to scenario, most students think bystanders can help their victimised peers. Telling an adult continues to be the course of action students most commonly refer to as something the bystander can successfully do as a reaction to all bullying scenarios, except for the social bullying one.

Table 2.23 Self-efficacy scenario answer percentages (post-workshop)

	Physical	Verbal	Social	Cyber
Telling adult	53.5%	40.2%	3.0%	29.0%
Confronting bullies	23.5%	29.0%	19.5%	16.0%
Supporting victim	1.8%	15.4%	62.7%	21.6%
Telling adult and confronting bullies	10.6%	5.3%	1.2%	4.9%
Telling adult and supporting victim	1.8%	5.3%	1.2%	4.9%
Refraining from bullying	.6%	1.2%	0%	5.6%
Unsure	1.8%	.6%	.6%	1.2%
Lack of action (disinterest)	0%	.6%	1.2%	2.5%
Lack of action (risk for bystander)	4.7%	1.2%	5.9%	1.2%
Lack of action (futility)	1.8%	1.2%	4.7%	13.0%

Differences were observed in different bullying type scenarios.

Physical bullying. Even though telling an adult is the most common option students think of when asked what bystanders can do to help victims, it most prevalent as a response to the physical bullying scenario. Conversely, thinking of comforting the victim was rare

when students thought of physical bullying. Participants were also more likely to say bystanders can use the combination of telling an adult and confronting the bullies than to say they can use the combination of telling an adult and supporting the victim. Students who thought bystanders are not efficacious helpers explained that helping physical bullying victims was too risky.

Verbal bullying. Confronting bullies is a frequently mentioned possible bystander intervention for all bullying scenarios, particularly the verbal bullying one. Still, telling an adult continues to be the most common response for this scenario. The combinations of telling an adult and confronting bullies and telling an adult and supporting the victim were mentioned as a helping option the same amount of times in the verbal bullying scenario.

Cyberbullying. The cyberbullying scenario had the lowest number of students referring to confronting bullies as an intervention possibility; telling an adults and comforting victims were more common responses. Students are more likely to think that bystanders do not have the power to alleviate the situation when thinking of cyberbullying situations.

Social bullying. Students believe that the predominant way bystanders can help social bullying victims is supporting them; this response was also more common as a reaction to the social bullying scenario than any other. Participants who believed that bystanders cannot help social bullying victims explained their responses through two main rationales: that their help would not make a difference and that becoming involved was too risky for the bystander.

It is noteworthy that of the students who believed bystanders cannot do anything to help bullied peers, very few expressed a lack of interest in the situation. Only 2.5% of students believe bystanders are not interested enough to lend a hand in the case of cyberbullying and zero participants think this is the case when it comes to the physical bullying scenario.

b) Moral Engagement/Disengagement Answer Percentages

Table 2.24 shows the moral disengagement/engagement answer percentages for the post-workshop questionnaire applications. For the most part, participants perceive bystanders as morally engaged with bullying situations. Empathy is the most common response students believe bystanders have when witnessing a peer being victimised: this is especially true in the case of social bullying. Morally disapproving of the action is also frequent.

Table 2.24 Moral disengagement scenario answer percentages (post-workshop)

	Physical	Verbal	Social	Cyber
Engaged (Empathetic)	50.0%	60.9%	64.9%	56.4%
Engaged (Disapproving)	14.1%	21.9%	19.3%	24.2%
Engaged (Wishing to help)	15.9%	5.3%	4.7%	2.4%
Engaged (Guilty)	4.7%	5.9%	4.7%	1.8%
Fearful of experiencing bullying too	5.9%	.6%	1.8%	3.6%
Unsure	7.1%	3.0%	2.3%	3.0%
Disengaged (futility)	0%	.6%	0%	1.2%
Disengaged (distance from incident)	2.4%	.6%	1.2%	2.4%
Disengaged (victim blaming)	0%	.6%	1.2%	.6%
Disengaged (Entertained)	0%	.6%	0%	4.2%

As before, differences between bullying scenario types were observed.

Physical bullying. Participants were most likely to think that bystanders felt the need to help victims of physical bullying. Students were likely to feel guilty over not helping physical bullying victims as well. The physical bullying scenario also had the highest number of students saying they were unsure of how the bystander felt. Students who disengaged from the scenario did it by distancing the bystander from the incident.

Verbal bullying. Students were most likely to disapprove of verbal bullying due to the idea that it is not fair or nor right and they were least likely to not know what to make of these types of incidents. Some students also expressed guilt over not helping and fear of being victimised.

Cyberbullying. Most students expressed the belief that bystanders morally engage with the cyberbullying incidents they witness, primarily through empathy or disapproval of the act. However, even though disengagement was uncommon, students were more likely to disengage from the cyberbullying scenario. Students were least likely to feel guilt for not helping cyberbullying victims as well. Disengaging by interpreting the event as amusing was only present in response to the cyberbullying scenario.

Social bullying. In the post-workshop scenario answers, social bullying replaced verbal bullying as the scenario to which students were more likely to respond empathetically. Students were also least likely to express fear of suffering social bullying when they witness it, and least likely to disengage by distancing themselves from the event.

3.5.2.2. Pre-workshop/ post-workshop answer percentage changes

This section presents the answer categories that saw a significant change in answer percentages from the pre-workshop to the post-workshop questionnaire. Differences were explored through equality of proportions tests

a) Self-efficacy

Table 2.25 shows the comparison of response percentages by self-efficacy category regarding physical and verbal bullying from the pre-workshop to the post-workshop questionnaire application.

Table 2.25 Physical and verbal self-efficacy scenario answer percentages (pre vs. post-workshop)

	Physical Pre	Physical Post	Verbal Pre	Verbal Post
Telling adult	58.1%	53.5%	48.9%	40.2%
Confronting bullies	13.4%*	23.5%*	20.3%	29.0%
Supporting victim	2.2%	1.8%	16.5%	15.4%
Telling adult and confronting bullies	14.5%	10.6%	6.6%	5.3%
Telling adult and supporting victim	2.2%	1.8%	2.2%	5.3%
Refraining from bullying	0%	.6%	0%	1.2%
Unsure	0%	1.8%	4.4%*	.6%*
Lack of action (disinterest)	.5%	0%	0%	.6%
Lack of action (risk for bystander)	5.9%	4.7%	.5%	1.2%
Lack of action (futility)	1.1%	1.8%	.5%	1.2%

***Difference significant at p <0.05.**

The equality of the proportions was tested in the categories that had more than 10 respondents. A greater number of students reacted to the physical bullying scenario by stating that bystanders can confront bullies in the responses to the post-workshop scenarios, as compared to the pre-workshop scenario responses. The equality of proportions was tested, which produced a z score of -2.12 , with a $.03$ significance. These scores indicated that the difference is statistically significant; students were more likely to believe bystanders could confront physical bullying after the workshop.

Regarding the verbal bullying scenario, less students stated to be unsure of whether the bystander could help the victim. The equality of proportions was tested, which yielded a z score of 2.33 and a p value of $.01$. Students were less likely to answer that they did not know if bystanders could help their verbally bullied peers.

Table 2.26 shows the comparison of response percentages to the social and cyberbullying scenarios from the pre-workshop and the post-workshop questionnaire. There were less changes for the social and cyberbullying scenarios than for the physical and verbal scenarios in the post-workshop questionnaire. Fewer students thought that the way bystanders could help bullied peers was by alerting an adult. The equality of the proportions was tested, which yielded a z score of 2.26 and a p value of $.02$ for the social bullying scenario and a z score of 2.25 and a p value of $.023$ for the cyberbullying scenario. Students were significantly less likely to state that bystanders could help by alerting adults for both types of bullying incidents.

Table 2.26. Social and cyber self-efficacy scenario answer percentages (pre vs. post-workshop)

	Social Pre	Social Post	Cyber Pre	Cyber Post
Telling adult	9.0%*	3.0%*	36.6%*	29.0%*
Confronting bullies	24.0%	19.5%	15.6%	16.0%
Supporting victim	49.7%*	62.7%*	15.6%	21.6%
Telling adult and confronting bullies	1.8%	1.2%	3.8%	4.9%
Telling adult and supporting victim	2.4%	1.2%	2.2%	4.9%
Refraining from bullying	5.4%*	0%*	.5%*	5.6%*
Unsure	.6%	.6%	2.2%	1.2%
Lack of action (disinterest)	4.8%	1.2%	2.2%	2.5%
Lack of action (risk for bystander)	1.2%*	5.9%*	2.2%	1.2%
Lack of action (futility)	1.2%	4.7%	7.5%	13.0%

***Difference significant at p <0.05.**

Fewer students said they believed that bystanders can help socially bullied peers by refraining from joining bullying as well. The equality of the proportions was tested, and it yielded a z score of 3.01 and a p value of .002. Students were less likely to believe that a good way to help socially bullied peers was by not bullying them. Conversely, more students gave responses that reflected that they believed students can help cyberbullied peers by not joining in. The equality of the proportions was tested, which yielded a z score of -2.59 and a p value of .009. Students were more likely to respond that refraining from joining in with cyberbullying is helpful for victims.

More students expressed that bystanders could help social bullied peers by offering support. The equality of the proportions test yielded a z score of -2.55 and a p value of .01. Participants were significantly more likely to answer that bystanders can help by providing support to socially bullied peers in the post- workshop questionnaire. Still, more students said they believe that it is not possible to help social bullying victims because of the potential dangers that challenging social norms brings to bystanders. The equality of the proportions was tested, yielding a z score of -2.30 and a p value of .01. Students were more likely to believe that social risks are a deterrent to helping behaviour in social bullying situations.

b) Moral disengagement

Table 2.27 shows the comparison response percentages to the physical and verbal bullying scenarios by moral disengagement category from the pre-workshop to the post-workshop questionnaire.

Table 2.27. Physical and verbal moral disengagement scenario answer percentages (pre vs. post-workshop)

	Physical Pre	Physical Post	Verbal Pre	Verbal Post
Engaged (Empathetic)	42.9%	50.0%	48.4%	60.9%
Engaged (Disapproving)	15.9%	14.1%	31.3%	21.9%
Engaged (Wishing to help)	11.5%	15.9%	3.8%	5.3%
Engaged (Guilty)	7.1%	4.7%	4.9%	5.9%
Fearful of experiencing bullying too	12.1%*	5.9%*	6.0%*	.6%*
Unsure	3.8%	7.1%	1.6%	3.0%
Disengaged (futility)	1.6%	0%	.5%	.6%
Disengaged (distance from incident)	3.3%	2.4%	2.7%	.6%
Disengaged (victim blaming)	1.1%	0%	.5%	.6%
Disengaged (Entertained)	.5%	0%	0%	.6%

***Difference significant at p <0.05.**

The percentage of students who said that bystanders experiencing fear of being bullied when they witness other students being bullied increased from the pre-workshop to the post-workshop questionnaire. The equality of the proportions was tested, and it produced a z score of 2.17 with .03 significance in the case of physical bullying and a z score of 2.90 with .003 significance in the case of verbal bullying. Students were significantly less likely to believe that students engaged with witnessed bullying incidents through fear of being bullied as well.

Table 2.28 Social and cyber moral disengagement scenario answer percentages (pre vs. post-workshop)

	Social Pre	Social Post	Cyber Pre	Cyber Post
Engaged (Empathetic)	31.9%*	64.9%*	44.5%*	56.4%*
Engaged (Disapproving)	39.2%*	19.3%*	28.7%	24.2%
Engaged (Wishing to help)	6.0%	4.7%	4.3%	2.4%
Engaged (Guilty)	4.2%	4.7%	3.7%	1.8%
Fearful of experiencing bullying too	1.8%	1.8%	1.2%	3.6%
Unsure	9.6%	2.3%	5.5%	3.0%
Disengaged (futility)	1.2%	0%	6.7%*	1.2%*
Disengaged (distance from incident)	3.6%	1.2%	2.4%	2.4%
Disengaged (victim blaming)	2.4%	1.2%	1.2%	.6%
Disengaged (Entertained)	0%	0%	1.8%	4.2%

***Difference significant at $p < 0.05$.**

Table 2.28 shows the comparison of response percentages for the social and cyberbullying scenarios by moral disengagement category from the pre-workshop to the post-workshop questionnaire. Responses that stated bystanders react to social bullying by feeling empathetic towards the victim increased from the pre-workshop to the post-workshop questionnaire. The equality of the proportions was tested, and the result yielded a z score of -6.21 and a p value smaller than .000. Students were significantly more likely to respond with empathy towards social bullying victims. Conversely, responses that involved the bystander engaging by disapproving of the bully's behaviour decreased. The equality of the proportions was tested, which produced a z score of 3.6 with < .000 significance. Students were significantly less likely to engage with the social bullying scenarios by disapproving of the bully's behaviour.

Empathy towards the hypothetical cyberbullying victim increased in the post-workshop questionnaire application. The equality of the proportions was tested, which produced a z score of -2.23 with .02 significance. Students were significantly more likely to respond with empathy towards cyberbullying victims. Students who responded that bystanders cannot help cyberbullied peers because their efforts would be futile saw a decrease. The equality of the proportions was tested, yielding a z score of 2.51 and a p value of .01. Students were less likely to answer that bystander efforts to help cyberbullying victims would make no difference.

3.5.2.3. Thematic analysis (post-workshop)

The post-workshop questionnaire scenario thematic analysis centred around the following research questions: "Are there gender differences in perceptions on bullying and bystander behaviour?", "Does addressing moral disengagement dynamics help students morally reengage?", "Does introducing a variety of prosocial bystander roles increase self-efficacy in bullying situations?", and "Are students receptive to material aimed to encourage

them to become prosocial bystanders?”. For this purpose, all student answers were analysed thematically.

1) Are there gender differences in perceptions on bullying and bystander behaviour?

Male and female students seemed to have different reactions to the idea of supporting socially bullied peers. Students who believed that the bystander must comply to group norms were mostly male. These participants did not believe social bullying victims can be helped.

“No (the bystander cannot help), if they didn’t invite her they didn’t invite her and that’s that.”

“No, she is not invited and rules are rules.”

“No, because it’s not her decision, it’s the group’s decision.”

On the other hand, females were more likely to be angered about the bystander being forced or manipulated to isolate a peer, and believed social bullying bystanders must defy the bully group.

“Yes (the bystander can help), telling her class that if Jimena (the victim) doesn’t go, she won’t go either and if they tell her that they don’t care, they can go somewhere else on their own.”

“Yes, she can ignore those people who told her not to invite her and invite her anyway.”

“Yes, asking Jimena to go to the fair with her and telling her that they don’t need those kids who don’t want to invite her.”

When asked about ways bystanders can assist physical bullying victims, more female than male students considered talking to bullies and reasoning with them to be a viable option.

“Yes (the bystander can help), taking the bully aside and talking to him.”

“Yes, he can get someone to talk to teachers and trying to calm the bully down.”

“Yes, telling the boy to stop hitting Juan (the victim) because there is no good reason for violence.”

Males rarely thought of approaching the bully as an option to help. Their idea of defending physical bullying victims was normally restricted to interrupting the fight. Physical bullying perpetrators facing the consequences for their behaviour was also more commonly mentioned by males.

“Yes, (the bystander can help) trying to pull the bully away and talking to a teacher so they will get detention.”

“Yes, remove the person who is punching Juan (the victim) from him.”

“Yes, he can stop the assault or tell a teacher so that the bullies can be punished and justice is done.”

Regarding cyberbullying, females were more likely to think of alerting the victim, as well as an adult, as a way of helping. Being unaware of being a cyberbullying victim was seen as one of the injuries particular to this bullying type and as an obstacle for the victim getting help.

“Yes (the bystander can help), showing the memes to his parents and Liliana so the bullies can be stopped.”

“Yes, showing Liliana (the victim) the conversations and telling her where the images can be found.”

“Yes, showing Liliana what is being said about her and taking the evidence to a teacher or a legal authority.”

On the other hand, male students thought that trying to help cyberbullying victims is futile more often than female students. Again, the reasoning behind this was the public and permanent nature of the internet.

“No (the bystander cannot help), because there are too many people who have that image now and nobody can do anything to erase it anymore.”

“No, because everyone has seen the image and it is on the internet.”

“No because everybody has the images by now and he cannot make everybody delete them.”

2) Does addressing moral disengagement dynamics help students morally reengage?

In their answers to the post-workshop scenarios, many student answers expressed disapproval of bullying at a moral level. Compared to the pre-workshop answers, more participants referred to bullying being a violation of the victims' rights.

“She (the bystander) feels bad because people should not be treated like that.”

“She feels bad, because all people have the right to have friends and have fun.”

“Bad, because nobody deserves to be assaulted, all human beings have rights.”

Other students identified the one-sided nature of bullying, which separates it from fights in which there is mutual aggression. This made participants consider bullying to be unfair.

“(The bystander feels) Bad because she thinks it is not fair for everybody to make fun of him if he didn't do anything.”

“(The bystander feels) Bad, because they are excluding a classmate who didn't do anything, and anyone, even she, could be in that situation.”

“Bad because if he got orthodontics it is because they will be good for him (the victim) and it is not fair that they are making fun of him for that.”

Students seemed more empathetic towards bullied victims, compared to the pre-workshop application. Students also allowed themselves to reflect more on the victims’ circumstances and feelings.

“(The bystander feels) Very sad because maybe his (the victim’s) parents are making an effort to buy his glasses, and then some kids come along and break them and beat him up, that’s horrible.”

“Bad because she can see how they’re excluding her classmate, and pushing her away from the rest of the class, and talking about the fair in front of her. That is just mean.”

“He feels bad, because if he puts himself in Liliana’s (the victim’s) place and thinks what if the memes were about him, and he knew everyone is looking at them and talking about him, he’d feel terrible.”

Even though fewer students reported feeling guilty for not helping their classmates, the post-workshop scenario answers revealed that students’ responses about bystander guilt showed a greater awareness of the role of the bystander in bullying situations. Post-workshop answers involved guilt for both failing to defend and for continuing to play a part in the issue.

“(The bystander feels) Bad, because he knows he could stop it, but he doesn’t do anything.”

“He feels bad because he’s just watching and by not reporting them, so he is an accomplice.”

“(The bystander feels) Guilty, even though he’s not joining in, he’s not doing anything to stop it.”

Some participants assumed the bystander is a bully reinforcer, and talked about the dichotomy between feeling pressured to encourage or join bullying behaviours and feeling guilty over the victim's suffering. This type of assumption, only seen in female participants in the pre-workshop questionnaire application, was now expressed by male students as well.

"He (the bystander) feels bad, because even though he might have laughed, he was uncomfortable to see it".

"(The bystander feels) Guilty, because she listened to them and didn't invite Jimena either".

"Guilty for having laughed and not having spoken up when the boy was being bullied to make it stop."

As before, some students felt morally engaged because bullying affects members of their community. However, the theme of students having responsibility towards their classmates was more common in the post-workshop scenario answers.

"(The bystander feels) Bad, because even if they're not friends, they're classmates and they have to look after each other."

"Bad because he is his classmate and classmates are supposed to protect each other."

"Yes (the bystander can help), he can be a friend and a good classmate because he needs him."

Although most of the students morally engaged with the bullying scenarios, moral disengagement dynamics were present in some post-workshop responses. Victim blaming for not defending themselves, while less frequent, was still observed. Other students blamed the victims by saying there must be some reason why they became recipients of harassment.

“(The bystander) doesn’t feel anything. Why isn’t Jimena (the victim) telling on them?”

“He feels bad, because Raul (the victim) isn’t doing anything about it as he should.”

“Well, I think she (the victim) was not invited for a reason.”

Other students disengaged by distancing themselves from bullying incidents under the argument that they do not really know what happened between bullies and victims and that it is not their business. A lack of information was considered to be an obstacle for intervention.

“He (the bystander) doesn’t feel anything because he doesn’t know anything about it.”

“She (the bystander) doesn’t have an opinion because she doesn’t really know what happened.”

“I think he should just stay out of things that do no concern him.”

Some students declared that bystanders are indifferent to bullying and did not provide any reasoning. This was not observed in pre-workshop scenario responses.

“Luis (the bystander) doesn’t feel anything, he just watches and doesn’t do anything.”

“She (the bystander) feels nothing, I don’t think she cares.”

“He feels normal.”

Other participants refused to engage with the question. Again, this was not seen in the pre-workshop questionnaire application.

“How would I know?”

“I don’t know how he feels, I’m not José.”

“Why do you want to know that?”

3) Does introducing a variety of prosocial bystander roles increase self-efficacy in bystanders?

Even though fewer students thought of telling an adult as the main course of action as a response to the post-workshop scenarios, many students still considered reaching out to an adult as an important step in prosocial bystanding. Some participants also thought of involving an adult combined with another course of action, such as confronting bullies and comforting the victim.

“Yes (the bystander can help), I think that she could let someone know, someone who can really talk to the bullies and make them see that what they’re doing is wrong.”

“Yes, talking to a teacher so they become aware of the problem and talking to Raúl (the victim) to improve his self-esteem.”

“Yes, trying to break the fight up or maybe calling a teacher if he cannot handle the situation himself.”

Compared to the pre-workshop application, more students thought that bystanders could help by confronting bullies to defend victims. These answers also reflected an increased awareness of the nature of bullying and the damage it causes.

“Yes (the bystander can help), telling the boy to stop hitting Juan (the victim) because there is no good reason for violence.”

“Yes, convincing the bullies to delete those images and never do it again.”

“Yes, making her classmates see that if they don’t know someone, they have no reason to exclude her and insult her.”

Thinking of supporting victims to help in bullying situations was very common in the post-workshop questionnaire answers. These answers also reflected an increased awareness of the effect that comforting victims has on the incident.

“Yes (the bystander can help), comforting him (the victim) and giving him her support so that Raúl knows that he’s not alone.”

“Yes, cheering him up and protecting him so that it never happens again.”

“Yes, she could comfort her and they could both go to the fair on their own.”

Apart from supporting victims by comforting them after the incident, the post-workshop answers mentioned inclusion of bullied peers as a means of bystander intervention, which was not observed in the pre-workshop questionnaire answers. These kind of responses were seen more frequently in relation to the social bullying scenario.

“Yes (the bystander can help), I am sure she can find the way to integrate her (the victim) to the group.”

“Yes, taking her to the fair and helping her be included so people can see she’s nice.”

“Supporting her and trying to help her get integrated to the group.”

Another way of helping victimised peers that emerged for the first time in the post-workshop responses was that of refraining from supporting the bully. This was mostly seen as a way of showing support to bullied peers.

“Yes (the bystander can help), he can comfort him and cheer him up instead of joining the bully.”

“Yes, if she doesn’t laugh the bullies won’t think they are funny, and she can also tell Raúl (the victim) no to listen to those kids.”

“Yes, she can motivate her, support her and help her, and not support the bully.”

However, some participants shared that they do not think bystanders are able to help bullied students. This was more common as a reaction to the social and cyberbullying scenarios. These participants believe they cannot influence their classmates and that the internet is out of anyone’s reach.

“No, (the bystander cannot help) she cannot convince everyone to invite her (the victim).”

“No, because there are too many people who have that image now and nobody can do anything to erase it anymore.”

“I don’t think so, because it is difficult to delete images from social media, or even stop people from sharing them.”

Even if students think that their intervention would help their bullied peers, many of them refrained from action for fear of being bullied themselves. This theme was observed as a response to all bullying scenarios.

“No (the bystander can’t help) because not anybody is brave enough to help, and yes because that’s a classmate who can defend himself.”

“He (the bystander) feels worried, because he doesn’t know if he should say something or stay quiet, because then everyone is going to tease him next.”

“Elena is sad because she can’t tell them anything, or she’ll have it worse than Raúl.”

4) Are students receptive to material aimed to encourage them to become prosocial bystanders

Post-workshop answers showed an increase of student awareness of bullying dynamics, why bullying is a problem, and its harmful consequences for victimised peers.

“(The bystander feels) Really bad because they’re isolating her (the victim) and all people have the right to have friends and have fun.”

“He feels bad, because they’re psychologically damaging his classmate and they’re making her feel bad.”

“They (the bullies) are publishing photos of her without her approval and they’re insulting her.”

Another change that became evident in the post-workshop questionnaire data analysis is that students have a clearer and more detailed idea of how they can help bullying victims.

“Of course (the bystander can help), picking him (the victim) up, giving him his glasses back to him and staying close to him if Luis speaks to the boys who were beating him up.”

“Yes, she can explain to her classmates that driving a person away from the social circle is not right because we all need each other.”

“Yes, first not re-sending the meme, marking the image as spam and then telling an adult what’s happening to put an end to Liliana’s (the victim’s) cyberbullying.”

In addition to the ideas of defending victims and confronting bullies that were also mentioned in the pre-workshop answers, post-workshop answers show new ideas on how to help. Participants mentioned mediation or mediation-like techniques as something bystanders can do to help alleviate bullying cases in their schools

“Yes, (the bystander can help) talking to her (the victim) and her classmates and reaching an agreement where nobody can make fun of anybody else.”

“Yes, he (the bystander) can intervene in the situation acting as a mediator and talking about what’s happening and why, so the problem can be solved.”

“Yes, he can go to a teacher and talk to the people who are bothering his classmate and ask them to stop.”

Students seem to be aware that their attitudes can worsen or alleviate bullying situations. Many responses mentioned not only supporting victims, but refraining from encouraging bullies as something bystanders can do to help. The role of bystander attitudes in bullying situations was one of the main messages of the workshop.

“Yes, (the bystander can help) maybe she can invite her (the victim) over that day, and she can motivate her, support her and help her, and not support the bully.

“Yes, not laughing, because she knows it is not funny and the bullies should know that if they wanted to make kids laugh, they can’t.”

“He should do something, otherwise the bully will think it is okay and he can do it to another kid too.”

Even though many students still feel cyberbullying is more difficult to tackle, the post-workshop results did show that participants knew of courses of action that they can take to support cyberbullying victims.

“Yes (the bystander can help) reporting the memes, not sharing them and finding a way to make Liliana (the victim) feel better.”

“Yes, talking to her (the victim) about what to do with the memes, how to delete them, how to report them, etc.”

“Yes, deleting the messages he has in his phone and mark the meme as offensive where it was shared and talking to her (the victim) to cheer her up.”

Another observed change was that while students used to be concerned about physical bullying mainly because of the risk of someone being injured, post-workshop answers reflect concern about physical bullying victims’ feelings and a desire to emotionally support them.

“Yes (the bystander can help), comforting him (the victim) or intervening in a respectful way.”

“Yes, telling an adult what’s happening and asking Juan (the victim) if he is ok.”

“Yes, comforting him or talking to the prefect so he can talk to Juan about the situation.”

Group views on changes that students have seen after the workshop implementation were explored through the focus groups.

3.6 Focus groups

This section presents the thematic analysis of the transcripts of the focus groups that were run before and after the workshop implementation. This data sheds light on group norms and understandings of the role of bullying bystanders, attitudes towards bullies and victims, whether students think they have a moral responsibility towards their victimised peers, and whether they feel efficacious to help victims of bullying incidents they witness.

3.6.1 Pre-workshop

Six focus groups were carried out before the intervention: one with first year girls, one with first year boys, one with second year girls, one with second year boys, one with third year girls, and one with third year boys. Between 6 and 8 students partook in each focus

group, having been selected randomly by their register number. Participant ages ranged from 12 to 15 years.

Results for the pre-workshop focus groups are broken down by research question. The pre-test focus group result analysis centres around the following research questions: “What are student’s perceptions on their role as bystanders?”, “Are bystanders morally responsive to witnessed bullying incidents (moral engagement)?”, “Do bystanders think they have the power to alleviate bullying situations (self-efficacy)?”, and “Are there gender differences in perceptions on bullying and bystander behaviour?”. As mentioned before, focus group responses were analysed thematically for this purpose.

In this section, the identifiers “S1” (Student 1), “S2” (Student 2), “S3” (Student 3) and so on, are used to mark different students taking part within interactions. Therefore, if an identifier is repeated in an interaction, we can assume that statements marked with said identifier were uttered by the same participant. However, these identifiers are not kept among interactions; each interaction starts with a new “S1”, which does not refer to “S1” in other interactions. The unnumbered identifier “S” is used in statements in which only one student is quoted. However, the identifier “R” refers to the researcher in all cases.

1) What are student’s perceptions on their role as bystanders?

In general, participants expressed seeing themselves and their classmates as a part of a community and bullying as a problem that affects the whole group. Hence, they said to believe that as bystanders, they should help victimised students.

S1: “Of course it is up to us. (to help)”

S2: “We are a group. As classmates, we should do something.”

S: "When we have a problem, we go to each other for support. It would be wrong if someone had a serious problem and we didn't support her. "

However important they perceived their involvement might be, students also identified the need for other parties to intervene and help them in addressing the issue. Participants expressed that adult assistance is an important requirement for them help bullied peers.

S: "I do think it is someone else's issue too, as well as ours. Our parents, and our teachers."

S: "We should do something, but we can't do it alone. We need adults to help us out."

2) Are bystanders morally responsive to bullying incidents (moral engagement)?

All students in the pre-workshop focus groups claimed to feel empathetic towards bullying victims, mostly stating they feel sadness or anger in response to their peers being mistreated. Some students also talked about how even though they might seem indifferent to the situation, they are far from it.

S1: "I feel angry because nobody deserves to be treated like that. "

S2: "We feel bad, it's sad."

S: "If they (the victims) feel bad for having the rest of the group ignoring their situation, they should know some care."

Other students see bullying as a social and moral violation of their peers' rights. These students were more likely to think that doing something against this injustice is a duty that all students have towards their victimised classmates.

S: "Nobody deserves to be mistreated and everyone should be respected. We all have the same rights."

S1: "It is not fair that they (victims) have to go through that, and everybody should..."

S2: "Be equal."

S3: "Help so that it doesn't keep happening"

Students also expressed feeling somewhat responsible for their bullied peers' suffering. This concern does not seem to translate into action because of doubts about how to react to bullying, and fear of negative consequences, which was explored at more length in response to the following question.

S: "We sometimes have this idea of "I'd like to do something" or "I should do something about bullying"."

R: "What do you think you should do?"

S: "I don't know. Something".

S: "I feel that I should do something, but sometimes people don't have enough courage to stick out for others."

Guilt for refraining from helping bullied peers was a common theme in the focus groups. Students who feel guilt believe that they could mitigate harm for victims, but they are unsure of how to help and feel fearful there will be negative consequences for them.

S1: "There is nobody there to defend them. I feel bad because I don't know how to help."

S2: "We feel bad because we know we could help, but we're also scared."

"Often, when I'm watching I don't do anything because I think it's not my problem, but later on I think.... why didn't I do anything?"

On the other hand, students who have defended in the past, attribute their will to act to a sense of duty, avoidance of self-censure, and a wish to be on good terms with the victim.

S: "... (Helping depends on) your degree of humanity. Knowing that it is wrong and face the possible consequences of helping another person."

S1: "(You act) knowing that if you do it, you will earn that person's appreciation, and you won't be left with that feeling of...."

S2: "...or remorse!"

S1: "Yes, or guilt."

The moral disengagement mechanism that came up most often during the focus groups was moral justification, through which bullying was portrayed as an experience that will help victims deal with difficult situations later in life. This mechanism was more commonly used by male students.

S: "In the end, doing it is going to build our character, and that can give us a little courage. Because maybe in the future, in a job for example, you can't come whining to a teacher, or whining to your parents."

S: "It's like the law of the jungle, right? Eat or be eaten. I don't know, that is my opinion. If you can't defend yourself at a certain point of your life, you won't be able to do it ever."

The second most common moral disengagement mechanism was victim blaming, through which bullied students were blamed for their situation due to alleged weakness. Again, this argument was more common in males. Female students were more likely to victim blame by assuming the victim had in some way provoked the aggression.

S: "They (victims) should do something about it. People are definitely going to treat you like that if you let them."

S: "I think she (the victim) must have done something. The other person might have a reason to do what they do."

Another moral disengagement mechanism that appeared in responses is that of displacement of responsibility. While students claim that something must be done to help bullying victims, some do not count themselves as possible sources of help.

S: "I feel very sad, because there aren't other people, friends, who can stick out for them, or protect them, or stop the others."

S: "Someone should help them (victims), but I don't think I should get involved in problems that have nothing to do with me."

3) Do bystanders think they have the power to alleviate bullying situations (self-efficacy)?

When speaking theoretically, most students consider they would be efficient helpers and that their interventions would make a difference.

S: "We're here all day with each other, there is nobody better to support us than us."

R: "Do you think you could make a difference as bullying bystanders?"

S1: "Yes, so much."

S2: "Everything would change if we did more."

Talking to students about what kinds of interventions they feel efficacious at, the most common response was that they would feel comfortable reporting the situation to an adult. This can either be individually or as a group effort. It is noteworthy that the adults students

believe they can approach are not only school staff, but also family members of bullies and victims.

S: "I feel bad to see one person attacking another and how those people don't know how to defend themselves, so what I do is telling them to go tell the teacher and don't remain silent."

S1: "We should tell a teacher. Right?"

S2: "Or tell his (the victim's) parents, I think, before you tell a teacher, because maybe his parents can do something."

S3: "And tell the bully's parents, that he's mistreating people."

However, a few students do not believe that their help can make much of a difference in bullying incidents. One of the reasons students feel pessimistic on the matter is the idea that the power of the bullies is unchallengeable and that bullies will always behave the same way.

S: "You can do an anonymous tip for bullying, I worry more about the fact about the bully will have it better than the victim, they still have power and ways to pick on others."

S1: "Sometimes people can understand the way things are and they can make a change. But sometimes they can't. There are times in which you can try to talk to the person who is doing it..."

S2: "But they don't understand."

S1: "And you can't do it if they don't take that first step..."

S2: "And sometimes they can't see it until there are consequences."

Another factor that undermines student confidence to act is the fear of social punishment if they become involved in bullying incidents. This concern is also considered by participants to be the biggest deterrent for bystander intervention.

S1: "If you talk to the bullies they'll tell you to mind your own business."

S2: "You will become the victim."

S3: "Instead of who it was before."

S1: "There is this feeling of wanting to do something, but also you think that if you do something..."

S2: "Things will go really wrong for you."

S3: "Fear of having people do stuff to us."

S1: "I think they (students) are afraid because they think that if you defend someone, you will be bullied yourself, along with the other one."

S2: "And classmates will tell the ones who say something that they are being nosey, or a tattletale..."

S1: "So you do want to help but you also feel powerless to the fact that they will go after you next."

In one group of males, students stated that this fear of being targeted is exacerbated by the idea that if they did, they would get little support from adults. Participants expressed that they believed they would be accused of weakness or of overreacting.

S1: "Sometimes when your family knows you're being bullied, they'll tell you things like "You're weak, you need to go to boxing classes so you can respond in equal measure.""

S2: "Even teachers sometimes will tell you to just defend yourself."

S3: "Or that the bullies are just playing. They want you to ignore it."

4) Are there gender differences in perceptions on bullying and bystander behaviour?

Gender differences were observed regarding views of how to help peers involved in bullying situations. While both genders agreed on the importance of supporting victims and confronting bullies, females were more likely to talk about approaching bullies and victims in a caring way and offering help to both parties.

S1: "Talk to the bullies."

S2: "And the victim. Because you can support both."

S3: "Try to talk to the bullies to figure out what's happening and why they're doing that."

S2: "And to the victims, so they feel better."

S1: "Help them both in different ways."

R: "How so?"

S1: "Talking to the bully to know if they have been having problems before, and helping them find ways to take out the stress in a different way."

S2: "Or talking to the victim...if she was my friend...or even if she wasn't, I'd ask her to tell me what she's been going through, so I can help her after."

S3: "You can advise the victim. And tell them we're going to help them in whatever they need."

Females were more likely to see supporting peers as the agent of change needed to address bullying situations and to find acceptable resolutions to problems. Some of the ideas that came up to achieve these resolutions resemble mediation techniques.

S: "I think we should try to talk to them and open the doors for bullies and victims to talk too, so they can express their feelings in a different way."

S: "I think that talking to both at the same time, or.... talking to one first and then the other to see how they feel, and then talk to both together. So that the bully knows how it feels for the victim, and the victim can understand why the bully does it."

S1: "Our help can be a big help in solving the problem."

S2: "You can see things from the bully's point of view and understand why they do it."

S3: "And you can talk to the bullied too and give them the right advice."

S2: "I think if you do things with good intentions, you will get good results."

Male students' ideas on helping bullied students were mostly aimed to interrupting incidents and helping victims defend themselves.

S: "I'd like to defend the victim, or tell those who are under the bully's control to not be afraid and stand up to him."

S: "I'd tell him (the victim) not to let people do that to him, not to stay quiet, because then they're going to latch on to him and never let him go as a victim."

Helping bullies deal with their emotional distress did not come up in male focus groups, and using violence to subdue aggressors was debated. Their views on how to work with bullies revolved around standing up to them and refusing to give them the reinforcement they seek.

S1: "You feel angry and want to hit the bully and just leave him there, that's what you'd like to do, but you can also be scared to think that the strength that you have might not be enough and he might hit you back and even harder."

S2: "Just tell someone. It's not right to hit them back, we'd be reacting in the exact same way he would. And you don't want that."

S1: "Yes, bullies wouldn't keep doing that because they just want others to like him..."

S2: "To make others laugh."

S3: "To make a group for himself."

S1: "Or to feel bigger than others. So, not responding to that he does could change what he's doing because no one would pay attention to him."

S3: "He just wants to be seen, to feel better than others. We can ignore him then."

R: "Of course (bystanders can make a difference). In the end, what the group says about you cannot determine how you live your life. Maybe not the bully, but when the others see that you help they will learn a different way to do things. Because they will see, "if he stood up, so can I.""

The discrepancy between male and female views on how to address bullies and victims might be related to a fundamental difference in how they view them. It is noteworthy that even though questions were presented in a gender-neutral way, males tended to assume that both bullies and victims were also male. Females were more likely to keep gender neutrality, but occasionally assumed that victims were also female.

In general, female students view bullies in a compassionate light, seeing them as vulnerable students who act out because they are having trouble dealing with personal issues.

S1: "They don't feel good about themselves."

S2: "(Bullies) don't know how to... they don't have someone to talk to and to support them, so they bottle up and want to take it out on other people."

S1: "They're insecure. Just insecure."

S1: "They have a lot of problems at home and don't know how to solve them, and the only outlet that they have is school."

S2: "They are very angry."

S3: "And they have poor skills."

Male students were more likely to view bullying as a means to gain a position in the group, and they were more likely to condemn bullies for this behaviour.

S: "I think they feel brave and want to portray themselves as strong, because they think the group is behind them...they don't stop to think about the damage they cause."

S: "Bullies just do it to belong. And because it is very convenient."

Many male students were also aware of power dynamics present in bullying situations, and even of the role that the glorification of violence among males plays in certain cases.

S: "I think it's wrong because they do it to belong to a group and to be leaders harassing others, using them as stepping stones to lead the group."

S: "Sometimes they have these macho family views that get passed from generation to generation. It's a chain."

There is also a dichotomy regarding views on victims. Some students feel supportive of victims, focusing on them being subject to unfair treatment and neglected by the rest of the group. This attitude, while not exclusive to them, is more common in female students.

S: "They (victims) feel bad and in the end, they are not to blame for what the other person is going through."

S: "I feel very sad, because there aren't other people, friends, who can stick out for them, or protect them or stop the others."

Females were also more likely to respect victim's choice to refrain from violence, and to see it as voluntary and constructive behaviour.

S1. "They're afraid of standing up for themselves."

S2. "No, they just don't want to attack the other person, because..."

S3. "They have different thoughts."

S1. "They feel like doing something, but set a boundary on themselves not to."

S2. "Yeah, they stop themselves."

S1: "They don't want to be like that too."

Males, on the other hand, were more likely to cast some degree of judgment on the victims for a perceived failure to defend themselves. Some male students also believed that families were responsible for not teaching their children how to do so.

S: "I feel bad that some people weren't taught to defend themselves."

S1: "I feel bad to see one person attacking others and how those people don't know how to defend themselves."

R: "Why do you think this happens?"

S: "Because some people are submissive and don't have their families' support."

3.6.2 Post-workshop

Again, six focus groups were carried out after the workshop implementation: one with first year girls, one with first year boys, one with second year girls, one with second year boys, one with third year girls, one with third year boys. Participant ages ranged from 12 to 16 years. Number of participants ranged from 6 to 8 students in each focus group. To gauge

changes in perceptions, the same students who were involved in the first focus groups were asked to participate in the second.

Results for the post-workshop focus groups will be broken down by research question. The result analysis will centre around the following research questions: “Does addressing moral disengagement dynamics help students morally re-engage?”, “Does introducing a variety of prosocial bystander roles increase self-efficacy in bullying situations?”, “Are students receptive to material aimed to encourage them to become prosocial bystanders?”, and “Are there gender differences in perceptions on bullying and bystander behaviour?”.

5) Does addressing moral disengagement dynamics help students morally reengage?

Most students seemed to agree that the way they thought about bullying had changed since the pre-workshop focus groups. Many of them express a better understanding of bullying dynamics and what they can do about it.

S1: “Yes, they hadn’t talked to us about it much before that.”

S2: “We can talk about it more freely.”

S3: “I think I understand it much better. “

S1: “Personally, I think I am more aware about many bullying situations.”

S2: “We know which measures to take if we witness bullying, we know what we can do.”

Some students share that the biggest change they see in themselves is increased empathy for both bullies and victims.

S1: “I used to think bullying wasn’t important until the workshops, I learned how much damage it can do.”

S2: “It made us think of how people feel.”

S: "We now know more about how the bully thinks and how the victim feels. And we know how we can help both of them."

Participants also seemed aware that bullied students are suffering an injustice, which causes them discomfort as bystanders.

S: "I think that sometimes we feel angry because we can understand the situation and knowing that someone is being picked on unfairly makes you angry."

S: "There are classmates who go after someone else, and that person just stands it, but they keep going and going, and they only go after certain kids, and it is normally kids who don't mess with anyone. It is just not fair."

Generally, students were in agreement about the idea that they have some degree of responsibility towards their bullied classmates. Students believed that they have this duty both for their peers' wellbeing and for their own sake, since bullying in their community affects them as well. Answers involving the negative effects of bullying on bystanders were not observed in the pre-workshop focus groups.

S: "When you help someone who is bullied, you're helping yourself."

R: "How so?"

S: "Because you are making your class a safer place in which we all can just be what we want to be."

S1: "Of course we have to help, we're a group."

S2: "Yes, it is the environment we're in, day in and day out."

Some students also talked about the bystander's responsibility towards their bullied peers, believing they would be letting them down if they refrain from action.

S1: "It is extremely important (to help). Our classmates rely on us; they rely on us to help."

S2: "They would expect that from us, and if we don't do it they will feel bad."

S1: "It would be a disappointment."

S1: "It is our place to give our support and make sure people don't feel inferior to others."

S2: "And that nobody is excluded."

Despite most students feeling empathy and responsibility, some students were openly morally disengaged. This did not occur in the pre-test focus groups. Remarks of this nature sparked discussions between students who claimed to be amused by bullying and the students who found these comments unsettling. There was also divergence between students who do not believe that bullying is a problem in their environment and those who believe it is.

S1: "Honestly it is funny."

S2: "It is very funny."

S1: "I think there are levels of bullying, and the level that we have in our school is actually pretty low, so it's funny."

S3: "It is how some people get along...but anyway you do feel bad because maybe they don't think that it is funny. The ones who are being laughed at, they don't think it is funny."

S1: "I think it is funny."

S2: "Many people say it is funny. But there are some who don't think it is funny at all, most of them, but since they're in that friend group, they try to laugh as well. "

S1: "We can tease each other, but even if we get annoyed, we're cool five minutes later."

S2: "I think many times it does start as playing around, but eventually one of the two parts may be not enjoying it."

Several moral disengagement dynamics were still in place in post-workshop focus group statements. The most common moral disengagement theme in the post-test focus groups was euphemistic labelling. Students claimed that some incidents do not count as bullying and therefore they are not given the attention bullying deserves.

S: "In this class, there is not so much bullying, as much as just joking."

S1: "Yes, it's not cool to be bullied about the way you look or those kind of things, but for instance, if you fall and someone laughs that's funny."

S2: "In this class we just have a laugh with each other."

Other widely used moral disengagement techniques were responsibility diffusion and responsibility displacement. Students avoided their responsibility since they shared their behaviour with many peers. Others disengaged by assigning the task of helping to people with closer relationships with victims.

S: "If anyone says something that is weird or funny, we all laugh. It's not so much like we pick on someone in particular. Or that we make fun of other people's defects. We do it because we want to laugh at something."

S1: "It also depends on who is the victim. If I like them, I try to help."

S2: "And if you don't?"

S1: "I'd try to help...I'm just not sure how to help someone I barely know. Their friends should help."

Students also avoid moral self-censure by trying to distance themselves from incidents. Some participants claim that bullying instances are not their problem and some declare not to notice.

S: "You should help your classmates, but it can't be your problem. But yes, you should help."

S1: "We don't bully in this classroom."

S2: "And we do not pay too much attention to what happens in other classrooms, we don't see it. But we don't bully in this classroom."

6) Does introducing a variety of prosocial bystander roles increase self-efficacy to help in bystanders?

Compared to the pre-test, student answers in the post-test focus groups revealed more diversity in the bystander intervention methods that students feel efficacious carrying out. These methods are consistent with the bystander intervention roles presented in the workshop.

The bystander intervention role students feel most efficacious at performing is comforting students after the bullying incident is over. This might be because participants view it as a safe way to make a difference.

S: "We can wait until the end of class, or recess and then go to the person who was bullied and ask them if they're ok and if we can help them in any way."

S: "I think that we mainly use moral support. When the victim is crying or feels bad, the others can come and comfort him."

Another intervention role that students view as safe is that of the messenger (alerting an adult), which was the predominant course of action shared in the pre-test focus groups. The stigma of the tattle-tale was not prominent in the post-test focus groups.

S: "I think that we need to have empathy in those situations and say ok, I can get myself in the place of both the victim and the bully, but as she says, the best thing is to go to an authority and talk about the situation."

S: "I think that it is better to go to a prefect or a teacher to help the person, not just leave them there being hurt, you never know what it can do to people."

S: "If you go with a teacher, they will call his (the bully's) parents and then it will be easier to get him to stop."

While confronting bullies is still a controversial topic among students, a few participants shared that they had already stepped in during bullying incidents and found their intervention to be effective.

S: "When you go and ask someone "hey, why are you bullying them?", it creates a moment for people to think twice about what's happening and it is something really important that we can all do when we see someone is being bullied."

S: "I talk to a friend to have someone with me, and then we approach the bully, but not aggressively, just calmly."

There are still differences between what students believe they could do and what they have done, but answers on what they feel efficacious doing involved much more concrete actions than the ones students gave during the pre-test focus groups.

S1: "Well, we normally all go to help the person who's been bullied, or ask them if they're alright"

Researcher: "How do you help them?"

S2: "Offering our support."

S1: "Yeah."

S1: "We can try to stop the bully, distract them, talk to them."

S2: "And comfort the victim too."

S1: "And then you have to let an adult know what happened, so they can help too."

Compared to how they felt before the workshops, some students see a difference in their perceptions of the degree to which they can help their peers in bullying situations.

S: "I used to believe there was nothing I could do, that they were going to go after me... But after the workshops I know I can do something. And if I can, it's going to start with me."

S: "Now we know we can help. And the very first time that you do something about it and you think nobody will have your back, but then they do. That is a great thing. It encourages you to do more."

Unfortunately, even though students have ideas about how to intervene in bullying situations, they still often refrain from taking action and remain passive instead. Students in the group with the highest bullying levels in the school admitted to having reinforced bullies since the workshops.

S: "I really feel like telling bullies to stop what they're doing because the other person doesn't deserve it. But it's hard."

S1: "I think that the way we see it, most of us, is that we want to save ourselves from trouble, we just..."

S2: "We just walk by and we try to ignore it, we avoid getting ourselves in trouble that is not ours and is not our business."

S1: "We can end up in trouble ourselves for getting involved."

S4: "But that is wrong. The right thing would be to help the person who is being bullied."

S1: "Most people make fun of it, and there are only a few who just stay silent."

S2: "To be honest, there are many times when we do laugh."

S3: "Yes, we have made fun of the bullied kid."

S1: "I want to do something to help, but as I said, I would need help from someone else."

The most common reason students gave for this passive stance was, similarly to what was expressed in pre-workshop focus groups, fear of social retaliation. However, this train of thought was often met with more optimistic views from peers who tried to convince students to overcome their fears.

S1: "In my case, I feel bad because I know that I can do something but I don't have the courage to do it. Maybe it is the fear of having people make fun of me for trying to help."

S2: "Why would people make fun of you? You'd be doing a good thing. If you were doing a bad thing it would be different. But it is a good thing."

S1: "The problem is that not everybody feels the same way."

S1: "If you do something, the group will follow you. First your group of friends, then others."

S2: "It depends on the group."

S3: "And if they don't follow you, they leave you unprotected."

S1: "They will, though."

Students also claimed to remain passive because they believe their efforts to achieve change would be futile. Participants viewed lack of peer support as one of the main obstacles

to their intervention. Another perceived obstacle was the power of students who benefit from bullying.

S1: I try to do something but I think I need more support from my friends. Well, from everyone.

S2: Me too. I think I can't make a difference on my own. Nobody will listen to me.

S1: "I've seen people try to do what we discussed, but they're swayed by other classmates. They convince them of going back to the way it was."

S2: "They're afraid of change."

S1: "Yes, exactly. They're afraid of change."

Another complication perceived by participants is that staff do not differentiate between bullies, victims and helping bystanders when they come across a student conflict. In addition, they believe staff intervention is often not meaningful enough to make a change in bully behaviour.

S1: "It is very difficult though, because so many classmates are influenced by those who bully."

S2: "And sometimes you try to help and you're the one who gets punished."

S1: "Bullies just deny it in front of adults. And adults get that kid's version of what happened."

S2: "And many times you tell teachers and they will just tell people off, but then do nothing to fix the problem."

7) Are students receptive to material aimed to encourage them to become prosocial bystanders?

Two types of changes in how students perceive their role as bystanders can be observed when comparing the pre-workshop and post-workshop focus groups responses. The first type is cognitive changes, such better awareness of bullying dynamics. While the term "bullying"

is still used liberally by the students, many can now differentiate bullying scenarios from other kinds of situations and they are willing to clarify the confusion for their peers.

S1: "I think many students love to bully but don't like it when they're bullied. I think that if people bully they should be cool when they're being bullied too."

S2: "No, but we're talking about two different things. You're thinking about people insulting each other. When two people are insulting each other, it is very different from bullying."

S1: "There was a case when two girls from a different class got really angry because someone scored a goal on someone else..."

S2: "That's not bullying though, that's a fight."

Another important cognitive change was student awareness of their own power over bullying situations as bystanders. Many students believe that if they took action, they could start a process that would improve social relations in their classrooms.

S: "If we acted differently, the bully could stop doing it so much. There would be more harmony and people wouldn't feel unsafe."

"Before, I thought -of course I could do something, but it won't do any good- but after the workshop I know what a mediator and a comforter is, and those are things I can do. I feel ready to help."

Some participants also expressed a desire for change and further help to tackle this issue. Students want a change both for victims and for bystanders who feel trapped in an environment that supports bullying. The latter is more common in male students.

S: "We do need to help our classmates. Bullied students need help and we need help to not make fun of other people."

S1: "The biggest thing I have seen in me is that now I'd like things to change."

S2: "Yeah, we would want it to be different and not feel that some kids will always bully other kids and that's just the way it is."

The other type of change is perceived behavioural changes in peers. A change observed in bullies, as described by several participants, was a shift in their choice of victims. After the workshops and subsequent student attempts at defending bystanding, some bullies shifted from their usual victims and looked for new ones. Again, talk about this phenomenon came up only in male student focus groups.

S: "I think things have changed in the sense that they stopped picking on a few, but now the bullies are always on the lookout of what everyone says to make fun of everything."

S: "There are times in which if you help someone they will stop bullying them, but then they (the bullies) find someone else. It's like a chain. Some get out and others go in."

With bullies on the lookout for new victims and students reaching out for each other more, some students perceive that after the workshops, bullying has, in fact, gotten worse. Again, this was only observed in male focus groups.

S: "Sometimes you feel it's getting better, and then you feel it gets worse. Even if you're not picking on people, you get picked on."

S1: "Yes (things have changed since the workshops), before we didn't talk to each other that much."

S2: "It was everybody on his own."

S1: "And now we're closer."

S3: "But that also means there is more bullying. We know each other better and we know who bullies and who won't say anything if they are being bullied."

However, participants also described positive effects deriving from the workshops. Apart from the defending and comforting efforts that have been described earlier, several students identified better general relations among pupils in their class.

S1: "I sometimes see the difference... I don't like everyone, and not everyone likes me, but I learned it is better to be civil with them."

S2: "We learned that if you see someone you don't like, you can just say hello and be respectful, just be polite whether or not you like them."

S1: "Things have gotten better, but not massively."

S2: "We have been more supportive."

S1: "That's true."

8) Are there gender differences in perceptions on bullying and bystander behaviour?

Feelings and concerns when witnessing bullying seem to vary widely among male and female students. Female students mostly expressed feeling anger due to their victimized peers being subjected to unjust treatment.

S1: "I feel angry because I wouldn't like that to happen to me and that person doesn't deserve it. That's what I feel, anger."

S2: "I feel anger too because it is not fair for people to be bullied and I don't understand why people are bullied if they didn't do anything."

S: "I think that sometimes we feel angry because we can't understand the situation and knowing that someone is being picked on unfairly makes you angry."

Male students say to experience their outrage in a different way. A common theme during their focus groups was feeling guilt or powerlessness for not being able or willing to carry out actions aimed to stop bullying incidents.

S: "For me, it's like there is a part of me that wants to help, but there is another part that always wins. I just end up seeing how they bully someone else."

S1: "I feel unsafe when I think of helping."

S2: "There is just fear and a lack of faith, you don't have the faith to tackle the problem."

S3: "Confidence, we don't have confidence to face the bully."

Female students agree that their help as bystanders could make a change in the way bullied peers feel, how bullies view the situation and how other bystanders behave.

S1: "It can help a lot because that person can feel the support of the other classmates, and it can give them courage to stay strong and deal with the problem."

S2: "So that they don't feel they're alone, with that problem on their own."

S1: "People would feel safer if we did (something), and that would be a useful experience. Then they'd be more willing to help others, and then it could be like a chain."

S2: "And bullies feel safer if you do nothing, because they think nobody will ever mess with them. If you do something they would feel less untouchable."

Boys, however, do not feel as confident in their power to improve their social situation as bullying bystanders. They consider they do not have enough support from peers and from staff, and there is an ongoing debate about whether they could change the current situation without that assistance. Some students even feared they could get into trouble for attempting to help.

S1: "It depends, if you go on your own to face the bully...it won't really make much of an impression."

S2: "But then there are two people who oppose him."

S1: "It's still not enough."

S: "If you tell a teacher then he won't go after the bully, he will go after you for telling on him."

Female students saw a small improvement in their classmates' behaviour, especially when it comes to victim support and inclusion. This change does not seem to be present in the male population.

S: "There has been a change for us girls. We're not excluding each other anymore."

S: "I think that there is less bullying among girls, but among the boys it is pretty much the same."

Some male students perceive the bullying situation to have persisted or even worsened in the time period between the first and the second focus groups. Female students also identify deeper bullying behaviours in their male counterparts.

S1: "It's the same."

S2: "Nothing has changed."

S3: "If anything, it is a little worse."

S1: "There are times in which if you help someone they will stop bullying them, but then they find someone else. It's like a chain. Some get out and others go in."

S2: "Mostly the boys. They look at people's weaknesses to go after them. And they go bully with a friend, so that it is easier."

S1: "That is true. The boys always have to be on their toes."

It is noteworthy that while female focus group participants claimed that bullying incidents were not prevalent in their classes, it would be incorrect to assume that social conflict is absent in female classes. Female students acknowledged having to work on tensions between friend groups or cliques. Stories of this type of antagonism were not observed in the male focus groups.

The following chapter presents the discussion of the present study's findings. Chapter four aims to put these findings into context, linking results to the theoretical background, other studies and cultural background of the population.

Chapter 4. Discussion

The present chapter presents an interpretation of the results in relation to relevant literature, placing the study's contribution in the context of the state of knowledge of the areas that pertain to it. This chapter is structured following the research questions, using the analysis of this study's and other related study's data to find appropriate answers to them.

The research questions that guided this study were the following:

- 1) What are students' perceptions of their role as bullying bystanders?
- 2) Are bystanders morally responsive to witnessed bullying incidents (moral engagement)?
- 3) Do bystanders think they have the power to alleviate bullying situations (self-efficacy)?
- 4) Are there gender differences in perceptions on bullying and bystander behaviour?
- 5) Does addressing moral disengagement dynamics help students morally re-engage?
- 6) Does introducing a variety of prosocial bystander roles increase self-efficacy to help in bullying situations?
- 7) Are students receptive to material aimed to encourage them to become prosocial bystanders?

Data analysis also unearthed that students' hold dissimilar perceptions of different bullying types. While this finding was not foreseen in the research design, it was considered that the relevance of these results warranted a separate section in the discussion chapter.

4.1 What are students' perceptions of their role as bystanders?

One of the main aims of this study was to gather information on the perception that Mexican secondary school students have of their own role as bullying bystanders. This was explored from different angles in different sections of the questionnaire. Data on the role of bystanders stemming from each of these sections is reviewed next.

4.1.1 Observed bystander behaviour

The first section of the questionnaire asked students about the type of bystander behaviour that they typically see in their peers. It is noteworthy that while in the preliminary focus group with staff the predominant idea was that the school where the study was conducted did not have many cases of bullying, most students had no problem recalling bullying incidents and identifying reinforcing, passive and defending bystander behaviour in their peers. Results of the observed bystander behaviour scale showed that more than half of the respondents claim they often or always witness bystanders reacting passively to bullying with around half of the participants perceiving that their peers frequently pretend not to see bullying.

According to Latané and Darley's (1970) steps for bystander intervention, the first step is to notice the event and assess the risk to all people who are involved in it. These steps have been found to be present in bullying bystanders' steps towards intervention as well. Bystanders will notice the event, assess the severity of the incident, consider their degree of personal responsibility and weight their relationship with victims and bullies. It is after these considerations that they decide if they will intervene, select a method of intervention and carry it out (Chen et al., 2016). However, if students choose to completely ignore that there is an incident that warrants their attention, they can avoid the moral dilemma of whether to help or not.

As much as failing to notice a bullying incident is the least morally costly and most risk-free alternative, in many cases it is not an option. Most bullying incidents are blatant and difficult to watch. Still, students still have the option to choose not to become involved. Participants expressed that they see peers preferring not to engage with bullying situations even more often than they pretend not to notice them. Choosing not to get involved may happen in the next steps towards bystander intervention: assessing the severity of the incident

and the risk to those involved and determining the extent of one's personal responsibility towards those affected by it (Chen et al., 2016).

It is possible that some students who preferred not to involve themselves in bullying situations simply failed to recognise the potential harmfulness of the incidents. In their 2012 study, Thornberg et al. found that often students do not identify the risk of bullying situations, believing that the consequences involved are not serious. Some students might not engage with bullying incidents because they do not perceive them as pernicious.

However, not identifying the risk in bullying situations might be an explanation for only a minority of students, since scenario and focus group responses revealed that most students do see that bullying is painful and potentially dangerous to victims. Refraining from helping comes with a moral cost, and the use of moral disengagement dynamics is necessary to reduce this penance. The most common disengagement dynamics used by students will be discussed in a further section.

Reinforcing bullies was also a type of behaviour that participants saw frequently in peers. Over a third of students stated that they witnessed peers joining bullies "often" or "always". Laughing at bullying seemed to be even more prevalent, with close to two thirds of students claiming to see it "often" or "always". Laughing at bullying incidents was one of the trespasses most commonly excused through euphemistic labelling, with students claiming that if there was laughing involved, the incident could be considered joking. Even though students often do not identify this as participating in bullying incidents, laughing condones bullying and it enhances negative emotional consequences in victims (Jones et al., 2015).

Studies have suggested that students who reinforce bullies seek to share power and status in return for supporting the bullies' behaviour, and that their participation makes bullying incidents last longer (O'Connell et al. , 1999). Reinforcing bystander behaviour increase the levels of social anxiety and peer rejection in their group (Karna et al., 2010).

This seems to be the case among particularly one group of male participants in this study, who claimed that they feel wary of participating in class for fear that anything they say can result in teasing. This group was identified by both staff and students as the group that struggles the most with bullying incidents. The more common that reinforcing behaviour is in one group, the more that students will worry about being bullied and feel pressured to join in as well to be in good terms with bullies and share their status. This poses a major obstacle for bystanders who seek to defend victims.

It is not surprising then that defending behaviour is perceived to be far less common than reinforcing and passive behaviour, with less than a fifth of students claiming to see peers trying to stop bullies “often” or “always”. Stopping bullies is seen by students as a dangerous thing to do, and this perception is not necessarily distorted; there is real risk associated with helping, primarily social, but in occasions physical risk as well (Chapin & Brayack, 2016). Given the small number of students who becomes involved in defending behaviour, students cannot expect support from their peers if they decide to defend bullying victims, increasing the risk for students who try to help.

Comforting victims is less threatening to students than confronting bullies, but it is still not the norm with only a third of students claiming to see peers comforting victims “often” or “always”. Even though comforting is more common than defending, most students do not see it as something that can be expected in all bullying situations. This is relevant, since it gives us an idea of students’ expectations of their peers’ behaviour: they do not think they can rely on other students if they are bullied. There is, however, a significant gender difference in this respect. Females are more likely to see defending behaviour among their peers than males. Gender differences have been found in bullying and bystander behaviour in studies worldwide, but there is also a cultural component that explains these results. In the Mexican context, females are raised to nurture other people and males are raised to be strong

and defend themselves (Diaz Guerrero, 1998). It is conceivable that the expected role of female bystanders is different than that of male bystanders, especially when it comes to comforting victims. Gender differences will be explored at length at a further point of this discussion.

4.1.2 Bullying scenarios

The questionnaire scenarios presented a situation in which a character witnessed a student being physically, verbally, socially or cyberbullied by other peer or peers.

Participants were asked students what they thought the bystander felt and what they thought they could do about it. The latter question explored two areas: whether bystanders think of themselves as efficacious in helping bullied peers and what students believe the role of the bystanders is when witnessing different kinds of bullying.

(Pre-workshop: Students see themselves mostly as observers, and think of bullying from a distance. This is especially true in the case of cyberbullying. Teachers are seen as the one with the jurisdiction to help. Still, many of them think bystanders are in the position to help. Some see it as a good deed, some as a responsibility.)

Responses varied widely according to the type of bullying being portrayed. Most students believed that when faced with physical bullying, the best course of action is telling an adult. This might be because students think of physical bullying as the most serious type of bullying since it represents bodily risk. Responses to the physical bullying scenario often mentioned concern for the victim's wellbeing. This is consistent with Jones et al.'s (2015) findings, which suggested that bystanders are more likely to report physical bullying and sexual harassment than any other types of aggression.

Students were also more likely to claim that bystanders cannot do anything to help bullying victims when reacting to the physical bullying scenario, compared to other bullying

types. The reason cited the most for thinking that it is not the bystanders' place to do anything is that it would mean putting themselves in danger. As mentioned before, defending is a risk, and students are aware of this.

Still, students expressed intense disapproval of physical bullying incidents and there were some who believed that bystanders can stand up to perpetrators in this context. This option generally was often depicted as confronting bullies directly, in occasions using violence as well. This was more common among male participants.

Participants who thought that bystanders can help physical bullying victims by providing emotional support were scarce; the emotional experience of physically bullied was not taken into consideration by most students. A possible explanation could be that the risk of physical injury undermines the emotional distress that physical bullying victims go through, leading students to oversee other types of injury present in all bullying incidents. Another explanation might be related to gender and Mexican culture. Both the victim and the bystander depicted in bullying scenarios were males, which might have made participants less likely to believe that the bystander would offer emotional support. It is also possible that did not believe that the victim would be grateful for it either. After all, secondary school is the time when the struggle for power and status starts among Mexican males, and any demonstration of vulnerability might be rejected. Lack of support from peers is one of the main problems that Mexican bullying victims face, since abuse mechanisms are learned soon after entering secondary school, and most students abide by them (Gomez Nashiki, 2013). This is concerning, since lack of social support is the strongest predictor of bullying in Mexican schools (Vega López et al., 2013).

Reactions to the verbal bullying scenario had some similarities to the reaction to the one depicting physical bullying; most students believe that alerting adults is what bystanders

can do to help victims. Teachers might be encouraging this behaviour, expressing greater availability to be reached for physical and verbal bullying incidents. When studying teachers' attitudes towards different kind of bullying, Duy (2013) found that teachers believe that physical and verbal bullying are more serious, and have more empathy for physical and verbal bullying victims than for victims of other types of bullying. They are more likely to intervene in those incidents as well. It is likely that staff have spoken to students about bullying discussing primarily physical and verbal aggression, and declared themselves available to help with these incidents in particular. Hence, students might more likely to identify these acts as bullying and to report them to school authorities.

Participants thought that providing comfort and moral support was more appropriate to support verbal bullying victims than they thought it was a way to help physical bullying victims. This might be related to them being more empathetic towards verbal bullying victims than towards victims of other kinds of bullying. Empathy has been found to be an important predictor of defending bystander behaviour (Pöyhönen et al., 2010), especially among male students (Barchia & Bussey, 2011; Capadoccia et al., 2012). Students found it easy to identify the distress that verbal bullying victims feel and to share these feelings.

Ideas on what bystanders could do to help social bullying victims were very different to the ideas of how to help verbal and physical bullying victims. Telling an adult was not one of the main ways students thought social bullying could be dealt with. This could be because, as we mentioned, school staff are less likely to talk to students about social bullying and to make themselves available to address social bullying situations. In their 2006 study on preservice teachers' responses to bullying, Bauman and Del Rio found that teachers rated social bullying as the less concerning and the one with which they empathise the least. Students might go to staff to report bullying situations less because they do not believe it is their place to help.

Even if they do not think to resort to adults to address social bullying incidents, students do believe there are things bystanders can do to help. Responses revolving comforting victims were much more common as a reaction to the social bullying scenario than any other bullying type. Most respondents expressed that the best way to alleviate social bullying situations was through inclusion and emotional support, not letting other people affect their judgment of the victim and offering their company and friendship. This is consistent with Jones et al.'s (2015) study, which found that supportive bystander behaviour was more common in relational bullying incidents, such as rumour spreading.

(Students identify being pressured to isolate someone as a violation to their social rights as well- this is more common in girls. Boys are more likely to think that they have to abide by social rules)

Students' responses regarding cyberbullying differed importantly from their responses regarding other bullying types. To begin with, students were more likely to think that it is not the bystanders place to do anything about cyberbullying than other bullying types. This was mainly due to the belief that nothing can be done about cyberbullying. The main reason students cited for this is that the internet is public, out of their reach and that the exposure is permanent.

When participants talked mentioned supporting cyberbullying victims, they often described teaching them cyber-safety measures, such as how to keep their profiles private and to block or report their aggressors. Students have good knowledge of how social media works, but they perceive cyberbullying as independent from their face to face social interactions. Price et al.'s (2014) explorative study on cyber-bystanders found something similar: even though students are aware of their role as cyber-bystanders, they have trouble integrating this role to their role as bystanders of traditional bullying.

While Quirk and Campbell (2015) found that students see adults as outsiders to cyberbullying, results to this study showed that participants are much more likely to think to involve adults in these situations than in social bullying incidents. Interestingly though, when students talked about helping victims by alerting an adult of the situation, they often referred to parents instead of school staff. A possible reason for this is that students are not sure if the school has any jurisdiction over cyberbullying, being that it is often perpetrated and noticed after school hours. Schools often share this confusion, not knowing how to deal with bullying or being unaware of them, leaving many cyberbullying incidents unaddressed. As Cowie and Colliety argue in their 2010 paper, it is vital to open school-wide communication on cyberbullying on this topic and to establish school-led measures to regulate online social interactions.

4.1.3 Focus groups

Focus group responses show that students do believe that it is their role to do something about bullying, but this role is inhibited by the fear of being socially penalised by bullies and reinforcing peers. Pöyhönen et al. (2012) found that this fear is also a motivator to reinforce bullies; students can worry that they will be chastised if they do not participate in bullying as well. Moral disengagement is then used to alleviate the guilt of not helping or reinforcing for fear of losing status or being targeted as victims (Doramajian & Bukowski, 2015). This engagement/fear/disengagement cycle stunts the role that bystanders believe they should have in bullying situations.

An interesting topic that came up in focus groups is that many female students believe that it is their place as bystanders not only to support bullying victims, but bullies as well. These students see aggressors as troubled students who need care to change their behaviour. This perception is correct according to Albores Gallo et al. (2011), who found that Mexican

bullies and bully-victims have the highest levels of psychopathology among their classmates, scoring even higher than victims in anxiety scores. Cowie and Colliety (2016) have found this as well, identifying bullies as vulnerable students, albeit, more difficult to empathise with than victims. The belief that bullies need help is not only accurate, but also useful. Bullies do need their peers' support to learn that they are capable of earning a place within their social group without resorting to victimisation.

However, this idea is uncommon among boys. The idea of challenging bullies through violence came up during focus groups with male students. It is a deeply ingrained idea within some students that violence is necessary to survive, insisting that being able to answer to attacks is a sign of strength. Participants shared that parents encourage this behaviour, giving their authorisation for the use of violence against students who are being abusive. While encouraging males to be more aggressive is present in many cultures, it is a staple of the Mexican definition of masculinity (Diaz Guerrero, 1994). This is one of the challenges to be addressed to encourage caring bystander intervention as general prosocial behaviour.

4.2 Are bystanders morally responsive to witnessed bullying incidents (moral engagement)

4.2.1 Moral disengagement scale

Generally, students are morally engaged with the bullying situations they observe; the moral disengagement average is below two out of a five point Likert scale. This would suggest that moral disengagement is not a major obstacle to bystander involvement. However, some students do employ moral disengagement mechanisms to reduce the discomfort of witnessing victimisation.

Participants most frequently disengage by victim blaming, agreeing with the statement that bullying happens because some students do not know how to defend

themselves. Victim blaming is common in Mexican culture, dating from the colonisation period, when mestizos (children of indigenous Mexicans and Spanish colonisers) glorified their coloniser parents for being able to conquer the land and looked down on their native parents for having allowed themselves to be conquered (Luquín, 1961). To the present day, it is not unusual to hear Mexican citizens praise aggressors in their environment and speak dismissively of victims. For instance, high powered drug lords are generally respected and appreciated in their hometowns. The economic resources they donate to local causes (mainly religious) causes them to be celebrated, and it sways communities towards overlooking the harm that they bring to their towns through illicit activities and violence (Redacción Mad, 2017). On the other hand, crime victims are often blamed for their fate by the authorities and the press, being accused of inappropriate or irresponsible behaviour. In its official Twitter page, Mexico City's prosecution office reported that 22-year-old murder victim Lesvy Berlin Osorio used drugs and alcohol with her boyfriend before she was strangled to death in her university campus. Later messages claimed that was also a university drop-out. The prosecution office's handling of the Lesvy Osorio case, which is not atypical in Mexico, started the social media protest campaign "If I am murdered", in which women share the details of their personal life that could be used to deprecate them if they were murder victims. These circumstances, such as being divorced, living on their own or having mental health issues, are often used by authorities, press and members of the public to deprecate victims (Lotto Persio, 2017). Being surrounded by these type of messages, it is possible that Mexican students are learning early on that being a violence victim is associated with a failure to take care of oneself, which can diminish empathy towards victim and create shame of being victimised.

As Gini et al. (2008) found in their study where students reacted to bullying scenarios depicted in short stories, victim blaming levels are higher in environments where nobody

intervenes to assist peers. Students might be inclined to conclude that if their peers are not helping victims, the victims do not deserve to be helped. Similarly, Forsberg (2014) found that victim blaming is positively related to bully reinforcing and passive bystander behaviour. This could create a cycle in which victim blaming enables students to refrain from helping victims, and this behaviour consolidates the idea that victims do not deserve empathy and help. Hence, the low incidence of defending behaviour in the Mexican school setting could be strengthening victim blaming attitudes towards bullied peers, further stigmatising vulnerable students. Furthermore, as Bandura (2016) explained, disengaging at the victim locus as in the case of victim blaming is one of the most noxious moral disengagement techniques, since holding victims accountable for their suffering allows escalation. If a person is blamed for the aggression they suffer, it makes no difference if the harm is trivial or serious, disengagement is still effective because someone other than the aggressor or the bystander is responsible for it.

The next most common moral disengagement dynamic participants used was euphemistic labelling, where students agreed to a statement that claimed that what most people refer to as bullying is just joking and playing. This is consistent with Pornari and Wood's (2010) study, which found that euphemistic labelling is one of the most common moral disengagement dynamics used to disengage from traditional bullying. Euphemistic labelling helps sanitise the event and perceive it as less serious (Bandura, 2016). According to Latané and Darley's (1970) model for bystander intervention, disengaging at the event locus (as in the case of euphemistic labelling) allows interruption of the process towards bystander intervention at the second step. After noticing the event, individuals need to identify it as a situation that calls for their assistance. If they fail to identify it as such and label the event as something more benign, they will not move on to assessing if it is their responsibility to provide help. Latané and Darley's model has been found to be consistent with the steps

bullying bystanders take before displaying helping behaviour (Jenkins & Nickerson, 2017). Hence, the idea that what people call bullying is just games and jokes can liberate students from further analysing the situation, and therefore, avoid the dilemma of whether to help. This moral disengagement mechanism seemed to be common in the current study's participants' environment, even being used by some teachers who expressed to the headmistress the belief that devoting time and resources to bullying is an exaggeration, and that the targeted behaviour is just a part of children being children. Contesting an idea that is shared by school teachers, and probably a few parents as well, is a challenge that needs to be addressed through extensive awareness efforts.

The third most common moral disengagement mechanism that came up in the moral disengagement scale was displacement of responsibility, with students agreeing that somebody should do something about bullying, but not themselves. Similarly, Robson and Witenberg (2013) found displacement of responsibility is associated with both traditional and cyberbullying. Displacement of responsibility aids disengaging at the agency locus (Bandura, 2016), stopping the steps towards bystander intervention in the third step, when students assume it is their responsibility to help (Jenkins & Nickerson, 2017). Students who disengage by responsibility displacement may acknowledge the seriousness of the situation and the need for bullying victims to be assisted, but they do not see themselves as the ones tasked to do this. This moral disengagement might be the easiest to challenge in the Mexican setting, being that Mexican communities tend to have a strong sense of cooperation and solidarity (Diaz Guerrero, 1994). Working comprehensively with students on the responsibility of the bystander could help achieve this goal.

4.2.2 Scenarios

Bullying scenarios also found that most students were morally engaged with the hypothetical bullying situations presented. The most common response to bullying scenarios

was expressing empathy for the victim's plight, which demonstrated that participants had reflected on how the incident was experienced by the victim. Empathy is important, since it is positively correlated with defending behaviour (Pöyhönen et al, 2010) and negatively correlated with overt aggression and moral disengagement (Bussey, et al, 2015). Still, participants do not have the same levels of empathy towards all types of bullying victims. Students have the highest levels of empathy towards verbal bullying victims. This might be because verbal bullying is pervasive in Mexico (Avilés Dorontes et al, 2012), so students can easily relate to the verbal bullying scenario. Another factor might be that verbal bullying victims were not stigmatised for failing to defend themselves to the degree that physical bullying victims did.

Another way students frequently engaged with the bullying scenarios was by condemning the situation as morally wrong. Unlike students who engaged with empathy towards the victim's pain, these students focused on how the bully's actions were unfair and unacceptable. This is a common student response to bullying, with some studies finding as much as 90% of the student population morally disapproving of bullies' actions (Craig et al., 2000). Thornberg et al. (2016) found that students tend to rate bullying situations more negatively than classroom rule transgressions or school etiquette breaches, under the argument of the harm that each type of behaviour can cause. This type of reasoning was often seen as a response to the bullying scenarios as well.

Some students engaged with the hypothetical bullying events by assuming the bystander felt guilty for being passive and not offering help. Guilt for passive bystander behaviour is consistent with Haro Solis et al. (2013)'s findings; their study's participants felt shame and guilt for not helping victimised peers, but reported low levels of personal responsibility for the situation. This apparent contradiction might be the result of the use of

moral disengagement dynamics, which were also present among the present study's participant.

It is important to note that while the psychoanalytic definition of guilt refers to the intrapsychic discomfort stemming from the conflict between the drives of the ego and the standards of the superego (1930), the conceptualization of guilt has moved to a more interpersonal phenomenon (Friedman,1994). The intrapersonal concept of guilt defines it as a social mechanism that regulates individual's responsiveness to both caring and commitment, avoiding transgressions and prompting prosocial changes (Baumeister, 1985). Hence, guilt can be seen as a resource that aids social adaptation. This is the concept of guilt followed in the thematic analysis of the present study: an unpleasant emotion deriving failure to behave prosocially towards bullied peers.

Guilt was initially more frequent as a response to the physical bullying scenario, but became similarly recurrent as a response to the verbal and social scenarios after the workshops. This can be explained by students being more aware of physically assaulted peers needing help to safeguard their health and safety, and less aware of ways they can help students who are verbally victimised and socially harassed before exposure to the workshops. However, after reflecting on the ways in which they could help victims of other bullying types as well, participants started expressing this sentiment about verbal, social and cyberbullying as well.

As mentioned before, even if they were a minority, some students did react to the scenarios with morally disengaging ideas. Displacement of responsibility was the most common way to disengage from bullying scenarios, with students recognising that the situation the victim is in is regrettable, but ignoring any part they might play in the situation or the responsibility they might have towards their peers. Some students even condemned

other peers for not helping, without reflecting on the possibility that the hypothetical bystanders could do something. A thought that seems to help students displace responsibility is that they cannot help bullied peers anyway, and that any efforts would be futile. This might be reflective of what some Mexican psychology authors called “the vision of the defeated”, in which a sense of powerlessness is deeply entrenched in the culture, preventing individuals from seeking change and directing them into distractions instead. Mexican psychology authors hypothesise that this sense of powerlessness plays a role in the tolerance of domination and corruption in many areas of the Mexican people’s lives (León Portilla, 1971). This aspect of displacement of responsibility relates to self-efficacy themes, which will be discussed further on.

Victim blaming notions were also present as a response to the scenarios, particularly in the cases of physical and social bullying. Physical bullying victims were mostly blamed for failing to defend themselves properly, which seems to be perceived as a flaw of character among male students. Expecting that young men learn to defend themselves, using violence if need be, is also a cultural demand that some authors argue stems from historical reverence of aggression, interpreting it as strength (Ramírez, 1959). This notion was also recurrent in workshops, with male students resisting the idea of solving conflicts peacefully, and asserting that “violence makes us strong”. Participants even shared that parents encouraged them to physically fight, and some have been told that if they hear they have been cowering away from fighting, they will get in trouble at home. Ambivalence towards aggression, half revering it and half fearing it, might be the biggest cultural hurdle towards addressing bullying in Mexican settings, since it is necessary to confront ideas of violence, not only in students, but in families and staff as well.

Blaming social bullying victims seemed to work differently. Victims who were gossiped about or excluded were blamed under the idea that if they were being mistreated,

they must have done something to deserve it. Gini et al. (2008) found a similar phenomenon when their participants were more likely to blame victims that had no defenders, believing that if they were not getting empathy or help, their behaviour must warrant them being mistreated. This train of thought was seen in scenarios and workshops, where students claimed that if the group was alienating a peer, they ought to have a good reason to do so. Capadoccia et al. (2012) found that when a group creates a social norm, such as refraining from intervening in bullying situations, it becomes difficult for some students to challenge it. The victim blaming that was seen in the scenarios might be a communal coping strategy to deal with the guilt of ignoring, or even contributing to, social bullying.

However, moral engagement and disengagement is not necessarily black or white. In some scenario responses students started freeing the hypothetical bystanders under the idea that they were not close to the victim or did not play a part in the incident, but ended up stating that the bystander felt bad or even guilty anyway. This ambivalence can represent an opportunity: students who have been exposed to morally disengaging discourse but feel empathy for the victims or a sense of responsibility for them could be reached to make a change in the group culture.

4.2.3 Focus groups

When focus group participants were asked about their feelings on bullying, for the most part, they showed empathy for the suffering of bullied peers. Some of them stated that they even if they do not show their disapproval, they experience strong discomfort when they see peers being victimised. This suggests that when students feel that they will be alone if they were to engage in anti-bullying behaviour, this feeling might be fuelled by pluralistic ignorance. Pluralistic ignorance, believing incorrectly that if others do not openly disagree with a situation means that they must agree, has been found to play a role in moral

disengaging ideas regarding bullying incidents (Gini et al., 2015). In her analyses of the role of bystanders in interventions, Salmivalli suggest that addressing pluralistic ignorance is an important step towards bystander involvement (Salmivalli 2010; Salmivalli, 2014). This seemed to be present among this study's participants, since numerous students felt engaged with bullying situations, but most of them refrained from acting.

Still, some students were vocal about their outrage over bullying, viewing it as deviant behaviour and expressing willingness to act. A handful of these students shared to have helped bullied peers already. Consistent with the findings of Capadoccia et al. (2012), these students perceive bullying as an injustice, see victims as undeserving of ill treatment, and acknowledge that their help is needed. Students who expressed willingness to act also spoke about being guided by a sense of humanity and a wish to be in good terms with victims, avoiding the guilt of withholding help. This sense of justice and humanity could be related to moral identity. Hardy et al. (2014) found that moral identity (the degree to which a person's self-concept is depends on acting in morally correct ways) can moderate the relationship between moral disengagement and aggressive behaviour. It is conceivable that moral identity could also play a role in students' readiness to defend bullied peers. Further research regarding moral identity in bullying bystander behaviour would be useful to understand defending dynamics and identify themes that need to be addressed in interventions that target bullying bystanders.

As in the moral disengagement scale and the scenarios, some focus group participants shared some morally disengaging sentiments on bullying. Moral justification was used by a small number of male students, who claimed that bullying experiences are valuable for young people to learn to deal with conflict and become stronger as people. These students argued against the idea of asking staff for help saying that later in life they would not be able to access others to solve their problems. Using violence as a means of defence was condoned by

these participants who believed that, as a few of them put it, “it is the law of the jungle”. This is a very clear example of the cultural belief that violence is necessary, and a valid resource to be used in the pursuit of an advantageous place in society (Diaz Guerrero, 1994).

The notion that aggression is a necessary behaviour and is expected from students (particularly males) also prompted victim blaming remarks. Some participants held bullied peers accountable for their victimisation by saying that they were being weak, although some expressed pity for them. Other participants blamed victims by assuming they must have done something to elicit other peers’ hostility. This type of victim blaming attitudes might be linked to the phenomenon described by Gini et al. (2008) in which students assume that if peers are not helping bullied peers, it must be because they do not deserve help due to their actions. Students might also disengage by convincing themselves that if students are being victimised they must have earned victimisation in some manner.

Displacement of responsibility is another moral disengagement dynamic that was used by pre-workshop focus group participants. Students who displayed it expressed empathy for bullying victims, and believed someone should do something to help them. However, they did not identify themselves as plausible sources of help. Post-workshop focus groups saw a shift in this belief; all participants acknowledged that they could potentially help bullied peers. These changes will be addressed at length in the discussion of research question number four.

4.3 Do bystanders think they have the power to alleviate bullying situations (self-efficacy)?

4.3.1 Self-efficacy scale

Responses to the self-efficacy scale show that students consider that they can be successful at aiding bullied peers. All self-efficacy means (male and female, pre-workshop and post-workshop) were above four points out of a five-point Likert scale.

When overtly asked if they thought they had the ability to help bullied peers, most students agreed that they were; this was also true when they were asked if they felt efficacious at following verbal instructions and at following other peers' lead. Most students expressed a desire to help bullied peers more and many claimed to have helped bullied peers before. These results would suggest that when speaking in the abstract, students feel efficacious at helping and are motivated to further develop their helping skills.

The self-efficacy scale answers might look promising in terms of the helping behaviour. Self-efficacy has been found to be positively correlated with defending bystander behaviour (Thornberg & Jungert, 2013) particularly among girls (Capadoccia et al, 2012). However, the type of bystander behaviour that students observed does not match these results; almost half of the participants say they rarely or never see peers confronting bullies and one in five see they rarely or never see comforting behaviour.

Part of this discrepancy might be related to Barchia and Bussey's (2011) findings on collective efficacy. In their study of how empathy, self-efficacy, moral disengagement and collective efficacy are related to victimisation and defending behaviour, they found that collective efficacy is a better predictor of defending than self-efficacy. Students were more likely to defend if they believed their group could successfully protect bullied victims than if they believed that they were personally able to carry out defending behaviour. This could be particularly relevant in the Mexican setting. Mexicans tend to be community oriented, and goals are often seen as collective tasks, more than personal challenges (Diaz Guerrero, 1994).

Students might feel that their individual actions are irrelevant if their group is not working together towards the same objective.

Chapin and Brayack (2016) also found a discrepancy between intent and action when it comes to self-efficacy to help bullied peers. When asked if they would intervene in bullying situations, most students answered they would. Hispanic students were the student group that expressed the most willingness to help, with 100% of Hispanic participants expressing their disposition to aid victimised peers. Still, far less students had helped bullied peers in the past, and only 60% of Hispanic students had turned their intentions into intervention. Chapin and Brayack explained this inconsistency by theorising that confidence is needed for intervention, but that it is not sufficient. It is possible that this study's participants also believed they could successfully carry out an intervention, but other factors were standing in the way. Scenario and focus group responses provide more insight into students' self-efficacy to help bullied peers.

4.3.2 Scenarios

When they were asked what bystanders could do to help victims of different bullying types, most students answered that bystanders are most efficacious at alerting school authorities that a bullying incident was taking place. This was true in all bullying types, except in the case of social bullying. As Pöyhönen et al (2010) noted, defending is risky, and students consider it is safer to go to adults for help. Additionally, most students stated that teachers and headmasters possess the jurisdiction and resources to help bullied peers. In the case of cyberbullying, students also considered alerting victims' parents. A possible explanation for this is that students seem unsure of whether cyberbullying is relevant for school authorities or rather pertains to students' personal lives, making it more of a family concern.

As mentioned before, social bullying bystanders believe they can help in a different way: offering their support. This support can come in the shape of inclusion, reassurance, advice or company. The reason why bystanders react differently to this bullying type might be that offering friendship does not seem as threatening as interrupting a physical or verbal bullying situation, or risking sharing the victims public ridicule if they retort to cyberbullying. Mexican students are encouraged to offer friendship, so they are less likely to be stigmatised for it. Students also tended to feel that being asked to exclude a student is a personal attack, since it limits students' right to make decisions over their own social life. This was more often seen in female participants; males were more likely to accept the social order imposed by the more powerful peers. The possibility of offering support as a response to other bullying types was presented in the workshops, and it might have had a role in the changes found in post-workshop supporting behaviour.

Some respondents expressed that bystanders can help bullied peers by directly confronting bullies. This was relatively common in all bullying types, except for cyberbullying. There is a possibility that students do not think of confronting cyberbullies since it is often difficult for students to identify the original aggressor; students shared that bullying images are often distributed among the peer group, and students are unsure of who created them. Cyberbullying provides the possibility of anonymity to bullies and this anonymity makes the incident seem more threatening to students (Sticca & Perren, 2013). Other manifestations of confusion regarding cyberbullying came up in the workshops, which suggests that students are still trying to understand the innerworkings of this type of victimisation.

While most participants claimed that bystanders can help bullied peers, some disagreed with this idea. The reasoning behind this belief varied among bullying types. Students were more likely to think that physical bullying bystanders cannot help because

helping poses too much of a risk for bystanders. On the other hand, students were more likely to say social bullying bystanders could not help because they are not involved or emotionally invested in the situation. This is consistent with Capadoccia et al's (2012) findings, in which participants shared that feeling uninvolved with the situation and fear of retaliation were often deterrents of helping behaviour.

In the case of cyberbullying, students were more likely to believe that bystanders cannot help victims because their assistance will not make a difference in their situation. Students explained this idea referring to the internet being public and permanent. Sticca and Perren (2013) found that students also perceive public incidents as more severe, due to how many people have access to it and to the anonymity of the aggressor. Some participants of this study stated that once something is on the internet, there is nothing anyone can do. Another perceived obstacle to addressing cyberbullying is that, consistently with Quick and Campbell's (2015) findings, students see adults as outsiders of cyberbullying. While alerting adults is one of the main ways they believe they can help bullied peers, they do not believe adults fully understand cyberbullying, or that they can do much about it. Students responses to the cyberbullying scenario suggest that this relatively new means of victimisation still needs to be studied and regulated, and students need to be made aware of protocol to be followed when they are faced with cyberbullying incidents.

4.3.3 Focus groups

As in the scenarios, most focus groups participants expressed that they believe that they could be successful at helping bullied peers. When asked how they would do this, they were most likely to say that they could help by telling an adult. This suggests that there is a difference between Mexican and US students, who are more likely to ask the bully to stop than to alert an adult of the bullying situation (Jones et al, 2015). Participants also thought to

go, not only to school staff, but to family members of bullies or victims as well. This might be explained by the fact that Mexicans tend to be highly family oriented, and the problems and behaviour of one family member are considered to be family issues more than individual situations (Diaz Guerrero, 1994).

Focus group participants shared that they believed that the main obstacle to bystander intervention was fear. While they believe that any bystander has the capacity to do something to help, they acknowledge that they are deterred by fear of social punishment should they challenge their more powerful peers. Doramajian and Bukowski (2015) found similar dynamics in Canadian students; those who intervened had to overcome the fear of being targeted or losing social status. Evans and Smokowski (2015) suggested that students' decision to help bullied peers is strongly influenced by social capital factors; how much it could result in social costs or social benefits. Evans and Smokowski explained that students with more social support and better grades were more likely to exhibit prosocial bystander behaviour because having more social support means that they risk less when they help, being that their social place is secure. On the other hand, students with good grades might gain more from helping since it can contribute to their prosocial and authority-praised identity. This might also help explain why some groups (particularly females) had more optimistic and positive views of helping than others; some group cultures have come to socially value defending bullied peers, while some groups still see it as a social impossibility.

Even if they thought they could intervene in bullying situations, many participants saw limitations to the extent to which their intervention can make a real difference in the bullying situation of their community. One reason for this is that they see the bullies' behaviour as unchangeable and their power as incontestable. Velazquez and Reyes found similar themes in their 2005 study. When they analysed Mexico City students' shared experiences with bullying, they found themes of power imbalance, changing to belong, and resignation to

bullying. Findings like these pose a contradiction in this study's findings: students believe that they can individually tell a teacher, support victims or even confront bullies. Under that standard, this study's participants could be said to be self-efficacious. Still, many students have little faith on the change that their intervention can achieve in the larger scheme of bullying dynamics in their classes. This phenomenon is reflective of the complicated nature of self-efficacy to help in bullying situations; even if individuals believe they can successfully carry out a defending technique, that does not mean that they believe that their intervention will make a difference in the victim's situation. There are important variables that do not pertain to their intervention and are out of the students' control, such as the reaction of the bullies, whether the group supports or chastises them and what the school authorities will do if they go to them for help.

The current state of the Mexican anti-bullying legislation might also contribute to the lack of trust that students have on their schools to help them. The idea that there is no clear protocol to help bullying victims is not a perception, but a reality for many students. While the General Bill of Education requires all Mexican states to have protective and corrective measures against bullying, there are no further guidelines of what must be done (CEAMEG, 2013). Furthermore, there is not a set definition of what bullying is. While the state of Puebla does not acknowledge incidents that occur outside of school premises as bullying, the state of Veracruz does, and keeps a record of all bullying incidents, including cyberbullying. Mexico City and the state of Mexico, where the present study took place, have no anti-bullying regulations in place, claiming that bullying is already covered in their laws against all child violence, failing to acknowledge the bullying epidemic as a different type of violence which requires a different type of care (Zurita, 2012).

Hence, while bullying victims and bystanders might be wrong in assuming that their peers or their school's staff do not care about their plight, they are right in assuming that there are no protocols set to protect them. This puts them in an undoubtedly vulnerable situation. Setting legal definitions, regulations and protocols is a necessary step to successfully addressing bullying in schools. Based on these guidelines, schools can create and enforce rules and protocols made known to all staff, students, and their families. Having this framework in place, it would be easier to encourage students to defend their bullied peers, assuring them that there are school-wide mechanisms in place that will ensure that their intervention will result in aid for their bullied peers and protection for them.

4.4 Are there gender differences in perceptions of bullying and the role of bystanders?

4.4.1 Observed bystander behaviour

Results of the observed bystander behaviour items showed a significant difference between the perceptions that male and female students have regarding how often their peers comfort bullying victims. Females are twice as likely as males to perceive that victimised students always have someone to comfort them, and more than half as likely as males to perceive that bullied students are rarely comforted. Comforting behaviour seems to be more common in female social groups.

Various studies have found gender differences in bullying behaviour. A cross-national study of bullying in 40 countries found that boys reported higher rates of bullying in all countries (Craig et al., 2009). In their naturalistic observations of schoolyard interactions in Toronto, O'Connell et al, (1999) found that girls supporting bullied peers more often than their male counterparts. Similarly, Thornberg and Jungert (2014) found that Swedish boys are more likely to bully, and girls are more likely to defend. In their 2010 study, Pozzoli and Gini also

found that females help bullied peers more, and that their biggest motivation to help is the perception that this behaviour is expected from them. From these results, Pozzoli and Gini concluded that female social groups expect more prosocial behaviour from their members than male groups.

While the role of bullying bystanders has been mostly overlooked in Mexican studies, gender differences have been found in terms of bullying behaviour. Albores Gallo et al.'s (2011) study on bullying in Mexico suggested that bullying is more common among boys, with girls making up only 13% of students involved in bullying situations. Girls were also rarely in the role of a bully and bully-victim; their findings showed that, if implicated in bullying situations, girls tend to be in the role of the victim. mostly as victims. The type of bullying that students report more also seems to vary. In Avilés Dorontes et al's (2012) study, male students expressed that the types of bullying they experience the most are physical and verbal, while girls shared to be subjected to cyberbullying. Results like these suggest that males and females have different experiences when it comes to bullying in Mexico, and arguably, other parts of the world.

A possible explanation for gender differences in terms bullying and bystander behaviour is that boys and girls are receiving different ideas on violence. For instance, Cowie and Colliety (2016) argued that boys are more likely to bully and reinforce bullies because gender roles and stereotypes push males into aggression. Cowie and Colliety theorise that this could be a starting point for misogyny and lad culture in the UK. This premise could be relevant in the Mexican context as well; Mexican gender stereotypes expect females to make tending to others' needs a priority, and expect males to be ready to fight to defend themselves and theirs (Diaz Guerrero, 1994). As Pozzoli and Gini (2010) suggested, differences in gender role expectations might mean that girls are more likely to comfort peers because

nurturing behaviour is expected from them, while it is seen as unusual behaviour among males.

From a social capital viewpoint (Evans & Smokowski, 2015; Evans & Smokowski, 2017), suggest that girls defend more because they gain social rewards for defending and comforting, such as affiliation and strengthening of their prosocial identity. Boys, on the other hand, might refrain from comforting because consoling others is not within their understanding of what male social interaction entails. Moreover, being more exposed to antisocial capital, boys might actually gain social rewards, such as status and a sense of belonging, for imitating the antisocial behaviour of their peers. For male students, attempting to comfort peers could mean daring to try out an unconventional social role, which becomes more difficult since they are also more likely to experience social capital deprivation (Evans & Smokowski, 2017). If this is the case, to encourage male students to support each other it is necessary to work on the flexibilization of gender roles and the social benefits that this evolution could bring for male and female students alike.

4.4.2 Self-efficacy scale

Self-efficacy scale results show that girls feel significantly more efficacious to help in bullying situations; these results were stable before and after the workshop implementation. It is noteworthy that results like these have not been found in other places of the world. For instance, in their 2013 study with Swedish secondary school students, Thornberg and Jungert (2013) found that even though girls were more likely to act as defender bystanders, they had significantly lower self-efficacy to defend bullied peers than boys. Similarly, in her study of the perspectives of middle school girls on bullying and gender identities, Forsberg (2017) found that while girls are more caring, they are less confident than their male peers, and saw male aggression as “braver” than female aggression. This was not seen in this study’s

participants, who believed that females were better at caring for each other and dealing with social conflict than males.

The reason why Mexican female students feel more self-efficacious to help bullied peers might lie in the dynamics of Mexican female friendships. In their ethnographic study of violence in secondary school girls, Mejía and Weis (2011) found that social conflict is expressed differently among Mexican female students than it does among Mexican male students. It is rare for female students to be singled out; social conflict tends to happen between social groups instead. Unlike the participants in Fosberg's (2017) study, who did not feel they could rely in the loyalty of their social group and feared to lose friends if they spoke their mind, Mejia and Weis's found that their participants established dependable and protective social groups. Slight to any group member was perceived as an offence to the whole group, and girls were quick to go to their friends' defence. Because of this, Mexican females might be more likely to express their aggression through clique feuds than through bullying. While this type of social conflict is not ideal, it may mean that females are used to defending peers and that they are more likely to have a strong support system in place. Having succeeded at defending and knowing that they will be supported when taking social risks might enhance female students' self-efficacy to defend. This sense of loyalty and readiness to defend friends could conceivably be used to encourage females to defend other peers.

4.4.3 Moral disengagement scale

Moral disengagement scale results revealed that male participants are significantly more likely than females to morally disengage from bullying situations; these results were stable before and after the workshop implementation. Many other studies have found that males have higher moral disengagement levels than females. For instance, Bandura et al.

(1996) observed that adult males were more likely to use moral disengagement dynamics as a part of their moral agency practices. Bandura et al. noted that these differences are not found in the early childhood years, but that as they grow, boys become more prone to moral disengagement than girls. It is conceivable then that, as in the case of helping behaviour, moral disengagement variations have their origin on socialisation differences. Boys might be taught to avoid responsibility through moral disengagement more frequently than girls.

The present study's results are also consistent with moral disengagement research in the subject of bullying. In their study of moral disengagement in bullying, Thornberg and Jungert (2014) found that boys use more euphemistic labelling, moral justification, victim blaming, and minimising consequences than females. Bussey et al. (2015) found that that boys display higher levels of moral disengagement and overt aggression. Their results also showed that moral disengagement and overt aggression were significantly and positively correlated. These results are consistent with findings in the Mexican context as well. Haro Solis et al. (2013) found that while male students express sadness for bullying victims, they are less likely than girls to feel guilt for having contributed to bullying, and less likely to feel a sense of personal responsibility towards bullied peers.

A possible explanation might be that, as Gilligan (1982) noted in her critique of Kohlberg's work on moral development, males and females have different ideas of morality. While males are socialised under the idea that morality consists in following set ideas of duties and responsibilities, females are more likely to understand morality as responsive to other people's specific needs and plights. Gilligan refers to this as the "ethics of care"(Gilligan, 1982). For this reason, males might find it easier to turn their backs on bullying victims under the inflexible idea that "they should mind their own business" or "people need to learn to defend themselves". On the other hand, females might be more likely to see bullying victims as individuals and to respond to their pain by attempting to help.

It is also possible that, as Cowie and Colietty (2016) suggested, boys are pushed towards aggression as a part of their gender identity development. Being pressured to engage in aggression might make males develop the need to morally disengage to deal with the self-disapproval of engaging in behaviour that they consider to be morally reprehensible.

However, as Hymel and Bonano (2014) noted, repeated use of moral disengagement leads to crystallisation, and therefore, to the ability to morally disengage from the discomfort of taking part in antisocial behaviour more efficiently. Freedom from moral discomfort removes one of the obstacles that stand between students and bullying behaviour. Better understanding of gender differences in moral disengagement could be useful to address this phenomenon and break this cycle.

4.4.4 Focus groups

Male and female focus groups participants had different ideas on how bystanders can help in bullying situations. Male students were more likely to think that bystanders could help bullied peers by interrupting bullying situations and confronting bullies, or by alerting school staff. Females were more likely to think that they could help by offering their support to both victims and bullies, since they view both as vulnerable students. Student responses were consistent with Eagly's (2009) analysis of prosocial behaviour and gender. Eagly suggests that gender roles steer men and women towards different kinds of prosocial behaviour. Men have the tendency to engage in the type of prosocial behaviour that requires collective physical work, while females tend to seek relational prosocial behaviour (Eagly, 2009).

Gender role differences have been found in helping behaviour in the context of bullying as well. In their follow-up study about the evolution of peer support systems implemented in 34 British secondary schools, Cowie et al. (2002) found that the staff in charge had trouble recruiting male volunteers and keeping them involved the project. Cowie

et al. (2002) suggested that this obstacle might have been created by students wanting to conform to a male stereotype that is inconsistent with the image of an emotional support provider. This separation between what males and females are willing to do to help was found in the present study as well.

Another explanation for the gender differences found is that males and females have different views on the implications of being bullied. While all girls spoke of victims as individuals that the community has failed to protect, some boys suggested that, even though they felt bad for them, victimised peers had simply failed to defend themselves properly. This rejection of vulnerability might have a cultural component; glorification of strength and contempt towards weakness is an important part of the Mexican male discourse (Ramirez, 1959). Male students did empathise with bullied peers, but they also morally disengaged by blaming them for their own suffering.

Gender differences were also found in what male and female students believed staff should do to address bullying. Female students were more likely to mention that staff should assist victims and bullies, while for males it was more important that the aggressors were penalised for their actions. Also, while females saw bullies as confused and neglected individuals, males were more likely to be aware of the power disparity present in bullying dynamics. This might be because, as Diaz Guerrero (1994) noted, Mexican male bid for dominance begins in the secondary school years. In their study of students transition from 5th grade to secondary school, Pellegrini and Bartini (2001) also found that social dominance becomes very important at this stage, particularly for male students.

It is worth noting that, as in the case of the scenarios, even though questions about bullies and victims were presented to students in a gender-neutral way, all boys assumed that bullies, victims and bystanders were males. Females also spoke of bullies and victims as

females, but they did refer to the bullying dynamics among their male peers as being far more worrisome than the ones they have seen among females. This clear separation of male and female bullying dynamics might be explained by students being more likely to get involved in bullying situations of students of their same gender. In their naturalistic study of peer involvement in bullying dynamics, Hawkins et al. (2001) found that students were more likely to defend peers if the bully and the victim were the same gender as themselves. Similarly, in their analysis of dyadic dynamics of victims and defender bystanders, Sainio et al. (2011) found that most victim-helper dyads are between students of the same gender. Bystanders might assume that hypothetical bullying situations are among students of their gender because inter-gender involvement in bullying incidents is uncommon. Bending this social norm might be an opportunity in putting a dent on bullying dynamics: females could benefit from being defended by their male peers and males could benefit from greater social support from their peers.

4.5 Does addressing moral disengagement dynamics help students morally reengage?

4.5.1 Moral disengagement scale

The t-test that compared the total moral disengagement mean before the workshop application and the moral disengagement mean after the workshop application produced a t of .21 with a .83 significance; this indicated that there were no significant differences between the pre-workshop and post-workshop moral disengagement scale responses.

The lack of change in the moral disengagement scale can be in part attributed to the limited amount of time that was allocated for the workshop implementation. The workshop had six one-hour sessions, and only one of these sessions was devoted to the inner workings of moral disengagement in the context of bullying. This might not have been enough to significantly change student attitudes. As Smith (1997) found in the appraisal of the Sheffield

Anti-Bullying project, schools that invested more time and attention to the project had better results than the ones that restricted certain components of the intervention. Cowie et al. (2008) encountered similar results in their study on peer support systems in schools, which led them to conclude that for interventions to produce evident results, efforts need to be widespread and sustained for longer periods of time. To have a realistic chance at significantly changing a group's moral disengagement culture, it is necessary to devote more time and resources to morally reengaging interventions.

It is also worth noting that the present population already displayed low levels of moral disengagement. On a 5 point Likert scale, the moral disengagement mean fluctuated between 1.90 and 1.89, which suggests that moral disengagement was present in the population, but not widespread. Most students were not using morally disengaging thoughts in their assessment of bullying situations. Data collected through the bullying scenarios and the focus groups shed further light on the effect that workshops had on students' morally disengaging cognitions.

4.5.2 Bullying scenarios

Empathetic student responses increased from the pre-workshop to the post-workshop questionnaire. This difference was statistically significant as a response to the cyberbullying and social bullying scenarios. More than twice as many students reacted with empathy towards the victim of these scenarios, compared with the responses of the pre-workshop questionnaire. This change could be attributed to increased awareness of the negative consequences of social bullying and cyberbullying, which they perceived to be less distressing than physical and verbal bullying before the workshop implementation. In their study of students' and teachers' perceptions of the seriousness of bullying incidents, Maunder et al. (2010) discovered that both students and teachers perceived indirect bullying, such as

social and cyberbullying, to be less serious than direct bullying. In a similar study with preservice teachers, Bauman and Del Rio (2006) found that teachers did not only perceive relational bullying as less serious, but had less empathy for relational bullying victims. This perception of indirect bullying as less severe, and therefore less harmful, might have been reduced by the material delivered in the workshop sessions.

In the case of the physical and verbal bullying scenarios, after the workshop, students were significantly less likely to engage with these hypothetical bullying situations with fear of being victimised. There was also an increase of answers revolving around empathy towards victims and wish to help, and there were more students who spoke about bullying as a violation to their peers' rights. This could suggest that more information and familiarity with bullying dynamics might have helped some students to see bullying under a different light. Beside of being a risk that they run, students might have become aware that bullying was currently affecting members of their community.

Even though there was a decrease in morally disengaged responses, moral disengagement dynamics were still observed in post-workshop scenario answers. Victim blaming was used to lay responsibility on the target for failing to prevent the situation, for not stopping it, or for having caused it in some way. Students also disengaged by claiming that the bystander did not have the information necessary to make a fair judgement, and therefore, it was better to disregard the event. Changing moral disengagement is very challenging, especially among individuals who have been disengaging for a long time, since repeated use of moral disengagement dynamics leads to crystallisation (Bandura, 1999; Hymel and Bonano, 2014). Obermann (2013) conducted a study to track changes in moral disengagement dynamics among non-bullies, chronic bullies, desisted bullies, and new bullies, measuring levels at two intervals. Her results found that while there were no significant changes between the first and the second interval, there was an increase in the

moral disengagement levels of chronic bullies and new bullies. This might have happened among this study's participants as well. An increased resistance to speak about bullying was seen in a few participants, who openly refused to engage with questions regarding the bystander's emotional reaction when witnessing bullying. This defiance, which was also observable during the workshop implementation, might be a result of increased levels of moral disengagement, which became necessary when students were confronted with the workshop material. Resistance and opposition from group bullies and bullying reinforcers were expected as a result of the workshop, but it was not a focus of this study. Further research involving bullies' and bully reinforcing bystanders' reaction to anti-bullying programmes is necessary to gain insight on how they experience exposure to anti-bullying material.

4.5.3 Focus groups

Most students in the focus groups agreed that they saw a change in how they think and feel about bullying dynamics after they took part in the workshop. The main change that they reported was that they started thinking more of the victims' experience and feeling more empathy for them. Students also claimed that they started seeing bullying behaviour not only as unpleasant, but as abusive, and as a violation of their peers' rights. This change could be a step towards more bystander involvement, since awareness of the victims' distress is positively correlated with defending (Pronk et al., 2016).

However, while in the pre-workshop focus groups all students seemed to agree that bullying is wrong, some students in the post-workshop focus group openly expressed to find bullying incidents entertaining. This sparked spirited responses from students who declared to be against bullying behaviour and insisted that it was not amusing to hurt other students. Morally disengaged students did not debate their peers, but maintained their opinion. This

exchange informed the study on the nature of the evolution of group discourse regarding bullying. This change in discourse could be explained by what Gini et al. (2014) define as collective moral disengagement, which is shared ideas that become a consensus to morally excuse a group's harmful actions. In their 2015 study on collective moral disengagement's relationship with bullying and bystander behaviour, Gini et al. (2015) found that collective moral disengagement is positively correlated with aggression and with passive bystander behaviour. They also found that it tended to happen within social groups that were important to individuals, and that it was more common among males. This study's findings also found expressions of collective moral disengagement to be stronger among males, since students expressing disengagement was only seen in male focus groups. Collective moral disengagement and pressure to conform to it could be an important hurdle towards encouraging students to help bullied peers.

4.6 Does introducing a variety of prosocial bystander roles increase self-efficacy to help in bystanders?

4.6.1 Self-efficacy scale

The t-test that compared the pre-workshop self-efficacy mean and the post-workshop self-efficacy mean produced a t of 1.8 with a .064 significance; this suggests there were no significant differences between the pre-workshop and post-workshop self-efficacy scale responses.

The absence of significant change in the post-workshop answers to the self-efficacy scale can be partially explained by the fact that, since the focus of the present study was the perceptions of bystanders, it was aimed at students and providing no training or additional information for families and staff. Meta-analyses of anti-bullying interventions have found that to achieve optimal results, programmes need to be comprehensive and include as many

elements of the school community as possible (Vreeman & Carroll, 2007; Ttofi & Farrington, 2011, Bradshaw, 2015). This might be particularly important when attempting to increase students' self-efficacy to help bullied peers, since part of the outcome of their actions does not depend on effective performance, but on how the environment reacts to them. Creating clear protocols to give students an idea of what they can expect after they help a bullied peer is important to increase students' self and collective efficacy to help bullying victims.

4.6.2 Bullying scenarios

The main change in self-efficacy scenario responses was that students' reactions reflected a wider variety of helping options bystanders can be efficacious at carrying out. These options were consistent with the prosocial bystander roles introduced in the workshops. For instance, students were significantly more likely to respond that bystanders can respond to physical bullying by confronting bullies. However, while some students were mindful that confronting bullies is only safe if done in a calm manner, some students spoke of trying to stop the bullies through violence. These answers raise the concern of protecting students perceived as aggressors, and not condone the use of violence against them. As Cowie and Colliety (2016) it is not easy to empathise with bullies, but they are also vulnerable students who need to be cared for.

While significantly less students said that they think bystanders could help social bullying victims simply by refraining from joining bullying, more students expressed that bystanders can help by supporting them. This might also be caused by exposure to the workshop material. The workshops stressed that social bullied peers can be helped by bystanders who actively befriended them and included them in social activities, which was reflected in scenario answers. Still, even though more students thought bystanders can support social bullying victims, more of them acknowledged the risk of getting involved as well. The risk of intervening in bullying situations is real, and researchers such as Chapin and

Brayack (2016) would argue that it is important that students are mindful of it, and take appropriate precautions.

On the other hand, more students thought that refraining from joining bullying is helpful after the workshop implementation. This might be because the workshop material that focused on cyberbullying stressed that one single post had the potential to be further circulated, amplifying the repetition of harm towards the victim (Kyriacou & Zuin, 2016). While there is still confusion among students regarding boundaries and dynamics of cyberbullying, students were significantly more likely to talk about stopping the dissemination of hurtful material after the workshop.

4.6.3 Focus groups

As in the case of the bullying scenarios, the post-workshop focus groups revealed more diversity in the helping options students believe they have to help bullied peers. A new helping resource that students have after the workshops is to comfort bullied peers once the incident is over. Participants expressed to feel the most comfortable with that choice because it is a safe way to make a difference. Even though it was more common among females, some males shared to have comforted bullied peers as well.

After the workshops, focus group participants still believed that alerting an adult is a good alternative since it is safe as well, and they believe school staff have the power to alleviate bullying situations. However, there is still discrepancy between what they think staff can do and what will do. Many students do not perceive they can count on school staff, and they fear that if they reach for a teacher or administrator, they will find to see a lack of support on their side. This is an important challenge for bystander intervention. To ask students to take the social risk of helping bullied peers, there is a need for clear regulations and students need to have knowledge of what the consequences of their efforts will be. As mentioned before, systemic programmes that involve as many parties as possible yield the best results (Smith, 1997; Ttofi & Farrington, 2011; Bradshaw, 2015).

There were also important gender differences in terms of self-efficacy to help. While female students claimed that they had seen positive changes in their groups, males were less optimistic. While some males stated that they had seen changes in terms of increased social support, other students perceived that the bullying situation in their groups had not changed, or had worsened. While participants shared that some peers had defended bullied peers, they were discouraged to see that the bullies had simply moved on to new targets. Students also talked about a lack of support from their peers, who keep conforming to the bullies for fear of retaliation. This gave some boys the idea that bullying is unchangeable. This is consistent with Machillot's (2017) and Rodriguez Machain et al.'s (2016) findings: Mexican students find it very difficult to challenge the social order, particularly male students. Male participants of this study expressed a desire to change their situation, but they also claimed to need more support from their peers and from school staff.

4.7 Are students receptive to material aimed to encourage them to become prosocial bystanders?

4.7.1 Self-efficacy and moral disengagement scales

The results of the self-efficacy and moral disengagement scales showed that there were no significant changes after the workshop implementation. The lack of significant changes in the self-efficacy and moral disengagement scales might be attributed to the limited amount of time allocated for the workshop. Students were not exposed to the material extensively enough to produce a statistically significant change.

However, the workshop facilitated some cognitive, emotional and even modest behavioural changes, which became evident in the scenario and focus group data analysis.

4.7.2 Bullying scenarios

The analysis of scenario responses revealed that student awareness of bullying dynamics and the damage that bullying can inflict upon victims increased after exposure to the workshops. Participants also displayed better understanding of how their reaction to bullying can exacerbate or alleviate bullying situations. Raising awareness is an important part of some notoriously successful anti-bullying programmes. A Peer-led intervention campaign designed by Salmivalli (2001), P.A.T.H.S. (Tsang et al., 2011) and KiVa (Salmivalli & Poskiparta, 2012) all highlight the importance of raising awareness of the role of bullying bystanders as a step towards increasing bystander intervention levels. In that respect, the workshops designed for this study had a positive influence: participants were responsive to awareness material.

Another change that was observed in the post-workshop scenario analysis was that students could think of a wider variety of options bystanders have to help in bullying situations. These options were consistent with the bystander roles introduced in the workshops: mediation and mediation-like techniques were prominent in student's responses to bullying scenarios after the workshop. Responses that involved offering support to bullying victims were also more common after the workshop implementation. While this response was rare in the case of physical bullying before the exposure to the workshop, increased concern for physical bullying victims' emotional wellbeing led to students thinking of offering comfort to the victims of this bullying type as well.

Other marked changes were observed in relation to social and cyberbullying. After the workshops, students were significantly more likely to think that bystanders should offer social bullying victims their support, and less likely to think that they should help by reporting the incident to an adult. Students were also twice as likely to react empathetically

towards social bullying victims. As mentioned before, students tend to see social bullying as less serious (Forsberg et al., 2014) and teachers treat social bullying victims less empathetically than physical or verbal bullying victims (Bauman & Del Rio, 2006; Duy, 2010). Discussing the dynamics and consequences of social bullying in the workshops might have increased mindfulness of social bullying victims' plight, making students more empathetic towards them and more prone to believe bystanders can help by offering their support.

In the case of cyberbullying, the percentage of students who believed bystanders can alleviate cyberbullying incidents by not participating in them increased significantly. This might be explained by the workshop emphasis on how sharing injurious online material can magnify damage. The proportion of students who reacted with empathy towards the cyberbullying victim also saw a significant increase, while significantly less students said that bystander efforts towards cyberbullying are futile. Even though many students still expressed to believe that cyberbullying is particularly difficult to tackle because of the difficulty of erasing material from the internet, student responses were now more aware of cyber-safety measures they could share with victims. This change could signal a better understanding of the inner-workings and perils of cyberbullying. However, as scenarios and focus groups showed, there is still a need to work on students' grasp of cyberbullying and cyber-safety in general.

4.7.3 Focus groups

Focus group participants expressed that after the workshops, they have observed cognitive changes in themselves and behavioural changes in their peers. Participants report to be more aware of bullying dynamics, and some students exhibited the capacity to distinguish between bullying, joking, and student fights. These students were also comfortable explaining

this difference to their peers. Teaching students to make this distinction between continuum of play, bullying, fighting, and delinquency is one of the aims of the Bully Busters (Horne et al., 2003) programme. Even though more of this study's focus groups participants knew the division between these types of aggression after the workshop implementation, some still get confused and label fighting as bullying, and bullying as joking.

Another change that students displayed was an increased awareness of their influence over bullying situations. Participants seemed to believe that if they intervened, they could facilitate an improvement in the social climate in their classrooms. Even though they expressed a desire to do this, student admitted that their intentions were rarely translated into action. According to focus group participants, the main reason for this is that they fear social retaliation from powerful peers and they do not believe they would have enough support from the rest of the group and from school staff. This sense of powerlessness and discomfort over feeling trapped in an environment that promotes bullying was more common in male students. This is consistent with Rodriguez Machain et al.'s (2016) and Machillot's (2017) findings, which suggest that Mexican males believe that aggression is a part of normal social interaction and do not think that these dynamics can be challenged. This is one of the biggest cultural obstacles that anti-bullying interventions would face with Mexican populations.

Students also said to be disillusioned by the perception that once a bullying victim received protection by a group of peers, bullies would simply select a new target. Again, this phenomenon was only expressed by male participants. It was reasonable to expect a reaction from bullies, since they use domination over other students to gain social status (Olweus, 1993). Further research on how to handle bullies' emotional and behavioural reactions to anti-bullying material is still needed.

However, and even though they fail to recognise this as substantial change, students agreed that they have seen an improvement in social interactions among non-bullies in their classrooms. Participants also report an increase in support towards bullying victims. This rise in supportive behaviour, along with increased awareness of bullying dynamics, better understanding of the role bystanders play, and a desire to make a change in their school environment suggests that students were generally receptive to the material designed for the workshops. Students would benefit from material aimed to encourage them to become prosocial bystanders, if this material was a part of a comprehensive programme that involved teachers, staff and families, and ensured protection for bystanders who intervene in bullying incidents.

4.8 Additional findings: Differences in perceptions regarding different bullying types

While students' perceptions of their role as bystanders of different bullying types was not an area of focus in the original research design, students' responses to the different bullying scenario types provided insight on the diversity of student conceptions from one bullying type to the next.

4.8.1 Physical bullying

Along with verbal bullying, physical bullying tends to be the kind of bullying that comes to many students' and teachers' minds when discussing the topic, and the one that they rate as most serious (Maunder et al., 2010). This might be the reason why students were more likely to wish to help physical bullying victims, and more likely to feel guilty for not doing so. Additionally, student responses reflected that witnessing physical bullying incidents makes them most afraid of being targeted. Students were also most likely to believe that the personal risk that they would have to take to help physically bullied peers is a deterrent of helping behaviour. In their study of bystanders' perceptions of bullying and its effects on

their sense of safety, Gini et al (2008) found that witnessing bullying incidents has an impact on how safe students feel at school. The negative consequences of physical bullying are clear and evident to bystanders, which might explain why witnessing physical bullying makes them most fearful for themselves. It might also explain why students are more likely to think that alerting an adult is the best course of action to intervene in physical bullying incidents; it is relatively safe and it is possible to do it anonymously. Students were also most likely to feel guilty about not helping physically bullied peers, perhaps because, as mentioned before, physical bullying damage is easily observable by bystanders.

However, students were least less likely to think of helping physical bullied peers by comforting them. One reason for that could be that since students are concerned about the risk of physical injury, they do not think of emotional support as useful. Another explanation might be that in the Mexican context, physical bullying is more pervasive among male students (Aviles Dorantes et al, 2012), and Mexican males are expected to accept aggression as a normal part of interaction (Rodriguez Machain et al, 2016). It could be argued that some Mexican secondary school students might believe that it is inappropriate to show compassion to physical bullying victims, and that they might not even want it, being that sympathy could be interpreted as undermining their capacity to withstand aggression and respond to it.

4.8.2 Verbal bullying

Participants in this study were more likely to feel empathy towards verbal bullying victims than victims of other types of bullying. A possible explanation of this could be that verbal bullying is the most prevalent bullying type in Mexico (Aguilera et al., 2007; Castillo Rocha & Pacheco Espejel, 2008), so students are more likely to have been verbally bullied or to have witnessed a friend being verbally bullied in the past. In Forsberg et al.'s (2014) study on bystanders' thoughts on peer reactions to bullying, they found that students' relationships

with victims and bullies plays a big role on how they perceive bullying incidents. Students will rate bullying incidents involving their friends as more serious, and they will be more prone to intervene. Therefore, it is plausible to think that students feel sympathy for verbal bullying victims because they have seen their friends, and maybe themselves, in that position before.

4.8.3 Social bullying

Before workshop implementation, students were least likely to feel empathy towards social bullying victims than for other type of bullying victims. As mentioned before, this has been found in research before; social bullying is rated as less serious than physical and verbal bullying (Maunder et al., 2010). In their study with Mexico City secondary school students' experiences with guilt and shame, Haro Solis et al. (2013) found that students were more likely to feel for physical and verbal bullying victims. However, empathetic responses to the social bullying scenario doubled in the post-workshop questionnaire application. This could be attributed awareness raised as a result to exposition to the workshop's material. In their study on stuttering education and bullying awareness, Langevin and Prasad (2012) found that exposing students to awareness material on stuttering and bullying increased positive attitudes towards peers who stuttered and bullied peers. The significant increase in empathy for social bullying victims in this study could be a result of students being more aware of how social bullying works and of the distress that it causes.

Students were also least likely to involve adults to address social bullying. There might also be a cultural component to these results. In a recent study, Machillot (2017) found strict group-wide social codes among Mexican students, in which involving outsiders (such as school staff and family members) is strongly condemned. These social codes tend to work to the service of disruptive students, who expect and demand peers to follow their behaviour,

and censure reporting it under the premise of “standing together”. Machillot also discovered that while students with disabilities are widely accepted, students who challenge social norms tend to be excluded. This makes reporting bullying behaviour extremely difficult. Hence, it is plausible that students are more likely to turn to staff for transgressions that they was a clear transgression of social norms, but less likely to do so for situations that they perceive as ambiguous, as indirect bullying.

However, there seems to be a division on social bullying perceptions per gender. In their study on aggressive behaviour among Mexico City secondary school students, Rodriguez Machain et al. (2016) found that females were more likely to challenge social norms. Participants in their study had the understanding that social interactions should be kept among students, and that doing something that displeases the group might result in exclusion. Still, males were more likely to accept this system and females were more likely to criticise it as unfair. That divergence was found in the present study too. While males were more likely to believe that if the group had chosen to exclude a member there was nothing they could do, females often perceived imposed social restriction as a violation to their rights as much as the victims’ rights. These students were more likely to believe that challenging the social order was worth the risk.

Female students’ willingness to challenge the social order might be a result of a protective factor that they enjoy and male students do not. In their study on aggression in secondary school girls, Mejia Hernandez and Weis (2011) found that Mexican girls form tight-knit friendship groups in which loyalty is highly valued and it is rare to have a female student who is not part of one of these groups. While female friend groups are often involved in gossiping, group rivalry, and competition for potential mates, this aggression tends to be manifested through cliques, rather than singling out of individuals. Aggression to one group member is considered an affront to the whole group (Mejia Hernandez & Weis, 2011). Girls

might be more willing to challenge social norms and refuse to follow powerful peers' instructions because they know they will not be completely isolated, being able to depend on the loyalty of their clique.

4.8.4 Cyberbullying

Out of all the bullying types, students were most likely to think that bystanders cannot help cyberbullying victims. The main reason that participants gave for this sense of powerlessness is the idea that when harmful material is already on the internet there is nothing to be done. This perception of any efforts to help cyberbullied peers being futile is also grounds for morally disengaging from this type of incidents: if there is nothing they can do to help, there is no point in getting involved. Because of this, students were also less likely to feel guilty for not attempting to assist victims of cyberbullying.

There might be other reasons why students find it easier to morally disengage from cyberbullying incidents. In their 2010 study, Pornari and Wood found that while both traditional and cyberbullying are related to moral disengagement, cyberbullying requires lower levels of moral disengagement than face-to-face bullying. Kyriacou and Zuin (2016) suggested that the reason for this difference is that since cyberbullies cannot see the harm that their behaviour is causing in their victims, it is easier for them to morally disengage. Quirk and Campbell (2015) also found that students were more likely to join cyberbullying because of the "disinhibition effect" caused by being unable to see and be seen by peers.

It is plausible that these effects are also true for bullying bystanders. It is easier for a bystander to disengage from an event that has no visible damage. Still, there was a significant decrease in students who disengaged by stating that helping cyberbullying victims is futile. This could mean that, while there is still disinformation on the topic, students are receptive to material on cyberbullying information and awareness.

Cyberbullying also set itself apart from other bullying types in that students are unsure of its boundaries. Participants did not know if cyberbullying falls within the jurisdiction of the school, family members, or legal authorities. They were also unaware of basic cyber-safety measures that they can have in place. Curriculum devoted to rights, obligations, and safety on social media might be necessary not only to address cyberbullying, but to safeguard students from other online perils.

Chapter 5. Conclusions

This chapter presents conclusions reached through the analysis of the results and the critical discussion of how they fit into the relevant literature. The research aims are revisited and the main findings are summarised in the context of the state of the knowledge. The limitations that this study encountered are also examined. Finally, this chapter considers directions for further research that the findings of the present study has highlighted.

5.1 Aims and main findings

The main aim of the present study was to explore Mexican secondary school students' perceptions of their role in bullying situations. Special attention was paid to gender differences in these perceptions, students' levels of self-efficacy and moral disengagement, and student receptivity to material that encourages prosocial bystander behaviour.

Results suggest that most Mexican bullying bystanders morally engage with bullying incidents and feel efficacious at helping bullied peers. Participants reacted empathetically towards bullying victims and condemned the behaviour of bullies, which was seen as abusive and disruptive. A desire to help bullied peers was also common. Students had different ideas of helping behaviour that they believed bystanders could successfully carry out. While most students thought of alerting an adult as the main way bystanders can help bullied peers, many students also believed bystanders can be efficacious at comforting victims and confronting bullies.

However, on many occasions these ideas are not translated into actions. The main reason students identify for this hesitancy to intervene is fear of having their more powerful peers retaliate, and becoming bullying victims themselves. Findings of reluctance to act due to social risks are consistent with Machillot's (2017) findings on social norms, violence and discrimination among peers in Mexico. Dominant students who engage in victimisation

expect to be tolerated and to have other peers enable and imitate them. The group does not believe these demands can be challenged. Therefore, to avoid earning the bullies' animosity which could ultimately result in being targeted, many students choose to remain passive in the face of bullying incidents, or even to reinforce or join the bullies.

Consistently with Haro Solis et al.'s (2013) findings, feeling guilty for not helping victims, or for aiding bullies, was common among students. To alleviate this guilt, some students employed moral disengagement dynamics in their rationalizations about bullying and the role of bystanders. The most common moral disengagement dynamics used by participants were victim blaming and moral justification. The use of these mechanisms might relate to cultural views on violence: many Mexicans tolerate or even encourage aggression, interpreting it as a sign of strength (Diaz Guerrero, 1994). This way, bullied students are blamed for not defending themselves, and they are accused of being weak. Bullying is also morally justified through this reasoning, attributing to it the power to make students stronger and to prepare them for future encounters with aggression that students have come to see as normal. This habituation to violence was also found by Castillo Rocha and Pacheco Espejel (2008), who found that Mexican students are very tolerant of violence and see it as an unavoidable part of life.

While this idea is widespread in Mexican culture, some students are more likely to challenge it. Results of this study found that there is a marked gender difference when it comes to perceptions of bullying and bystander behaviour. Female students have more positive attitudes regarding bullying victims, are more empathetic towards the vulnerability of perpetrators, and display lower levels of moral disengagement. These findings are consistent with relevant literature worldwide (Salmivalli et al., 2011; Pozzoli & Gini, 2012; Sijtsema et al., 2014; Thornberg & Jungert, 2014).

However, there was one gender difference finding that did not come up in the literature review process: female participants displayed significantly higher levels of self-efficacy to help bullied peers. This might be because a lack of social support is the biggest predictor of bullying in Mexican populations (Vega Lopez et al., 2013), and females have the protective factor of being cared for by their friend group. While Forsberg (2017) found that Swedish secondary school girls do not feel they could trust the loyalty of their social group and that they believed speaking their mind could cause them to lose friends, Mejía Hernández and Weis (2011) found the opposite in Mexican girls. Their results suggested that Mexican girls rely on their friends and are prompt to protect their them in case of social conflict. This study had similar findings. Bullying seems to be less common among females, who are more likely to handle social conflict in the form of clique feuds.

This study found that females claim that they are seldom singled out, and that they are more likely than males to be willing to challenge socially powerful peers. Unlike male students who believed that the sway that powerful peers hold over the group is inflexible, females were more likely to see peer dominance as abusive. This is consistent with Rodriguez Machain et al.'s (2016) findings: Mexican girls are might be more likely to defend themselves and their peers against dominant group members. Again, this might be because they are less likely to be socially ostracised for this.

While gender differences are commonly found in research on bullying and bystander behaviour, the origin and implication of these differences are rarely the focus of research. This study hypothesises that differences in perceptions might be caused by different messages on violence and helping behaviour. In the Mexican context, aggression is more likely to be encouraged in males, and displays of male vulnerability are held in contempt, being interpreted as a sign of weakness. Still, vulnerability is permitted of Mexican females, and supporting and nurturing others is expected of them (Diaz Guerrero, 1994). By socialising

children this way, Mexican families are arguably making their boys vulnerable in their attempt to make them strong. While females become comfortable helping their peers and asking for their help, males are expected to deal with their problems in isolation and are shamed for having troubles in the first place. This situation puts males at an important disadvantage as victims of bullying. Even though this interpretation is relevant to the Mexican context, the prevalence of gender differences in bullying and bystander behaviour worldwide might be an indicator that this happens to some extent in other cultures as well.

One finding that was not foreseen in the research design is that students have very different perceptions of different bullying types. For instance, physical and verbal bullying were clearly seen as a social transgression, and participants had clear views on them. This is consistent with Bauman and Del Rio (2006) and Duy's (2013) research, which concluded that physical and verbal bullying are perceived as more serious than indirect bullying, like social and cyberbullying. Therefore, students were more likely to feel guilty for not helping physically bullied peers, and witnessing physical bullying makes them feel most fearful of being bullied themselves. As for verbal bullying, students are more likely to empathise with victims, and they have more varied resources in their repertoire to help them. This might be the case because verbal bullying is the most common type of bullying around them (Valadez, 2016) and they have more experience in addressing it.

Views on social and cyberbullying situations were different. While what constitutes physical bullying and verbal bullying was very clear to participants, there was some confusion about what can be considered social bullying and cyberbullying. Suspicion for what caused students to be rejected was common, and social bullying victims were more likely than others to be blamed for their situation. Other studies have also found reduced empathy for social bullying victims has been found among students (Maunder et al., 2010) and teachers (Bauman & Del Rio, 2006). Also, unlike any other bullying type, alerting adults

of social bullying incidents was not seen as an appropriate course of action, since social issues are perceived as a peer concern that does not involve third parties.

When it comes to cyberbullying, students were empathetic towards victims, and aware of the pain that this form of victimisation causes. However, students were more likely to think that bystanders cannot do anything to help cyberbullying victims. The main reason participants gave for this sense of powerlessness against cyberbullying is that they perceive that what is posted on the internet is unchangeable and out anyone's reach. Additionally, students were unsure as to whom they could alert in case of cyberbullying, since there was confusion about whether or not cyberbullying incidents fall under the school's jurisdiction.

Student level of receptiveness to curriculum aimed to encourage active prosocial bystander behaviour was a focus of this study as well. Results suggested that students are receptive to curriculum on the role and responsibility of bullying bystanders; scenario and focus group responses showed that participants acknowledged their part in the phenomenon and remembered the helping options presented during the workshops. This receptiveness has been found as a response to programmes with strong bystander components such as Steps to Respect (Frey et al., 2005), P.A.T.H.S (Tsang et al., 2012) and most notably KiVa (Yang & Salmivalli, 2015).

Still, students also expressed that translating this knowledge into action had been obstructed by fear of retaliation and perceived lack of support on the part of the peers and staff. While an increase in victim comforting behaviour was reported, other types of efforts were not perceived. This reluctance is understandable; students did not seem to have a clear idea of what would happen if they were to attempt to confront bullying perpetrators, or even if they were to report their behaviour.

Asking students to take the social risk of challenging bullies, without clear protocols as to how bullying situations are addressed and without the definite assistance of school staff, is too much to ask. If students are encouraged to protect their peers, school communities need to be able to assure them that they will be protected as well. Detailed bullying guidelines and regulations should be in place so that students know which behaviours are defined as bullying, what the consequences are for engaging in these behaviours, and which resources students can rely on when assisting peers. Staff training must also be provided so all members of staff know which steps they should follow if they detect bullying or if students make them aware of bullying situations. This way, students can be assured that they will find appropriate responsiveness to their helping efforts. Finally, family members ought to be informed about how anti-bullying protocols work, so they are aware of which actions will be taken if their children were to be involved in bullying situations in any capacity. Involving the whole educational community and having their support is vital for tackling bullying. As various meta-analysis of anti-bullying programmes have found: systemic programmes that involve as many parties as possible have the best results (Rigby, 2002; Ttofi & Farrington, 2011; Bradshaw, 2015). While many schools feel reluctant to invest the time, economic, and human resources needed for this type of interventions to be carried out, it is what is needed to make a substantial difference in bullying in schools.

5.2 Study limitations

The present study encountered limitations not foreseen in the research design process. The first limitation rested in failing to highlight relevant terms. While research has found widespread links between bystander behaviour, self-efficacy, and moral disengagement, most of these studies have been conducted in individualist cultures of the developed world. Mexico, as many developing countries, is a collectivist culture, in which the accomplishments of the group are valued over individual endeavours. For this reason,

highlighting the potential importance of collective efficacy (Barchia & Bussey, 2011) would have been important for this study. Results showed that while participants were confident that they, as individuals, could correctly execute helping protocols, they were less optimistic about what the group could achieve. Collective moral disengagement (Gini et al., 2015) should have been addressed as well. Discrepancies between the individual questionnaires and focus group responses showed that while students rarely use moral disengagement dynamics in their own interpretations of bullying, they found it difficult to challenge collective understandings of bullying and social norms on bystander behaviour.

Another limitation was the unexpected finding that perceptions of bullying differ widely according to the bullying type. While the bullying scenarios depicted different bullying types to provide students with the diversity of situations they might encounter in daily life, participants responded very differently to each of them. Since the extent of these variations were not foreseen, different bullying types were not represented in the observed bystander behaviour, self-efficacy or moral disengagement scales, nor were they enquired about in the focus groups. This left the data gap of self-efficacy and moral disengagement levels exclusive to each bullying type, and of group norms pertinent to them. Additionally, the gender of the hypothetical victim-bystander dyads in the scenarios might have led to specific results regarding gender in each bullying type. It is not implausible to think that student responses would have been different if the physical bullying victim had been depicted as female, or of the cyberbullying victim had been depicted as male. Gender factors relative to different bullying types were not addressed in this study.

Finally, while this study assumes that all students have witnessed bullying, it does not consider variations in perceptions of students who have been defenders, students who typically engage as reinforcers, students who tend to remain passive, and students who have engaged in bullying situations as victims, bullies and bully-victims. This study's design's

emphasis on anonymity restricted information of how student responses vary according to the role they tend to play in bullying situations. Information on different perceptions and reactions to curriculum according to the role students play in bullying situations would have been enlightening to have a wider representation of students' experiences as bystanders.

5.3 Directions for future research

The data analysis process found answers to all research questions, and pointed out areas that require further research. As mentioned before, the present study focused on self-efficacy and moral disengagement in Mexican secondary school students, overlooking the collective nature of the Mexican culture. Studies on collective efficacy and collective moral disengagement in collectivist cultures are needed to get a comprehensive depiction of what students believe a group can do to help bullied peers, and the of collective moral disengagement mechanisms that have become social norms.

This study's focus on Mexican secondary school students found cultural peculiarities relevant to Mexico and, possibly, other Latin American countries. However, participants in this study belonged to a self-urbanised, lower middle-class community in the Valley of Mexico, and made up a very homogeneous cultural group. Comparative research could help explore how bystander behaviour differs in urban, semi-urban, self-urbanised and rural communities, and whether socioeconomic status plays a significant role. Being a marginalised sector of the Mexican population, all educational topics are under-researched in indigenous communities and bullying and bystander behaviour are not the exception. Bullying research on indigenous Mexican populations would shed light on how students in these communities perceive violence and their role in it.

Cultural components that influence bullying and bystander behaviour are bound to exist not only in Latin-American settings, but worldwide. Research on cultural components to

students' views on violence, helping, bullying, and bystander behaviour would be useful to address the issue in different countries and different cultural settings. Additionally, strengths and resources that aid bullying intervention in different cultures could be harnessed for intervention in other settings. For example, the protective factor of close female friendships in Mexican students could be used in different contexts, and international perceptions of masculinities can be used to combat toxic masculinity in Mexican populations.

Cultural differences might be particularly enlightening when it comes to gender differences in perceptions of violence and helping behaviour. While gender differences have been found in bullying research worldwide, the source, dynamics and implications of these differences have been largely ignored. Learning about the inner workings of gender differences in bullying and bystander behaviour in different cultural settings could help inform curriculum, anti-bullying intervention, and gender equality efforts.

This study's findings suggest that different social dynamics, in this case, gender sensitive, provide a protective factor for some students and makes other students especially vulnerable to bullying. Further research on how certain social dynamics can be harnessed as protection for victims and how other social dynamics need to be challenged could be valuable for the design of gender-sensitive anti-bullying programmes. Female empathy towards bullying perpetrators could also be researched in view of creating future bully-rehabilitating schemes.

Like many other studies, this study found that while students feel empathy towards bullied peers, bystander involvement is still uncommon. As mentioned before, the main reasons that this study's participants cited for reluctance to help was fear of retaliation on the bullies' side. Research on what bystanders would need from teachers, administrators, family members and peers is vital to add an element of protection to bystander-based programmes. When students are encouraged to protect their peers, efforts should be made ensure their

protection as well. This study shed light on how students have different ideas of their own efficacy, have different resources, and employ different moral disengagement dynamics when faced with different bullying types. Research on students' cognitive processes, emotional reactions, and behavioural responses relative to different bullying types is still needed to better inform policy and intervention design on how to address bullying comprehensively.

While the dual role of the researcher being the workshop facilitator was acknowledged as an ethical issue to be considered, interesting information was unearthed in the process of implementing the workshop. This information was useful in probing certain issues in the post-workshop focus groups and in getting a wider picture of the tone of the student conversation regarding bullying and being a bystander. Having the researcher facilitate or observe the implementation of any curriculum designed for a study can be valuable in bullying-related research. However, it is vital to be mindful of the bias that is likely to arise from rapport with the students and from the researchers' personal feelings regarding bullying or violence.

Finally, it is important to note that this study focused on secondary school students and the violence that stems from their developmental domination dynamics and the social interaction patterns in adolescence. While no evidence was found to suggest that there are significant differences in perceptions between 13, 14 and 15 year olds, results cannot be generalised to young children and young adults. Similar research in primary schools and higher education settings is necessary to explore the perceptions of bystanders and the role they play in bullying dynamics in different age groups.

5.4 Recommendations

As most meta-analyses of bullying interventions (Bradshaw, 2005; Vreeman & Carroll, 2007; Ttofi & Farrington, 2011) and analyses of comprehensive interventions (Smith, 1997; Olweus et al, 2009; Salmivalli & Poskiparta, 2012) have stressed, results of this study

suggest that to successfully address bullying, it is necessary to implement a widespread programme that involves as many parties as possible. Participants expressed the need to have not only the support of more peers, but of school staff as well. Parental support was also cited as a potential resource. However, families were also cited as an obstacle for pro-social alternatives to deal with bullying; many students shared that parents encourage to and even demand that they physically attack their aggressor peers. Training staff and families on how to respond to bullying incidents would be invaluable in presenting students with a homogeneous message on violence and in adequately supporting victims, bystanders, and bullies as well.

An important obstacle to student, staff and family involvement in anti-bullying efforts is misinformation on what bullying is. Students, families, and staff are likely to label different forms of student conflict as bullying, and to overlook bullying incidents thinking of them as normal banter. All members of the educational community need to be aware of the types of bullying that exist and how they manifest themselves. Once all parties have the same understanding of what bullying is, they need to be informed of the protocols to be followed to address bullying incidents. This is likely to make staff more responsive to students' reports of bullying incidents, parents more comfortable when they have a child involved in a bullying situation and make students better supported in helping and asking for help.

Regarding the strong influence of culture in bystander behaviour, two areas of opportunity came up in the. The first one is that students feel more comfortable denouncing bullying on behalf of others than to identify themselves as bullying victims. This phenomenon, along with the collectivist nature of Mexicans (Diaz Guerrero, 1194) could make Mexican classrooms an excellent setting for an anti-bullying culture that stresses bystander intervention. However, for this to work it is necessary to draw on the second area of

opportunity: the protective influence of close friendships that females enjoy but males are deprived of. This could be achieved by addressing toxic masculinity, which endorses violence and discourages emotional expression and helping behaviour among males.

Still, for a comprehensive, multi-party intervention to be successful it is necessary for schools to be willing to devote a significant amount of time and resources to its comprehensive implementation. This might seem like a sacrifice for staff and administrators, but such an effort is likely to result in a noticeable improvement, not only in the school's anti-bullying culture, but in its general social climate as well.

Appendices

Appendix I. Bystander Perception Questionnaire (English version)

Bystander Perception Questionnaire

This questionnaire is aimed to learn about your experiences, thoughts and feelings as a bullying bystander. A bullying bystander is someone who is present when bullying is happening and is aware of it, but is neither the bully nor the victim. All your responses are anonymous.

The questionnaire consists of four sections: Section I, Section II, Section III and Section IV. If you have any questions, feel free to ask.

Section I.

Tick the appropriate box

Grade: 1st 2nd 3rd

Gender: Male Female

Section II.

Listen to the description of what bullying means and what types of bullying exist. Read the following statements and state how often you see people reacting in the following ways.

When bullying is happening:	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1. Someone laughs at it.					
2. Someone pretends they do not see it.					
3. Someone tries to stop the bully.					
4. Someone joins the bully.					
5. Someone sees it, but tries to stay out of it.					
6. Someone tries to make the victim feel better.					

Section III.

Read the following statements and state how much you agree with them.

	Completely agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Completely disagree

I believe I'm capable of helping someone who's being bullied.					
I have helped students who were bullied before.					
If I see how other people help in bullying situations, I can help too.					
If someone tells me what I can do when someone is being bullied, I can help.					
I want to help bullied students more.					
I think someone should help bullied people, but not me.					
I see "bullying" as playing around or joking.					
I think that the victim probably deserved it.					
I think bullying helps people become stronger.					
I really think it's no big deal.					
I think bullying happens because some people don't know how to defend themselves.					

Section IV. Read the following situations and answer the questions

1) Jorge is walking through the schoolyard during recess and sees a group of students crowding around Carlos, a boy in Jorge's class. Two of the students have taken his lunch from him, and are slapping him while they laugh. Carlos is struggling to get his food back, but the two other students are much taller. It looks like Carlos won't be able to eat before the bell rings.

a) How do you think Jorge feels about Carlos being treated like that?

b) Do you think Jorge can help Carlos? If your answer is YES, How? If your answer is NO, Why?

2) For an in-class assignment, Ana's class is divided into groups to answer some questions. Ana notices that a couple of the group members are making fun of everything Javier, another group member is saying. They say what Javier is saying is stupid and that he should just stay quiet. When Javier goes silent, they start making fun of him and ask him if he's going to cry.

a) How do you think Ana feels about Javier being treated like that?

b) Do you believe Ana can help Javier? If your answer is YES, How? If your answer is NO, Why? _____

3) Sandra notices that a new girl, Julia, has joined her class. The teacher asks Sandra to work with Julia in a paired assignment. Afterwards, some students in Sandra's class tell her no to talk to Julia. They say they know her from outside the school and have a lot of negative things to say about her. By the end of the week, nobody in the class talks to Julia.

a) How do you think Sandra feels about Julia being treated like that?

b) Do you believe Sandra can help Julia? If your answer is YES, How? If your answer is NO, Why? _____

4) Arturo is on Facebook when he sees that his classmate Teresa's page is being bombarded with really mean comments about the way she looks. She is deleting them, but more seem to be coming up. For what some of them say, it is obvious to Arturo that she is receiving insulting phone text messages from the same people too.

a) How do you think Arturo feels about Teresa being treated like that?

b) Do you believe Arturo can help Teresa? If your answer is YES, How? If your answer is NO, Why? _____

Appendix II. Bystander Perception Questionnaire (Spanish version)

Inventario sobre las percepciones del espectador de violencia escolar (bullying)

Este cuestionario tiene como propósito aprender sobre tus experiencias, pensamientos y sentimientos como espectador de bullying. Un espectador es alguien que está presente y nota que el bullying está sucediendo, pero no es ni la víctima ni el agresor. Todas tus respuestas son anónimas.

El cuestionario consta de cuatro secciones, Sección I, Sección II, Sección III y Sección IV. Si tienes dudas, puedes levantar la mano para preguntar.

Sección I.

Marca con una "X" la opción indicada.

Año escolar: 1^{ro} 2^{do} 3^{ro}

Género: Masculino Femenino

Sección II.

Escucha la definición de lo que es el bullying y los tipos de bullying que existen. Después, marca con una "x" que tan a menudo ves que la gente reacciona de las siguientes maneras.

Cuando un compañero está sufriendo bullying:	Siempre	Casi siempre	A veces	Casi nunca	Nunca
7. Hay gente que se ríe.					
8. Hay gente que finge que no ve lo que está pasando.					
9. Hay gente que trata de detener al agresor.					
10. Hay gente que se le une al agresor.					
11. Hay gente que lo ve pero prefiere no involucrarse.					
12. Hay gente que intenta consolar a la víctima.					

Sección III.

Lee las siguientes oraciones y marca con una "X" que tan de acuerdo estás con ellas.

	Completamente de acuerdo	Un poco de acuerdo	Indeciso
1. Creo que soy capaz de ayudar a alguien que está sufriendo bullying.			

2. Ya he ayudado a gente que estaba sufriendo bullying.			
3. Si veo que otras personas ayudan a mis compañeros que sufren bullying, puedo ayudar también.			
4. Si alguien me dice que hacer para ayudar a la gente que está sufriendo bullying, puedo ayudar.			
5. Quiero ayudar más a mis compañeros que sufren bullying.			
6. Creo que alguien más debería ayudar, pero yo no.			
7. El bullying es más bien bromas y chistes entre compañeros.			
8. Creo que las víctimas probablemente se lo merecen.			
9. El bullying ayuda a la gente a ser más fuerte.			
10. La verdad, creo que no es para tanto.			
11. Creo que el bullying pasa porque algunas personas no saben cómo defenderse.			

Sección 4. Lee las siguientes situaciones y responde las preguntas.

5) Jorge va caminando por el patio en el recreo cuando ve que un grupo de compañeros están en bola alrededor de Carlos, un chico de su salón. Dos de los otros compañeros le quitaron su lunch, y le están dando bofetadas mientras se ríen de él. Carlos está intentando recuperar su comida, pero los otros compañeros son mucho más altos que él y la ponen fuera de su alcance. Parece que Carlos no va a tener tiempo de comer antes de que se acabe el recreo.

c) ¿Cómo crees que se siente Jorge de ver cómo están tratando a Carlos? ¿Por qué?_

d) ¿Crees que Jorge puede ayudar a Carlos? Si tu respuesta es **SI** ¿Cómo? Si tu respuesta es **NO** ¿Por qué? _____

6) Para un trabajo en clase, la maestra de Ana divide a su salón en equipos para contestar unas preguntas. Ana se da cuenta de que un par de compañeros se están burlando de todo lo que Javier, otro compañero dice. Le dicen que todo lo que dice es una tontería

y que mejor deje de opinar. Cuando Javier se queda callado, se empiezan a reír de él y le preguntan si va a llorar.

a) ¿Cómo crees que se siente Ana de ver cómo están tratando a Javier? ¿Por qué?

b) ¿Crees que Ana puede ayudar a Javier? Si tu respuesta es **SI ¿Cómo?** Si tu respuesta es **NO ¿Por qué?** _____

3) Un miércoles, una chica nueva que se llama Julia llega al salón de Sandra. Como Sandra es muy sociable, su maestra le pide que trabaje con Julia en parejas. Julia se ve buena onda, y parece que trabaja bien. A la salida, alguien le dice a Sandra que no le hable a Julia. Le dice que la conoce de afuera de la escuela y le dice muchas cosas negativas de ella. Para el viernes, nadie en el salón le habla a Julia.

a) ¿Cómo crees que se siente Sandra de ver cómo están tratando a Julia? ¿Por qué?

b) ¿Crees que Sandra puede ayudar a Julia? Si tu respuesta es **SI ¿Cómo?** Si tu respuesta es **NO ¿Por qué?** _____

4) Mientras Arturo está revisando su Facebook, ve que un grupo de personas de su salón le están poniendo a una compañera que se llama Teresa muchos comentarios insultantes sobre su aspecto. Teresa los está borrando, pero le ponen más y más. Por lo que dicen algunos de los comentarios, es obvio para Arturo que a Teresa también le están mandando mensajes insultantes a su celular.

a) ¿Cómo crees que se siente Arturo de ver cómo están tratando a Teresa? ¿Por qué?

b) ¿Crees que Arturo puede ayudar a Teresa? Si tu respuesta es **SI ¿Cómo?** Si tu respuesta es **NO ¿Por qué?** _____

Appendix III. Approved Ethical Issues Audit Form



Education Ethics Committee

Ethical Issues Audit Form

This questionnaire should be completed for each research study that you carry out as part of your degree. Once completed, please email this form to your supervisor. You should then discuss the form fully with your supervisor, who should approve the completed form. **You must not collect your data until you have had this form approved by your supervisor (and possibly others - your supervisor will guide you).**

Surname / Family Name:	Lopez Romero
First Name / Given Name:	Maria Eugenia
Programme:	PhD in Education
Supervisor (of this research study):	Professor Chris Kyriacou
Topic (or area) of the proposed research study:	Bullying in Mexican schools: The role of bystanders.
Where the research will be conducted:	Mexico.
Methods that will be used to collect data:	Focus groups, surveys.
If you will be using human participants, how will you recruit them?	A secondary school in Estado de Mexico, Mexico, has allowed me to collect data and implement an intervention involving their entire student population.

Supervisors, please read *Ethical Approval Procedures: Students*. Note: If the study involves children, vulnerable participants, sensitive topics, or an intervention into normal educational practice, this form must also be approved by the programme leader (or Programme Director if the supervisor is also the Programme Leader); or the TAP member for Research Students. It may also require review by the full Ethics Committee (see below).

First approval: by the supervisor of the research study (after reviewing the form):

Please select one of the following options.

I believe that this study, as planned, meets normal ethical standards. I have checked that any informed consent form a) addresses the points as listed in this document, and b) uses appropriate language for the intended audience(s).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
I am unsure if this study, as planned, meets normal ethical standards	<input type="checkbox"/>
I believe that this study, as planned, does not meet normal ethical standards and requires some modification	<input type="checkbox"/>

Supervisor's Name (please type):	Chris Kyriacou
Date:	21 April 2015

Supervisor - If the study involves children, vulnerable participants, sensitive topics, or an intervention into normal educational practice (see *Ethical Approval Procedures: Students*), please email this form for second approval to the Programme Leader (or Programme Director if the supervisor is also the Programme Leader); or the TAP member for Research Students. For this second approval, other documents may need to be sent in the same email e.g. the proposal (or a summary of it) and any informed consent and participant information sheets.

If the study has none of the above characteristics, the supervisor should email this completed form to the Programme Administrator.

Second approval: by the Programme Leader; or Programme Director; or TAP member for Research Students:

Please select one of the following options:

I believe that this study, as planned, meets normal ethical standards. I have checked that any informed consent form a) addresses the points as listed in this document, and b) uses appropriate language for the intended audience(s).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
I am unsure if this study, as planned, meets normal ethical standards	<input type="checkbox"/>
I believe that this study, as planned, does not meet normal ethical standards and requires some modification	<input type="checkbox"/>

Name of Programme Leader; or Programme Director; or TAP member (please type):	Poppy Nash (TAP member)
Date:	21 April 2015

The supervisor should now email this completed form to the Programme Administrator, unless approval is required by the full Ethics Committee (see below).

Approval required by the full Education Ethics Committee

If the application requires review by the full Education Ethics Committee, please select one of the following options then forward the application to the Research Administrator (education-research-administrator@york.ac.uk).

The study involves deception	<input type="checkbox"/>
The study involves an intervention and procedures could cause concerns	<input type="checkbox"/>
The topic is sensitive or potentially distressing	<input type="checkbox"/>
The study involves vulnerable subjects	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other reason:	

Name of Programme Leader; or Programme Director; or TAP member (please type):	
Date:	Click here to enter a date.

FOR COMPLETION BY THE STUDENT

Data sources

- 1 If your research involves collecting secondary data only **go to SECTION 2.**
- 2 If your research involves collecting data from people (e.g. by observing, testing, or teaching them, or from interviews or questionnaires) **go to SECTION 1.**

SECTION 1: For studies involving people

- 3 Is the amount of time you are asking research participants to give reasonable? **YES**
- 4 Is any disruption to their normal routines at an acceptable level? **YES**
- 5 Are any of the questions to be asked, or areas to be probed, likely to cause anxiety or distress to research participants? **YES**
- 6 Are all the data collection methods used necessary? **YES**
- 7 Are the data collection methods appropriate to the context and participants? **YES**
- 8 Will the research involve deception? **NO**
- 9 Will the research involve sensitive or potentially distressing topics? (The latter might include abuse, bereavement, bullying, drugs, ethnicity, gender, personal relationships, political views, religion, sex, violence. If there is lack of certainty about whether a topic is sensitive, advice should be sought from the Ethics Committee.) **YES**

If YES, what steps will you take to ensure that the methods and procedures are appropriate, not burdensome, and are sensitive to ethical considerations?

The school counsellor and head teachers have agreed to be present for all data collection and intervention procedures and to handle distressed and/or disruptive students.

- 10 Does your research involve collecting data from vulnerable or high risk groups? (The latter might include participants who are asylum seekers, unemployed, homeless, looked after children, victims or perpetrators of abuse, or those who have special educational needs. If there is a lack of certainty about whether participants are vulnerable or high risk, advice should be sought from the Ethics Committee. Please note, children with none of the above characteristics are not necessarily vulnerable, though approval for your project must be given by at least two members of staff; see above). YES

If YES, what steps will you take to ensure that the methods and procedures are appropriate, not burdensome, and are sensitive to ethical considerations?

The school counsellor will be present for the duration of all workshop sessions. The intervention will be focused on the bystander experience, rather than bullies and victims, which will prevent excessive confrontation with painful personal experiences. Also, students will be instructed to refrain from identifying classmates in their participation and go to the counsellor for guidance, if needed, after each workshop session.

- 11 Are the research participants under 16 years of age? YES

If NO, go to question 12.

If YES, and you intend to interact with the children, do you intend to ensure that another adult is present during all such interactions? YES

If NO, please explain, for example:

- i) This would seriously compromise the validity of the research because [*provide reason*]

- ii) I have/will have a full Disclosure and Barring Service check (formerly Criminal Records Bureau check). Choose an item.

- iii) Other reasons:

Payment to participants

- 12 If research participants are to receive reimbursement of expenses, or any other incentives or benefits for taking part in your research, please give details, indicating what or how much money they will receive and, briefly, the basis on which this was decided:

If your study involves an INTERVENTION i.e. a change to normal practice made for the purposes of the research, go to question 13 (this does not include 'laboratory style' studies i.e. where ALL participation is voluntary):

If your study does not involve an intervention, go to question 20.

- 13 Is the extent of the change within the range of changes that teachers (or equivalent) would normally be able to make within their own discretion? **YES**
- 14 Will the change be fully discussed with those directly involved (teachers, senior school managers, pupils, parents – as appropriate)? **YES**
- 15 Are you confident that *all* treatments (including comparison groups in multiple intervention studies) will potentially provide some educational benefit that is compatible with current educational aims in that particular context? (Note: This is *not* asking you to justify a non-active control i.e. continued normal practice) **YES**

Please **briefly** describe this / these benefit(s):

All students will partake in an anti-bullying workshop, learn about the topic and will be presented with resources to deal with the issue as bystanders.

- 16 If you intend to have two or more groups, are you offering the control / comparison group an opportunity to have the experimental / innovative treatment at some later point (this can include making the materials available to the school or learners)? Choose an item.

If NO, please explain:

- 17 If you intend to have two or more groups of participants receiving different treatment, do the informed consent forms give this information? Choose an item.
- 18 If you are randomly assigning participants to different treatments, have you considered the ethical implications of this? Choose an item.
- 19 If you are randomly assigning participants to different treatments (including non-active controls), will the institution and participants (or parents where participants are under 16) be informed of this in advance of agreeing to participate? Choose an item.

If NO, please explain:

General protocol for working in institutions

- 20 Do you intend to conduct yourself, and advise your team to conduct themselves, in a professional manner as a representative of the University of York, respectful of the rules, demands and systems within the institution you are visiting? **YES**
- 21 If you intend to carry out research with children under 16, have you read and understood the Education Ethics Committee's *Guidance for Ethical Approval for Research in Schools*? **YES**

Informed consent

- 22 Have you prepared Informed Consent Form(s) which participants in the study will be asked to sign, and which are appropriate for different kinds of participants? **YES**

If YES, please attach the informed consent form(s).

If NO, please explain:

23 Please check the details on the informed consent form(s) match each one of your answers below. Does this informed consent form:

- a) inform participants in advance about what their involvement in the research study will entail? **YES**
- b) if there is a risk that participants may disclose information to you which you may feel morally or legally bound to pass on to relevant external bodies, have you included this within a confidentiality clause in your informed consent form? **N/A**
- c) inform participants of the purpose of the research? **YES**
- d) inform participants of what will happen to the data they provide (how this will be stored, who will have access to it, whether and how individuals' identities will be protected during this process)? **YES**
- e) if there is a possibility that you may use some of the data publicly (e.g. in presentations or online), inform the participants how identifiable such data will be **and** give them the opportunity to decline such use of data? **N/A**
- f) give the names and contact details (e.g. email) of at least two people to whom queries, concerns or complaints should be directed? One of these people should be on the Education Ethics Committee and not involved with the research. **YES**
- g) in studies involving interviews or focus groups, inform participants that they will be given an opportunity to comment on your *written record* of the event? **NO**

If NO, have you made this clear this on your consent form? **YES**

If NO, please explain why not:

Spontaneous student responses work for the data collection process.

- h) inform participants how long the data is likely to be kept for? YES
- i) inform participants if the data could be used for future analysis and/or other purposes? YES
- j) inform participants they may withdraw from the study during data collection? YES
- k) provide a date/timescale by which participants will be able to withdraw their data and tell the participants how to do this? (NB. If your data is going to be completely anonymised, any withdrawal of data needs to happen before this.) NA*

**NA if your data will be anonymous at point of collection*

If your answer was NO to any of the above, please explain here, indicating which item(s) you are referring to (a-j):

24 Who will be asked to sign an Informed Consent Form? Please select all that apply:

CATEGORY	
Adult research participants	<input type="checkbox"/>
Research participants under 16	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Teachers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parents	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Head/Senior leadership team member	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please explain)	<input type="checkbox"/>

25 In studies involving an **intervention** with under 16s, will you seek informed consent from parents?

YES

If NO, please explain:

If YES, please delete to indicate whether this is 'opt-in' or 'opt-out'

If 'opt-out', please explain why 'opt-in' is not being offered:

Opt-out- because the intervention will be handled as a school-wide activity, being that it will focus on bullying bystanders.

SECTION 2

Data Storage, Analysis, Management and Protection

- 26 I am accessing data from a non-publicly available source (regardless of whether the data is identifiable) e.g. pupil data held by a school or local authority, learners' work. NO

If YES, I have obtained written permission, via an informed consent document, from a figure of authority who is responsible for holding the data. This informed consent a) acknowledges

responsibility for releasing the data and b) confirms that releasing the data does not violate any informed consents or implicit agreements at the point the data was initially gathered.

Choose an item.

- 27 I have read and understood the Education Ethics Committee's *Guidance on Data Storage and Protection* YES

- 28 I will keep any data appropriately secure (e.g. in a locked cabinet), maintaining confidentiality and anonymity (e.g. identifiers will be encoded and the code available to as few people as possible) where possible. YES

- 29 If your data can be traced to identifiable participants:

a) who will be able to access your data?

b) approximately how long will you need to keep it in this identifiable format?

30 If working in collaboration with other colleagues, students, or if under someone's supervision, please discuss and complete the following:

We have agreed:

- a) [*Maria Eugenia Lopez Romero*] will be responsible for keeping and storing the data
- b) [*Maria Eugenia Lopez Romero*] will have access to the data
- c) [*Maria Eugenia Lopez Romero*] will have the rights to publish using the data

Reporting your research

31 In any reports that you write about your research, will you do everything possible to ensure that the identity of any individual research participant, or the institution which they attend or work for, cannot be deduced by a reader? **YES**

If NO please explain:

Conflict of interests

32 If the Principal Investigator or any other key investigators or collaborators have any direct personal involvement in the organisation sponsoring or funding the research that may give rise to a possible conflict of interest, please give details:

Potential ethical problems as your research progresses

- 33 If you see any potential problems arising during the course of the research, please give details here and describe how you plan to deal with them:

Any issues regarding bullying incidents in the school will be handled by the school counsellor.

Student's Name (please type):	Maria Eugenia Lopez Romero
Date:	09 March 2015

Please email this form to your supervisor. They must approve it, and send it to the Programme Administrator by email.

NOTE ON IMPLEMENTING THE PROCEDURES APPROVED HERE:

If your plans change as you carry out the research study, you should discuss any changes you make with your supervisor. If the changes are significant, your supervisor may advise you to complete a new 'Ethical issues audit' form.

For Taught Masters students, on submitting your MA dissertation to the programme administrator, you will be asked to sign to indicate that your research did not deviate significantly from the procedures you have outlined above.

For Research Students (MA by Research, MPhil, PhD), once your data collection is over, you must write an email to your supervisor to confirm that your research did not deviate significantly from the procedures you have outlined above.

Appendix V. Consent form (English version)

Bullying Intervention – Parent or guardian consent form

Dear parent or guardian:

This school year, Mano Amiga Zomeyucan will participate in a research project on bullying being carried out by the Education Department at the University of York, U.K, which looks to gain information on student perceptions and experiences as bullying bystanders.

What does this mean for my child?

All students will have the opportunity to participate in an eight-session bullying workshop, in which bullying dynamics will be explained and student's tools to prevent and face bullying situations will be discussed. Before and after the workshop, students will be asked to fill in a survey on their perceptions as bystanders. Also, randomly selected students will be able to partake in focus groups in which they will be free to express their ideas on the matter. Both the workshop and the focus groups will be run by a doctoral candidate.

Confidentiality.

All information obtained through the surveys and the focus groups will be completely anonymous and confidential; students won't be asked to identify themselves at any moment. Only the researcher and her supervisor will have direct access to the surveys and focus group transcripts, which will be stored for five years in a locked cabinet. Mano Amiga administrators will have access to a general report on the school's bystander scenario and the educational research community may access to the research results.

You, as a parent or guardian, have a right to decide if you want your child to be a part of the project. Also, your child can refuse to be a part of the project from the start, or to withdraw whenever he/she may want to.

We hope you will accept to have your child participate in the project, since it could be beneficial for Mano Amiga's student environment. If you have any questions about the project or any part of this form, feel free to contact the doctoral candidate responsible for this research project, [María E. López Romero \(melr500@york.ac.uk\)](mailto:melr500@york.ac.uk) or the [Head of Ethics Committee, Emma Marsden \(emma.marsden@york.ac.uk\)](mailto:emma.marsden@york.ac.uk).

Please print your initials in the box on the left if you agree with the following statements.

I confirm that I have read and understand the information above and I agree to have my child participate in the project.

Date

Name of the student (printed)

Parent or guardian signature

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