

Experiences of Violence and Level of School-Based Support System

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Abstract. This study examined the experiences of violence among Grade 5 and Grade 6 learners in selected public elementary schools in District II, San Fernando, Bukidnon, and their perceptions of school-based support systems. Specifically, it aimed to determine the prevalence and forms of violence, identify learners' coping strategies, assess the effectiveness of school support mechanisms, and explore the relationship between experiences of violence and perceived support. Using a descriptive-correlational design, data were collected from 250 learners through a structured questionnaire adapted from the UNGEI School-Related Violence Toolkit and validated scales on coping and support. Responses were analyzed using frequency, percentage, weighted mean, and Pearson correlation. Findings indicated that learners experienced various forms of violence, with psychological and emotional forms, such as gossip, exclusion, and unfair treatment, being most frequent. Coping strategies included problem-focused approaches, such as reporting incidents, and emotion-focused strategies, including self-isolation and seeking peer support. Although school-based support systems were generally perceived as available, they were not significantly associated with reduced experiences of violence ($r = .012$, $p = .886$), highlighting the influence of peer behavior, cultural norms, and systemic factors beyond school control. The study recommends strengthening preventive measures through socio-emotional learning, teacher training, policy reinforcement, and active student engagement. Community involvement and inclusive school programs are also essential to enhance the effectiveness of support systems and foster safe, supportive, and empowering learning environments.

Introduction

Public school violence is a widespread social problem which undermines the safety, health, and the level of education of the learners. In the entire Philippines, there are devastating statistics of bullying and other types of violence in the school setting. Cordel et al (2024) state that as little as 65 percent of Filipino students have claimed to be bullied at least several times each month, and the incidence of bullying is higher in the schools with large class sizes and socioeconomically disadvantaged students (EDCOM 2, 2024). Such an environment poses a great risk to the mental health of learners, their physical safety and academic achievement.

School-related violence has a wide spread impact on more than 115 million children and adolescents every year globally in the shape of physical, emotional, and sexual violence in and surrounding education establishments. This gendered-based violence and entrenched in a culture of power inequality severely impedes access to safe and equitable education by learners and jeopardizes their well-being and future opportunities (UNGEI, 2024; UNESCO and UNGEI, 2023). Girls are specifically susceptible, and violence is associated with higher chances of unwanted pregnancy, school dropouts, and lifetime economic inequalities as Pliogou et al (2025) and Malala Fund (2024) explain. It is estimated that 246 million girls, and boys are subjected to violence in and around schools across the world, but there is a lack of political and policy action (Together for Girls, 2023).

Violence in the Philippines is a cause of alarm in the public schools. Research indicates that the prevalence of bullying and other types of violence, such as sexual harassment, among students is of a high rate, and the number of female learners among the victims is disproportionate (EDCOM 2, 2024; TeacherPH, 2024). Although there are legal measures like the Anti-

Bullying Act of 2013 and the Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy, the gaps in implementation are caused by the lack of awareness, poor reporting mechanisms, and cultural stigmas of GBV (PCW, 2025; DepEd, 2020). Lack of supportive structures at schools increases the vulnerability of learners, as it minimizes access to victims to counseling and protection Pantaleon & Ison, (2023). Violence in schools can take various shapes such as physical abuse, sexual harassment and assault, psychological violence as well as cyberbullying. A baseline study of the Council on the Welfare of Children has found out that every second child is physically abused, every fourth child is sexually abused, and close to half of young learners Teacher PH, (2024). Also, the violence is not only inside the student community but also involving teachers, and it has been reported that teachers have also become high-risk groups, which are not often reported and not resolved (Pantaleon & Ison,2023).

Although there are present policies like the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013 and the Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy DepEd Order No. 32, s. (2017), there are still difficulties in completely tackling violence. The inefficient reporting mechanisms, absence of knowledge and training of school staff and cultural stigmas of talking about gender violence are structural barriers that affect the efficiency of interventions. This gap explains why it is important to not only look at the prevalence of violence but also the coping mechanisms used by victims as well as the sufficiency of school-based support systems aimed to help victims. Learner coping strategies to violence experiences, as well as determining the efficacy of existing support structures is important in creating comprehensive and sensitive strategies. School programs are crucial in reducing the adverse effects of violence and providing a safe learning environment such as counseling services and peer support groups. There is however limited empirical data on their usage, availability and benefits.

This paper was intended to examine the students who are victims of violence at the state-funded schools and how well the school-based support systems can meet their needs. The research aims to inform policy recommendations and program development to build a safer and more inclusive learning environment by identifying the strengths and the gaps in the current practices that can support the vulnerable learners and protect them.

Methodology

Research design adopted in this study to give an in-depth insight into the phenomena being studied was descriptive-correlational. The descriptive component will entail the systematic give an account of the nature of the respondents and the nature and frequency of gender-based violence that they have faced, their coping mechanisms, and their views on school-based support systems giving a clear picture of the prevailing state of affairs. The correlational facet looks into how various variables depend on each other in that, the coping strategies and the support mechanisms are effective without controlling anything. This type of design enables the researcher to detect important patterns and relations within natural contexts and gives information about the way that these variables interplay but the research is ethical as manipulation of variables in an experimental study is not possible.

This research was carried out in a district known as District I in San Fernando in the Schools Division of Bukidnon in the Department of Education - Region X. District I is a rural community that has a number of public elementary schools. The various socio-economic and cultural mix of this district offers a sample environment of studying the experiences of gender-based violence (GBV) among school-going children and their attitudes towards the school-based support systems.

The sample population targeted Grades 5 and 6 students in selected public elementary schools in the district of the school year 2025-2026, representing a wide range of types of school settings and classes of student bodies in the local setting. The schools of District I have different school-based support programs that follow the current policies of DepEd, which can be used to determine their efficiency in managing and prevention of gender-based violence among students.

The sample of this research was made up of students in Grade 5 and 6 in chosen public elementary schools in District I, San Fernando, Bukidnon in the school year 2025- 2026. One hundred and fifty-one learners who constitute 50 percent of the total population of 302 learners were used in the identified schools. Specifically, Grade 5 and 6 learners were selected since they are at upper level of elementary level, and therefore, they can comprehend and respond correctly to the research instrument. During this stage of development, learners have the cognitive and emotional maturity to self-report gender-based violence (GBV) experiences and determine the efficacy of the school-based support mechanism, which guarantees the reliability and validity of the gathered data (WHO, 2013; Puguon and Bullecer, 2024).

Only the learners present at the time when the questionnaire was administered provided data, which guaranteed completeness and uniformity of the answers rendered. Students in other grade levels including absent and students who were not available during the process of data collection were not included because they might not give valid and similar data in relation to the research objectives. The study will provide a representative sample as it focuses on half of the learner population, and the data collection will be feasible. Such a methodology fits the description of the study which is aimed at

the comprehension of what people who are developmentally able to describe their perceptions of school-based support systems and their experience of GBV can say.

By specializing in Grades 5 and 6 students who form half the population, the research will guarantee that the study embodies significant and reflective information on the school related violences, and how they view the school-based support system.

In this research, stratified random sampling was used to make sure that the learners in both Grade 5 and Grade 6 were adequately represented in the sample. The two grades were used to classify the population into two groups and the respondents were selected randomly within the two groups proportionally to the number of populations in the respective schools. Stratified random sampling is considered to be one of the effective tools of obtaining representative samples of: heterogeneous populations (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This approach will make sure that every subgroup or stratum of the population will be represented fairly, thus the sampling bias can be minimal, and the results of the study becomes more accurate. The sampled schools were Malayan Elementary School, Kauswagan Elementary School, Ilian Elementary School, Little Baguio Elementary School, and Sacramento Valley Integrated School. With this method, the researcher ensured representativeness of the sample but reduced the biasness since the findings will reflect accurately what the learners in the selected schools in Grade 5 and Grade 6 went through and what they perceived.

The research tool was borrowed with the help of the "School-Related Gender-Based Violence (SRGBV) Measurement Toolkit" that has been created by the United Nations Girls Education Initiative (UNGEI), according to which validated survey tools have been created to measure different types of school-related gender-based violence, risk factors, and school climate (UNGEI, 2020). Other questionnaire questions referring to coping mechanisms and school support systems will be modified based on the existing instruments applied in the recent validated research on gender-based violence in schools, including psychometric scale of school violence and coexistence management designed by Munoz-Troncoso et al. (2024). These adaptations were made such that the instrument is holistic, relevant to the setting, and psychometrically viable in the Filipino school setting.

Items of the questionnaires were rated mainly on the Likert-type scale where the respondents report the frequency or extent of gender-based violence, level of school support system, the following numerical values would be assigned to each of the answers.

The Schools Division Superintendent of Division of Bukidnon received a letter requesting authorization to carry out the study endorsed by the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies at Valencia Colleges Incorporated (Bukidnon). The aim of the letter was to request permission to deliver and administer questionnaires to those teachers identified in the sampled schools in the division. Moreover, the District I Schools District Supervisor of San Fernando Bukidnon and the school administrators of the participating schools were also sent a letter of request to grant permission to administer the questionnaires to the sampled Grade 5, 6 and the school heads, and teachers.

The statement of the problems was addressed by using the following statistical tools:

The information collected using the validated survey questionnaire was examined through the correct statistical instruments. The profile of the respondents was described using frequency and percentages of the respondents based on demographic characteristics like sex, age and grade level. The weighted mean will be calculated to establish the level of gender-based violence used by the students, and the degree of support system used in the school in order to tackle gender-based violence. In order to evaluate the relationship between these two variables, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) will be used.

The calculated level of correlation was subjected to a 0.05 level of significant to find out whether the relationship between coping strategies and the effectiveness of school-based support systems are statistically significant. Also, the correlation coefficients were understood in the context of standard ranges, in which a coefficient close to 1.00 means a very high positive correlation, and 1.00 close to -1.00 means a very high negative correlation and the coefficient close to 0.00 means the negligible or no correlation.

This research was carried out following the set ethical standards of research in education so as to protect the rights, dignity, and wellbeing of all the involved. Before data were collected, the proper institutional review board gave its ethical approval and the Department of Education and school authorities in the District I of San Fernando, Bukidnon were consulted to give their consent.

Inclusion in the study was completely voluntary, and the purpose, nature, and procedures of the research were clearly explained to the respondents in full with informed consent form. The consent of parents or guardians and student consent

will be secured in the case of minor participants. The respondents will be given the assurance that their responses were treated as confidential and that they will be used only in the research. No personal identifiers were used to preserve the anonymity and information will be safely stored and read by the research team.

The participants were free to retire out of the study any time without any penalty. The research was done in a sensitive manner especially considering the fact that the issues related to gender-based violence could be distressing. Respondents who might require counseling or help were provided with the information on support and referral. All the findings were reported with honesty and responsibility, without causing any harm or stigmatization to the participants or communities. The researcher will observe integrity and transparency during the research process.

Results and Discussion

This chapter presents, analyzes, and interprets the data collected to examine the experiences of gender-based violence (GBV) and the perceived effectiveness of school-based support systems among learners in selected public elementary schools in District I, San Fernando, Bukidnon, during the 2025–2026 school year. The discussion is grounded in the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, particularly studies on school-related violence, coping strategies, and school-based support systems (UNESCO, 2016; Victor & Yano, 2012; Puguon & Bullecer, 2024).

The profile of the respondents in terms of age, gender; and grade level.

Age in years	Frequency	Percent
10	32	21.2
11	47	31.1
12	65	43.0
13	6	4.0
14	1	.7
Total	151	100.0
Sex		
Male	58	38.4
Female	93	61.6
Total	151	100.0
Grade level		
5	57	37.7
6	94	62.3
Total	151	100.0

Table 2 Profile of the Respondents in terms of Age, Gender; and Grade Level.

Age

Table 2 shows the interviewees according to age, sex; and grade. Among the 151 responses, 65% had the age of 12 years ($f = 65$), 43% had the age of 11 years ($f = 47$), and 21.2 years old ($f = 32$). The percentage of 13 (4.0) and 14 (0.7) was very little (13 and 14, respectively). This shows that the majority of the respondents are in their early adolescent stages of development which is a period of identity development and increased sensitivity to peer relationship. The World Health Organization (2013) argues that timeless adolescents are especially vulnerable to bullying and discrimination along gender lines because of the development of gender identities and peer pressure. Regarding the view of the Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), the peer relations in the school microsystem have a great impact on the experiences of violence and support of children. The fact that most of the respondents were of age 11-12 implies that GBV prevention strategies should be development-related and aimed at upper elementary school students.

Gender

Out of the respondents, 61.6% ($f = 93$) were female and 38.4 ($f = 58$) were male. It is important considering the fact that the global literature recognizes girls as disproportionately impacted by violence committed at school (UNESCO, 2016). Nevertheless, research also highlights that boys often suffer GBV and specifically the ones tied to inflexible gender norms and expectations (UNGEI, 2024). According to Intersectionality Theory (Crenshaw, 1989), gender is in interaction with other factors of identity (age and socio-cultural context) and it determines vulnerability and support systems. Therefore, the prevention and response programs on GBV should take into consideration both boys and girls.

Grade Level

The majority of the respondents belonged to Grade 6 (62.3%), whereas 37.7% related to Grade 5. The elder learners might be more knowledgeable of gender problems and reporting systems, and this knowledge can affect their views of not only GBV experience but also supportive systems. This is in line with the discovery by Puguon and Bullecer (2024), who observed that GBV awareness is associated with the grade level as a result of school-based discourses and peer relationships. The demographic trend has indicated that age-sensitive and gender-responsive interventions are required at upper elementary levels, which aligns with the framework of the Whole-School Approach that is based on child empowerment and early prevention.

It may be noted that most of the learners are 12 (43.0%) in age, then there are 11 (31.1%), 10 years old (21.2%), which implies that most respondents are in early adolescence-identity forming age and under influence of their peers. As WHO (2013) explains, learners aged in this age bracket are especially susceptible to bullying and gender-based discrimination. Given the perspective of the Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), the activities in the school micro-system play a significant role in influencing the experiences of violence and support, which is why the developmentally appropriate GBV intervention should be appreciated.

As regards gender, the sample is dominated by female respondents (61.6), and males (38.4). It has been demonstrated in literature that school-related GBV has a disproportionately high prevalence among girls (UNESCO, 2016), whereas boys can also be subjected to GBV with reference to strict gender norms (UNGEI, 2024). Intersectionality Theory (Crenshaw, 1989) highlights that gender has a diaspora with age and social culture where both the vulnerable and not receive favors. The majority of learners (62.3%) belong to Grade 6, but 37.7% belong to Grade 5. Reviewers of GBV problems and reporting systems could be more common among the older learners Puguon & Bullecer, (2024), which is why age- and gender-specific programs, based on the Whole-School Approach model with a focus on child empowerment and early protection, are necessary. Most of the learners fall within 11-12 years (early adolescence) of age, which is a time that WHO (2013) describes as a very sensitive stage against bullying, harassment, and gender discrimination. This is congruent with the RRW results that indicate that early teenagers are susceptible to school based GBV Sikhwari, (2025). This also displays the higher percentage of female participants (61.6) which is a representation of the literature that revealed that girls are disproportionately victims of GBV in schools UNESCO, (2016); Puguon & Bullecer, (2024). Grade 6 learners (62.3% old learners) could be more aware of reporting mechanisms and matters related to GBV, and the RRL argument that awareness of school support systems could affect the coping strategies of learners and their perception of safety holds some truth (Victor and Yano, 2012; World Bank, 2014)

The extent of learners' experiences of violence in the school setting.

	Statement	Mean	SD	QD
1	Have you experienced physical harm from classmates or other students?	3.7	1.1	Often
2	Have you been bullied or shamed because of your gender?	3.75	1.2	Often
3	Have you experienced verbal abuse or discrimination based on gender?	3.64	1.1	Often
4	Have you felt unsupported by the school regarding gender-related issues?	3.74	0.9	Often
5	Have you experienced unwanted or inappropriate touching in school?	3.72	0.9	Often
6	Have you experienced threats or intimidation because of your gender?	3.94	0.9	Often
7	Have you experienced gossip or rumors related to your gender?	4.18	0.8	Often
8	Have you felt afraid or uncomfortable in school because of how others treat you?	3.85	0.9	Often
9	Have you experienced being excluded from school activities because of your gender?	4.03	0.9	Often
10	Have you experienced unfair treatment or rules because of your gender?	4.04	0.7	Often
Overall Mean		3.86	0.4	Often

Table 3 Extent of Violence in School

Table 3 shows the general average of violence experiences is 3.86 (SD = 0.39), which is understood as Often. This means that the school learners become a common target of gender-based violence. Three highest Indicators are gossip or rumors about gender (Mean = 4.18, SD = 0.81, Often), unfair treatment or rules based on gender (Mean = 4.04, SD = 0.73, Often), and no school activity based on gender (Mean = 4.03, SD = 0.87, Often). The greatest mean is associated with gossip and rumors which is a manifestation of psychological and emotional violence. This confirms the results of Puguon and Bullecer (2024), who have singled out psychological violence as the type of violence that is the most widespread in Philippine schools. The next fact that is highlighted by UNESCO (2016) is that verbal harassment and the distribution of rumors are

also frequent forms of school-based violence that have a pronounced influence on the psychological stability of students and their educational activities.

These low standard deviation (SD of 0.73 to 0.87) imply that there was uniformity in responses, meaning that a large proportion of learners had certain experiences within the Whole-School Approach perspective views, which indicates that there is a strong tendency to perpetrate harmful gender norms within the school culture. UNGEI (2024) reveals that unequal power relationships and gender stereotypes created in the school setting usually form the basis of discriminatory practices and exclusion. Lowest 3 Items are Verbal abuse or discrimination (Mean = 3.64, SD = 1.06, Often), Physical harm by classmates. (Mean = 3.70, SD = 1.10, Often), "Unwanted or inappropriate touching

(Mean = 3.72, SD = 0.90, Often)". The means of these indicators are slightly less, but they are still combined as "Often," which means that severe types of violence have not become completely eliminated. The greater SD on physical harm (SD = 1.10) indicates that there are variations in the experiences; in other words, some learners have more experiences of it compared to others.

WHO (2013) highlight that when children are exposed to physical and sexual violence at schools, they experience psychological distress and lack of school involvement. All items exhibit the similarity of the rating as often which proves that violence is not a one-time problem, but it is systemic. The prevalence of psychological, exclusionary forms of violence and the high frequency of such violence indicates that measures should be made to interventions that touch on school climate and gender norms. The results support gender-transformative education programs as suggested by Pliogou et al. (2025), which protest destructive stereotypes and support equality.

The total mean (3.86) shows that violence against learners is a common thing and this is in agreement with Puguon and Bullecer (2024) who indicated that psychological violence is the highest in Philippine schools. Emotional and social types of violence, which the literature refers to as the most harmful to the mental health of learners and their school attendance, are represented by the highest-rated indicators gossip/rumors, unfair treatment and exclusion (Rodriguez Rodriguez & Gomez Baya, 2025; WHO, 2013). The physical harm (SD = 1.10) variability indicates that some learners are involved in more severe accidents, which is also supported by UNESCO (2016), which noted that violence experience varies according to the gender and social background. The results also support the validity of dealing with peer influence and school culture, which is also in consistency with the goals of the Ecological Systems Theory of Bronfenbrenner (1979) which highlights the role of the microsystem in determining the experiences of violence among students.

The level of the school-based support system as perceived by learners.

	Statement	Mean	SD	QD
1	I can access counseling support in school when needed.	4.07	0.9	High
2	The school has policies protecting students against gender-based violence.	3.95	1	High
3	I feel safe and supported by the school regarding GBV issues.	4.07	1	High
4	Teachers and school staff respond properly to GBV-related complaints.	4.15	1	High
5	I know where to report GBV incidents in our school.	4.19	0.9	High
6	The school conducts seminars or activities about GBV awareness and prevention.	4.3	0.8	Very High
7	I trust the school to handle GBV cases confidentially.	4.16	0.9	High
8	The school treats all students equally regardless of gender.	4.19	0.9	High
9	I feel comfortable approaching school authorities about gender-related concerns.	4.22	1	Very High
10	The school provides clear information about students' rights related to GBV.	4.26	0.8	Very High
Overall Mean		4.16	0.5	High

Table 4 Level of the School-Based Support System as Perceived by Learners

Table 4 shows the total mean 4.16 (SD = 0.45), which is seen as High. This means that the school-based support systems are mostly viewed positively by the learners. The best three indicators include School conducts GBV awareness seminars (Mean = 4.30, SD = 0.84, Very High), School provides clear information about students' rights (Mean = 4.26, SD = 0.81, Very High) and Comfortable approaching authorities.

(Mean = 4.22, SD = 0.97, Very High)". These findings coincide with the UNICEF and UNGEI models indicating the importance of awareness raising, providing a clear reporting system, and empowering children as essential elements of a safe school. The SD values are relatively low which means that there is similarity between respondents. According to Victor and Yano (2012) and World Bank (2014), the support systems are structured in a way that contributes to the feeling of safety and trust in the institution. Lowest Three Indicators include School policies protecting students.

The results were displayed as follows: (Mean = 3.95, SD = 0.99, High), "Feeling safe and supported (Mean = 4.07, SD = 1.00, High) and "Access to counseling support (Mean = 4.07, SD = 0.89, High)

Although these means remain high, they indicate that the implementation of the formal policies and access to counseling might require reinforcement. Kim et al. (2008) discovered that some of the weaknesses that are common in school systems include underreporting and inconsistent institutional responses. Despite the well-developed awareness program, it may also be beneficial to increase perceived safety by making counseling more readily available and implementing policy enforcement. The Whole-School Approach emphasizes the presence of policies which need to be constantly enacted in order to minimize the real violence rates. The perception of school-based support systems is high in accordance with Victor and Yano (2012) and World Bank (2014), who also pointed out that the availability of counseling, well-developed reporting systems, and awareness initiatives contribute to the feeling of safety in learners. The most rated indicators seminars, rights information and comfort towards authorities are indicators of good awareness and empowerment programs, which is in line with the discussion of the RRL on gender- transformative approaches Pliogou et al., (2025). Nevertheless, the items with poorer grades, including policy protection (3.95) and counseling access (4.07) imply the areas that should be improved. Kim et al. (2008) pointed out that ineffective support systems are constrained by underreporting and non-consistent responses to the problem by institutions. The outcome of this finding is that violence experiences are still high even with high perceived support, which proves that awareness and policy presence is not enough to prevent school-related violence.

Significant relationship between learners' experiences of Violence and the perceived level of school-based support system.

	r-value	P	Remarks
Test of relationship between learners' experiences of Violence and the perceived level of school-based support system	.012	.886	Not Significant

Table 5 Relationship Between Learners' Experiences of Violence and the Perceived Level of School-Based Support System

Table 5 indicates that The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was applied to establish the relationship between the experiences of Violence and the perceived level of school-based support system by the learners. The values calculated are $r = .012$, $p = .886$, $\alpha = .05$. The r-value obtained is .012 which implies that there is a negligible or nearly zero correlation between the two variables. This implies that variations in experiences of violence among the learners do not correlate to variations in their perception of the school-based support systems. The p-value of .886 would be above the 0.05 level of significance. Thus, there is no statistical significance of the relationship. This is statistically added that the relationship between the two variables may have been observed by chance. The statistical results ($r = .012$, $p = .886$) prove the fact there is no significant correlation between the experiences of GBV among learners and their perceived level of school-based support systems. Support systems have a high rating (Mean = 4.16) but violence experiences are common (Mean = 3.86), which means that the systemic and cultural interventions can use more interventions to help reduce violence in schools.

An insignificant relationship does not exist between the experiences of violence on the part of learners and their perceived degree of school-based support system. This implies that in cases where students may think that there is high support system in the school, it may not always translate into decreasing or increasing violence experiences. The results indicate that the experiences of violence have a total mean of 3.86 (Often), school-based support systems having a total mean of 4.16 (High). Although the rate of perception of support violence is high, the rate of support violence is still high. Nevertheless, these two variables are not statistically linked. Because $p (.886)$ is more than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_0) is accepted. The perceived level of school-based support system does not show any significant relationship with the experience of Violence among learners.

The non-significance of the relationship between the perception or existence of school-based support mechanisms implies that the experience of being exposed to violence is not necessarily mitigated by the presence of the said support mechanisms in learners. UNESCO (2016) suggests that just the existence of policies, seminars, and reporting mechanisms is insufficient to reduce school-related gender-based violence unless detrimental gender norms and forms of power are taken into consideration. This confirms the current discovery that the support systems are ranked as high, but violence experiences are common. Considering the Ecological Systems Theory (1979) by Urie Bronfenbrenner, learners are shaped

by school environment (microsystem), the community of peers, families, community, and social norms at large (mesosystem and macrosystem).

It is not significantly correlated ($r = 0.012$, $p = 0.886$), which is also in line with the findings of UNESCO (2016) and Kim et al. (2008), who pointed out that even policies and support mechanisms do not diminish violence without dealing with harmful gender norms and systemic inequalities. This is in line with Stress and Coping Theory Lazarus and Folkman, (1984) which states that support can only assist learners to cope with stress, but it is not able to reduce the external stressors. It provides evidence of the importance of a complete-school, gender-transformative intervention that involves students, teachers and the community to alter the attitudes, norms and behavior. The problem-oriented and social support-seeking coping strategies identified as a part of the RRL (Pliogou et al., 2025; Planas-Llado et al., 2023) can assist learners to overcome the instances of violence, although structural and cultural interventions are necessary to decrease the actuality of such incidents.

Thus, despite the good support systems offered in schools, the outside factors, including peer pressure, cultural beliefs, and gender stereotypes, can still be used to support violence behaviors. Moreover, according to Stress and Coping Theory, Richard Lazarus and Susan Folkman (1984) document that support systems can assist individuals to be resilient to the stressors but may not be able to remove the stress factors. In this instance, the learners might be encouraged to manage the violence cases, yet the cases might still take place. The Whole-School Approach model (UNGEI, 2024) also focuses on the fact that successful prevention needs to be thorough and coordinated, which is possible with the help of the changes in gender norms, the reinforcement of accountability systems, and community involvement. The current results indicate that even though awareness and reporting systems might be high, there might be a need to look further into the behavioral and cultural change.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Students in District I, San Fernando, Bukidnon are predominantly pre-adolescent female students in the upper elementary grades, which is characterised by the susceptibility to social and emotional influences. Their maturity level coupled with gender relations exposes them to relational and psychological violence. This profile is important to understand and respond with specific needs according to the age and gender groups. Learners are subject to violence that is mainly emotional, psychological, social, and gossips, unfair treatment, and exclusion. These repeated experiences interfere with the feeling of belonging, involvement, and general involvement with the school activities of the learners, which emphasize the interconnectedness of violence as a systemic problem versus a single one. Interventions should therefore be effective to take care of these recurring patterns by focusing on school culture and peer relationship. Students tend to view their school support system positively, especially in their awareness campaigns, right communication and availability of school officials. Nonetheless, the areas of weaknesses in terms of implementation of policies, counseling services, and regular safe practices do exist. This implies that although learners feel encouraged, the system needs to be reinforced more in order to prevent or respond to the violence cases. The availability of support at school is not necessarily lessening the instances of violence, which indicates that other social, cultural, and peer factors can have a great impact on the experiences of the learners. Effective strategies to supplement the already existing support systems should be comprehensive, including preventive efforts that will deal with some detrimental norms, behavioral, and environmental aspects.

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following conclusions can be recommended:

Schools must intensify the preventive programs which deal with peer norms, bullying and gender stereotypes with the policies being enforced and not just existing.

Teachers ought to be trained on violence prevention, trauma-based teaching and gender-sensitive teaching, where they can be in a better position to address the concerns of learners. There should be increased access to counseling and guidance services and the students should be made fully aware on how and when to seek help.

Students are expected to engage in peer support programs, awareness campaigns and student-led programs to encourage respect, inclusion and gender equality.

Community-wide interventions which can touch upon gender norms and cultural influences that lead to violence should be implemented by policy makers and school administrators according to the Whole-School Approach framework.

The Valencia Colleges are urged to liaise with a district of the public schools so as to design extension programs, seminars and workshops that will help to bring gender sensitive education, create awareness and assist the learners in coping up with violence.

It should be investigated in future studies that other variables affecting violence like family environment, exposure to media and societal norms and efficacy of interventions over time should be examined and this would ensure that there is constant improvement in the policy and practice.

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Data Availability Statement

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analyzed in this study; all data used were obtained from previously published sources as cited in the reference list.

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Appendices

No appendices are attached to this study.