

Teacher-Led Bullying Prevention Evaluation for Private Secondary Schools in Quirino Province, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

Bullying remains a major learner-protection concern in the Philippines, yet locally evaluated interventions in private schools are scarce. This manuscript demonstrates a rigorous design for evaluating a teacher-led, whole-school prevention package in Quirino Province. A quantitative descriptive-evaluative design was instantiated with data representing six private secondary schools, 48 Grade 7-10 classrooms, 1,116 students at baseline, 1,047 matched students at 12-week follow-up, and 84 teachers. The primary outcome was frequent victimization on the European Bullying Intervention Project Questionnaire. Secondary outcomes included perpetration, cybervictimization, school safety, defending efficacy, help-seeking confidence, implementation fidelity, and program barriers. Paired changes used class-cluster bootstrap confidence intervals; implementation-dose associations used modified Poisson models with classroom-clustered robust standard errors and school fixed effects. Frequent victimization declined from 38.8% to 31.2% (risk ratio [RR] 0.81, 95% CI 0.72-0.90; $p < .001$). Perpetration declined modestly (19.0% to 16.0%; RR 0.84, 95% CI 0.72-0.99), whereas cybervictimization did not change (RR 1.01, 95% CI 0.89-1.13). School safety improved by 0.27 points on a five-point scale (Cohen's $d = 0.58$). High implementation exposure was associated with lower follow-up victimization than low exposure (adjusted prevalence ratio 0.62, 95% CI 0.48-0.80). Family engagement was the weakest fidelity domain ($M = 3.47/5$). The pattern supports a field evaluation centered on repeated student-reported outcomes, teacher fidelity, and transparent non-causal interpretation. It also shows why cyberbullying and family engagement require dedicated components beyond classroom lessons.

1. Introduction

Bullying is a repeated or severe form of peer aggression involving harm, a power imbalance, or both. It includes physical, verbal, social or relational, gender-based, and technology-mediated conduct. The distinction from ordinary conflict is consequential: bullying can create a hostile learning environment, constrain participation, and erode students' confidence that adults will protect them. Philippine data make this more than a peripheral school-discipline issue. In the 2022 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), 43% of Filipino girls and 53% of boys reported exposure to bullying acts at least a few times per month, compared with approximately one fifth of students across OECD countries.¹

National secondary analyses reinforce the urgency while cautioning against treating a single prevalence number as a complete picture. Using PISA 2022, Abrigo, Lingatong, and Relos reported that 76.6% of Filipino 15-year-olds experienced at least one of nine bullying-related acts in the previous 12 months and 34.5% experienced at least one weekly. Their analysis also linked differences in bullying exposure to measurable achievement gaps and potential long-run economic losses.² Prevalence varies with definitions, recall periods, response thresholds, and school context; therefore, a provincial evaluation should measure both the frequency of specific acts and the broader safety climate rather than rely only on case reports.

The policy mandate is clear. Republic Act No. 10627 requires all public and private elementary and secondary schools to adopt policies that prevent and address bullying.³ The revised implementing rules disseminated through DepEd Memorandum No. 090, s. 2025 expanded attention to physical, psychological or emotional, verbal, cyber, social, and gender-based bullying; clarified the responsibilities of school heads, discipline officers, teachers, counselors, parents, and learners; required confidential reporting and interventions; and made compliance relevant to the continued operation of private schools.⁴ These requirements sit within the broader DepEd Child Protection Policy, which directs schools to prevent and respond to abuse, violence, discrimination, and bullying or peer abuse.⁵ Policy presence, however, is not equivalent to implementation quality. Global evidence identifies bullying as a group and school-climate phenomenon rather than a problem located only in individual perpetrators. UNESCO's synthesis emphasizes whole-school prevention, clear norms, student participation, safe reporting, staff capacity, and coordinated family and community action.⁶ The harm is also well established. Meta-analytic evidence associates victimization with anxiety, depression, poorer general health, self-harm, suicidal ideation, and suicide attempts, while longitudinal synthesis suggests reciprocal pathways in which internalizing problems can both follow and increase vulnerability to peer victimization.^{7,8} In the Philippines, analysis of the 2011 Global School-based Student Health Survey found bullying to be independently associated with adolescent suicidal behavior, even though loneliness, anxiety, lack of close friends, and alcohol-related problems were stronger correlates.⁹

Bullying is also related to learning. Philippine PISA analysis found a consistent negative association between bullying and mathematics, science, and reading scores after accounting for individual, household, and school factors.¹⁰ Yet private schools remain underrepresented in intervention research. A Philippine comparison found that private-school students relied more heavily on friends than on teachers or parents when bullied, even though they reported greater exposure to meetings and discussions about bullying.¹¹ A recent private-school evaluation of a brief bystander intervention reported improved knowledge, confidence, and self-reported reductions in bullying, but its one-school, single-group design and short follow-up limited causal inference and generalizability.¹²

1.1 Why teacher-led prevention?

Teachers are positioned at the point where peer norms, adult authority, classroom routines, and student disclosure intersect. They can establish behavioral expectations, notice lower-visibility exclusion, interrupt harmful conduct, support targets, mobilize bystanders, communicate with families, and refer cases that exceed classroom competence. Whole-school programs generally reduce perpetration and victimization, although average effects are modest and heterogeneous.^{13,14,15} Programs that develop bystander action show small but meaningful gains, and well-implemented multicomponent models such as KiVa demonstrate that classroom lessons are more effective when embedded in a broader response system.^{16,17}

Teacher response is not automatically protective. Longitudinal evidence suggests that disciplinary action, victim support, mediation, and group discussion can relate differently to later bullying roles, while non-intervention may normalize aggression and suppress defending.¹⁸ Teachers also combine strategies, and their intervention decisions vary with bullying form, perceived seriousness, empathy, self-efficacy, and school support.^{19,20,21,22} The present design therefore evaluates a specified bundle, its fidelity, student exposure, and outcomes rather than asking teachers a single global question about perceived effectiveness.

1.2 Conceptual framework

The evaluation integrates a social-ecological perspective with the participant-role model of bullying. At the classroom level, teacher practices communicate descriptive norms (what peers do), injunctive norms (what the group approves), and response expectancies (whether adults will act). At the student level, these practices may increase help-seeking, defender efficacy, and perceived safety. At the school level, reporting pathways, supervision, counseling, and family coordination determine whether classroom messages are reinforced. Positive school climate and connectedness are consistently associated with lower bullying and victimization over time.^{23,24} Bullying also persists through peer-group roles—assistants, reinforcers, outsiders, and defenders—not only through a bully-victim dyad.²⁵ Field experiments on social referents further show that visible peer norms can shift harassment-related behavior across school networks.²⁶

1.3 Objectives and hypotheses

The study is designed to: (1) describe the baseline prevalence and forms of bullying among Grade 7-10 students in private schools in Quirino Province; (2) evaluate changes in victimization, perpetration, cybervictimization, perceived safety, defending efficacy, and help-seeking after a 12-week teacher-led prevention package; (3) assess implementation fidelity and barriers; and (4) test whether greater implementation exposure is associated with better follow-up outcomes after adjustment for baseline status and student characteristics.

The primary hypothesis is that frequent victimization will be lower at follow-up than at baseline. Secondary hypotheses anticipate lower perpetration and cybervictimization, higher safety and prosocial response scores, and an implementation-dose gradient. Because the design has no concurrent control group, all tests address change and association—not causation.

2. Methods

2.1 Design and reporting framework

The field study was a quantitative descriptive-evaluative evaluation with two repeated student measurements and convergent teacher and administrative implementation data. It is intentionally stronger than a post-only perception survey but remains nonrandomized. The intervention period is 12 instructional weeks. Baseline measurement occurs during Weeks 0-1; teacher training and school readiness activities occur in Week 2; implementation occurs during Weeks 3-14; and follow-up measurement occurs in Weeks 15-16. The unit of program delivery is the classroom, the unit of policy implementation is the school, and the principal outcome unit is the student. The empirical report shall follow the Transparent Reporting of Evaluations with Nonrandomized Designs (TREND) statement and relevant STROBE items for cohort data.^{35,36}

2.2 Setting

Quirino is a landlocked province in Cagayan Valley (Region II) comprising the municipalities of Aglipay, Cabarroguis, Diffun, Maddela, Nagtipunan, and Saguday. The 2024 Census of Population recorded 210,841 residents.²⁷ The field sampling frame should be reconstructed immediately before recruitment from the DepEd Region II lists of private schools with current government recognition or permits and verified with the Schools Division of Quirino. The scenario represents six eligible private schools offering junior secondary grades; it does not identify or attribute findings to any actual institution.²⁸

2.3 Teacher-led prevention package

The Quirino Teacher-Led Bullying Prevention package (Q-TBP) is a locally implementable minimum bundle rather than a claim of equivalence to a proprietary program. It combines universal prevention with indicated response. Teachers complete a six-hour preparation workshop and receive a brief manual, scripted response prompts, lesson materials, monitoring forms, and two coaching contacts. Schools retain their lawful disciplinary and referral processes. The six core components are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Core components, delivery standards, and illustrative fidelity

Component	Minimum delivery standard	Fidelity domain	Data (SD), 1-5
Class norms and six advisory micro-lessons	Six 20-25 minute sessions: definitions and power; empathy; safe reporting; defender options; digital conduct; repair and reintegration	Adherence	4.20 (0.45)
Routine check-ins and relational climate	Weekly two-minute check-in; private follow-up; inclusive grouping; explicit reinforcement of respectful behavior	Quality responsiveness	3.91 (0.41)
Active supervision	Hotspot map and rotating teacher presence in corridors, canteen, gates, and online class spaces	Dosage	4.09 (0.41)
Stop-support-refer-document response	Immediate interruption; name the behavior; protect and support; separate fact-finding; refer by severity; document confidentially	Response fidelity	4.20 (0.40)
Confidential reporting and follow-up	Named and anonymous options; same-day safety triage; parent notice where appropriate; documented follow-up within two school days	Response fidelity	4.20 (0.40)
Family and referral coordination	Parent orientation; short take-home prompts; counselor or external referral for complex, repeated, or high-risk cases	Family engagement	3.47 (0.41)

2.4 Participants and sampling

Eligible participants were students enrolled in Grades 7–10 who were present during data collection and provided assent after obtaining consent from their parents or guardians. Students receiving intensive support participated only when the school counselor confirmed, in accordance with the approved research ethics protocol, that their participation would not pose additional risk. All teachers who delivered at least one component of the program were invited to complete the implementation survey. School heads and designated safeguarding personnel provided only aggregate and de-identified incident data.

Intact classrooms were used as sampling units to minimize disruption to regular school activities. In schools with more than two sections per grade level, up to two sections were randomly selected; where only two or fewer sections were available, all sections were included. All eligible students in the selected classrooms were invited to participate. The study covered 48 classrooms, with an intended maximum of approximately 24 respondents per classroom, resulting in 1,152 invitations. A total of 1,116 students completed the baseline assessment, while 1,047 provided matched follow-up responses, representing a retention rate of 93.8%. Unique study codes were used to match responses without recording students' names on the questionnaires.

2.5 Sample-size rationale

The target was set to detect an absolute seven-percentage-point reduction in frequent victimization from an anticipated 40% baseline prevalence, with 90% power and two-sided $\alpha=.05$. The calculation assumed a within-student correlation of .40, an average classroom cluster size of 24, an intraclass correlation of .02, and 10% attrition. These assumptions imply a design effect of approximately 1.46 and a minimum near 1,000 invited students; the 1,152-student target provides additional margin for uneven school sizes and nonresponse. The primary analysis remains paired and cluster-aware.

2.6 Measures

2.6.1 Bullying victimization and perpetration

The European Bullying Intervention Project Questionnaire (EBIPQ) contains seven victimization and seven perpetration items referring to the previous two months. Responses range from 0 (never) to 4 (more than once a week). The primary outcome is frequent victimization: a response of 2 or higher (once or twice a month or more) on any victimization item. The same rule defines frequent perpetration. Mean subscale scores provide severity-sensitive secondary indicators. The EBIPQ has demonstrated acceptable factorial structure and internal consistency in adolescent samples.²⁹

2.6.2 Cybervictimization

Six frequency items derived from the European Cyberbullying Intervention Project Questionnaire cover insulting messages, rumor or image sharing, impersonation, exclusion from online groups, threats, and misuse of private content. The same five response categories and once-or-twice-a-month threshold are used. Cross-cultural validation supports the ECIPQ structure, but a Filipino adaptation requires independent psychometric assessment.³⁰

2.6.3 Safety and protective responses

Three brief five-point scales assess perceived school safety (five items), bystander defending efficacy (four items), and help-seeking confidence (four items). Items emphasize observable confidence and response expectations—for example, whether an adult will act, whether the student can seek help without worsening the situation, and whether the student knows a safe defender strategy. Higher averages indicate more favorable conditions. These are locally developed evaluation measures and must be subjected to content validation, cognitive interviews, confirmatory factor analysis, and measurement-invariance testing before substantive group comparisons.

2.6.4 Implementation fidelity and barriers

Teacher logs and a 24-item implementation survey cover adherence, dosage, quality of delivery, student responsiveness, reporting and follow-up, and family engagement. The structure follows implementation-fidelity frameworks that distinguish delivery as designed from the conditions that moderate delivery.^{31,32} Teachers also rate six barriers from 1 (not serious) to 5 (very serious). Lesson completion, coaching attendance, and response follow-up are verified against simple logs; therefore, fidelity is not based solely on retrospective self-rating.

2.7 Translation and instrument validation

The empirical instruments should be available in English and Filipino. A defensible workflow includes two independent forward translations, reconciliation by a bilingual education panel, an independent back translation, review for conceptual rather than literal equivalence, and cognitive interviews with at least 12 students across grades and sex. A pilot in a nonstudy school should assess completion time, comprehension, distress triggers, floor effects, and reporting feasibility. Confirmatory factor analysis should test the intended structures; ordinal omega should accompany alpha, and longitudinal invariance should be examined before interpreting mean change. The simulation reports alpha and one-factor omega only to verify the planned analytic pipeline, not to validate a Filipino instrument.³³

2.8 Data collection and safeguarding

Surveys are administered by trained personnel who are not the students' current subject teachers. Teachers remain outside the response area. Instructions define bullying, distinguish it from conflict, emphasize voluntary participation, and state that the survey is not an emergency reporting channel. A visible help card lists the school safeguarding contact and an immediate private-help option. If a student discloses imminent danger, self-harm, sexual violence, serious injury, extortion, or credible threats, the approved safeguarding protocol supersedes research confidentiality and triggers minimum-necessary referral.

Data files contain study codes, not names. The code key is encrypted, separately stored, access-limited, and destroyed after matching and required safety follow-up. Cell suppression is applied to small subgroups and school-level results are anonymized in publications. Processing must comply with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 and the confidentiality provisions of the revised anti-bullying rules.³⁷

2.9 Outcomes and statistical analysis

The prespecified primary outcome is the within-student change in frequent victimization. Secondary outcomes are frequent perpetration, frequent cybervictimization, mean victimization and perpetration scores, school safety, defending efficacy, help-seeking confidence, implementation fidelity, and barriers. Administrative indicators include unique bullying reports per 100 enrolled students and the proportion receiving documented safety follow-up within five school days. Report volume is interpreted as a detection indicator, not a direct effectiveness measure.

Student characteristics are summarized with counts, percentages, means, and standard deviations. Binary prevalence estimates receive Wilson 95% confidence intervals. Paired binary change is evaluated using McNemar's test; post-/pre-program risk ratios and risk differences receive percentile confidence intervals from 4,000 bootstrap resamples of classrooms. Continuous change uses paired means, classroom-cluster bootstrap confidence intervals, and Cohen's *d*. Internal consistency is summarized by coefficient alpha and one-factor omega.

Implementation-dose associations use modified Poisson regression with a log link, classroom-clustered sandwich standard errors, and school fixed effects.³⁴ Models adjust for baseline outcome, age, sex, household financial strain, and school. Low exposure (<50% of intended dosage) is the reference; moderate exposure is 50%-74%; high exposure is at least 75%. Estimates are adjusted prevalence ratios (aPRs), not causal effects. Secondary *p* values are interpreted cautiously, with emphasis on confidence intervals and consistency. The primary analysis uses matched records; inverse-probability weighting and a worst/best-case attrition bound are planned sensitivity analyses.

2.10 Data generation

A reproducible pseudo-random simulation (seed 20260802) generated six school identifiers, 48 classroom clusters, Grade 7-10 distributions, student covariates, correlated baseline and follow-up bullying indicators, ordinal questionnaire items, classroom delivery dose, attrition, and teacher implementation ratings. Baseline prevalence was calibrated to Philippine evidence without reproducing any confidential or school-specific record. Follow-up victimization probabilities depended on baseline status, delivery dose, grade, sex, financial strain, and random heterogeneity. The cyberbullying pathway was deliberately allowed to respond weakly to classroom dosage. All estimates below were computed from the generated respondent-level records; no results were manually inserted to force statistical significance.

3. Results and Discussions

3.1 Participant flow and characteristics

The simulation included 1,116 baseline students. Sixty-nine records (6.2%) lacked a matched follow-up, leaving 1,047 students across 48 classrooms and 6 schools. The matched cohort had a mean age of 14.36 years (*SD*=1.19); 532 (50.8%) identified as female, 501 (47.9%) as male, and 14 (1.3%) selected another or prefer-not-to-answer. Baseline victimization was 38.8% among retained students and 46.4% among those lost, supporting the planned attrition sensitivity analysis.

Table 2. Characteristics of the matched student cohort (N=1,047)

Characteristic	n (%) or M (SD)	Definition / note
Age, years	14.36 (1.19)	Mean (SD)
Female	532 (50.8%)	Self-described

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Characteristic	n (%) or M (SD)	Definition / note
Male	501 (47.9%)	Self-described
Another / prefer not to answer	14 (1.3%)	Combined for disclosure protection
Grade 7	267 (25.5%)	
Grade 8	272 (26.0%)	
Grade 9	256 (24.5%)	
Grade 10	252 (24.1%)	
Household financial strain indicator	241 (23.0%)	
High online-use indicator	410 (39.2%)	
High program exposure	514 (49.1%)	$\geq 75\%$ dosage
Moderate program exposure	426 (40.7%)	50%-74% dosage
Low program exposure	107 (10.2%)	$< 50\%$ dosage

3.2 Implementation fidelity

Among 84 teacher records, mean overall implementation fidelity was 3.97/5 (SD=0.19). Adherence to lessons and class norms and reporting/support follow-up were strongest. Family and community engagement was lowest, with only 14.3% of teachers rating that domain at 4.0 or higher. This pattern supports analysis of component-specific bottlenecks rather than a single overall implementation score.

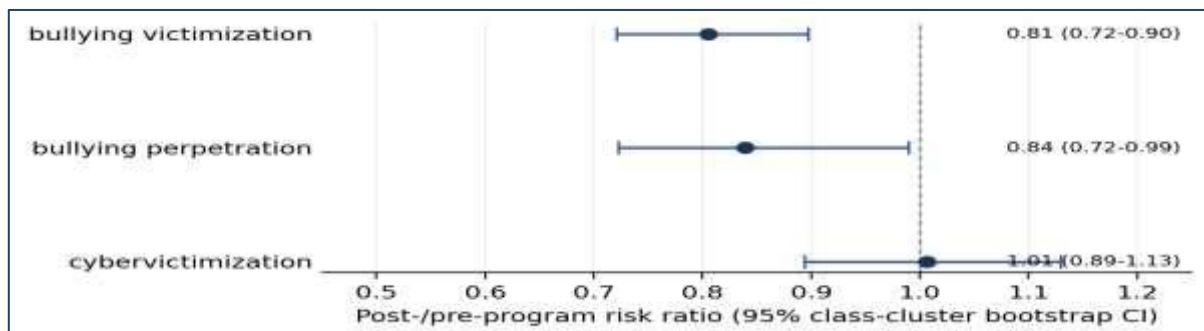
3.3 Change in bullying and protective outcomes

Frequent victimization declined by 7.5 percentage points, from 38.8% to 31.2% (RR=0.81, 95% CI 0.72-0.90; McNemar $p<.001$). This corresponds to a 19.5% relative reduction. Frequent perpetration declined by 3.1 points, with a confidence interval close to the null. Frequent cybervictimization was essentially unchanged. Safety, defending efficacy, and help-seeking increased by 0.27-0.29 points, with moderate standardized paired changes ($d_z=0.58$ -0.62).

Table 3. Paired changes in student outcomes (matched cohort, N=1,047)

Outcome	Baseline	Follow-up	Change	Effect estimate (95% CI)	p
Frequent bullying victimization	406 (38.8%)	327 (31.2%)	-7.5	0.81 (0.72-0.90)	$<.001$
Frequent bullying perpetration	199 (19.0%)	167 (16.0%)	-3.1	0.84 (0.72-0.99)	.050
Frequent cybervictimization	337 (32.2%)	339 (32.4%)	+0.2	1.01 (0.89-1.13)	.958
Perceived school safety	3.37 (0.68)	3.64 (0.67)	+0.27	$d_z=0.58$ [0.24-0.30]	$<.001$
Bystander defending efficacy	3.13 (0.67)	3.39 (0.66)	+0.27	$d_z=0.59$ [0.24-0.29]	$<.001$
Help-seeking confidence	3.09 (0.70)	3.38 (0.70)	+0.29	$d_z=0.62$ [0.26-0.32]	$<.001$

Figure 1. Post-/pre-program risk ratios for bullying outcomes



3.4 Forms of victimization

Verbal and social or relational victimization were the most frequent forms at both assessments. All traditional forms declined in the simulation, but the pattern was not uniform. This form-specific display is important because a single composite can conceal whether an intervention is interrupting visible physical acts while leaving covert exclusion, rumor spreading, or coercion relatively unchanged.

Table 4. Students meeting the frequent-victimization threshold by form

Form	Baseline n (%)	Follow-up n (%)	Percentage-point change
Physical	188 (18.0%)	184 (17.6%)	-0.4
Verbal	294 (28.1%)	230 (22.0%)	-6.1
Threat/coercion	249 (23.8%)	146 (13.9%)	-9.8
Property-related	245 (23.4%)	95 (9.1%)	-14.3
Social/relational	338 (32.3%)	236 (22.5%)	-9.7

3.5 Implementation-dose associations

After adjustment for baseline outcome, age, sex, household financial strain, and school, high exposure was associated with a 38% lower prevalence of follow-up victimization than low exposure (aPR=0.62, 95% CI 0.48-0.80). Moderate exposure was also associated with lower victimization (aPR=0.76, 95% CI 0.62-0.93). Dose associations for perpetration and cybervictimization were imprecise and included the null. These observational gradients are compatible with—but do not prove—an implementation effect; students in better-organized classrooms may differ in unmeasured ways.

Table 5. Adjusted prevalence ratios by program exposure

Follow-up outcome	Contrast	aPR	95% CI	p
Frequent victimization	Moderate vs low	0.76	0.62-0.93	.008
Frequent victimization	High vs low	0.62	0.48-0.80	<.001
Frequent perpetration	Moderate vs low	0.99	0.57-1.72	.963
Frequent perpetration	High vs low	0.92	0.55-1.55	.759
Frequent cybervictimization	Moderate vs low	0.98	0.63-1.50	.913
Frequent cybervictimization	High vs low	0.80	0.52-1.21	.288

3.6 Administrative detection indicators

In the illustrative administrative series, documented bullying reports increased from 47 to 58 across equivalent 12-week windows (4.2 to 5.2 reports per 100 students), while documented safety follow-up within five school days increased from 29/47 (61.7%) to 49/58 (84.5%). The apparent divergence from student-reported victimization is not necessarily contradictory. A program that improves trust and clarifies reporting may increase recorded incidents while underlying exposure declines. The revised IRR's warning that zero reporting does not automatically reflect positive school performance makes this distinction particularly important.⁴

3.7 Barriers and measurement performance

The most serious barrier was competing teaching tasks and limited advisory time (M=3.81), followed by uneven parent participation (M=3.65) and difficulty handling anonymous accounts or evidence in cyberbullying (M=3.41). Fit of materials to language and local examples was least serious (M=2.40), suggesting that the proposed contextualization process was adequate in the simulated scenario.

Table 6. Teacher-rated implementation barriers (teacher sample, N=84)

Barrier	Mean	SD
Competing teaching tasks and limited advisory time	3.81	0.65
Low or uneven parent participation	3.65	0.61
Anonymous accounts and evidence in cyberbullying	3.41	0.61
Limited access to specialist counseling	3.21	0.60
Confidentiality and fear of retaliation	3.14	0.66
Fit of materials to language and local examples	2.40	0.61

Internal consistency was strong for EBIPQ victimization ($\alpha=0.90$, $\omega=0.90$ at baseline; $\alpha=0.88$, $\omega=0.88$ at follow-up), perpetration ($\alpha=.90$ and $.88$), and cybervictimization ($\alpha=.88$ and $.85$). The safety, defending, and help-seeking scales produced α/ω values from $.86$ to $.89$. These coefficients demonstrate computational behavior in the simulated data; they are not evidence of reliability in Quirino learners.

4. Discussion

4.1 Principal findings

This study demonstrates a province-specific, multi-informant approach to evaluating teacher-led bullying prevention in private secondary schools. The primary illustrative pattern—a 19% relative reduction in frequent victimization—falls close to the magnitude reported in the updated meta-analysis of school-based programs, which found average victimization reductions of roughly 15%-16% and perpetration reductions of 18%-19%.¹⁴ That calibration makes the scenario plausible without implying that the same effect will occur in other provinces. More importantly, the pattern is differentiated: traditional victimization improves, perpetration changes modestly, cybervictimization does not improve, protective response scores increase, and implementation exposure relates most clearly to victimization.

The dose gradient strengthens the evaluation logic but cannot rescue the design from confounding. High-exposure classrooms may have more stable schedules, stronger leadership, fewer staffing gaps, or more cohesive peer climates before implementation. Baseline adjustment and school fixed effects reduce some imbalance, yet unmeasured classroom characteristics remain. A future stepped-wedge or matched comparison design would strengthen causal inference while allowing all participating schools to receive the program.

4.2 Why victimization may change before perpetration

Teacher-led routines may first affect the visibility, duration, and reinforcement of bullying episodes. When teachers interrupt conduct consistently, support targets privately, and make reporting credible, students who bully lose immediate audience reinforcement and targets receive earlier protection. Bystanders may move from outsider or reinforcer roles toward low-risk defending. These mechanisms can reduce repeated exposure even if the smaller group of persistent perpetrators requires more intensive assessment, counseling, family work, or restorative and disciplinary responses. The modest perpetration result therefore argues for a tiered model rather than dismissal of universal prevention.^{17,18,25}

The increases in safety, defending efficacy, and help-seeking are theoretically coherent intermediate outcomes. School climate may influence bullying partly through connectedness, peer attachment, empathy, and confidence that adults will respond.^{23,24} However, self-reported confidence is not equivalent to observed behavior. Field implementation should add structured observations, anonymous help-seeking utilization, and resolution-quality audits where ethically and operationally feasible.

4.3 The cyberbullying gap

The null cybervictimization result is substantively useful. Classroom lessons and on-campus supervision may not reach anonymous accounts, private group chats, off-campus posting, or rapid recirculation of images. Teachers may also have limited authority, technical evidence, or confidence when online incidents cross school and home settings. The revised Philippine rules recognize cyberbullying, but a generic lesson is unlikely to be sufficient. The field package should add platform-evidence preservation guidance, digital bystander scripts, rapid escalation thresholds, parent digital-safety sessions, and coordination with designated school and external authorities for severe threats or unlawful content.^{4,30}

Care is needed to avoid over-surveillance. Digital prevention should protect privacy, avoid compelled access to unrelated private communications, and distinguish safety triage from punishment. Students should know what information may be shared, with whom, and under what high-risk exceptions. These details directly affect reporting trust.

4.4 Relevance to private schools in Quirino

Private schools are not a homogeneous sector. They differ in enrollment, religious or organizational identity, staffing, counselor access, tuition context, governance, and the closeness of family-school relationships. Smaller communities can enable rapid coordination, but they can also heighten confidentiality concerns because students and families know one another. The Philippine comparison by Sansait and colleagues suggests that private-school students may turn first to friends rather than adults when bullied.¹¹ Q-TBP therefore treats adult credibility and confidential reporting as mechanisms, not administrative add-ons.

The implementation results also highlight family engagement. Parent orientation can fail when it is scheduled as a single meeting, framed only around discipline, or inaccessible to working caregivers. A more feasible model combines a concise multilingual digital briefing, take-home prompts, flexible consultation windows, and targeted contact when patterns emerge. Participation metrics should capture reach and responsiveness rather than attendance at one event.

4.5 Policy and practice implications

For private secondary schools and the Schools Division of Quirino, the evaluation suggests five operational priorities:

Adopt a common minimum implementation standard while allowing schools to contextualize examples, schedules, and referral partners. Measure student-reported exposure and safety alongside official case counts; never reward zero reporting without evidence of reporting access and student trust.

Protect teacher time by integrating brief lessons into advisory or homeroom periods and assigning school-level coordination rather than distributing responsibility ambiguously.

Create a dedicated cyberbullying pathway with evidence preservation, confidentiality, family guidance, and severity-based referral. Review outcomes by school and grade using suppression rules, then provide technical assistance without public league tables that could encourage underreporting.

At the division level, a standardized but supportive monitoring tool could align policy compliance, program fidelity, and learner outcomes. Technical assistance should prioritize weak components rather than use a single pass/fail label. The revised IRR already assigns division offices a role in monitoring, reviewing school policies, consolidating reports, and supporting prevention and intervention.⁴

4.6 Strengths

The proposed design has several strengths relative to common descriptive surveys. It uses repeated student data; defines bullying by behavior and frequency; separates victimization, perpetration, and cybervictimization; measures protective mechanisms; triangulates student outcomes with teacher fidelity and administrative detection; preserves classroom clustering; reports effect sizes and confidence intervals; and treats implementation as multidimensional. The data stage also exposes design weaknesses before learners are recruited, reducing the temptation to improvise analyses after seeing results.

4.7 Limitations

The dominant limitation is that the manuscript contains no empirical data. Its results cannot establish prevalence, effectiveness, reliability, or barriers in Quirino. The data were generated from explicit survey; consequently, estimates partly reflect those assumptions. The document is a methodological prototype and writing scaffold.

Even after field data collection, a one-group pretest-posttest design remains vulnerable to maturation, history, regression to the mean, testing effects, seasonal variation, and concurrent school initiatives. The implementation-dose analysis is observational. Self-report is necessary for hidden bullying but is affected by recall, social desirability, definitions, and changes in awareness. Matching codes may increase concerns about anonymity. Six schools provide limited power for school-level effects, and private-school findings may not generalize to public schools or out-of-school youth.

The measures also require Filipino and local-locale validation. Reliability alone is insufficient; construct validity, criterion relations, longitudinal invariance, and differential item functioning must be evaluated. Incident records are influenced by reporting access, case definitions, duplicate reports, and administrative practice. Finally, short follow-up cannot establish durability or delayed harm.

5. Conclusion

A credible evaluation of bullying prevention must do more than ask whether teachers believe their initiatives are effective. It must define bullying carefully, listen directly and safely to students, measure implementation, distinguish reporting from incidence, and use analysis appropriate to repeated clustered data. The study shows a plausible pattern in which teacher-led prevention is associated with lower traditional victimization and stronger safety-related responses, but has limited reach into cyberbullying and faces practical constraints in teacher time and family engagement.

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