

Abstract

The present study aimed to investigate bystanders' reactions to a bullying incident against a classmate with mental illness, so as to extend the existing literature on bystanders' profile. An array of factors that have been demonstrated to influence a bystander's intervention intention were simultaneously investigated, including: *personal attitudes* such as public stigma to mental illness, attitudes on aggression legitimacy; *situational characteristics* such as causal attribution of mental illness, perceived severity of the incident, and number of bystander in the incident; as well as *emotional responses* and *cognitive reasoning* after the bullying incident. Self developed measurement on bystanders' cognitive reasoning over their intended behavior and emotional responses after observation of bullying episode were validated with Salmivalli's participant roles measurement on bystanders' intervention. Hypothetical vignettes were endorsed to examine how psychiatric status of the victim and its causal attribution might influence stigma and the responses of the bystanders. However, the proposed differential effects of attributing serious mental illness to genetic causes and non genetic cause were not observed. Results of hierarchical regression revealed the relative importance of each factor set in predicting bystanders' behavioral intentions. Bystanders' *cognitive reasoning* on their own intended behavior contributed the most variances in all the three predictions while *emotional responses* after witnessing the bullying scenario remained as an important predictor even after

controlling for the significance of *cognitive reasoning*. Implications of the findings were discussed in the context of school bullying.