

Bystander behavior in violence against women in Spain: A scoping review

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Bystander behavior
Helpful behavior
VAW
IPVAW

ABSTRACT

Part of the research for the prevention of violence against women (VAW) has focused on bystander behavior due to the fact that many people in the woman's environment, while not directly related to the violence, can be witness to it.

The present study applies a scoping review methodology to analyze the available scientific knowledge on helping behaviors, the factors that facilitate or inhibit them, and the proposals for intervention with bystanders in cases of VAW in Spain.

Thirty-eight articles were selected from the database search, including peer-reviewed publications and grey literature. The eligibility criteria included papers related to bystanders defined as non-professionals, and studies published in Spain between 2005 and 2020, written in Spanish, Catalan or English.

Most of the research uses quantitative methodology. While there are many observed factors that facilitate or inhibit the bystander behavior, few interventions are carried out to achieve a helping behavior by the bystanders.

More thorough research is needed in all forms of VAW, especially because most of the information is about intimate partner violence (IPVAW). It is imperative to carry out studies that provide the necessary information to be able to intervene in all forms of VAW.

1. Introduction

Violence against women (VAW) is not only a violation of human rights, but also a form of gender-based violence, and a social and health problem of epidemic proportions throughout the world, with a major negative impact on victims and a significant cost for society (European Institute for Gender Equality [EIGE], 2020; García-Moreno et al., 2013; World Health Organization [WHO], 2021). Among the different forms of VAW, intimate partner violence against women (IPVAW) is “one of the most common forms of violence experienced by women” (Devries et al., 2013, p. 1527).

Despite its enormous importance, there is still a widespread social perception that these forms of violence are “a private matter” or a “hidden problem” (Cinquegrana et al., 2018). This perception needs to change across society, on an individual level as well as in the private, professional and public spheres (EIGE, 2020) due to, among other reasons, the significant number of people who form part of the women's personal or private environment and witness the violence they suffer,

but choose not to become directly involved in the event itself (Fenton et al., 2016; Gracia et al., 2018; Gracia & Lila, 2015; Taylor et al., 2019).

Regarding the term witness or bystander, it is important point out that some authors (e.g., Pease & Flood, 2008; Waltermaurer, 2012) consider the entire community, and not just those within the victim's inner circle, to be witnesses or bystanders of VAW. Others (e.g., EIGE, 2020; Herrero et al., 2017) distinguish a witness or bystander (non-professionals; namely, any adult who observes, suspects, or is otherwise made aware of VAW, including acquaintances, family members, friends, colleagues or neighbors) from professionals (namely, someone who works within the judicial branch, at both a national or local level, including the police, member of the court, health and social care workers, or specialized victim services). Our research assumes this distinction and focuses on working with non-professional witnesses or bystanders (EIGE, 2020).

These witnesses or bystanders may engage in a wide range of active or direct and passive or indirect actions towards VAW victims (Banyard et al., 2014; Banyard & Moynihan, 2011; EIGE, 2020; León Márquez,

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<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2023.101861>

Received 2 March 2022; Received in revised form 18 June 2023; Accepted 5 July 2023

Available online 6 July 2023

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2020; Palmer et al., 2018), including: doing nothing or not intervening; supporting the perpetrator and/or blaming the victim; providing different forms of informal support to the victim (i.e., talking to the victim, mediating, helping or accompanying her to access support services, or helping her to report the case to the police); or reporting the case to the police or relevant authorities. These actions can be taken before, during or after the aggression (Banyard & Moynihan, 2011; Hoxmeier et al., 2015). In fact, depending on the type of behavior performed, Fenton et al. (2016) distinguish passive bystanders (people who do nothing) from prosocial bystanders who intervene when they witness a problematic event between a perpetrator and a victim.

More recently, Banyard et al. (Banyard et al., 2020; Rothman et al., 2019) propose the term *actionist* to refer to prosocial bystanders who engage in private, individual behaviors to prevent VAW (as opposed to activists, i.e., people involved in collective action to prevent or eradicate such violence). In fact, in the context of VAW, the social engagement and helping behaviors of actionist or prosocial bystanders are key strategies for preventing and ending any kind of this violence (Cinquegrana et al., 2018; Fenton et al., 2019; Fenton & Mott, 2017). However, it may be noted that most of the literature on this topic has focused on sexual violence and intervention in the context of an academic campus (e.g., Banyard & Moynihan, 2011), and more recently, on IPVAW (Baldry et al., 2015; Baldry & Pagliaro, 2014; Banyard et al., 2020; Cinquegrana et al., 2018; Fenton et al., 2019).

One of the main theoretical frameworks for understanding bystander helping behavior is Latané and Darley's (1970) bystander model of intervention in emergencies, a cognitive model that analyses the factors that modify an individual's willingness to intervene, underlining how perceived severity and personal responsibility are essential pre-conditions in the decision to move from inaction to action. Some of the inhibitors and facilitators of helping behavior considered in this model are, therefore, directly related to individual beliefs and attitudes.

In the case of VAW, Flood and Pease (2009) explained that attitudes have been a central concern in relation to this violence, and that they play a central role in the responses "adopted by individuals other than the perpetrator or victim, whether family members and friends, professionals, or bystanders" (p. 127). In fact, social context and social norms determine these attitudes and play an important role in condemning or condoning these forms of violence (Cinquegrana et al., 2018; Pease & Flood, 2008).

The role of bystander attitude is considered in the case of intimate partner violence (IPV) by Waltermaurer (2012, p. 167), who develops the Social Justification of Intimate Partner Violence Model. According to this model, the community-wide (perpetrator, victim, and bystanders) perception of IPV as a justifiable behavior may increase the incidence of perpetration. After the abuse, the victim may agree that violence against her was justifiable, and as a result, she will be less likely to report this violence to someone or allow someone to intervene. And finally, if IPV is witnessed or reported in a community that believes these acts are justifiable, it can be hypothesized that a lesser response or none at all, will be enacted. In fact, as Waltermaurer (2012) points out "the IPV bystanders, witnesses known and not known to the victims or perpetrator as well as the criminal justice system will logically be less likely to respond negatively to a behavior that they, the community, feel is warranted" (p. 168). In fact, there is evidence that any form of tolerance towards VAW or of adherence to violent-supportive beliefs decreases the likelihood of victims or witnesses reporting this violence and even inhibits potential helpers from intervening (Bucheli & Rossi, 2019; Gracia & Herrero, 2006; Pease & Flood, 2008).

Returning to Latané and Darley's (1970) bystander model of intervention in emergencies, Banyard et al. (Banyard, 2011; McMahon & Banyard, 2012) incorporate into this general model some social and environmental factors related to the specific characteristics of VAW (such as social norms, peer norms, or attitudes and beliefs towards this violence), thus developing an ecological explanatory model specific for sexual violence, which can be applied to some other forms of VAW.

In this context, the study of bystander helping behavior in VAW cases has significantly increased in last decades and from different perspectives. Thus, for example, different systematic reviews of the scientific literature on the subject show interest in the research of attitudes towards intervention (see Gracia et al., 2020; Gracia & Lila, 2015), in key variables that facilitate or inhibit bystander intervention (see Mainwaring et al., 2022; Rizzo et al., 2022), and, above of all, in analyzing the effectiveness of bystander programs that address different types of VAW in different contexts (see Evans et al., 2019; Jouriles et al., 2018; Kettrey et al., 2019; Kovalenko et al., 2022; Mujal et al., 2021; Park & Kim, 2023).

One issue to note is that this interest has preferentially focused on bystander helping behavior in cases of sexual violence (e.g., Evans et al., 2019; Jouriles et al., 2018; Kettrey et al., 2019; Mainwaring et al., 2022; Mujal et al., 2021; Park & Kim, 2023; Rizzo et al., 2022), and substantially less in cases of IPVAW (e.g., Gracia et al., 2020). It is also worth noting the fact that most of the papers mentioned (in fact, all of them, except Kovalenko et al., 2022) have focused on the study of a single type of VAW.

Regarding the region where the studies included in these reviews were conducted, most were carried out in the USA and published in English (see Evans et al., 2019; Kettrey et al., 2019; Kovalenko et al., 2022; Mainwaring et al., 2022; Park & Kim, 2023; Rizzo et al., 2022). In fact, in some cases, simply being conducted in the USA (e.g., Evans et al., 2019) or being published in English (e.g., Evans et al., 2019; Kovalenko et al., 2022; Mainwaring et al., 2022) were inclusion criteria for the systematic review. Only some reviews (e.g., Kovalenko et al., 2022; Mainwaring et al., 2022; Park & Kim, 2023) include studies conducted in Europe, accounting only for less than 20 % of the total and of these, most come from the UK (e.g., Mainwaring et al., 2022).

Focusing on Europe, Gracia and Lila (2015) review information identified and provided by the European Network of Experts on Gender Equality (ENEGE). Specifically, these experts provided surveys conducted in European Union countries over the previous 5 years that included questions addressing attitudes towards VAW, as well as quantitative and qualitative studies published in academic journals. These authors identified four key topics, including as one of them public knowledge, attitudes towards intervention and responses in cases of VAW. Information related to this topic was available in 21 surveys conducted in 11 countries, four of which were conducted in Spain (three in gender-based violence, and one in IPVAW); and in 8 studies published in 6 countries, one of them conducted in Spain and related to attitudes towards IPVAW among police officers (Gracia et al., 2011).

Subsequently, Gracia et al., 2020 performed a systematic review of quantitative studies addressing attitudes towards IPVAW conducted in European Union countries and published in English in peer-reviewed journals between 2000 and 2018. These authors identified four focus categories, including attitudes towards intervention, analyzed in 14 studies. Among these studied, 8 were conducted in Spain, 4 with police officers samples (Gracia et al., 2008, 2011, 2014; Lila et al., 2013) and 4 with non-professional samples (Gracia et al., 2009, 2018; Gracia, Herrero, 2006, 2007a).

The EIGE (2020) conducted a scoping review on witness reporting of IPVAW at the European level and in-depth qualitative research in four countries, Denmark, Germany, France, and Portugal, to explore factors (enablers or barriers) that affect witnesses' support of IPVAW victims and the environments in which this occurs. This scoping review identified some studies conducted in Spain, which analyze circumstantial factors relevant for bystander behavior (e.g., Gracia et al., 2009; Gracia & Herrero, 2006; Herrero et al., 2017), in addition to a study presenting a scale to evaluate willingness to intervene in cases of intimate partner violence (Gracia et al., 2018).

Regarding Spain, as pointed out by Alonso et al. (2023), VAW and particularly IPVAW are included in the political agenda, and it is treated as a public matter addressed institutionally and comprehensively by the state. Maybe, as Gracia et al. (2020) remark, this institutional concern,

jointly with the public concern showed by surveys as the FRA (2014) explain that Spain was one of the European countries where most studies on attitudes towards IPVAV have been published in recent decades. In fact, among the total number of studies identified by these authors in a systematic review (Gracia et al. (2020) more than 48 % were conducted in Spain.

However, the volume of studies conducted in Spain on the intention to intervene by non-professional bystanders in cases of IPVAV and VAW seems substantially lower, as shown in reviews conducted by the EIGE (2020) or Gracia et al. (Gracia et al., 2020; Gracia & Lila, 2015). In order to examine the limited evidence published on this topic and identify other possible research, a scoping review was performed extending the inclusion criteria to encompass research conducted in Spain on any form of VAW, and published in English, Spanish, or Catalan, both in peer-reviewed publications and in grey literature. The aim of this review is to further study the available scientific knowledge on helping behaviors in Spain, identify possible particularities in factors that facilitate or inhibit such behaviors, and provide proposals for future bystander intervention as a step further towards a more effective intervention, in a context where the Spanish government's State Strategy to combat male violence 2022–2025 (DGGV, 2022) includes among its objectives the involvement of the society as a whole to eradicate VAW.

2. Methods

To achieve this goal, we decided to conduct a scoping review of research literature, which is useful to identify knowledge gaps that help guide future research efforts (Tricco et al., 2018). This review was conducted in accordance with the recommendations in PRISMA 2020 (Page et al., 2021) along with the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR) guidelines (Tricco et al., 2018). A protocol was registered with the Open Science Framework registry and can be publicly accessed at: <https://osf.io/p3an5/>.

2.1. Eligibility criteria

The following inclusion eligibility criteria for this scoping review was applied: 1) the studies must have been referred to as an assessment or intervention made with bystanders or witnesses in cases of any kind of VAW; 2) a witness or bystander was defined as a non-professional adult who observes, suspects, or is otherwise made aware of VAW, including acquaintances, family members, friends, colleagues or neighbors, and excluding all types of professionals who assist VAW victims; 3) the studies must have been carried out in Spain; 4) they must have been published between the years 2005 (when Organic Act 1/2004 of 28 December on integrated protection measures against gender violence, the first specific Spanish law in IPVAV, came into force) and 2020; 5) they must have been written in the Spanish, Catalan or English language; 6) sources included peer-reviewed publication and grey literature (i.e., articles from specialized journals, books, book chapters, research reports, dissertations and presentations at conferences and congresses); and 6) full-text must be published and available (paper or digital format).

2.2. Search strategy

The studies meeting the eligible criteria were identified through a computer-based search using Google Scholar to access the largest possible volume of publications produced in Spain and in Spanish. In order to perform this search of scientific production on the topic, the following key words and combinations were used: “violence against women”, “Spain”, and “bystander / witness”. And, in order to retrieve the available scientific literature on the subject, the search was performed as an advanced search (such as Find articles with all the words: “Spain” “bystander OR witness”; and with the exact phrase “violence

against women”). The search strategies were drafted by an experienced researcher [the Principal Investigator of the Research Project] and further refined through team discussion.

The search with these criteria was completed in March 2020 and, initially identified a total of 7560 publications for possible inclusion. An initial review of the articles obtained from this search showed that, in international psychological production, the words witness and bystander are generally used interchangeably. However, in the research conducted in Spain, witness is usually reserved for legal or forensic psychology literature and for court contexts, and when it is used in general psychological literature it is usually reserved for bullying cases or for children who have observed/witnessed IPVAV. Therefore, this search was refined and restricted to the bystander concept in VAW issues and with Spanish samples, resulting in a total of 722 records obtained.

A complementary search performed with the same key words in TESEO (a database of Spanish Doctoral Dissertations) yielded an additional eight records. Moreover, in order to ensure a thorough and complete analysis, the reference sections of the records obtained were examined with the aim of locating other records that were relevant to the subject (hand-searching performed in ascending order); this operation was repeated until the main line of the subject disappeared. Following this strategy, 26 additional resources were identified. No additional results were provided by the complementary search made in DIALNET (<http://dialnet.unirioja.es/>), Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO) and Summaries ISOC (database on Social Sciences and Humanities of Spanish National Council, CSIC), two databases that cover a greater spectrum of publications conducted in Spain, including both the most visible scientific journals and the so-called grey literature. The review of websites and publications of organizations (statistics and equality organizations) provided 28 additional records. Following screening methods as defined by PRISMA-ScR, two researchers independently reviewed the identified article titles and abstracts and reconciled the selection differences via discussion. A data form was jointly developed by these reviewers to determine which variables to extract. Both independently charted the data, discussed the results and continuously updated the data form in an iterative process.

2.3. Data collection

After duplicates and records marked as illegible were removed, a total of 723 unduplicated potentially relevant studies were identified and analyzed on the basis of inclusion and exclusion criteria. As a result, 625 articles were excluded for not meeting one or more of the criteria established for this scoping review, leaving 98 articles as relevant for full-text review. Of these, 60 were excluded for the following reasons: 10 did not look at helping behaviors, 12 presented a sample or data duplicated from other studies, 9 were not carried out within the Spanish population, 17 had been made with a professional sample, 6 were dated outside the specified range, 1 did not present results related to the VAW, and 5 more were discarded because the full text could not be found. The full search/screening process resulted in 38 studies eligible for our scoping review (Fig. 1).

For a better understanding of the results, we grouped the studies according to their key points and divided them into 4 analysis groups, summarizing in each case the type of methodology used, the type of violence analyzed, the type of population studied and the general findings.

3. Results

3.1. Percentage of bystanders

Of the eleven articles reporting the number of bystanders (Table 1), 9 followed a quantitative methodology, and 2 a mixed methodology (Commission for the Investigation of Mistreatment of Women [CIMW], 2020; Puigvert et al., 2019). Regarding the type of article, 5 of the 11

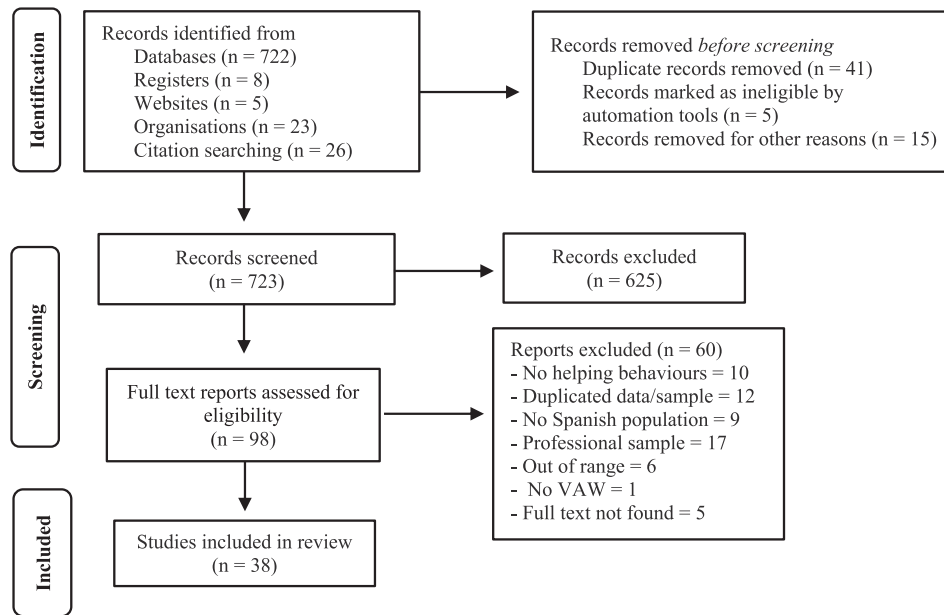


Fig. 1. Flow Diagram.

Table 1
Percentage of bystanders

Author & year	Objective	Sample & instruments	Results
CIMW (2020)	Analyze attitudes, experiences & perceptions	Teenagers sample Total sample (n = 1578) / Data sample (n = 683) Questionnaire + qualitative analysis of stories	Girls have seen or experienced VAW, IPVAV, sexual harassment and street sexual harassment more than boys.
DGGV (2018)	Analyze social perception and beliefs about sexual violence	General population (n = 2.465) Survey	30.7 % of women and 24.3 % of men know a woman victim of sexual assault.
Díaz-Aguado (2013)	Analyze students' perception of equality and IPVAV	Students from 12 to 24 years old. (n = 7.861; n = 6403) Survey	41.41 % of girls and 31.52 % of boys surveyed have knowledge of couples in which the boy abuses the girl.
Donoso et al. (2017b)	Analyze perceptions, experiences and responses of adolescents about VAW	Teenagers (n = 155) Survey (Cyberobservation scale)	Between 31.6 % and 45.66 % of those surveyed have observed cyberviolence towards a girl.
European Commission (2010)	Get an opinion on different topics	General population (older than 15 years) n = 1006 (Spanish sample) Survey	23 % know a woman victim of IPVAV in their circle of friends or family, 21 % by their neighbors and 7 % in their workplace.
European Commission (2016)	Get an opinion on different topics	General population (older than 15 years) n = 1008 (Spanish sample) Survey	18 % of bystanders know a victim of IPVAV in their circle of friends & family, 14 % in their intimate area or neighborhood and 6 % in their work or study.
Osuna-Rodríguez et al. (2020)	Analyzes perception of VAW	University students sample (n = 268) Questionnaire Likert 1 (Never) to 12 (Always)	Women present more knowledge about situations of VAW and IPVAV than men.
Puigvert et al. (2019)	Determine the suitability of a mixed methodology for the study of VAW at the university	University students (n = 1083) Questionnaire to students +16 communicative stories +13 interviews with teachers and PAS from universities	62 % of students have experienced or know someone who has experienced some type of gender-based violence at university, but only 13 % of the participants actually identified these situations as gender-based violence.
SRC (2011)	Know the IPVAV situation	General population of women (n = 7897) Survey	17.7 % know a woman who is a victim of IPVAV. Most are friends or neighbors and have known it for more than 5 years.
Tapia (2015)	Know about VAW at the University	University students (n = 30) Questionnaire	10 % know a IPVAV situation in the university environment. If asked about specific behaviors, rises 26,6 %.
Valls et al. (2008)	Know about IPVAV at the University	University women students (n = 367) Survey	14 % know about an IPVAV situation in the university environment, but if ask specific situations, it goes up to 44 %.

were research studies, while the remaining 6 were sociological surveys (CIMW, 2020; Delegation of the Government for Gender Violence [DGGV], 2018; Díaz-Aguado, 2013; European Commission, 2010, 2016; Sociological Research Center [SRC], 2011). Most were focused on IPVAV (8) and/or VAW (5), with the least studied types of violence being sexual harassment and street harassment (CIMW, 2020), sexual aggression (DGGV, 2018) and cyberviolence (Donoso et al., 2017b). Four of the eleven studies were carried out with a sample of university students, one of them only with women (Valls et al., 2008) while four studies were conducted with a general population sample, one of them also with a sample of women (SRC, 2011). Two other studies were carried out with adolescents (CIMW, 2020; Donoso et al., 2017b), and

one (Díaz-Aguado, 2013) was conducted with a population sample between 12 and 24 years old. In general, many articles indicated awareness among a considerable percentage of participants of some VAW situation in their environment. The lowest percentage of knowledge about a VAW situation was 10 %, occurring in a sample of university students (Tapia, 2015), and the highest was 80 %, occurring in a sample of adolescent women who have seen or suffered some type of experience related to VAW (CIMW, 2020). Women generally reported a greater knowledge of cases of some type of VAW. This knowledge about different types of VAW increases when the subject is not asked specifically about VAW, but instead about behaviors that are considered some type of VAW (Puigvert et al., 2019; Tapia, 2015). In these cases there

were differences of up to four times more in reporting knowledge of cases (Puigvert et al., 2019).

3.2. Bystander behavior

Of the total of 13 articles found about bystander behavior (Table 2), 11 followed a quantitative methodology and 2 followed a mixed methodology (Bas et al., 2015; Rebollo-Catalán & Mayor-Buzón, 2020), 8 were social surveys and 5 were research studies (Bas et al., 2015; Donoso et al., 2018; Mendez-Lois et al., 2017; Rebollo-Catalán & Mayor-Buzón, 2020; Rubio et al., 2017). The violence most studied in this case was IPVAW (10), followed by VAW (4) and cyberviolence (4). The least studied types of violence were sexual harassment and sexual aggression, only observed by the Directorate of Attention to Victims of Gender-based Violence [DAVG], 2012. No articles were found for either sexual assault or street harassment. Regarding the surveyed population, 6 of the 13 articles were conducted with a general population sample, 2 of them only with women (SRC, 2014, 2019). Another 4 were conducted with an adolescent population, two with university students and one with students between 14 and 24 years of age (Díaz-Aguado & Carvajal, 2011). Most of these articles include data on bystander behavior as well as the number of bystanders in VAW, adding more information in this regard. Two of the sociological surveys (SRC, 2014, 2019) and one of the studies (Bas et al., 2015) focus part of their report on the subject of effective reporting. In 2014, according to the SRC report, 20.1 % of those surveyed indicated that it was a third person who reported a case of IPVAW to the police, while in 2019 it was 16.5 %. Additionally, in the sociological surveys, the victims of IPVAW primarily related the events with their partner to a friend, followed by their mother and sister, and the most recurrent advice given to her was to leave the relationship. In the article by Bas et al. (2015), 65.73 % knew or witnessed a situation of gender violence, but only 15.49 % reported the events. These data contrast with those given by the SRC (2008) where respondents were asked if they would be willing to report an IPVAW situation, and 84.7 % answered yes. In general, women were found to encourage victims to report the situation of violence to someone who can punish the aggressor. Men, on the other hand, were more likely to confront the aggressor directly or to make passive responses (DAVG, 2012; Díaz-Aguado & Carvajal, 2011; Donoso et al., 2018; Meil, 2012; Mendez-Lois et al., 2017; Rebollo-Catalán & Mayor-Buzón, 2020).

3.3. Facilitating/inhibiting factors of bystander behavior

This group of articles focuses on knowing which individual and social factors facilitate or inhibit a bystander from performing or being willing to perform helpful behavior in the event of witnessing a scenario of VAW. Of the eight articles (Table 3), 6 were studies, while the remaining 2 were doctoral theses (Rincón-Neira, 2017; León Márquez, 2020). Regarding the type of violence, 7 focused on IPVAW and one on VAW and cyberviolence (Donoso et al., 2017a). Four were carried out with a general population sample, 2 with a sample of teenagers and the last two with a sample of university students. One study also carried out a qualitative analysis of the report of 17 survivors of violence (Rincón-Neira, 2017) and was the only one to apply a mixed methodology (the rest perform quantitative analysis). Regarding VAW and cyberviolence, Donoso et al. (2017a) observed in the teenage sample that girls are more likely to act as defenders of the victim, a probability that increases when they feel that they have some characteristic that makes them vulnerable to cyberviolence. Moreover, teens who have suffered some types of cyberbullying are less likely to act in defense of the victims; in fact, the findings suggest that the older the person, the greater the probability of acting in complicity with the aggressor. In the case of the IPVAW, several studies (Gracia et al., 2009; León Márquez, 2020) also found that the older the bystander, the less willing they are to help. Other inhibiting factors of helping behavior in IPVAW cases are sexist beliefs, myths of rape, the fact that the act is viewed as less severe, knowing the abuser,

Table 2
Bystander behavior

Author & Year	Objective	Sample and instruments	Key points & results
Bas et al. (2015)	Analyze the training in IPVAW in students of the degree of social education.	University sample (n = 213) Analysis of teaching guides + online questionnaire for students + expert interviews.	65.73 % have known or witnessed a situation of gender violence from people they know, but only 15.49 % reported the events; those who reported went to the National Police (6.10 %), the Local Police (5.16 %), the Prosecutor's Office, Courts (3.23 %) and 5.63 % to "others".
Centre Dolors Piera d'Igualtat i Oportunitats i Promoció de les Dones (2013).	Analyze the perception of IPVAW among university students	University students (n = 1679) Survey	8.1 % indicate that they have had knowledge of some case of IPVAW happened in the university. When asked where they would go if they knew of a case of IPVAW, 24.6 % answered to the school itself, 22.2 % said to the teaching staff, and 17.1 % answered that they would not go to anyone.
De Miguel (2015)	Analyze social perception and beliefs around IPVAW	General population (15–29) (n = 2457) Survey	29 % say they know at least one victim of gender violence. In the case of knowing a VAW situation, 58.2 % would call the police; 22.5 % would confront the aggressor; 13.9 % would attract the attention of other people who could help.
Díaz-Aguado and Carvajal (2011)	Analyze the perception of students on equality and IPVAW. Teachers and schools are also analyzed.	Total sample (n = 11,022) Students (14 to 24 years) Survey	1/3 have known a couple in which the boy abused the girl. Among girls, the response of passivity is less frequent while a response to break off the relationship with the aggressor was more frequent. In the case of boys, it is more frequent to anticipate that they would

(continued on next page)

Table 2 (continued)

Author & Year	Objective	Sample and instruments	Key points & results
DAVGV (2012)	Know the perception of Basque society regarding gender violence and different situations of VAW	General population (+16) (n = 1600) Survey	confront the abuser. In a rape case, the majority would help the victim (45,2 %), in an IPVAV case the majority would call the police (65,4 %), in a sexual harassment case the majority would encourage the victim to report (71,5 %) the case.
Donoso et al. (2018)	Present a measurement instrument on gender violence 2.0 and analyze perceptions and experiences adolescents about VAW.	Teenagers (n = 3043) Survey (Cyberobservation scale)	The girls show a higher level of awareness when it comes to identifying all the 2.0 violence situations that they observe. When it comes to taking action, 58.9 % have defended or helped the person attacked, and 38.3 % have done nothing. Boys (22 %) present more passive responses (doing nothing) than girls (17 %).
Meil (2012)	Analyze social perception and beliefs around IPVAV	General population (n = 2580) Survey	Almost 1/3 of the population interviewed affirms they know a woman victim of gender violence. In the event of witnessing an attack or mistreatment, the most frequent response would be to call the police (63 %). 95.3 % have observed behaviors of violence 2.0; 56.4 % use active and positive coping strategies as helped the person attacked; 36.6 % show a passive response (doing nothing); 2.3 % use active and negative coping strategies.
Mendez-Lois et al. (2017)	Analyze observation and responses of adolescents to cyberviolence.	Teenagers (15 & 16 years) (n = 615) Questionnaire	The most common form of cyber violence observed was IPV. 64.9 % acknowledged helping the
Rebollo-Catalán and Mayor-Buzón (2020)	Analyze observation and responses of adolescents to cyberviolence.	Teenagers (13 to 17 years old) (n = 1468) Questionnaire + participant observation	

Table 2 (continued)

Author & Year	Objective	Sample and instruments	Key points & results
Rubio et al. (2017)	Analyze observation and responses of adolescents to cyberviolence.	Teenagers (14 to 16 years old) (n = 977) Survey	victim, 31.5 % did nothing, 2.1 % helped the aggressor, and 1.5 % encouraged the aggressor. When cyberviolence against women is observed, half of the sample defends the person attacked (54 %), 40 % does nothing and 3.2 % helps or encourages the aggressor to continue.
SRC (2008)	Know the opinion of young people about IPVAV	General population (15 to 29 years old) (n = 1441) Survey	When asked if they would be willing to report in IPVAV cases, 84.7 % say yes.
SRC (2014)	Know VAW situation in Spain	Total sample (n = 10.171) General population (women) Survey	In 20,1 % of the cases, it was another person who reported the incident. The most common advice was to leave the relationship. The police were aware of what happened in 26.8 % of the cases.
SRC (2019)	Know the situation of different forms of VAW in Spain.	Total sample (n = 9.568) General population (women) Survey	16,5 % of the cases, it was another person who reported the incident. The most common advice was to leave the relationship. In 0.3 % of the cases, it was another person or institution who went to court to file a complaint.

believing that the episode is an isolated event, not knowing what to do, fear of retaliation, or considering that the aggressor regrets it (Gracia et al., 2018; Tamarit et al., 2007). On the other hand, in her doctoral thesis León Márquez (2020) found that religious affiliation, knowing victims of gender violence, higher educational level, and being more concerned about this form of violence, were variables that predicted the least willingness not to intervene (which is to say they indicated a greater willingness to intervene). Gracia and Herrero (2007b) have found that undecided people view the situation as more serious but show less willingness to intervene. This agrees with the findings of Gracia et al. (2009), who observe that individual differences in perceived severity do not seem to be relevant, rather what does seem to matter is the feeling of personal responsibility.

Table 3
Facilitating and inhibiting factors of bystander behavior

Author & Year	Objective	Sample & instruments	Key points & results
Donoso et al. (2017a)	The role of young people when they are observers of gender cyber violence; which characteristics can increase the probability of acting with complicity or helping the victim	Teenagers (n = 4536) Survey	Girls are more likely to act as defenders of the victim. The older they are, the greater the probability of complicity with the aggressor, a probability that increases among children who feel vulnerable, who have suffered cyberbullying, and who perceive the risks of internet social networks.
Gracia et al. (2009)	Analyze the influence of perceived severity and the feeling of personal responsibility and determine which response the subjects prefer according to the characteristics of the situation	General population (n = 419) Scenario + Survey	Participants preferred a response of mediation to one of complaint. Women perceive IPVAV as more serious and feel a greater responsibility to act. Older subjects perceive the same scenarios as less serious and feel less responsible. Individual differences in perceived severity do not seem to be relevant; what does seem to matter is the feeling of personal responsibility.
Gracia and Herrero (2007b)	Analyze the perceived severity of IPVAV and the responsibility to intervene and how it relates to the willingness to intervene	General population (community sample) (n = 148) Scale	Greater inhibition towards the intervention is related to a lower perception of severity and responsibility, while a more positive attitude is related to intervene to higher levels of severity. Indecisive people perceive the situation as more serious but show less willingness to intervene.
Gracia et al. (2018)	Develop a scale to assess the propensity to intervene in cases of IPVAV	General population (n = 500, 1000 & 200) Scale	The general factor "willingness to intervene" was negatively related to acceptability of IPVAV, attitudes of victim blaming, and hostile sexism. The "personal involvement" factor only presented a significant and negative relation to perceived severity. "Willingness to intervene", "personal involvement" and "calling the cops" shows significant differences between genders. There are differences between

Table 3 (continued)

Author & Year	Objective	Sample & instruments	Key points & results
León Márquez (2020)	Analyze the attitudes and beliefs associated with gender violence in Spain	General population (n = 1007) Scenarios	ages for "willingness to intervene". The preferred type of intervention was mediating the conflict (57.0 %), followed by seeking external help (52.6 %). Religious affiliation, knowing victims of gender violence, being under 35, higher educational level, and being more concerned about this form of violence, predicted the least willingness not to intervene.
Rincón-Neira (2017)	Analyze helpful behavior in situations of violence against women in relationships	University students & Surviving women (n = 209); (n = 17); (n = 164)	The intention to help was greater when the victim was a friend. Women reported a greater willingness to help. Greater belief in RMA resulted in less predisposition to help. The participants expressed greater intention to help when the victim was a relative than when they were unknown and when they had suffered physical violence.
Ruiz et al. (2010)	Analyze the reactions of adolescents who have witnessed an episode of gender violence towards a friend	Teenagers (n = 98) Scenario + survey (ASI)	More negative reactions were found in men when the victim had a relationship with the aggressor than when it was a date, especially if the perpetrator was a stranger. In girls, more avoidance reactions were found when it was a couple than when it was a date.
Tamarit et al. (2007)	Analyze factors that determine decisions to intervene or refrain from helping IPVAV	University students (n = 133) Scale	If violence is perceived as reciprocal, it is more difficult to identify it as gender-based violence. Some reasons for not acting could be: belief that the episode is an isolated event, not knowing what to do or fear of retaliation, or considering that the aggressor regrets it.

3.4. Intervention though helpful behavior

Six articles were found that explored intervention through helpful behavior (Table 4). Three studies followed a qualitative methodology, two a quantitative methodology, and the last study was an intervention designed for the prevention of aggression (Giménez, 2018). In this case, no sociological surveys were found on the subject, but there were two doctoral theses (Schubert, 2015; Vidu, 2017), a master's thesis (Giménez, 2018) and three research studies (Gonzalez-Liencres et al.,

Table 4
Intervention through helpful behavior

Author & Year	Objective	Sample & instruments	Key points & results
Giménez (2018)	Carry out an intervention proposal for the prevention of aggressions in nightlife contexts	Nightlife workers Literature review of other interventions + intervention design	Program proposal for sexual violence and VAW. A workshop was held to train workers to identify sexual assaults, to understand the fundamental principles that must be followed when witnessing or reporting a sexual assault, and to provide suggestions on how to create a space where sexual violence is not tolerated.
González-Liencrez et al. (2020).	Determine if there are changes in how non-offender men view violence from the point of view of victims and witnesses	Non-offender men ($n = 32$) virtual reality + questionnaires + implicit tests	To know aspects to consider when designing a program. Their level of identification with the female avatar was correlated with the decrease in prejudice towards women. First-person perspective showed that the potential for rehabilitation of the abuser originates in the identification with the victim.
González-Rodríguez and González-Méndez (2019)	Prepare students to intervene early in the case of inappropriate behaviors	University students ($n = 201$) Intervention group ($n = 30$) Pre-post design with two groups (intervention and control) + instrument with four subscales	Implementation of a program for VAW. Significant improvements were observed in the intervention group in several of the measures (assessment of sexual harassment, knowledge and willingness to intervene, and empathy).
Joanpere and Morlà (2019)	Enhance visibility of the impact of the university context in a situation of harassment, show all the impediments that victims and bystanders face, and highlight actions that helped the case to come to light and end successfully	University teachers & students Literature review + life history of a year during which a student suffered sexual harassment. (qualitative)	Case example, sexual harassment and bystander intervention approach. The situation is described, including the behaviors of teachers and students (mostly inaction, in some cases re-victimization, and only in one case helpful behavior (bystander), developed by a teacher who put his response into practice from the new alternative masculinities.

Table 4 (continued)

Author & Year	Objective	Sample & instruments	Key points & results
Schubert (2015).	Analyze communicative acts in the university to determine their potential in the prevention of VAW	University teachers & students Literature review + case studies + description bystander intervention programs	Chapter 5 presented the case study of behaviors of bystanders who helped the victims in a Spanish case with the Solidarity Network of Victims of Gender Violence at Universities, an initiative emerging from the victims who dared to provide their testimony in the first formal report of sexual harassment against a university professor in a public university in Spain.
Vidu (2017)	Analyze the role of student movements (solidarity networks) in relation to the prevention and overcoming of gender violence in the university context	University teachers & students Literature review +2 case studies carrying out communicative observations	Solidarity networks in cases of sexual violence and VAW. Emphasis is placed on the importance of solidarity networks and friendly relationships in coping with VAW.

2020; González-Rodríguez & González-Méndez, 2019; Joanpere & Morlà, 2019). Of the 6 articles, one focused on IPVAV (Gonzalez-Liencrez et al., 2020), another on sexual harassment (Joanpere & Morlà, 2019), and the remaining four on VAW intervention (González-Rodríguez & González-Méndez, 2019), 3 of which focused on sexual violence as well (Giménez, 2018; Schubert, 2015; Vidu, 2017). In three of the six studies, the sample was made up of professors and university students. In the remaining three studies, the sample was made up of college students (González-Rodríguez & González-Méndez, 2019), nightlife workers (Giménez, 2018) and non-offender men in IPVAV (Gonzalez-Liencrez et al., 2020), respectively. The two doctoral theses and the master's thesis all focused on VAW and sexual violence. The central point of the theses (Schubert, 2015; Vidu, 2017) was the so-called "solidarity networks" based on the testimonies of victims, second-order victims and bystanders involved in a controversial VAW case of a professor towards several students at a Spanish university. The case led to the creation of the Solidarity Network of Victims of Gender Violence at Universities, supported by victims and bystanders, and promoted by different people from the university field, reaching the press and the media as a result. Joanpere and Morlà (2019) also talk about a case of sexual harassment at a Spanish university, but this time the aggressor was another student. Based on the victim's testimony, the article recounts the bystander behavior of a professor who, from a position of NAM (New Alternative Masculinities), helped and supported the victim. The other study that discussed sexual violence was the final master's thesis (Giménez, 2018); it designed an intervention strategy for the prevention of aggressions occurring at night and was aimed at nightlife workers. The purpose of the intervention is to train the bystanders in situations that may arise in such contexts so that they intervene successfully. González-Rodríguez and González-Méndez (2019) also designed an intervention approach, with a pre-post design, which was carried out on a sample of university students, including both an intervention and a control group. People who were in the intervention group showed significant improvement when evaluating sexual harassment, a better knowledge and willingness to intervene, and showed greater empathy towards the victim. Finally, Gonzalez-Liencrez et al. (2020) focused on the IPVAV and conducted an

innovative study with a sample of non-offender men using virtual reality. The participants experienced a case of IPVAV first-hand and it was found that the first-person perspective shows greater potential for the rehabilitation of aggressors by generating a better identification with the victim than in third-person contexts.

4. Discussion

This scoping review sought to analyze the available scientific knowledge on helping behaviors, the factors that facilitate or inhibit them and the proposals for intervention with bystanders in cases of VAW in Spain. Except for articles focused on intervention through helpful behavior, IPVAV is clearly the most studied type of violence in the remaining analysis groups. This is proof of the importance of this kind of violence in the current social context in Spain, and also follows the trend of recent international studies (Baldry et al., 2015; Baldry & Pagliaro, 2014; Banyard et al., 2020; Cinquegrana et al., 2018). For this type of violence, sociological studies in particular stand out in this review (Díaz-Aguado, 2013; European Commission, 2010; SRC, 2011), probably as a way of counting the cases of IPVAV in Spain and being able to see what measures could be or are being taken to stop this type of violence. In contrast, the violence least studied in the articles was found to be street sexual harassment. Both in Spain and in the rest of the world, bystander helpful behavior in scenarios of street sexual harassment have recently started to garner attention due to a growing interest in this type of violence (Fileborn & O'Neill, 2021). In this review, only one sociological study takes SSH into consideration (CIMW, 2020) and asked the participants, among many other questions, about their knowledge of any case of street sexual harassment. It did not, however, ask about the actions or steps they would take should they encounter such a situation.

In general, sociological studies are very present in the VAW and bystander behavior fields, and they constitute an important part of the articles identified (CIMW, 2020; DGGV, 2018; European Commission, 2010; SRC, 2008, 2011, 2014, 2019). If we talk about the methodology and population used to carry out the studies, we find a majority of quantitative studies (Gracia et al., 2009; Gracia and Herrero, 2007b; Meil, 2012) and a relevant number of teenage and university population samples (Mendez-Lois et al., 2017; Rubio et al., 2017; Tapia, 2015). It is clear that conducting studies on people who are in the university environment or in a research-related work environment through surveys or scales is the fastest way to obtain information; however, we must also consider that this information will not be representative of the general population and that there is no type of intervention in most of the articles found (Donoso, Rubio, Vilà, 2017b; Tamarit et al., 2007). During the bibliographic search, many of the articles dealing with bystander behavior were found to focus on a professional population, many of them in relation to the state security forces (Gracia et al., 2008, 2011, 2014; Lila et al., 2010, 2013; Tamarit, 2014). These were discarded as they do not fit the EIGE definition of bystander we were taking into account (EIGE, 2020). It is striking that in both bystander behavior and number of bystanders, helping behavior is not usually the main theme. This is almost always secondary information, and bystander behavior is rarely found as part of the study objective.

Despite the limited amount of literature regarding the articles classified in the category of facilitating/inhibiting factors of bystander behavior and helpful behavior, a notable number of theses and final works were found. This predominance of academic work, especially in the analysis group intervention through helpful behavior, indicates that research on bystander behavior in relation to VAW is an emerging issue in Spain that should continue to be investigated, since social commitment and helpful behaviors by bystanders are the key to preventing and raising awareness of this type of violence (Cinquegrana et al., 2018; Fenton et al., 2019; Fenton & Mott, 2017).

Focusing on the results of the different studies, we find that, on average, about one third of the population knows a woman who has suffered some type of VAW. This percentage may increase if the studies

did not ask about gender violence, but instead about specific abusive behaviors of a man towards a woman (Puigvert et al., 2019; Tapia, 2015). This is probably because many people can identify certain behaviors as violence but are not able to associate such violence as an act of VAW. Even so, SRC (2014, 2019) data show that there is a significant percentage of complaints made by bystanders (within the few cases that are reported compared to those that are not), so it seems that people are aware of the VAW suffered by women in their environment. On the other hand, the actual complaints made by those bystanders are much lower than the percentage of people in the survey who reported their willingness to report to a legal authority (Bas et al., 2015; SRC, 2008). This may be because willingness to intervene is only one of many factors that affect bystander behavior. Several articles have also revealed a general tendency among bystander women to encourage the victim to file a complaint, while bystander men are more likely to confront the aggressor (DAVGV, 2012; Díaz-Aguado & Carvajal, 2011; Donoso et al., 2018; Meil, 2012; Mendez-Lois et al., 2017; Rebollo-Catalán & Mayor-Buzón, 2020). This gender-differentiated behavior may be due to the fact that women identify with the victim, which is why they decide to support her, while men, following stereotypically masculine behaviors, position themselves in a more aggressive kind of role.

5. Limitations

Limitations of this review include the restrictions generally associated with searching electronic databases and grey literature sites. Although the search was carried out under specific criteria and following the methodology established by PRISMA ScR (Tricco et al., 2018), it is possible that there are some articles that met the criteria but were not found for this review. The limited number of articles identified that met the inclusion criteria for bystander behavior means that the final sample of articles in this scoping review is small, and the conclusions drawn here may be of limited scope.

6. Conclusions

To our knowledge, this is the first Scoping Review specifically designed to analyze research on bystander behavior conducted in Spain and, in general terms, much more research is needed on this topic. Most of the information provided by the articles published to date includes data about the perception or the knowledge of the population about VAW, and specifically about IPVAV. It is imperative to carry out studies that provide the necessary information to be able to realize interventions in the near future, delving into the behaviors of the bystander and not just their knowledge about VAW situations in their close environment. Also striking is the lack of studies in relation to other types of VAW such as street sexual harassment or sexual aggressions. New studies about other types of specific violence against women in relation to bystander behavior would contribute to a general understanding of helpful behavior and would lay a better basis for the development of effective interventions. The research on this matter is an emerging issue in Spain, which is why we hope this Scoping Review will serve to provide future direction and improve future studies that will be carried out on the subject, providing a better understanding of bystander behavior and helping to make violence against women a growing concern for all, as required by the Spanish government's State Strategy to combat male violence 2022–2025 (DGGV, 2022), while increasingly turning passive bystanders into active bystanders.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

Data availability

No data was used for the research described in the article.

Acknowledgment

This study was part of the project PID2019-104006RB-I00, and the grant PRE2020-096777 both funded by MCIN/AEI/10.13039/501100011033 and ESF investing in your future.

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