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*Essays*

## **Bullying: Descripción desde la perspectiva ecológica y los objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible**

***Bullying: Description from the ecological perspective and the Sustainable Development Goals***

***Bullying: Descrição desde a perspectiva ecológica e os objetivos do Desenvolvimento Sustentável***

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### **Resumen**

El estudio del bullying es crucial debido a su impacto en el bienestar psicológico y emocional, de las víctimas, agresores, doble rol (víctima/agresor), así como en el clima escolar. Por lo que este ensayo, tiene por objetivo describir el acoso escolar, a partir de la perspectiva ecológica, documentando su estudio para identificar factores de riesgo y protección que favorecen estrategias de atención para su erradicación, lo que contribuirá al cumplimiento del cuarto objetivo de la Agenda 2030 UNESCO, que busca garantizar una educación inclusiva, equitativa y de calidad, promoviendo oportunidades de aprendizaje para todos y todas, independientemente de su origen, género, condición. El ensayo ofrece una revisión reciente de investigaciones de expertos, a través de la cual se identificará que existe un consenso científico para establecer la traducción de la palabra bullying al español, se hace también una diferenciación con respecto a la violencia escolar, caracterizando al alumnado que participa como víctima, acosador, doble rol o los que no se involucran en bullying, identificando la importancia de estudiarlo a partir de la perspectiva ecológica. Se concluye

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que la erradicación del bullying contribuirá a la creación de sociedades más justas, fomentando una cultura de respeto, empatía y tolerancia, valores fundamentales para el progreso social.

**Palabras clave:** Acoso escolar, Desarrollo sostenible, Problema social, Relaciones entre pares, Violencia.

## Abstract

The study of bullying is crucial in the social context due to its impact on the psychological and emotional well-being of victims, aggressors and dual roles (victim/aggressor) as well as on the school climate. Therefore, this essay aims to describe bullying, highlighting the need to study it from an ecological perspective to identify risk and protection factors that favor attention strategies to eradicate it, which will contribute to the fulfillment of the fourth goal of the UNESCO 2030 Agenda, which seeks to guarantee inclusive education. equitable and quality, promoting learning opportunities for all, regardless of origin, gender, or condition. The essay offers a recent review of expert research, through which the scientific consensus for its translation into Spanish will be identified, the differentiation with school violence, the characterization of students who participate as victims, bullies, dual roles or those who do not engage in bullying, identifying the importance of studying it from an ecological perspective. It is concluded that the eradication of bullying will contribute to the creation of fairer societies, fostering a culture of respect, empathy and tolerance, fundamental values for social progress.

**Keywords:** Bullying, Sustainable development, Social problem, Peer relationships, Violence.

## Resumo

O estudo do bullying é crucial no contexto social devido ao seu impacto no bem-estar psicológico e emocional das vítimas, agressores e indivíduos com duplo papel (vítima/agressor), bem como no clima escolar. Portanto, este ensaio tem como objetivo descrever o bullying escolar, documentando seu estudo a partir da perspectiva ecológica para identificar fatores de risco e proteção que favoreçam estratégias de atenção para erradicá-lo. Isso contribuirá para o cumprimento do quarto objetivo da Agenda 2030 da UNESCO, que visa garantir uma educação inclusiva, equitativa e de qualidade, promovendo oportunidades

de aprendizagem para todos, independentemente de sua origem, gênero ou condição. O ensaio oferece uma revisão recente de pesquisas de especialistas, através da qual se identificará o consenso científico para sua tradução para o português, a diferenciação com a violência escolar, a caracterização dos alunos que participam como vítima, agressor, duplo papel ou aqueles que não se envolvem em bullying, identificando a importância de estudá-lo a partir da perspectiva ecológica. Conclui-se que a erradicação do bullying contribuirá para a criação de sociedades mais justas, fomentando uma cultura de respeito, empatia e tolerância, valores fundamentais para o progresso social.

**Palavras-chave:** Bullying escolar, Desenvolvimento sustentável, Problema social, Relações entre pares, Violência.

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## Introduction

The essay is composed of three sections: Background, Development and Conclusions. In the background, bullying is distinguished as a form of violence with serious consequences, the study of which will allow us to understand the dynamics of power, describing the arguments why its study is crucial to achieve the objectives of the UNESCO 2030 Agenda.

The second section, called Development, shows the basic theoretical foundations of bullying, which is why it is defined by distinguishing it from school violence, highlighting the multiple levels of influence, from the individual to the cultural. The different roles involved are analyzed (victim, bully, victim-bully and non-involved), as well as the factors of the ecological model that contribute to the appearance of bullying: microsystem (family, school), mesosystem (school-family), exosystem (media, technology), macrosystem (culture, society), which have allowed to identify in each of these systems factors that protect children and adolescents from participating in violent episodes, which is why it has been a theoretical model that has driven the development of the contents of the programs to address bullying.

The description of protective factors has allowed us to identify components that should be included in intervention programs, such as strategies to develop socio-emotional skills (non-violent conflict resolution, empathy, assertive communication, self-control of emotions), framed in a comprehensive program with a focus on gender and children's rights, promoting the joint participation of parents and teachers.

Identifying strategies to create safe environments is essential to ensure the comprehensive development of children and adolescents, and thus meet the fourth objective of the UNESCO 2030 Agenda.

## Background

Bullying is a phenomenon that affects millions of girls, boys and adolescents around the world. This form of violence has devastating consequences, both in the short and long term. Bullying only occurs between students in the school context. It is a pattern of aggressive and repetitive behavior that seeks to harm, psychologically subduing a victim. There is an imbalance of power between the bully and his victim, who is chosen because he is perceived as weak and without the ability to defend himself. Bullying represents a serious threat to the education, well-being and integral development of children (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [ UNESCO], 2019), which violates the fundamental rights of girls, boys and adolescents by not guaranteeing the right to an education free of violence.

For educational institutions, bullying represents a fundamental challenge, especially in terms of creating a safe and conducive environment for learning. Therefore, zero tolerance for bullying not only protects students' rights to an education without fear, but also fosters a positive school climate necessary for students to fully develop and reach their full potential (Mendoza, 2020).

Bullying research is of vital importance for several reasons: firstly, it allows to understand the power dynamics and imbalance that underlie this phenomenon; secondly, it allows to distinguish the risk and protection factors associated with it (Kennedy and Brausch , 2024) , facilitating the design of effective prevention and intervention strategies ( Neumayer et al., 2023) ; thirdly, its study helps to make visible the serious consequences that it has, both in the short and long term, such as anxiety and depression ( Blanchflower and Bryson, 2024). Therefore, its early attention will make it possible to influence the creation of healthier social environments, with greater justice, respecting the rights of those who make up and build the educational community (Jensen, 2022 ).

The study of bullying is essential to advance the objectives of the UNESCO 2030 Agenda (UNESCO, 2024), which seeks to promote inclusive, equitable and quality education for all, so the eradication of bullying will guarantee:

- Respecting children's rights, by addressing bullying, will promote the creation of safe school environments, through which the right to learn is protected and its development is guaranteed in a democratic, fair and healthy environment.
- Promoting the comprehensive development of children and addressing bullying episodes will facilitate an environment conducive to comprehensive development: emotional, social and academic well-being.
- Promoting equality and diversity will prevent the development of prejudices and stereotypes based on differences in gender, sexual orientation, race, religion or other personal characteristics, which foster the perception of vulnerability in the imbalance of power necessary for the development of bullying.
- Prevent other forms of violence, bullying is associated with other forms of violence such as virtual violence (Neumayer et al., 2023; Pichel et al., 2022), delinquency, antisocial (Garaigordobil, 2017), so by studying its dynamics, effective prevention strategies will be developed to address not only bullying itself, but also other forms of violence associated with it.

Socio-emotional skills have been identified as the antithesis of bullying (Garaigordobil, 2017; Kljakovic and Hunt, 2016; Nasti et al., 2023), so skills such as empathy, tolerance, self-regulation of emotions, assertive communication, are skills that are associated with a decrease in aggressive behavior and an increase in the generation of non-violent solutions to conflicts (Kennedy and Brausch, 2024; Perlado and Trujillo, 2024; Stephenson et al., 2024), so their development is necessary to eradicate bullying.

The prevention and attention to bullying are key to achieving the objectives of the UNESCO 2030 Agenda, since the creation of safe, inclusive and respectful educational environments promotes the integral development of students, encouraging them to reach their full potential, which is why bullying is a threat to the achievement of the fourth objective of the UNESCO 2030 Agenda, by preventing students from enjoying their right to quality education, taking away the opportunity to learn equitably during the school stages. However, it has currently been determined that bullying transcends to stages of development after the school stage, such as adulthood, a stage in which bullying has been identified as being associated with deficits in social, family and even work well-being (Blanchflower and Bryson, 2024).

## Development

### Definition of bullying

There is scientific consensus in determining that the Spanish translation of bullying is *acoso escolar* (Cerezo et al., 2015; Mendoza, 2022; UNESCO, 2019), considering it a subtype of aggression, which occurs only in educational institutions, it has been mistakenly used as a behavior that occurs in spaces other than schools, to describe violent relationships between adults in work spaces, as well as between doctors and patients (violent relationships that develop in hospitals), it has also been used to describe violence that occurs in the family context, mistakenly calling bullying the construct called family violence, so it is necessary to specify that bullying only occurs between students and in school spaces.

Bullying must be differentiated from other types of violent behavior that also occur in school spaces, called “School violence”, both are violent behaviors that occur in educational institutions. and they are a subtype of aggression, which must be operationally differentiated, since their distinction will allow teachers and school authorities to have the elements to prevent and address them (Serna, 2020; UNESCO, 2019).

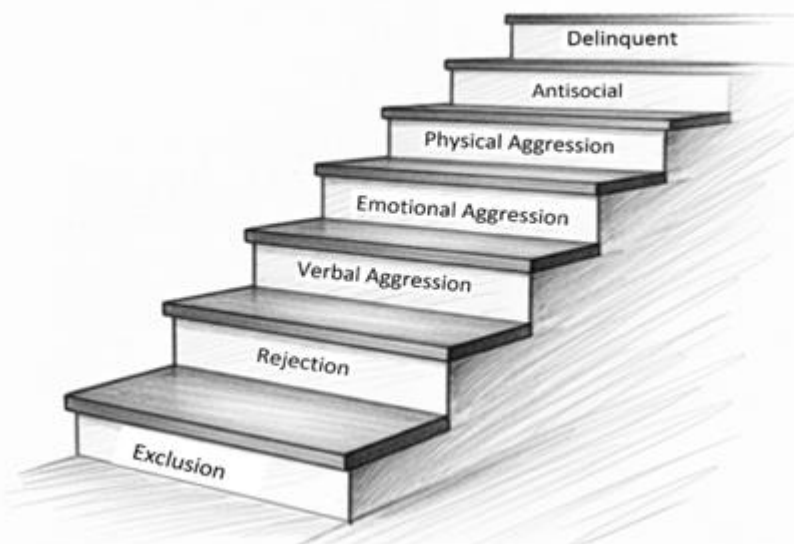
School violence is defined as aggressive behavior between students, between teachers and students, as well as attacks directed towards school furniture and spaces (Mendoza, 2022; Mendoza et al., 2022; UNESCO, 2019). Bullying occurs only between peers and must meet specific characteristics, such as choosing a person to whom all kinds of aggressive behavior will be directed frequently (almost daily) (Cerezo, 2014; Garaigordobil, 2017). They are chosen because they are perceived as a different, weak person, without the ability to defend themselves or ask for help, identifying an imbalance of power between the aggressors and the victim. The attacks directed at the victim are of any type with the intention of causing harm (Garaigordobil et al., 2017; Serna, 2020; UNESCO, 2019).

Bullying has been classified as physical, verbal, social, sexual, emotional, until it escalates to antisocial and criminal behaviors (Mendoza, 2022). This typology has allowed us to identify that bullying begins with rejection and exclusion behaviors, whose level of aggression escalates until it reaches criminal behaviors (See Figure 1). Therefore, in an educational institution where physical fights, robberies and even homicide occur, it is undoubtedly an educational context in which bullying was always present in its initial stages, such as rejection and exclusion, but it was never identified or addressed early, so it escalated to other aggressive levels.



Fig. 1. Behavioral Escalation of Bullying

## Behavioral Escalation of Bullying



Source: Created with Artificial Intelligence (Gemini)

Regarding gender differences, it has been identified that men generally participate more than women as aggressors and victims (Cosma et al., 2022), being more involved in physical aggression (Stephenson et al., 2024), and women more in verbal aggression (Prakash et al., 2022).

Bullying has a social impact as it is associated with school dropouts (Prakash et al., 2022), health problems such as depression, anxiety, obesity (Mendoza et al., 2020; Prakash et al., 2022), increased likelihood of alcohol, tobacco and other harmful substance use (Pichel et al., 2022), as well as participation in cyberbullying (Mendoza et al., 2021; Morales et al., 2021; Neumayer et al., 2023; Serrano et al., 2021).

Bullying is a social behavior in which other peers are required since the contingency arrangements of the environment will maintain its incidence (Cerezo, 2014; Santoyo and Mendoza, 2018), identifying that the behavior that maintains bullying behavior among many other reinforcers are "social gains", which have evolved to obtain highly valuable resources for the aggressors such as leadership and popularity (Hensums et al., 2023), both leadership and popularity give them social benefits so that other peers join the bullying circles that they lead, managing to strengthen their position of power over the victims (Cerezo, 2014), so bullying is a means that helps to obtain profits with high social value.

## Participation roles

The line of research on bullying shows advances that facilitate its prevention and attention, an example of this is the description of the students who participate in bullying episodes with different acting roles (Cerezo et al., 2015; Van Geel et al., 2022), identifying three main roles of active involvement: pure victim, pure aggressor, double role or victim-bully ( Favini et al., 2023; Garaigordobil, 2017; Mendoza, 2022; Pichel et al., 2022) and another role that does not participate in bullying called not involved, whose study has allowed the Identification of factors that protect students from becoming involved in bullying (Cerezo, 2014; Favini et al., 2023; Menabò et al., 2024; Mendoza et al., 2020) .

The importance of identifying participation roles is associated with the creation of effective intervention routes that avoid the escalation of aggressive behaviour, preventing escalation to antisocial and criminal behaviour.

The study of each of the acting roles: Pure victim, pure aggressor, double role victim-aggressor and not involved (Appelqvist et al., 2024; Cerezo, 2014), has allowed to describe the factors that place at greater risk to perform each of them ( Kochel et al., 2015; Menabò et al., 2024; Mendoza et al., 2020), in this way by identifying the cognitive, behavioral and emotional deficits that each participant shows to have, they function as a guide that allows to know the factors that should be integrated into the intervention programs designed to prevent the development of specific profiles in bullying.

The description of each of the roles of participation in bullying reduces the risk of treating cases as false positives, since the lack of knowledge of their existence leads managers and teachers to treat students with a double role profile (victim-bully) as pure aggressor or pure victim, which causes the behaviors associated with the role to become stronger, become invisible and make it impossible to provide an effective solution that allows the eradication of bullying , but the greatest danger is the escalation of behavior to criminal conduct such as homicide.

### Double role profile, victim-bully

It is a profile characterized by students who direct and receive aggression of all kinds from their peers (Cerezo et al., 2015), which is why they have a bivalent condition as an aggressor and as a victim, both profiles at the same time ( Kljakovic and Hunt, 2016; Menabò et al., 2024; Mendoza et al., 2022).



This student's behavior confuses teachers and administrators, since by choosing him as a victim he will constantly receive aggression from his peers, but at the same time, this student will choose others whom he perceives as different, vulnerable and with less power than him, so he will direct all kinds of aggression at them.

These two types of behavior as victim and aggressor that the student exhibits during the school day confuse teachers because they do not know if they should classify him as a victim or as an aggressor, which occurs because they ignore that he has two profiles.

This role is a great challenge for educators and psychologists since it is a student who shares characteristics of both roles ( Kljakovic and Hunt, 2016) , however, it is identified that he is less empathetic than the "pure aggressor" students, they feel less willing to collaborate as a team (cooperate, help), they are impulsive and with deficits to generate solutions without resorting to aggression, they are generally not able to identify the consequences of their actions, they justify their aggression by explaining that the victim deserves it (Mendoza and Maldonado, 2017; Menabò et al., 2024), they have an even poorer social network than that of the victims, so they may perceive themselves excluded (Cerezo, 2014; Kochel et al., 2015), they exhibit antisocial behavior (Garaigordobil, 2017).

### **Pure victim profile**

Victims of bullying are defined as students who receive any type of aggression from their peers on a daily basis (Cerezo et al., 2015), which is why they are excluded from schoolwork, parties, sports and leisure activities, experience high levels of stress, anxiety, depression (Balluerka et al., 2023), have low self-esteem (Appelqvist et al., 2024), are overweight (Mendoza et al., 2020; Prakash et al., 2022) as well as any other characteristic that, in the perception of the aggressor students, makes them different.

Victims are characterized by having deficits in social skills, which is why they have difficulty starting and maintaining conversations with their peers, they are apathetic, withdrawn, do not enjoy joining groups and team activities, they like to "be alone", deficits in skills that put them at greater risk of exclusion (Kennedy and Brausch, 2024; Mendoza and Maldonado, 2017), demonstrating their lack of knowledge to respond successfully to the attacks of their aggressors.

Victims are certain that they have no option to get out of their helpless state, so they do not generate alternative solutions such as asking for help or avoiding problematic situations, which happens as a consequence of the difficulty in facing conflicts by elaborating

and choosing the best alternative solution (Stephenson et al., 2024). They have cognitive distortions, especially the so-called "wishful thinking" which means that the victim students will create for themselves stories that lack real support, so through this distortion they hide and transform their reality (Mendoza and Maldonado, 2017), so they hide the aggressions they receive and build a reality based on what they wish would happen in their daily lives, so they develop erroneous beliefs in which they claim that they are not victimized, so they do not seek or request help (Garaigordobil and Oñederra, 2010; Mendoza, 2017).

Currently, research has strengthened the scientific consensus that the victimization pattern is stable over time (Blanchflower and Bryson 2024; Kljakovic and Hunt, 2016; Neumayer et al., 2023) and is therefore maintained through the different stages of a person's development (Pouwels et al., 2016; Stephenson et al., 2024; Van Geel et al., 2022), remaining even in other contexts such as the virtual one (Mendoza et al., 2021; Neumayer et al., 2023), showing that being a victim of bullying is associated with other types of victimization, predicting future victimization, so it remains even until victimization in relationships in adulthood.

### **Bully Profile**

The Profile Bully is defined by directing all kinds of aggression towards a particular student whom he chooses because he perceives him to be different, weak, and vulnerable.

Students who play this role are sexist, racist, classist, that is, they reject, criticize and minimize those they perceive as different from them, do not recognize minorities and generally reject those they perceive as weak, justify the use of violence (Mendoza et al., 2020; Pina et al., 2022), and are characterized by a lack of empathy for their victims (Garaigordobil and Oñederra, 2010; Kennedy and Brausch, 2024).

Students who live as aggressors or bullies, socially have ambivalent behaviors because although they are effective in generating social networks in which they are characterized by being leaders, popular and have a large social network that makes them feel powerful and successful (Cerezo, 2014; Hensums et al., 2023), they have socially ineffective strategies such as difficulties in resolving conflict situations, which they generally resolve with aggression because they are impulsive (they act without thinking about the consequences of their actions) and deficiencies in managing their emotions, which is why they get angry more frequently and intensely, escalating to physical, antisocial and criminal aggression (Garaigordobil, 2017; Kennedy and Brausch, 2024).

Furthermore, this type of profile is associated with other risk behaviors such as aggression towards authority figures such as teachers (Mendoza et al., 2022), addictions, alcoholism, school dropouts (UNESCO, 2019), strategies that are stable in adulthood and are therefore associated with well-being and health problems ( Nasti et al., 2023 ) and even the lack of formal employment (Blanchflower and Bryson, 2024).

### **Profile Not involved**

Students who do not participate in bullying episodes are called uninvolved and (Appelqvist et al., 2024; Cerezo, 2014; Kochel et al., 2015) are generally the majority group in schools where bullying exists (Balluerka et al., 2023; Menabò et al., 2024; Mendoza et al., 2020).

The factors that protect these students from participating in bullying are having a positive perception of the quality of their relationships with their schoolmates, so they establish positive relationships proving to be cooperative, participative, empathetic, sensitive (they identify the emotional state of their peers, sadness, anger, joy or any other emotion, responding assertively), supportive, especially when someone needs help, assertive in expressing what they feel and think, so they are able to defend rights, opinions and requests without using violence (Menabò et al., 2024; Mendoza and Maldonado, 2017), they have high self-esteem (Balluerka et al., 2023), their behavior is summarized in having socio-emotional skills.

These are students who have greater skills in finding creative and alternative solutions without using violence in conflict situations. They have the ability to reflect and analyze before acting, that is, they do not respond impulsively. Students who do not get involved in bullying episodes respond assertively to the aggression of their peers (Mendoza and Maldonado, 2017).

### **Perspective of the study of bullying**

Derived from Bronfenbrenner's ecological perspective (1987), the study of bullying would involve analyzing the multiple factors that affect the behavior of students in their social environment, so this perspective considers individuals as key pieces in different systems, from the closest and most immediate such as the individual, school and family, to the broadest and most distant such as culture and society, these systems interact with each other to influence the development and behavior of each of those involved in bullying.

The approach to bullying from an ecological perspective has allowed the identification of protection and risk factors present in each of the environments in which students participate (Cerezo, 2014; Blanchflower and Bryson, 2024; Mendoza et al., 2020), thus guiding comprehensive intervention programs that have proven effective in reducing disruptive behavior, as well as in preventing, addressing and eradicating bullying, generating a positive school climate in which teachers also perceive a healthy and safe environment (Jensen, 2022), optimal for the development of schools with an inclusive culture and healthy environments, actions stipulated in the 2030 Agenda (UNESCO, 2019).

To analyze bullying from Bronfenbrenner's ecological perspective, the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem, which are described below, must be explored.

### **Microsystem**

This level refers to the most immediate environment in which the individual interacts regularly, such as family, school and group of friends, so bullying is described as a result of relationships and social norms, relationships with power dynamics; studying it from this system implies analyzing the interactions between the individuals involved, identifying factors that affect them such as social support, group cohesion, school and family dynamics.

In the family context, domestic violence and ineffective parenting practices have been identified as risk factors for participation in episodes of bullying (Blanchflower and Bryson 2024; Cerezo et al., 2015; Machimbarrena et al., 2019), identifying that the combination of aggressive and overprotective parenting practices promote the development of the double role profile (victim-bully). In the development of the victim profile, the use of mixed practices has been identified, combining effective with ineffective practices, so they use overprotection, aggression (physical, verbal and emotional) and positive parenting at the same time, and for the development of the aggressor profile, parents mainly use hitting, threats, criticism, while being absent parents (Machimbarrena et al., 2019; Mendoza, 2017).

In the school environment, the first risk factor identified is the lack of knowledge of the manifestations of violence and bullying (Mendoza et al., 2022), followed by the lack of knowledge on the part of teachers and authorities about the routes of action to address episodes of school violence and bullying (Mendoza and Barrera, 2018), as well as the "aversion to change", resistance that manifests itself in various ways, such as denial of the existence of bullying, open opposition to intervention strategies, lack of commitment and training in effective strategies, which is associated with teacher burnout ( Jensen, 2022).

### **Mesosystem**

This level focuses on the interactions between the different microsystems in which students participate, mainly describing the interaction of families with educational institutions, so from this perspective, communication between parents, teachers and school managers is analyzed (Mendoza and Barrera, 2018).

It has been shown that constant, effective, and positive communication between school and family will affect the behavior of students with a bully profile, decreasing aggressive behavior, strengthening prevention, detection and care strategies. Therefore, this communication is essential to eradicate bullying by promoting effective collaboration, demonstrating exchange of information, comprehensive support, consistency in responses and the promotion of a positive school culture.

Therefore, shared responsibility between school and family becomes necessary to demonstrate that aggressive behavior will not be ignored, thus demonstrating that both parties are committed (Mendoza, 2022; Mora-Rosales and Romero-Pérez, 2019).

It is necessary to demonstrate that the agents of change (teachers and parents) are leaders, so they must establish consistent consequences, demonstrating to the students with a bully profile that their behavior will not have gains, so the daily supervision and monitoring of parents and teachers will reflect attention and love to the bully students, therefore, monitoring their behavior in the daily environment will promote the learning of socio-emotional skills (Mendoza, 2020).

Attention by parents and teachers will allow us to proactively address bullying, stopping the stability of the profiles of victims and aggressors, preventing more serious problems in the future such as aggression in the family, work and leisure environments, including sports environments.

### *Exosystem*

This level refers to environments in which the individual does not participate directly, but which have a direct impact on his or her life. Here we find virtual environments and, in general, media influences, through which behavior and attitudes are learned, mainly through learning by models.

Television, social media and information and communication technologies (ICT) can significantly influence the aggressive behaviour of bullying students for several reasons, which are explained below.



The virtual environment is an environment that facilitates aggressive behavior models, so programs and content in digital media can act as models of aggression, normalizing it (Morales et al., 2021), since it works as a desensitizing system of violence, which occurs due to the repeated consumption of exposure to violent acts through social networks, making them less sensitive to the suffering of others ( Serrano et al., 2021).

Virtuality works as a rapid and exponential diffusion of aggressive situations, which is why social networks quickly spread messages of hate and aggression through a wide audience, amplifying the impact of aggressive behavior (Rodríguez et al., 2019).

Finally, peer groups formed in virtual environments validate and reinforce aggressive behavior, which makes bullies feel more supported (popular), which makes it easier to justify that behavior, making bullying even desirable for certain peer groups (Mendoza et al., 2021).

Recent research indicates that students lack the minimum digital skills necessary to be protected from cyber-attacks and aggression (Pérez-Maldonado et al., 2023), which must be considered for the analysis of this system, since young people actively participate in social networks with these deficiencies.

### **Macrosystem**

This level refers to cultural and social influences, such as the effects of crime, gender stereotypes, as well as cultural attitudes towards aggression, violence and the resolution of social conflicts.

Addressing bullying from Bronfenbrenner's ecological perspective refers to the analysis of multiple factors that contribute to the emergence of this phenomenon, which allows for the development of more effective interventions that address the underlying causes and promote healthier and safer environments.

Gender stereotypes, as well as the normalization of violence in culture, play a significant role in the emergence and perpetuation of bullying for several reasons (Mendoza, 2022; Mendoza et al., 2022):

The first of these is the rigid establishment of a duality, in which people are forced to choose between two traditional social stereotypes: submission associated with victimization and machismo associated with the abuse of power and the use of violence.

Another reason is the perpetuation of violence as a normal system in society, which occurs in many cultures where violence has been normalized, such as in the media, social networks and other environments.



Finally, inequality of power and control, associated with gender stereotypes, contribute to the use of power to maintain dominance over others, achieving the stigmatization and exclusion of those who do not conform to traditional gender norms (Mendoza, 2022).

### **Intervention programs**

Intervention programs to prevent and eradicate bullying have been developed for more than four decades, based on the studies of Dan Olweus in Norway, so they have mainly been developed in Europe. Currently, various programs have been consolidated in various regions of the world (Kennedy, 2020a; Kennedy, 2020b) demonstrating their effectiveness in stopping bullying, offering immediate protection to victims, guaranteeing a change in the behavior and cognitions of those who participate.

Some programs have pointed out their effectiveness in increasing empathy, responsibility, strategies to defend themselves, and changing attitudes towards victims among students (Garandean et al., 2023).

Other programs have shown a decrease in bullying behavior by having components that favor non-violent conflict resolution, and the increase of socio-emotional skills such as helping, cooperation, prosocial leadership, self-esteem and empathy (Garaigordobil et al., 2017).

Others have demonstrated their effectiveness in eradicating bullying and school violence, including aggression between teachers and students, with strategies that require the active participation of students, parents and teachers, demonstrating cognitive and behavioral changes in victims, aggressors and victims/aggressors (Mendoza, 2020).

The design of intervention programs must necessarily involve the active participation of students, so the care strategies must necessarily promote the identification of problems in their school environment, as well as the search for solutions, encouraging student participation, leadership and social responsibility, fundamental aspects for the formation of active citizens committed to the construction of peaceful societies, which has been achieved through school assemblies, demonstrating their effectiveness in eradicating bullying (Mendoza et al., 2020).

It was concluded from a recent international review on the analysis of the effectiveness of multiple programs that one of the components that could not be missing in the design of bullying prevention and attention programs is the training of socio-emotional

skills in students (Perlado and Trujillo, 2024), the key to achieving this being to have specialized bullying professionals who are capable of demonstrating skills and knowledge to develop scientifically proven strategies (Garaigordobil, 2023).

## Conclusions

The prevention and response to bullying are urgent tasks that require the joint commitment of governments, schools, families and society in general. Working together, safe, and favorable environments can be created for children and adolescents to develop their full potential without fear of participating in bullying, in order to comply with the actions stipulated in UNESCO's 2030 Agenda for the fulfillment of the objectives stipulated therein, especially the fourth, which establishes the fulfillment of quality comprehensive education in violence-free school environments.

Therefore, care strategies should focus on programs designed by specialists in school violence and bullying, which demonstrate the effectiveness of programs developed and tested in the same culture and society in which they are intended to be established, since establishing programs developed in cultures and societies whose educational and economic reality is different will not work, especially when they have been designed in developed countries and are desired to be replicated in underdeveloped countries.

The design of care and prevention programs must necessarily demonstrate that they were built based on a gender perspective, children and adolescents' rights, programs and study plans, as well as health and behavioral sciences, also demonstrating the theoretical support in research that helps to understand its causes, dynamics and effects, so the design of a comprehensive program to eradicate bullying, with a gender perspective, will allow overcoming the gender dichotomy through traditional gender stereotypes that are established in a continuum of machismo and submission, associated with gender violence, stereotypes rooted by socially established erroneous beliefs such as that men are superior in areas of mathematics, science, among many other beliefs that promote sexism, the culture of misogyny that influences the equity of peer relationships in school contexts at any educational level, daily threatening the fulfillment of actions established in the objectives of the UNESCO agenda set to be achieved in 2030, such as the actions established in the objectives of quality education and gender equality. gender (fourth and fifth respectively).

The family context plays a fundamental role in the early eradication of bullying, especially because it has been shown that by having an active and daily participation establishing effective parenting practices from the family, such as positive parenting (also called democratic), which guarantee the development of prosocial behavior by establishing habits, limits, through the daily supervision and accompaniment of parents in the lives of their children, will contribute to the comprehensive development of children and adolescents to guarantee a life of health and well-being that will impact the development of societies.

### Future Lines of Research

As a prospective, the need to have as an object of analysis for future research the specific action routes to effectively address bullying is highlighted, information that was not analyzed in this essay and that is essential to study in future inquiries.

For future research, it is suggested to conduct predictive studies that allow us to understand the individual, family and school variables that predict bullying behavior, which will allow us to identify the factors that protect students from participating in violent episodes.

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