



TEACHERS' BELIEFS ABOUT BULLYING, ANALYSIS TO REORIENT TEACHER TRAINING

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Abstract

Purpose of the study: The objective of this study is to describe the beliefs, and opinions of the teachers of the Primary Education, Secondary Education, and Baccalaureate stages, regarding the phenomenon of bullying.

Methodology: A random sampling procedure was used for the selection of participants. There were 224 teachers from Primary Education (32%), Secondary Education (56%), and the Baccalaureate (12%) who participated in a voluntary. The ages of the teaching staff were between 25 and 63 years. The majorities were women (87.4%) and half of the teachers reported bullied students in their classrooms.

Main Findings: The results show that teachers are able to identify the most common bullying situations and consider that the cause is fundamentally socio-cultural. The teachers expressed a need for training in the field and those strategies for conflict management focus on dialogue and group and individual mentoring, and consider that preventive actions based on value education are highly desirable.

Applications of this study: It can serve as a reflection to think about all the bullying situations that happen in any context and not only schools.

Novelty/Originality of this study: the novelty of the study is that it analyzes the teachers' beliefs about bullying in their centers, there are important errors about bullying that can influence detection and intervention in real situations of bullying.

Keywords: *Bullying, School Harassment, Teachers' Beliefs, Teacher Training, Primary Education, Secondary Education.*

INTRODUCTION

Bullying is still an extremely serious problem that has become more widespread and continues to be the focus of research aimed at finding a solution to a problem that is affecting a growing number of schoolchildren. [Sánchez and Ortega \(2010\)](#) refers to the complexity of the phenomenon and point to the difficulty that exists in conceptualizing, precisely, the phenomenon called bullying. [Abdulwahhab \(2020\)](#) and [Harwood and Copfer \(2011\)](#) emphasizes that this is one of the most important difficulties in establishing measures for the prevention or management of a complex phenomenon that has not been precisely targeted.

Relevant initiatives have been developed and most programs have focused on so-called school violence or "school contexts" ([Trianes, 2000](#)) and bullying (a term that could be translated as "intimidation", and that comes from the term "bully", which means "thug", "braggart" and in its meaning as the verb "intimidate", "tyrannize" and "force one with threats"), on which there is abundant material. [Olweus \(1998\)](#) is considered to be the initiator, in the Nordic countries, of programs for the prevention of such violence (*Mobbing vi och vi kan göra*, published in Stockholm in 1986), which he defines on the basis of three basic criteria: (a) it is a type of aggressive conduct aimed at causing harm; b) repeated in time and c) which occurs in an interpersonal relationship characterized by an imbalance of power. That is why the term "peer violence" should be rethought.

In general, educational programs have been based on improving the classroom environment, democratic discipline, cooperation, training in constructive problem solving, education in values, conflict resolution, in a line that could highlight school coexistence; what it is, and how to address it ([Goodwin et al., 2019](#); [Ortega and del Rey, 2003](#); [Ruiz et al., 2019](#)).

Programs developed by [Olweus \(1998\)](#) focused on the use of a teacher's booklet, a parent's kit, a video, and a questionnaire on perpetrators and victims, noting that during the two years following the implementation of the intervention the program there was a 50% reduction in the problems of perpetrators and victims of both direct and indirect aggression. The effects of the program were more noticeable in the second year than in the first, with a clear reduction in antisocial behaviors, as well as a marked improvement in the social climate of the class ([Nam et al., 2020](#)).

Peace education programs occupy an important place ([Santos, 2003](#)). The basic difference with the first trend is that they do not consider the gender perspective that is the power relations between the genders, except for some contributions ([Santos, 2003](#)). While it is true that we have learned from past experiences, they have not always focused on a gender perspective and have not linked violence to gender-based violence ([Gilad, 2014](#)). But this perspective cannot be ignored,

since the exclusion of the gender perspective implies working from an androcentric perspective. In this line of work, we must highlight the design of the prevention program carried out by the Ministry of Public Education of Mexico, the Guide to Coexistence for Interpersonal Relations and Conflict Resolution. Strategies that promote values, inclusion, and retention in school ([Barragán-Medero and Pérez-Jorge, 2019](#); [Pérez-Jorge et al., 2020a](#)).

[Roland and Munthe \(1989\)](#) talk not only about the physical dimension but also about the mental aspects associated with the phenomenon of bullying and the effect this has on students who are not able to defend themselves ([Hendricks and Tanga, 2019](#)). This psychological dimension and its effect are highlighted by [Oñate and Piñuel \(2005\)](#) who defines the phenomenon as a fact "continuous and deliberate verbal and modal mistreatment of a child by another or others, who behave with him or her cruelly in order to subdue, restrain, frighten, threaten him or her and violate the dignity of the child" (p.3).

Studies developed by [Olweus \(1998\)](#) and [Asiri \(2019\)](#) in relation to teachers' perception and experience of the phenomenon, show the existence of a passive attitude on the part of teachers, who rarely tried to put an end to bullying situations that occurred at school because they did not feel sufficiently trained to manage and deal with such situations ([Cilliers and Chinyamurindi, 2020](#); [Søndergaard and Kyobe, 2019](#); [Shahrour et al., 2020](#); [Søndergaard, 2020](#)). More recent studies such as ([Yoon, 2004](#); [Barr, 2013](#); [Wachs et al., 2019](#); [Yoon et al., 2016](#); [Nocentini et al., 2019](#)) have highlighted teachers' complaints about bullying, in addition to the lack of specific preparation for the evaluation and intervention of peer abuse ([Wachs et al., 2019](#)).

The diversity of approaches around what is the phenomenon itself has led to several ways of classifying it. Accordingly, [Serrano \(2013\)](#), [Pérez-Jorge et al. \(2019\)](#), [Pérez-Jorge et al. \(2020b\)](#), and [Pérez-Jorge et al. \(2020c\)](#) speaks about physical aggression (fights, blows, provocations, etc.), verbal aggression (insulting the victim, spreading rumors and lies) psychological mistreatment or intimidation (blackmail, threats, fostering insecurity and fear); social mistreatment (talking out a colleague from a group, not letting him participate in activities) and social exclusion and/or racial harassment (nicknames or stereotyped phrases) ([van der Ploeg et al., 2020](#)). [Ovejero \(2013\)](#) makes special mention of the fact that the prevalence rates of these types of harassment vary according to the way in which the phenomenon is measured (research tools used), the type of harassment, age, school year, the gender of both aggressors and victims and the country in which the study is conducted ([Pérez-Jorge et al., 2020a](#)).

One of the most controversial aspects of the definition of this type of violence is the continuity in time to be considered as violence ([Dietrich and Cohen, 2019](#)). We disagree with this aspect because the educational intervention should be carried out from the beginning and not wait for situations in which fear or the desire to commit suicide are presented as options. In the same way, we must place the emphasis on those who exercise it and not on those who suffer it ([Wachs, 2019](#)). Stop talking about the psychological profile of the person who is suffering because we are doing double harm: the violence received and our stigmatization. The theory of profiling is an unacceptable justification for those who suffer from violence ([Barragán-Medero and Pérez-Jorge, 2019](#); [Pérez-Jorge et al., 2019](#)).

Theoretical Background

Who and whom are they harassing?

[Rigby et al. \(2004\)](#) talk about profiles of aggressors, victims, and mixed profiles (aggressor and victim) according to personal characteristics, family contexts, or reputation among the peer group ([Çalışkan et al., 2019](#); [van der Ploeg et al., 2020](#)). [Fleming and Jacobsen \(2009\)](#) assert that stalkers or victims have reduced social experiences and emotional well-being. They consider that students who are victims of bullying experience poor social and emotional adaptation, low self-esteem, and higher levels of loneliness, anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideas ([Trihadi et al., 2020](#)).

According to [Farrington \(1993\)](#) the victims are weak, insecure, anxious, sensitive, shy people, and with low levels of self-esteem. [Olweus \(1998\)](#) adds that there are passive or submissive victims who will not respond to attacks and active or proactive victims with an irritating behavior that causes tension around them ([Albdour et al., 2020](#)). [Vargas et al. \(2020\)](#) add that many students with physical, mental, developmental difficulties, learning disabilities, etc., or for some special characters such as wearing glasses, having a large nose, obesity or thinness, are people who are often harassed ([Broomhead, 2019](#); [González Contreras et al., 2020](#)). The perception of distinguishing or prominent features in certain types of students is often an element of mockery and harassment. Because of the special sensitivity to students with special educational needs, the study by [González \(2017\)](#) revealed a greater perception of victims of harassment in all forms of harassment evaluated in relation to students without special educational needs.

Socially, the role of aggressor has been associated with male students identifying it with a profile of physical aggression; however, women are more subtly harassed, especially of a psychological nature ([Olweus, 1998](#)). [Abdulwahhab \(2020\)](#) and [Benítez et al. \(2006\)](#) say that teachers identify the aggressor mainly with physical force, rarely notice other forms of violence and harassment. [Olweus \(1998\)](#) adds that these boys and girls tend to have greater social recognition among their peers, despite being students who have learning difficulties and poor performance ([Wachs et al., 2019](#)).

Very often teachers are unable to identify the aggressors, they feel they are not able to intervene or work effectively with the aggressors ([O'Moore and Hillery, 1989](#)). In this sense, these authors confirm the demand for teacher training and qualification, knowledge of conflict management strategies, and improved coexistence would enable them to intervene

in a preventive and appropriate manner in cases where bullying was detected ([Khanolainen et al., 2020](#); [Mishna et al., 2020](#); [Giavrimis, 2020](#)).

Bullying situations in schools are often witnessed by other students, who can become both accomplices and supporters for those affected. This is a group that is not involved in intimidation and does not take the initiative ([Dietrich and Cohen, 2019](#)). They usually know the existence of bullying situations between partners and know who the aggressors are and where the attacks take place ([Ortega, 2006](#)). Modifying and acting preventively on the role that viewers assume in bullying situations are essential ([Nocentini et al., 2019](#)). [Quintana et al. \(2011\)](#) talk about three types of behavior: antisocial behavior, in which he does not use force, but reveals an attitude of complicity with the aggressor; his own and more common ones in which he simply assumes an observer role, and pro-social, in which he empathizes with the victim, even recriminating the aggressor and denouncing the conduct to the adult.

Why and where are they harassed?

There are different reasons that influence the possibility of a student becoming a victim or aggressor. The cultural, socioeconomic, family, and school contexts determine the appearance or not of bullying ([Ovejero, 2013](#)). Situations such as social violence and the shortage of commitment to education and the lack of social and family values and low culture significantly affect the atmosphere of coexistence in the centers ([Fernández et al., 2004](#)). [Barboza et al. \(2009\)](#) and [Fernández et al. \(2004\)](#) warn of the lack of motivation and disinterest that teachers perceive towards solving problems of coexistence in educational establishments, pointing to the lack of consensus on rules and the lack of conflict resolution skills as the main reasons.

[Hernando and Sanz \(2017\)](#) confirmed that as the years go by, teachers tend to relate conflicts more to situations in the family environment or the characteristics of the students themselves. The studies of [Cuadrado et al. \(2010\)](#) also confirmed this fact, with 69.5% of teachers identifying family problems as the main cause of abuse among students, while the lack of school discipline (52.6%) and lack of school motivation (52,5 %) was considered in second and third place.

It should not be forgotten that certain moments, such as the entrance and exit of the school or places such as patios, corridors, toilets, and even the class itself can lead to harassment, either because of the physical layout of the place or the lack of control and supervision of the teachers ([Calışkan et al., 2019](#); [Ombudsman, 2007](#); [Serrano, 2013](#)).

Galtung, in the 1950s, enunciated his theory of violence. This would consist of an iceberg where the visible part is behavior, aggression, which he calls direct violence. The submerged part, which explains and sustains the emerging one is composed of two factors: cultural violence and structural violence. For the answer to the question, why is harassed, has two answers: on the one hand, the culture of violence, the good value that receives the “Machito”, the “male”, that even forms part of the imaginary in affective relations; and the structural reason, harassers are often harassed in other areas (family, social, etc.) and only reproduce violence. This idea was expressed in French sociology in the 1970s when several researchers such as Bordieu, Baudet, and Althusser, labeled as Marxists, developed the theory of cultural reproduction, where the School is a context in which the dynamics that exist in society are reproduced and if there is violence in the form of oppression, then, in the classroom, its students will reproduce it. This view is criticized as deterministic by others like Giroux and Willis. Instead, he proposes the opposite theory of cultural resistance, where the oppressed stop being passive subjects and reacts to oppression.

Can bullying be prevented and acted upon?

Strategies such as group work, activities to improve the atmosphere of coexistence, or education in values seek to sensitize students and families to the need to promote and foster appropriate climates of relationships, and interaction between people. Being aware of the harmful effect and consequences of bullying situations is fundamental in the generation of positive and sensitive attitudes towards the reality of the students who suffer it ([Hendricks and Tanga, 2019](#); [Pérez-Jorge et al., 2016](#); [Valdés et al., 2014](#)). Studies such as those of [Hernando and Sanz \(2017\)](#) show that there is a minority of teachers trained to manage and deal with bullying situations among students. Furthermore, they are unaware of effective strategies for dealing with such situations ([Ochoa and Peiró, 2010](#)), given that article 121 of the Education Organization Act (LOE) states that educational establishments must include the Coexistence Plan in their Educational Centre Project, there are no specific programs in schools to regulate and intervene in order to improve living conditions. ([Cilliers and Chinyamurindi, 2020](#); [Musri 2012](#); [Pérez-Jorge et al., 2017](#); [Shahrour et al., 2020](#); [Søndergaard and Kyobe, 2019](#); [Søndergaard, 2020](#)) proposes that interventions carried out in the centers should include planning of actions at the institutional, family, group, and individual levels ([Nam et al., 2020](#); [Wachs, 2019](#); [Smith, 2019](#)). [Cuadrado et al. \(2010\)](#) inquired about all the preventive activities carried out by the teachers warning that these were carried out mainly in the tutoring sessions in which, based on the coexistence program of the centers, It addressed mutual knowledge and discussed coexistence standards (between 75 and 86 percent). It also found that only 50% of teachers used participatory and collaborative methodologies to facilitate effective interaction in preventing bullying and improving coexistence ([Nickerson, 2019](#); [Nocentini et al., 2019](#)).

Are teachers prepared to respond to bullying?

As [Hernando and Sanz \(2017\)](#) point out in his study, teachers are becoming increasingly aware of the need for training and that is why more and more teachers are ensuring that more pedagogical training is needed in keeping with the reality of the classroom ([Khanolainen et al., 2020](#); [Mishna et al., 2020](#); [Giavrimis, 2020](#)). They require training in how to manage and deal with bullying, how to help victims, how to intervene with perpetrators, how to collaborate and help families, and how to ultimately improve the situation ([Gutiérrez-Barroso, Pérez-Jorge, 2017](#); [Pérez-Jorge et al., 2019](#); [Kelly et al., 2020](#)).

[Fernández-García \(2010\)](#) says that in the '80s school cohabitation was based on discipline as a way to guarantee the school's climate. In the first decade of the 21st century, different strategic lines were developed to address the phenomenon of bullying, among which Education for Peace stood out. [Uruñuela \(2019\)](#) claims that a large part of the teaching staff, either because they were trained in those years, or because they have inherited their vision, continues with the paradigm of discipline. There are teachers who reject the current reality and, consequently, do not train themselves to give answers to the problems related to bullying ([Mahabeer, 2020](#); [Mroz and Woolner, 2020](#)).

The training and updating of teachers should be encouraged through joint actions promoted by the centers, as a result of the analysis of their reality and needs [Coscojuela and Comellas \(2007\)](#).

The literature review carried out on the problem identified the lack of studies on teacher training in relation to bullying, following [Fischer and Bilz \(2019\)](#) and [van Verseveld et al. \(2019\)](#) we set a feasible, clear, and significant general objective.

Objective

To know the perception of those teachers of Primary Education, Secondary Education, and Baccalaureate, have about the phenomenon of bullying.

Specific Objectives

- a. Determine whether teachers know how to identify bullying situations in their schools.
- b. Identify the causes of bullying in the opinion of teachers.
- c. To learn about strategies for the prevention and management of bullying used by teachers.
- d. To know the characteristics that teachers attribute to aggressors and victims in situations of bullying.
- e. To know the training demands in the area of bullying of teachers.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

A non-random sampling procedure was used for the selection of participants. There were 224 teachers from Primary Education (32%), Secondary Education (56%), and the Baccalaureate (12%) who participated on a voluntary basis between the ages of 25 and 63. The majority of participants were women (87.6 %), with undergraduate studies (24.6 %) and graduates (64%). Fifty percent of the sample reported having experienced bullying in their schools.

Instrument

The instrument used for the collection of information was an ad hoc test developed from the CUVE3-EP ([Álvarez et al., 2015](#)) and the questionnaire on the Mistreatment of Equals at School ([Nicolaidis et al., 2002](#)). The survey questionnaire called the Bullying Perception, Response, Qualification and Teacher Training Questionnaire (CPRCFP), it was produced in a Likert scale format of six response levels, where 1 expressed the least degree of agreement and 6 the highest degree in relation to the ideas expressed by each item. The instrument was validated by the opinion of 3 bullying experts who reviewed and evaluated the adequacy of the items, reformulating, eliminating, or adapting those that needed to be adapted. The questionnaire was composed of 6 control variables (age, gender, training, teaching course, type of centers, and bullying experience) and 15 dependent variables consisting of items exploring aspects such as (a) frequency of bullying situations (D1), (b) frequent bullying behavior (D2), (c) causes of bullying (D3), (d) teacher beliefs about bullying (D4), (e) characteristics and the personality of the victims (D5) f) characteristics and the personality of the aggressors (D6), (g) features of the family environment of the victims (D7), (h) features of the family environment of the aggressors (D8), (i) strategies for the prevention and management of bullying (D9)(j) forms of behavior of teachers in relation to bullying (D10) and (k) bullying training (D11).

Procedure

After the selection of the sample, the different educational establishments were contacted to engage them with the study, explaining the purpose of the study, and sending them the consent to participate. Upon acceptance, the questionnaires were submitted and a one-month period for their collection was established. The questionnaires were submitted to the tutors of the participating groups along with a sheet with information about the test and its administration.

Data analysis

Given the nature of the data in the study, data analysis was carried out using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for Windows, V.25.

RESULTS/FINDINGS

a) CPRCFP reliability analysis

For the CPRCFP reliability analysis the internal consistency coefficient Alfa Cronbach was used, the procedure was applied to the 122 valuation items of each of the questionnaire dimensions. The total reliability value of the questionnaire was 0.954 which indicated an adequate consistency of the scale.

b) General results on bullying perception

With regard to the definition of the concept of bullying, it has been observed that in bullying situations, the majority of teachers (93.2%) say that it causes a situation of inferiority and insecurity in the harassed person, such as physical, psychological, or relational harassment (86.2 %). As determining characteristics of a bullying situation, they consider that there is a recurrence of abusive behavior over time (88.5%) and that there is a relationship with power imbalance (strong weak) (76.3%).

With regard to the atmosphere of coexistence in the center, teachers generally consider that there is a good atmosphere of coexistence in their centers (52.4 %). Despite this, they also point out that coexistence in the centers has worsened slightly over the years (38.9 %). 57.1% of teachers do not consider bullying to be widespread, compared to 42.9% who do.

It is interesting to note that 40 % of teachers sometimes spend time dealing with issues of coexistence and conflict resolution and that only 22.1 % do so frequently (almost always).

With regard to the reasons for the attacks, the teachers consider that attacks or bullying situations have personality or character problems as their root (79.2 %) and intolerance (52.9 %) among the students.

With regard to the place where the attacks usually take place, it has been observed that, according to the teachers, they take place in the courtyard (82 %), the school's exit or entrance (60.2 %), and in the corridors (36.1 %).

c) CPRCFP results by dimensions

In general, we can observe that teachers consider that in their schools, the most frequent problems are direct verbal aggression or isolation and social exclusion (D1). Specifically, among the direct verbal actions, they highlight the insults between companions ($\bar{x}=4.01$), although they also point out the offensive nicknames ($\bar{x}=3.56$) and the verbal aggressions to companions ($\bar{x}=3.42$).

With regard to the most frequent actions (D2), teachers refer to a significant way to the existence of actions that bring together behaviors of social exclusion. Teachers point out that some students are left alone at recess because no one plays with them ($\bar{x}=3.89$), they are rejected for having a good academic performance and getting good marks ($\bar{x}=3.74$).

Regarding the causes of bullying (D3), teachers have pointed out causes related to the cultural, family, and school context. In particular, they consider that the main cause of bullying situations in schools is the result of an inconsistent disciplinary system on the part of families ($\bar{x}=4.52$) and as a consequence of the lack of values and social sensitivity to attacks and abuses that the media treat with total insensitivity and that media such as video games, social networks, and the internet present almost normal and natural fact ($\bar{x}=5.17$). It is important to note that the school context was considered by the teachers as the space of least risk; in this sense, the teachers pointed out that a lack of attention and carelessness on the part of the teachers ($\bar{x}=1.03$) is not relevant to the possible causes of bullying. It is noted that teachers attribute the origin and gestation of bullying behavior to causes outside the school.

With regard to the opinion of teachers on personal characteristics of people who could bully (D4), they highlight the low tolerance to frustration ($\bar{x}=4.91$) and the difficulty in controlling impulses ($\bar{x}=5.01$). They consider that the result of these personality characteristics, the profile of the aggressors (D5), is characterized by being popular ($\bar{x}=5.63$), are easily irritated ($\bar{x}=4.97$), and with learning difficulties ($\bar{x}=4.37$). Characteristics such as physical weakness ($\bar{x}=2.02$) or not having friends ($\bar{x}=1.83$) are not associated with the profile of the aggressor.

Regarding the profile of victims (D6), teachers perceive them as having low self-esteem ($\bar{x}=4.73$), are always worried and anxious ($\bar{x}=3.72$), and lack social skills ($\bar{x}=3.94$). It is also important to note that teachers do not identify victims with characteristics such as physical strength ($\bar{x}=1.68$) or popularity ($\bar{x}=1.99$).

In relation to the family environment, they have a clear perception of the characteristics that revolve around the families of both profiles (aggressors and victims) (D7 and D8). In the case of the families of the aggressors, they perceive that there is no dialogue, that there is emotional abuse ($\bar{x}=4.90$), and that there are no positive interpersonal relationships ($\bar{x}=1.80$). As for the family of the victims, they believe that there are distant interpersonal relationships ($\bar{x}=3.89$) and

overprotection towards the sons and daughters ($\bar{x}=3.91$). In addition, they believe that emotional abuse is not typical of these families ($\bar{x}=2.13$).

Regarding the improvement of the problem of bullying, the tendency to respond with high values (D9) stands out. In this way, the actions that scored the most was the involvement of the management team to address possible bullying issues ($\bar{x}=5.83$), followed by working in class attitudes of respect between peers ($\bar{x}=5.56$) and developing social communication and conflict resolution skills among members of the educational community ($\bar{x}=5.39$). On the other hand, they do not consider that a beneficial action was the exercise of greater supervision and control over students ($\bar{x}=3.02$), understanding that this fact would not improve the root cause of the problem.

Regarding the actions that teachers carry out when conflict or disruptive situations (D10) occur, they respond that the most common is a private dialogue with the people involved ($\bar{x}=5.63$), followed by the option of dealing with problems in tutoring ($\bar{x}=5.34$). The worst-rated valued actions were collective punishment ($\bar{x}=1.21$) or ignoring the facts ($\bar{x}=1.33$).

With regard to the training, they believe they should receive in order to improve bullying situations (D11), they consider it more important to include prevention and intervention activities ($\bar{x}=5.67$) and to help them develop a school policy on bullying ($\bar{x}=5.60$). In general, teachers scored high values for the rest of the training activities described in the questionnaire, which shows a willingness to learn and train in this area.

d) Differences in teachers' opinions according to demographic variables

Parametric evidence of hypothesis contrast has been used, namely the Student T-test and the ANOVA contrast test. On an exploratory basis, the differences have been analyzed according to the dimensions established.

In relation to gender in all the dimensions presented, women (x m) obtain a higher average than men (x h). In nine of the eleven dimensions, significant differences are observed, is always the upper average for women. See table 1.

Table 1: Means of the different dimensions according to gender. (1 minimum agreement, 6 maximum agreements)

Dimensions	Gender			
	Male		Female	
	Average	N	Average	N
(D1) Frequency of harassment situations	2.35	50	4.49	360
(D2) Frequent behavior of students towards the harassed	1.73	52	2.89	365
(D3) Causes of the bullying	2.19	49	3.21	354
(D4) Teachers' beliefs about bullying	3.66	63	4.58	359
(D5) Characteristics and personality of victims	3.19	60	4.38	364
(D7) Characteristics of the victims' family environment	3.81	61	4.78	348
(D9) Prevention and bullying management strategies	4.18	62	5.83	355
(D10) How teachers deal with bullying	2.51	56	3.97	364
(D11) Training demanded	4.16	57	5.61	362

*: Statistically significant differences at 95%

The differences in the shaded dimensions were not significant. Nevertheless, they reflect the trend of the data.

Source: Authors

Depending on age, the opinions of teachers vary, it can be seen that teachers over 48 have a higher average in relation to D1 and D2. However, the averages of D7, D9, and D11 are higher among teachers under 48 years of age. See table 2.

Table 2: Means of different sizes depending on age. (1 minimum agreement, 6 maximum agreements)

Dimensions	Age			
	To 48 years		Over 48 years	
	Average	N	Average	N
(D1) Frequency of harassment situations	2.27	182	4.02	209
(D2) Frequent behavior of students towards the harassed	2.73	189	3.69	201
(D7) Characteristics of the victims' family environment	4.91	175	3.74	224
(D9) Prevention and bullying management strategies	5.48	195	4.98	225
(D10) How teachers deal with bullying	5.51	183	5.01	251

*: Statistically significant differences at 95%

The differences in the shaded dimensions were not significant. Nevertheless, they reflect the trend of the data.

Source: Authors

On the basis of teacher training, it can be seen that, although in all cases the average for teachers with a bachelor's or bachelor's degree is higher than the average for graduates, only differences were observed with respect to dimensions D3, D7, and D9. See table 3.

Table 3: Means of different sizes depending on age. (1 minimum agreement, 6 maximum agreements)

Dimensions	Degree			
	Graduate degree		or Graduate	
	Average	N	Average	N
(D3) Causes of the bullying	4.26	101	3.35	348
(D7) Characteristics of the victims' family environment	4.92	98	3.91	325
(D9) Prevention and bullying management strategies	5.68	121	5.02	342

*: Statistically significant differences at 95%

The differences in the shaded dimensions were not significant. Nevertheless, they reflect the trend of the data.

Source: Authors

In relation to the nature and type of institution, differences were observed in D2, D3, and D7. The highest averages were obtained by the teaching staff in agreed institutions. See table 4.

Table 4: Means of different sizes depending on age. (1 minimum agreement, 6 maximum agreements)

Dimensions	Centre			
	Public		Private	
	Average	N	Average	N
(D2) Frequent behavior of students towards the harassed	2.67	152	3.92	278
(D3) Causes of the bullying	2.73	179	3.62	263
(D7) Characteristics of the victims' family environment	3.91	165	4.74	265

*: Statistically significant differences at 95%

The differences in the shaded dimensions were not significant. Nevertheless, they reflect the trend of the data.

Source: Authors

In relation to the bullying experience, differences were observed in the D1, D6, D7, and D9 dimensions, with experienced teachers obtaining higher averages in the D1 and D6 dimensions. In the case of dimensions D7 and D9, the inexperienced teachers obtained higher averages. See table 5.

Table 5: Means of different sizes depending on age. (1 minimum agreement, 6 maximum agreements)

Dimensions	Experience			
	Yes		No	
	Media	N	Media	N
(D1) Frequency of harassment situations	3.95	103	3.12	245
(D6) Characteristics and personality of the aggressors	3.79	98	3.08	298
(D7) Characteristics of the victims' family environment	3.81	124	4.35	243
(D9) Prevention and bullying management strategies	4.98	112	5.79	299

*: Statistically significant differences at 95%

The differences in the shaded dimensions were not significant. Nevertheless, they reflect the trend of the data.

Source: Authors

In relation to educational level, the significant differences of opinion were observed in the D2, D3, D7, and D9 dimensions. Teachers teaching in primary education have obtained upper secondary and baccalaureate levels in the dimensions; (D2) Identification of bullying behavior towards bullied students, (D3) Recognition of the possible causes of bullying, (D7) Recognition of the family profile of the aggressors, (D9) Identification of the actions that would be necessary to improve the problem of bullying. They show greater concern at this stage over the others. They notice more frequent situations of bullying in the primary stage ($\bar{x}_p=3.28$, $\bar{x}_s=2.57$, $\bar{x}_b=2.01$), just as primary school teachers score higher than the rest regarding the causes of bullying ($\bar{x}_p=3.32$, $\bar{x}_s=2.80$, $\bar{x}_b=2.75$), and more clearly identify the family profile of the aggressors ($\bar{x}_p=4.24$, $\bar{x}_s=3.70$, $\bar{x}_b=3.71$).

DISCUSSION

In order to facilitate the reading and understanding of the discussion of results, the structure is presented according to the dimensions addressed throughout the study.

a) Teachers' perception of bullying

This study has allowed us to investigate teachers' perceptions of bullying and the reality of schools in relation to this not-as-uncommon situation as might be expected ([Mahabeer, 2020](#); [Mroz and Woolner, 2020](#)). Most teachers assure that they have no problems living together in their schools and situations of aggression and conflict are not a serious problem ([Gutiérrez-Barroso and Pérez-Jorge, 2017](#)). This contrasts with the opinions they give regarding the frequency with which conflicts and situations related to coexistence have to be resolved, which claim that such situations often or almost always occur. There is a degree of difficulty in identifying, detecting, and differentiating bullying situations ([Pas et al., 2019](#)). There has been confusion and a degree of ignorance among teachers, as [Abdulwahhab \(2020\)](#) and [Sánchez and Ortega \(2010\)](#) point out, any problematic situation cannot be defined as bullying. Situations of bullying in schools involve intentionality, thus eliminating the possibility of unexpected and random maltreatment ([Çalışkan et al., 2019](#); [Olweus, 1998](#)).

b) As for the frequent situations in the center

In line with the studies of [Hernando and Sanz \(2017\)](#), teachers detect mainly verbal aggression in the form of insults and nicknames ([Pas et al., 2019](#)). However, undetectable attacks are likely to need to reach more drastic or very obvious levels for teachers to detect them ([Ombudsman's Report, 2007](#)). The women better identified disruptive situations and aggression in their different types than men. Similarly, older teachers, perhaps as a result of experience gained, showed more sensitivity in detecting bullying situations.

c) With regard to the causes of bullying

It has been found that teachers tend to regard themselves as being external to the reality or situations of schools. Like ([Fernández et al., 2004](#)), they consider the cause of bullying, the cultural level of families, and their social context. Talking about parental filial models and relationship styles in families are elements that explain the profiles and behaviors of the aggressors ([Kendall and Taylor, 2016](#); [Tremblay-Perreault and Hébert \(2020\)](#)). Schools should be alert and not focus on the external genesis of the phenomenon, studies such as those of [Fernández et al. \(2004\)](#), claim that lack of motivation or interest in what is done in schools can be a key element in the gestation of the first bullying and bullying behaviors ([Hendricks and Tanga, 2019](#)).

[Uruñuela \(2019\)](#) reflects on the structural violence identified by Galtung and points to the school and school organization itself as an element that introduces violence that will be replicated by the students.

The detection of bullying the behaviour has been a subject on which much has been saying and expressed, despite the fact that teachers say they have difficulties and little training in detecting and intervening in situations of bullying ([Nickerson, 2019](#); [Pas et al., 2019](#)). Teachers say they have difficulties and little training in detecting and intervening in situations of bullying, but in our case, teacher training has proved to be a determining variable. Teachers with a degree or diploma (primary teachers) have found that they are better able to identify bullying situations ([Goodwin et al., 2019](#)). The teachers who teach at the primary level have received more pedagogical training, in addition to the structure and organization of the primary stage, they are the teachers who spend more time with the same class group, which makes him better acquainted with the students and able to better perceive possible situations of aggression and conflict.

d) With regard to the profile of aggressors

Regarding the characteristics of the profile of aggressors, teachers identify them as popular, with character problems and learning difficulties. A profile characterized by having a problematic personality due to emotional, personal, and/or family instability ([Ortega, 2006](#)) or the lack of impulse control favored by the greatest physical force and/or need to show a strong and dominant character ([Vargas et al., 2020](#)).

Women teachers have the best identified these characteristics in the profile of the aggressor; in addition, they have had more experience in bullying situations, mainly in the primary education stage. It is important to highlight, from the answers gathered in this study, the probability that teachers are not being able to identify other profiles. They have been attributed to the most socially recognized characteristics but have not been able to identify the profile of passive

aggressor and aggressor who often use aggression to seek acceptance and avoid becoming victims ([O'Moore and Hillery, 1989](#); [Serrano, 2013](#); [González Contreras et al., 2020](#)).

e) The profile of victims

The results coincide with those of other studies, in which low popularity, weak physique, and low self-esteem have been identified as characteristics of the victims ([Benítez et al., 2006](#); [Farrington, 1993](#); [Trihadi et al., 2020](#)). [Olweus \(1998\)](#) refers to the existence of different types of victims and that framing the profile of victims carries the risk of ignoring warning signs. It is also necessary to take into account the possibility that these characteristics are the consequence of lived situations, rather than personal characteristics ([Ovejero, 2013](#); [González Contreras et al., 2020](#); [Kelly et al., 2020](#)).

f) On the family context

The perception of the family contexts of aggressors and victims has been characterized by a lack of family cohesion, poor or strict supervision of parents, inappropriate emotional behavior with sons and daughters, and the inappropriate family atmosphere ([Dietrich and Cohen, 2019](#); [Serrano, 2013](#)).

It has been observed that teachers believe that in the family context of stalkers there is no dialogue and there is emotional abuse. In the case of the victim, they identify families as protective and with cold and distant interpersonal relationships. These data coincide with the vision of [Serrano \(2013\)](#) and [Tremblay-Perreault and Hébert \(2020\)](#) that highlight as the possible causes of the lack of communication, a strict education with the possible existence of emotional abuse, as well as issues related to the authority they exercise before the sons and daughters.

g) Preventive actions and management of bullying

The most identified preventive actions have been the involvement and sensitization of members of the educational community and the work of values in the classrooms ([Nickerson, 2019](#); [Nocentini et al., 2019](#)). When aggressions are detected, the strategies they use are to talk to those involved and deal with problems in mentoring ([Pas et al., 2019](#)). These data coincide with some revised studies that assert that teachers usually use dialogue or support in other members of the educational community ([Ochoa and Peiró, 2010](#); [Serrano, 2013](#)). However, they differ in terms of punishments, as this study does not consider bullying to be a relevant management measure, as opposed to the studies described above that do.

The strategies they have identified as best suited to improving conflict situations are collaborative work or value education. Recent experiences and studies have shown that the implementation of coexistence plans is essential to reduce bullying in schools ([Olweus, 1998](#)).

h) Training demanded

Teachers have expressed widespread interest in and the need for training in bullying ([Mahabeer, 2020](#)). There can be no doubt that there is a growing awareness of the importance of training in order to provide the means to help put an end to this increasingly common problem in schools ([Hernando and Sanz, 2017](#)).

CONCLUSION

The results of this study allow us to draw a series of conclusions that can serve to guide future improvement processes regarding how to treat and address bullying situations in schools.

While it seems that teachers are able to identify, in general terms, the most common situations related to bullying, the truth is that they recognize having difficulty in identifying them in real situations and contexts, many teachers, especially men, acknowledged not having been able to identify situations of harassment in their Classrooms. In general, teachers expressed a positive vision regarding the climate and living situations in the classroom, although they did not fail to recognize the fear and uncertainty generated by having harassed and harassing students in their classrooms. Although they believe that in schools they try to educate in respect for others and in positive coexistence climates, they considered that it is mainly in the cultural and family context where situations of harassment arise and arise.

Teachers often establish preventive actions such as working on values from the classroom with the support of the educational community and use strategies such as dialogue and mentoring to carry out specific interventions for the prevention of bullying.

The teachers said that the main problem of aggressors is the difficulty of these to control impulses, the low tolerance to frustration, and the popularity and recognition of the role of power and control over the rest of students. Teachers usually associate harassers and harassers as students with learning difficulties and victims as students with low self-esteem, always concerned, anxious, and with few social skills. They believe that the family context of the aggressors and aggressors is an impoverished environment, with no dialogue and emotional abuse, and that that of the victims is an environment with distant interpersonal relationships characterized by family overprotection.

Above all, teachers considered it important to develop preventive policies and improve teacher training plans as a fundamental strategy to prevent and intervene in situations of bullying.

LIMITATION AND STUDY FORWARD

The results of this work are not generalizable, but they propose indicators and guide results that can be taken up again for future work. However, it is very useful to know the state of research and the development of programs that can serve as guides in our work of commitment to urgent social problems.

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AUTHORS CONTRIBUTION

Authors one and two contributed to the conceptualization, methodology, formal analysis, and the first and final drafts, authors one, three, and four did the literature review and results.

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