

# School bullying: A contextual analysis in Venezuelan secondary schools from perpetrators' and victims' reports

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**ABSTRACT.** Bullying is a growing worry in Venezuelan schools, which is analyzed from an ecological approach addressing conceptual and methodological peculiarities inherent to the context. In order to provide a systematic database for the small number of research on bullying in the country, we present the outcomes of an exploratory study to identify this behavior in adolescents aged 11-19 years in four secondary schools in Mérida city. The frequency of victimization and perpetration is discriminated in relation to the gender and the type of school (private vs. public), in order to consider the socioeconomic status. The outcomes confirm bullying in the sample studied, particularly in verbal behaviors (joking and nicknames) and nonverbal behaviors (rumors and indifference) and higher incidents in public schools.

**KEY WORDS.** Bullying, Victim, Perpetrator, Ecologic Approach, Secondary Schools.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Research about school bullying and violence among peers has grown in the last 20 years worldwide, especially in Europe (Ortega, 2010; Ovejero, 2013), which indicate an interest for a situation that is growing globally. In Latin-America, these studies are more recent, focusing on the issue from two perspectives: on one hand, it looks at the quantitative assessment of this phenomenon, based on a global definition in line with research development in Europe; on the other hand, it looks at qualitative reports about cases and individual intervention experiences from a cultural perspective which concerns the local community's circumstances.

In Venezuela, there has not been enough empirical research about school bullying among peers, even though, non-systematic reports account for its existence and increase. Therefore, we must rely on a coherent and updated database of statistics and qualitative research which manifest this phenomenon's characteristics in order to propose structured interventions.

The country has researched about this issue with a greater emphasis on a criminological approach which associates school violence with crime in a binding manner. This allows for figures and tendencies related to social and economic circumstances to be presented, which stem from situations of poverty. Looking at the different social sciences areas, there has been an interest in undertaking research which provides further information about the issue. Although, up until now, these efforts have been dispersed.

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A first step towards defining the focus of this research, is to define its field and perspective: education psychology, from which we take on school bullying as a phenomenon related to the context which is being developed. Regarding the ecological and cultural aspect, (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Cole, 2003) we consider necessary to make explicit the relation between broad everyday experiences and cultural aspects in which bullying and aggressive behaviour take place; in this sense, relationships at school reflect and pervade society's conflicts, conveying in small settings what also occurs in macro-systems.

Considering the permeability of what occurs in schools and in a sociocultural environment, we believe that the school environment is an ideal setting in which it is possible to re-create and generate psychological and teaching strategies which would not only impact relationships between peer groups but also families and communities. For this reason, we sustain that all proposals orientated in intervening and preventing bullying should focus on and address the issue with an ecological and cultural perspective. Evidentially, this is a task which requires time and we stress on the fact that it demands a coherent evidence base which must start to develop in our country. This research is a significant contribution in that regard.

## **2. BULLYING, INTIMIDATION AND SCHOOL VIOLENCE. METHODOLOGICAL, SEMANTIC AND SOCIOCULTURAL PROBLEM**

One of the biggest problems that research about school bullying has faced has been the definition itself about the issue which has been limited to the perception of aggressors' and victims' behaviours without considering involvement of a group (Ortega, Del Rey y Casas, 2016) and without considering other systematic factors. Linked to this, methodological difficulties have been reported regarding the use of key questions associated with bullying according to age, cultural differences as well as discrepancies regarding the semantic "extent" of its meaning and its relationship with the Western scientific definition (Menesini & Nocentini, 2009). These considerations allow us to confirm that research about school bullying also requires a critical work which considers semantic aspects linked to social and cultural factors; this does not mean relativizing the mentioned issue in which those behaviours considered aggressive in an environment may be natural in another, but instead, a general framework about the concept, which eventually comes into play, in the way which the behaviours are registered through specific procedures must be made explicit.

In research carried out in Spanish-speaking countries, the terms *acoso* (harassment), *amenaza* (threat), *agresividad* (aggression) and *intimidación* (intimidation) are used interchangeably and grouped as bullying (Arroyave, 2012; Ortega, Del Rey y Mora, 2001; Paredes et al., 2011; Santoyo y Frías, 2014); however, there are differences in the Spanish language regarding the concept of *acosar* (to harass) and *intimidar* (to intimidate), which make it non-appropriate to generalise its frequent usage in Spanish-language literature as a synonym for bullying. In fact, it would be necessary to categorise which behaviours have been defined as such.

The term bullying in English refers to behaviours that in Spanish are often expressed by using different nouns, such as: *acoso* (harassment), *intimidación* (intimidation), *agresión* (aggression) and *hostigamiento* (victimisation). The researcher, Dan Olweus (2006), who investigated about bullying and created a measuring scale, also outlined semantic aspects in translations from Swedish and Norwegian to English which underlie the most widespread definition. These aspects may have had a small significance from a global development theory point of view. Nevertheless, it is necessary to see them from a perspective which considers cultural implications of the issue, thus avoiding a merely casual perspective.

In any case, the operational definition accepted by the scientific community shows that harassment and intimidation exist when the victim is repeatedly exposed to negative actions that another student or students carry out for a duration of time, in other words, it refers to those negative actions in which aggressive behaviours are committed intentionally with a purpose to cause damage, hurt or disturb another person repeatedly and/or constantly for some time.

School bullying or intimidation also implies repetitive physical victimisation behaviours, whether it is directly or indirectly through open and explicit attacks or through social isolation and/or deliberate exclusion of a student or group of students from others within or outside school grounds. In this situation, a hierarchical relationship of power stands out from the perpetrator towards the victim (Salmivalli, 2013).

Even though bullying behaviours remain as a broad semantic category, it is not suitable to generalise the concept, considering that not all aggressive behaviours are the same bullying phenomenon and not all behaviours which can be grouped under this term have the same severity of impact on psychological and personal damage. Therefore, this concept also requires some precision in terms of subjectivity of the ones involved; in these conditions, circumstances that define which behaviours are tolerated or not by group members and what are the individual effects that it produces, come into play (Del Rey, Romera y Ortega, 2010; Ortega, 2010).

Finally, the hardest job will be creating valid and reliable resources to study this issue under the circumstances and specific environments mentioned above. Thus, we confirm that research about school bullying has been carried out for several years in the scientific field, but its approach from a cultural focus has only began.

### **3. VENEZUELAN SCHOOL VIOLANCE AND BULLYING BACKGROUND HISTORY**

School bullying is categorised in three conditions: it is intentional, it is repeated and uses asymmetric power. In Venezuelan schools, bullying cases are initiated in a general way by repetitively teasing others, which is difficult for teachers or schoolmates to detect; when said situations are supported by peer groups, behaviours to intimidate others occur (Misle y Pereira, 2013). This kind of teasing is colloquially known by Venezuelan youngsters as “chalequeo”, which naturalises or banalises aggression since it already implies the tacit acceptance by the victim and his/her peers on teasing which denotes and accentuates a certain personal condition, for example skin colour or physique, among others.

Studies conducted within the country show an increase in verbal abuse incidents above any other type of aggression. Arellano, Chirinos, López and Sánchez (2007), conducted a research in which it shows that 148 teenagers between the ages 14 and 15 at a school in the Zulia State, prevailed established verbal abuse through degrading comments, use of offensive words, shouting, dominant tone of voice and threats. Rodríguez and González (2010) also back-up the previous results through a study conducted with 294 students between the ages of 9 and 18 in which it's proven that using offensive name-calling and making fun of other schoolmates are the behaviours in which most teenagers have been involved in. It has also been reported that the majority of teenagers have been involved in some kind of aggression towards other schoolmates (7 out of 10 students) and almost half of teenagers state having used physical force towards their peers by means of punches, kicks, pushes and fights. Nevertheless, the results show that this kind of aggression is occasional.

A research carried out by Garrido (2007) in schools in Caracas, makes a difference between two big kinds of school bullying: one based on interpersonal relationships between equals aimed at

causing harm (physical, verbal or psychological), and the other based on behaviours using weapons (knives or firearms) within the school grounds with the purpose of scaring or intimidating students or teachers. Our research focuses on that first case which corresponds to the operational description of school bullying, because starting from the basis of the use of weapons as a tool of school aggression is a case for criminology professionals as it implies a level of violence that normally relates to a criminal and victimisation case that exist on the outside, even if it is in a school setting.

The biggest problem from the criminological focus facing the educational focus, is that it has masked daily face-to-face aggression that occur in the classrooms of our country. For this reason, an important quantity of information that circulates about aggression between peers, refer to complied figures by organisations and independent associations on reported criminal acts at the police forces (Gabaldón, Serrano y Sanginés, 1999; Machado y Guerra, 2009), promoting bias on the obtained limited data which impacts prevention policies and care for the students.

From a qualitative perspective, there has been reports of intervention experiences in schools (Álvarez y Briceño, 2010; Arellano, 2008; Machado y Guerra, 2009; Misle y Pereira, 2011) which again focuses on aggression incidents at school in relation to factors linked to poverty such as the use and dealing of drugs and crime. The mentioned circumstances in these studies refer to public schools which take in students coming from a less privileged economic and social background. This shows another bias in research about school bullying. The studies carried out in private schools are limited; however, there is evidence about the impact of cyber-bullying as it involves youngsters who have access to technology (Reinoza, Escobar y Alonso, 2014).

#### 4. METHODOLOGY

This research has the main objective to understand the presence and frequency of school bullying in four secondary schools in Mérida city, as well as presenting specific indicators which allow to structure future research in this area.

**Participants:** The participants of this research were 540 teenagers of which 268 are boys and 272 are girls at four secondary schools in Mérida city. They were distributed in the following way: two public institutions which have been named as Educational Unit 1 and 4; and two private institutions which have been named as Educational Unit 2 and 3.

The selection of the educational institutions was not random, it complies with an intentional criterion. The percentage of student participation was 44% from public institutions and 56% from private institutions. The ages of the participants were between 11 and 19 years old ( $M= 14,63$ ;  $SD$ -standard deviation=  $1,564$ ).

**Tool:** The Menesini, Noicentini & Calussi (2011) school bullying measuring scale was provided by the authors for this investigation, which allows the validation and application to an intercultural context. This tool consists of two scales of multiple items: one geared towards victimisation behaviours and the other one geared towards bullying perpetration. For each circumstance, participants were inquired about how often they were victimised and/or supported bullying incidents in the 2 to 3 months before the questionnaire was given.

A general question was firstly conducted and then a further 15 specific items were asked in which the frequency is chosen by the participant on different bullying situations. The frequency options are: never, once or twice, once a month, two to three times a month, once a week and several times a week.

The trained staff administered the definitive questionnaires during the school day at the four selected schools, considering the informed consent of each institution. Confidentiality and participation anonymity was assured.

**Data analysis:** A data base was built to differentiate each school (Educational Units) and the frequency of each item students were in according to a victimisation and perpetration scale. The data procedure was made according to IBM SPSS Statistics 22. The comparison between the obtained results from the scales according to gender and one school were conducted using the Pearson's Chi-Square for contingency tables and with an ANOVA factor, using multiple comparisons for the Least Significant Difference (LSD). For independent groups, the Student Q (questionnaire) was conducted to compare the ratio of bullying between both genders. Statistical testing was contrasted with a significant maximum level of 0.05.

#### 4. RESULTS

The tabled results and its subsequent analysis are presented below.

Table 1. Types of bullying behaviours towards students.

	Nº	%	Yes	%
Punches	440	83,0%	101	18,7%
Name-calling	284	53,6%	257	47,5%
Mocking	258	49,0%	283	52,3%
Indifference	379	71,5%	162	29,9%
Threats	479	89,9%	62	11,5%
Exclusion	404	76,2%	137	25,3%
Punches and kicks	476	89,8%	65	12,0%
Rumours	359	67,0%	182	33,6%
Discrimination	447	83,9%	94	17,4%
Theft or damages	345	65,0%	196	36,2%
Mockery of diasability	491	93,0%	50	9,2%
Mockery of religion	515	96,6%	26	4,8%
Peer pressure	478	90,5%	63	11,6%
Homophobic insults	444	83,8%	97	17,9%

According to the interviewed students, mocking is the type of behaviour that is most common within the school grounds, with 52.3%; followed by name-calling with 47.5%, theft and damages with 36.2% and rumours with 33.6%.

In terms of the types of bullying behaviours that were committed, mocking is reported to be the most frequent type of behaviour with 64.88%, which coincides with the previous table, but there is a greater percentage in the victims' report. This is followed by name-calling with 55.27%; in third place, indifference stands out with 39.37% followed very closely by punches with 39.19%.

Table 2. Committed types of bullying behaviours.

	N°	%	Yes	%
Punches	329	61,3%	212	39,19%
Name-calling	242	45,2%	299	55,27%
Mocking	190	35,5%	351	64,88%
Indifference	328	61,5%	213	39,37%
Threats	501	93,1%	40	7,39%
Exclusion	402	75,1%	139	25,69%
Punches and kicks	431	80,3%	110	20,33%
Rumours	475	89,5%	66	12,20%
Discrimination	422	78,6%	119	22,00%
Theft or damages	488	91,2%	53	9,80%
Mockery of diasability	482	89,9%	59	10,91%
Mockery of religion	511	95,7%	30	5,55%
Peer pressure	490	91,8%	51	9,43%
Homophobic insults	405	75,6%	136	25,14%

A.- VICTIMISATION:

Table 3. How many time have you been a victim of aggressive behaviour in the last 2-3 months? Vs. gender, cross-tabulating.

		Gender				Total	
		Feminine		Masculine			
		N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
How many time have you been a victim of aggressive behaviour in the last 2-3 months?	Never	176a	65,2%	165a	62,0%	341	63,6%
	Once or twice	63a	23,3%	67a	25,2%	130	24,3%
	2-3 times a month	11a	4,1%	10a	3,8%	21	3,9%
	Once a week	11a	4,1%	7a	2,6%	18	3,4%
	Several times a week	9a	3,3%	17a	6,4%	26	4,9%
Total		270	100,0%	266	100,0%	536	100,0%

Each letter in the subscript denote a subset of the Gender category which column proportions do not differ in a significant form between them in the 0.5 level.

The table above shows that around 65% of girls and 62% of boys have never been a victim of school bullying by their schoolmates. There is a group of 24.3% who have suffered bullying once or twice, among them is the boy's group who have experienced a slightly higher proportion of bullying in comparison with the girls; a similar tendency in the option "several times a week". By evaluating the Chi-Square test to determine if school bullying has a significant relevance to gender, it shows that it does not depend on that, this is confirmed with 95% of certainty.

Table 4. How many times have you been a victim of aggressive behaviour in the last 2-3 months? Vs. Education Units (E.U.), cross-tabulating.

		Educational Units								Total	
		U. E. 1		U. E. 2		U. E. 3		U. E. 4			
		N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
How many times have you been a victim of aggressive behaviour in the last 2-3 months?	Never	68a	59,6%	92a	61,3%	99a	66,0%	83a	67,5%	342	63,7%
	Once or twice	28a	24,6%	43a	28,7%	37a	24,7%	22a	17,9%	130	24,2%
	2-3 times a month	5a	4,4%	8a	5,3%	4a	2,7%	4a	3,3%	21	3,9%
	Once a week	6a	5,3%	4a	2,7%	3a	2,0%	5a	4,1%	18	3,4%
	Several times a week	7a	6,1%	3a	2,0%	7a	4,7%	9a	7,3%	26	4,8%
Total		114	100,0%	150	100,0%	150	100,0%	123	100,0%	537	100,0%

Each letter in the subscript denote a subset of the Education Units category which its column proportions do not differ in a significant form between them in the 0.5 level.

When comparing the frequency in which the student has been a victim of bullying and the school of where he/she comes from, the intuition that reports a greater number of victimisation behaviours is E.U. 1, followed by E.U. 2. Whereas, E.U. 3 and E.U. 4 show a very small similar proportion of victimisation than the previous tables. When we evaluate statistically evaluation these differences, no significant evidence was shown, therefore, we can confirm with 95% certainty that the intensity of bullying does not depend on the school.

Table 5. Bullying comparison with physical, verbal and non-verbal abuse, according to the victims.

		N	Average	Out of	Student Q	P
Physical abuse	Feminine	262	1,2376	,42389	2.747	0.098
	Masculine	252	1,3085	,54141		
Verbal abuse	Feminine	251	1,3830	,49044	0.948	0.331
	Masculine	251	1,4263	,50467		
Non-verbal abuse	Feminine	263	1,3625	,66571	0.612	0.434
	Masculine	260	1,4077	,65598		

When comparing the physical, verbal and non-verbal abuse average between boys and girls from the victim's perspective, no statistical difference was shown, which indicates that bullying is not related to gender, but instead it occurs in both groups with the same average intensity. The evidence shows that verbal abuse is the type of behaviour that dominates, specially more in boys than in girls.

When comparing physical, verbal and non-verbal abuse between the schools in this investigation, it is found that average physical and non-verbal abuse do not show significant differences in a 0.05 level. Whereas verbal abuse, is shown to have a greater intensity in E.U. 1, which shows significant differences with the other schools, this is confirmed at level 0.01.

Table 6. ANOVA of one factor according to the Education Unit (E.U.).

		N	Average	Out of	Snedecor's F distribution	P
Physical abuse	U. E. 1	107	1,3621	,56032	1.625	0.183
	U. E. 2	141	1,2624	,46611		
	U. E. 3	148	1,2399	,38452		
	U. E. 4	119	1,2416	,54163		
Verbal abuse	U. E. 1	107	1,5434	,58060	3.613	0.013*
	U. E. 2	137	1,3723	,42940		
	U. E. 3	146	1,3532	,43531		
	U. E. 4	113	1,3831	,54541		
Non-verbal abuse	U. E. 1	110	1,4303	,63269	0.374	0.772
	U. E. 2	144	1,3542	,60587		
	U. E. 3	150	1,3622	,64730		
	U. E. 4	120	1,4056	,76108		

“\*” p<0.05

B.- PERPETRATION:

Table. 7 Have you ever taken part in aggressive behaviours against anyone of your schoolmates in the last 2-3 months? Vs. Gender, cross-tabulation.

		Gender				Total			
		Feminine		Masculine		N°		%	
		N°	%	N°	%				
Have you ever taken part in aggressive behaviours against anyone of your schoolmates in the last 2-3 months?	Never	191a	72,9%	127b	49,8%	318	61,5%		
	Once or twice	54a	20,6%	87b	34,1%	141	27,3%		
	2-3 times a month	7a	2,7%	14a	5,5%	21	4,1%		
	Once a week	5a	1,9%	7a	2,7%	12	2,3%		
	Several times a week	5a	1,9%	20b	7,8%	25	4,8%		
Total		262	100,0%	255	100,0%	517	100,0%		

Each letter in the subscript denote a subset of the Gender category which column proportions do not differ in a significant form between them in the 0.5 level.

The participation of students as aggressors significantly depends on gender, which is confirmed with 95% certainty ( $\chi^2$  (n=517;gl=4);p=0.000. More than half of boys (50.1%) state that they have been aggressors in comparison with 27.1% of girls.

A significant relevance between the frequency in which students participate as aggressors within the school grounds (E.U.) and the school they belong to, can be seen. The institution which shows the least proportion of aggressors is E.U. 4 with 26.9%, followed by E.U. 3 with 32.2% of students who have bullied their schoolmates at least once. The institution with the greatest proportion of bullying is E.U 2 with 64.5% which differs significantly with the first two other institutions, followed by E.U. 1 with 40%. The relevance between the educational institutions and the proportion of students who have taken part in bullying is significant to a 0.01 level.

Table 8. Have you ever taken part in aggressive behaviours against anyone of your schoolmates in the last 2-3 months? Vs. Education Units (E.U.), cross-tabulation.

		Educational Units								Total	
		U. E. 1		U. E. 2		U. E. 3		U. E. 4			
		N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
Have you ever taken part in aggressive behaviours against anyone of your schoolmates in the last 2-3 months?	Never	66a, b	60,0%	66b	45,5%	99a	68,8%	87a	73,1%	318	61,4%
	Once or twice	38a	34,5%	49a	33,8%	32a, b	22,2%	22b	18,5%	141	27,2%
	2-3 times a month	1a	0,9%	15b	10,3%	4a, b	2,8%	2a	1,7%	22	4,2%
	Once a week	2a	1,8%	8a	5,5%	2a	1,4%	0a	0,0%	12	2,3%
	Several times a week	3a	2,7%	7a	4,8%	7a	4,9%	8a	6,7%	25	4,8%
Total		110	100,0%	145	100,0%	144	100,0%	119	100,0%	518	100,0%

Table 9. Bullying comparison with physical, verbal and non-verbal abuse, according to the perpetrators.

		N	Average	Out of	Student Q	P
Physical abuse	Feminine	267	1,1816	,34855	32.752	0.000**
	Masculine	260	1,4279	,60790		
Verbal abuse	Feminine	261	1,3481	,42547	18.037	0.000**
	Masculine	257	1,5281	,53365		
Non- verbal abuse	Feminine	266	1,4311	,62684	1.114	0.292
	Masculine	262	1,4924	,70556		

\*\*\*p<0.01.

A significant difference is shown in the intensity of bullying across physical and verbal abuse dimensions in which the presence of bullying is more frequent among boys in both cases, especially in relation to physical abuse followed by verbal abuse. In the non-verbal abuse variable, the relationship is similar, even though the difference between genders is lower. Verbal abuse is scored higher with girls.

When analysing the averages, physical abuse is more frequent in E.U. 1 and E.U. 2, whereas in E.U. 3 and E.U. 4 this type of behaviour is presented with a lower intensity, this can be confirmed with 95% certainty. Verbal abuse shows significant differences for the selected educational institutions of this study, in which it is more frequent in E.U. 1 and E.U. 3 and less frequent in E.U. 2 and E.U. 4.  $F(3;524)=3.689;p=0.012$ . Non-verbal abuse does not show an average difference in terms of frequency in the selected educational institutions.

Table 10. ANOVA with an Educational Unit (E.U.) factor.

		N	Average	Out of	F de Snedecor	P
Physical abuse	U.E. 1	110	1,423	,640	3.137	0.025*
	U. E. 2	145	1,319	,483		
	U. E. 3	151	1,247	,497		
	U. E. 4	122	1,252	,394		
Verbal abuse	U. E. 1	111	1,565	,579	3.689	0.012*
	U. E. 2	138	1,373	,418		
	U. E. 3	150	1,451	,485		
	U. E. 4	120	1,390	,491		
Non-verbal abuse	U. E. 1	114	1,596	,731	2.527	0.057
	U. E. 2	143	1,427	,640		
	U. E. 3	152	1,476	,686		
	U. E. 4	120	1,367	,603		

“\*”p<0.05.

## 5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this investigation was to identify school bullying characteristics across a sample of schools in Mérida city in Venezuela using the Menesini, Nocentini & Calussi (2011) measuring tool, valid for this context. The frequency in which bullying and victimisation behaviours are conducted was analysed in relation to gender and school (Educational Unit), differentiating public schools with private schools as an indicator of socioeconomic differences between students. The data analysis allowed us to establish a subcategorization of bullying in three dimensions: physical abuse, verbal abuse and non-verbal abuse.

According to the results, the type of bullying behaviour that dominates, both in victims as well as perpetrators, is mockery followed by name-calling or the use of nicknames.; this is consistent with the other investigations’ results carried out in the country (Arellano, Chirinos, López y Sánchez, 2007; Rodríguez y González, 2010). Nevertheless, there is a difference in the third type of the most frequent behaviour: theft or damages as the victims state, while the perpetrators show that indifference is also a frequent type of behaviour, closely followed by punches.

We can interpret that the divergence between the victims’ and perpetrators’ statements are attributable to a certain behaviour rational, since indifference tends to be socially perceived as less damaging in comparison to theft and damages, especially from the victims’ perspective who could dismiss exclusion as an unjustified type of aggression. The moral component of school bullying is an aspect that must be explored in a further investigation with the selected schools of this study (Menesini, Nocentini & Camodeca, 2013).

Mockery because of religion is placed last for both victims and perpetrators. It is to be noted that this item showed a small correlation in comparison with the other items both for victims and perpetrators. However, we can confirm that this variable is not relevant as a type of bullying behaviour in the investigated context. This aspect must be considered in intercultural studies aimed to validate the instrument.

In terms of the victims' bullying positions, both in boys and in girls, they did not show to have received aggressive behaviour from their schoolmates, however, boys state that they have been victims of bullying more often than girls during the week, even though no significant relevance was found between gender and victimisation. That said, school bullying behaviours significantly depend on gender, seen as the majority of boys report this.

Comparing both results, we can conclude that the relationship between perpetrator and victim is produced with a greater intensity in boys. The difference regarding the victims' and perpetrators reports stands out, according to the boys who report it more as perpetrators than the victims, with girls the opposite happens. The question to be asked is if girls do not assume or recognise the indifference, inclusion or rumours as types of aggression or bullying towards peers.

The proportion of students who reported to be bullying victims "several times a week" varies according to the school; nevertheless, victimisation by school does not have a significant relevance. The reports of young people who do not perceive themselves to be perpetrators according to school shows a significant relevance, and in this situation the obtained relevance differs from the victims' reports. In any case, between school 1 and 2 (Educational Units), a greater number of bullying incidents occur, for both victims and perpetrators. We assumed that at the beginning of this research bullying behaviours would be more frequent in public schools, due to the socio-cultural context associated with devaluation and violence cases which are often present in the students; however, according to the analysis sample from the victims' and perpetrators' reports, we cannot precise this statement with certainty. In the future, this consideration will be taken up from another set of variables.

That being said, when grouping bullying behaviours in three dimensions: physical abuse, verbal abuse and non-verbal abuse, new elements are obtained for analysis which complement the previous proposals. When inquiring how victims and perpetrators behave according to gender, a slightly higher intensity is obtained in boys than in girls for all indicators, with verbal abuse being especially relevant followed by non-verbal abuse. In this light, we confirm that the most frequent bullying behaviour among the inquired students is verbal abuse.

The least frequent behaviour among girls is non-verbal abuse which is associated with indifference, exclusion and discrimination which, as explained previously, it is often perceived as less damaging and it is possibly overlapped with moral reasoning. This result brings up once again to the necessity of going into deeper detail about rational behind non-verbal abuse in further investigations, which can be related to a small number of girl perpetrators than girls as victims, as it is in the boys' case.

Looking at grouping the three types of the mentioned bullying behaviours (physical, verbal and non-verbal), the results show significant differences related to the school of where it is coming from. In public schools, a greater frequency of victimisation by verbal abuse is reported as well as physical and non-verbal abuse. This significant correlation between verbal abuse and public schools is a relevant fact, especially when it has been stated that the modality of school bullying is more frequent in the studied sample.

This same grouping of bullying in terms of the three stated dimensions, show different results from the perpetrators' point of view, being from a public school followed by a private school that report a greater number of verbal abuse incidents followed by non-verbal abuse; the other public school is placed in third place in relation to verbal and non-verbal abuse.

According to these results we can conclude that students from public schools are perceived as

victims of both verbal and non-verbal abuse and this tendency is maintained when reports of perpetration are grouped by school. To summarise, the analysed results according to the three bullying indicators show a greater report of verbal abuse, non-verbal abuse and physical abuse in public schools, which allow us to reinforce the assumption that socioeconomic contexts should be considered in school bullying behaviours. The results show tendencies and possible contradictions that should continue to be studied in other regions and schools in order to strengthen the systematic investigation about school bullying in Venezuela.

Finally, it is important to highlight that the victims' and perpetrators' reports only represent a fraction of the problem, therefore, research about school bullying should not only focus on inadequate relationships that are established between peers, but instead it requires reviewing actions and values associated with school institutions. On the other hand, it is crucial to explore and promote teacher and family participation in contexts which incite aggression, in addition to strengthen bonds with the community, as there are many people and circumstances involved in this issue which must be considered for future co-existence and conflict resolving.

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