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ANALYSIS OF THE PERCEPTIONS OF 2ND YEAR STUDENTS OF FUNDAMENTAL EDUCATION ABOUT SCHOOL BULLYING

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Abstract. Cross-sectional study on school bullying. Objective: To identify and get to know the perceptions of children from the 2nd year of the 1st cycle of elementary school in a public school in the city of Niterói, about school bullying. Research tools: Interviews with students. Methodology: qualitative quantitative and descriptive method with content analysis and focus group technique. Sample: approximately 30 students from the 1st cycle of Elementary School. The data collected in questionnaires were treated statistically and the interviews with students were recorded, heard and transcribed and content analysis was addressed to the students' verbal records. Results: This study made it possible to observe that students brought a lot of information about bullying and violence, with clarity and objectivity, which also facilitated the approach to content analysis in the treatment of information. When conducting a study focused on childhood culture, based on the information brought by the students, as an instrument of methodological analysis, it is possible to obtain safe and practical ways to understand this children's universe. After all, they know, understand and help us understand how their thoughts and ideas work on many subjects. The understanding of bullying as a systematic intimidation, can often clarify that behavior of supposed implication of children in this age group and that some professionals and family members understand to be common. In these cases, a formative action for teachers and administrative staff would be pertinent in order to validate what children are bringing to adults in relation to their complaints about other people's behavior.

Keywords: Bullying, perceptions, children, elementary education, experiences.

ANÁLISE DAS PERCEPÇÕES DOS ALUNOS DE 2º ANO DO ENSINO FUNDAMENTAL SOBRE O BULLYING ESCOLAR

Resumo. Estudo transversal sobre bullying escolar. Objetivo: Identificar e conhecer as percepções das crianças do 2º ano do 1º ciclo do ensino fundamental de uma escola pública no município de Niterói, sobre o bullying escolar. Instrumentos de pesquisa: Entrevistas a alunos. Metodologia: método quali quantitativo e descritivo com análise de conteúdo e técnica de grupo focal. Amostra: aproximadamente 30 alunos do 1

o ciclo do Ensino Fundamental. Os dados coletados em questionários foram tratados estatisticamente e as entrevistas com alunos, gravadas, ouvidas e transcritas sendo abordada a análise de conteúdo, aos registros verbais dos alunos. Resultados: Este estudo possibilitou observar que os alunos trouxeram muitas informações a respeito do bullying e violência, com clareza e objetividade o que facilitou inclusive a abordagem da análise de conteúdo no tratamento das informações. Ao realizar do um estudo voltado a cultura da infância, com base nas informações trazidas pelos alunos, como um instrumento de análise metodológica, é possível a obtenção de caminhos seguros e práticos, para a compreensão deste universo infantil. Afinal eles sabem, compreendem e nos ajudam a entender como funcionam seus pensamentos e ideias sobre muitos assuntos. A compreensão do bullying como uma intimidação sistemática, pode esclarecer por muitas vezes aquele comportamento de suposta implicância de crianças nesta faixa etária e que alguns profissionais e familiares compreendem ser comum. Nestes casos seria pertinente uma ação formativa aos docentes e equipe administrativa a fim de validar o que as crianças estão trazendo para os adultos em relação às suas queixas quanto ao comportamento alheio.

Palavras chaves: Bullying, percepções, crianças, ensino fundamental, experiências.

ANÁLISIS DE LAS PERCEPCIONES DE LOS ESTUDIANTES DEL 2º AÑO DE EDUCACIÓN FUNDAMENTAL SOBRE EL ACOSO ESCOLAR

Resumen. Estudio transversal sobre bullying escolar. Objetivo: identificar y conocer las percepciones de los niños del segundo año del primer ciclo de la escuela primaria en una escuela pública de la ciudad de Niteroi sobre el acoso escolar. Herramientas de investigación: entrevistas con estudiantes. Metodología: método cualitativo cuantitativo y descriptivo con análisis de contenido y técnica de grupos focales. Muestra: aproximadamente 30 estudiantes del primer ciclo de la escuela primaria. Los datos recopilados en los cuestionarios fueron tratados estadísticamente y las entrevistas con los estudiantes fueron grabadas, escuchadas y transcritas y el análisis de contenido se dirigió a los registros verbales de los estudiantes. Resultados: Este estudio permitió observar que los estudiantes aportaron mucha información sobre el acoso y la violencia, con claridad y objetividad, lo que también facilitó el enfoque del análisis de contenido en el tratamiento de la información. Al realizar un estudio dirigido a la cultura infantil, basado en la información aportada por los alumnos, como instrumento de análisis metodológico, es posible obtener formas seguras y prácticas de comprender el universo de este niño. Después de todo, ellos saben, entienden y nos ayudan a comprender cómo funcionan sus pensamientos e ideas en muchos temas. La comprensión del acoso como una intimidación sistemática a menudo puede aclarar ese comportamiento de supuesta implicación de los niños en este grupo de edad y que algunos profesionales y familiares entienden que es común. En estos casos, una acción formativa para los maestros y el personal administrativo sería pertinente para validar lo que los niños traen a los adultos en relación con sus quejas sobre el comportamiento de otras personas.

Palabras clave: Bullying, percepciones, niños, educación primaria, experiencias.

Introduction

Society has long lived with bullying, but the lack of attention to the phenomenon has had disastrous consequences. In Brazil, it is in the late 1990s and early first decade of the 21st century that researchers such as Canfield (1997), Neto and Ferreira (2000/2001) and Fante (2000/2002), lead to the public recognition of bullying as a public health problem, considering the tragedies resulting from the phenomenon, such as: suicides, crimes, aggressions, among others (Fante and Prudente, 2015, p.135). It is a practice that occurs in all social segments, including school, emotionally destabilizing those who suffer it and strengthening those who practice it. The school, with its social function, has suffered with bullying actions in several sectors: culture, religion, race, gender, etc. Diversity has caused social unrest, which for some can be solved with this type of practices. It has

become fundamental in the school context the constant ethical and moral orientation that aims to respect others in its essence.

This concern lived daily in the school space contributed significantly to this scientific research. With a pedagogical practice that values the children's discourse, recognizing in it their cultural and social potential and the knowledge acquired throughout their lives, this study aimed to identify and understand the perceptions of 2nd grade students of EMPELEV, about bullying, from their socio-educational experiences. By choosing the interview methodology as a research tool, we aimed to (re)learn about the phenomenon from the verbal records of the children, that is, from their knowledge and experiences in relation to this phenomenon. We have opted for a study prior to a doctoral research, in order to evaluate what Demartini et al (2005, p.2) wisely reveals:

(...) the growing importance nowadays of learning to listen to children and young people also makes it clear that we, educators and social scientists, are not able to dialogue with children and young people and questions to what extent we are listening to their voices, often silenced?

During the research, it was also possible to recognize the overload of emotions brought by the students' reports. It was identified among the target audience of the research, ideas and behaviors sometimes contradictory both with the education received, as well as with the expectation or vision of the family in relation to their children. In addition, it was possible to verify the perception capacity of some students about themselves and towards others, requiring them a criterion of observation, criticism, and self-criticism.

According to Demartini et al. (2005, p. 2) it is necessary to listen to children's narratives in order to collectively address the serious problems of today's society.

Prior authorization for the research was based on the existing documentation in the school, because it is understood that the school space is a place of learning and research. The identity of the participants was preserved and protected, taking into account that the verbal records revealed their opinions and some information of a more intimate nature.

Methodology

Cross-sectional study with qualitative, quantitative, and descriptive approach to identify and understand students' perceptions about bullying. The choice of the focus group technique allowed a greater proximity with the respondents who positioned themselves in a relaxed manner, despite the emotional tension brought by the topic, allowing a collective listening that gave the opportunity to know their ideas, concepts, and even their behavioral positions on the subject.

The sample included 30 second-year elementary school students from a public school in Niterói, who were divided into two groups. Regarding the identification of the groups, group 1 was considered to be 14 students from 2nd B and group 2 was considered to be 16 students from 2nd A.

Inclusion criteria for participants: students duly enrolled and attending the 2nd year of the 1st cycle of primary school in the school where the research was carried out; without physical or mental illnesses that interfere with the research. Exclusion criteria: students who do not meet the aforementioned requirements.

In order to systematize the verbal records, tables were prepared with the information related to each of the questions asked in the interview and then the content

analysis was performed. As for the statistical analysis of the students' responses, the Excel program was used to measure the results and create graphs.

At the beginning of the research, when I proposed to hear their perceptions about bullying, two students intervened with the following question: "Is it to say everything?" Thus, passing the concern for judgments and condemnation of their speeches. They were welcome to express their thoughts freely.

Both groups participated in a motivational activity prior to the application of the interview, which included a story whose content referred to the topic of bullying. After the reading, the interpretation of the story was made, based on the behavioral posture of the character. The students were placed in relation to the character and then asked if the character practiced bullying towards the other. Most of them acknowledged the practice.

They then received the information that from that moment on they would participate in an investigation on bullying and that their reports on the subject would be of great relevance to the investigation.

The research included the following data collection in relation to the topic: identification of the similarity or not between the concepts of bullying and violence and conceptualization of these terms based on the knowledge acquired by students in their social contexts; identification of students as victims or perpetrators of bullying; students' perception of who practices bullying and the influence of the family in relation to behavior in the context of violence.

The students' statements, in this research received the nomenclature of "verbal register," a term adopted by Silva (2010), in his research "Use of drawing as a tool for analyzing the perception of risk and fear in traffic." In this research, Silva (2010) used this term to characterize the contributions of children's discourses in drawings, referring to "Graphic register (drawings) X Verbal register (children's speech)". In this study, we will keep the understanding of the students' discourses with the nomenclature of verbal registers (Silva, 2010).

Results

As the research began with the verification of the similarity or not between the concept of bullying and violence and the conceptualization of the term by students, it is important to clarify the concepts of these terms to understand the students' way of thinking and, consequently, to refer to them theoretically. Paviani (2016, p. 9) clarifies that "the origin of the term violence, comes from the Latin *violentia*, which expresses the act of violating another or violating oneself. In addition, the term seems to indicate something outside the natural state, something linked to force, impetus, deliberate behavior that produces physical damage such as: injuries, torture, death, or psychological damage that produces humiliations, threats, offenses."

The author also states that, philosophically, "the practice of violence expresses acts contrary to someone's freedom and will, and therein lies its moral and ethical dimension." He also stresses that "these general characteristics of the concept of violence vary in time and space, according to the cultural patterns of each group or time, and are illustrated by the semantic difficulties of the concept."

Regarding the concept of bullying, Silva (2010) clarifies that since it is an English word with no translation in Brazil, the term bullying is "used to qualify violent behavior in the school environment, both for boys and girls. Among the violent behaviors are aggression, harassment, and disrespectful actions carried out in a recurrent and intentional manner by the aggressors.

On the definition of bullying, Fante (2012, p.29) reveals it as "an intrinsically cruel behavior, where the stronger turn the weaker into objects of amusement and pleasure, through "pranks" that disguise the purpose of mistreatment and intimidation."

In a recent law that went into effect in 2015, bullying is classified as:

"any act of physical or psychological violence, intentional and repetitive that occurs without evident motivation, practiced by an individual or group, against one or several persons, with the purpose of intimidating or assaulting them, causing pain and anguish to the victim in a relationship of imbalance of power between the parties involved. Systematic bullying is characterized when there is physical or psychological violence in acts of intimidation, humiliation, or discrimination and, in addition: physical aggressions; personal insults; systematic comments and derogatory nicknames; threats by any means; derogatory graffiti; prejudicial expressions; conscious and premeditated social isolation; mockery." (Law No. 13.185/2015)

After providing the concepts and definitions related to the phenomenon, it was time for the students' verbal records. It should be noted that the knowledge provided by them was transcribed in its entirety, analyzed from the construction of their own thinking, taking into account their social experience, and related to the theoretical references on the subject. At no time was a subjective analysis of their ideas made, thus avoiding contaminating the research with the opinion of the adult (researcher), maintaining the focus on the children's perceptions.

Step 1. Similarity between the concepts of harassment and violence

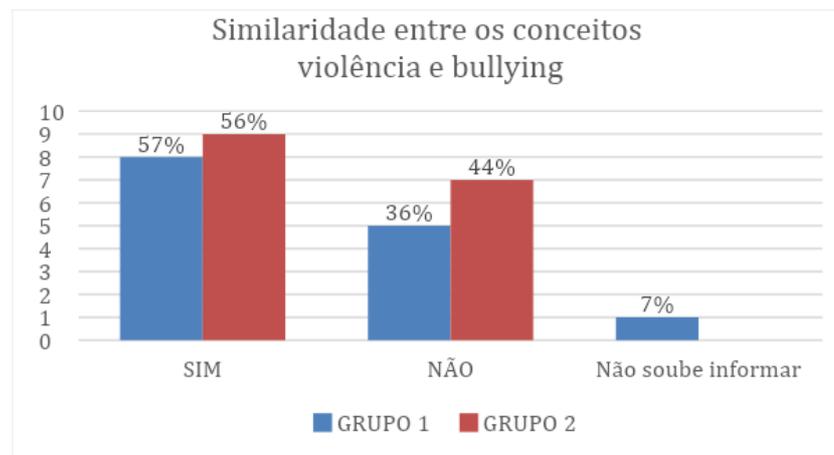


Figure 1. Similarity between the concepts of violence and bullying.

Note: Source: (own)

For this question, children should indicate affirmatively or negatively (by raising their hand) whether bullying and violence have the same meaning or not.

Comment

According to the results obtained, Figure 1 shows that for students there is a similarity between violence and bullying. When comparing the theoretical concepts between the terms, the relationship between them is noted, differing only in terms of intentionality, which in bullying can be only for pleasure; and continuity, because in bullying it is a repetitive aggression of violence.

Given this conceptual specificity with respect to bullying, and the fact that for the students there may not have been a conceptual orientation about the term, neither in their social life nor in their school life, most of them understand both concepts as similar.

Stage 1.1 and 1.2. Students' perceptions of the conceptualization of violence and bullying.

In order to understand effectively their perceptions of the terms, this question gives students the opportunity to expose the possible similarities and differences between the concepts, according to their knowledge.

Thus, it is important to highlight the theoretical references on the characterization of both concepts, understanding that this procedure will help in the analysis of the students' verbal registers.

Paviani (2016, p. 10-11) reveals that as the concept of violence is broad, it becomes difficult to typify and classify violence as he considers that everything depends on "the chosen criteria, the evidence of empirical reality, the ways of combating violence, and other modalities." But he understands that it is useful to typify it because it allows us to imagine its aspects. Thus, the author mentions the following types of violence: "provoked and gratuitous, real and symbolic, systematic and non-systematic, objective and subjective, legitimized and illegitimate, permanent and transitory violence." The author clarifies that these typifications are didactic with the aim of visualizing the phenomenon of violence, but then makes real violence pass:

of war, revolution, terrorism, genocide, murder, organized crime, urban violence, violence against children, adolescents, women, rape, sexual harassment, *bullying*, vandalism. It also adds corruption and its derivatives, such as nepotism, bribery, extortion, influence peddling, and other modalities.

It is striking that the author cites the phenomenon of bullying as a specific type of violence, which further reinforces the students' understanding of the similarity between the aforementioned concepts.

Regarding bullying, Silva (2010, p 23-24) classifies it in its forms: verbal, where he considers the following actions: insulting, offending, swearing, mocking, putting pejorative nicknames, making offensive jokes, "teasing"; physical and material: hitting, kicking, punching, hitting, pushing, hurting, pinching, stealing, or destroying the victim's belongings, throwing objects at the victims; psychological and moral: irritating, humiliating and ridiculing, excluding, isolating and ignoring, belittling or ridiculing, discriminating, terrorizing and threatening, blackmailing and intimidating, tyrannizing, dominating, harassing, defaming, passing notes and drawings among peers of an offensive nature, scheming, gossiping, or rumoring (more common among girls), sexual: abusing, raping, harassing, and insinuating; and virtual: cyberbullying, spreading slander and malice overwhelmingly through communication devices (cell phone and internet).

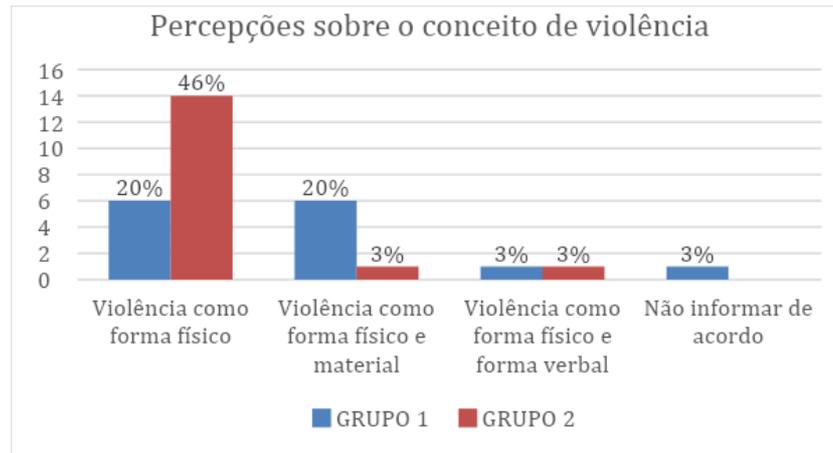


Figure 2: Perception of the concept of violence

Note: Source: (own)

Comment

In their narratives, the students were objective and clear, using language that was understandable and compatible with their sociocultural context.

The verbal records were transcribed and analyzed according to the content provided. To facilitate the analysis of the information provided by the students, the verbal records were classified into three forms of violence: violence as a physical form: characterized by aggressive and/or violent physical contact; violence as a physical and material form: characterized by aggressive and/or violent physical contact, with the use of objects, firearms, or bladed weapons; violence as a physical and verbal form: characterized by aggressive and/or violent physical contact, combined with verbal and/or psychological aggression.

In this way, it was possible to verify that most of the children perceive violence as a physical form, brought in their verbal records as: *Pushing, hitting; It is... violence is... something like if the person is hitting you, mistreating you, assaulting you, that is; It is... pulling hair, kicking someone in the face is... hitting them, many things! Hurting, it is.... Pushing others; Pushing, pulling hair; When a person is going to hit you and you don't like it; Hitting; It's when one person hits another; Hitting others; It's when one person wants to hit another; It's when you hit people and they don't like it; When people hit others they don't like it; When they hit you, they kick you, they hit you in the face; It's when one person hits another very hard; When the other hits.*

Although it appears in the survey with a lower percentage, children perceive violence as a physical and material form, characterized in the verbal records of the students as: *Ahhh, shot, hit and bomb and.... death is... shot in the middle of the face, stabbed and Hitting the woman (Student H), Wrong. _ Hurt, ... get slippers and hit; Shots ... and everything she said to Student H. Shooting, hitting and bombing. It's like flip-flops, extension cords, hitting, punching in the face; Violence is shooting, strafing, SKA, AK (referring to types of weapons), stabbing, machete; It would be you punching a person in the face, sticking the knife in other people's hearts, killing a person for no reason, murdering a person and erasing all the evidence, blaming a person and also shooting a person in the brain.*

With an even lower percentage than the other data provided, violence as a physical and verbal form is also addressed by the students, who refer to it as follows: *Hit, curse, call me fat, call me..., give me band, curse; Punch, hit, curse.*

The verbal records of these students characterized their perceptions of violence. As the aim of this article is to identify and get to know them, we could only stop here,

considering that their knowledge is in line with the theoretical references on the subject. Nevertheless, let us go a little further; let us bring the data on violence only against children and adolescents, although two children mentioned violence against women.

According to the Brazilian Pediatric Society, based on data from the National System of Aggressions and Notifications (SINAN) of the Ministry of Health, an average of 233 types of aggressions (physical, psychological, and torture) against children and adolescents up to 19 years of age are reported daily in our country. In 2017, the sum of these three types of records reached 85,293 notifications, occurring a large part of them in the domestic sphere, or by relatives and cohabitants of the victims. Of this total, 69.5% (59,293) were due to physical violence; 27.1% (23,110) to psychological violence, and 3.3% (2,890) to episodes of torture.

Regarding violence associated with the use of objects, firearms, or targets according to data from the ATLAS Violence 2019 survey, organized by the Institute of Economic and Applied Research and the Brazilian Forum for Public Security (Cerqueira et al, 2018, p. 81), "between the years 1980 and 2017, about 955,000 people were killed with the use of firearms." Furthermore, it is possible to observe in their narratives that the listed weapons are commonly visible in their daily lives in the peripheral communities of large cities. They are heavy weapons used by drug gangs.

From these data, we can verify and conclude that children have adequate knowledge on the subject, either by virtue of their social context, delimited by conflicts, intra and extra-family violence, or based on the information transmitted by the media - television or online (internet).

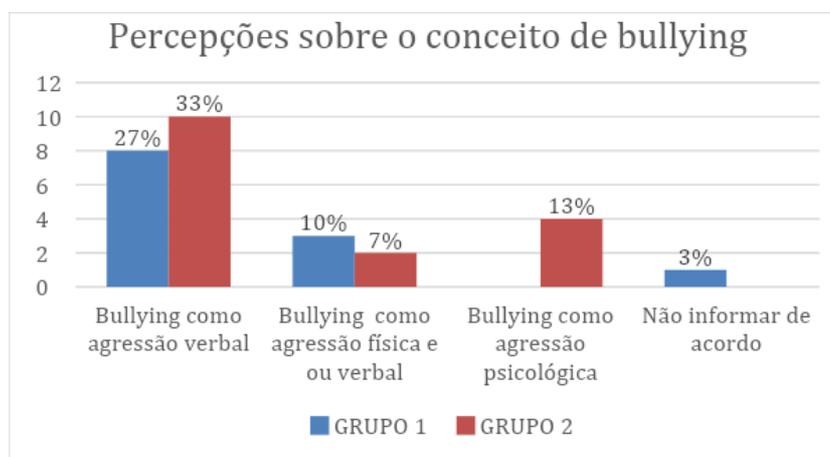


Figure 3: Perceptions of the concept of school bullying.

Note: Source: (own)

Comment

As for the procedure related to the categorization of the forms of bullying, the strategy was maintained in accordance with what was done with the concept related to violence. The proposal consisted of a better understanding of the verbal records of the students in relation to the concept of the phenomenon. As mentioned above, Silva (2010) categorized the forms of bullying by virtue of its varieties as: verbal, physical and material, psychological and moral, sexual and virtual.

For this research, the verbal records were categorized as bullying as verbal aggression: characterized by insults, derogatory nicknames; bullying as physical and verbal aggression: characterized by aggressive and violent physical contact and verbal aggression; and bullying as psychological aggression: characterized by emotional and

moral harassment. It should be noted that this categorization at the time of data analysis had as its main proposal the separation of aggression: verbal, physical, and emotional.

As we can see in the graph, for the most part, students revealed that they understand the concept of bullying as related to verbal aggression, brought in their records as follows: *Offensive, ... like calling you a whale, fat..., shit; calling you a bore..., calling you fat...; calling you a cuckold, cuckold, asshole, shit, motherfucker, "Get down from there cuckold, get down from there!" (imitating the Northeastern accent); Bullying is an offense, like if the person is calling you fat, whale, ugly, that's an offense; It's calling you horn, ox, cow ... rrsrrsrs, dog and ... rrsrrsr no..., wait..., what do you call that thing? Rrsrrsrs stinky snake poop; It could be scaring the person or talking about fat, talking whale, talking giraffe and my sister is a giraffe, that's why I call it that... and I keep saying it's an animal, but it's a dog; bullying is calling my mom fat, calling you (referring to the teacher), calling... calling other things, calling everybody shit, calling everything boring, idiot; Well, it would be a.... I would be a kind of person who only knows how to talk... ah, you are ugly, you are shameless, heartless, then you hit others in the face for no reason, the teacher punishes you and then, then he does it all over again and then in a while you hit people, the person you don't like and then when you get blamed, then you.... because the teacher defends you so much, you decide to pretend that you are hurt and blame the person you don't like; to curse; to curse; It's like when a person tells you that you are fat, that you are boring; When a person mistreats another person; It's when this person is called fat, toothless; It's when other people insult you; It's when they call you fat, whale; For me it's when a person calls another person what they don't like; When a person keeps calling other people names; There is someone who is fat and the person says fat, whale; It's when a person calls another person something and when a person calls that person fat, thin, toothpick.*

Other children also brought bullying as physical aggression and/or verbal *hitting, calling stupid; Bullying to me is more specific, it's more thrown in the United States, because there the kids are more like, because bullying in the U.S. people put each other's face in the floor, lock in the closet, beat until bleeding these things there; Hitting and cursing; When you curse and hit.* A smaller group revealed that bullying is psychological aggression: *Bullying is picking on people and calling them fat, annoying, irritating; It's like when the person will say you're fat, you're annoying; It's like a person who won't stop picking on the other; It's when a person looks at the other person's ass. It's like him, he looks in the window and keeps seeing people doing number 1 and number 2; It's when one person is always picking on the other; Bullying is to keep picking on people and keep calling people fat, boring, annoying.*

In a recently published article, referring to a cross-sectional epidemiological study of an exploratory nature that consisted of analyzing the prevalence of bullying victimization and aggression and the typologies associated with sociodemographic factors and risk behaviors in students from 6th to 9th grade in the municipality of Campina Grande, Paraíba, Marcolino et al (2018, p.3), reveals the following statistics:

Among the types of bullying suffered by students, psychological bullying (spreading gossip, exclusion from activities, insults, threats, ridicule) predominated in the situations; 23.3% of students reported having suffered this type of school violence. While physical bullying (slapping, punching, kicking, pushing) and virtual bullying (sending messages by telephone or Internet of threats, insults, ridiculing, offenses) reached 15% and 5.5% of students, respectively.

It should be noted that the study considered swearing as psychological harassment.

Although the statistics have provided a group of students with an older age range than those surveyed for this article, a comparative analysis between this article and the data offered by the research of Marcolino et al (2018) is possible, because we are really

providing real data subject to projections. For if today primary school students report a higher incidence of verbal aggression (insults), considered in the research of Marcolino et al as psychological, (insults among others), it is possible that this type of aggression will be maintained in the future. Based on this assumption, we can observe how much children know about what they say.

When comparing the two conceptual tables of violence and bullying, it is clearer that the differentiation between the concepts may have been recognized by the form of aggression applied, in violence the students pointed out a greater incidence of physical and material form and for bullying the verbal form. This may be related to their own school experiences. The students know that there are occasional conflicts in which sometimes verbal and/or physical aggressions occur that have a context with a beginning, a middle, and an end. However, they also know that there are those conflicts without explanation, without meaning, in which the aggressor insinuates for the sake of insinuating, curses for the sake of cursing, attacks for the sake of attacking, and that only end up bringing harm to the one who is offended or attacked.

We can also understand that these children's narratives provide not only the students' interpretation of these concepts, but mainly their understanding of them due to their social experiences. Vygotsky (1992, 28) helps us to understand this by clarifying that:

concepts are cultural constructs, internalized by individuals throughout their development process. The attributes necessary and sufficient to define a concept are established based on the characteristics of elements found in the real world, selected as relevant by different cultural groups.

Giving continuity to their knowledge from their verbal records, the research gives the student the possibility to talk about their social experience in relation to bullying, either as a victim or as a victimizer. For this purpose, it is important to clarify the characteristics referred to the protagonism of bullying: victims, aggressors, and spectators.

Regarding the characteristics of the victims, Silva (2010, p. 37) clarifies the existence of the typical victim, the provocative victim, and the aggressor victim.

With respect to

the typical victim, the author reveals that they are students who have poor socialization skills. In general, they are shy or reserved, and are unable to react to provocative and aggressive behavior directed at them. They are often physically weaker or have some "mark" that makes them stand out from the majority of students (chubby, thin...); they are of different race, creed, socioeconomic status, or sexual orientation.

The provocative victim, on the other hand,

are those capable of provoking aggressive reactions against themselves in their peers. They are usually hyperactive, impulsive, and/or immature children who create a tense atmosphere at school without any explicit intention. They are victims who end up camouflaging the real aggressor (Silva, 2010, p. 40).

The victims of bullying are the ones who reproduce the abuse suffered to other victims, thus causing a vicious circle of bullying (Silva, 2010, p. 41).

As for the aggressor

is the one who victimizes the weakest. The aggressor, of both sexes, is usually an individual who shows little empathy. He is often a member of a broken family, in which there is little or no emotional relationship. (...) He feels a compelling need to dominate and subdue others, to impose himself through power and threat, and to get what he wants. May boast of real or imagined superiority over other students. Has a bad temper, is impulsive, is easily angered, and has little resistance to frustrations (Fante, 2012, p.73).

We also have in this context of the bullying phenomenon the spectator that Fante (2012, p. 73) explains as the student who witnesses bullying, but does not suffer or practice it. He represents the vast majority of students who live with the problem and adopt the law of silence for fear of becoming a new target of the bully.

Stage 2: Bullying protagonism

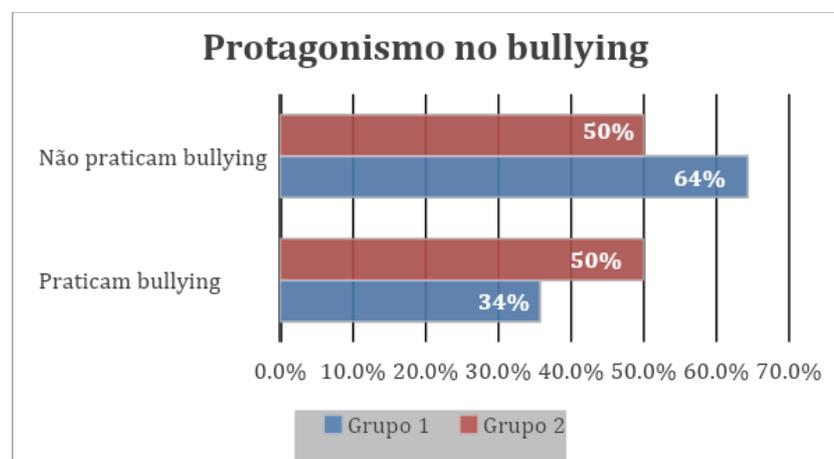


Figure 4: Protagonism in school bullying

Note: Source: (own)

Throughout the research process, the students presented themselves in a very natural way. There was no judgment of the position of one student or another, not even criticism when one accused another. There were reports, but no conflicts. At this point in the research, when their role in relation to bullying was questioned, that is, what is their position in relation to the phenomenon, the students let their feelings about it show, they see themselves as victims, spectators, or even aggressors. It was a very interesting experience because they were able to recognize themselves in the context and assign them authorship or guilt, characterizing the capacity they have to perceive themselves.

The ability to perceive themselves and the other, the empathy perceived in the moments when they revealed their victims were situations that provided greater sensitivity at the time of the research, which allowed a glimpse of the students' competence and discernment in front of social issues of great relevance for the processes of human development. Gomes and Aquino, (2019, p. 5) reinforce the competence of the child as a social subject, stating that:

childhood and children are important now, in the present era, because of the position and function they occupy in society as a whole, because of the active role they play in the generational division of labor and in the construction and determination of their lives, in cultural production and dissemination, in the reorganization and propagation of educational and cultural ideas, in politics (albeit latent), and in the

economic movement it generates. Children's lives are interconnected with those of other subjects - adults, youth, and the elderly - placing them in a constant position of action and participation in their spaces and times, which guarantees another understanding of the concept of childhood and the understanding that children are social agents.

It can be observed in the results shown in Figure 4 that most of the children exposed that they do not practice bullying (57%) and the others revealed the practice of the phenomenon (43%). According to statistics regarding the incidence of bullying in the school space, with students from 6th to 9th grade in the age range between 13 and 17 years, the PISA survey (2015) highlighted that 7.4% of students reported feeling humiliated by provocations and 19.8% had already practiced bullying. This is contrary to what has appeared in this research, but it may become a future reality if there is no ethical and moral work in the school context, taking into account that those who suffer bullying may also practice it considering their frustration and inability to overcome it.

Although Fante and Pedra (2008, p.61) clarify that bystanders are children from the whole school who witness bullying actions and do nothing to intervene. At the time of the interview with the groups, these bystanders appeared narrating facts seen. In their narratives it was clear the intention of repudiation and denunciation for those who practice bullying and solidarity for those who suffer the action. Fante and Pedra (2008, p. 61) explain this behavior because "bystanders who constantly witness the embarrassing situations experienced by the victims suffer the consequences. Many bystanders repudiate the aggressors' actions, but do nothing to intervene."

Step 3: Characteristics of the bully

Seeking greater depth in their impressions for the research, step 3 brings the students' impressions of the bullying practitioners. Thus, the following results were obtained about the characteristics of the bully: *Bad (4); Impatient (2); Ugly (6); Beautiful (1); Bitter chocolate under the carpet (1); Bad without feelings; Heartless; No love, no affection; Represents for me a person involved; Abuser who gets involved every day with me; A person who has no heart for people; Threatening; Mistreats others, is annoying; Picks on me a lot and is also a bad person who has more things than you; Naughty; Is popular, is conceited; Has deficiencies; A person with no heart, no brain, and ridiculously boring; Boring, ridiculous, and ugly.* From group 2, two students did not know how to identify the bully.

It is striking that in their responses, the students identified the aggressor as a person who presents several behavioral demands, such as impatience, perversity (in the sense of viciously, unfeeling, heartless); neediness (without love, without affection); inconvenience (annoying, annoying, intrusive). As for the use of the words ugly, pretty, these are not related to physical appearance, but to the behavioral attitude adopted that in a social context is not well seen. We can clarify that this type of characteristic (ugly and pretty) is usually used by relatives when the child is young and presents certain behaviors socially, i.e., when he/she behaves correctly he/she is pretty and when not, ugly. As for the use of the expressions: *he has deficiencies; ... no brain...*; we can consider that the students understand the bully as a sick person (regarding the deficiencies) and that he does not think before doing something. Another interesting situation to highlight in the research is that two students created and used the term *bullyist* to identify the bully and behind this term brings as a characteristic the inconvenience (implies with everyone).

It is possible to understand children's verbal registers by their clarity and objectivity, and even when they express themselves using a single term, or from

somewhat more subjective answers, it is possible to know their concepts. Vygotsky, quoted by La Taille (1992, p.30), explains about children's concept formation:

the language of the cultural group in which the child develops directs the process of concept formation: the developmental trajectory of a concept is already predetermined by the meaning that the word designating it has in the adult language.

Regarding the metaphorical response of the student in group 1 "bitter chocolate under the carpet," he was asked to clarify the subjectivity of his answer and, as incredible as it may seem, his answer was clear and objective.

"Bitter chocolate represents the person. It's very boring, it's very bad. Now under the rug is that it is no good for anything, it is no good for anything.

I understand, so what is under the carpet is useless? Is it like a hidden dirt? Can it be? (teacher)

No, no... I just imagined that under the carpet is the floor."

With this explanation, the student is able to understand that the bully is an uncomfortable (boring) and perverse (bad) person with no social function.

Another situation that arose from a student refers to the following expression: "He gets *involved with me a lot and he is also a bad person who has more things than you.*" Three situations can be highlighted in this expression: involvement, perversity, and ostentation. There are children who have the opportunity to have more toys, more school supplies, and other objects to which others do not have access. Moreover, in this way, they understand that they are superior to others because of that. Then they display their belongings as trophies in an attempt to humiliate others. Most likely, the child who made this revelation tried to expose this quote "*who has more stuff than you*" as one of the characteristics of a bully.

Vygotsky quoted by La Taille et al (1992, 28), clarifies that

concepts are cultural constructs, internalized by individuals throughout their development process. The attributes necessary and sufficient to define a concept are established on the basis of the characteristics of the elements found in the real world, selected as relevant by the different cultural groups. It is the cultural group in which the individual develops that will provide him with the universe of meanings that organizes the real world into categories (concepts), denominated with words of the group language.

Stage 4: Influence of the family on children's behavior in the face of violence

In step 4, the students exposed the occurrence or non-occurrence of family influence on their reactions to violence in the school context. The aim was to find out from the students whether their families guide them in relation to aggressive retaliatory attitudes towards bullying practices.

In group 1, 9 students said that their families told them not to retaliate, not to hit back. Within this group, three students explained that their families advise them to seek an adult at the time of the aggression, two others reported that although they are advised not to hit back, they do hit back and another (1) student revealed that the family does not advise them to hit, but advises them to defend themselves. Some students clarified that the family guided not to hit back and pointed out as family members favorable to non-aggression, the father, the sister, the mother, among others.

Regarding the encouragement of aggression, four students pointed to the father (1), the mother (2), and the sibling (1) as the instructors for the child to retaliate for the aggressive action. The student who reported receiving guidance from the father said that he tells the father that he needs to talk to solve the problems.

One (1) student was direct in saying that the mother is different, and that she directs to fight.

In group 2, eight (8) students revealed that their families do not encourage them to retaliate to the aggression suffered and of this group 1 student said that he receives guidance from his mother to talk to an adult (or teacher). Only one student was unable to respond, the others answered very naturally and authentically.

Regarding incitement to hit back, one (1) student said that he receives guidance from his family to hit back if he is assaulted.

Others clarified that the family does not advise them to retaliate against the aggression, but the father does (3), the brother (1), the grandmother (1). Two (2) students revealed that they react and counterattack on their own, but one of them said that the mother advises them to talk to the teacher, to the adult. Moreover, if he sees that he has not solved it, he reacts on his own and another said that the family does not teach, but gives it back to him right away.

It could be seen that there is an average between families advising not to fight back and those encouraging them to "defend" or fight back. There were a total of 15 families, but of this group, three students, even when told not to hit back, reported hitting back. Also of note were the two children who said they hit back on their own without family support, either positive or negative. What is striking about these responses is that the children reveal the person in the family who guides them to hit back and the one who advises them not to do so. Another interesting fact concerns the child who, although encouraged by the parent to fight back, reacts by not accepting such guidance and continues to guide the parent who is talking about resolving conflicts.

It can be seen that there is family influence, but also the understanding of some children in relation to the facts and the consequences of certain actions. Antunes (200, p. 13 and 14) explains that

(...) each man is a unique creature, bound to certain natural laws but free to conceive others. This incredible mixture of possibilities makes the types of "personalities" that exist among human beings almost infinite. Your "personality" comprises the way in which the set of characteristics inherited from your parents and acquired in your relationship with the world is organized in you. (...) It is clear that your personality harbors things that have been born in you, whether you like them or not, and others that have been constructed in your relationship with the world. The things inherited by you, which may naturally be different from those inherited by your brother, as long as your parents are the same, characterize your "temperament," while the things you acquire characterize your "character."

The influence of the paternal personality on the children was clear in the questioning in relation to the family orientation in conflict management. Making it possible to observe how much of their personalities, temperaments, and character were exposed here.

Discussion and conclusions

This study allowed us to observe that the students provided a lot of information about bullying and violence and were clear and objective in their answers allowing the understanding and knowledge of their ideas and thoughts. Thus, it was considered that approaching the culture of childhood, with the use of verbal records as a methodological tool of analysis, is a possible, safe, and practical way, after all children know, understand, and help us to understand how their thoughts and ideas on many topics work. Arroyo (2016) refers to the audience of students in the research because, in addition to valuing them, it allows greater knowledge and understanding about them and reveals:

(...) by giving voice to those who have been silenced for so long, their self-image can destroy so many stereotypical images that weigh on them. Their discourses can be less prejudiced than many discourses of the media, politics, and even pedagogy. Nothing better to revise our vision of childhood, adolescence, and youth than to confront them with their own vision. (Arroyo, 2016, p.81).

Throughout the research process, the students proved to be comfortable with the questions and their answers. They expressed their thoughts without fear of judgment, cited examples, experiences, and much knowledge on the subject after all the topic brought up, besides being very serious, because of the serious consequences in terms of emotional health of our children and youth and today and it is within a space where they want to find safety and respect that is the school.

The students demonstrated in their verbal records that they know violence and bullying in its different forms, harassment, physical aggression with and without the use of different types of weapons or objects, offenses, insults. And that despite having provided similar characteristics in relation to the terms, they reveal that they are different concepts, having prevailed for violence the physical aggression (corporal aggression) and with respect to bullying, the verbal aggression (moral, psychological, and emotional aggression). They consider the bully as a person with emotional (needy, without feelings), behavioral (bad, ugly), and even pathological deficiencies (brainless, disabled). Students are aware and understand that violence is not the best option, but sometimes some opt for this type of attitude, either because of family orientation or because of protective instinct. Others understand that dialogue and help from adults (teachers or not) facilitate the conflict mitigation process. These are choices and a critical sense in relation to certain guidelines that they receive in their social contexts or that they define by personal choice.

As it is perceived, students have the capacity to expose their social experiences, to know and recognize important topics to be discussed in the school context, to the point of contributing effectively in their production of thought and knowledge. Thus, it can even be verified that from their knowledge and experiences it is even possible a psychosocial intervention for the improvement of socio-educational relationships.

An important point to highlight in this research refers to the importance of understanding bullying as systematic bullying, since in the school context, it can often clarify that behavior of alleged involvement of children in this age group and that some professionals and family members understand that it is common. In these cases, a training action to teachers and administrative staff would be pertinent to validate what children are bringing to adults regarding their complaints about the behavior of others.

It is important to think about interventions that seek to understand this action in a broader way, starting from a conversation with children, families, and education professionals, even with the aim of minimizing the actions of bullies or even creating a

practice so that this type of behavior is not postponed in other phases of development of these children.

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