INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ADOLESCENCE AND YOUTH
https://doi.org/10.1080/02673843.2019.1602064

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Positive relationships for the prevention of bullying and cyberbullying: a study in Aragón (Spain)

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ABSTRACT

Coexistence between adolescents in educational centres and people outside these centres is increasingly mediated by the use of different technologies. The present study analyses the perceptions of 4,273 students in secondary education in Aragon (Spain) on how the positive relationships that occur in the educational centre (among students and their classmates, teachers, school principals and other staff) and between the family and the school mediate the prevention of bullying and cyberbullying. The study was performed in 20 educational centres of the Autonomous Community of Aragon, considering the stratified representation of the provinces, private and public schools, and rural and urban areas. The study was conducted by applying questionnaires on bullying and cyberbullying, among other questions, and by evaluating the relationship between students and the rest of the educational community. An analysis was elaborated from a structural equation model (SEM), using as exogenous variables the student's assessment of relations with the rest of the members of the educational community and, as endogenous variables, victimization, aggression and perception of bullying situations and cyberbullying (bystanders). This study concluded by exposing aspects related to these protective factors, which are so important for the development of a positive coexistence and personal relationships. Our research brings advances towards a positive and transformative vision for preventing bullying and cyberbullying. From this proposal, we find interesting the importance and necessity to overcome the silence of cyber-victimized adolescents, reinforcing not only the peer network in the educational centre but also teacher and family networks.

ARTICLE HISTORY
Received 25 March 2019
Accepted 28 March 2019

KEYWORDS
Bullying; cyberbullying; aggressor; victim; bystander; prevention

Introduction

This research is part of a completed work on the map of coexistence in Aragon within the *I Comprehensive Plan against bullying* (order ECD/715/2016). This map has included all of the members of the educational context. The part that we present here is situated in the analysis of the positive relations between students and the rest of the educational community as a protection factor preventing relational or indirect bullying and cyberbullying, the two types of school harassment with the greatest prevalence in our sample. We share the vision of Giménez, Arnáiz, Cerezo, and Prodócimo (2018) that bullying is a topic of great educational and social occupation (Egeberg, Thorvaldsen, & Ronning, 2016; González-Calatayud, 2018) and that it is, therefore, important to start

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from the voices of the people involved (Cano & Cortés, 2018) to determine how the subject can be studied from a positive and preventive approach.

In this work we have based on two models: Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model that collects the theoretical systemic vision that we want to give to the subject, and, linked to it, the Rawlings's model (2015) on school connectedness as a preventive factor for bullying behaviours. We believe that it is key to frame this study within the ecological framework of Bronfenbrenner as other authors have done previously (Hong, Lee, Lee, Lee, & Garbarino, 2014; Huang, Hong, & Espelage, 2013; Lee, 2011; Santoyo Castillo & Frías, 2014).

The actors involved in bullying or cyberbullying (victims, aggressors or bystanders) can be considered as the the cause of micro-level relationships – or, the lack of them- (with group of equals, family, teachers) (Yang, 2005), mesosystemic (the relationships that occur between micro environments) (Harris & Petrie, 2003), exosystemic (bystanders do not participate directly, although they are witnesses of violence) (Shin, 2000) and the macrosystem (alluding to the culture of individualization, aggression and absolute imposition) (Santoyo Castillo & Frías, 2014). Next, we expose researches in this line.

Being the students' context is so relevant for preventing aggressions, Cerezo and Rubio (2017) pointed out, in a comparative study of different Spanish regulations, that more proactive measures focused on the educational community are lacking. Also, following the ecological framework, it is something that is claimed in the South Korean context (Hong et al., 2014) or from the United States (Lee, 2011) In fact, as shown by Acquah, Topalli, Wilson, Junttila, and Niemi (2016), social loneliness at school is often associated with higher levels of bullying victimisation. Conversely, the scientific literature and various programmes have collected these measures. Furmam (2004, p. 222) alluded to "the management teams, teachers and families [who] are called to build schools as ethical communities that are involved in joint processes".

The importance of the support of the whole educational community was shown by Álvarez-Garc ía, Dobarro, Álvarez, Núñez, and Rodríguez (2014) when checking the validity and reliability of a questionnaire on cybervictimization with 2,490 Asturian students in secondary education. The mediating and protective role of friendship appeared relevant in the work of Leung, Wong, and Farver (2018) with Chinese students. If the peer group is very important for this prevention, the family is equally relevant (Bonil-Nissim & Sasson, 2018; Duque & Teixido, 2016; Ibáñez-Cubillas, Díaz-Martín, & Pérez-Torregrosa, 2017; Keelan, Schenk, McNally, & Fremouw, 2014; Offrey & Rinaldi, 2017). The ability of families to establish positive relationships with other families and the tutorial dialogue on educational guidelines become significant. In addition to contextual factors (educational centre, teaching staff, friendship, families), there are also emotional and personal aspects (Hamer & Konijn, 2016). For example, among the assertive strategies emphasized by the students, we can find calling the police (19.8%), helping or defending the victim (18.7%), talking to the aggressor (16.3%), preserving their privacy (15.7%), not counterattacking (10.9%), restricting access to ICT (Information and Communication Technology) (10.1%) or saving conversations (0.9%). Regarding confrontational actions, the following are highlighted: returning the aggression (69%), punishing the aggressor (33.8%), beating the aggressor (30.4%), excluding him/her (0.6%), or passive strategies such as avoiding strangers (46.4%), ignoring aggressors (23.5%), restricting the use of ICT (28.8%) or promoting antiabuse laws (13.5%) (Giménez et al., 2018).

The relationship between relational bullying and cyberbullying has been increasingly evidenced. Most proposals serve both modalities. At the international level, for example, we point out Barlett's proposal (2017) with his Gentile Cyberbullying Model (BGCM). This model is a learning-based theory that posits the importance of positive cyberbullying attitudes predicting subsequent cyberbullying perpetration. Furthermore, the tenants of the BGCM state that cyberbullying attitude are likely to form when the online aggressor believes that the online environment allows individuals of all physical sizes to harm others and they are perceived as anonymous. In Spain, work has also been conducted from a global and preventive perspective to improve coexistence and from a gender perspective (Díaz-Aguado & Martín, 2011; Rios-González, Peña Axt, Duque Sanchez, & De

Botton Fernández,2018), emphasizing the need for teacher training and the inclusion of the entire educational community, or from reviews of research on bullying from social, psychological and educational perspectives (Nocito, 2017), doctoral theses on cyberbullying from a preventive approach in primary education (Romero, 2017; Varela, 2012) or social networks with more than 1,300 adolescents in Andalusia (Bernal & Angulo, 2013).

Nacimiento, Rosa, and Mora-Merchán (2017) valued the need to intervene from programmes that improve different coping strategies. Conversely, from the University of Murcia, Cerezo and Rubio (2017) emphasized the need to update and adapt the regulations developed in relation to school bullying and transfer them with relevant modifications to cyberbullying situations, asking for the implementation of more educational measures against those that are punitive. In fact, brave clubs, the empowerment of the entire educational community in zero violence and the KiVa programme are along this line and claim to work with bystanders to prevent harassment (Conde & Ávila, 2018; Olenik-Shemesh, Heiman, & Eden, 2017; Vidu, Valls, Puigvert, Melgar, & Joanpere, 2017).

The study by Giménez, Arnaiz, Cerezo and Prodócimo (2018, p. 29), carried out with 1,704 primary and secondary students and 238 teachers, is relevant, and regarding cyberbullying, it was concluded that "the intervention most used by the teaching staff is to communicate, mediate and seek help, and for the students, the strategies of avoidance, protection and denunciation [..] show little confidence in the teaching staff in relation to cyberbullying ".

Hypothetical model

Considering as a basis the Bronbrenbrenner's ecological model, and the aforementioned researches in which the accent is placed on the students' context to prevent aggressions of relational bullying and cyberbullying, the SEM analysis by Rawlings (2017) has been taken as reference for the present investigation. In this model, the author points out that the bully perpetration and victimization is concurrently and longitudinally associated with low levels of school connectedness and student engagement with his/her close context (Fettrow, 2013; Hong & Espelage, 2012).

To analyze how school connectedness can be a preventive factor in situations of risk of bullying and cyberbullying, the author constructs an SEM model in which the effect of these relationships in the school on the probability of being a bullying or cyberbullying victim or aggressor is measured. To analyse the latent construct of "school connectedness" the Goodenow's (1993) Psychological Sense of School Membership (PSSM) Scale is used, taking as observed variables the feeling of belonging to the center, the relations of respect of the student with their peers and teachers, and their trust in their teachers. In the case of the latent variables of "Peer Victimization" and "Bully Perpetration", Rawlings uses The University of Illinois Aggression Scales (Espelage & Holt, 2001) to assess the occurrence of bullying behavior and victimization by peers, and the Internet Harassment Victimization scale and Internet Harassment Perpetration scale, both by Ybarra, Espelage, and Mitchell (2007), to assess those cyberbullying behaviors. Using a lickert scale 1–5 (from never to 7 times or more), these variables measure the frequency of aggressions and cyber-aggressions in victims such as "my classmates made fun of me" or "they call me names", and in bullies, as "upset" or "exclude" (see Figure 1)

Based on the theory by Bronbrenbrenner's and the empirical work by Rawlings (2017), in the present research we set out to analyze the influence of the micro and meso-level relationships in the behaviors of aggression and victimization of bullying and cyberbullying, following Fettrow (2013) or Hong and Espelage (2012), and adding the figure of the bystander, being an agent so far less analyzed by the literature, but with a relevance demonstrated by authors such as Thornberg and Wänström (2018) for bullying, or Olenik-Shemesh et al. (2017) for cyberbullying. Following Thornberg and Wänström (2018), if we take into account socio-ecological theories in the explanation of bullying situations, we cannot ignore the role of bystander as a relevant agent in blaming the victims (reinforcing bullying behaviors) or defending and reinforcing them(preventing

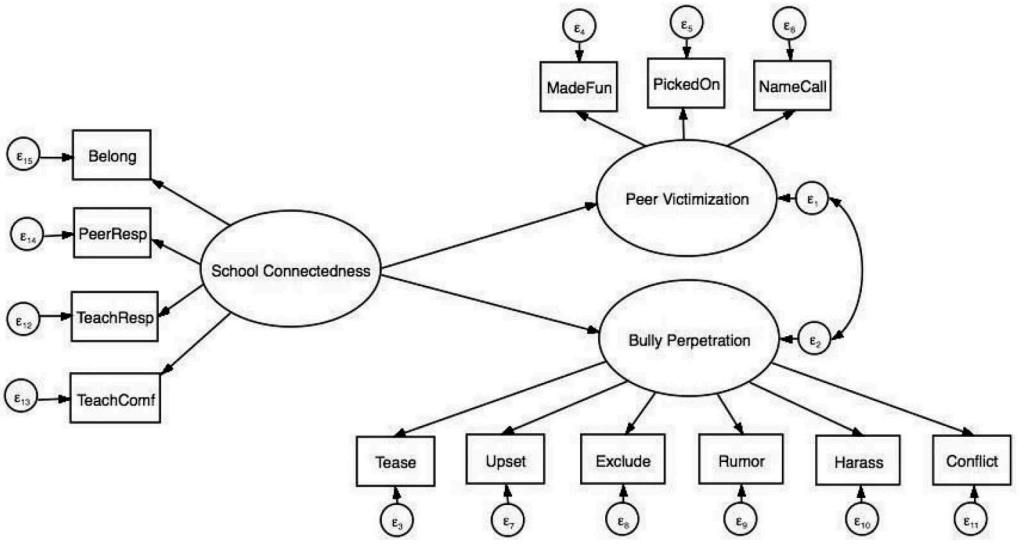

Figure 1. Rawlings' theoretical model (2017) on the influence of schools connectedness in bullying and cyberbullying perpetration and victimization. Source: Rawlings (2017).

aggressions). Another contribution of the hypothetical model that we present here to the previous model by Rawlings (2017), in the case of the latent construct of relations with the school context, is that, in addition to measuring the students' relationships with their classmates and teachers, we have included their relationships with other members of the educational community (principals, staff, general relationships in the school center), and between families and the school. This inclusion is due to the fact that the previous literature also highlights them as an element of protection against aggression and cyber-aggressions (Yang, 2005, Hong et al., 2014; Lee, 2011). Finally we have also added the observed variable of 'number of friends', measuring its influence in positive relationships at school and in bullying and cyberbullying prevalence. Cerezo, Ruiz-Esteban, Sánchez Lacasa, and Arense Gonzalo (2018) for bullying and Lee et al. (2017) demonstrated that one of the most influencing variables on preventing these behaviours and having better school connectedness was this friendship network.

The hypothetical model is represented in Figure 2, and the latent and observed variables used are detailed in the methodological section (Table 3)

Objectives

The main objective of our research is to analyse the positive relationships between students and the rest of the educational community as a factor of protection against relational or indirect bullying and cyberbullying. This general objective is specified in the following specific aims:

- Identify the effect of direct relationships (friends) as a factor of protection at the time of becoming a victim, bystander or aggressor in situations of relational bullying or cyberbullying;
- Analyse the influence of positive relationships between students and other members of the educational community in regard to preventing situations of relational bullying and cyber-bullying in the three types of participating roles;
- Measure the relevance of positive relationships between the families of the students and the educational centre as a factor of protection in regard to becoming a victim, bystander or aggressor in situations of relational bullying or cyberbullying; and

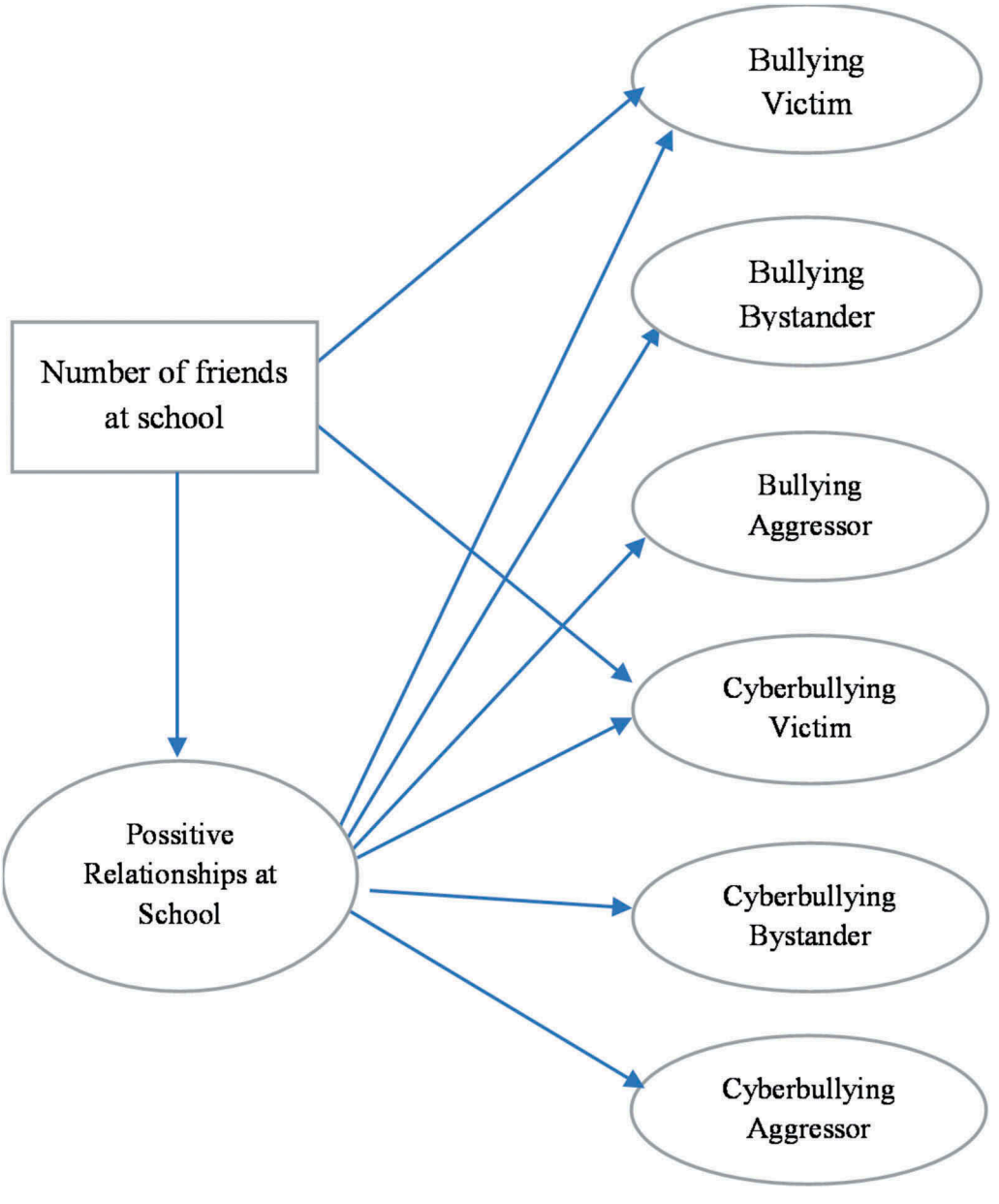

Figure 2. Hypothetical model. Graphical representation.

- Compare the effects of these positive relationships between relational bullying and cyberbullying to attempt to confirm that support networks are relevant to preventing both situations.

Materials and methods

For the realization of the present analysis, a quantitative methodology was followed and a statistical analysis of the data derived from the answers of the students in secondary education in the Autonomous Community of Aragon to the questionnaire designed for this purpose was

performed. The fundamental nucleus of this analysis was the elaboration of a structural equation model (SEM) to meet the objectives. The details of the method are specified below.

Participants

In this research, information was collected from students in the secondary educational stage (1st-4th of ESO) at 20 high schools in the Autonomous Community of Aragon, considering the stratified representation of the provinces (3 in Huesca, 2 in Teruel and 15 in Zaragoza), private and public centres, and rural and urban areas. From here, the selection of these schools was random. A total of 5,028 participants completed the survey, although only cases that did not present values lost in the analysed variables on bullying and cyberbullying were selected, finally obtaining a sample of n = 4,273. Regarding the characteristics of the participants of the survey, the majority were Spanish (91.0%), the distribution by sex was equitable (49.8% girls and 50.8% boys), with an average age of 14.2 years old (SD = 1.4), and the distribution by courses was also equitable (23.7% were in the first year of secondary education, 11–12 years old, 26.6% in the second, 24.9% in the third, and 22.0% in fourth). The majority of the students' families were Spanish (87.7% of the participants' fathers and 87.0% of the mothers), with university studies in 46.8% of the parents and 52.2% of mothers. Among the sample evaluated, 14.8% reported having repeated secondary education at least once. Conversely, 9.8% reported not having attended an educational centre before 6 years old. Finally, when asked about their numbers of friends at the school, the majority (67.7%) said they had 6 or more. The details of the sociodemographic information of the sample are shown in Table 1.

Instrument

To perform the present analysis, information was extracted from a questionnaire designed for the project *"Study of cohabitation in educational centres of Aragon"* based on surveys used in previous studies at the regional and national levels. Through the intermediation of the Government of Aragon, several schools were selected using cluster sampling. After the selection, an invitation was sent to collaborate in the study, together with the information, schedule and objectives of the research, and then the authorizations and consents of the students' tutors and/or parents of the students were collected.

During the months of March and April 2017, the teachers and members of the management team of each centre coordinated the data collection from the students, under the supervision of the research team of the project. Data collection was performed entirely online in classrooms enabled for this purpose during school hours. Each participant received a password to access the questionnaire once, ensuring the students' privacy, anonymity and confidentiality.

The questionnaire consisted of several sets of questions, among which we highlight those used for our analysis.

(1) Sociodemographic questionnaire with questions about sex, age, course, nationality of both the student and their parents, educational levels of the father and mother, if the participant had repeated courses, if he/she attended a school before the age of 6 and the number of good friends at school (from none to 6 or more).
(2) Questionnaire to evaluate the relationship between students and the rest of the educational community, specifically classmates, teachers, principals, school custodians, students' families, and relationships at school in general: these 6 items were answered through a Likert scale from 1 to 4, with 1 being not satisfactory and 4 being very satisfactory.
(3) Bullying questionnaire: to measure the suffered bullying (victims) perpetrated (aggressors) and witnessed (bystanders) by the students, the instrument previously used by Díaz-Aguado, Martínez-Arias and Babarro (2013) was used. This questionnaire presents several

Table 1. Sociodemographic features of the sample.

		%/Mean (SD)
Sex		
	Female	49.8
	Male	50.2
Age		14.2 (1.4)
Course		
	1st	23.7
	2nd	26.6
	3rd	24.9
	4th	22.0
Country of birth		
	Spain	91.0
	Other country	9.0
Father's country of birth		
	Spain	87.7
	Other country	12.3
Mother's country of birth		
	Spain	87.0
	Other country	13.0
Father's educational level		
	None	3.6
	ISCED 1	14.3
	ISCED 2–4	35.3
	ISCED 5	14.8
	ISCED 6–7	32.0
Mother's educational level		
	None	2.9
	ISCED 1	12.2
	ISCED 2–4	32.6
	ISCED 5	15.9
	ISCED 6–7	36.3
Repeated a course in secondary education		
	No, never	81.8
	Yes, once	13.3
	Yes, twice or more	1.5
Repeated a course in primary education		
	No, never	90.2
	Yes, once	9.3
	Yes, twice or more	0.4
How many good friends do you have at school?		
	None	1.0
	1	1.2
	2–3	10.7
	4–5	19.4
	6 or more	67.7

n. = 4,273

harassment situations and their frequency, consisting of 19 items answered on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (never) to 4 (many times). However, for the present analysis only, relational or indirect bullying (participation in situations of exclusion or humiliation evaluated through 5 items related to forms of relational aggression) and cyberbullying (participation in harassment with new technologies through 7 items) were analysed.

The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was high (>.8) for all of the subscales used in this study (see Table 2).

Analysis

Although a preliminary analysis of the incidence of relational bullying and cyberbullying was included in our sample, considering the three agents that can be part of these aggressions, either

Table 2. Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the relational bullying and cyberbullying scales.

	Relational bullying	Cyberbullying
Victim	.84	.89
Bystander	.91	.93
Aggressor	.87	.95

n. = 4,273

directly (victim and aggressor) or indirectly (bystander), the fundamental objective of our work was to test the influence of positive relationships with the rest of the educational community on the prevention of relational bullying and cyberbullying, following previous models (Rawlings, 2017) but including the figure of the bystander. To this end, an analysis using structural equation modelling (SEM) was implemented using the IBM-SPSS computer program and its AMOS extension (version 22) in two phases. First, a confirmatory factorial analysis (CFA) of the three subscales used (valuation of relationships in the school, relational bullying and cyberbullying) was carried out, verifying the contribution of each latent variable to the construct of each observed variable and verifying its internal consistency (see the Results section, Figure 1, Table 4). Next, the proposed structural model was tested, including the observed and latent variables (see the Results section, Figure 2 and Table 5). This model of the complete structural equation was used to test hypothetical patterns of causal structures that relate several variables to the constructed model (Byrne, 2010). This technique has a confirmatory character to prove a model derived from a review of the relevant literature and the theoretical framework. The latent and observed variables used in the model are detailed in Table 3.

The estimator selected was the maximum likelihood (MLE), a standard practice for finding the values of the parameters that make the observed data more likely. This procedure has also been recommended within the literature on SEM within AMOS (Pérez, Medrano & Sánchez Rosas, 2013, Byrne, 2010). To report the results, we included non-standardized and standardized regression weights. To facilitate the interpretation and comparison of results, we included standardized regression weights, in addition to non-standardized regression weights, which provide additional information about standard errors, critical residuals and the weight of each variable. Finally, the goodness of fit of our model was tested using p, RMSEA, CFI, TLI, NFI and GFI as indicators, as recommended by Schlermelleh-Engel, Moosbrugger, and Müller (2003), Vandenberg (2006) and Byrne (2010).

Results

In a preliminary analysis to determine the incidence of relational bullying and cyberbullying in victims (VB; VC), bystanders (BB; BC) and aggressors (AB; AC) in the sample of our study, we evaluated the percentage of people who had answered affirmatively to the situations posed (from "sometimes" to "many times"). Thus, analysing the figures on indirect or relational bullying, the data showed that 43.1% of the sample claimed to have been a victim of this type of aggression in recent months, 57.8% had been bystanders, and 27.8% claimed to have been at some point the aggressor using this type of behaviour. In terms of cyberbullying, 19.2% of participants had suffered during the previous months a situation of this type, 22.6% had witnessed it, and 9.9% admitted to having perpetrated some of the aggressions raised in the questionnaire.

Next, we proceeded to test a structural model in two phases. In the first phase, CFA was performed to ensure the reliability and internal consistency of the subscales used to subsequently evaluate the proposed model of the influence of positive relationships in the prevention of relational bullying and cyberbullying, considering the three agents that participate in these situations.

In the case of the CFA of the subscales used (Figure 3), the results showed positive structural coefficients between the observed and latent variables. Table 5 shows the non-standardized

Table 3. Variables used in the proposed model.

Latent variables		Observed variables	
Description	Label	Description	Label
		Number of friends at school	RF
Relationships at school	RS	Relationships: at this centre	RC
		Relationships: with teachers	RT
		Relationships: with the principal	RP
		Relationships: with custodians and other school staff	RO
		Relationships: between your family and the school	RFA
		Relationships: with your classmates	RCM
Relational bullying victim	VB	My classmates ignore me	VB1
		My classmates reject me	VB2
		My classmates don't let me participate	VB3
		They insult me; they offend or ridicule me	VB4
		They talk badly about me	VB5
Relational bullying bystander	BB	Rejecting him/her *	BB1
		Ignoring him/her	BB2
		Not allowing him/her to participate	BB3
		Insulting, offending or ridiculing him/her	BB4
		Talking badly about him/her	BB5
Relational bullying aggressor	AB	Rejecting him/her **	AB1
		Ignoring him/her	AB2
		Not allowing him/her to participate	AB3
		Insulting, offending or ridiculing him/her	AB4
		Talking badly about him/her	AB5
Cyberbullying victim	VC	Has a classmate recorded a mobile or video to use it against you?	VC1
		Has a classmate recorded you on a mobile or video to force you with threats to do something afterwards that you did not want to do?	VC2
		Have you received messages on the internet or mobile phone in which somebody insults you, threatens you, offends you or frightens you?	VC3
		Has someone posted photos or images of you over the internet or mobile phone to use against you?	VC4
		Have you received insults or other cruel or offensive actions from someone who has supplanted someone else on the internet or on your mobile?	VC5
		Have you been removed from a social network or an online game for some reason that you do not know?	VC6
		Have you been asked or forced to eliminate someone from a social network or an online game?	VC7
Cyberbullying bystander	BC	Being recorded by a classmate with a mobile phone or video to use it against him/her?*	BC1
		Being recorded by a classmate on mobile phone or video to force him/her with threats to do something?	BC2
		Sending messages through the internet or mobile phone that insult, threaten, offend or frighten a classmate?	BC3
		Spreading photos or images of a classmate on the internet or mobile phone to use against him/her?	BC4
		Pretending to be someone through the mobile or internet and acting cruelly or offensively?	BC5
		Eliminating a classmate from a social network or an online game because he/she is not liked?	BC6
		Asking or forcing someone to eliminate a classmate from a social network or from an online game?	BC7
Cyberbullying aggressor	AC	Have you recorded a classmate with a mobile phone or video to use against him/her?**	AC1
		Have you recorded a classmate on mobile phone or video to force him/she with threats to do something?	AC2
		Have you sent messages through the internet or mobile phone that insult, threaten, offend or frighten a classmate?	AC3
		Have you spread photos or images of a classmate on the internet or mobile phone to use against him/her?	AC4

(*Continued*)

Table 3. (Continued).

Latent variables	Observed variables	
	Have you pretended to be someone through mobile or internet and acted cruelly or offensively?	AC5
	Have you eliminated a classmate from a social network or an online game because he/she is not liked?	AC6
	Have you asked or forced someone to eliminate a classmate from a social network or from an online game?	AC7

*In recent months, have you seen situations in which a classmate has been upset at the school?
**In the last months, have you participated in situations upsetting a classmate at the school?

coefficients (all of the variables were significant, $p < .001$, Est./SE>1.96) and the standardized coefficients, showing the influence of the latent variable on the observed variables. In the subscale of VB, the observed variable that increased in greater proportion was VB2 ("My classmates reject me"); in the case of BB, it was BB2 ("Ignore"); and for the subscale of AB, it was the variable AB3 ("Not allowing him/her to participate"). In the subscale of VC, the observed variable that contributed the most to the latent variable was VC2 ("Has a classmate recorded you on a mobile or video to force you with threats to do something afterwards that you did not want to do?"). In BC, again the variable BC2 ("Being recorded by other classmate on mobile phone or video to force him/her with threats to do something?") and, in AC, AC4 ("Have you spread photos or images on the internet or mobile phone of a classmate to use against him/her?") contributed the most. Finally, on the Relationship scale at school (RS), it was the evaluation of the RC variable ("Relationships: In this centre") that had greater weight. Finally, the goodness of fit of the model was evaluated, obtaining an acceptable adjustment in all of the indicators (RMSEA = .05; CFI = .92; GFI = .90; TLI = .91; NFI = .91).

The second step of our analysis was the representation of the proposed structural model (Figure 4), together with its values specified in Table 5. Derived from the review of the literature and the models specified in it to analyse the influence of positive relations in the school on traditional bullying (in this case relational) and cyberbullying (Rawlings, 2017) considered not only victim and aggressor but also the figure of the bystander. In the relationships at school, both the subscale of relationships with the educational community (latent variable) and the number of friends at the centre (observed variable) were considered, given that they are considered protection factors for the victim. Therefore, a model was proposed in which the relationships between variables were analysed by performing different tests until an optimal final model was obtained. In this final model, the variables related to the relationships at the centre were proposed as exogenous (independent) variables, and the variables related to the three agents related to bullying and cyberbullying were proposed as endogenous (dependent) variables. The influence of the number of friends on being a bystander or aggressor of bullying or cyberbullying was not significant, so it was eliminated from the model to result in greater consistency.

Regarding the results of the model and responding to the objectives proposed in the present research, first, all of the non-standardized estimates ($p < .001$, critical residues, Est./SE> 1.96) were negative, except for the influence between the number of friends (RF) and the assessment of relationships at school (RS), with a coefficient of .27. This negative relationship of relationships with being a bullying or cyberbullying victim, bystander or aggressor indicated that the better the evaluation of these relationships is, the less likely that one is to suffer, participate or observe these behaviours. In other words, these good relationships evidence a prevention factor in situations of bullying and cyberbullying. Thus, the number of friends (RF) has an influence on lower victimization in traditional bullying (−.19) and cyberbullying, although to a lesser extent (−.07). In the case of relations at the school (RS), its influence on all of the variables is verified. In this way, the positive evaluation of relations at the centre has an inversely proportional effect on becoming a victim of relational bullying (−.19) and cyberbullying (−.14). Interestingly, the influence of these relationships is more relevant for cyberbullying (−.13) than for bullying (−.10) bystanders. Conversely, the effect

Table 4. CFA of the relational bullying scale, cyberbullying scale and relationships at school scale in secondary education. Standardized and non-standardized coefficients.

			Non-standardized coefficients	S.E.	C.R	Standardized coefficients
VB1	< –	VB	1,000			,626
VB2	< –	VB	,968	,026	43,030	,767
VB3	< –	VB	,849	,025	36,998	,670
VB4	< –	VB	,919	,027	41,499	,673
VB5	< –	VB	1,002	,033	40,134	,572
BB1	< –	BB	1,000		35,445	,832
BB2	< –	BB	1,022	,016	34,147	,835
BB3	< –	BB	,812	,015		,733
BB4	< –	BB	,867	,016	55,444	,745
BB5	< –	BB	,901	,017	51,301	,728
AB1	< –	AB	1,000		54,492	,713
AB2	< –	AB	1,224	,029	52,687	,727
AB3	< –	AB	,831	,019	47,231	,731
AB4	< –	AB	,951	,022	50,013	,726
AB5	< –	AB	1,063	,029		,610
VC1	< –	VC	1,000		73,317	,674
VC2	< –	VC	,891	,021	72,974	,763
VC3	< –	VC	1,167	,032	75,416	,639
VC4	< –	VC	1,011	,024	76,370	,730
VC5	< –	VC	1,012	,025	50,077	,702
VC6	< –	VC	1,053	,030	60,450	,609
VC7	< –	VC	,885	,026		,585
BC1	< –	BC	1,000		29,857	,758
BC2	< –	BC	,945	,017	31,891	,818
BC3	< –	BC	1,113	,022	21,465	,764
BC4	< –	BC	1,107	,020	33,000	,806
BC5	< –	BC	1,035	,020	21,543	,782
BC6	< –	BC	1,101	,023		,710
BC7	< –	BC	,996	,020	37,544	,747
AC1	< –	AC	1,000		34,424	,832
AC2	< –	AC	,969	,013	34,539	,877
AC3	< –	AC	1,031	,014	30,541	,874
AC4	< –	AC	1,032	,014		,891
AC5	< –	AC	1,028	,013	62,452	,898
AC6	< –	AC	1,038	,021	52,583	,679
AC7	< –	AC	,921	,015	53,660	,776
RC	< –	RS	1,000			,732
RT	< –	RS	,751	,025	42,907	,558
RP	< –	RS	,956	,030	43,142	,606
RO	< –	RS	,649	,030	42,846	,386
RFA	< –	RS	,920	,028	36,371	,636
RCM	< –	RS	,526	,024	52,043	,388

$p < .001$; GFI = .90; CFI = .92; TLI = .91; NFI = .91; RMSEA = .05

of these positive relationships is also significant for avoiding becoming an aggressor of bullying (–.19) and cyberbullying (–.13). In all of the cases, notably, there were no significant differences between the bullying and cyberbullying coefficients, so it was found that the positive effect of the network not only prevents situations of aggression that are more easily perceptible in the public sphere (bullying) but also avoids situations of violence in the private sphere (cyberbullying). By measuring each type of relationship at school, it was determined that the most significant was the evaluation that the students made of interactions with their peers (RCM) (.73), followed by the evaluation of the relationship of their families with the centre (RFA) (.64). Finally, when considering as a mediating factor the relationships in the school between the number of friends and victimization in both types of aggression, the aforementioned coefficient of .27 indicated that the number of friends, mediated by a positive evaluation of the rest of the relationships, increased its influence in avoiding such victimization.

Table 5. Structural model of concurrence among positive relationships in the educational centre, relational bullying and cyberbullying in secondary education. standardized and non-standardized coefficients.

			Non-standardized coefficients	S.E.	C.R	Standardized coefficients
RS	< –	RF	.170	.011	15,566	.272
VC	< –	RS	–.044	.006	–7,176	–.141
BC	< –	RS	–.054	.008	–6,854	–.126
AC	< –	RS	–.044	.006	–7,172	–.129
VC	< –	RF	–.013	.003	–4,656	–.067
VB	< –	RF	–.061	.005	–11,316	–.188
AB	< –	RS	–.084	.009	–9,790	–.190
BB	< –	RS	–.082	.015	–5,558	–.103
VB	< –	RS	–.097	.011	–9,243	–.187
VB1	< –	VB	1.000			.627
VB2	< –	VB	.967	.026	43,069	.768
VB3	< –	VB	.846	.025	37,030	.668
VB4	< –	VB	.917	.026	41,536	.672
VB5	< –	VB	1.003	.033	40,169	.574
BB1	< –	BB	1.000		35,476	.832
BB2	< –	BB	1.022	.016	34,177	.835
BB3	< –	BB	.812	.015		.733
BB4	< –	BB	.867	.016	55,443	.745
BB5	< –	BB	.901	.017	51,298	.728
AB1	< –	AB	1.000		54,489	.713
AB2	< –	AB	1.224	.029	52,682	.727
AB3	< –	AB	.831	.019	47,234	.731
AB4	< –	AB	.950	.022	50,014	.726
AB5	< –	AB	1.062	.029		.610
VC1	< –	VC	1.000		73,318	.640
VC2	< –	VC	.891	.021	72,975	.730
VC3	< –	VC	1.167	.032	75,417	.702
VC4	< –	VC	1.011	.024	76,370	.610
VC5	< –	VC	1.012	.025	50,077	.585
VC6	< –	VC	1.053	.030	60,450	.757
VC7	< –	VC	.885	.026		.818
BC1	< –	BC	1.000		29,515	.764
BC2	< –	BC	.945	.017	31,875	.806
BC3	< –	BC	1.113	.022	21,490	.782
BC4	< –	BC	1.107	.020	33,373	.710
BC5	< –	BC	1.035	.020	22,869	.747
BC6	< –	BC	1.102	.023		.832
BC7	< –	BC	.996	.020	37,756	.877
AC1	< –	AC	1.000		34,486	.874
AC2	< –	AC	.969	.013	34,646	.891
AC3	< –	AC	1.031	.014	30,717	.898
AC4	< –	AC	1.032	.014		.679
AC5	< –	AC	1.028	.013	62,461	.776
AC6	< –	AC	1.038	.021	52,589	.739
AC7	< –	AC	.921	.015	53,654	.544
RC	< –	RS	1.000			.597
RT	< –	RS	.725	.025	42,914	.384
RP	< –	RS	.932	.029	43,147	.634
RO	< –	RS	.639	.030	42,843	.410
RFA	< –	RS	.909	.027	36,370	.640
RCM	< –	RS	.551	.024	52,038	.730

$p < .001$; GFI = .90; CFI = .91; TLI = .91; NFI = .91; RMSEA = .05

To evaluate the goodness of fit of our model, we used the indicators recommended by the literature for SEM analysis in large samples (Schlermelleh-Engel et al., 2003, Vandenberg 2006, Byrne, 2010). The indicators RMSEA (.05), CFI (.91), TLI (.91), NFI (.91) and GFI (.90) showed that the matrix derived from the data and those from the conceptual model did not have significant differences, which led us to consider the proposed model to be optimal.

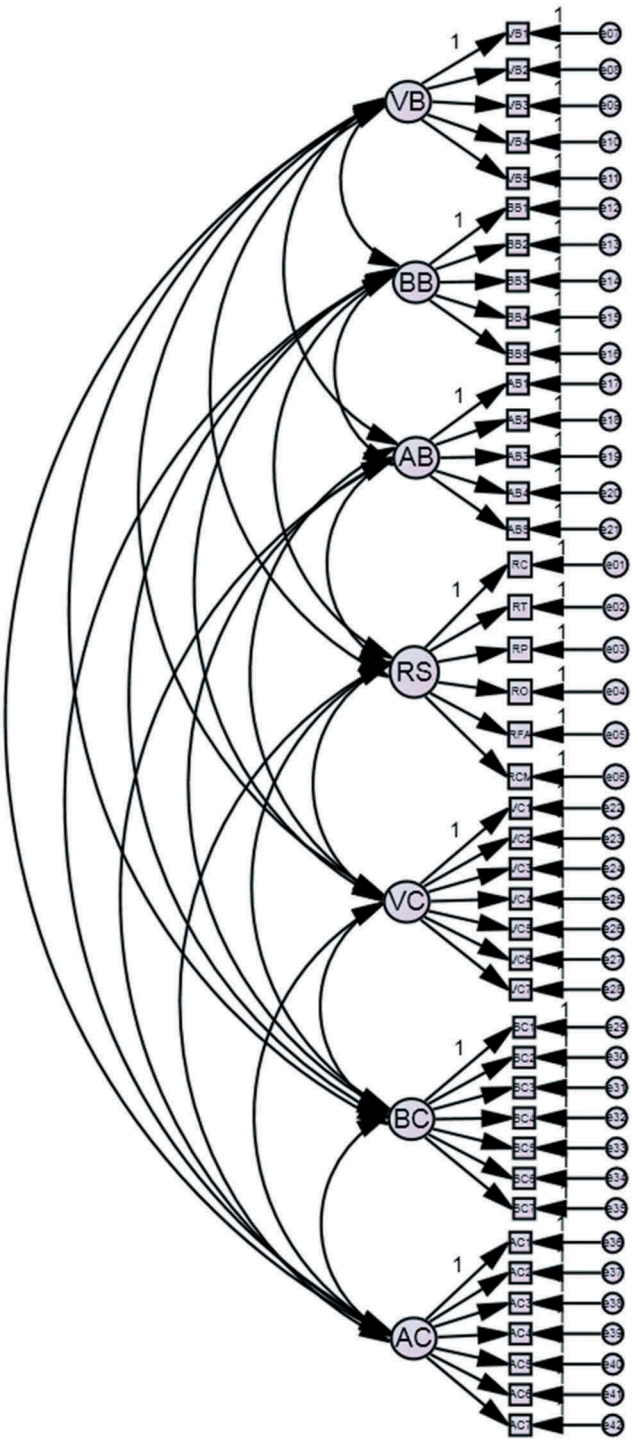

Figure 3. CFA of the relational bullying scale, cyberbullying scale and relationships at school scale in secondary education. Graphical representation.

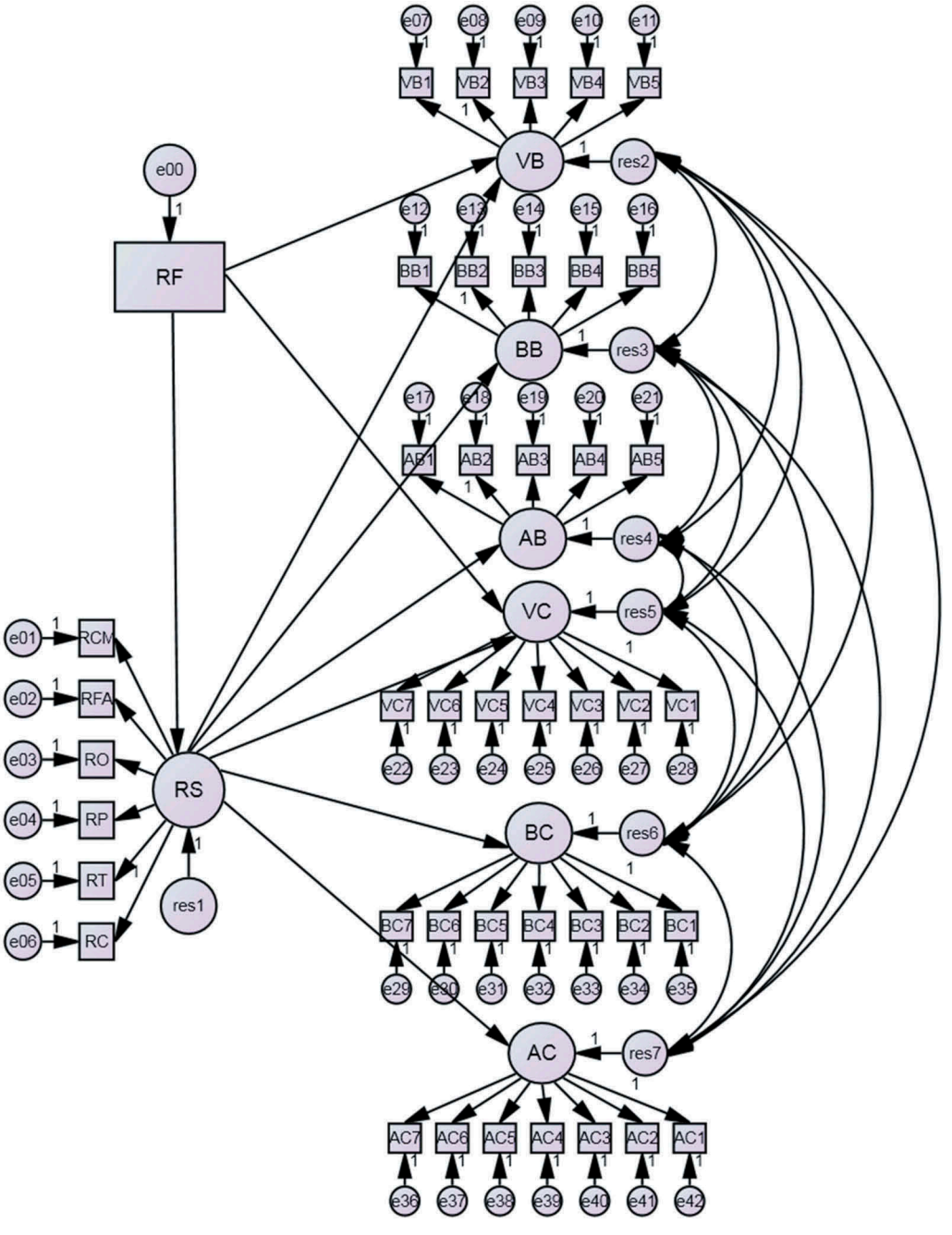

Figure 4. Structural model of concurrence among positive relationships in the educational centre, relational bullying and cyberbullying in secondary education. Graphical representation.

Discussion and conclusions

Our research brings advances to a positive and transformative vision for the prevention of bullying and cyberbullying. From this proposal, we find very relevant the importance and need to overcome the silence of aggressed and cyber-aggressed adolescents (Bastiaensens et al., 2014), reinforcing

mainly the peer network, the educational centre, teachers and families. We verify the relationship between the models used for this research, the ecological model and the SEM and as we are justifying next as you can see in Figures 1 and 2.

In addition to validating the scale used, and the model presented, which have been optimal according to the criterion used indicators (Schlermelleh-Engel et al., 2003, Vandenberg, 2006 and Byrne, 2010), the results of our analysis show that the positive relationships at the micro level are relevant to prevent aggression, victimization and, even to participate as bystander, in situations of relational bullying and/or cyberbullying. In the case of the friendship network, the number of friends was a notable protection factor for the victims of both types of aggression, endorsing previous works such as those of Cerezo et al. (2018), Lee et al. (2017) or Santoyo & Frias (2014).

Regarding the assessment of the rest of the relationships in the school, all of them were significant and inversely negative to the possibility of the student being involved in aggressions of bullying or cyberbullying, both as an aggressor and victim, endorsing the importance of the context not only in the public sphere (relational bullying), but also in the private sphere (cyberbullying) (Yang, 2005; Hong et al., 2014; Lee, 2011). In this context, and endorsing the aforementioned previous studies, the relationship with peers emerges as the most relevant, although, this is followed by the relationship of families with the school as the most relevant. This agent had not been taken into account in the Rawlings model (2017), although its participation as a fundamental element of prevention in studies such as those by Offrey and Rinaldi (2017), Bonil-Nissim and Sasson (2018), or Duque and Teixido (2016) had already revindicated. Finally, it has been observed that the inclusion of the figure of the bystander in the analysis was fundamental, given that the prevalence of attending situations of relational aggressions or bullying through the Internet was reduced when relations with the environment were more positive, in the same proportion as preventing aggresions and victimization. This fact that calls for a greater attention to this figure, as already claimed by Thornberg and Wänström (2018) or Olenik-Shemesh et al. (2017).

With the theoretical review and the data, we would like to highlight several factors in line with what was previously stated regarding prevention, modelling, impact on adulthood and relevance of ethical and emotional training. The preventive approach must start from the earliest ages, both in the family, with educational guidelines that promote conflict resolution in a dialogical way to prevent antisocial behaviour (Garaigordobil, 2017), and in education, with zero violence and the development of healthy relationships that foster autonomy, specifically working against "the permissive beliefs of aggression present in adolescents" (Yubero, Larrañaga, Navarro, & Elche, 2018, p. 26). In addition, the relationship among violent behaviours, amoral thoughts and cyberbullying has been proved, as verified by Kircaburun, Jonason, and Griffiths (2018) in a sample of 761 adolescents.

Regarding educational centres, it is a priority to reconvert them into learning communities. Initiatives, such as brave clubs and cyber-helpers, or programmes, such as KiVa, suggest an interesting line of intervention.

Conversely, it is essential to improve teacher training in the sense of "besides working with the instrumental competencies related to the use of ICT, empathy and values, such as tolerance and respect, must be addressed" (Montoro & Ballesteros, 2016, p. 131), and we must implement strategies for preventing and intervening with the entire educational community against cyberbullying using actions such as "working together with students (59.7%), establishing penalties (59.3%) and incorporating actions in plans for coexistence (40.7%)" (Giménez et al., 2018, p. 33).

In agreement with Buelga and Pons (2012) and Cerezo and Rubio (2017), it is necessary to update the coexistence plans of schools and high schools and to strengthen the preventive and communitarian intervention approach (Menesini & Salmivalli, 2017), going beyond the punitive approach.

We also point out some limitations of this research, in line with complementing a quantitative research design with qualitative perspectives. Moreover, it is important to complement the voices of students with those of teachers and families – their roles in mediating the use of ICT and the

type of family communication, aligned with the work developed by Yubero, Larrañaga, and Navarro (2018) with questionnaires among 938 parents of secondary education students – and those of other agents (non-teaching staff, monitors, etc.). The topic offers interesting lines of work, from expanding the sample by developing longitudinal and cross-sectional studies using an evolutionary perspective to other international studies and deepening the good practices of intervention based on evidence incorporating the entire educational community.

Acknowledgments

This study was funded by the Government of Aragon (Reference Group Educaviva - S57_17R) within the *I Comprehensive Plan against school bullying* in Aragon and co-financed with Feder 2014-2020 "Building Europe from Aragon". It was conducted by the Research Groups *Studies on the risk society* and *Coaching, entrepreneurship for personal and professional development.*

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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