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# Effectiveness indicators of bullying intervention programs: A systematic review of the international literature

## *Indicadores de efetividade dos programas de intervenção em situações de bullying: revisão sistemática da literatura internacional*

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### Abstract

A systematic review was conducted in 2011, aiming to survey articles for indicators of effectiveness of intervention programs in bullying situations. A total of 165 articles were recovered, indexed in the databases: Web of Science, PsycInfo, Redalyc, Dialnet, and Eric. The analysis variables were: frequencies per journal, year, country, author, and effectiveness indicators of intervention programs in bullying situations. The *"International Journal of Psychology"* and *"Psychological Therapy"* had the highest percentage of publications (8.7%); the year 2010, the largest number of indexes (51); and Spain (33.9%) and the United States of America (23.6%) were the countries with more articles. Regarding the effectiveness indicators of bullying situation programs, it was found that 30.9% of the articles considered teacher training; 26.11% considered the need for raising awareness of the phenomenon; and 23.6% considered individual and/or collective student support to be the elements with greater impact and effectiveness in bullying situation interventions.

**Keywords:** Adolescent; Bullying; Children; Intervention.

### Resumo

*A revisão sistemática foi realizada em 2011, visando levantar artigos referentes aos indicadores de efetividade dos programas de intervenção em situações de bullying. Selecionaram-se 165 artigos indexados nas bases Web of Science, PsycInfo, Redalyc, Dialnet e Eric. As variáveis de análise foram: frequências por periódico, ano, país, autoria e indicadores de efetividade dos programas de intervenção em situações de bullying. O "International Journal of Psychology" e "Psychological Therapy" evidenciaram o maior percentual de publicações (8,7%); o ano de 2010, o maior número de indexações (51,0); e Espanha (33,9%) e Estados Unidos da América (23,6%), os países com mais artigos. Em relação*

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aos indicadores de efetividade dos programas para situações de bullying, constatou-se que 30,9% dos artigos consideraram fundamental a capacitação docente; 26,11%, a necessidade de conscientização sobre o fenômeno; e 23,6%, o suporte individual e/ou coletivo para os alunos como elementos de maior impacto e eficácia na intervenção em situações de bullying.

**Palavras-chave:** Adolescente; Bullying; Criança; Intervenção.

Bullying was first formally conceptualized by Dan Olweus at the University of Bergen, Norway, and Peter Smith at Sheffield University, England, in the 1970s. Currently, the concept is a fundamental theoretical tool in studies of aggressive behavior, especially in the school context, by using a psychosocial approach to the phenomenon, with the behavior and attitudes being the objects of analysis.

The first designation of this phenomenon, appearing initially in the international scientific literature, was identified as "mobbing" in Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Denmark. In other European countries, such as Italy, Spain, and Portugal, terms were used that had a closer translation, referring to oppression or harassment; persecution; and mistreatment among peers, respectively (Cunha, 2005).

Pereira (2006) points out that the term bullying is of Anglo-Saxon origin, and in the Portuguese-speaking countries, such as Portugal and Brazil, this foreign terminology has been maintained due to the difficulty of identifying an equivalent expression that translates the aggression and victimization particular to this phenomenon, as highlighted by Dan Olweus. In relation to this characteristic of the term, Martins (2009) also explains that it can be translated as peer aggression or intimidation, or abuse among equals.

In this sense, Pereira (2006) and Martins (2009) point out that bullying is understood as aggression expressed in a physical or psychological manner among peers in an ongoing and intentional way, with a, normally malicious, systematic abuse of power that can last weeks, months, or even years and in which the victim is unable to defend himself or remedy the situation. Furthermore, Costa and Pereira (2010) observe that this form of peer violence is distinguished from occasional aggression, not only by its persistence over time, but also by the imbalance of power between those involved.

Based on the knowledge of these characteristics of the phenomenon, since the 1980s, research has been, and is still being, intensified and systematized in order to identify the causes of suicide and aggression among young people. Such studies have led to the perception that adolescents and children involved in situations of aggression with peers, in a repetitive manner and lacking ways to defend themselves, tend toward isolation behaviors and even extreme acts, such as suicide (Cunha, 2005; Fante, 2011; Olweus, 1993).

Research has also been carried out aiming to prevent or reduce bullying situations, rather than merely describe the phenomenon. In Brazilian and international studies, with different age ranges of students as sample inclusion criteria, the prevalence of bullying is observed as ranging between 10.0% and 40.5% (Cepeda-Cuervo, Pacheco-Durán, García-Barco, & Piraquive-Peña, 2008; Cheng et al., 2010; Chin, 2011; Fisher, 2010; Holt & Espelage, 2007; Libório & Francisco, 2008; Lopes Neto & Saavedra, 2003; Pereira et al., 2009a; Pereira, Silva, & Nunes, 2009b; Rudatsikira, Muula, & Siziya, 2008)

Given the finding of a high prevalence of bullying revealed by these studies, Pimenta, Pereira, and Lourenço (2011) mention that bullying has generated significant concerns due to being fairly frequent, complex, and still poorly addressed in schools. In contrast, the development and implementation of bullying intervention programs that aim to occupy the free time of the students, develop the social skills, and promote a more positive school environment for all interpersonal relationships, is becoming a requirement. Furthermore, the authors mentioned above emphasize that in an intervention program "the participation of all members of the school community, to present their views, and the creation of communication channels with all who are responsible for decision-making, is also critical" (Pimenta et al., 2011, p.128).

With respect to the aforementioned complexities of bullying, it is noteworthy that the negative actions carried out within the school are not only harmful to the children and adolescents directly involved (aggressors, victims and aggressor-victims), but also to those who are indirectly involved. In other words, those involved who participate in the bullying, such as: (a) the followers of the aggressors, who maintain an attitude of support and reinforcement for the acts of the aggressor; (b) the defenders who promote some form of support for the victims; and (c) observers (bystanders) characterized by not exhibiting any form of interference in the process (Lisboa & Ebert, 2012).

The damage caused by the climate of negative actions in the school environment has consequences in the academic and intellectual life, in the establishment of social relations, in the learning of values and rules, and in the apprehension of the culture for all these students (Nylund, Bellmore, Nishina, & Graham, 2007; Pereira et al., 2009a). This damage relates to absenteeism and premature entry of adolescents into the labor market, characterizing a setting of school dropouts and illiteracy (Abramovay, Castro, Pinheiro, Lima, & Martinelli, 2002; Assis, Deslandes, Santos, 2005; Pereira et al., 2009b; Waiselfisz, 2004).

Salmivalli, Lagerspetz, Björkqvist, Österman, & Kaukiainen, (1996), in a study on bullying, related variables such as personal desire for prestige and social status within the group with the form of violent behavior in aggressors and the victims' inability to acquire social status, demonstrating that violence can be used as a means of acceptance in the peer group. This violent behavior among peers in schools creates a fragile environment and carries risks for the physical and mental health of the students, including psychopathological disorders; in addition to feelings of discontent and insecurity in situations following conflict and aggression, and the tendency to accept such conflicts and aggressive acts as natural (Farrington & Ttofi, 2009).

Fernandez (2005) and Lisboa and Ebert (2012), however, highlight the school environment and climate as a protective factor, promoting

resilience and quality of relationships in the school, provided that: (a) they allow for the resolution of conflicts in a non-punitive manner; (b) there is a curriculum revision; (c) recreational activities that involve all students are established; and (d) that the partnership of the family with the school is promoted, among other strategies.

From this perspective, a school that lacks this combination of conditions and criteria, obviously, has or is prone to have an environment and an organizational climate that translate into risk factors for triggering conflicts and aggression. Furthermore, the school becomes more vulnerable to internal and interpersonal violence, as well as to violence outside the school, which can include domestic violence, drug trafficking, gang fights, and other manifestations of urban violence (Fernandez, 2005; Lisboa & Ebert, 2012; Luciano, Marín, & Yuli, 2008).

All these authors, in a unanimous finding regarding the necessity for the ongoing performance of theoretical or empirical research, also emphasize that continuous review and evaluation of the studies and programs already implemented and applied to reduce and prevent bullying in the school context must be carried out. Thus, the present study aimed to perform a systematic literature review using bibliometric methods. In other words, by identifying the frequency of scientific production regarding effectiveness indicators for intervention programs targeted to the context of bullying in the school environment involving children and adolescents.

## Method

This study was carried out through an electronic search to survey the publications on interventions for bullying situations between 2006 and 2011 in the following databases: (1) Web of Science (multidisciplinary database that aggregates content from major academic journals in the areas of Sciences, Social Sciences, Arts, and Humanities); (2) PsycInfo (gathers literature from the Psychology field, tied to the American Psychological Association); (3) Redalyc (network of scientific journals in various areas of Latin America and the

Caribbean, Spain and Portugal); (4) Dialnet (Iberian multidisciplinary database composed of journals and reviews from Portuguese and Spanish universities, with a strong impact in the European scientific community); and (5) Eric (exclusive database of research in education, with over a million indexed publications), associating the term “bullying” with the terms “intervention welfare” and “management welfare”. It is important to stress that the terms were used in English since they are common to all the databases; and the period chosen was justified by the need to consider more current sources of scientific literature on the subject.

Inclusion criteria for the publications were the presence of these descriptors in the title and the abstract, identified through text skimming. Repetitious publication references were excluded, as were those that highlighted intervention for bullying-related comorbidities, editorials, books, chapters, monographs, dissertations and theses.

The analysis of the publications related to the proposed theme was performed by employing quantitative and qualitative research techniques, facilitating respectively: (a) the frequency survey of the variables of interest for the study, and (b) the establishment of categories of analysis according to the results listed in the studies enumerated in the present study. These perspectives are therefore complementary when the intent is to estimate, to discover, and to study certain realities or strategies of interventions already conducted in other follow-up and cross-cohort studies (Reveles & Takahashi, 2007).

The study’s quantitative analysis variables of interest were the databases in which the articles were selected; year of publication; the journal; nationality; authorship; and study methodology. The qualitative analysis, in turn, consisted of using content analysis technique based on Bardin (2010), through which it was possible to perform: (a) pre-analysis of the articles involving text skimming to choose those that clearly identified the effectiveness indicators of bullying intervention programs; and preparation of material for analysis, i.e., survey and identification of intervention programs of 165 selected articles referencing the indices of

effectiveness and development of indicators for the description and analysis of bullying intervention programs; (b) the exploration of the material with encoding and enumeration of the bullying intervention programs, as contextual units, and the quantification of the content and/or key phrases also referring to these programs, as recording units (finalizing Phase I of the analysis); and (c) treatment of the results, inference and interpretation, i.e., delineation of categories according to the indicators of effectiveness described by the intervention programs listed (phase II). These categories were divided into (1) awareness of bullying and the variables related to it; (2) teacher skills, training or development; (3) support for students; and (4) partnership with the community and with the family.

It is important to note the exclusion of indicators from programs in which the contents did not directly involve the school and its body of actors, in order to remain in line with the theme of the study, the homogeneity, relevance, objectivity, fidelity, and productivity. Furthermore, it is also worth mentioning that the content analysis is characterized by the methodological rigor of the text and interview analysis, and is therefore a qualitative data treatment technique focused on the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the content, as well as the interpretation of such data.

## Results

The electronic search for the present review on the indicators of effectiveness of intervention programs for bullying situations initially recovered 689 publications containing, in the titles and abstracts, the terms “bullying intervention welfare” and “bullying management welfare”. With the use of exclusion criteria, i.e., publications that dealt with articles having restricted access, repetitions, books and chapters, monographs, editorials, dissertations, and theses, 165 articles were selected.

Regarding the frequency of the articles by database, it was found that the Web of Science had the highest percentage in the period 2006 to 2011, with 48.5% of the total publications.

Regarding the annual publication, the year of highest production on the theme was 2010 (30.9%), as shown in Table 1.

The periodicals that published more between 2006 and 2011 were: (a) the *“International Journal of Psychology”* and *“Psychological Therapy”* (8.5%), which brings together interdisciplinary publications of an empirical and theoretical character in any of the different fields of Psychology study, in English and Spanish; (b) the *“School Psychology Quarterly”* (6.7%), a scientific journal indexed at the American Psychology Association (APA), which publishes empirical studies and literature reviews of various nationalities in the areas of Psychology, Education, and services for the care of children in school settings, and covers a wide range of methodologies and guidelines, such as education, cognitive psychology, cognitive behavioral therapy, and prevention, among others; (c) the *“School Psychology International”* (5.5%), which is an international journal on Psychology that emphasizes research in which the focus is on the quality of life and mental health of individuals in educational, therapeutic, and school and community support service environments; (d) the *“Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research”* (3.0%) is a periodical of the Educational Publishing Foundation in collaboration with the *“Society of Psychology Consulting”*, which is also indexed in the APA, and is intended to contribute to the advancement of knowledge and practice in all specialties of psychology; (e) the periodical *“Educational Psychology”* (2.4%), a journal from the English group, Taylor & Francis Group, also indexed in Thomson Reuters, and in the Web of Science, brings

together discussions and seeks to disseminate the results of research in Psychology relevant to Education, as well as emphasize the publication of reports of applied research based on experimental and behavioral studies; (f) The journal *“Anales de Psicología”* [Annals of Psychology] (2.4%), with a significant international impact factor (1.388), belongs to the School of Psychology, *Universidad de Murcia*, Spain. It is a semiannual publication and covers various thematic areas of Psychology in terms of empirical or theoretical studies (within both the basic and methodological frameworks, and in their subsequent applications); (g) the *“Journal of Adolescence”* (2.4%) is an internationally organized interdisciplinary journal that addresses professional and academic questions about human development, especially in the period of adolescence; (h) the multidisciplinary journal, *“Child Abuse & Neglect”* (1.8%), mainly gathers publications about the abuse and neglect of children, with emphasis on studies that address prevention and treatment of issues harmful to child and adolescent development. It is indexed in the Elsevier Journals database; (i) the journal *“Criminal Behavior and Mental Health”* (1.8%), is indexed in the Wiley Online Library and gathers publications on the themes of violence, crime, and mental health; (j) the periodical *“Education Research”, “Group Dynamics-Theory Research and Practice”* (1.8%), publishes articles resulting from theoretical and empirical studies derived from experimental research and is also indexed in the APA; (l) *Intervention in School and Clinic* (1.8%) belongs to the SAGE Journal group and publishes articles from studies focusing on behavior, educational curricular

**Table 1**  
Frequency and percentage of publications according to year and database

Database	N	%	Year	N	%
Web of Science	80	48.5	2010	51	30.9
PsycInfo	25	15.2	2009	30	18.2
Redalyc	24	15.2	2008	26	15.8
Eric	25	14.5	2011	25	15.2
Dialnet	11	6.7	2007	17	10.3
			2006	16	9.7
<b>Total</b>	165	100.0		165	100.0



strategies, teaching, and professional training, among others; (m) and finally, the *Revista de Cerceatara si Intervire Sociala*, with 1.8% of the total publications, is an Italian periodical that publishes, in English and in Italian, on sociology, social psychology, and social work themes, and is indexed in Thomson Reuters, the Directory of Open Access Journals, Web of Science, and Scopus. It should be noted that the remaining journals had a publishing frequency of 1.2%.

Concerning publication by country (publication nationality), Spain accounted for 33.9% of the articles published, followed by the U.S. (23.6%) and Portugal (10.9%). Brazil was still only slightly representative in the publications on intervention for bullying situations (3.6%), as can be seen in Table 2. Regarding the authorship of the 165 articles, a wide diversity of authors was found, the majority with 0.6% (1) of the total publications. However, Allen, K.P.; Avilés, J.M.; and Gázquez, J.J. each produced 1.8% (3) of the analyzed articles; while Padilla, D.; Andreou, E.; Pizarro, H.C.; Bell, C.D.; Blood, G.W.; Card, N.A.; Cook, C. R.; Cowie, H.; Farmer, T.W.; Frey, K.S.; Graham, S.; Horne, A.M.; Merrell, K.W.; Novick, R.M.; Ross, S.W.; Sapouna, M.; Vannini, N.; Williams, K.R.; Aboud, F. each produced 1.2% (2). Of the methodologies used in the studies presented in the articles, quasi-experimental designs were the most frequent (19.4%), followed by systematic literature reviews (11.5%), prevalence studies (9.7%), qualitative research using case study (7.3%), and survey studies (6.1%), among other methodologies, as can be seen in Table 3.

Considering that the content analysis was derived from the pre-analysis; exploration of the material; treatment of the results; and inference and interpretation of the categorization for the results of the articles ( $N=165$ ) relevant to effectiveness indicators of intervention programs for bullying, it was established that the most frequent indicators referred (a) to the teacher training and skills development to deal with the context of bullying in the school environment (30.9%) and (b) to the awareness of the phenomenon and the variables

related to it (26.1%). These were followed by lesser cited indicators, which were the support for students (23.6%) and the partnership with the community and the family (19.4%), as can be seen in Figure 1.

Regarding the first category, concerning awareness about bullying and the variables linked to it, and the negative impact on the health and psychosocial development of those involved, it was found that such awareness was considered important and effective in intervention programs for bullying situations. This was due to offering education professionals, especially teachers, more clarity on what actions can be more cohesive and have more attainable goals in the school context, such as improving the organizational climate of the school and the relationship with students (Ertesvåg & Vaaland, 2007).

Among the actions clarified and enumerated by acquiring knowledge about the phenomenon of bullying, the most frequently reported in the first category were: facing the problem by establishing dialogue with other faculty members and bullying victims, aggressors, and bystanders; social support for victims including active listening and positive reappraisal of the school; and the distribution of tasks and recreational activities (Avilés, 2009; Castilho, 2010; Garaigordobil & Oñederra 2010).

**Table 2**  
Frequency of publication according to country

Country	N	%
Spain	56	33.9
United States of America	39	23.6
Portugal	18	10.9
United Kingdom	14	8.5
Colombia	10	6.1
Costa Rica	9	5.5
Brazil	6	3.6
Greece	3	1.8
Germany	3	1.8
Italy	2	1.2
Canada	2	1.2
China	1	0.6
Australia	1	0.6
Mexico	1	0.6
<b>Total</b>	165	100.0

**Table 3**

Most frequent study methodologies in the publications

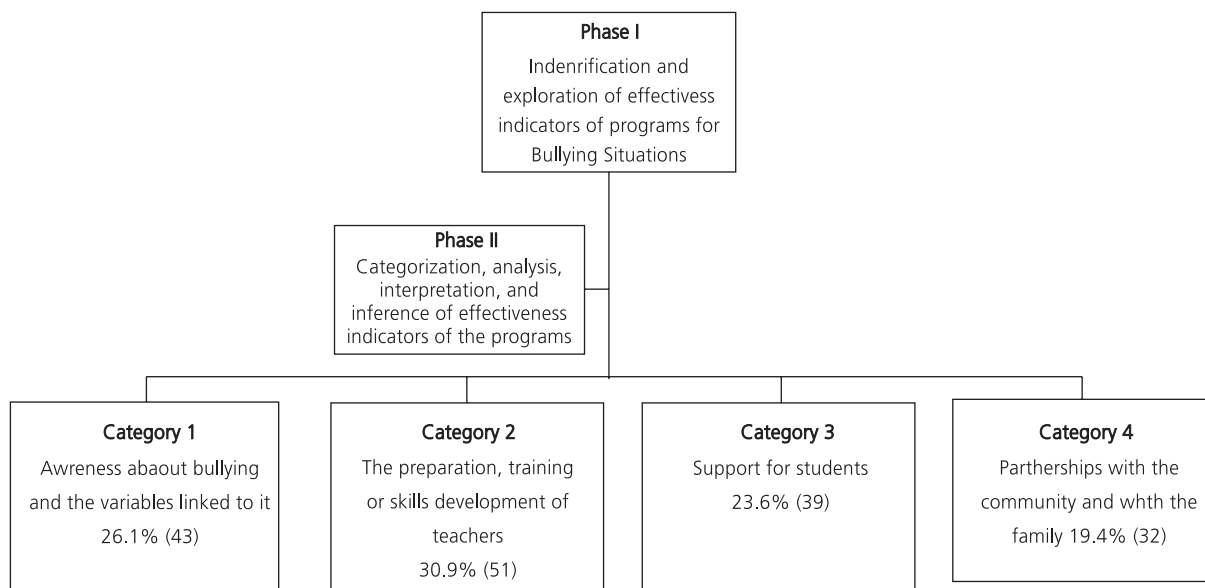
Methodology	N	%
Quasi-experimental study	32	19.4
Systematic literature review	19	11.5
Prevalence study	16	9.7
Qualitative - case study	12	7.3
Survey study	10	6.1
Qualitative - focus group	7	4.2
Longitudinal	7	4.2
Cross-sectional sample study	7	4.2
Experimental	7	4.2
Non-systematic review/indication of intervention techniques	6	3.6
Meta-analytic study	6	3.6
Quantitative and qualitative study	5	3.0
Descriptive study	4	2.4
Comparative study	3	1.8
Quantitative and qualitative study/focus group prevalence	2	1.2
Case-control study	2	1.2
Prevalence Study/contextual analysis	2	1.2
Psychometric study	2	1.2
Cohort/longitudinal study	1	0.6
Cohort/prevalence study	1	0.6
Psychoanalytic intervention	1	0.6
Correlational study	1	0.6
Incidence study	1	0.6
Epidemiological study	1	0.6
Qualitative contextual analysis study	1	0.6
Qualitative exploratory study	1	0.6
Qualitative psychometric study	1	0.6
Cohort study	1	0.6
Survey/Cohort study	1	0.6
Preliminary study	1	0.6
Prospective study	1	0.6
Qualitative study - content analysis/focus group	1	0.6
Qualitative Analysis	1	0.6
Theoretical Study	1	0.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The preparation, training, and skills development, as presented in the second category in the table above, was the most frequent indicator of the effectiveness of bullying intervention programs. According to the studies analyzed, this indicator may be the most effective, primarily due to approaching democratic management and the integration of social-emotional education and cooperative learning as an appropriate methodology for teaching-learning the required curriculum. From a secondary perspective, it is also effective due to openly engaging or addressing the issue of bullying with its various consequences for those directly and

indirectly involved in any school setting (Cerdán, 2011; Garaigordobil & Oñederra, 2010; Teixeira, 2008).

In category 3, support for students, the publications analyzed reported individualized care for the more severe cases, collective efforts with focus group techniques, and the establishment of rules of coexistence and non-punitive strategies, with reinforcement for empathic, friendly, sociable, and caring behaviors among classmates. Furthermore, it was emphasized how student support promotes a climate of trust, emotional security, and clear and assertive communication





**Figure 1.** Content analysis for effectiveness indicators of bullying intervention programs.

among teachers and students (Avilés, 2009; Jiménez, Castellanos, & Chau, 2009; Menesini, Codecasa, Benelli, & Cowie, 2003).

Finally, in category four, the partnership with the community and the family was highlighted as an effective indicator for intervention and particularly for the prevention of bullying. This partnership was described as involving the process of joint management and ongoing dialogue between parents and the school, through which it becomes possible to better understand the contexts outside of the school and specific to the students, which may interfere at any moment, both positively and negatively, in the socialization and social learning process. Among these contexts, we cite the dynamics of the families and friendships of the students, the community leisure spaces, and the community routine when faced with variables such as ethnic and sexual orientation differences, drug trafficking, and gangs, among others (Bender & Lösel, 2011; Cerdán, 2011; Moreno, Díaz, & Venegas, 2006).

## Discussion

The quantitative data from this study, presented in Table 1 showing the amount of

publications per year and per database surveyed, demonstrate the marked increase in research on the topic of bullying, as well as the concern about the repercussions and impacts of this psychosocial problem in the everyday lives of those involved. Regarding the most productive database, as shown to be the Web of Science, Yamamoto and Costa (2009) observe that this is the most heavily-referenced, perhaps due to being the most renowned in the scientific community, as it encompasses the greatest diversity of fields of knowledge, and due to being a strict evaluator of the quality of the manuscripts, through both qualitative and quantitative methodological parameters.

With respect to publications by country (Table 2), Spain appears as the most productive country. Avilés (2009) and Avilés, Irurtia, García-Lopez, and Caballo (2011) attribute this intense publication to the country's demand regarding the subject of violence, that is, the need for research aimed at understanding, intervention, and prevention in the area of violence with its various typologies (family, school, urban, and community, for example). In addition, we may infer that the extensive productivity of Spain, and other European countries, such as Portugal, the United Kingdom,

Germany, and Italy, is also due to the fact that this continent is the forerunner in research on bullying.

The quasi-experimental study was the methodology most commonly used in the articles analyzed. We can infer that this is due to the characteristics that this design has, regarding the rigor and greater generalizability of the results, compared to other methodologies. Systematic literature reviews, also quite frequent, (Table 3) demonstrate the concern with understanding the phenomenon and how it has been addressed in academic and scientific contexts (Reveles & Takahashi, 2007). It is important to note that the diversity of methodologies presented in Table 3 may also indicate an attempt to remedy the limitations and extend the results of the studies, replicating them and reproducing them in different cultural and socio-economic contexts (Baptista & Campos, 2007).

Regarding the content analysis that was performed, Martins (2009) and Pinheiro, Stelko-Pereira, and Williams (2010), present arguments that support the items placed in category one, due to also emphasizing the importance of educators' initial training and awareness promoted through specific content of the bullying phenomenon, such as the definition of bullying, related phenomena (violence outside of school and in the family setting, juvenile delinquency, etc.), and the characteristics of victims, aggressors, and bystanders, thus enabling teacher competence.

The training and development of teachers, indicated by the publications in category two, are also discussed by Castillo (2010), Lopes Neto and Saavedra (2003), and Lourenço, Pereira, Paiva, & Gebara (2009). According to these authors this process of training and development is essential for dealing with the behavioral and emotional problems of students, for applying techniques of conflict resolution, and for promoting assertiveness training and social skills among students and in the school environment. Furthermore, Hirschstein, Edstrom, Frey, Snell, and MacKenzie (2007) point out that the training of teachers to handle and individually monitor (coach) students involved in bullying, fostering skills that improve their peer relationships,

help in lowering the levels of victimization and aggressive and destructive behaviors at school, thus ensuring the effectiveness of interventions when included in the investment in professional training for teachers.

However, Lisboa and Ebert (2012) and Stelko-Pereira and Williams (2012) note that some socio-economic factors can derail the training process and professional development for educators. These factors include low pay, heavy workloads, violence outside the school, drug trafficking, the safety of the school's surrounding neighborhoods, community characteristics, occupational health, and the culture of devaluing the teacher and the basic educational process, which are variables that affect the personal motivation of the teacher, the school climate, and the quality of the educational system.

With regard to student support, Pinheiro et al. (2010) note that the responsibility for bullying can not be placed solely on the teacher or educator since the phenomenon has multiple determinants. In this sense, assistance to students should not only focus on the school environment or the relationship between peers and with their teachers, but also on the patterns of behavior and attitudes within the family arising from an environment of aggression and violence, which can have repercussions in the repetition of aggressive behavior in other contexts, such as the school and the community.

Pereira (2008), with regard to support for students, emphasizes the development of recreational and leisure activities in the school context with ways of deterring situations of aggression between peers, and promoting an organizational climate in the school that conveys physical and emotional safety for the students.

The partnership of the school with the family and the community shown in the fourth category of analysis of publications as an indicator of the effectiveness of bullying intervention and prevention programs, although not the most frequent in this study, is mentioned by Fernandez (2005) and Gázquez, Cangas, Padilla, Cano, and Pérez-Moreno (2005) as essential in deterring bullying situations, especially in the long term.

According to these authors, this partnership contributes to reducing the impact on physical and psychological health and to improving interpersonal relationships, since it functions as an important source of emotional and social support. Olweus (2011) and Barbosa, Lourenço, and Pereira (2011) point out, however, that an effective and efficient intervention proposal for bullying situations should include a combination of the indicators highlighted in the analysis of effectiveness indicators of intervention programs for bullying situations.

Literature reviews conducted on a particular phenomenon and the variables related to it are becoming increasingly essential, especially if understood as one of the stages of conducting and enabling empirical research. Through this study, this characteristic is well explained, not only through the descriptions by frequency of publications on the subject in question, but also through the survey of effectiveness indicators of intervention programs for bullying situations.

As the results were able to explain, the increase of publications in the period analyzed demonstrates the growing interest regarding the various impacts of bullying in the school environment, whether from the perspective of the victimized students or the bullies, or from the concept of teachers and school managers, in different academic environments and professional activities related to education. This study therefore aimed to clarify the research and activities carried out in an attempt to mitigate the damage done to all involved in bullying situations in different parts of the world, and thus guide future research and activities that may be consistent with, for example, the context of bullying situations in Brazil, and contribute as a reference source for professionals in their decision making in relation to this theme.

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