

Predictors of suicidal ideation in middle school students in the Dominican Republic

Predictores de ideación suicida en estudiantes de secundaria en República Dominicana

Preditores de ideação suicida em estudantes do ensino fundamental na República Dominicana

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Abstract

Currently, suicide has become the second cause of death among adolescents, with some attempts occurring in middle schools. Cases of suicide attempts are becoming increasingly worrisome. In this research, a model for predicting suicide ideations associated with different variables was tested on 531 adolescents from the Dominican Republic to contribute to its understanding. Statistical analyses included Confirmatory Factor Analyses (CFAs) to test psychometric properties of the constructs of interest, and Structural Equation Models (SEMs) to test for the effects among the constructs. The results displayed the predictive power of factors as being bullied, emotional instability and prosocial behaviour on verbal and physical aggressiveness and self-esteem and, in turn, how these effects predict suicidal ideation. These results contribute to the understanding of the role bullying has on adolescent's suicidal tendencies and the mediated paths for this effect, which may guide the design for future prevention programs.

Keywords: Suicide ideation, Bullying, Adolescents, Aggression, Prosocial Behaviour

Resumen

Actualmente, el suicidio se ha convertido en la segunda causa de muerte entre los adolescentes, con algunos intentos en la escuela secundaria. Los casos de intentos de suicidio son cada vez más preocupantes. En esta investigación, se probó un modelo para predecir las ideas suicidas asociadas con diferentes variables en 531 adolescentes de la República Dominicana para contribuir a su comprensión. Los análisis estadísticos incluyeron Análisis Factoriales Confirmatorios (AFC) para evaluar las propiedades psicométricas de los constructos de interés, y Modelos de Ecuaciones Estructurales (MEE) para evaluar los efectos entre los constructos. Los resultados mostraron el poder predictivo de factores como el acoso escolar, la inestabilidad emocional y la conducta prosocial sobre la agresividad verbal y física y la autoestima, y, a su vez, cómo estos efectos predicen la ideación suicida. Estos resultados contribuyen a la comprensión del papel del acoso escolar en las tendencias suicidas de los adolescentes y las vías mediadoras de este efecto, lo que podría orientar el diseño de futuros programas de prevención.

Palabras clave: ideación suicida, bullying, adolescentes, agresión, conducta prosocial

Resumo

Atualmente, o suicídio tornou-se a segunda causa de morte entre adolescentes, com algumas tentativas ocorrendo em escolas de ensino fundamental. Casos de tentativas de suicídio estão se tornando cada vez mais preocupantes. Nesta pesquisa, um modelo de previsão de ideias suicidas associado a diferentes variáveis foi testado em 531 adolescentes da República Dominicana para contribuir para sua compreensão. As análises estatísticas incluíram Análises Fatoriais Confirmatórias (AFCs) para testar as propriedades psicométricas dos construtos de interesse e Modelos de Equações Estruturais (MEEs) para testar os efeitos entre os construtos. Os resultados demonstraram o poder preditivo de fatores como bullying, instabilidade emocional e comportamento pró-social sobre a agressividade verbal e física e a autoestima e, por sua vez, como esses efeitos predizem a ideiação suicida. Esses resultados contribuem para a compreensão do papel do bullying nas tendências suicidas de adolescentes e os caminhos mediados para esse efeito, o que pode orientar o desenho de futuros programas de prevenção.

Palavras-chave: ideiação suicida, bullying, adolescentes, agressão, comportamento pró-social

Introducción

More than 800 000 people in the world die from suicide each year, with suicide being the second leading cause of death among teenage and young people. Furthermore, these numbers do not include suicide attempts, which occur 20 times more often than actual deaths by suicide (World Health Organization, WHO, 2017). The Dominican Republic has had an average of 566 suicides per year in the last decade, of these 3.2% correspond to young people under 15, while in the 15-19 age range the percentage is 6.4% (National Statistics Office, 2017). In this context, in 2016 the suicide rate was 1057 (9,9 per 100 000) (WHO, 2019).

According to different authors, suicidal behavior is multicausal (Lárazo-Pérez et al., 2023). Some important risk factors are low self-esteem, social isolation, anxiety, suicidal ideation, bullying, or victimization (Quarshie et al., 2023). In the stage of adolescence, suicidal behavior is an important health concern. The adolescents have not complete emotional maturity; therefore, they can find more difficulties facing stress situations, especially related to the social context (Amaral et al., 2020). This is related to the social and the academic contexts, as adaptation to school and to the peers' group is significant at this age. Research as the one from De la Barrera et al. (2024) affirms that an inadequate school climate is related to suicidal behavior. In this sense, in many situations, suicide is a result of bullying or harassment at school, or incidents of violence, which is becoming increasingly a problem (WHO, 2017). In fact, bullying is a frequent problem, and therefore a matter of concern for the professionals involved in the educational process all over the world (Baridon & Martin, 2014; Fine-Davis & Faas, 2014; Inglés et al., 2014; Save the Children, 2016; Schultze-Krumbholz et al., 2015).

Different international studies have found links between bullying and psychological and social factors such as aggression, self-esteem, emotional instability, and even in the most serious cases, suicidal ideation or suicide attempts among students aged 9–14 years (Baiden et al., 2019; Bauman et al., 2013; Fredrick & Demaray, 2018; Klomek et al., 2010; Lárazo-Pérez et al., 2023; Polo del Río et al., 2015; Slovak & Singer, 2011). In the study of Tur-Porcar et al. (2012) emotional instability was directly related to aggression. To avoid abuse and prevent the numerous negative effects we mentioned above, we have studied the importance of the prosocial behavior of individuals, as it acts as a protective factor against suicide attempts according to Carlo et al. (2012) or Padilla-Walker et al. (2025).

According to Sánchez-Sosa et al. (2010), suicide could be considered as a process that starts with the ideation in its different manifestations (self-destructive restlessness, organization of a deadly event, longing for death), goes through the attempt, and ends with the consummated suicide. Thus, suicidal ideation would be any idea

before attempting any act related to suicide and, therefore, is an important predictor of the act of suicide (Mortier et al., 2017). Positive suicidal ideation is the protective factor, while negative suicidal ideation is the risk factor (Villalobos-Galvis, 2009). Research on suicide ideation, as well as the identification of variables related to it, acquires special relevance when it comes to suicide prevention (Sánchez-Sosa et al., 2010).

According to Villalobos-Galvis (2009), ideation is the most common form of suicidal behavior, and it is often the most important precursor to later, more serious suicidal behaviors. It is a complex phenomenon where individual, family, and school variables interact (Cheng et al., 2009). Multiple studies have found links between bullying and suicidal ideation or suicide attempts (Arango et al., 2016; Baiden et al., 2019; Foss-Sigurdson et al., 2018; Fredrick & Demaray, 2018; Hesapcioglu et al., 2018; Kim et al., 2020; Klomek et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2018; Liu et al., 2017; Nocito, 2017; Pengpid & Peltzer, 2020; Tang et al., 2020) and also with cyberbullying (Kim et al., 2020; Kim et al., 2019; Iranzo et al., 2019).

In most research with adolescents in school settings, peer victimization is associated with both ideation and suicide attempts (Cui et al., 2011; Hepburn et al., 2012; Schneider et al., 2012). However, some studies find that bullying is associated only with attempts, and not with suicidal ideation or planning (Roh et al., 2015; Romero et al., 2013; Stewart et al., 2018), while others report the opposite pattern (Sampasa-Kanyinga, et al., 2014). Bonanno and Hymel (2010) showed that school victimization is a variable that predicts suicidal ideation. In this line, other research indicates that suicidal ideation is greater in those students who do not have family support (Crepeau-Hobson & Leech, 2016; Loinaz et al., 2011; Pengpid & Peltzer, 2020; Sánchez-Sosa et al., 2010; Villalobos-Galvis, 2009). Behaviors of psychological violence consisting of mockery and social exclusion are those that increases the most recurrent suicidal ideation, which is up to five times higher in individuals who suffer these experiences (Nocito, 2017).

In a meta-analysis of prospective or longitudinal studies, Carballo and Gómez (2017) pointed out that there is consensus on the association between bullying and the subsequent appearance of suicidal thoughts, attempts and non-suicidal self-injurious behavior of the victims. Similar results are found by Espelage and Holt (2013), and Holt et al. (2015) among the aggressors, victims and victim-aggressors; the latter were the ones with the strongest association. Arango et al. (2016) identified a relationship between lower levels of social connection and higher levels of bully intimidation and perpetration associated with suicide ideations and attempts. In this sense, other research has found that being a victim of bullying predicts suicidal ideation, but not aggression towards others (Undheim, 2013). However, in a study by Reed et al. (2015),

the results suggested that the effects of bullying on suicide ideation, planning, and attempts of suicide were mediated by violent behavior.

Among the different psychological factors with which suicidal ideation has been related, self-esteem is a particularly relevant variable (Carballo et al., 2019). For example, Miranda et al. (2009) found that the suicidal ideation group had significantly lower self-esteem than the non-ideation group; and specifically, they were 3.7 times more likely to have experienced suicidal ideation. This seems to point to the relationship between suicidal ideation and self-esteem (McMahon et al., 2010; Yoder & Hoyt, 2005). Low self-esteem predisposes adolescents to depression and thus to suicidal thoughts (Horwitz et al., 2017; Huang & Wang, 2019; Wilburn & Smith, 2005; Xin, et al., 2016). Generally, an increase in self-esteem decreases the risk of suicidal ideation (Cheng-Fang et al., 2015; Hesapcioglu et al., 2018; Kim et al., 2020; Primananda et al., 2019; Wan et al., 2019; Zhu et al., 2019). Indeed, research indicates that self-esteem is an independent predictor of suicidal behavior (Groholt et al., 2005; Jiménez et al., 2007; Sánchez-Sosa et al., 2010).

The differences across countries can influence as well. According to Quarshie et al. (2023) low and middle-income countries, as the Dominican Republic, have the 79% of the world's suicides. Studies in the Dominican Republic indicate that the prevalence of bullying in schools is very high, both in the public sector (Parada et al., 2017; Vargas et al., 2014) and in private schools (Vergés & Guzmán, 2017).

Romero et al. (2013), in a context of the USA, found that Latin adolescents experienced more suicidal ideation and depression compared to the other groups. Therefore, we aim to the need to analyze the specific context of the Dominican Republic.

Nevertheless, Romo and Kelvin (2016) emphasize that the prevalence of bullying changes according to country but the relationship between negative health behaviors and suicide ideation is stable. Therefore, authors point to the need to prioritize bullying in Latin America with an integrated approach that considers both physical and mental.

Therefore, the aim of this study is to determine the predictive factors of suicidal ideation in adolescents in the context of Dominican Republic trying to clarify the effect of these variables, considering the results for the design of better programs with the final goal of preventing suicide associated with bullying. In this context, it is important to deepen the study of the different variables to specify their role as determinants in suicidal ideation in adolescents. For this, a Structural Equation Model of suicidal ideation is proposed, which tests the predictive power of bullying, emotional instability and prosocial behavior, mediated by aggression and self-esteem.

Method

Participants

The participants of this study are students from the six years of secondary education (13–18 years old) from San Pedro de Macorís, Educational District 05-03 of La Romana (Dominican Republic). The mean age of the participants was 15.48 years ($SD = 1.74$), and they were between 11 and 21 years. Of the 531 students, 227 were male (42.7%) and 304 were female (57.3%). A total of 50.5% of the students surveyed lived with both parents, 37.5% only with one of the parents, and the remaining 12% was distributed in extended family, reconstituted and/or with grandparents.

To assure a more representative sample, the population data was collected from five public centers located in the area. Three were rural centers and two were urban centers. After a stratified probabilistic sampling, by school and educational level, a total of 531 students were obtained as the final sample. The sample was selected for a margin of error of 5% with a confidence level of 99%, with a stratification according to the enrollment of each school and the different grades in secondary school, from 1st to 6th.

Instruments

Participants completed some sociodemographic indicators previously presented in the sample description, together with several psychological scales:

1. Cisneros's Self-Test of School Harassment (Piñuel & Oñate, 2006). 50 items gather information about eight dimensions of harassment. In addition, two second order factors of harassment with high reliability in this sample are obtained by grouping the eight dimensions: physical harassment ($\alpha = .86$) and psychological harassment ($\alpha = .90$). A CFA with a two-factor structure had an excellent fit to the data: $\chi^2_{1174} = 2346.54$, $p < .001$, RMSEA = .043 [.041 - .046], CFI = .950.
2. Emotional Instability Scale (Caprara & Pastorelli, 1993) in the Spanish version of Del Barrio, et al., (2001). It consists of 20 Likert-type items with a three-point response scale. They describe adolescent behavior measuring lack of control, and low capacity to contain impulsivity and emotionality. The internal consistency of the test in this study was $\alpha = .81$, and a one-factor CFA also fitted the data very well: $\chi^2_{77} = 213.93$, $p < .001$, RMSEA = .058 [.049 - .067], CFI = .943.

3. Prosocial Conduct Questionnaire (Caprara & Pastorelli, 1993). We used the Spanish version adapted by Del Barrio et al. (2001). Initially, it had 15 items, of which 10 offer a description of children's behavior in relation to altruism, trust and sympathy, and five are control items. The scale provides a reliability for prosocial behavior with an alpha of .67 and, again, a CFA with one factor fitted the data well: $\chi^2_{35} = 119.18, p < .001, RMSEA = .067 [.054 - .081], CFI = .900$.
4. Scale of Physical and Verbal Aggressiveness (Caprara & Pastorelli, 1993), in the Spanish version by Del Barrio et al. (2001). Of the 20 items on this scale, 15 describe the behavior of children referred to hurting others either physically or verbally, and five are control items. The internal consistency of the test was $\alpha = .84$ for verbal aggressiveness, and $\alpha = .80$ for physical aggressiveness. A two-factor CFA had very good fit: $\chi^2_{89} = 247.65, p < .001, RMSEA = .058 [.049 - .067], CFI = .968$.
5. Scale of global self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1986). This scale assesses a single dimension of self-esteem. It consists of 10 items, five items are positively worded, and the other five negatively. For the purposes of this work, only the positive half of the scale was used. Cronbach's alpha of this scale in the present study was .70. The CFA for the five positive items showed a good model fit: $\chi^2_5 = 29.67, p < .001, RMSEA = .096 [.065 - .131], CFI = .979$.
6. Inventory of Positive and Negative Suicidal Ideation (PANSI; Osman, et al., 1998). It is a scale adapted into Spanish by Villalobos-Galvis (2010). It has fourteen items: six measure positive suicidal ideation, or protective factors, and eight measure negative suicide ideation or risk factors. In this study, Cronbach's alpha was .70 for positive suicidal ideation, and .89 for negative suicidal ideation. A two-factor solution CFA model fitted the data very well: $\chi^2_{76} = 242.89, p < .001, RMSEA = .064 [.055 - .073], CFI = .979$.

Procedure

The questionnaires were applied in the classrooms or in the place arranged by the school according to availability. For this, it was ensured that the conditions of the spaces were optimal, quiet, and comfortable. Moreover, participation was completely voluntary, and all answers were anonymous. Participants were duly informed about the procedure for filling out the instruments, the conditions of anonymity and confidentiality of the survey, so they could be confident and their answers as sincere and honest as possible. Finally, this study was carried out in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the Declaration of Helsinki.

Data analysis

The statistical analyses included several multivariate procedures. Specifically, CFAs to test for the factorial validity and reliability of the constructs of interest, and structural equation models (SEMs) to test for the effects among the constructs. They have been estimated in the Mplus 8.3 software. The plausibility of any CFA or SEM model is assessed using several fit indices and criteria (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Tanaka, 1993). Missing data were dealt with Full Information Maximum Likelihood (FIML), the recommended method for structural models (Finney & DiStefano, 2013).

Given that the size of the sample greatly influences the decision to accept or reject a model based on statistical grounds, a few practical fit indices are used to assess any model. The following criteria were used: (a) Chi-square Statistic (Kline, 1998); (b) the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) (Bentler, 1990); (c) the Root Mean Squared Error of Approximation (RMSEA) (Steiger & Lind, 1980); and (d) the Standardized Root Mean Squared Residuals (SRMR). Based on the recommendations of Hu and Bentler (1999), a CFI of at least 0.95, and RMSEA less than 0.06, and an SRMR less than 0.08, together, would indicate a good fit between the hypothesized model and the data.

Results

An *a priori* theoretical model has been proposed, based on the literature consulted and theoretical reasoning, to try to predict suicidal ideations, both positive and negative. This initial theoretical model is presented in Figure 1.

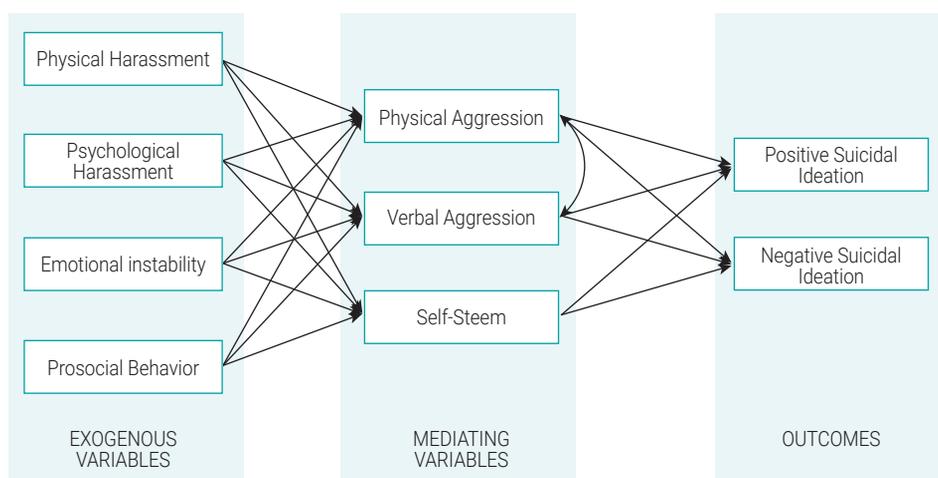


Figure 1. Theoretical Model to predict suicidal ideations in adolescents.

As can be seen in Figure 1, the model proposes the prediction of suicidal ideations, based on several exogenous variables (physical and psychological harassment, emotional instability and prosocial behavior), and establishes three mediators (physical and verbal aggressiveness, and self-esteem). However, the fit of the model to the data was not satisfactory: $c^2_{14} = 86.55, p < .001, RMSEA = .099 [0.079 - .119], CFI = .916, SRMR = .084$. The modification indices indicated some direct missing relationships that could improve model fit: a direct effect of physical harassment on negative suicidal ideations, a direct effect of psychological harassment on positive suicidal ideations, and an additional direct effect of emotional instability on negative suicidal ideations. Thus, to improve the model, it was modified according to the aforementioned three effects (Figure 2). The final model obtained a very good fit: $c^2_{11} = 33.15, p = .0005, RMSEA = .062 [0.038 - .086], CFI = .974, SRMR = .058$. All standardized parameter estimates of this model were statistically significant

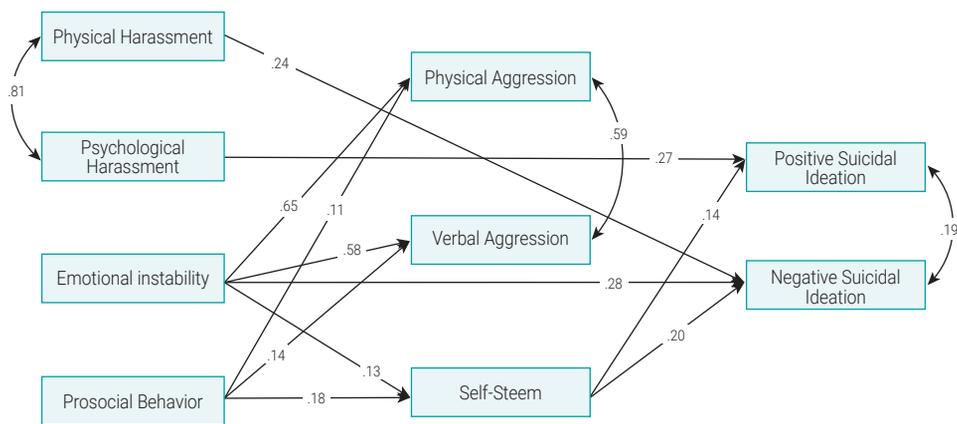


Figure 2. Final Model to predict suicidal ideations in adolescents.

Note: All parameter estimates statistically significant ($p < .01$).

Parameter estimates in the model are detailed in Figure 2. Harassment factors have a direct effect on suicidal ideations. Physical harassment has a positive relationship with negative suicidal ideations ($\beta = .24, p < .01$). Psychological harassment presents a negative relationship to positive suicidal ideations ($\beta = -.27, p < .01$). Emotional instability has a positive effect on negative suicidal ideations ($\beta = .28, p < .01$). It also presents a positive relationship with physical aggression ($\beta = .65, p < .01$) and verbal aggression ($\beta = .58, p < .01$). Additionally, it is negatively related to self-esteem ($\beta = -.13, p < .01$), which mediates its effect towards positive ($\beta = .14, p < .01$) and negative suicidal ideations ($\beta = .20, p < .01$). Prosocial behavior is negatively related to physical

aggression ($\beta = -.11, p < .01$) and verbal aggression ($\beta = -.14, p < .01$). In addition, it presents a positive effect on self-esteem ($\beta = .18, p < .01$). Self-esteem is positively and negatively related, respectively, to positive ($\beta = .14, p < .01$) and negative suicidal ideations ($\beta = -.20, p < .01$). The model was able to predict 12.52% of the variance of positive suicidal ideations, and up to 15.3% of the variance of negative suicidal ideations.

Discussion

The prevalence of suicide is a clear concern, especially in some contexts, as middle-income countries (Kalender et al., 2024; Quarshie et al., 2023) as the Dominican Republic, and in some stages of adolescence (Amaral et al., 2020). In fact, one of the leading causes of death in adolescents is suicide (Hutchinson et al., 2025). Among adolescents, the suicidal ideation is common. This doesn't indicate mental health problems, but that could be a risk to the suicidal behavior as between 15 and 19 years old, many of the suicidal attempts often result in suicide.

As we mentioned above, suicidal behavior is multicausal (Layrón Folgado et al., 2022; Lázaro-Pérez et al., 2023). Different studies paid attention to the different risk and protective factors that influence on this process and should be analyzed into an integrated model (Romero et al., 2013). Thereby, as regards as the prevalence of suicidal behavior, Quarshie et al. (2023) refer to different levels: an individual level (with some personal variables as emotional instability, prosocial behavior, self-esteem), an interpersonal level (as victimization), school context (bullying), community context (as the country), among others. These authors emphasize how important to identify and analyze these factors is to promote intervention and prevention programs.

In our study, we considered different factors to analyze their impact on the suicidal ideation. It estimated and tested a predictive model of school-age suicidal ideations in the Dominican Republic. Specifically, this work tested the relationship of physical and psychological harassment, emotional instability, and prosocial behavior, with positive and negative suicidal ideation, mediated by physical and psychological aggression, and self-esteem. This model was tested through a mediation Structural Equation Model (SEM) with observed variables. This SEM evaluates predictive multivariate models by examining the relationships between exogenous predictors, mediators, and outcomes. The initial theoretical model of full mediation did not fit correctly the data (Figure 1).

Following the changes suggested by the modification indices, the model was transformed including some direct relationships from the exogenous variables to the suicidal ideations (a direct effect of physical harassment on negative suicidal

ideations, a direct effect of psychological harassment on positive suicidal ideations, and an additional direct effect of emotional instability on negative suicidal ideations) and eliminating statistically non-significant relations.

Therefore, we found that physical and psychological harassment were direct predictors of suicidal ideas. In the case of negative suicidal ideations, the presence of physical harassment seems decisive according to the results. In positive suicidal ideations, the non-presence of psychological harassment appears as a protective factor. These results are in line with those found in the literature (for example, Crepeau-Hobson & Leech, 2016; Iranzo et al., 2019; Nocito, 2017), supporting Undheim (2013) suggestions, that being a victim of bullying predicts suicidal ideation, but not aggressiveness towards others. This led us to emphasize the relevance of enhancing the school social climate, such as the prevention of bullying, to help to reduce suicidal behavior (De la Barrera et al., 2024).

Psychological factors, such as emotional instability and prosocial behavior, are related to aggression, both physical and psychological, that do not mediate the prediction of suicidal ideations. In this way, emotional instability would be a risk factor for aggression, as in the research of Tur-Porcar et al. (2012), and prosocial behavior a protective factor, as in Carlo et al. (2010), Carlo et al. (2012) or Padilla-Walker et al. (2025). In addition, emotional instability has a direct effect on negative suicidal ideation. This is consistent with Polo del Río et al. (2015) research, in the sense that the emotional instability factor implies the propensity to discomfort, expressed in mood alterations, low self-esteem, depression, discontent, and irritability among others. All these variables may play a role in suicidal ideation. This confirms studies with adolescents which show that emotional instability is the best single predictor of aggressive behavior (Llorca, 2017). Moreover, both emotional instability and prosocial behavior predict positive and negative suicidal ideation, through an effect mediated by self-esteem. This is consistent with the growing number of studies that conceptualize prosocial behavior as a potential brake against negative developmental outcomes during adolescence (Caprara et al., 2015; Seibert & Kerns, 2015). In other words, high levels of prosocial behavior predict high levels of self-esteem, which in turn predict an increase in positive ideations that act as a protective factor against negative suicidal ideations or against suicide attempts, as suggested in Padilla-Walker et al. (2025).

Thus, Padilla-Walker et al. (2025) emphasizes that psychological variables such as emotional instability and prosocial behavior appear as protective factors of suicide, with their effects being mediated by self-esteem. This result lines up with previous investigations indicating that low self-esteem predisposes adolescents to depression and, therefore, to suicidal ideations (for example, Carballo et al., 2019 or Miranda et

al., 2009). Moreover, an increase in self-esteem decreases the risk of suicidal ideation (Cheng-Fang et al., 2015; Landa-Blanco et al., 2024; Hesapcioglu et al., 2018). This and other studies indicate that self-esteem is an independent and relevant predictor of suicidal ideation and behavior (Groholt et al., 2005). However, suicidal ideations and attempts are extremely difficult phenomena to predict.

To conclude, this study highlights the need to promote school programs focused on improvement of a school social climate, like preventing bullying, and on the promotion of prosocial behavior and the increase on self-esteem, as well as a decrease on emotional instability.

There are strengths and weaknesses in this study, as well as there are some directions for future research. Among the limitations, first, the model has been tested in school adolescents. Therefore, the results may not be generalizable to the entire population or other populations. Second, the research design is cross-sectional, which always limits our ability to draw causal conclusions. Third, there are other factors that can moderate or mediate the relationships between bullying and suicidal ideations, which opens the door for future research. Despite these limitations, this study also has several merits. First, the present investigation increases the understanding of an interesting phenomenon: the role of bullying in adolescent suicide. Second, the multivariate study of the relationships between the variables through SEM is the best analytical strategy in the presence of mediational effects in the context of cross-sectional designs (MacKinnon, 2008).

It should be emphasized that the presence or absence of these risk factors does not imply the presence or absence of suicidal ideation in all cases. Suicidal ideation is an extremely complex construct that still needs further investigation. As directions for future research, a larger and more inclusive sample of schoolchildren could help determine if the results are generalized to this general population. In addition, it would be convenient to replicate the study including students from other districts of the country, and even, ideally, from other countries with similar problems. We must be aware that these types of studies can be altered by the possibility that some victims do not disclose their real situation out of shame or fear, which would be a limitation to be considered.

Finally, as for the practical implications of these results, this study points to the importance of intervening in certain risk and protective factors in suicide prevention programs. It is necessary to promote educational policies that can create school contexts with interventions that contemplate actions not only in school bullying, but also in factors such as prosocial behavior, self-esteem or emotional regulation. In this way, it will be possible to create protected schools, improving the mental health of students.

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