Psychosocial Intervention

Non-Disclosure and Suicidal Ideation in Adolescent Victims of Bullying: An Analysis from the Family and School Context

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, suicide rates among bullying victims have raised much concern among educators and health professionals. Suicide is the fourth leading cause of preventable death among adolescents, data that warn about the need to monitor the signs before victims' suicidal behavior to prevent this fatal outcome. In the present study, the role of victims' silence about their victimization situation was analysed, as well as the particular impact of family and school environments. More specifically, we examined the mediating role of the victim's non-disclosure between the parental styles (observing the father's and mother's roles separately) and the school climate, concerning suicidal ideation in victims. The sample consisted of 2,977 adolescents (48.5% boys), aged 11-17 years (M = 14.1, SD = 1.42), of whom 635 (21.3%) reported having been victims of bullying in the past year. The results showed that parental styles of rejection and indifference were positively related to victims' non-disclosure of bullying and suicidal ideation. Conversely, a positive school climate showed a negative relationship with victims' disclosure of the bullying situation and suicidal ideation. The findings also indicated that non-disclosure mediates the relationship between the mother's parental style and suicidal ideation. These findings expand knowledge about the role of bullying victims' social context and the variable disclosure with regards to suicidal ideation in adolescents victimized by peers at school.

El silencio y la ideación suicida en los adolescentes que son víctimas de acoso escolar: un análisis desde el contexto familiar y escolar

RESUMEN

En los últimos años, el índice de suicidio entre las víctimas de acoso escolar ha generado mucha preocupación en los educadores y los profesionales de la salud. El suicidio es la cuarta causa de muerte prevenible entre los adolescentes, datos que alertan sobre la necesidad de vigilar los signos ante la conducta suicida de las víctimas para prevenir el fatal desenlace. En el presente estudio se analizó el papel del silencio de las víctimas en su victimización, así como el impacto particular del entorno familiar y escolar. Más concretamente, se analizó el papel mediador del silencio de la víctima entre los estilos parentales (considerando el rol del padre y de la madre por separado) y el clima escolar en la ideación suicida en las víctimas. La muestra constaba de 2,977 adolescentes (48.5% varones), en edades comprendidas entre 11 y 17 años (M = 14.1, DT = 1.42), de los cuales 635 (21.3%) indicaron haber sido víctimas de acoso escolar en el último año. Los resultados mostraron que los estilos parentales de rechazo e indiferencia se relacionaban positivamente con el silencio de las víctimas y la ideación suicida. Por el contrario, un clima escolar positivo mostraba una relación negativa con la revelación de la situación de acoso y la ideación suicida de los estudiantes victimizados. Los hallazgos también indican que el silencio de las víctimas media la relación entre el estilo parental de la madre y la ideación suicida. Estos resultados amplían el conocimiento del papel del contexto social de las víctimas de acoso y de la variable silencio con respecto a la ideación suicida en adolescentes victimizados en la escuela por compañeros.

In recent years, bullying has generated great social concern and interest in the scientific community (Cañas, E. Estévez, et al., 2020; Garaigordobil & Larrain, 2020). Bullying refers to violent behavior among peers characterized by its intentionality, persistence, and power imbalance (Olweus, 2005). In the school context, traditional bullying implies coercing, forcing, threatening, abusing, dominating, or intimidating others, repeatedly and belligerently, and with an imbalance of power between the bully and the victim (Bondu et al., 2016; Harbin et al., 2019). Being a victim of bullying has been associated with significantly negative, and sometimes devastating, consequences at multiple levels, including substantial physical and psychological damage, such as high levels of distress, anxiety, and depression, among others (Cañas, J. F. Estévez, et al., 2020; Estévez et al., 2019; Laninga-Wijnen et al., 2023; Van Ryzin, & Roseth, 2018). In severe cases, suicidal ideation is the consequence that arouses the most concern among families, educators, and professionals.

Adolescent Suicide and Relationship with Bullying

Worldwide, suicide has been considered a severe public health problem of multicausal origin (Soto-Sanz et al., 2021). In fact, it is the fourth leading cause of preventable death among adolescents (World Health Organization [WHO, 2021]). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2020) reported that in 2019 19% of schoolchildren seriously considered suicide, 16% planned a suicide attempt, and 9% carried it out. These data warn about the need to monitor the signs before victims' suicidal behavior to prevent this fatal outcome.

In the Strain Theory of Suicide, Zhang (2005) defines "suicidal ideation" as an individual's idea and/or intention to voluntarily end their life. This theory holds that suicidal ideation mainly originates from the vast discordance that the individual perceives between reality and desire (Zhang, 2005); thus, a person lacking sufficient coping skills who faces a crisis or negative event will be more likely to attempt suicide (Lew et al., 2019; Sun & Zhang, 2015). Bullying victimization could fall into the last category, as the resulting mental crisis may exceed personal coping resources (Arvidsdotter et al., 2016; Nuñez-Fadda et al., 2022). In fact, in the last decade, interest in the study of the relationship between peer victimization and adolescent suicide has grown considerably (Van Geel et al., 2021; Van Geel et al., 2014).

Numerous studies have concluded that being a victim of bullying is associated with an increased likelihood of experiencing mental health problems (Cao et al., 2022; Estévez et al., 2009; Gili et al., 2019; Houbre et al., 2006; Kwan et al., 2022; Lee & Yi, 2022; Pengpid & Peltzer, 2021; Sutter et al., 2022), including suicidal ideation and subsequent attempts among youth (Benatov et al., 2021; Buelga et al., 2022; Castellví et al., 2017; Rooney et al., 2019; Sampasa-Kanyinga et al., 2017; C. Wang et al., 2018; Wei et al., 2016). The data indicate that youths victimized by bullying have almost three times the risk of suicidal ideation (Save the Children, 2022), even two years later (Geoffroy et al., 2016), and are six times more likely to engage in suicidal behaviors than non-victims (Li & Shi, 2018).

It is clear, therefore, that bullying by peers increases the probability of suicidal ideation in adolescents (Fredrick & Demaray, 2018), though it is also a fact that not all victimized adolescents think about taking their own life. These interindividual differences indicate that some factors must be involved in this relationship, mediating, or moderating the victimization-suicide association.

Non-disclosure and Suicide Risk

Although much has been said in the educational context about the so-called "code of silence" referring to the silence surrounding bullying situations (Griffiths & Perkins, 1996; Slocum et al., 2017), this fact has been poorly studied in the scientific framework. In the present study it was proposed to deepen the relevance of the "silence of the victims", i.e., the decision of not disclosure their own victimization situation to a trusted person, on the victim's suicidal ideation. Some authors have indeed argued that victims' disclosure of their experience may help to put an end to the bullying situation (Wójcik, & Rzeńca, 2021), as well as to help victims to cope with their trauma (Wójcik & Mondry, 2020), but it is crucial to investigate the effect that communicating (or not) such a traumatic experience could have specifically on the victim's suicidal ideation.

The data systematically show that many victims do not share their experience with others. Just one in ten students report having been repeatedly bullied at school (Inchley et al., 2020), and between 20% and 33% of adolescent victims do not tell anyone (Blomqvist et al., 2020). This is because victims are often afraid of the bullies' retaliation (Boulton et al., 2017; Shaw et al., 2019; Wójcik, & Rzeńca, 2021) or that their experience will become known by unwanted people who will make them feel ashamed of their peer relationships (Karga et al., 2013). Thus, the victims' disclosure of their bullying experience seems to depend on their relational and social contexts (Blomqvist et al., 2020; Greene, 2009). The available literature suggests that adolescents require a confident social environment where they feel safe to share traumatic experiences with parents and teachers, in contrast with environments where they perceive indifference or rejection (Estévez et al., 2013). Some researchers have examined the direct interaction of family and school factors with suicidal ideation among adolescents (Barzilay et al., 2017; Liu et al., 2017; C. Wang et al., 2018), but the gaps in the literature are evident when examining the role of the family and school environments in the victims' disclosure of their situation as part of the dynamics of an eventual suicidal ideation.

Family and School Environments, Victimization, and Suicidal Ideation

Research on family factors in recent years has mainly demonstrated the beneficial role of a positive family environment for children's development. Specifically, one such factor that has received considerable attention is parenting socialization styles. This basically means that psychological and social adjustment of children and adolescents depends on whether the relationships with their parents are based on acceptance or rejection (Gracia et al., 2005; Putnick et al., 2015). Rohner (1984), one of the most important researchers on parental styles, defines "parental rejection" as the absence or significant deprivation of parental warmth, affection or love towards their children, an attitude that can take three forms: hostility and aggressiveness; indifference and negligence; and undifferentiated rejection.

Concerning the effects of parental behavior on children's psychosocial adjustment, numerous studies relate high family conflict and rejection towards children to an increased risk of children's suffering from a wide variety of emotional and behavioral problems (Hou et al., 2020; Huang et al., 2022; Martínez-Ferrer et al., 2018; Sánchez-Sosa et al., 2010). These problems can lead to internalized symptoms, such as distress, depression, and anxiety disorders (Mendo-Lázaro et al., 2019; Qiu et al., 2022), or to externalized symptoms such as aggression and hostility (Crespo-Ramos et al., 2017; Koepp et al., 2022; Repetti et al., 2002; Rothbaum & Weisz, 1994; Steinberg et al., 1994). These emotional problems have been associated, in turn, in the most extreme cases, with future suicide attempts (Sánchez-Sosa et al., 2010; Schlagbaum et al., 2021; Yang et al., 2022).

On the contrary, parental styles based on open communication, warmth, support, and acceptance promote children's mental health and resilience towards defiant situations (Oppenheimer et al., 2016), helping even to moderate the negative impact of school victimization

(Plexousakis et al., 2019). Studies on the protective effect of parenting practices on suicidal ideation are much more scant (Cruz-Manrique et al., 2021; Olejniczak et al., 2018), being one of the most recent the work by C. Wang et al. (2018), in which family involvement was observed to buffer the relationship between victimization and suicidal thoughts in children.

Although the evidence provided helps to understand the role of parenting socialization styles, research until now is not yet sufficient to explain why some victimized students think about their own death, and not others. In addition, the available research has generally focused on parental behavior without distinguishing the effects of the paternal and maternal styles separately, despite research suggesting that fathers' and mothers' attitudes and behaviors may have differential impact on children's psychosocial adjustment (Gracia et al., 2005; Herrero et al.,, 2006; Veneziano, 2000). One of the purposes of the present study was precisely to consider independently father's and mother's influence on the association between victimization and suicidal ideation.

Among the key contexts to understand suicidal ideation in adolescent victims, the school is another essential environment to consider (Sánchez-Sosa et al., 2010). In the School Climate Theory, "school climate" is defined as students' perceptions of the degree of cohesion and affiliation with their classmates, and the quality of the teacher-student relationship (Martínez-Ferrer et al., 2012; Varela, et al., 2019; M. T. Wang & Degol, 2016). This theory argues that the social system and the school culture are important aspects in the psychoemotional and behavioral adjustment of students (Clark et al., 2022).

Several studies suggest that school climate is closely associated with students' mental health (Aldridge & McChesney, 2018; Kutsyuruba et al., 2015; Lester & Cross, 2015; Reaves et al., 2018). Specifically, it has been observed that a positive school climate, which promotes the sense of safety in students (Cava & Musitu, 2003; Zacharia & Yablon, 2022) and the feeling of community connectedness, reflects on children's and adolescents' well-being (Košir et al., 2020; La Salle et al., 2021; Long et al., 2021; Musitu-Ferrer et al., 2019; Musitu Ochoa & Cava, 1999). In fact, the evident relationship between school climate and students' mental health may determine the consequences of bullying victims (Aldridge & McChesney, 2018; Long et al., 2021; Reaves et al., 2018; Wong et al., 2021). It has been documented that victimized students generally report more significant psychological problems and suicidal thoughts, when they perceive low levels of school support (Iranzo et al., 2019; Marraccini & Brier, 2017; Morin et al., 2015; Stadler et al., 2010). On the contrary, previous studies have concluded that supportive teachers and peers are important protective resources for victims (Danielson & Jones, 2019; Mischel & Kisantas, 2020; Mucherah et al., 2018; Jiménez et al., 2021) and reduces victimization behaviors (Longobardi et al., 2022): the perception of a positive school climate can buffer the associations of victimization with suicidal thoughts and behaviors, as victims felt more protected and emotionally connected (Madjar et al., 2018; C. Wang et al., 2018).

Family, School, and Non-disclosure of Victimization

Indeed, the fact that the victim feels supported by their most significant ones can be a facilitating factor for them to talk about their problem. In general, it has been observed that when the adolescent perceives a high-quality parent-child or teacher-student relationship, they tend to share their problems more (Matsunaga, 2009; Shaheen et al., 2019). Regarding the victimization experience, Mishna (2004) observed, for instance, that children's decision to disclose their situation was affected by the parents' lack of interest or negative reactions to the issue.

The school environment can also influence an individual's decision to disclose. Thus, victimized students who perceive their classroom climate as protective are more likely to trust their classmates to help stop the bullying, making it easier for them to tell adults about the victimization and encourage intervention (Unnever & Cornell, 2004). In contrast, if victims perceive that their peers condone or tolerate bullying, they will be less likely to disclose their victim status (Blomqvist et al., 2020).

Likewise, students' perception of the teacher reactions during conflicts in the classroom has been also associated with their willingness to report or not bullying situations (Cortes & Kochenderfer-Ladd, 2014; Perea et al., 2010). If the teacher does not express disapproval of bullying or do not take appropriate actions to intervene, this may convey a message to their students that bullying is somehow acceptable (Saarento et al., 2013). However, if teachers are perceived as close and compassionate, they could became in the confidant adults chosen by victimized students who do not feel sufficient support at home (Herrero et al., 2006).

The Present Study

The scientific literature indicates that being a bullying victim in adolescence has severe psychological consequences, such as the presence of emotional problems closely linked to suicidal thoughts. However, as yet, little is known about the concrete impact of microsystems of influence in adolescence, such as family and school, that could explain why victimization turns into suicidal thoughts in some victims but not in others. In this study, the role of victims' silence is analysed as part of the explanatatory dynamics, since this information could help to better understand suicidal ideation among adolescents and to better design professional interventions against school bullying.

In particular, the purpose of the present study was to examine whether parental socialization styles and the school climate were associated with the probability that the bullying victim would remain silent about their situation, and to deepen the association between the victims' silence and their suicidal ideation. In other words, we examined the mediating role of the victim's non-disclosure of the problem between the parental styles (observing the father's and mother's role separately) and the school climate concerning suicidal ideation in victims.

Based on the theoretical and empirical background, the following hypotheses were proposed: (1) negative parenting styles will be associated with more suicidal ideation in victims, whereas perception of a positive school climate will be associated with less suicidal ideation; (2) negative parenting styles will increase the likelihood of non-disclosure of victimization situations by adolescents, whereas a perceived positive school climate will decrease the likelihood of non-disclosure of victimization incidents by adolescents; and (3) non-disclosure of a situation of victimization will mediate the relationship between the parenting styles and suicidal ideation, as well as between school climate and suicidal ideation.

Method

Sample

Analyses of the present study are based on data from a representative sample of high school students who were recruited through random cluster sampling in 7 Spanish schools from geographical areas of the Valencia, Aragon, and Andalusia regions. The primary sampling units were the urban and rural geographic areas of the three regions. The secondary units were the public and private secondary schools in each area. Classrooms were not considered tertiary units, as all classrooms

from first to fourth grade of the selected schools were included in the study. A series of preliminary analyses of differences of means was conducted on the target variables of the study as a function of the school's location and its public or private condition, without finding any statistically significant differences. The sample comprised 2,977 adolescents (48.5% boys), whose ages ranged from 11 to 17 years (M = 14.1, SD = 1.42) and proportionally distributed by academic level, from 1st grade to 4th grade of secondary compulsory education. From the total sample, 47 adolescents (1.6%) reported not having a relationship with their mother, 332 (11.2%) reported the same regarding their father, and 28 (0.95%) indicated not having a relationship with either of them. These cases were not included in the calculations. The average percentage of missing data was 2.6%, and it never exceeded 5% for an individual measure. Results of Little's (1988, 1992) test indicated that the missing data occurred completely at random, $\chi^2(29)$ = 35.72, p = .182. Missing values were imputed using the regression method at the item level (Gottschall et al., 2012).

Of the total effective sample, 635 adolescents (24.5%) stated having been victims of bullying in the past year. This subsample was used in the present study because our hypotheses focus on adolescents who have been victimized. In this subsample of 635 cases selected for the analyses of the present study, 37% were boys, and the mean age was 14 years (SD = 1.36).

This study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Miguel Hernández University, Reference DPS.ESL.01.19, besides complying with the ethical values required for research with human beings and respecting the basic principles included in the Helsinki Declaration.

Procedure

Data for this research were collected as part of a larger study on violent behavior, school bullying, and suicidal ideation in adolescents, after gaining the approval of the corresponding research ethics committees of each participating university. A letter with a summary of the research project was sent by email to the participating schools as a first step. Subsequently, initial telephone contact with the school headmasters was established, followed by a briefing with all the teaching staff in each school, informing of the objectives and methodology of the study in a 2-hr presentation. In parallel, a letter describing the study was sent to the parents, requesting them to indicate in writing if they did not wish their child to participate (1% of parents used this option). Passive consent was received from the rest of the parents. An online survey was administered by a group of trained and expert researchers in each region. Before data collection, students also attended a short briefing in which they provided written consent. All students voluntarily agreed to participate in the research. On the dates scheduled with the teaching staff, participants anonymously filled out the scales in their respective schools during a regular class period of about 50 minutes. Although the battery of scales was anonymous, a code was assigned to each student, following the recommendations of the university ethics committee that approved the study. Thus, we could identify participants at risk due to their level of victimization or suicidal ideation and activate the corresponding institutional intervention protocols.

Instruments

The variables and measurement instruments used in the present study were the following.

Non-disclosure

To identify adolescents who do not disclose victimization versus those who report their bullying status, we used a subscale from the Peer Harassment Screening (Garaigordobil, 2013). This scale identifies the victim role and provides additional information about it. For the analyses of this work, we measured non-disclosure by asking the victims: "If you've been bullied at school, have you told anyone?". The response options were: "I have not been bullied," "I have been bullied and I have told someone", or "I have been bullied, but I have not told anyone." A first classification of the sample was established from the responses to select the cases that had been victimized. Then, "disclosure" as the binary variable was constructed, distinguishing between students who had reported their victim status (0) and those who had not (1). Thus, the variable disclosure estimates the difference between the group that has not disclosed and the group that has communicated their victim status to someone. This variable has been used as an observable variable in previous studies, which have used an identical or similar question (Betts et al., 2022; ten Bokkel et al., 2021). In the present study, 'non-disclosure' has been transformed into a univariate latent factor to introduce the measurement error associated with this variable into the model.

Negative Parenting Styles

Negative parenting styles were measured with the Child-Parental Acceptance-Rejection/Control Questionnaire (PARQ/C; Rohner, 2005) in its Spanish adaptation by Del Barrio et al. (2014). It consists of 29 items that measure four dimensions related to the behavior of both parents—separately—towards their children: fondness/affection (8 items; e.g., "Says good things about me"), hostility/aggression (6 items; e.g., "Hits me, even when I don't deserve it"), indifference/neglect (6 items; e.g.,"Doesn't pay attention to me"), and rejection (4 items; e.g., "When I misbehave, it makes me feel like I'm not loved"); the remaining 5 items belong to the control scale. Responses are rated on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*almost never true*) to 7 (*almost always true*). For the structural equation model (SEM) analysis, the dimension of "affection" was reversed, so it could be called "non-affection," in order to delimit a global construct of "negative parental practices in education" (Del Barrio et al., 2015). Cronbach's alpha for the full scale in the case of the father was .95, and by dimension: affection = .92, hostility = .82, indifference = .82, and rejection = .83. Cronbach's alpha for the full scale of the mother was .96, and for each dimension: affection = .92, hostility = .84, indifference = .81, and rejection = .84.

School Climate

The relationship dimension of the Classroom Environment Scale (CES; Moos & Trickett, 1973) was utilized as the measure for this variable, employing the Spanish version by Fernández-Ballesteros and Sierra (1989). This version presents 20 items, which evaluate two subscales of classroom environment from the student's point of view: affiliation, or the degree of friendship and support among students ("Students in this class get to know each other really well") and teacher support, or the amount of help, trust, and friendship the teacher provides to students ("The teacher takes a personal interest in the students"). The answers are expressed on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 7 (*always*). In the present study, internal consistency of the global scale measured through Cronbach's alpha was .83; for the subscales, .74 for affiliation and .81 for teacher support.

Suicidal Ideation

This variable was measured with the Paykel Suicide Scale (Paykel et al., 1974) in its Spanish version by Fonseca-Pedrero et al. (2018). This scale includes five items that are increasingly associated with

Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations, and Pearson Correlations between Study Variables

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1	Meaningless Life	-															
2	Not wanting to get up	.58**	-														
3	Idea of Suicide	.54**	.62**	-													
4	Suicide Plan	.42**	.52**	.54**	-												
5	Suicide Attempt	.31**	.36**	.38**	.57**	-											
6	Peer affiliation	-.15**	-.13**	-.17**	-.17**	-.18**	-										
7	Teacher Support	-.15**	-.10*	-.10*	-.13**	-.04	.36**	-									
8	Father: no affection	.22**	.15**	.20**	.26**	.17**	-.05	-.12**	-								
9	Father: hostility	.11*	.15**	.16**	.18**	.13**	-.07	-.11*	.57**	-							
10	Father: indifference	.19**	.21**	.19**	.27**	.20**	-.09*	-.16**	.73**	.67**	-						
11	Father: rejection	.19**	.20**	.20**	.23**	.16**	-.04	-.09*	.68**	.81**	.75**	-					
12	Mother: no affection	.22**	.23**	.24**	.30**	.20**	-.13**	-.18**	.58**	.33**	.39**	.37**	-				
13	Mother: hostility	.14**	.21**	.190**	.28**	.25**	-.10*	-.17**	.39**	.57**	.47**	.50**	.66**	-			
14	Mother: indifference	.21**	.25**	.21**	.32**	.28**	-.11**	-.15**	.45**	.41**	.53**	.42**	.76**	.72**	-		
15	Mother: rejection	.17**	.23**	.18**	.28**	.24**	-.11**	-.15**	.39**	.47**	.44**	.52**	.70**	.86**	.76**	-	
16	Non-Disclosure	.16**	.17**	.25**	.28**	.20**	-.10*	-.10*	.19**	.09*	.16**	.16**	.26**	.16**	.20**	.20**	-
	Mean	0.62	0.60	0.59	0.40	0.25	4.42	4.64	3.45	2.35	3.11	2.40	2.92	2.27	2.74	2.17	0.26
	SD	0.49	0.49	0.49	0.49	0.43	0.94	1.07	1.53	1.2	1.3	1.36	1.53	1.29	1.33	1.41	0.44

Note. Coefficients of binary indicators of suicidal ideation (1 a 5) and non-disclosure (16) are point-biserial correlations.
$^*p < .05$, $^{**}p < .01$.

the idea of suicide, from Item 1, which expresses a general thought of discomfort with life, to Item 5, which asks whether there has been a suicide attempt in the last year. These five items were directly included in the models to form the construct of suicidal ideation. The items of the scale are: 1) "Have you ever felt that life is not worth living?"; 2) "Have you ever wished you were dead (e.g., going to sleep and wishing you won't get up)?"; 3) "Have you ever thought about taking your own life even if you really weren't going to do it?"; 4) "Have you ever really considered taking your own life or planned how you would do it?"); and 5) "Have you tried to take your own life?". The response system for each of the 5 items is dichotomous (Yes/No). Cronbach's alpha of the global scale in the present sample was .83.

Analysis Plan

The statistical analyses were conducted on a subsample of 635 bullying victims, although data were collected from the entire sample of students. Firstly, the relationships between the "suicidal ideation" variable and disclosure with two control variables used in the study, namely gender and grade, were examined using contingency tables, with chi-square used as the test statistic. Afterwards, univariate statistics (means and standard deviations) and correlations were computed using SPSS (IBM Corp. v.2020) with the bootstrap method using 1,000 samples. Next, multivariate inferential analysis was conducted using SEM through MPLUS 8.4 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2017), and taking school as a cluster variable. Confirmatory factor analysis was used to ensure that the measurement model of the sample data had an acceptable fit considering all the latent variables.

Then, after controlling for gender and grade, a SEM with latent factors was implemented to examine the relationship between parental socialization and school climate with suicidal ideation. Next, we designed a model that incorporated the univariate factor of non-disclosure as a mediator. Indirect effects analysis was performed with the bootstrapping method. The errors, goodness of fit, and statistical significance of the SEM models included the schools as a cluster variable and were calculated using robust estimators with the weighted least squares method (WLSMV). WLSMV estimation is a suitable method for structural equation modelling with ordered categorical items and is based on the polychoric item intercorrelation matrix. This estimation method was selected because the variables of interest, namely suicidal ideation and non-disclosure, were both measured by binary items. Therefore, the assumption of measurement on an interval-scale level was not met. The default method for handling missing data with WLSMV estimation is pairwise deletion, which performs well when the data are MCAR (Asparouhov & Muthen, 2010; Shi et al., 2020).

The following indicators were used to evaluate the goodness of fit of the measurement model (Hu & Bentler, 1999): comparative fit index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) with 90% confidence interval (CI), and normalized root mean square residual (SRMR). CFI ≥ .90, TLI ≥ .90, SRMR ≤ .08, RMSEA ≤ .08, and indicate that the model fits the data well.

Results

Descriptive Analysis

In the subsample used for this study, composed of 635 adolescent victims of bullying, 39.5% said they had seriously thought about or planned suicide and 25% said they had attempted suicide. Grouping those who claimed to have thought seriously about suicide or even attempted it (Items 3 and 4 of the scale), the percentage did not differ significantly in the grades of study ($\chi^2 = 3.91$, $p = .27$), although it was lower among the boys ($\chi^2 = 12.04$, $p < .001$). Among the victims, 73.5% indicated that they had reported their abuse situation to a family member. The victimized adolescent's communication did not show a significant relationship with grade ($\chi^2 = 6.32$, $p = .10$) or sex ($\chi^2 = 1.21$, $p = .27$).

The correlation matrix, means, and standard deviation of each observable variables considered in this study are shown in Table 1. All the indicators of the suicidal ideation construct showed significant correlations with the rest of the variables in the expected direction.

Influence of Parental Styles and School Climate on Suicidal Ideation

In this phase of the study, the adequacy of a complete measurement model for the proposed constructs was identified: factor loadings,
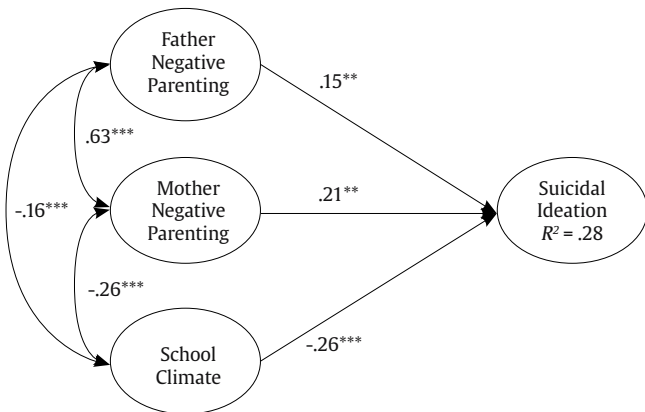
Table 2. Factor Loadings, Cronbach's Alpha, and Covariances between Latent Variables in the Measurement Model

Item	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Latent Variable	Covariances			
				School Climate	Father's Style	Mother's Style	Non-Disclosure
Meaningless Life	.78***	.83	Suicidal Ideation	-.36***	.35***	.39***	.62***
Not wanting to get up	.89***						
Idea of Suicide	.90***						
Suicide Plan	.95***						
Suicide Attempt	.80***						
Peer affiliation	.57***	.83	School climate	-	-.17***	-.27***	-.30***
Teacher Support	.63***						
Father: no affection	.82***	.95	Father's style	-	-	.63***	.36***
Father: hostility	.76***						
Father: indifference	.88***						
Father: rejection	.86***						
Mother: no affection	.83***	.96	Mother's style	-	-	-	.38***
Mother: hostility	.85***						
Mother: indifference	.89***						
Mother: rejection	.88***						
Non-Disclosure	.71***	-	Non-Disclosure	-	-	-	-

Note. Factor loadings and covariances between latent variables are standardized values.
***$p < .001$

Cronbach's alpha, and covariances between latent variables in the measurement model are shown in Table 2. Factor loadings are high and significant for all the items ($p < .001$): above .75 in the five items of suicidal ideation, .57 or more in school climate, above .75 in father's style, and .80 in mother's style. The reliability coefficients were higher than .80 for all the latent variables. This model showed an optimal fit ($\chi^2 = 146.85$, $df = 94$, CFI = .96, TLI = .95, RMSEA = .03 [.020, .039], SRMR = .05).

The structural model presented in Figure 1, which controlled for the effects of sex and age ($\chi^2 = 188.28$, $df = 111$, CFI = .95, TLI = .93, RMSEA = .03 [.025, .041], SRMR = .06), revealed that both the negative parenting behaviors of the father ($\beta = .15$, $p < .01$) and mother ($\beta = .21$, $p < .01$) had a significant negative impact on the victim's suicidal ideation. The model also suggested that a positive school climate was negatively related to adolescents' suicidal ideation ($\beta = -.26$, $p < .001$). The variance in the 'suicidal ideation' variable explained by the exogenous factors in the model was 28%. To summarize, the results of this model suggest that victims' suicidal ideation was positively associated with parenting styles characterized by rejection and indifference, both by the father and the mother, while a positive school climate was negatively associated with such ideation.

Mediating Effects of Non-disclosure

The variable non-disclosure (concealing the bullying situation) was added to the previous structural model as a mediating variable (Figure 2). This model had an optimal fit ($\chi^2 = 201.09$, $df = 124$, CFI = .95, TLI = .94, RMSEA = .03 [.023, .039], SRMR = .06). The explained variance of suicidal ideation in this new model increased up to 45%, with the introduction of non-disclosure.
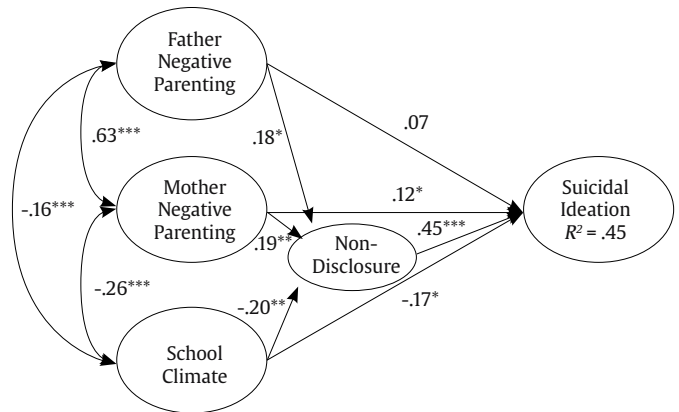
Figure 2. The Mediation Model of Father's and Mother's Parenting Styles on Suicidal Ideation, with the Variable Non-Disclosure as a Mediator.
*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$.

Figure 2 shows the significant relationship between the three variables with the mediator non-disclosure. The direction of these relationships is as follows: on the one hand, both father's and mother's negative socialization styles were positively associated with the adolescent's non-disclosure of their situation as a victim; on the other hand, a positive school climate was negatively related to non-disclosure. Thus, higher scores in school climate are associated with a lower probability that the victim will be silent in the face of bullying. In other words, a school climate based on peer affiliation and teacher support favors victimized students' communicating their victimization situation. The model also estimated a statistically significant and positive coefficient between the mediating variable non-disclosure and suicidal ideation ($\beta = .45$, $p < .001$), indicating

Figure 1. A Structural Model relating Father's and Mother's Parenting Styles and School Climate to Suicidal Ideation.
**$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$.

that the victim's non-disclosure is associated with greater suicidal ideation.

The introduction of the mediating variable non-disclosure reduced the direct influence of the three variables on suicidal ideation. On the one hand, the significance of the direct relationship between the father's negative parenting style and suicidal ideation was annulled, and, on the other hand, the mother's negative parenting style (β = .12, p < .05) and school climate (β = -.17, p < .05) again showed significant direct relationships with suicidal ideation.

The potential indirect effect channeled through the mediating variable non-disclosure was contrasted by bootstrapping using 1,000 resamplings. The estimated indirect effect of the father's negative socialization style on suicidal ideation was β = .04, and the 95% confidence interval [-.06, .12] included the value 0, indicating that the effect could be null. Regarding the mother's negative socialization style, the estimated indirect effect was β = .12, 95% CI [.05, .23], accounting for 49.40% of the total effect. The indirect effect of school climate was estimated at β = -.09, CI [-.17, .02]. These results indicated that the relationship between the mother's negative practices and suicidal ideation was partially mediated by the variable non-disclosure. However, non-disclosure was not a significant mediating variable between the father's socialization and the victim's suicidal ideation, nor did it have a significant mediating effect on school climate.

Discussion

The primary objective of this research was to analyze the influence of family and school contexts on suicidal ideation among victims of peer bullying, with a particular focus on the critical role of the victim's non-disclosure of their victimization. The results suggested the greater probability of suicidal ideation in victims of bullying whose family context was characterized by negative parenting styles based on rejection and indifference and lower suicidal ideation in adolescent victims who perceived a positive environment in their schools, confirming these findings the first hypothesis raised.

In line with these findings, several studies have concluded that, for adolescents who are susceptible to suicidal thoughts, rejection by their parents can substantially increase the likelihood of suicidal ideation or attempts (Adrian et al., 2018; Capuzzi & Golden, 2013; Kuramoto-Crawford et al., 2017; Nunes & Mota, 2017). Concerning the school context, also in line with findings of the present study, previous studies have documented that a positive teacher-student relationship significantly decreases the likelihood that victims of bullying will develop suicidal thoughts (Han et al., 2018), and that a general positive school climate plays a protective role in the relationship between victimization and suicidal ideations in schoolchildren (Benatov et al., 2022). Several authors have argued that the mechanisms underlying this protective effect are based primarily on the perception of school connection and affectionate relationships with peers, teachers, and the school staff (Shim-Pelayo & De Pedro, 2018; Thapa et al., 2013).

The second hypothesis proposed in this study postulated that negative parenting styles would increase the likelihood of non-disclosure of victimization, and positive school climate would reduce such probability. The results confirmed this hypothesis, as disaffection, hostility, indifference, and rejection felt by children at home was related to the greater likelihood that they will decide not to tell their problem. This result is along the lines of the studies that indicate that, in general, young people are reluctant to share information with adults unless they trust them (Bjereld 2018; Matsunaga, 2009). Trusting their parents is closely linked to positive parenting styles which allow emotional support climates to emerge (Hakim et al., 2012) that, in turn, facilitate the fact that a child disclose their experience of bullying.

Regarding the school climate, as expressed through the perception of peer affiliation and teacher support, the results obtained also

confirmed the hypothesis. Specifically, the findings revealed that a positive school climate would facilitate victims' communication about their bullying situation. According to previous studies, it seems that victims of bullying are more likely to disclose their situation to adults in the school setting if they consider teachers capable of handling the disclosure appropriately (Betts et al., 2022), and perceive that educators do not tolerate violent acts, in contrast to those teachers showing ambivalent or tolerant attitudes towards conflicts among peers (Blomqvist et al., 2020). Blomqvist et al. (2020) also pointed out that the perception of peer support in victims of bullying was associated to informing adults about victimization, since this support can promote the feeling of safety that leads victims to communicate their situation.

The third hypothesis proposed that the non-disclosure of victimization would mediate the relationship between negative parenting styles, school climate, and suicidal ideation. The findings partially supported this hypothesis. There was no evidence of mediation of non-disclosure between negative father's parenting and suicidal ideation, but the results revealed that non-disclosure partially mediated the effect of negative mother's parenting on suicidal ideation. These results suggest that a situation of rejection or indifference from the mother may impact suicidal ideation not only directly, but also indirectly by promoting a lack of disclosure among victimized adolescents, which in turn affects suicidal ideation. In relation to these findings, especially the latter, previous studies on adolescent adjustment have indicated that mothers and fathers may play different roles in young people's development (Collins & Russell, 1991; Estévez et al., 2008). Thus, for children, it seems that talking about their concerns with the maternal figure could be more comforting than discussing them with their father, and this is possibly due to the fact that listening to problems has been traditionally considered part of the female gender role (Mark et al., 2013). Similarly, Kenny et al., (2013) observed that adolescents reported higher levels of companionship and openness with their mothers, often leading them to prefer seeking support from them over their fathers. However, at this stage of the life cycle, although many young people can maintain open communication with their parents, in most cases they do not address delicate and difficult issues (Ombayo et al., 2019).

The results of some studies support the same direction as the present study, indicating that maternal parenting style has stronger effects than paternal parenting style on personal happiness of adolescents (Furnham & Cheng, 2000; Raboteg-Saric & Sakic, 2014). Moreover, without maternal sensitivity, adolescents may display higher levels of inhibited behavior and are at greater risk of developing internalizing problem behaviors, as suggested in the study by van der Voort et al. (2014), where it was found that high levels of maternal sensitivity in middle childhood predicted less anxious-depressed behavior in adolescence indirectly through less behavioral inhibition in adolescence.

As regards the school, it was found that the association between school climate and suicidal ideation was not mediated by non-disclosure, even though school climate was related to both non-disclosure and suicidal ideation. This could be due to the fact that although a positive school climate could decrease the level of non-disclosure among victims of school bullying, it may not compensate for the lack of communication caused by negative parenting practices within the family. As previous studies have shown, a lack of parental support during early adolescence is a strong predictor of emotional problems during adolescence (Helsen et al., 2000).

Furthermore, it is crucial to acknowledge that the impact of parenting styles can differ between the father and mother, resulting in distinct effects on the adolescent's ability to communicate or withhold information (Raboteg-Saric & Sakic, 2014; van der Voort et al., 2014). The results of the present study suggest that negative mothering practices may impact the victim's tendency to disclose

or withhold information at home and their suicidal ideation, regardless of the quality of the school environment.

Conclusions

For victims of bullying, failure to disclose their situation is correlated with heightened suicidal ideation. This is a significant finding, since previous studies have not accounted for this variable, and our results suggest that it could be a crucial factor to consider in future research on bullying. Our findings imply that within the population of bullying victims, non-disclosure could be a fundamental difference that explains why some adolescents are more susceptible to suicidal ideation than others, despite all being victims of bullying.

Father's negative parenting is related to both the victim's non-disclosure and suicidal ideation. Mother's negative parenting is directly associated with suicidal ideation and indirectly through the victim's non-disclosure of bullying.

School climate is an essential factor that can help reduce both victim non-disclosure and suicidal ideation. In particular, the results highlighted the crucial role of the school environment in promoting adolescent well-being and emphasize the potential of a supportive school climate in mitigating the negative effects of some adverse home contexts. This suggests the need to focus special efforts and perhaps different protocols in identifying students where bullying problems and negative parenting styles converge.

Limitations and Future Research

Overall, the results of this paper contribute to expanding knowledge about the role of the social context in bullying victims and the variable disclosure in suicidal ideation. However, the authors acknowledge certain limitations that should be considered for future research. One of them is based on the cross-sectional nature of the data, which makes it impossible to establish causal relationships between the variables analyzed. A longitudinal study in which measurements are collected at different times would clarify the observed relationships. Also, it should be noted that the results of this study are limited to the adolescent stage of 11 to 17 years, so they are not generalizable to individuals of other ages or other educational levels (early childhood education, primary education, and university education), or even to school environments from other cultures that could be very different. Another limitation of the study is the fact that for the mediating variable only the binary variable 'disclosure' was available, which implies a mediator with limited variability, where errors would not be normally distributed.

Despite these limitations, the contribution of the present paper in the relationship between the social context of bullying victims and suicidal ideation should be highlighted, taking into account the variable disclosure, due to the scarcity of studies focused on this topic and this population. This is an incentive to continue working and researching due to the interest of these constructs, as well as for the prevention of bullying and its devastating consequences.

Implications of the findings of this work point to the need to intervene from the perspective of the disclosure of bullying. On the one hand, to eradicate these behaviors at school, since evidence has shown that making bullying visible is the first step to ending it. So, it is important to start implementing programs in which one of the objectives is to address the disclosure of the bullying situation, as well as to continue to investigate the factors that may be influencing bullying victims' suicidal ideation. On the other hand, ending the victims' silence can be essential to prevent the psychological problems associated with bullying situations (Wójcik & Mondry, 2020), such as, in its most extreme manifestation, the case of suicidal ideation analyzed in this study.

Conflict of Interest

The authors of this article declare no conflict of interest.

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