RESEARCH ARTICLES

Social Representations of Cyberbullying in Parents and Teachers of a School in Lima in the Context of a Pandemic

Representaciones sociales sobre ciberbullying en padres y docentes de un colegio de Lima en contexto de pandemia

Kimberly Franco-Jiménez
Universidad Peruana de Ciencias Aplicadas, Lima, Perú
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1470-8830

Fiorella Núñez-Orihuela
Universidad Peruana de Ciencias Aplicadas, Lima, Perú
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5566-9850

Eli Malvaceda-Espinoza*
Universidad San Ignacio de Loyola, Lima, Perú
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9506-4741

*Correspondence:
Email: emalvaceda@usil.edu.pe

Abstract

After the arrival of the pandemic, not only the traditional forms of teaching-learning in schools changed, but also the violence, thus generating cyberbullying, in this regard, it is important to address what parents and teachers think about it. Thus, the objective is to know the social representations about cyberbullying in parents and teachers at a school in Lima in the context of pandemic. For this purpose, a qualitative research of reflexive thematic analysis design was carried out where 10 semi-structured interviews were applied to (5) teachers and (5) parents. It was found that, cyberbullying is perceived as a type of cyber violence among peers that manifests itself through verbal violence, as well as photo editing; also, the victims are perceived as introverted, the aggressors as lacking affection, and the spectators as normalizers of violence as entertainment. Regarding the contextualization of cyberbullying, participants point to dysfunctional family dynamics as the main cause, which generates emotional instability. Finally, regarding the coping of parents and teachers, the importance of involvement is found, and emphasis is placed on the prevention of the problem through different mechanisms. It is concluded that the participants represent cyberbullying as cyber violence, involving aggressors with affective deficiencies, introverted victims and bystanders who normalize violence. For their part, they indicate that the perpetrators come from families with dysfunctional dynamics; finally, they stress the need for active involvement and prevention on their part.

Keywords: Cyberbullying; Parents; Teachers; Pandemic; Qualitative Research.

Resumen

Tras la llegada de la pandemia, cambiaron no solo las formas tradicionales de enseñanza-aprendizaje en los colegios, sino también las violencias, generándose así el ciberbullying, al respecto, resulta importante abordar lo que los padres y docentes piensan de esta. Así, se plantea como objetivo conocer las representaciones sociales sobre el ciberbullying en padres y docentes de un colegio de Lima en el contexto de pandemia. Para ello se realizó una investigación cualitativa de diseño de análisis temático reflexivo donde se aplicaron 10 entrevistas semiestructuradas, a (5) docentes y (5) padres de familia. Se encontró que, el ciberbullying es percibido como un tipo de violencia cibernética entre pares que se manifiesta por medio de la violencia verbal, así como la edición de fotos; asimismo, las víctimas son percibidas como introvertidas, los agresores como carentes afectivos, y los espectadores como normalizadores de la violencia a modo de entretenimiento. En cuanto a la contextualización del ciberbullying los participantes señalan como principal causa a la dinámica familiar disfuncional, que genera inestabilidad emocional. Finalmente, en cuanto al afrontamiento de padres y docentes, se encuentra la importancia del involucramiento, y se hace hincapié en la prevención de la problemática a través de distintos mecanismos. Se concluye que los participantes representan al ciberbullying como una violencia cibernética, que involucra agresores con carencias afectivas, víctimas introvertidas y espectadores que normalizan la violencia. Por su parte, indican que los violentadores provendrían de familias con dinámicas disfuncionales; finalmente, subrayan la necesidad de involucramiento y prevención activa por su parte.

Palabras claves: Ciberbullying; Padres; Docentes; Pandemia; Investigación cualitativa.

INTRODUCTION

The advent of the pandemic affected school education and changed the traditional education system (United Nations Group for Sustainable Development, 2020). In light of that, the education sector implemented innovative approaches for the continuity of education through the use of digital media (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2020). At the international level, significant efforts were made to implement distance education because there were no distance learning strategies (Álvarez et al., 2020). In Peru, virtual teaching was implemented (Estrada et al., 2020), and, in addition to classes, strategies were provided to generate self-care methods and tools for emotional support of students (Economic Commission for Latin America & UNESCO, 2020).

In this regard, pre-existing problems in the classroom have taken on new forms, such as virtual bullying, which affects the mental health of students (United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF], 2021). According to the Peruvian Ministry of Education (MINEDU, 2023), between 2013 and 2023, there was a high incidence of bullying and cyberbullying at secondary school level (37,606 cases), with Metropolitan Lima having the highest number of reported cases (26,765). Also, according to Aldeas Infantiles SOS Peru (2023), 61% of Peruvian students between 10 and 17 years old have been cyberbullied. In addition, 91% of parents are unaware that their children have been cyberbullied. Similarly, 79% of teachers are not aware of cyberbullying situations.

In this regard, cyberbullying is considered a behavior of school and psychological violence, being the negative result of digital communication in a global society (Henares et al., 2022). Traditionally, cyberbullying is defined as the intentional use of technological resources to send offensive messages, videos, or images through social media to repeatedly humiliate its victims (Romani & Martinez, 2021). This phenomenon has worsened within the educational context due to the increased use of different Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for interaction with peers during the pandemic (Álvarez, 2020; Gómez-León, 2021).

In cyberbullying, the bullies exert control over their victims, thus revealing an imbalance of power in which the victimizer shows superiority to the victim (Gonzalez & Palmar, 2021). The consequences of this phenomenon can be evidenced in the deterioration of the mental health of the victims (Neyra, 2021). In this regard, symptoms such as anxiety, low self-esteem, isolation, depression, stress, suicidal tendencies, in short, emotional instability may be experienced (Del Rey et al., 2018; MINEDU, 2020). Despite this, in Peru, both parents and teachers are unaware of its scope in their children and students (Aldeas Infantiles SOS Peru, 2023), so it is important to learn about their social representations when facing this situation of violence.

Social representations are cognitive systems that comprises forms of knowledge that arise and are shared within a group that participates in a social environment with its own language (Moscovici, in Sammut et al., 2015). These representations are formed through interaction with society and comprise two processes: objectification, which makes a conceptual scheme real and transforms the abstract content into concrete and known, and anchoring, which classifies and incorporates the social object in pre-existing knowledge networks in society (Urbina & Ovalles 2018).

Moscovici (1979) proposed three dimensions for understanding social representations: information, which refers to the knowledge acquired by an individual about a specific social situation by interacting with the object in question, including the varied data and explanations that people construct in their daily interactions; the field of representation, which determines what is believed and how it is interpreted, comprises the set of attitudes, opinions, images, beliefs, experiences, and values in the same social representation, which will be ordered and hierarchized by the individual to give them a meaning; and the attitude, which orients people's behavior to determine what they do and how they behave, covering the emotional aspects and positions held about the object of representation.

The social representations of bullying can manifest different forms of knowledge, involving the way of valuing the school environment that surrounds them. Likewise, they are framed in a set of interpretations socially shared by students, teachers, parents, and the media (Sanabria, 2014).

Specifically, parents' social representations of cyberbullying point out that the family environment usually minimizes the problem of bullying since they consider that students are at a stage in which they can face such situation on their own (Larrañaga et al., 2022). Also, it is found that they have few tools to intervene in this situation (Dorantes et al., 2019; Gallo, 2021). For their part, parents are indirect actors in cyberbullying (due to the quality of care they provide to their children). In addition to this, lack of communication and school problems can aggravate such situation (Dorantes et al., 2019).

Teachers play an authority and supervisory role for students to prevent bullying while they are committed to school coexistence and mutual respect among students (Gallego & Agudelo, 2020). In this regard, the knowledge and perceptions of teachers about the characteristics and repercussions of cyberbullying impact their approach and the use of prevention strategies (Flores, 2020). In light of this, Montoro and Ballesteros (2016) propose that there should be joint work between the school and the family, in which spaces for analysis and reflection on cyberbullying are encouraged.

In this regard, recent research indicate that teachers find it difficult to identify cyberbullying (Alzamendi & León, 2023; Lanzillotti & Korman, 2018). Likewise, a tendency to accept such behaviors as age typical (Alzamendi & León, 2023) was found. Similarly, teachers consider that teacher training programs did not prepare them to intervene in these cases (Cuadros & Zamora, 2022; Lanzillotti & Korman, 2018). Finally, teachers say that they and their institutions do not know how to intervene and how to use technological resources to intervene and have few tools to intervene without knowing how to provide emotional support to students (Alzamendi & León, 2023; Gallo, 2021; Lanzillotti & Korman, 2018). In this line, teachers were found to use avoidance coping as a dysfunctional form of action in cases of bullying, which is evidenced by procrastination and denial of the cyberbullying situation (Bautista et al., 2023).

The above shows that at the social level, cyberbullying cases have increased during the pandemic. Similarly, at the empirical level, previous research indicates that both parents and teachers are unaware of the scope of this type of violence and the ways to address it in their children or students. Likewise, at the level of educational institutions, it can be seen that they do not have a protocol to respond to this situation. This makes it possible to identify that there is a knowledge gap

regarding the representations of parents and teachers about cyberbullying. Based on the foregoing, this study will aim to know the social representations of cyberbullying in parents and teachers of a school in Lima in the context of a pandemic.

METHOD

Design

The study is qualitative and explores the social and human sphere from the natural context of the study phenomenon, thus the object of study was examined from the perspective of the participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Likewise, the reflective thematic analysis design was used, which focuses on the exploration and interpretation of the patterns of meanings (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

Participants

There were 10 participants: five were parents and the other five were secondary school teachers in a private school in Lima. The stratified purposive sampling (Robinson, 2014) was used to have a homogeneous sample in each subgroup and representative in structural terms. The inclusion criteria were parents who have a child enrolled in 1st-to-5th grade of secondary school, who live with the child, and who reside in Metropolitan Lima. Parents whose child had repeated the grade in the year before the year of the study were excluded. Teachers who have been working at their current school for more than one year and have a contract with the institution were considered. Among the exclusion criteria were teachers who taught complementary subjects and teachers who do not have a teaching degree. The referenced sampling (snowball) was used to select the participants.

The age of the teachers ranged from 32 to 58 years old (average 40.4 years old). All of them were women. Their years working at the educational institution (IE) ranged from 10 to 18 years (average 13.8 years). As for the grade they teach, four of them teach 1st and/or 2nd grade, and one teaches 4th and 5th grade. Finally, four teach literature and one teaches design (Table 1).

Table 1.
Characteristics of teachers

Pseudonym	Age (years old)	Years working at the school	Grade s/he teaches	Subject
Carmen	40	16	2nd	Literature
Fabiola	58	18	1st and 2nd	Literature
Maribel	37	10	1st	Literature
Valeria	32	12	4th and 5th	Design
Flor	35	13	2nd	Literature

The parents' ages ranged from 38 to 59 years old (average 45.8 years old). There were four women and one man. The age of their children ranged from 12 to 15 years old (average 13.4 years old). As for the grade of the children of the participants, three were in 2nd grade, one was in 1st grade, and one was in 4th grade of secondary school. Finally, regarding the participation of the child in the cyberbullying problem, three of the parents reported that their children were bystanders, and one was a victim; none was a bully (Table 2).

Table 2.
Characteristics of parents

Pseudonym	Age	Sex	Child's age (years old)	Grade of his/her child	Perceived role of the child:
Martha	47	F	13	2nd	Bystander
Carlos	59	M	13	2nd	Bystander
Natalia	38	F	15	4th	Victim
Helen	42	F	12	1st	Bystander
Sara	43	F	14	2nd	Bystander

Note: F: Female; M: Male.

Table 3.
Interview guide topics and questions.

Topics	Questions
Familiarization	For parents: How old is your child? What is your child's grade? Do you live with your child? What type of participation do you think your child has in cyberbullying (bystander, victim, or bully)? For teachers: Do you have a teaching license? How many years have you been working at this school? What grades and subjects do you teach here?
Information	What do you understand by cyberbullying? What do you think about the use of digital media as a tool for bullying? What do you know about the content shared by students on social media? What do you think to be the reason for a student to be violent? What impact do you think cyberbullying can have? How is it addressed from your educational institution?
Field of representation	What is your opinion about this problem in the school environment? What do you think the bully's behaviors are due to? What behaviors do you think a cyberbullied student has? What feelings do you think cyberbullied students experience?
Attitudes	What do you think should be done about cyberbullying? What position do you take regarding cyberbullying? What feelings do you experience when you know that a student is being cyberbullied? What actions can be taken to prevent cyberbullying?

Instruments

A semi-structured interview was conducted, which was based on a flexible interview guide that allowed the addition of questions to deepen the topic of study. For the construction of the interview guide, a categorization matrix was used, which considered the dimensions of the theory of social

representations (Moscovici, 1979), such as information of the problem, field of representation and attitudes toward cyberbullying. Likewise, a topic of familiarization questions was added, in which sociodemographic questions were asked to the participants. Prior to its application, the interview was assessed by the expert judgment of three specialists in qualitative methodology. Then, a pilot interview was conducted with a teacher who met the inclusion criteria. Based on the data collected, some terms were changed in certain questions for better coherence and logical order of the questions. Finally, the interview was considered appropriate for application (Table 3).

Procedure

A key informant provided access to teachers and parents in a private EI, who were informed of the objectives of the study, guarantee of anonymity, voluntary participation, and procedures to be followed if they agreed to participate in the study. Those who decided to participate were asked to accept the online informed consent form. Then, virtual meetings were scheduled through the Google Meet platform. The interviews lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes and were audio-recorded. Data were collected between May and August 2022. The first two researchers conducted the interviews, while one conducted the interview, the other took notes. The participants were alone while conducting the interviews. There was no financial contribution for this. Finally, the interviews were held in Spanish and there was no repetition of the interviews.

The project was approved by the Ethics Deputy Committee of Universidad Peruana de Ciencias Aplicadas (No. FCS-SCEI/181-05-22). Likewise, ethical principles such as autonomy, anonymity (through the use of pseudonyms chosen by the participants), confidentiality, beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice were followed.

Also, strictness criteria were applied, such as credibility, since the transcripts and the results were returned to the participants, from which they were able to inform their comments of the research (Daniel, 2018). Furthermore, the crystallization process (Varpio et al., 2017) was carried out to integrate the perspectives of parents and teachers to have a broader perspective of the object of study. Finally, the auditability criterion was used, which was met through the review of the study by different experts, as well as the review of the instrument by expert judges and a pilot.

Data analysis

This study used the reflective thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022) to identify the perspectives and meanings of the parents and the teachers about cyberbullying and to group the statements into thematic axes. For this, the six stages of analysis proposed by the design were followed. First, the data set was familiarized with, the interviews were literally transcribed, the information obtained was read in detail, and relevant textual quotations responding to the research question were identified.

Second, coding was carried out, generating concepts inductively that synthesized the previously identified quotations and recognizing the relevant ideas. Third, the topics were generated, and the previously created concepts were reviewed and grouped into inductive topics based on their conceptual or thematic similarities (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Four, the topics discussed were

reviewed and verified to determine if their content was convincing and in line with the research objective. The topics were further developed, assessing whether they were divided, combined, or discarded. Next, the topics were defined, and each topic was refined through a review process applying the constant comparative method. Finally, the report was written, describing the results obtained in an organic whole. The analysis was carried out with the aid of the QDA Miner Lite qualitative data analysis software.

RESULTS

The analysis reveals that the social representations of cyberbullying in parents and teachers of a school in Lima in the context of a pandemic are circumscribed to the topics of conceptions about cyberbullying, contextualization of cyberbullying, and parent and teacher coping. Each of them, in turn, presents subtopics generated inductively for greater clarity about the social representations in this context (Table 4).

Table 4.
Topics and subtopics regarding social representations of cyberbullying

Topics	Subtopics
Conceptions of cyberbullying	Conceptualization of cyberbullying Forms of manifestation Perspectives on cybervictimization and cyberaggression Naturalization of cyberbullying by bystanders
Contextualization of Cyberbullying	Causes of cyberbullying Consequences of cyberbullying
Parent and teacher coping	Involvement Prevention and approach Avoidance coping

Conceptions of cyberbullying

This topic refers to the knowledge of the parents and the teachers about the problem of cyberbullying at school and the main characteristics of the victims and bullies. It gathers the contents provided by the interviewees related to their knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon, the school situation, and the main characteristics of the victim, the bully, and the bystander.

Linked to this information is the conceptualization of cyberbullying, which is defined by the participants as harassment and violence using virtual platforms within the school environment. In this regard, the participants indicate that cyberbullying occurs through verbal and psychological aggression among students using technological media and causes discomfort. It is also considered as a lack of respect among students through a hostile attitude. "It is harassment, verbal and psychological aggression with insults through technological resources. It is even rejection. It is the use of adjectives in a person, in this case of the students through social media" (Carmen, 2nd-grade secondary school teacher).

It is important to note that both the parents and the teachers consider cyberbullying as a social problem that is not given due importance, but that generates concern. In addition, the parents mention that they overlook certain warning signs such as reports of insults and teasing from their children, without a notion of the seriousness of the consequences. "Some moms sometimes do not understand. They think that cyberbullying is just an insult" (Martha, a mother of a 13-year-old son).

Another element that is part of the information of cyberbullying is the forms of manifestation. In this regard, the contestants indicate that the students make fun by uploading edited photos of their classmates to their statuses on social media, and also use the private groups of these applications for their dissemination. It is worth mentioning that sometimes such images have sexual connotations and are distributed through memes, resulting in offenses toward the victims. "Teenagers have started to share sexual images, using memes and posting photos or something, or talking to each other and laughing, among men they talked about sexual things, with a sexual tone" (Natalia, a mother of a 15-year-old son). Another of the perceived forms of manifestation of such violence is verbal aggression, which uses nicknames to call their peers, as well as threats among students. "Affecting them with adjectives, insulting them, and harassing them" (Fabiola, a 1st- and 2nd-grade secondary school teacher).

Regarding the perspectives of cyber victimization, the participants conceive of the victims as introverted and shy people who behave reservedly in their environment. Likewise, they mention that they usually change their behavior starting by avoiding participating in social and daily activities on social media. "Undoubtedly their behavior changes. They are not usually seen to be sociable with their classmates. They are distracted in class, quiet [...] they no longer want to meet with their classmates, or they no longer want to go to class. They are afraid and scared" (Carmen, a 2nd-grade secondary school teacher).

The participants perceive that the victims may have low self-esteem and communication problems, and may experience feelings of terror, sadness, frustration, negative self-thoughts, and poor ability to ask for help. "Emotionally, they isolate themselves. They do not want to show up. It generates fear and distrust, even in themselves. They begin to believe that they are the ones who fail. It does affect them emotionally" (Natalia, a mother of a 15-year-old child). Particularly, the teachers emphasize that among the characteristics of the victim is that s/he is considered studious and dedicated to the school environment. "Is happy, quiet, committed to his/her studies, because even that is a reason for cyberbullying, that is the bookworm, the most studious and the most dedicated" (Maribel, a 1st-grade secondary school teacher).

Regarding the perspectives of cyberaggression, the participants mention that the bullies tend to seek the attention they do not get at home, or seek to achieve some recognition, evidencing -from their point of view- affective deficiencies, feelings of emptiness, and a need to feel important. Specifically, the teachers mention that the bullies have violent behaviors on social media, thus managing to have control over the victim by provoking feelings of fear and intimidation. "I simply see that, through violent behavior, with insults, the bully will feel that s/he is in control, s/he will feel important, s/he will feel that s/he exists. Because s/he knows that others are going to look at him/her" (Carmen, a 2nd-grade secondary school teacher).

Finally, regarding the naturalization of cyberbullying by the bystanders, the parents and the teachers think that the teenagers have normalized certain behaviors such as adjectives, calling people names, and making memes of their classmates' photos. They also find that such behavior is adopted as a form of entertainment among students. Along the same lines, there are beliefs that aggression is an expected behavior from secondary school students because they relate it as a natural behavior since they are in the stage of adolescence.

> They normalize certain behaviors. [The students say] "but that's how we treat each other, miss, with insults" "Yes, miss, with adjectives, I call him 'fat', I call him 'fat-faced', I call him 'shorty'. So many adjectives normalize it. They see it as something normal. They are not just a game. They are just kids' stuff (Carmen, a 2nd-grade secondary school teacher).

This section shows that cyberbullying is considered a type of school violence through the use of digital media. It manifests at school through the use of photos and qualifying adjectives on social media. It should be noted that the participants consider the victim as shy and introverted and the bully as someone who lacks affection. In addition, the parents and the teachers perceive in the bystander the presence of naturalized actions such as the use of memes and adjectives.

Contextualization of cyberbullying

This topic presents the notions of the causes and consequences of the problem. Regarding the causes of cyberbullying, the idea is that any behavior comes from the family environment and is related to the parenting style over the years. The participants think that if a person is violent, it is because s/he has had problems at an early age. Along the same lines, they mention that the bullies may have perceived violence within their homes and that this would be related to the lack of control by the parents and the school authorities.

> It could be several points. It could be the fact that perhaps they don't have enough attention at home, or they are totally neglected. They have a very violent family. They also want to exercise that authority their parents exercise over them over others, or that it is a projection (Flor, a 2nd-grade secondary school teacher).

Similarly, both the parents and the teachers recognize the existence of consequences of cyberbullying. Thus, they mention that bullying causes emotional damage to the victim, resulting in low self-esteem and discouragement to attend school, difficulty in saying "no" and in the relationships with peers. In particular, the parents say that the victim can become more vulnerable, leading the victim to make decisions such as suicide, self-harm, and drug use.

> One of the consequences for the victim is to lower his self-esteem. He does not value himself, and he does not learn to say "no" to the things he should say "no" to. He may be more vulnerable to drugs, or to drink, or to take rebellious actions (Carlos, a father of a 13-year-old son).

In addition to the above, the participants mention that cyberbullying can also affect the behavior of the bullies, causing psychological damage, making them become arrogant, rebellious

with their parents, and trying to hide their actions from others. "Perhaps it can cause psychological damage to the bully. To have this type of behavior, I think they have something they have not healed. If you do not with the bully, s/he may grow up feeling that what s/he is doing is okay" (Maribel, a 1st-grade secondary school teacher).

To summarize, the participants perceive the lack of limits, the conflicts in the family environment, and the dysfunctional parenting style as the main causes. Regarding the consequences for the victim, emotional distress, ideas of death, and self-injurious actions are found. Finally, regarding the effects on the bully, they may have behavioral problems, feeling arrogant or rebellious.

Parent and teacher coping

The participants say that there are ways to prevent and address this problem. In this sense, they refer to the involvement in, the prevention of, the approach to, and the avoidance coping with cyberbullying. In relation to involvement, the teachers state that they should assume the responsibility of being attentive to students through supervision and talks to develop values and foster self-esteem in them. Likewise, they perceive that most parents are not fully involved and that they do not understand the importance of their presence in preventing this problem.

> From the teachers' point of view, I feel that we work on it more because it is our obligation, so we try to make sure that the students can refer a little bit to the topic of self-esteem. Teaching them that their actions have consequences and that they should not behave in such a way, it is a great responsibility (Flor, a 2nd-grade secondary school teacher).

For their part, the fathers recognize that they should have more communication with their children, give them quality time, and reinforce empathy. They mention that there are all kinds of fathers, including those who are attentive to the students and those who prioritize other activities and do not share time with them. "Regarding fathers, there are all kinds of dads. Dads who leave their children in the care of grandparents, dads who leave them in the care of the housemaid or domestic worker and believe that this quality of time is enough" (Fabiola, a 1st- and 2nd-grade secondary school teacher).

In relation to prevention and approach to cope with cyberbullying. Among the actions to prevent it is the attention given to teenagers at school and home, including talking to them, asking them how they feel and about the situations they are going through. As a preventive measure at school, they consider the use of restrictions on certain websites in the computers used by the students. Another measure they mention is observation in the classroom to identify what is happening among the students and to follow up on them. In this regard, it is mentioned the role of the class teacher, who is in charge of accompanying the class during the school year through tutoring hours. They also emphasize the development of "cyberbullying prevention" campaigns and events and the promotion of the role of the educational psychologist.

> One is to be in full observation in the classroom, to talk to the teenagers, to know what is going on. If one remains silent, it gets out of control. Perhaps the teacher hears that a student is being insulted and recorded with a cellphone (Martha, a mother of a 13-year-old son).

The participants mention the multidisciplinary work between teachers, psychologists, and parents to address cyberbullying. They consider important the identification of warning signs and the planning of the approach by talking first with the student and then with the people involved.

> First, to call the student for a meeting. It is important to talk to them to see what is going on and also to call the parents to see their family environment to see what is happening. There may be a situation and perhaps the student is expressing their emotions regarding such situation, and then psychological assistance (Maribel, a 1st-grade secondary school teacher).

Finally, another form of coping for parents and teachers is avoidance. In this regard, it was found that the participants, when finding out or imagining that a teenager is being cyberbullied, experience feelings of sadness, anger, anguish, frustration, grief, insecurity, and concern. They indicate that thinking that a student may be attacked causes them anguish. The parents indicate that if they find out that their children are being cyberbullied, they will feel remorse for not having been more involved with them.

> In this case, emotional feelings, definitely, sorrow, pain, anguish, sadness, even the desire to want to get out of that hole in which they are, in which they show up, but they cannot do it (Valeria, a 4th- and 5th-grade secondary school teacher).

To summarize, regarding parent and teacher coping, there is involvement through communication. Prevention also emerges through the supervision of the use of technology in the classroom, observation, and the implementation of preventive workshops. A multidisciplinary approach is emphasized, with the collaboration of parents, teachers, psychologists, and school directors to prevent and intervene in cyberbullying. Finally, the participants also mention avoidantly coping with the situation when finding out or imagining that their child is being cyberbullied.

DISCUSSION

This study aimed to know the social representations of cyberbullying in parents and teachers of a school in Lima in the context of a pandemic. For this, 10 interviews with parents and teachers of an educational institution were analyzed. In this regard, three relevant topics regarding social representations, such as conceptions and contextualization of cyberbullying and parent and teacher coping were found.

Regarding the conceptualization of cyberbullying by the parents and the teachers, cyberbullying has been pointed out as an act of aggression on social media, in which students disrespect each other, causing them psychological damage. This agrees with what has been indicated by different authors (Romani & Martinez, 2021). The above may be due to the inappropriate use of social media, on which the students find the space to insult, blackmail, threat, and intimidate their peers (Camero et al., 2021). This situation violates their privacy and rights and causes psychological damage and damage to their social relationships (Prudencio, 2022). However, the parents, unlike the teachers, recognize that most of them do not pay due attention to the warning signs in their children

when they are the bullies. This could be because the students commit cyberbully when they do not have proper supervision (Álvarez, 2020; Gómez-León, 2021).

Regarding the forms of manifestation of cyberbullying, the parents and the teachers indicate that the students create and share visual material and adjectives to their peers on social media and in private groups, causing psychological damage to others. This coincides with what has been reported by Camero et al. (2021) who found that the teenagers interact actively on social media, and upload edited photographs that generate notoriety because they give importance to the number of likes or comments on the photos and images. This is due in part to the ease of access to do so. In this sense, the students have a technological device that enables them to access this information and act quickly without the school authorities and their parents knowing about it (Alzamendi & León, 2023).

Furthermore, regarding the perspectives of cyber victimization and cyberaggression, regarding the victim, the participants point out that the victim would have characteristics of introversion, low participation in daily activities and on social media, low self-esteem, and communication problems, feelings of terror, sadness, frustration, and poor ability to ask for help. The above coincides with Gudiño and Onofre (2023) who state that the victim is usually a submissive person who has low self-esteem and finds it difficult to relate with his/her peers.

As for the perceptions of the cyberbully, the cyberbully is conceived as an individual who seeks the attention s/he does not get at home, or who seeks some recognition, evidencing his affective deficiencies, feelings of emptiness, and need to feel important. In this regard, different studies corroborate the above (Gonzalez & Palmar, 2021). This is related to what Alzamendi and León (2023) and Camero et al. (2021) postulate, who point out that cyberbullies are individuals who intend to cause discomfort, regardless of who they cause it to.

Regarding the naturalization of cyberbullying by the bystanders, it is found that the parents and the teachers perceive that the teenagers have normalized violent behaviors. Likewise, such behavior is accepted as a form of entertainment among students. This coincides with Garaigordobil (2018) who mentions that the students do these actions and minimize the impact, considering them as a game. This may be due to the misinformation about the causes, consequences and strategies to prevent the problem (Ospina, 2022).

Regarding the contextualization of cyberbullying, reference is made to the causes of cyberbullying from the perspectives of the parents and the teachers. Thus, the belief is found that cyberbullying comes from the problems of the family environment and the parenting styles of the students at home. This finding is consistent with Contreras and Rosario (2022), who indicate that the parenting styles, the rigid forms of correction, and the lack of affection and limits increase the risk of teenagers participating in cyberbullying. In this regard, the bully usually repeats the behaviors seen at home, in which the person living in an aggressive environment will learn similar behaviors (Ramirez, 2022).

Regarding the consequences of cyberbullying on the victim, both the parents and the teachers think that cyberbullying cause emotional damage to the victim, resulting in low self-esteem and discouragement for not wanting to attend school. This coincides with Gómez-León (2021) who

points out that the victims experience feelings of fear of being mistreated, interfering with their ability to defend themselves. They tend not to report the abuse and want to leave school. They also mention that the victims become vulnerable and are predisposed to substance abuse, self-harm, and suicide. This is related to Espitia et al. (2022) who indicate that cyberbullying causes a deep state of emotional discomfort, making the victim become isolated, have low participation in school activities, consume alcohol, and think about suicide as an option.

Regarding the effects on the bully, the parents and the teachers consider that practicing aggressive actions can lead to arrogant and rebellious behavior. This is related to that proposed by Viñachi and Males (2022) who state that the possible consequences of a bully are poor empathy, personal problems, and impulsive, aggressive, and criminal conducts. This may be because such students learn to achieve their goals violently and obtain recognition from others, which ends up feeding back their actions (Cuadros & Zamora, 2022).

Regarding parent and teacher coping, the teachers, unlike the parents, consider that they are more directly involved in cases of cyberbullying through constant supervision and talks to students. This contrasts with Cristancho and Niño (2020) who found that some teachers do not know how to assist the victims of bullying. Likewise, the parents recognize that they could talk more with their children and make a distinction between those parents who look after the students and those who prioritize other activities, as mentioned by Dorantes et al. (2019), who refer that school violence behaviors are also present in the family circle and the scarce follow-up by the parents in their children's activities is pointed out as a cause.

Regarding the prevention of cyberbullying, the parents and the teachers point out the importance of constantly communicating with the students, inquiring about their feelings and the events that happen to them. The interviewees highlight the relevance of the development of preventive campaigns to promote school coexistence and the responsible and safe use of the new technological media, as pointed out by Fernández (2021). In particular, the teachers emphasize that among the measures to be considered by the educational institution are the restriction of websites on computers, the observation of the students' behavior in the classroom, and tutoring hours in each class. In this regard, Amaya et al. (2020) indicate that the teachers recognize the need to update and learn new strategies to prevent and implement intervention routes and programs to be prepared for the problem.

Regarding the approach to cyberbullying, the importance of a multidisciplinary work between teachers, psychologists, and parents is identified. This is consistent with what has been proposed by Montoro and Ballesteros (2016). In this regard, it is important to take into account the identification of warning signs and plan school intervention. Despite the above, the parents and the teachers have not mentioned the Protocol for Addressing Bullying that is implemented at the schools, which involves security measures in the educational institution, the referral to access a mental health service, and the follow-up and closure of the case (MINEDU, 2019).

Finally, regarding avoidance coping, the parents and the teachers have negative feelings such as sadness, guilt, frustration, and remorse when they find out that a student could be a victim of cyberbullying, and therefore seek to avoid such situations. This coincides with what is pointed

out by Dos Santos (2019), indicating that teachers do not have an emotional response that promotes school coexistence, but rather attitudes that may encourage school bullying. Similarly, according to Larrañaga et al. (2022), the parents minimize the situation and the effects of virtual bullying, without involving emotionally and behaviorally. This may be due to the lack of tools with which the parents and the teachers are usually socialized in the face of a situation as overwhelming as peer violence.

Among the implications of this study is the need for greater awareness and education about cyberbullying in parents and teachers, focusing on improving early detection, emotional management, and multidisciplinary collaboration for prevention and effective intervention at schools, especially during crises such as the pandemic. Also, to address the stereotypes that exist around the victim and the bully for better intervention in the future.

By way of conclusions, it was found that the parents and the teachers understand cyberbullying as an act of aggression through the inappropriate use of digital media. Regarding its forms of manifestation, it manifests through content editing and dissemination in virtual groups. Regarding the perspectives of cyber-victimization, the victim is conceived as a shy and submissive person, while cyber-aggression is attention-seeking in their environment. Furthermore, the naturalization of cyberbullying by the bystander tends to normalize attitudes as expected and of entertainment among peers. Regarding contextualization, there is the perception that cyberbullying may be caused by problems and conflicts in the family dynamics. Regarding the consequences for the victim, the participants point out that they may experience emotional distress, suicidal ideas, and self-injurious behaviors. Regarding the effects on the bully, behavioral problems may be triggered.

Finally, regarding parent and teacher coping, the importance of involvement through communication and supervision of the use of technology is highlighted. Likewise, the prevention and approach from a multidisciplinary approach, including the participation of parents, teachers, psychologists, and the directors of the educational institution, to implement intervention programs. Finally, the participants coping with it avoidantly, which makes it difficult to face the problem.

As for the limitations of this research, the pilot interview was conducted with a teacher and not with a parent. It is also considered a limitation not to have carried out a triangulation of techniques, with which it would have been possible to obtain a greater depth in the study. It is recommended as perspectives in the field of research to address the social representations of the students and the administrative personnel of the educational institutions, as well as to conduct longitudinal research to know the process of construction of the violent dynamics among the students. Finally, to carry out educational and awareness-raising interventions aimed at parents, teachers, students, and authorities of educational institutions to generate greater awareness of cyberbullying.

REFERNCES

Aldeas Infantiles SOS Perú. (2023, 31 de agosto). *Seis de cada diez niñas, niños y adolescentes han sido víctimas de ciberbullying.* https://www.aldeasinfantiles.org.pe/noticias/seis-de-cada-diez-ninas,-ninos-y-adolescentes-han

Álvarez, F. (2020). Los nuevos comienzos y la educación, reflexiones desde el confinamiento. En H. Casanova. *Educación y pandemia: una visión académica*. (pp. 271-279). Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones sobre la Universidad y la Educación. http://132.248.192.241:8080/jspui/bitstream/IISUE_UNAM/567/1/AlvarezF_2020_Los_nuevos_comienzos.pdf.

Álvarez, H., Arias, E., Bergamaschi, A., López, A., Noli, A., Ortiz, M. ... (y otros). (2020). La educación en tiempos de coronavirus: Los sistemas educativos de América Latina y el Caribe ante COVID-19. *Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo.* http://dx.doi.org/10.18235/0002337

Alzamendi, A., & León, A. (2023) D*ocentes escolares. Representación mental de ciberbullying en Lima Metropolitana.* [Tesis para Obtener el Título Profesional de Licenciado en Psicología]. Universidad Peruana de Ciencias Aplicadas. https://repositorioacademico.upc.edu.pe/handle/10757/668713

Amaya, D., García, L., Gómez, L., Jiménez, K., Morales,J., Pardo, M., Pizza, A., Ramirez, L., García, C., Romero, M., Ropaín A., Saiz, L.,Torres, M., Urrea, M. & Valderrama L. (2020). *Ciberbullying: Evaluación y Prevención en el Colegio El Carmelo de Bogotá.* [Trabajo de Grado]. Universidad Católica de Colombia. https://repository.ucatolica.edu.co/server/api/core/bitstreams/349153d4-3b76-46df-b505-876aeaecb2f5/content

Bautista, P., Cano, J., & Vicente, E. (2023). *Afrontamiento del ciberacoso en los futuros docentes: Experiencias online de Inteligencia colectiva en contextos educativos.* [Tesis de la Universidad de Zaragoza]. https://zaguan.unizar.es/record/126711

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2022). *Doing Reflexive Thematic Analysis. A practical guide.* Sage. https://www.thematicanalysis.net/doing-reflexive-ta/

Camero, S., Ruiz, A., Vertiz, I., & Aguado, A. (2021). Redes sociales y el ciberbullying en estudiantes de secundaria de una Institución Educativa Pública de Lima. *Alpha Centauri, 2*(4), 36–47. https://doi.org/10.47422/ac.v2i4.6

Comisión Económica para América Latina & Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Educación, la Ciencia y la Cultura, (2020). *La educación en tiempos de la pandemia de*

COVID-19. CEPAL & UNESCO. https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/publication/files/45904/S2000510_es.pdf

Contreras, J., & Rosario, S. (2022). *Estilos de crianza ante la presencia del ciberbullying en estudiantes: una revisión sistemática.* [Tesis para obtener el Título Profesional de: Licenciado en Psicología]. Universidad Cesar Vallejo. https://repositorio.ucv.edu.pe/bitstream/handle/20.500.12692/84061/Contreras_TJJ-Rosario_LSE-SD.pdf?sequence=

Creswell, J., & Poth, C. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and Research design: Choosing among five approaches.* (4th ed.). SAGE.

Cristancho, M. & Niño, J. (2020). Estrategia de formación docente para la intervención en casos de ciberbullying. *Infometric@ - Serie Sociales y Humanas*, *3*(1), 109-130. http://infometrica.org/index.php/ssh/article/view/110

Cuadros, H. & Zamora, D. (2022). *Representaciones sociales en docentes acerca del acoso escolar.* [Tesis para optar el título profesional de Psicólogos]. Universidad Nacional de San Agustín. https://repositorio.unsa.edu.pe/server/api/core/bitstreams/630e687f-7aa3-4767-a8fa-69580801824e/content

Daniel, B. (2018). Empirical verification of the "TACT" framework for teaching rigour in qualitative research methodology. *Qualitative Research Journal*, *18*(3), 262–275. https://doi.org/10.1108/QRJ-D-17-00012

Del Rey, R., Mora, J., Casas, J., Ortega, R., & Elipe, P. (2018). Programa «Asegúrate»: Efectos en ciberagresión y sus factores de riesgo. *Revista Científica de Comunicación y Educación*. *26*(56), 39-48. https://doi.org/10.3916/C56-2018-04

Dorantes, J., Lagunes, Y., Zarate, L., & Rivera, E. (2019). *Maestros en acción ante el cyberbullying en la escuela.* Imaginarial Editores. https://www.uv.mx/personal/jedorantes/files/2019/03/Editorial-Requerida-Maestros-en-accion-ante-el-cyberbullying-en-la-escuela.pdf

Dos Santos, F. (2019). Bullying y Cyberbullying en la escuela secundaria: Revisión de las actitudes y decisiones docentes que no colaboran en la disminución de los casos de hostigamiento en las clases de Educación Física. *XIII Congreso Argentino y VIII Latinoamericano de Educación Física y Ciencias.* Universidad Nacional de Avellaneda http://sedici.unlp.edu.ar/bitstream/handle/10915/87127/Documento_completo.pdf-PDFA.pdf?sequence=1

Estrada, E., Mamani, H. & Gallegos, N. (2020). Estrategias psicoeducativas para el desarrollo de las habilidades sociales de los estudiantes de educación secundaria. *Revista San Gregorio, 39,* 116-129. http://scielo.senescyt.gob.ec/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S2528-79072020000200116

Espitia, J., Narváez, D., & Carreño, A. (2022). *Consecuencias emocionales y comportamentales del cyberbullying en el adulto joven de 18 a 35 años.* [Trabajo de grado para optar por el título de Psicólogo]. Universidad Cooperativa de Colombia. https://repository.ucc.edu.co/items/abcea670-7f4e-4645-9ab4-1b270d1de532

Fernández, P. (2021). *Propuesta de prevención, detección e intervención en ciberbullying en el ámbito educativo.* [Máster Universitario en Intervención e Investigación Socieducativa]. Universidad de Oviedo. https://digibuo.uniovi.es/dspace/bitstream/handle/10651/60562/TFM_PaulaFernandez%20Reigosa.pdf?sequence=4

Flores, P. (2020). *Concepciones y creencias sobre el bullying en docentes de secundaria de colegios públicos en Lima Metropolitana*. [Tesis para optar el título de Licenciada en psicología con mención en psicología educacional]. Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú. https://tesis.pucp.edu.pe/repositorio/bitstream/handle/20.500.12404/19575/FLORES_FLORES_PAOLA_JIMENA.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

Fondo de las Naciones Unidas para la Infancia. (2021, 14 de diciembre). *El ciberacoso aumenta durante la pandemia.* Ciudades Amigas de la Infancia. UNICEF. https://ciudadesamigas.org/ciberacoso-ciberbullying-pandemia/

Garaigordobil, M. (2018). *Bullying y cyberbullying. Estrategias de evaluación, prevención e intervención.* Editorial UOC.

Gallego, A, & Agudelo, J. (2020). Acoso escolar: ¿están preparados los maestros en formación para afrontarlo? *Revista de Investigaciones de UCM, 21*(36). http://www.revistas.ucm.edu.co/ojs/index.php/revista/article/view/153.

Gallo, J. (2021). *Teacher and Parent Perception of Cyberbullying in a Middle School Setting* [Doctoral dissertation, Walden University]. https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=12177&context=dissertations

Gonzalez, A. & Palmar, A. (2021). El ciberbullying en los centros educativos: abordaje cualitativo de un problema de salud pública. Conocimiento enfermero. *Revista científica del CODEM, 4*(12), 5-20. https://www.conocimientoenfermero.es/index.php/ce/article/view/14

Gómez-León, M. (2021). Disminución de la ansiedad en las víctimas del bullying durante el confinamiento por COVID-19. *Revista de Educación a Distancia*, 65(21), 1-20. revistas.um.es/red/article/download/439601/298611/1580471

Grupo de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo Sostenible, (2020). *Informe de políticas: Educación durante la COVID-19 y más allá* (1ª ed.). UNSDG. https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-08/sg_policy_brief_covid-19_and_education_august_2020.pdf.

Gudiño, B., & Onofre, D. (2023). Cyberbullying through WhatsApp in young migrants of the northern border of Ecuador: analysis of its forms and consequences. *LATAM Revista Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades*, *4*(1), 3977-3994. https://doi.org/10.56712/latam.v4i1.541

Henares, J., Benites, V., Ruiz, I., Pastor, G. & Rodríguez, M. (2022). Cyberbullying and associated factors in member countries of the European Union: a systematic review and meta-analysis of studies with representative population samples. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 19*(12), 7364. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19127364

Lanzillotti, A, & Korman, G. (2018). Conocimiento e identificación del cyberbullying por parte de docentes de Buenos Aires. *Revista mexicana de investigación educativa*, *23*(78), 817-839. http://www.scielo.org.mx/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S1405-66662018000300817&lng=es&nrm=iso&tlng=es

Larrañaga, N., Martínez-Fernández, G., Olveira, R., & Garitaonandia, C. (2022). La actitud de los progenitores ante el ciberbullying que viven sus hijos e hijas. *Revista Electrónica de Investigación y Evaluación Educativa, 28*(2). http://doi.org/10.30827/relieve.v28i2.24075

Ministerio de Educación del Perú. (2023). *Números de casos reportados en el SíseVe a nivel nacional.* SíseVe contra la violencia escolar. http://www.siseve.pe/web/

Ministerio de Educación del Perú. (2020). *Pautas para prevenir el ciberacoso desde la familia.* Aprendo en casa. https://repositorio.minedu.gob.pe/bitstream/handle/20.500.12799/6984/Pautas%20para%20prevenir%20y%20atender%20el%20ciberacoso%20desde%20la%20familia.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

Ministerio de Educación del Perú. (2019). *Protocolos para la atención de la violencia escolar.* SíseVe contra la violencia escolar. *https://repositorio.minedu.gob.pe/bitstream/handle/20.500.12799/5891/Protocolos%20para%20la%20atenci%C3%B3n%20de%20la%20violencia%20escolar.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y*

Montoro, E., & Ballesteros, M. (2016). Competencias docentes para la prevención del ciberacoso y delito de odio en Secundaria. *Revista Latinoamericana de Tecnología Educativa, Relatec, 15*(1), 131-142. https://idus.us.es/handle/11441/66102

Moscovici, S. (1979). *El psicoanálisis, su imagen y su público*. Colección de Temas Básicos.

Neyra, O. (2021). Ciberbullying: El acoso escolar en el ciberespacio e implicancias psicológicas. *Revista cuatrimestral de divulgación científica Universidad Alas Peruanas, 8*(1). 67-74. http://dx.doi.org/10.21503/hamu.v8i1.2238

Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Educación, la Ciencia y la Cultura. (2020). *Nuevas publicaciones cubanas para enfrentar los efectos de la COVID-19 sobre la Educación.* UNESCO https://es.unesco.org/news/nuevas-publicaciones-cubanas-enfrentar-efectos-covid-19-educacion.

Ospina, N. (2022). *El ciberbullying: un fenómeno social en la escuela.* (Tesis de Licenciatura). Universidad Católica de Pereira. https://repositorio.ucp.edu.co/handle/10785/12423

Prudencio, J. (2022). *Ciberbullying y los neuroderechos, en estudiantes de educación secundaria del Departamento de Ancash, Perú.* [Tesis para Obtener el Título Profesional de: Abogado]. Universidad de César Vallejo. https://repositorio.ucv.edu.pe/bitstream/handle/20.500.12692/107171/Prudencio_BJE-SD.pdf?sequence=1

Ramírez, M. (2022). *El cyberbullying y su relación con el malestar psicológico en estudiantes de la Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador sede Ambato.* [Proyecto de investigación previo a la obtención del título de Psicóloga Clínica]. Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador. https://repositorio.pucesa.edu.ec/bitstream/123456789/3437/1/77588.pdf

Robinson, O. (2014). Sampling in Interview-Based Qualitative Research: A Theoretical and Practical Guide. *Qualitative Research In Psychology*, *11*(1), 25-41. https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2013.801543

Romaní, C, & Martinez, V. (2021). *El cyberbullying durante la pandemia por la covid- 19 en estudiantes de educación secundaria de la institución educativa "Belén Osma y Pardo de Andahuaylas".* [Tesis desarrollada para optar el Título de Licenciatura de Psicología]. Universidad Autónoma de Ica. http://www.repositorio.autonomadeica.edu.pe/bitstream/autonomadeica/1044/3/Cintya%2 0Yulliana%20Roman%C3%AD%20Mansilla.pdf

Sammut, G., Andreouli, E., Gaskell, G., & Valsiner, J. (2015). *The Cambridge Handbook of Social Representations* (Cambridge Handbooks in Psychology). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107323650

Sanabria, J. (2014). *Representaciones Sociales del bullying en estudiantes de grados sextos y séptimos de la institución educativa Luis Carlos Galan Sarmiento*. [Tesis de grado, Universidad Abierta y a Distancia de Fusagasuga]. https://repository.unad.edu.co/bitstream/handle/10596/2705/1069734785.pdf;jsessionid=D FF3A34E58957A3A1AD1CDD8B1B6597C.jvm1?sequence=1

Urbina, J. E. & Ovalles, G. A. (2018). Teoría de las representaciones sociales. Una aproximación al estado del arte en América Latina. *Psicogente, 21*(40), 495-517. https://doi.org/10.17081/psico.21.40.3088

Varpio, L., Ajjawi, R., Monrouxe, L. V., O'Brien, B. C., & Rees, C. E. (2017). Shedding the cobra effect: Problematising thematic emergence, triangulation, saturation and member checking. *Medical Education, 51*(1), 40–50. https://doi.org/10.1111/medu.13124

Viñachi, Y., & Males, A. (2022). *Entornos virtuales como medios de violencia entre pares, en estudiantes de Básica Superior de la escuela de Educación Básica "Otavalo valle del amanecer".* [Trabajo previo a la obtención del Título de Magíster en Educación]. Universidad de Otavalo. https://repositorio.uotavalo.edu.ec/bitstream/52000/600/1/PP-EDU-2022-009.pdf