


**PREVALENCE OF BULLYING AND ASSOCIATED FACTORS  
IN 9TH GRADE STUDENTS FROM TRAMANDAÍ/RS** <https://doi.org/10.56238/sevened2025.019-014>**Régis Waechter Gonçalves<sup>1</sup>****ABSTRACT**

This quantitative cross-sectional study on the prevalence of *bullying* and its associated factors was carried out with 192 9th grade students from the municipal network of Tramandaí/RS. They answered questionnaires on the subject and the data were digitized and submitted to statistical analysis. Thus, the results were discussed in the light of the literature: about 51.1% of the students reported having already been *bullied*, with gender and race indicating relevance. In addition, the most frequent intimidation reported was verbal and physical aggression. The results aim to promote the discussion on the subject and to support *anti-bullying programs* as a strategy for prevention and health promotion.

**Keywords:** *Bullying*; Violence; Adolescents; School Health.

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## INTRODUCTION

The term *bullying* has the meaning of aggression, intentionally and repetitively against another person or group, which can be physical and/or psychological, and is characterized by an imbalance of power between victims and aggressors. The universal adoption of the term *bullying*, due to the difficulty in translating it, in a single term, into several languages, is based on the diagnosis that this is a problem that spreads throughout the globe, and that it must be confronted through a transnational dialogue. During the International Online *School Conference on Bullying and Violence*, from May to June 2005, it was characterized that the broad concept given to the word makes it difficult to identify a corresponding term in other countries such as Germany, France, Spain, Portugal and Brazil (LOPES NETO, 2005).

This type of violence refers to a specific form of aggressive and intimidating behavior in the school context among peers and is characterized by three criteria: intentionality, repetitiveness and power imbalance (OLWEUS, 1997). The characteristic place of these aggressions is the school environment (MANZININI; BRANCO, 2017). Characterized as a type of repetitive, deliberate and aggressive behavior, which has no apparent motives, the bullying phenomenon presents itself in a veiled way, through a set of cruel behaviors, for a long time, against the same victim, and whose destructive power is dangerous to the school community and society as a whole, due to the damage caused to the psyche of those involved (FANTE, 2005).

This behavior is part of an unequal power relationship, in which the oppressor considers the intimidated victim as the "weak side", the one who cannot react, the one who does not retaliate or denounce his aggressors. The victim, in many cases, keeps with him, in silence, all the humiliations he goes through. The aggressor, in turn, by not being coerced in his attitudes, has reinforced, day after day, his hostile behavior. Generally, the victim has physical or psychological characteristics that differ them from the others because they do not match the standards established by the group in which they are inserted (MANZININI; BRANCO, 2017). It is a very old phenomenon in our society, indicated in works of art and adult reports about school life, as is clear, for example, in the novel *O Ateneu*, by Raul Pompéia, published for the first time in 1888:

Several times that afternoon I was assailed by Barbalho's impertinent mockery. The one-eyed demoniac would pull my clothes, bump into me and run away with great false laughter, or pull me suddenly forward, and dressing himself with how much seriousness the saffron on his face was susceptible to, he would ask: "Have you changed your trousers?" Hell. (POMPÉIA, 1996, p. 33).

In the fragment above, one can see a typical bullying action, of which the character Sérgio was the target, the victim. Aggression by their peers through insults, offenses, curses, laughter, pulls and pushes are elementary characteristics of school *bullying* (CORINGA; GOMES, 2013). The characterization of the situation as "hellish" draws, in the aforementioned excerpt from the novel, the intensity and dimension of the suffering generated, from the perspective of the child-victim.

The first systematic studies on *bullying* were carried out by Dan Olweus<sup>2</sup>, in Norway, and were published in the early 1990s. The author, who came from the University of Bergen, was not only a pioneer in the study of *bullying*, but also in the strategies to combat it. In the 1970s, he began an investigation into the aggressors and their victims at school, drawing a lot of attention from the educational institutions of his country. In the 1980s, Olweus surveyed a sample of 84,000 students, 400 teachers and 1,000 parents, in different age groups, seeking to verify the characteristics and extent of *bullying*, as well as to evaluate the interventions carried out. With the first results of the survey, in 1989, it was found that one in seven students was involved in cases of *bullying*. In 1993, Olweus published the book *Bullying at School*, where he proposes intervention policies and makes a diagnosis of possible signs or symptoms of aggressors and victims. With the support of the Norwegian government, it was able to implement a program to combat *bullying* in schools, which reduced its occurrence by 50% (ZOEAGA; ROSIM, 2009).

Olweus' experiences served to raise global awareness of the problem, having served as an example and reference for several other successful studies and actions, drawing attention to other nations that thus began to develop actions to prevent and combat *bullying* in the 1990s. Examples include *The DES Sheffield Bullying Project* in the United Kingdom (1994), the *Anti-Bullying Campaign in Portuguese Schools* (1996) in Canada (1997) and the *Education for Tolerance Program* in Spain (1998). From 2001 onwards, the European Economic Community implemented a project entitled *Training and Mobility of Research (TMR) Network Project: Nature and Prevention of Bullying*, also covering campaigns in Canada, Italy, Germany, Greece and Spain (ZOEAGA; ROSIM, 2009; SILVA; COSTA, 2016).

Bullying, as a research topic, has different terminologies and classifications in use, some of which divide it into direct *bullying* or indirect bullying and physical or non-physical bullying. In terms of academic production, *bullying* has been classified into three categories: physical, verbal and social (SILVA; COSTA, 2016). The literature classifies children involved

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<sup>2</sup> Dan Olweus is a professor of psychology, affiliated with the Research Center for Health Promotion (HEMIL) at the University of Bergen in Norway. He is considered the pioneer in research and programs to combat *bullying* in the world, receiving several recognition awards for his investigations and satisfactory interventions.

in *bullying* as victims, aggressors and observers, or even as victim/aggressor, being simultaneously target and perpetrator (MANZINE; BRANCO, 2017; PIGOZI; MACHADO, 2015). Victims usually do not react to aggression, are very insecure, fear rejection and have few friends, feel unhappy, suffer from fear, shame, depression and anxiety, and may avoid school and social life, as protection against new aggressions (LOPES NETO, 2011).

The victims, when they react, reproduce the mistreatment suffered, as a form of compensation, that is, they look for another victim, which triggers the domino effect, as in a vicious circle. Transforming it into a problem that is difficult to control, it makes *bullying* take on unfortunate proportions of a pandemic, a threat to public health (SILVA, 2010, p. 42). Studies show that teachers tend to ignore *bullying*, either because they don't know what to do, or because they think that it is the children themselves who should find the solutions to their problem (LOPES NETO, 2011).

One of the roles also assumed by students in the face of school *bullying* is that of the observer/spectator. Although many studies only present data in relation to aggressors and victims, the bystander has an important social role in the practice of *bullying*. According to Teixeira (2011) and Lopes Neto (2011), bystanders or observers of *bullying* cases would be around 70% of students in a classroom who, although not necessarily configured as victims or aggressors, also "participate" in various forms of the dynamics in this cycle of violence.

As it is a social problem, school *bullying* should not be seen only as a violent behavior practiced by the initiative of a few students. This is measured by family, social and school issues, which varies in severity according to individual and collective attitudes and the context where it occurs, being characterized as a complex phenomenon, which requires the conjunction of several pieces to set up a favorable scenario for its occurrence: a permissive and tolerant environment, in which coexistence between peers is frequent and lasting, where aggressive children or adolescents coexist and submissive and lonely children or adolescents (LOPES NETO, 2011). The school must analyze the possible ways to control *bullying*, structuring itself pedagogically to be able to stop violence not only inside, but also coming from outside the school space (FANTE, 2005).

In this sense, it is important to carry out the survey and analysis of data, based on this research. Thus, it can be used in the confrontation and construction of public policies and actions in the area of health and education to confront school *bullying*. In view of the present panorama, this study aims to describe the prevalence of school *bullying* and associated factors among 9th grade students in the municipal network of Tramandaí/RS.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

This is a quantitative, descriptive, cross-sectional, school-based research carried out with 9th grade students from the municipal school system in the city of Tramandaí, RS. This municipality is located on the north coast of the State of Rio Grande do Sul and is located 118 km from the capital, Porto Alegre.

According to data from the Municipal Department of Education and Culture, Tramandaí, in 2019, had 310 students enrolled in the daytime shift of the 9th grade of regular elementary school, in nine schools in the urban area of the municipal network. Data collection was carried out in ninth-grade classes in seven municipal schools in the city and, at the end of the collection, a sample of 192 students with ages ranging from 14 to 18 years was obtained. For the purposes of this study, enrolled students who did not agree to participate in it, students who were absent at the time of data collection, and students who did not bring the informed consent form signed by their parents were considered losses. The percentage of losses was 12%.

The inclusion criterion was to be enrolled and regularly attending the 9th grade of elementary school in the municipal public school of Tramandaí/RS, aged between 12 and 18 years, in the period of 2019. Data collection was carried out between November and December 2019, in school classrooms, by the researcher himself, and the application of the questionnaires was preceded by a brief explanation of the research and the completion was done by the adolescent himself, anonymously, in the presence of only the researcher (evaluator).

To this end, two questionnaires were used as research instruments. The first questionnaire is related to sociodemographic data and contains questions about age; color/ethnicity; parents (living or deceased, whether they live together or apart); people with whom you live; if it develops remunerated activity; educational institution (public or private). The second instrument used was the Kidscape *questionnaire*<sup>3</sup>, which contains the variables specifically related to *bullying*, such as whether you have ever been *bullied*; age at which you were bullied; last time you were bullied, harassed or assaulted; where and how the bullying happened; how you felt; sex of the person who bullied; opinion about the aggressor; guilty of the assault; type of aggression; if you have ever bullied.

Data collection considered the ethical and legal aspects in scientific research, and the Informed Consent Form (TALE) and the Informed Consent Form (ICF) were applied so

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<sup>3</sup> The Kidscape data collection instrument consists of 17 questions, was built by researchers in London and is currently used in research on the subject, to identify frequent *bullying* practices in the school institution, who are the victims, the aggressors and the possible observers/spectators. Extracted from: <http://www.kidscape.org.uk/>.

that students and their parents were aware in writing of the research objectives and the presentation of the research project. Voluntary participation was duly informed to the study participants. The TALE and ICF were given to the students so that they could express their consent to voluntarily participate in the research and, on the day of application, they would bring them signed by their parents, expressing their authorization for the students' participation in it. All questionnaires were answered by the participating students themselves and carried out during the class period, without the presence of the teacher, in order to maintain the confidentiality of the information. Three weekly meetings were arranged with the schools to obtain adherence from students who were absent on the first day of collection or from those who had not brought the informed consent form duly signed by their guardians on the first occasion.

The data analysis process began with the data entry process, using the Epidata 3.1 software, and, later, the database was exported for the application of statistical tests in the STATA 12.0 software. First, the qualitative variables were coded, and *the necessary missings* and groupings were cleaned. Next, the descriptive analysis presented means, medians, standard deviation, percentages and counts. In the inferential part, tests were performed to analyze the distribution (*Shapiro-Wilk* test to see normality), tests to identify associations (Chi-square test for independence). To complement these analyses, logistic regression analyses were also performed. A significance level of 5% was adopted.

The project that supported this research, after authorization from the Municipal Department of Education and Culture of Tramandaí, was submitted to the Ethics and Research Committee of the Lutheran University of Brazil – ULBRA for evaluation and ethical and methodological adequacy as provided for in Resolution 466/12 of the National Health Council and approved under opinion number 3.678.167.

## RESULTS

The sample included 192 students from schools in the municipality of Tramandaí, Rio Grande do Sul, who attend municipal schools. As can be seen, the students presented a balanced and homogeneous distribution in terms of gender, with a slight predominance of girls (50.8%). Regarding age, most students were 15 years old (50%), with a mean age of 15.59 years (standard deviation of 0.93 years).

Considering race, 39.9% declared themselves white (39.9%), 35.1% brown (35.1%) and 25% black and others. Practically all students in the sample (96.8%) studied only in public schools. The vast majority of students (88.2%) declared that their parents are alive, and their marital situation is quite balanced between those who live together (46.4%) or



separated (40.6%). As for the residential situation, regarding parents who live in the same residence as the student, most live with the father, mother and siblings together (32.5%), followed, in this variable, by those who live only with the mother (26.2%).

When we checked the data regarding *bullying*, 51.1% of the students stated that they had already suffered aggression or some type of harassment. The aggressions happened mainly among students aged 11 to 14 (66%). Regarding the feelings aroused by aggression, most students felt bad or were afraid, respectively 34.4% and 30.2%. When asked who is responsible for aggressions that happen recurrently, students blamed the aggressors (62.3%) and the parents of the aggressors (20.1%). Most of the aggressors are boys (68%). Among the students in the survey, the vast majority stated that they had not committed any aggression against another person (72.7%).

Most of the aggressions took place in the classroom (33.0%) and in the schoolyard (22.7%). The types of aggression most cited by the students were verbal (51%) and physical (43.9%) intimidation (Table 1).

**Table 1** – Specific data on the prevalence of *bullying* and associated factors in 9th grade students from the municipal network of Tramandaí, RS

VARIABLES	n	%	p-value
Already bullied			0,772
<b>No</b>	93	48,9	
<b>yes</b>	97	51,1	
Age of the victim when assaulted			<0.001
<b>less than 5 years</b>	1	1,1	
<b>from 5 to 11 years old</b>	19	20,2	
<b>from 11 to 14 years old</b>	62	66,0	
<b>More than 14 years</b>	12	12,8	
How did you feel			<0.001
<b>It didn't bother me</b>	14	14,6	
<b>I felt bad</b>	33	34,4	
<b>I got scared</b>	29	30,2	
<b>I didn't want to go to school anymore</b>	18	18,8	
<b>I felt scared</b>	2	2,1	
Consequences related to aggression			<0.001
<b>It was of no consequence</b>	42	43,3	
<b>Some bad consequences</b>	23	23,7	
<b>Dire consequences</b>	20	20,6	
<b>made me change schools</b>	12	12,4	
What the victim thinks about the aggressor			<0.001
<b>I don't think anything</b>	50	27,8	
<b>I feel sorry for them</b>	31	17,2	
<b>I don't like them</b>	96	53,3	
<b>I like them</b>	3	1,7	
Guilt for the continuous aggression			<0.001
<b>of those who attack</b>	96	62,3	
<b>From the School Board</b>	12	7,8	
<b>of their parents</b>	31	20,1	
<b>of the victim</b>	10	6,5	
<b>of teachers</b>	5	3,2	

Sex of the aggressor			<0.001
<b>boy</b>	58	58,0	
<b>girl</b>	32	32,0	
Have you ever assaulted someone			<0.001
<b>No</b>	136	72,7	
<b>yes</b>	51	27,3	
<b>Last aggression suffered</b>			<0.001
Today	8	8,2	
In the last 30 days	37	38,1	
In the last 6 months	18	18,6	
1 year or more ago	34	35,1	
<b>How many times have you been a victim</b>			<0.001
Once	27	28,4	
Several times	38	40,0	
Almost every day	17	17,9	
Several times a day	13	13,7	
<b>Where it happened</b>			<0.001
Going to or coming from school	14	14,4	
In the classroom	32	33,0	
In the schoolyard	22	22,7	
In the cafeteria	12	12,4	
In the bathrooms	5	5,2	
Elsewhere	12	12,4	
<b>Type of aggression/harassment/ bullying</b>			
Physical Intimidation	43	43,9	0,225
VERBAL Intimidation	49	51,0	0,838
SEXUAL INTIMIDATION	5	5,2	<0.001
RACIST Intimidation	22	22,9	<0.001
EMOTIONAL INTIMIDATION	10	10,3	<0.001

Source: Authors, 2020

The association of the gender variable with the bullying variables is described in Table 2. The sex of the aggressor was statistically significant, with the highest percentage of boys stating that they had been victims of male aggressors (85.7%). Girls, on the other hand, had a very balanced distribution between female (54.5%) and male (45.5%) aggressors. Boys had higher percentages of students who suffered aggression (57.6%) compared to girls, who, in only 46.3% of the sample, stated that they had already been *bullied*. In both sexes, aggressions were mainly located between 11 and 14 years of age (66%), with the victims stating that they felt fear (30.2%) and not recognizing consequences related to the aggression (43.3%). The victims also indicated, when asked what they think of their aggressors, that they do not like their aggressors, and that the blame for recurrent aggressions is primarily on those who attack.

**Table 2 – Association of bullying variables with students' gender**

VARIABLES	MALE		FEMALE		p-value
	n	%	n	%	
<b>Has been bullied</b>					0,122
No	39	42,4	51	53,7	



yes	53	57,6	44	46,3	
<b>Related consequences</b>					0,544
It was of no consequence	22	40,7	20	46,5	
Some bad consequences	15	27,8	8	18,6	
Dire consequences	12	22,2	8	18,6	
made me change schools	5	9,3	7	16,3	
<b>Aggressor</b>					<0.001
boy	48	85,7	20	45,5	
girl	8	14,3	24	54,5	
<b>Have you ever assaulted someone</b>					0,240
No	62	68,9%	72	76,6%	
yes	28	31,1%	22	23,4%	

Source: Authors, 2020.

Among the associations with race (Table 3), only the question about the occurrence of bullying was statistically significant, since the groups of black, yellow and indigenous students presented the highest percentages of positive answers. The other variables did not obtain a distribution that would allow the application of the chi-square test.

**Table 3 – Association of bullying variables with the students' race**

VARIABLE	RACE			p-value
	White %	Brown %	Black and others %	
<b>Has been bullied</b>				<0.001*
No	55,4%	58,5%	25,5%	
yes	44,6%	41,5%	74,5%	
<b>Related consequences</b>				0,274
It had no consequences	37,5%	60,7%	34,3%	
Some consequences. Bad	31,3%	10,7%	25,7%	
Dire consequences	15,6%	21,4%	25,7%	
He made me change schools	15,6%	7,1%	14,3%	
<b>Aggressor</b>				0,074
Boy	67,6%	82,8%	55,9%	
Girl	32,4%	17,2%	44,1%	
<b>Have you ever assaulted someone</b>				0,310
No	78,1%	69,8%	66,0%	
yes	21,9%	30,2%	34,0%	
<b>Type of aggression/harassment/ bullying</b>				
Physical Intimidation	57,6%	42,9%	31,4%	0,293
VERBAL Intimidation	56,3%	50,0%	47,1%	0,750
SEXUAL INTIMIDATION	6,3%	0%	8,8%	N.A
RACIST Intimidation	3,6%	12,5%	50,0%	<0.001*
EMOTIONAL INTIMIDATION	9,4%	10,3%	11,8%	0,951

Source: Authors, 2020.

Black, yellow and indigenous students were grouped together, as they were a numerical minority in the sample and, again, presented the highest percentage of positive responses to bullying, a statistically significant result. Even with the absence of statistical

significance, we highlight the difference in response patterns for the aggressor's gender, this same group had a higher percentage of girls as aggressors, when compared to the other groups. Regarding the type of aggression suffered by the students, the highest percentages of positive responses showed a pattern in all groups for verbal intimidation, in which all presented positive responses in percentages very close to 50%.

The variable "racist intimidation" presented statistical significance, since minority students presented an exact percentage of 50% of positive responses regarding suffering this type of aggression, and the other groups presented very different percentages, reaching a maximum of less than 13% of positive responses. We noticed a significant association between having already been a victim of harassment and having committed some type of harassment against colleagues (Table 4).

**Table 4** – Association between having been *bullied* and *bullied*

	Has already bullied			
	No		Yes	
	n	%	n	%
Already bullied				
No	73	54,1	17	34,0
Yes	62	45,9	33	66,0

Source: Authors, 2020.

## DISCUSSION

In order to investigate the prevalence of *bullying* in 9th grade students in the municipal network of Tramandaí, RS, the present study shows that 51.1% of students have already been victims of *bullying* among students aged 14 to 18 years, enrolled in the 9th grade of elementary school in Tramandaí, and boys have a slightly higher prevalence of being *bullied* (57.6%) over the percentage of girls (46.3%). The scope of the present research does not allow us to affirm it, however, we indicate as a hypothesis, based on the structural machismo of our society, that cultural conditions may lead girls to recognize, accuse and/or identify their aggressors less frequently. These data are similar to the study carried out with 815 students from public schools in the interior of São Paulo, in which, through the same *Kidscape Questionnaire*, the prevalence of being *bullied* among schoolchildren was 48.22% (GARBIN; GARBIN et al., 2016). On the other hand, using the same methodology (*Kidscape*) in Rio Grande do Sul, there are studies with students from public schools in Pelotas, with a much lower prevalence, at 17.6% (MOURA; QUEVEDO et al, 2011) and in Cruz Alta, where, with 459 students from public schools, the prevalence was 30% (NASCIMENTO et al 2013). Also, in Caxias do Sul, with a sample of 1230 students from public schools, another study found a prevalence rate of being *bullied* at

10.2% (RECH; SANTOS, et al, 2013). In Porto Alegre, in the study by Bandeira and Hutz (2012), the prevalence of *bullying* victims was 67.5%, in which boys and girls have similar levels of victimization.

The divergences found between the studies can be explained by regional and cultural differences, even in the case of cities in the same state, and by the methodological limitations that the collection instruments use. What we call regional and cultural differences are exemplified by the very concept of *Bullying* (VESSEY *et al*, 2014), that is, the notion of what bullying is, what aggression is and what violence is that each community forms for itself and with which each school works on a daily basis. One factor that we observed in the research is that the increase in the incidence of being *bullied* can also be linked to the campaigns that are carried out within each school environment, in the pedagogical work with the laws and how much this discussion is (or is not) ingrained among the school community.

In line with the data found and the increase in the victims' manifestations in self-reports, there was an increase in the reports of bullying victims between 2009 and 2015 in Brazil, in a comparative analysis of the trend of *bullying* in Brazilian capitals, considering data from the three editions of PeNSE (2009, 2012 and 2015). For example, with regard to the report of being *bullied*, among 9th grade students, there was an increase: 5.4% in 2009, to 7.2% in 2012, and 7.4% in 2015, representing a growth of 37% in this interval. The states of São Paulo and Paraná had the highest prevalences, indices that, when associated with sociodemographic factors, allow us to infer that, as they are among the richest states with the highest population density in the country, they are also those where people from various parts of the country converge, increasing the plurality of people from different origins. colors, accents, customs, and increasing the differences between social classes.

Among schoolchildren aged 13 to 17 years, the prevalence of *bullying* at 13 years of age was higher, being slightly lower in students aged 15, 16 and 17 years (MELLO; MALTA; SANTOS, 2018). Although most students said that they "felt bad" or "were afraid" when they were *bullied*, the number of responses that associated the episode of violence with subsequent consequences (56.7%) and those that did not make this association (43.3%) was balanced. However, a study found that 31.8% victims of *bullying* are not bothered by the attitudes of their peers (BANDEIRA; HUTZ, 2012), and, also according to Nascimento et al. (2013) for 29.70% of the victims surveyed, *bullying* would not have had consequences.

It should be noted that the fact that the students surveyed did not recognize the immediate consequences of the act does not mean that they do not exist. To this end, it would be necessary to further investigate the reasons why students do not recognize the

consequences of *bullying*, as the relationship between the answers of students who "are not bothered" (14.6%) and the answers of those for whom bullying "had no consequences" (43.3%) can reveal a mismatch between the recognition of the discomfort, in itself, as a consequence and from there we would need to characterize the nature and depth of this discomfort, in order to understand its persistence over time, in the lives of the victims. In addition, the data that 18% no longer want to go to school and that 12% have changed schools, both due to *bullying*, high rates for such drastic consequences, allow us to think that there is a gap between the non-immediate recognition of the consequence and the drastic consequence, which would need to be better analyzed.

For Marcolino (2018), in addition to the macrosocial impact, *bullying* has a direct effect on the emotional, psychological, physical, and social dimensions. The victims present themselves, most of the time, as defenseless, insecure and with low self-esteem, developing, in them, emotional instability and a tendency to psychic disorders, related to the school environment, triggering low learning performance and even abandonment. These data also refer us to the studies of Nascimento et al. (2013), according to which *bullying* is one of the reasons for school dropout, and can be the reason and suffering of many young people, causing them to stop wanting to go to school or have to change schools, causing social problems.

Verbal aggression is the most frequent type of intimidation (51%) among students, but 40% of them reported that they had suffered several aggressions, which were not only verbal aggression, but also physical aggression (43%). Likewise, studies by Garbin (2016) point to verbal aggression as the most suffered type of *bullying* with an incidence of 46.56%, followed by physical aggression (14%). Most studies point to verbal aggression as the most typical occurrence, with rates ranging from 75% (MOURA; QUEVEDO et al. 2011) to 35.50% (NASCIMENTO et al 2013). Physical aggression, in turn, is pointed out as the second most frequent type of *bullying*, ranging from 62.4% (MOURA QUEVEDO et al., 2013) to 14% (GARBIN; GARBIN, 2016).

It is noteworthy that the most common place of *bullying* has been the classroom (33%), which demonstrates that many episodes of *bullying* happen in the presence of the teacher (GARBIN, 2016; RECH, SANTOS et al, 2013). According to Garbin (2016), this data places teachers in a position of impotence or even omission in the face of the phenomenon.

In our research, cases of *bullying* linked to racism are noteworthy, which stand at 22.9%. In other studies, this rate is indicated between 6.3% and 18% (MOURA; QUEVEDO et al. 2011; RECH; SANTOS et al. 2013). In a country where discriminating against a

person because of skin color is a crime, the rate of this type of *bullying* in the school environment is worrying (NASCIMENTO et al., 2013). This fact is due to the reflection of our society where racism is a consequence of the social structure itself, in which political, economic, legal and even family relations are constituted. In this way, individual behaviors are derived from a society whose racism is the rule and not the exception (ALMEIDA, 2018).

The surveys also showed that, when students were asked who was to blame for the intimidation, aggression or harassment, most pointed out that it was the aggressor himself. A smaller percentage, but no less important, pointed out that the victim is to blame for the aggressions, which also raises the question about the victim's blaming for cases of violence in the adult world.

The male predominance of the aggressor's sex (31.1%) corroborates other findings in the literature (GARBIN, 2016). In the 2015 edition of PeNSE, we have an index of self-report of bullying, that is, of children/adolescents who confess/admit to having been aggressors in cases of school violence. This index covers almost a fifth of the total population of students surveyed (19.8%), being more frequent in males (24.2%), that is, almost one in four boys admits to having already been an aggressor (MELLO; SILVA; OLIVEIRA, 2017). This indicator is important, as it highlights the gender inequality present already in adolescence, which can raise hypotheses about the type of masculinity, *macheza* performances that are being imputed to children and young people, as well as about the persistence of archaic, patriarchal and misogynistic values in Brazilian society.

The high number of students who identified themselves as both aggressor and victim (66%) in our research was similar to the study by Moura et al. (2011), in which 47.1% of those who were victims also provoked *bullying*, which is also compatible with international studies (UNDHEIN; SUND, 2010). But for Garbin (2016), what differentiates *bullying* from other forms of violence among adolescents is the fact that, in *bullying*, victims do not react against their aggressors, that is, there is an unequal power relationship, where victims would have a repressed behavior towards their abusers. In other words, in research that indicates the presence of victims who are also aggressors, they are not aggressors because they reacted to the *bullying* they suffered (neither at the time they were victims nor later): it is much more likely that they have reproduced the violence they suffered in other victims, whom they have indicated as weaker than themselves.

It is necessary to reflect on the role of the various agents of the school community, in the sense of rethinking strategies for the resignification of this space and, also, in the sense of pressuring authorities to enforce *anti-bullying* laws in the form of promoting public

policies of results. By agents of the school community, we understand not only teachers, but also students, parents, managers, employees, in short, all those involved in the teaching-learning processes. The school is an important environment for ethical, aesthetic and citizenship training, and it is often within this space that children and young people learn to live with other people and, above all, to deal with differences.

The occurrence of *bullying* in the Brazilian school context is directly related to the reproduction of violence at the macropolitical level, through attitudes that persist from childhood to adulthood, and generate consequences for the victims in the short and/or long term, among which we mention, above all, the marks imprinted on the psychosocial formation of the subjects, their personality, their way of facing the world. Therefore, it is necessary that the phenomenon of *bullying* be seen as a social problem that produces suffering and interferes with learning, that is, as a form of violence directly associated with the triggering of other violence, in addition to intensely affecting the cognitive development, health and quality of life of the people involved.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The rate of students who reported having suffered violence by schoolchildren in the school environment was approximately 51.1%, and boys were the main ones involved, among victims and aggressors, in cases of *bullying*. Boys are recognized as the main ones involved in bullying events, both as victims and as abusers. Racism and the existence of victims who are also aggressors are characteristics that seem to us to be striking in the characterization of the types of *bullying* among the students in the research network. This study aims to be an instrument for the discussion and mapping of the prevalence of *bullying* in the municipal public education network of the city of Tramandaí/RS, in order to subsidize public policies for the promotion of health and human development among students, through the fight against forms of school violence.<sup>i</sup>

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