Article

Bullying in Adolescents Practising Sport: A Structural Model Approach

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Abstract: This article aims to analyse the relationship between the bullying aggressor and bullying victim profile related to practising or not practising sport in adolescents living in southern Spain. The research includes male and female participants aged between 12 and 16 years in different secondary schools in the provinces of Andalusia, Ceuta and Melilla in the period between February 2022 and June 2022. The study aims to extend the existing scientific, theoretical and empirical knowledge on the influence of playing sport or not on disruptive bullying attitudes in adolescents. To this end, two initial hypotheses were designed; the first hypothesises that bullying victim behaviours are associated with future bullying aggressor behaviours when practising sport; and the second states that victim behaviours are associated with future bullying aggressor behaviours when not practising sport. To verify them, SPSS software was used for the preliminary analysis of the scale and sociodemographic profile. Additionally, the study is based on structural equation modelling methodology and variance-based methods employing SmartPLS v3.3 software. The results show the importance of sport or physical activity to reduce the chances of carrying out bullying actions on other peers and/or classmates. Therefore, it is considered necessary to prevent bullying in the classroom by implementing sports intervention programmes in educational centres.

Keywords: bullying victim; bullying aggressor; adolescents; sport; structural model

1. Introduction

School climate and safety are at the forefront of current educational issues. Bullying is a fragment of the school climate and safety puzzle. Bullying, either as a victim or as an aggressor, can have a lasting impact on students [1]. Such a situation aims to generate discomfort in the victim, who is unable to defend himself/herself [2]. Along the same lines, [3] understand it as a prolonged behaviour of verbal insults, social rejection, psychological physical aggression and/or intimidation by some students towards others, in which the victim is exposed to repetitive negative behaviours developed by one or several aggressors in a helplessness statement. In other words, bullying is understood as the intentional action of consciously harming or being cruel to the victims. In general, traditional forms of bullying can be divided into three categories of aggression: physical (hitting, kicking), verbal (name-calling, teasing) and social (ignoring and isolating). Behind these behaviours lies an inequality of power (physical, verbal, psychological or social) between a weak victim and a strong aggressor that leaves the victim defenseless [4].

As is reflected by [5], bullying is one of the subsets of social aggression that started to be analysed more extensively 40 years ago and, in the last decade, attracted increasing interest from researchers in various countries, which is still ongoing to this day [6]. In this
context, bullying is relevant as it is produced in the educational environment, where its consequences can have a significant impact [7]. This type of disruptive behaviour continues in the 21st century after decades of trying to improve school behaviour and coexistence. Consequently, it is necessary to consider its implications for future generations [8]. These disruptive behaviours are still not disappearing, despite the efforts of the educational community, and continue to increase through new forms of bullying [9]. In this sense, it is necessary to assess the state of affairs to find the current causes that provoke this behaviour so that academic and social authorities can work together to find an early solution [10]. These disruptive behaviours not only affect students during their compulsory education stage but can also transcend to the university or adult stage [11]. Moreover, due to technological advances, these problems caused in the school context are transferred to virtual spaces [12]. In fact, studies have found a strong relationship between the two types of bullying, observing that many victims/perpetrators of traditional bullying were also victims/perpetrators of cyberbullying [13]. In this sense, Buelga [14] has suggested that cybervictimisation and cyberbullying are part of a general pattern of violence, where using electronic devices is another way of bullying the peer group.

For this reason, researchers and education professionals must understand and comprehend the prevalence of school bullying to become agents of change within their school systems [15]. Authors such as [16] define bullying as “unwanted and aggressive behaviour among school-aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance that is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time”. This definition is one of the most widely used by experts in the field [17].

The main concern shown by experts studying school bullying, such as education professionals, is the myriad of possible effects it can have on the victim and the aggressor [18]. Some research has indicated that both victims and bullies are at increased risk of suicidal ideation and suicide attempts [19,20]. Other adverse effects may include poor mental health, depression and social maladjustment [21]; poor academic performance [22]; and illicit drug use and substance abuse for victims [21,23]. Refs. [6,24] have linked an environment of physical education (PE) to bullying acts. In this sense, it has been suggested that victims of school bullying tend to avoid school contexts that make them feel vulnerable, among which the authors highlight those found in physical activities [25].

However, some prevention programmes have considered the physical education factor in the role against violence in schools due to its valuable effects by favouring the externalisation of emotions and social skills improvement [26]. In this sense, it should be noted that among healthy lifestyle habits, (non-competitive) sports practice promotes responsibility and improves coexistence [27], being an excellent means of transmitting values [28] and promoting prosocial attitudes [29]. Thus, it can be applied as a means of prevention and treatment of school bullying and victimisation and carries a lower risk of developing aggressive behaviours and deviant behaviours [30]. Authors such as [31] and [32] indicate that physical activity, and more specifically sport, can have a positive impact on the body, mind, empathy and cooperation among peer groups. Therefore, the teachers of PE’s importance in fostering a positive environment during lessons has been highlighted, favouring students’ empowerment and social empathy development [33]. Following [34,35], sports coaches and PE teachers should not only help students to improve their physical fitness but also develop their social skills, improving their empowerment and growth in learning to live constructively in society [36].

Instead, other studies highlight the need and relevance of the proactive and, therefore, the non-reactive role of physical education teachers in dealing with bullying [37], thus highlighting the importance of physical education teachers assessing the environment in which classes take place to promote inclusive environments that do not encourage violence among young people. Along these lines, [38] and [39] propose various steps to develop a bullying-free environment in physical education: the previous assessment of bullying types and their frequency in physical education lessons (e.g., by surveys collecting students’ and teachers’ perceptions); the elaboration of a curriculum that vindicates proactive actions...
(e.g., by integrating activities requiring more collaboration and cooperation, rather than competition); and its measurement (e.g., by asking teachers, parents and students, about perceived variations in bullying experiences).

Therefore, this research aims to analyse the relationship between the bullying aggressor (BAgres) and bullying victim (BVic) profile related to practising or not practising sport in adolescents. The study aims to extend the existing scientific, theoretical and empirical knowledge on the influence of playing sport or not on disruptive bullying attitudes in people aged between 12 and 16 years.

2. Materials and Methods

As a result of the above, the following hypotheses are presented (the overall proposed model in Figure 1):

![Proposed model](image)

**H1a.** bullying victim (BVic) behaviours are associated with future bullying aggressor (BAgres) behaviours when playing sport.

**H1b.** bullying victim (BVic) behaviours are associated with future bullying aggressor (BAgres) behaviours when not playing sport.

2.1. Participants

Non-probability purposive sampling is used. The number of participants analysed (N = 1454) in the research is considered eligible. The number obtained is representative of the total number of adolescents stipulated (n = 944,570) from the southern and northern African Spanish centres of secondary education. This gives a confidence level of 95% and a maximum estimation error of 5% [40]. The sample selection consisted of 1454 adolescents from Andalusia and the North African cities of Ceuta and Melilla. Participants ranged in age from 12 to 16 years (M = 13.98; SD = 1.353), reflecting a similar representation of 725 males (49.9%) and 729 females (50.1%). The selected sample is taken from the different provinces of southern Spain, such as the autonomous cities Ceuta and Melilla to carry out the research, as they are the Spanish areas where the highest cases of bullying among adolescents are manifested [41,42]. The distribution of participants by province is shown in Table 1, by practising (or not) sport in Table 2.

| City     | Participants’ No. | %   |
|----------|-------------------|-----|
| Granada  | 107               | 7.4 |
| Málaga   | 131               | 9.0 |
| Almeria  | 111               | 7.6 |
| Jaén     | 161               | 11.1|
| Córdoba  | 193               | 13.3|
| Sevilla  | 205               | 14.1|
| Cádiz    | 117               | 8.0 |
| Huelva   | 89                | 6.1 |
| Melilla  | 172               | 11.8|
| Ceuta    | 168               | 11.6|
| Total    | 1454              | 100 |
Table 2. Participants practising or not practising sport.

| Practising Sport | Participants | %  |
|------------------|--------------|----|
| No               | 143          | 9.8|
| Yes              | 1311         | 90.2|
| Total            | 1454         | 100|

2.2. Sample and Instrument Design

The questionnaire is divided into three blocks. The first addressed questions relating to the sociodemographic profile of the sample, such as gender, age, whether or not they had been physically active, the city where they were studying, as well as their religion, ethnicity and race. These questions were polytomous. Second, questions related to victim bullying behaviours, and third, questions regarding aggressor bullying behaviours. In these last two blocks, the questions were formulated through five-point Likert scales, being 1 not at all, 3 enough and 5 a lot. Block two, which referred to questions concerning victim bullying, consisted of 14 questions, while the third block was composed of 15 questions concerning bullying harassment.

The questionnaire was administered in educational centres in each of the provincial capitals of Andalusia and in the autonomous cities of Ceuta and Melilla, in a period ranging from February to June 2022, to obtain a total of 1632 questionnaires. However, after an initial filtering process, the final number of valid questionnaires was 1454. The questionnaire is elaborated, taking as the basis the Spanish version of the European Cyberbullying Intervention Project Questionnaire (ECIPQ) [43,44], the European Bullying Intervention Project Questionnaire [45], Hall’s Cyberbullying questionnaire [46] and Bullying in Sport Questionnaire (BSQ), which were designed to measure the frequency of bullying in sport [47].

The adapted instrument is designed for adolescents between 12 and 16 years old and is structured with 52 items that evaluate three blocks (sociodemographic variables, victims and aggressors). Following theoretical indications [48], the elaboration of the questionnaire is carried out in three phases: preliminary, exploratory and final, which determined the 29 definitive items of the instrument. This questionnaire focused mainly on the variable if the students had been physically active or not and the influence it exerts on bullying.

2.3. Preliminary Reliability Analysis and Statistical Analysis

To carry out the proposed analysis, different software is employed. First, the SPSS programme is used for data preparation and to carry out the preliminary analysis of the scale and sociodemographic profile. To test the reliability of the scale used, a Cronbach’s alpha test value of 0.959 is obtained. The last is clearly above the minimum required value of 0.7, as indicated by reference authors in the field [49].

On the other hand, the study was based on structural equation modelling (SEM) methodology, specifically on variance-based methods (V-SEM), employing SmartPLS v3.3, a tool widely used in the field of social sciences [50–52]. The use of partial least squares methodology has several advantages, such as the fact that it does not assume any specific distribution [53] or that it can estimate structural models with small sample sizes [54,55].

3. Results

3.1. Sociodemographic Profile and Questions Raised

The mean sociodemographic profile of the sample selected corresponds to a female who is physically active, aged 13/14 years, whose religion is Christianity and of Castillian ethnicity and white race. Table 3 shows a more detailed breakdown of the sociodemographic results. Table 4 shows the descriptive statistics of the items answered by the study participants: mean and standard deviation.
Table 3. Sociodemographic profile.

| Variable           | %   | Variable         | %   | Variable         | %   |
|-------------------|-----|------------------|-----|------------------|-----|
| Gender            |     | Physical activity|     | Religion         |     |
| Male              | 49.9| Yes              | 90.2| Christianity     | 70.2|
| Female            | 50.1| No               | 9.8 | Judaism          | 5.4 |
| Age               |     | City             |     | Islam            | 4.1 |
| 12 years old      | 16.7| Granada          | 7.4 | Taoism           | 1.1 |
| 13 years old      | 23.8| Málaga           | 9.0 | Buddhism         | 0.3 |
| 14 years old      | 23.2| Almería          | 7.6 | Other            | 18.8|
| 15 years old      | 17.6| Jaén             | 11.1|                  |     |
| 16 years old      | 18.7| Córdoba          | 13.3|                  |     |
|                   |     | Seville          | 14.1|                  |     |
|                   |     | Cádiz            | 8.0 |                  |     |
|                   |     | Huelva           | 6.1 |                  |     |
|                   |     | Melilla          | 11.8|                  |     |
|                   |     | Ceuta            | 11.6|                  |     |
| Race              |     |                  |     | Ethnicity        |     |
| White             | 37.3|                  |     | Castilian        | 65.7|
| Indigenous        | 20.8|                  |     | Mongolian        | 13.5|
| African           | 4.4 | Mongolian        | 13.5|                  |     |
| Asian             | 1.4 | Celtic           | 0.6 |                  |     |
| Nordic            | 1.0 | Celtic           | 0.6 |                  |     |
| Other             | 5.2 | Other            | 16.0|                  |     |

Table 4. Descriptive statistics of the items.

| Item Code | Question                                                                 | Mean | Std. Dev. |
|-----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|-----------|
| BVic1     | Someone has called me names or insulted me because I have a different skin colour. | 1.46 | 1.027     |
| BVic2     | Someone has called me names or insulted me because I am of a different ethnicity or religion. | 1.41 | 0.945     |
| BVic3     | Made racist comments about my race, ethnicity or religion.               | 1.48 | 1.026     |
| BVic4     | Someone has told other classmates lies about my race, ethnicity or religion. | 1.39 | 0.947     |
| BVic5     | I have been threatened because of my religious or ethnic tradition.     | 1.39 | 0.964     |
| BVic6     | They have promoted fear about the customs of my country or my ethnicity or religion. | 1.41 | 1.001     |
| BVic7     | Someone has made fun of my family and me because of our traditions and customs. | 1.42 | 1.017     |
| BVic8     | Someone has humiliated me because of my race.                           | 1.41 | 1.014     |
| BVic9     | My group’s religious or ethnic activity has been ridiculed.              | 1.41 | 1.006     |
| BVic10    | I have been excluded or ignored because I am of a different race, religion or ethnicity from my peers. | 1.39 | 0.983     |
| BVic11    | I have been hit for being different from them (skin colour, hair, dress, tradition, religion). | 1.39 | 0.986     |
| BVic12    | They imitated my speech to make fun of my language.                     | 1.37 | 0.949     |
| BVic13    | I have been told that my race, religion or ethnicity should be exterminated. | 1.42 | 1.010     |
Table 4. Cont.

| Item Code | Question                                                                 | Mean  | Std. Dev. |
|-----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-----------|
| BVic14    | I have been made fun of for wearing a different dress or garment from my peers. | 1.38  | 0.984     |
| BAgres1   | I have called someone a bad word or insulted another classmate for having a different skin colour. | 1.40  | 0.959     |
| BAgres2   | I have spoken abusive words or insulted other classmates because they are of a different ethnicity or religion. | 1.39  | 0.985     |
| BAgres3   | I have made racist comments about other races, ethnicities or religions. | 1.49  | 1.007     |
| BAgres4   | I have told other colleagues lies about other races, ethnicities or religions. | 1.36  | 0.976     |
| BAgres5   | I have threatened other religious or ethnic traditions through messages. | 1.17  | 0.608     |
| BAgres6   | I have attempted to create hatred towards other racial, ethnic or religious groups. | 1.13  | 0.532     |
| BAgres7   | I have ridiculed religious or ethnic traditions other than my own. | 1.16  | 0.608     |
| BAgres8   | I have mocked the traditions and customs of other families. | 1.14  | 0.595     |
| BAgres9   | I have humiliated the religious or ethnic traditions of other groups. | 1.15  | 0.626     |
| BAgres10  | I have ridiculed the religious or ethnic activity of another group. | 1.12  | 0.579     |
| BAgres11  | I have excluded or ignored others because they are of a different race or belong to a different religion or ethnicity from the rest of my classmates. | 1.11  | 0.554     |
| BAgres12  | I have hit classmates because they are different from me (skin colour, hair, clothing, tradition, religion). | 1.14  | 0.981     |
| BAgres13  | I have imitated my partner’s speech to make fun of his or her language. | 1.12  | 0.573     |
| BAgres14  | I have threatened that the race, religion or ethnicity of other classmates should be exterminated. | 1.13  | 0.590     |
| BAgres15  | I have made fun of other classmates for wearing a different dress or garment than the rest of my classmates. | 1.13  | 0.585     |

3.2. Measurement Model Assessment

The measurement evaluation of the model is carried out through an individual analysis, where factor loadings are addressed and, at the level of internal consistency, through the Dijkstra-Henseler composite reliability, convergent validity through the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and discriminant validity through the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HT-MT ratio). For the existence of individual validity, factor loadings must be greater than 0.70 [56], although other authors such as [57] point out that in the initial stages of research, this minimum value must be 0.6. Regarding internal consistency, the Dijkstra-Henseler $\rho A$ composite reliability values should be above 0.70, 0.5 for AVE and HT-MT ratio values below 0.85 [58]. Table 5 present the reliability and validity analysis of the measurement model for both the YES-SPORT and the NO-SPORT models. The obtained data show an optimal validity of the measurement model, both at the individual level (it was necessary to remove indicators that did not exceed the minimum loading threshold for both the YES-SPORT and the NO-SPORT models) and at the level of internal consistency, as indicated by the mean extracted variance and the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (Table 6).
Table 5. Reliability and validity analysis of the measurement model (YES-SPORT Model).

| YES-SPORT MODEL | NON-SPORT MODEL |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| **Loads _A**    | **A.V.E.**      | **Loads _A**    | **A.V.E.**      |
| Bullying victim (BVic) | 0.952 0.606 | Bullying victim (BVic) | 0.919 0.559 |
| BVic1 | 0.704 | BVic3 | 0.607 |
| BVic2 | 0.769 | BVic6 | 0.856 |
| BVic3 | 0.772 | BVic7 | 0.811 |
| BVic5 | 0.750 | BVic9 | 0.740 |
| BVic6 | 0.805 | BVic10 | 0.769 |
| BVic7 | 0.858 | BVic11 | 0.707 |
| BVic8 | 0.868 | BVic12 | 0.758 |
| BVic9 | 0.856 | BVic13 | 0.748 |
| BVic10 | 0.817 | BVic14 | 0.709 |
| BVic11 | 0.769 | Bullying aggressor (BAgres) | 0.952 0.587 |
| BVic12 | 0.760 | BAgres2 | 0.783 |
| BVic13 | 0.665 | BAgres3 | 0.651 |
| BVic14 | 0.694 | BAgres4 | 0.663 |
| Bullying aggressor (BAgres) | 0.963 0.655 | BAgres5 | 0.737 |
| BAgres1 | 0.735 | BAgres6 | 0.758 |
| BAgres2 | 0.707 | BAgres7 | 0.873 |
| BAgres3 | 0.776 | BAgres8 | 0.670 |
| BAgres4 | 0.689 | BAgres9 | 0.742 |
| BAgres6 | 0.796 | BAgres10 | 0.778 |
| BAgres7 | 0.903 | BAgres11 | 0.838 |
| BAgres8 | 0.781 | BAgres12 | 0.895 |
| BAgres9 | 0.902 | BAgres13 | 0.792 |
| BAgres10 | 0.944 | BAgres14 | 0.739 |
| BAgres11 | 0.733 | BAgres15 | 0.733 |
| BAgres12 | 0.873 |    |    |
| BAgres13 | 0.810 |    |    |
| BAgres14 | 0.691 |    |    |
| BAgres15 | 0.931 |    |    |

Table 6. Discriminant validity. Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio.

| Bullying Aggressor (BAgres) | Bullying Victim (BVic) |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
|    YES-SPORT                | [0.094; 0.248]         |
|    NO-SPORT                 | [0.130; 0.470]         |

Notes: Brackets are the 95% confidence interval (two-tailed) with 5000 resamples-Practice sport (YES-SPORT) and No practice sport (NO-SPORT).

3.3. Structural Model

Based on Section 3.2, and to test the significance of the hypotheses presented (Section 2), a bootstrapping of 10,000 subsamples [59] is developed, obtaining Student’s t and the associated p-value, as well as the confidence intervals, thus carrying out hypothesis testing from a parametric and non-parametric perspective. Table 7 shows the results obtained. Thus, the final structural models for each group are presented in Figure 2 (H1a) and Figure 3 (H1b).

Table 7. Hypothesis testing.

| Original Sample | t     | p-Value | 95% CI |
|-----------------|-------|---------|--------|
| H1a B Vic → B Agres | -0.160 NS | 0.799 | 0.424 | -0.256 | 0.436 |
| H1b B Vic → B Agres | 0.285 * | 2.490 | 0.013 | 0.219 | 0.653 |

Notes: * p < 0.05; (10,000; two-tailed); t (9999; 0.05) = 1.96; t (9999; 0.01) = 2.57; t (9999; 0.001) = 3.29. NS = not supported.
which it is highlighted that, among healthy lifestyle habits, the practice of sport promotes
promoter of prosocial attitudes [29]. Therefore, it can be applied as a means of prevention
previously bullied. Thus, the first hypothesis (H1a), which stated that victim bullying
aggressive behaviours and deviant behaviours [30]. School bullying, within this context,
should be taken with particular relevance, as it should be taken into consideration that it
cant impact on the physical, psychological and social development of the youngest [7].
Along the same lines, despite preventive interventions, this type of disruptive behaviour is still present today,
and after decades of trying to improve school behaviour and coexistence, it is necessary
to consider the consequences it may have for future generations [8].

Sports practice becomes an excellent means for the transmission of values [28] and a
responsibility and improves coexistence among the peer group. Along the same lines,
authors such as [26] reflect that prevention programmes have considered the role of sport
as an intervention against school violence since its effects are beneficial, as they favour the
externalisation of emotions and improve social skills.

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4. Discussion

The results obtained show differences in bullying behaviours when they have been
previously bullied. Thus, the first hypothesis (H1a), which stated that victim bullying
behaviours are associated with future aggressor bullying behaviours when practising
sport, has not been supported, indicating that if a sport is practised, this behaviour is
not repeated. The results are associated with those obtained in previous studies [27] in
which it is highlighted that, among healthy lifestyle habits, the practice of sport promotes
responsibility and improves coexistence among the peer group. Along the same lines,
authors such as [26] reflect that prevention programmes have considered the role of sport
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and treatment of school bullying and victimisation and carries a lower risk of developing

![Diagram](image-url)
aggressive behaviours and deviant behaviours [30]. School bullying, within this context, should be taken with particular relevance, as it should be taken into consideration that it occurs in the educational environment, where its consequences can have a more significant impact on the physical, psychological and social development of the youngest [7]. Despite preventive interventions, this type of disruptive behaviour is still present today, and after decades of trying to improve school behaviour and coexistence, it is necessary to consider the consequences it may have for future generations [8]. Along the same lines, other studies indicate that these disruptive behaviours have not disappeared, despite the efforts of the educational community, and continue to increase through new forms of bullying [9]. For this reason, and as demonstrated [60], the practice of physical-sports activities in young people and adolescents provides beneficial effects on their physical, psychological and social development. In addition, although bullying can occur in different contexts, it has been observed that the incidence of bullying in sport is lower than that observed in the school context, where it presents rates with wide ranges of incidence ranging from 10% to 48% [61]. This theory is reinforced by [62], who argued that many adolescents spend most of their free time in sports environments, which allows them to interrelate with their colleagues and fellows, offering them the opportunity to develop physically and socially, and establishing and reinforcing interpersonal relationships between students.

A study applied in schools with a high prevalence of bullying [63], showed that students who participated in a sports programme to act against bullying improved their knowledge and attitudes against bullying, and as students, after completing the programme, reported an improvement in their knowledge about bullying and a reduction in bullying behaviours, victimisation and fighting compared to students who did not participate in the study.

On the other hand, the second hypothesis (H1b), the one that hypothesised that victim behaviours are associated with future bullying aggressor behaviours when not practising sport has been supported, indicating that when not practising sport or physical activity, there is a tendency to carry out future bullying aggressor behaviours when having been a victim of aggression in the past [64]. As reflected in the literature, these behaviours must be intervened upon to avoid “the spiral of violence”, where they not only occur in the adolescent stage but can transcend to the adult stage or other higher educational stages [11]. The technological context implies that these disruptive behaviours are transferred to virtual spaces [12]. In fact, some studies show a strong relationship between both types of bullying, noting that many victims/perpetrators of traditional bullying were also victims/perpetrators of cyberbullying [13].

Evidence suggests that when a child or adolescent spends a significant amount of time in sedentary behaviours or activities, it is associated with poorer health and attitudinal outcomes [28]. According to [65], it may be directly related to the development of antisocial behaviour and aggression [66] and more negative feelings [67]. Therefore, it is important to understand how the bullying situation is related to young people’s compliance or non-compliance with physical activity recommendations and sedentary behaviour [68]. Similarly, these findings can be supported by the results of [69] where it is highlighted that young people who reported that they had bullied others or had been bullied were associated with less sport practices. However, students who reported more sporting activity contributed significantly to predicting that this type of activity decreased bullying levels among adolescents [70]. Considering previous studies, the results highlight the importance of focusing on beliefs about sport practice as an intervention strategy to improve interpersonal relationships in adolescents involved in bullying [71–73].

5. Conclusions

The conclusions obtained highlight and confirm the two initial hypotheses put forward in the study, indicating the importance of sport or physical activity not only in terms of a better physical situation for the individual but also, as verified in the results of the study, in reducing the possibilities of bullying other classmates and/or fellows. Therefore, it
is considered necessary, as a means of preventing this type of bullying, for schools to implement sports intervention programmes for this purpose in the classroom. In the present study, it seemed to be effective in reducing victimisation in school bullying and, as in many cases, in cyberbullying, as well as aggression in bullying, although with a more cautious interpretation. Teachers could apply this type of intervention, together with specialist teachers and programmes adapted to PE content, to reduce levels of bullying while working on aspects related to students’ socio-emotional skills.

Thus, it is considered fundamental for educational institutions to raise these educational intervention programmes from the different contents of the curriculum to include training in values and prosocial aspects of learning through sport, which will encourage empathy, autonomy and help among the peer group. In this sense, pedagogical models already proven in the scientific literature could be a solution, as with, for example, Cooperative Learning, the Personal and Social Responsibility Model or interventions based on dialogical learning in schools that are transformed into learning communities. These models or their combination could reduce the negative behaviours of schoolchildren in the adolescent stage, such as aggression and the effects of victimisation, contributing to solving coexistence problems and developing a positive climate for the personal development of adolescents.

As limitations of the study, it is necessary to consider with caution the data obtained in the research, since they do not constitute a sample of the total Spanish educational context—which is only characteristic of a Southern Spain context—, nor can they be extrapolated to European contexts. Despite these limitations, the sample is considered distinctive for the south of the country, which provides a solid approach to the phenomenon of bullying and how sports practice influences this phenomenon. Moreover, this research used a quantitative methodology, which may provide limited information about the construct. For this reason, it is recommended to extend the study to research that accumulates qualitative data to provide complementary information to the current findings and to contract them.

Despite all these limitations, the results obtained in the research process are worthy and accurate for the existing scientific vacuum of research carried out in Spain on this type of bullying and how the practice of sport helps to reduce this type of disruptive behaviour in adolescents, as bullying is on the rise, specifically in educational environments, especially in those with a large cultural influx.

As a result of these limitations, it is suggested that future research related to this study replicates the analysis of the model presented with other larger samples, using longitudinal designs, measuring at two or three different moments that would provide us with more accurate data on the analysed construct. On the other hand, another type of analysis is also proposed for future studies that address this aspect from the aforementioned methodological approaches. Therefore, it is recommended that future research addresses all these limitations and study similar models with experimental, qualitative or mixed methodologies, also considering other theoretical perspectives based on modern human sciences and beyond educational theories to easily interpret some of the considerable empirical research carried out recently in many countries.

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Institutional Review Board Statement: The study was conducted following the ethical recommendations proposed in previous research in the same field and observing the principles and recommendations of the Declaration of Helsinki (1975), subsequently updated in Brazil in 2013 and by the Ethics Committee of the University of Granada (reference code: 742/CEIH/2018).

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