ISSN online 1688-4221

Ciencias Psicológicas July-December 2025; 19(2), e-4658
DOI: 10.22235/cp.v19i2.4658

Anti-bullying interventions with adolescents: a mapping review

Intervenções *antibullying* com adolescentes: uma *mapping review*

Intervenciones antibullying con adolescentes: una revisión de mapeo

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Received: 06/12/2025
Accepted: 10/15/2025

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How to cite:
Lembo, V. M. R., & Oliveira, W. A. (2025). Anti-bullying interventions with adolescents: a mapping review. *Ciencias Psicológicas*, *19*(2), e-4658. https://doi.org/10.22235/cp.v19i2.4658

Funding: São Paulo State Research Support Foundation (Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado de São Paulo, Processo FAPESP 2024/01240-0).

Conflict of interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Abstract: Bullying and cyberbullying are problematic group phenomena that affect adolescents' health and development. This study aimed to systematically identify and describe the content of anti-bullying interventions conducted with adolescents. To achieve this objective, a mapping review was conducted following PRISMA guidelines and searching the SCOPUS, PsycINFO, PubMed, and Web of Science databases. A standardized data extraction form was developed, and all results identified in the consulted sources were exported to the Rayyan platform. All titles and abstracts were reviewed in the first screening stage, followed by full-text retrieval for corpus formation. Data were analyzed descriptively and analytically. Eleven studies were included in the review, reporting ten interventions. A diversity of components and theoretical foundations was evident across the reviewed interventions. All documented initiatives were effective, to some extent, in addressing bullying and/or cyberbullying. Student participation in leading peer-based intervention activities was highlighted in some cases. Culturally relevant interventions were documented, and participatory approaches integrated into the school environment were highly valued, serving as inspiration for future initiatives.
Keywords: school psychology; school violence; adolescence; intervention

Resumo: O *bullying* e o *cyberbullying* são fenômenos problemáticos de grupo que afetam a saúde e o desenvolvimento dos adolescentes. Esse estudo objetivou identificar e descrever sistematicamente o conteúdo de intervenções *antibullying* realizadas com adolescentes. Para atender a esse objetivo foi desenvolvido uma mapping review, seguindo as recomendações PRISMA e pesquisando nas bases de dados SCOPUS, PsycINFO, PubMed e Web of Science. Um formulário de extração padronizado foi desenvolvido, sendo que todos os resultados identificados nas fontes consultadas foram exportadas para a plataforma Rayyan. Todos os títulos e resumos foram revisados na primeira etapa de triagem e, em seguida, foram recuperados os materiais na integra para constituição do corpus. Os dados foram analisados de forma descritiva e analítica. Onze estudos foram incluídos na revisão, e estes relataram 10 intervenções. Evidenciou-se uma diversidade de componentes e fundamentos teóricos presentes nas intervenções revisadas. Todas as iniciativas documentadas foram eficazes, em alguma medida, para combater o *bullying* e/ou *cyberbullying*. A participação dos próprios estudantes na condução das ações interventivas junto aos colegas foi destaque em algumas intervenções. Intervenções culturalmente relevantes foram documentadas e a abordagem participativa e integradas ao ambiente escolar foram muito valorizadas, sendo inspiração para outras intervenções.
Palavras-chave: psicologia escolar; violência escolar; adolescência; intervenção

Resumen: *Bullying* y *ciberbullying* son fenómenos grupales problemáticos que afectan la salud y el desarrollo de los adolescentes. Este estudio tuvo como objetivo identificar y describir sistemáticamente el contenido de intervenciones *antibullying* realizadas con adolescentes. Para alcanzar este objetivo se llevó a cabo una revisión de mapeo, siguiendo las recomendaciones PRISMA y realizando búsquedas en las bases de datos SCOPUS, PsycINFO, PubMed y Web of Science. Se desarrolló un formulario estandarizado de extracción de datos y todos los resultados identificados en las fuentes consultadas fueron exportados a la plataforma Rayyan. Todos los títulos y resúmenes fueron revisados en la primera etapa de selección, y luego se recuperaron los textos completos para la conformación del corpus. Los datos fueron analizados de manera descriptiva y analítica. Se incluyeron once estudios en la revisión, que reportaron diez intervenciones. Se evidenció una diversidad de componentes y fundamentos teóricos en las intervenciones. Todas las iniciativas documentadas fueron eficaces, en alguna medida, para combatir el *bullying* o *ciberbullying*. La participación de los propios estudiantes en la conducción de las acciones con sus compañeros fue destacada en algunas intervenciones. Se documentaron intervenciones relevantes, y los enfoques participativos e integrados fueron muy valorados, por lo que sirve de inspiración para futuras intervenciones.
Palabras clave: psicología escolar; violencia escolar; adolescencia; intervención

Bullying is a type of school violence characterized by a real or perceived power imbalance between peers, in which deliberate and recurring aggressive behaviors are directed directly or indirectly at the victims (Olweus, 2013). Traditionally, this phenomenon has occurred only in physical spaces, such as schools. However, with the advent of the internet and the social media, this violence has also overflowed online, causing the so-called cyberbullying. This virtual form of the phenomenon has the same characteristics as the traditional model, but it has specific properties that need to be understood to better address it (Ferreira & Deslandes, 2018).

Regarding prevalence, a study of 421,437 students from 71 countries found an overall rate of 30.4 % of frequent victims in school settings (Hosozawa et al., 2021). In Italy, a study by Costantino et al. (2019) indicated that 2 in 10 adolescents between the ages of 11 and 17 reported being victimized by peers two or more times in a 30-day period. Regarding cyberbullying, a literature review conducted by Zhu et al. (2021) found variations in the overall rate between 14 % and 57 %. In Uruguay, a study found that direct symbolic violence, especially in the form of verbal insults, was the most prevalent in a sample of 643 students, occasionally affecting approximately 43 % to 46 % and persistently affecting between 5 % and 9.5 % (Aristimuño & Noya, 2015).

In Brazil, the 2019 *Pesquisa Nacional de Saúde do Escolar* (PeNSE, National School Health Survey) indicated that in a sample of 159,245 students between the ages of 13 and 17, 13.2 % reported being victims of cyberbullying (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, 2021). In this same study, 23 % of adolescents reported being victims and 12 % identified themselves as aggressors in traditional bullying dynamics, with 14.6 % of boys reporting this practice compared to 9.5 % of girls (Malta et al., 2022). Specialized scientific literature on the subject indicates that boys, across a wide range of sociocultural contexts, tend to bully twice as much as girls. Furthermore, the methods they engage in are different, with boys engaging in direct bullying more often (such as kicking, punching, name-calling, etc.) and girls engaging in indirect bullying more often (social exclusion, spreading rumors, etc.) (Bosa et al., 2018; Garcés-Prettel et al., 2020).

This phenomenon impacts the educational community as a whole, generating short- and long-term consequences for the children and adolescents involved. Regarding the victims, the scientific literature has indicated increased rates of anxiety, depressive symptoms, suicidal ideation, insecurity, and loneliness; while aggressors have been reported to experience excessive alcohol use, poor academic performance, and a greater risk of juvenile delinquency and crime (Loch et al., 2020; Silva et al., 2016). Given the high prevalence rates and the physical and psychological consequences that cyberbullying causes to those involved, the issue is classified as a public health problem that requires the implementation of specific and intersectoral intervention/prevention programs (Hultin et al., 2021). Cyberbullying noxious consequences appear to be even more damaging during adolescence, a unique period of development that can increase vulnerability to risky behaviors. This observation concerns not only the many biological and psychosocial changes adolescents experience but also the central role played by peer groups at this stage of development (Best & Ban, 2021).

It is noteworthy that, although previous reviews have contributed significantly to this field by reviewing the overall effectiveness of antibullying interventions (e.g., Ng et al., 2022; Resett & Mesurado,

2021), there are still significant gaps in understanding the specific content of these interventions, especially regarding how they address the group dynamics that characterize bullying and cyberbullying. The review by Ng et al. (2022), specifically, focused on evaluating the effectiveness of educational interventions, but with a limited description of the theoretical, thematic, and contextual elements that comprised the reviewed strategies. Similarly, Resett and Mesurado (2021) reviewed the interventions aimed at reducing aggressive behavior, without, however, delving deeper into the concepts underlying the programs or how the interventions articulate with this phenomenon group dimension. Given this scenario, and considering that bullying and cyberbullying are interactive processes mediated by relations of power and belonging to collective contexts, this study aimed to systematically identify and describe the content of antibullying interventions carried out with adolescents.

Method

Type of study

A mapping review was conducted, a type of literature review that does not aim to evaluate the methodological quality of the analytical corpus, but allows the researcher to outline the nature and scope of the scientific production related to the topic investigated (Khalil & Tricco, 2022). The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) recommendations were used in the structure and development of this review (Galvão et al., 2022).

Search strategy and guiding question

The PCC strategy (Population - adolescents, Concept - antibullying interventions, and Context - school) was used to develop the following guiding question (Pollock et al., 2023): What interventions are used with adolescents in schools and address the dynamics of bullying and/or cyberbullying?

Based on the guiding question, searches using the terms "bullying" "cyberbullying" "adolescents" and "intervention" were conducted in the following databases: SCOPUS, PsycINFO, PubMed, and Web of Science. The searches were operationalized as follows: bullying OR cyberbullying AND adolescents AND intervention. The results obtained were exported to the Rayyan platform, which assisted in identifying duplicates and organizing the screening process of the studies selected to compose the analytical corpus (Ouzzani et al., 2016).

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Empirical studies (quantitative or qualitative) published between 2015 and 2025 that described in detail specific interventions for preventing or addressing bullying and/or cyberbullying, applied to adolescents (10 to 19 years old), were included. The time frame aims to encompass conceptual, technological, and social advances that have occurred in the last decade, a period marked by the increased use of digital networks, the expansion of the debate on school violence, and the renewal of strategies to address bullying and cyberbullying in educational contexts. Scientific articles and book chapters written in English, Portuguese, or Spanish, available in full text, were considered. Studies should also present implementation and/or impact evaluation data for the interventions. The following were excluded: theoretical studies, literature reviews, editorials, or commentaries; research focused exclusively on children (<10 years old) or adults (>19 years old); studies that addressed school violence without defining bullying or cyberbullying as their central focus; generic health or well-being promotion interventions without a specific component targeting bullying. It should be noted that despite the trilingual search and consideration of different types of publications (articles and chapters), the rigorous application of the inclusion criteria resulted in the final selection of few studies. Many Latin American publications, including Brazilian ones, initially identified were excluded for not presenting detailed descriptions of the interventions, for not focusing exclusively on bullying/cyberbullying, or for not meeting the required methodological standards.

Study selection and data extraction

After searching the databases, the results were organized using the Rayyan platform (Ouzzani et al., 2016) to identify duplicates and perform an initial screening, which consisted of reading the titles and abstracts of the identified studies. Based on the established inclusion and exclusion criteria, 47 scientific articles were selected for full reading and analysis. After detailed reading and indexing of these articles, a second selection stage was carried out, culminating in the inclusion of eleven studies in the

analytical corpus. A flowchart was created to detail the selection process and results, following PRISMA guidelines.

Data analysis

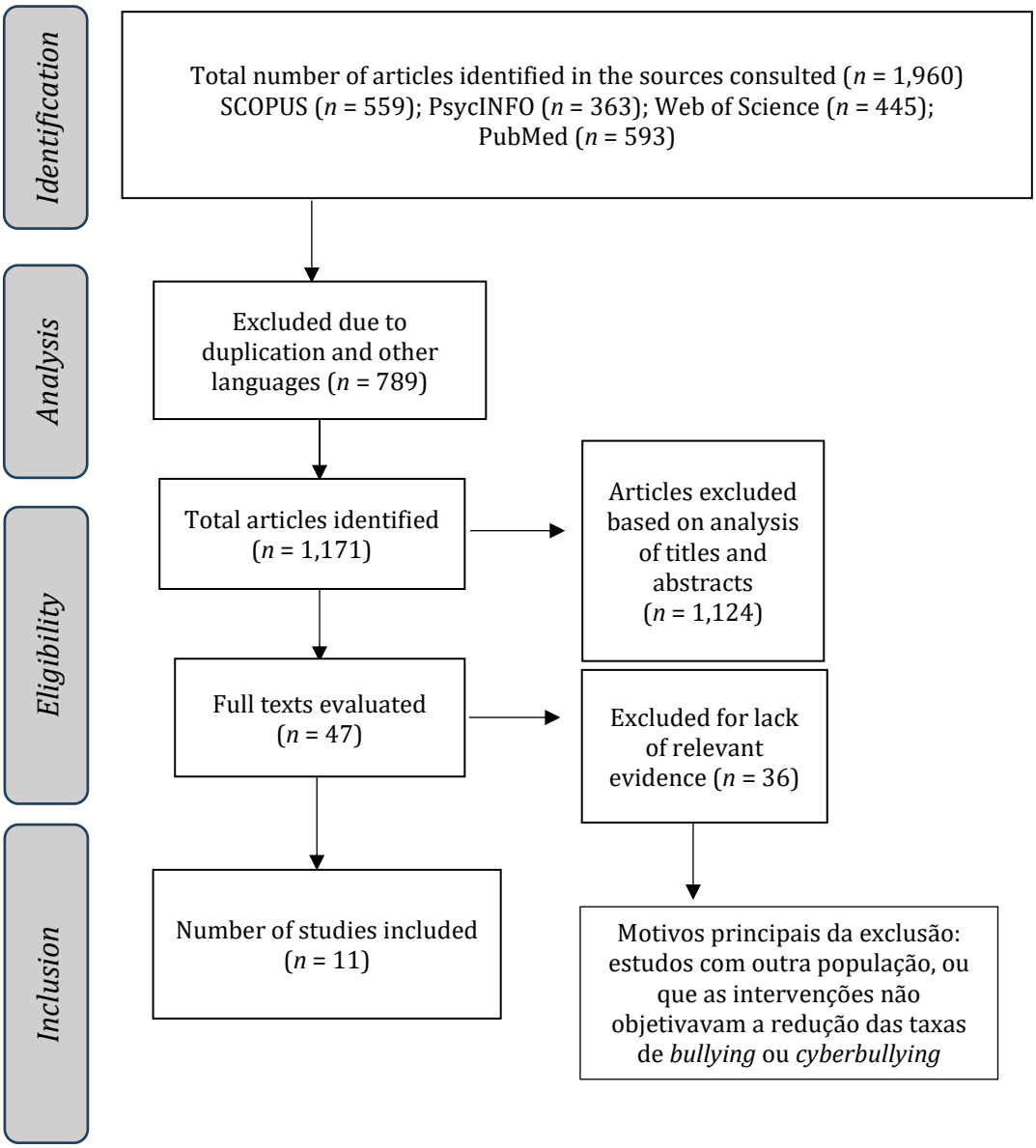
The data were analyzed descriptively, following the recommendations of a mapping review (Khalil & Tricco, 2022). Relevant information, such as the characteristics of the interventions, methodological and bibliographical data, and the main results obtained in the studies, were extracted from a standardized form and summarized in tables. Themes and patterns across the studies were identified to provide insight into the various antibullying interventions targeted at adolescents reported in the scientific literature.

Results

The searches conducted in the four databases consulted (SCOPUS, PsycINFO, WOS, and PubMed) resulted in the identification of 1,171 articles, which were subjected to title and abstract analysis. The selection process is detailed in the PRISMA flowchart available in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Flow diagram of the process of searching and selecting review articles (PRISMA)



After the analysis and selection process was completed, 11 studies were included to compose the analytical corpus. The analysis of this material was divided into three main categories: (1) metatheoretical analysis, (2) metamethod analysis, and (3) metasynthesis. The metatheoretical analysis covers the bibliometric data, the description of the interventions, and the theories or concepts underlying the selected studies. The metamethod analysis considers the methodological designs adopted and the data collection strategies used in each study. Finally, the metasynthesis integrates and interprets the main findings of the studies, synthesizing the results that meet the objectives of this review.

Category 1: Metatheoretical analysis

The bibliometric data of the studies included in the analytical corpus, such as the country in which the research was conducted, the journal in which it was published, the authorship, the title and the year of publication, are presented in Table 1. From the analysis of this content, it is highlighted that Spain was the setting for the majority of the studies included (n = 5); and the years 2019 and 2016 obtained the highest publication rate each (n = 4).

Regarding the authors of the studies, it is clear that the researchers were diverse and had training in health, education, or social sciences, and most held doctorates or postdoctoral degrees. In total, five journals were used to publish the ten scientific articles included, with the *International Journal of Environmental Research* and *Public Health* (n = 4), and *Aggressive Behavior* (n = 3) being the most frequently used. It is noteworthy that only the study by Menesini et al. (2016) was published as a book chapter by Routledge.

Table 2 describes the intervention programs reported in each product included in the review, as well as their respective theoretical foundations.

Table 1

Bibliometric survey of articles included in the review corpus

Year	Title	Authors	Country	Journal
2023	Empathic Skills Training as a Means of Reducing Cyberbullying among Adolescents: An Empirical Evaluation	Salem, A. A. M. S., Al-Huwailah, A. H., Abdelsattar, M., Al-Hamdan, N. A. H., Derar, E., Alazmi, S., Al-Diyar, M. A., & Griffiths, M. D.	Egypt	International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health
2023	The Efficacy of the Tabby Improved Prevention and Intervention Program in Reducing Cyberbullying and Cybervictimization among Students	Sorrentino, A., Sulla, F., Santamato, M., Cipriano, A., & Cella, S.	Italy	International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health
2019	Assessing the effect of the cordoba peer support program on fostering social competence and reducing the bullying	Martín-Criado, J. M., & Casas, J. A.	Spain	Aula Abierta
2019	Effects of Intervention Program Prev@cib on Traditional Bullying and Cyberbullying	Ortega-Barón, J., Buelga, S., Ayllón, E., Martínez-Ferrer, B., & Cava, M. J.	Spain	International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health
2019	Effectiveness of the TEI Program for Bullying and Cyberbullying Reduction and School Climate Improvement	Ferrer-Cascales, R., Albaladejo-Blázquez, N., Sánchez-SanSegundo, M., Portilla-Tamarit, A., Lordan, O., & Ruiz-Robledillo, N.	Spain	International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health
2019	Evaluation of a virtual reality enhanced bullying prevention curriculum pilot trial	Ingram, K. M., Espelage, D. L., Merrin, G. J., Valido, A., Heinhorst, J., & Joyce, M.	USA	Journal of Adolescence
2016	Noncadiamointrappola! Let's not fall into the trap!: Online and school-based program to prevent cyberbullying among adolescents	Menesini, E., Palladino, B., &Nocentini, A.	Italy	Routledge
2016	Impact of the ConRed program on different cyberbullying roles	Rey, R. D., Casas, J. A., & Ortega, R.	Spain	*Aggressive Behavior*
2016	Feeling cybervictims' pain-The effect of empathy training on cyberbullying	Schultze-Krumbholz, A., Schultze, M., Zagorscak, P., Wölfer, R., & Scheithauer, H.	Germany	*Aggressive Behavior*
2016	Effects of the cyberbullying prevention program media heroes (Medienhelden) on traditional bullying	Chaux, E., Velásquez, A. M., Schultze-Krumbholz, A., & Scheithauer, H.	Germany	*Aggressive Behavior*
2015	Effects of Cyberprogram 2.0 on “face-to-face” bullying, cyberbullying, and empathy	Garaigordobil, M., & Martínez-Valderrey, V.	Spain	*Psicothema*

Table 2

Survey of the characteristics of interventions and their respective theoretical bases

Reference	Theoretical base	Intervention
Salem et al., 2023	Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) based on strengthening empathy	Twenty sessions were held, divided into two sessions per week, each lasting 45 to 60 minutes. The following methods were used: discussion and dialogue (exchange of experiences between the researcher and participants to encourage the expression of feelings), feedback (assessment of participants' abilities in the counseling sessions), stories (narration of participants' daily events), role-play (one participant plays the role of another), exercises (interactions and exchanges of opinions in the counseling sessions), fun and humor (moments of joy and transition from distress to fun), imaginary modeling (fictional styles accompanied by images of achievement, superiority, self-esteem development, and improved quality of life for a group with reading difficulties), live modeling (discussion of individuals who achieved their goals through their abilities), brainstorming (problem-solving through the exchange of ideas among participants), positive reinforcement (encouraging positive behaviors), and homework.
Sorrentino et al., 2023	Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory and the Threat Assessment Approach	Tabby Improved Prevention and Intervention Program (TIPIP): focuses on identifying and managing relevant risk factors for cyberbullying and cybervictimization. Its approach includes the active participation of teachers, parents/guardians, and peers through structured training, collaboration, and group dynamics. The program consists of the following elements: (1) training activities aimed at teachers, (2) school meetings with parents/guardians, (3) provision of online materials for students, teachers, and parents, and (4) classroom activities with students.
Martín-Criado & Casas, 2019	Theories about social skills/competences	Córdoba Student Helpers Program: aims to foster support networks among students, training them in skills such as active listening, conflict analysis and mediation, empathy, neutrality, team decision-making, and others. The program is divided into two phases: The first phase aims to train students and implement specific strategies to support and facilitate conflict resolution in peer relationships. The second phase focuses on training and implementing strategies for dealing with more complex situations related to bullying and cyberbullying.
Ortega-Barón et al., 2019	Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, Empowerment Theory, and Hellison's Personal and Social Responsibility Model	Prev@cib: The program consists of 10 one-hour sessions, divided into three modules: information, awareness, and engagement. Module 1 (4 sessions) - Information on risk factors and prevention of bullying and cyberbullying; Module 2 (2 sessions) - Awareness and sensitivity to cyberbullying; Module 3 (4 sessions) - Engagement and commitment to cyberbullying prevention and intervention.
Ferrer-Cascales et al., 2019	Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, Theories of Emotional Intelligence and Positive Psychology	TEI Program: Aims to improve the school climate and foster positive interactions within the educational environment. To this end, it promotes the development of effective strategies for resolving interpersonal problems, as well as the incorporation of an institutional culture based on zero tolerance for violence, consolidating this principle as an essential element of the institutional identity.

Ingram et al., 2019	Construal Level Theory	Stand Up Program: aims to integrate the virtual reality experience into short-term bullying prevention practices. The intervention took place over six weeks, with weekly one-hour meetings. The curriculum was structured into six classes: In the first class, participants were introduced to virtual reality technology and trained in its effective use. The three subsequent classes followed a dynamic that began with discussions facilitated by the interventionist, followed by immersion in three virtual reality scenarios, each depicting situations related to bullying. After each immersion, participants answered reflective questions individually and in writing and participated in a brief discussion led by the interventionist. In the final two classes, students were organized into teams to create short videos with antibullying messages.
Menesini et al., 2016	Peer Support Model, Empathy Theories, and Adaptive Coping Strategies	NoTrap! Program: The program aims to raise awareness within the school community about bullying and cyberbullying; promote peer education—focusing on bystanders and their responsibility to act; consider coping strategies; and foster the development of relationships based on empathy, tolerance, and mutual respect. The steps include: Initial assessment; Specific course on ICT, online risks, bullying, and cyberbullying, focusing on what the school can do to combat both phenomena; Program launch and awareness-raising; Selection of peer educators for each participating class through self-nomination (between 5 and 6 students); Peer educator training day; Activities led by peer educators in the classrooms; Online intervention by peer educators; Final assessment.
Rey et al., 2016	Theory of Social Normative Behavior	ConRed Program: The program is structured in three components: (1) curriculum-based work focused on developing social skills; (2) information gathering sessions and safe and cautious internet use; and (3) work sessions with teams of teachers experienced in bullying prevention. Over a three-month period, eight training sessions were held with students. Two sessions were held with faculty and one with families, in which the topics discussed with the students were summarized and adapted to the needs of the adults.
Schultze-Krumbholz et al., 2016	Theory of Planned Behavior and Theories of Empathy	Media Heroes Program: aims to improve social and online skills by fostering cognitive and affective empathy, media literacy, and offering specific action options. The program was developed for classroom implementation and covers a ten-week period, with 90-minute sessions each (long intervention). To meet schools' needs for more time-efficient programs, a one-day abridged version (four 90-minute sessions) (short intervention) was also developed. In general, the short version covers the same content, except for the legal aspects of cyberbullying.
Chaux et al., 2016	Theory of Planned Behavior and Theories of Empathy	Media Heroes Program
Garaigordobil& Martínez-Valderrey, 2015	Theories about empathy	Cyberprogram 2.0: The program consists of 19 one-hour sessions, held throughout the school year, which aim to: (1) Identify and conceptualize bullying and cyberbullying, in addition to exploring the roles of victims, aggressors, and bystanders; (2) Analyze the consequences of bullying and cyberbullying for each of those involved, promoting critical reflection and encouraging the ability to report such practices when identified; (3) Develop effective coping strategies aimed at preventing and reducing behaviors associated with these phenomena; (4) Promote cross-cutting objectives related to strengthening positive variables, such as empathy, active listening, social skills, emotional regulation strategies, constructive conflict resolution, and valuing diversity of opinions.

It is evident that, despite the variety of techniques and theories used by the authors, empathy is mentioned in several interventions (*n* = 5), as well as the strengthening of the socio-emotional aspects of those involved in the dynamics of bullying and/or cyberbullying (*n* = 5). Furthermore, in general, the researchers based themselves on the classic definitions of these phenomena, which characterize them as situations of power imbalance between peers, in which intentional and repeated aggressions are directed, directly or indirectly, at the victims (Olweus, 2013). It is noteworthy that ten distinct interventions were identified, considering that the "Media Heroes" program was analyzed in two of the eleven materials included.

Among the ten interventions described, six focused their actions exclusively on students —CBT, Córdoba Student Helpers Program, Prev@cib, Media Heroes, Cyberprogram 2.0, and Stand Up Program—, while four involved other agents of the school community, such as parents, administrators, and/or teachers —ConRed, TEI, NoTrap!, and TIPIP Program—. The NoTrap! intervention proposes a new role for students, called "peer educators" – these are students who voluntarily participated more assiduously in the program (approximately five to six per class) and who were responsible for transmitting the acquired skills and concepts to the other students in their class (Menesini et al., 2016).

Similarly, in the Córdoba Student Helpers Program, student helpers organized themselves into support networks to provide mutual assistance and support. Unlike the NoTrap! program, student selection was based on two distinct criteria: one group was nominated by their peers, based on their perceived social competence, while the other group was selected by program leaders, comprising students who exhibited hostile and unruly behavior, for example. This strategy aimed to foster the exchange of experiences among diverse profiles, fostering the development of social and interpersonal skills (Martín-Criado& Casas, 2019).

The TEI program introduced the roles of tutor and tutee. The tutor was a student up to two years older than the tutee and who demonstrated good interpersonal skills. Their role was to support the more vulnerable student in strengthening self-esteem, developing social skills, and promoting a more positive integration into the school environment (Ferrer-Cascales et al., 2019).

Category 2: Metamethod analysis

For a more in-depth analysis of the methodological aspects of the studies that comprise the analytical corpus, Table 3 was prepared, which presents the objectives, design, sample characteristics, instruments used, and data analysis procedures adopted in each study. From the analysis of this table, it can be observed that all studies employed a quasi-experimental design, using scales or questionnaires as data collection instruments.

Regarding the selection of participants, it was found that 10 of the 11 studies used convenience sampling, while only the study by Garaigordobile Martínez-Valderrey (2015) adopted a random sampling technique. It is worth noting that, in order to verify the evidence of the effectiveness of the NoTrap! program, two interventions were conducted in different years and with different samples, while maintaining the same content and properties (Menesini et al., 2016).

Table 3

Survey of the method and objectives of the articles included in the review

Reference	Objectives	Methodological Data
Salem et al., 2023	To evaluate the impact of empathy skills training on reducing cyberbullying in a sample of adolescents in Egypt.	- Design: A quasi-experimental study was conducted, in which the experimental group received CBT sessions focused on developing empathy, and the control group received traditional CBT sessions. - Sample: 217 adolescents between the ages of 12 and 16 participated in this study, of which 98 comprised the experimental group and 119 the control group. It should be noted that the two groups were matched in terms of gender, age, intelligence, empathy, and cyberbullying. This was a convenience sample. - Instruments: Bullying and Cyberbullying Scale for Adolescents (BCS-A); Toronto Empathy Questionnaire (TEQ). - Data analysis: Descriptive statistics, inferential statistics, Mann-Whitney U test, t-test. No analytical software was used.
Sorrentino et al., 2023	To evaluate the long-term effects of the Tabby Improved prevention and intervention program for cyberbullying and cyber victimization in a sample of Italian elementary and high school students.	- Design: Longitudinal, quasi-experimental study with follow-up. - Sample: 475 Italian students, ages 10 to 17, from 5 schools (49 classes) participated in this study, of which 20 were in the experimental group and 29 in the control group. Convenience sampling. - Instruments: TABBY Improved checklist. - Data analysis: Descriptive statistics, attrition analysis, ANOVA, ANCOVA, interclass correlation. SPSS software version 26.0.
Martín-Criado & Casas, 2019	To assess whether the training and interventions carried out by students participating in the Córdoba Student Helpers Program promote the development of their social skills, as well as to analyze the involvement of these students in the different roles associated with bullying and cyberbullying.	- Design: Quasi-experimental study, including pre- and post-test measurements in an experimental group and a control group. - Sample: 206 students aged 12 to 16, enrolled in 29 public schools, participated in this study. They were divided into two groups: the first being the experimental group and the second the control group. A convenience sample was used. - Instruments: Adolescent Multidimensional Social Competence Questionnaire (AMSC-Q); European Bullying Intervention Project Questionnaire (EBI-PQ); European Cyberbullying Intervention Project Questionnaire. - Data analysis: Descriptive statistics, repeated measures linear models. SPSS software version 20.0.
Ortega-Barón et al., 2019	To evaluate the effectiveness of the Prev@cib Program on the dynamics of bullying and cyberbullying among Spanish adolescents.	- Design: Quasi-experimental study, including pre- and post-test measurements in an experimental group and a control group. - Sample: 660 Spanish adolescents, ages 12 to 17, from four different schools (35 classrooms) participated in this study. Of these, 434 (24 classrooms) were in the experimental group and 236 (11 classrooms) were in the control group. A convenience sample was used. - Instruments: Scale of Peer Victimization at School; Scale of School Aggression; Scale of Victimization through the Cell Phone and Internet; Scale of Aggression through the Cell Phone and Internet. - Data analysis: Descriptive statistics, ANOVAs, t-tests, and eta-squared. SPSS software version 22.0 was used.

Ferrer-Cascales et al., 2019	To evaluate the effectiveness of the TEI Program, an intervention based on peer tutoring, in reducing bullying and cyberbullying, as well as improving the school climate.	- Design: Quasi-experimental study, including pre- and post-test measurements in an experimental group and a control group. - Sample: 2,057 students, ages 11 to 16, from 22 Spanish public schools participated in this study. Of these, 986 were in the experimental group and 1,070 in the control group. A convenience sample was used. - Instruments: Illinois Bully Scale; E-Victimization Scale (E-VS); E-Bullying Scale (E-BS); and the Spanish version of the School Climate Questionnaire. - Data analysis: Descriptive statistics, t-test, ANCOVA, and eta-squared. SPSS software version 23.0.
Ingram et al., 2019	To evaluate an antibullying intervention using virtual reality among US adolescents.	- Design: Pilot, quasi-experimental study, including pre- and post-test measurements in an experimental group and a control group. - Sample: 118 students, ages 11 to 14, from two US schools participated in this study. Of these, 72 were in the experimental group and 46 in the control group. A convenience sample was used. - Instruments: Demographic questionnaire; the Empathy subscale of the Teen Conflict Scale; the Psychological Sense of School Members Scale; the University of Illinois Willingness to Intervene in Bullying Episodes; the Illinois Bully Scale; the Relational Aggression Perpetration Scale. Cyberbullying was assessed using a four-item scale based on preexisting materials. - Data analysis: Descriptive statistics, bivariate correlation analysis, and path analysis. The software used was Mplus 7.4.
Menesini et al., 2016	To verify the evidence of effectiveness of the 3rd edition of the NoTrap! intervention program in reducing bullying and cyberbullying.	- Design: Quasi-experimental studies, including pre- and post-test measurements in experimental and control groups. - Sample: To verify the evidence of the program's effectiveness, two quasi-experimental studies were conducted: the first in 2011/2012 and the second in 2012/2013. The first study involved 622 adolescents enrolled in the 9th grade at eight different schools in Tuscany. 451 students (22 classes) participated in the experimental group, with 92 adolescents engaged as peer educators, and 171 students (9 classes) were assigned to the control group. The second study involved 461 adolescents from seven schools in the Province of Lucca. 234 students (10 classes) were part of the experimental group, with 39 adolescents engaged as peer educators, and 227 students (10 classes) comprised the control group. A convenience sample was used. - Instruments: Florence Bullying/Victimization Scales; Florence Cyberbullying/Cybervictimization Scales; a scale developed to measure student satisfaction with participating in the intervention. - Data analysis: Descriptive and inferential statistics, ANOVA. No analysis software was mentioned.
Rey et al., 2016	Examine the impacts of the ConRed Program on adolescents involved in cyberbullying dynamics.	- Design: Quasi-experimental study, including pre- and post-test measurements in an experimental group and a control group. - Sample: 875 students aged 11 to 19 enrolled in three Spanish schools participated in this study. 586 adolescents were in the experimental group and 289 in the control group. A convenience sample was used. - Instruments: Internet-Related Experiences Questionnaire; Spanish version of the European Bullying Intervention Project Questionnaire (EBIPQ); Spanish version of the European Cyberbullying Intervention Project Questionnaire (ECIPQ); Basic Empathy Scale; Perceived Information Control Scale. - Data analysis: Descriptive statistics, t-test, MANOVA, and Cohen's d test. SPPS software version 21.0 was used.

Schultze-Krumbholz et al., 2016	Examine the effects of the "Media Heroes" intervention on cyberbullying dynamics.	- Design: Quasi-experimental study, including pre- and post-test measurements in an experimental group and a control group. - Sample: 722 students, ages 11 to 17, from 35 classes in a city in Germany participated in this study. Of these, 354 were in the control group, 136 in the short intervention group, and 232 in the long version. A convenience sample was used. - Instruments: European Cyberbullying Intervention Project Questionnaire (ECIPQ); the perspective-taking subscale of the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI); Sympathy Reactivity Questionnaire. - Data analysis: Descriptive statistics, latent growth curve, multigroup analysis, Cohen's d, and least squares method. Software used: Mplus version 7.0.
Chaux et al., 2016	To examine the effects of the "Media Heroes" intervention on traditional bullying dynamics.	- Design: Quasi-experimental study, including pre- and post-test measurements in an experimental group and a control group. - Sample: 722 students, ages 11 to 17, from 35 classrooms in a German city participated in this study. Of these, 12 received the long-term intervention, 7 the short-term intervention, and 16 comprised the control group. A convenience sample was used. - Instruments: European Cyberbullying Intervention Project Questionnaire (ECIPQ). - Data analysis: Descriptive statistics, Pearson's bivariate correlation; interclass correlation; ANOVAs. No analysis software was mentioned.
Garaigordobil & Martínez-Valderrey, 2015	Analyze the effects of the Cyberprogram 2.0 intervention on the dynamics of bullying and cyberbullying.	- Design: Quasi-experimental study, including pre- and post-test measurements in an experimental group and a control group. - Sample: 176 Spanish adolescents, ages 13 to 15, from three different schools participated in this study, of which 93 participated in the experimental group and 83 in the control group. Random sampling technique. - Instruments: Screening of Peer Harassment; Index of Empathy for Children and Adolescents (IECA). - Data analysis: Descriptive statistics, MANOVA, and ANOVA. SPSS 20.0 analysis software.

Regarding data analysis, it was found that all authors adopted a quantitative design, using descriptive and inferential statistics, as well as regression, correlation and variance analyses.

Category 3: Metasynthesis

Table 4 presents the main results obtained in each reviewed study.

Table 4

Main results found in each reviewed article

Reference	Results
Salem et al., 2023	- The proposed intervention demonstrated an increase in empathy levels and a reduction in cyberbullying levels among adolescents in the experimental group; - A gender variation in cyberbullying was observed, with boys scoring higher as aggressors and girls as victims; - Female adolescents scored higher on the empathy scales compared to male adolescents; - The results were maintained at follow-up.
Sorrentino et al., 2023	- The intervention is ineffective in combating cyberbullying and cybervictimization in the long term, even though it obtained good results in reducing these phenomena, at the end of the program these results were not sustained in the post-implementation follow-up.
Martín-Criado & Casas, 2019	- The results related to cognitive restructuring showed that adolescents in the experimental group perceived themselves as more capable of modulating their emotions, changing their way of thinking about a situation, and thus reconceptualizing it in a positive way to understand it; - There was a small decrease in scores on post-test measures; - The results showed no significant differences in descriptive data on bullying or cyberbullying between the control and experimental groups.
Ortega-Barón et al., 2019	- The Prev@cib intervention has demonstrated positive effects in reducing bullying and cyberbullying, as well as aggression and victimization; - The program is more effective in addressing bullying dynamics than in addressing cyberbullying.
Ferrer-Cascales et al., 2019	- Adolescents participating in the TEI program noticed an improvement in factors related to school climate, such as satisfaction with school, a sense of belonging, cooperation, and positive communication between family and school; which contributed to the reduction in bullying and cyberbullying rates.
Ingram et al., 2019	- Adolescents in the experimental group showed improved empathy compared to participants in the control group; - The virtual reality intervention was associated with a reduction in bullying, which was not the case with cyberbullying; - Adolescents in the experimental group perceived an increased sense of school connection and willingness to intervene as an active bystander, mediated by empathy.
Menesini et al., 2016	- Significant decrease in bullying, victimization, cyberbullying, and cyber-victimization in the experimental group compared to the control group. - In the NoTrap! program evaluation questionnaire, students reported that teachers were not very engaged with the intervention, as few of them participated. - Peer educators moderated the online forum, dealt with cyber threats, and offered support to those who requested help for three months in each phase of the study. Those most involved as victims and bystanders were those who most frequently accessed the website for advice or support.
Rey et al., 2016	- A reduction in bullying victimization was observed, with a focus on traditional bullying compared to cyberbullying; - Victims in the experimental group showed decreased levels of interpersonal dependence; - There was a reduction in cyberbullying rates among aggressors in both the experimental and control groups; - The ConRed program was effective in interrupting the trend of cyberbullying exclusively among boys; - Among boys, a reduction in bullying victimization was also identified, encompassing both those who were victims and those who acted as aggressors.

Schultze-Krumbholz et al., 2016	- Students in the experimental group who underwent the long-term intervention showed a significant reduction in cyberbullying perpetration; - The long-term intervention was the only intervention modality that demonstrated positive results in reducing cyberbullying; - In the short-term intervention group, students who increased their cognitive empathy reduced their levels of cyberbullying. However, in the long-term intervention group, no direct relationship was identified between changes in empathy levels and the reduction in cyberbullying; - Changes in empathy levels may not be the direct underlying mechanism responsible for the reduction in cyberbullying behavior; - While the short-term intervention exclusively impacted cognitive empathy, the long-term intervention promoted significant changes in both cognitive and affective empathy, although the observed effects on cyberbullying reduction appear to be more related to affective empathy.
Chaux et al., 2016	- The intervention had a greater impact on reducing traditional bullying, especially in the longer version of the program; - No effects were observed on bullying and cyberbullying victimization; - The positive effects on traditional bullying were most evident among participants who initially did not engage in bullying, with an increase in bullying only in the control group; and among those simultaneously involved in cyberbullying and traditional bullying; - There were no significant effects for participants who engaged in only traditional bullying.
Garaigordobil& Martínez-Valderrey, 2015	- In the experimental group, there was a reduction in the levels of victimization, aggression, and aggressive victimization in cases of bullying/cyberbullying; - Cyberprogram 2.0 significantly increased the empathy capacity of adolescents in the experimental group.

Effective interventions in reducing traditional bullying were found to include Media Heroes (focused on developing empathy), Cyberprogram 2.0 (focused on developing empathy and social skills), ConRed (focused on social skills), Stand Up (focused on social-emotional skills), TEI (focused on emotional skills), NoTrap! (peer support model, theories on empathy and adaptive coping strategies), and Prev@cib (focused on social skills) (Chaux et al., 2016; Ferrer-Cascales et al., 2019; Garaigordobil & Martínez-Valderrey, 2015; Ingram et al., 2019; Menesini et al., 2016; Ortega-Barón et al., 2019; Rey et al., 2016).

In the dynamics involving cyberbullying, the intervention programs that demonstrated effectiveness were Cyberprogram 2.0, Media Heroes, ConRed, TEI, NoTrap!, Prev@cib and Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT) aimed at strengthening empathy (Ferrer-Cascales et al., 2019; Garaigordobil & Martínez-Valderrey, 2015; Menesini et al., 2016; Ortega-Barón et al., 2019; Rey et al., 2016; Salem et al., 2023; Schultze-Krumbholz et al., 2016). It is noteworthy that, with the exception of the Stand Up program, effective interventions in confronting bullying also demonstrate efficiency in the context of cyberbullying. However, programs that addressed both phenomena tended to be more effective in reducing traditional bullying, with the exception of the NoTrap! program, which presented similar results in both dynamics (Ingram et al., 2019; Menesini et al., 2016; Ortega-Barón et al., 2019; Rey et al., 2016).

On the other hand, some interventions did not achieve the expected objectives, such as the TIPIP Program, based on Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory, and the Córdoba Student Helpers Program, which prioritized the development of social and cognitive skills (Martín-Criado & Casas, 2019; Sorrentino et al., 2023). However, even without obtaining evidence of effectiveness in reducing the phenomena of interest, the Córdoba Student Helpers Program promoted some qualitative changes in the participants, such as improved ability to modulate emotions, for example (Martín-Criado& Casas, 2019).

Programs that used empathy as a theoretical basis —Cyberprogram 2.0, Media Heroes, NoTrap!, Stand Up, and CBT— have demonstrated effectiveness in reducing bullying and cyberbullying dynamics, in addition to promoting advances in this construct (Chaux et al., 2016; Garaigordobil & Martínez-Valderrey, 2015; Ingram et al., 2019; Menesini et al., 2016; Salem et al., 2023; Schultze-Krumbholz et al., 2016). However, it is not guaranteed that empathy was the determining factor for these results, nor is it

possible to specify which of its dimensions (affective or cognitive) was associated with the observed effect (Schultze-Krumbholz et al., 2016).

Interventions that addressed social and cognitive skills, however, presented mixed results. The Córdoba Student Helpers Program failed to significantly reduce rates of bullying and cyberbullying (Martín-Criado & Casas, 2019). In contrast, the Stand Up and TEI programs achieved their proposed objectives (Ferrer-Cascales et al., 2019; Ingram et al., 2019).

Based on the reviewed results, the Italian intervention NoTrap! can be considered the most effective among the ten programs analyzed. This conclusion is based on statistical evidence of its effectiveness, proven by two separate studies, as well as the greater engagement of the school community —including parents, students, and teachers— in the proposed activities. Furthermore, the program adopts a hybrid intervention model, combining in-person classroom activities with interactions mediated by an online platform. This modality, supervised by adults, is structured around the logic of peer-to-peer interaction, which favors more active student involvement in all stages of the program (Menesini et al., 2016).

Discussion

The main objective of this study was to map antibullying interventions targeted at adolescents available in the scientific literature, with an emphasis on the systematic description of their content, strategies, and theoretical foundations. Unlike previous reviews that focused predominantly on measuring the overall effectiveness of programs (Ng et al., 2022; Resett & Mesurado, 2021), this study adopted the mapping review model to broaden the descriptive and analytical scope, offering a panoramic view of the current landscape of intervention practices. This approach is justified for two main reasons. First, because it allowed us to identify trends, gaps, and heterogeneities in the program content and underlying concepts of the programs, going beyond the question "what works?" to also address "how these interventions are designed and implemented." Second, because bullying and cyberbullying were recognized as group, relational, and contextually mediated phenomena, requiring more complex strategies than those evaluated solely in terms of symptom reduction or aggressive behavior (effectiveness).

The analysis of the 10 intervention programs identified revealed a diversity of components, methods, and theoretical frameworks present in these approaches. It was observed that all documented initiatives were effective, to some extent, in combating bullying and/or cyberbullying. However, the approaches adopted, the levels of action (individual, group, school-based), and the core elements of each intervention varied substantially, which reinforces the importance of an analytical mapping that allows us to understand what is being done and how these practices align (or not) with scientific and ethical assumptions.

Given the plurality of variables involved in an intervention, the Society for Prevention Research established six fundamental criteria for identifying efficacy, effectiveness, and dissemination (Flay et al., 2005). These are: (1) having been evaluated in at least two rigorous trials; (2) involving well-defined samples from specific populations; (3) employing psychometrically valid measures and appropriate data collection procedures; (4) using robust statistical methods in data analysis; (5) presenting consistent positive effects; and (6) reporting at least one long-term follow-up with statistically significant results (Flay et al., 2005).

These criteria were applied to the interventions reported in the reviewed studies. Thus, based on the reviewed results, only two of the 10 interventions described —the TIPIP Program and the Córdoba Student Helpers Program— did not achieve the expected results, that is, a significant reduction in the rates of school bullying and cyberbullying. Although the other eight presented the desired effects, only the NoTrap! intervention met all six criteria mentioned above, as it was the only program that was evaluated in two rigorous trials, that is, the only one that met the first expected requirement (Flay et al., 2005; Menesini et al., 2016).

Another finding indicated that intervention programs that simultaneously address traditional bullying and cyberbullying tended to be more effective in reducing the former, with the exception of the NoTrap! program, which demonstrated similar effects in both dynamics. This finding may be explained by the transposition of strategies originally developed to address traditional bullying to cyberbullying, without due consideration of the specificities of the virtual environment, among which the anonymity of the aggressors stands out (Li et al., 2024; Wingate et al., 2013).

Based on this, the need to develop specific content that addresses the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in interventions that address both phenomena is highlighted (Wingate et al., 2013). In this sense, a systematic review carried out by Ansary (2020) proposed some criteria for the development of effective interventions against cyberbullying, which include: (1) incorporation of a theoretical framework that supports all adopted strategies; (2) emphasis on risk and protective factors identified in the scientific literature; (3) consideration of the entire school community – family, peers, teachers, administration – in the design of actions; and (4) carrying out rigorous empirical evaluations to measure the results achieved.

Regarding the target audience of intervention programs, a meta-analysis conducted by Gaffney et al. (2021) indicated that interventions that encompass actions across the entire school community are more effective. Considering that bullying is a multi-determined phenomenon, it is essential that prevention and coping strategies consider the diversity of contexts, agents, and circumstances that contribute to its occurrence (Tristão et al., 2022). This action strategy was used, for example, by the ConRed, TEI, NoTrap!, and TIPIP programs.

Furthermore, some of the interventions described used the peer education methodology, in which specific group members are recruited and trained to conduct activities with their peers (Sun et al., 2018; Zambuto et al., 2020). However, the effectiveness of programs that adopt this strategy can vary depending on several factors, such as: the content and duration of the training offered, the attitude of the trainers, the materials and/or activities used to develop the peer educators' skills, the roles assigned to these students, the degree of autonomy granted in carrying out their tasks, and, especially, the recruitment strategy adopted (Sun et al., 2018).

The scientific literature also indicates that the voluntary recruitment strategy tends to yield better results in antibullying intervention programs (Zambuto et al., 2019). A study conducted by Zambuto et al. (2020) demonstrated that, although peer educators nominated by classmates are, in general, more popular and charismatic, this characteristic did not translate into a significant reduction in rates of bullying, victimization, cyberbullying and cybervictimization.

This condition can be seen in the present study, since the NoTrap! Program, in which peer educators were recruited voluntarily, recorded a significant reduction in bullying and victimization incidents (Menesini et al., 2016). In contrast, the Córdoba Student Helpers Program, which used a nomination strategy led by peers and intervention leaders, did not achieve the expected results (Martín-Criado & Casas, 2019). These findings reinforce the importance of carefully considering the method of recruiting peer educators as a moderating variable for the effectiveness of bullying prevention programs that use this strategy.

Regarding empathy, all interventions that incorporated this construct as a basis for formulating their actions —Cyberprogram 2.0, Media Heroes, NoTrap!, Stand Up, and CBT— showed a reduction in the rates of aggression and victimization associated with bullying and/or cyberbullying. However, it is not possible to state with precision whether these results are directly attributable to the work with empathy (Schultze-Krumbholz et al., 2016).

Similarly, a literature review conducted by Lembo et al. (2023) indicated that individuals with aggressive behavior tend to present empathy deficits and difficulties in adopting the perspective of others. However, scientific studies have pointed out discrepancies regarding the nature of this deficit, that is, whether it manifests predominantly in the cognitive or affective dimension of empathy. Therefore, the relevance of developing interventions that address empathy as a central component can be determined, but further studies still need to be conducted.

Finally, based on the results analyzed, the NoTrap! Program was considered the most effective among the ten antibullying interventions included in this review. This evaluation is justified by the fact that the program was the only one to meet the criteria established by the Society for Prevention Research, in addition to involving the entire school community in its actions —as recommended by the specialized literature— and including, in a structured manner, the development of empathy (listening and empathic feedback, for example) in its methodology (Flay et al., 2005; Gaffney et al., 2021; Lembo et al., 2023).

Conclusion

Given the high prevalence rates and the psychosocial consequences they generate for the entire school community, bullying and cyberbullying are considered serious public health problems, requiring

urgent and effective interventions. Therefore, this study aimed to map intervention programs in the scientific literature aimed at preventing and addressing these phenomena among adolescents.

In total, 10 interventions were identified, eight of which demonstrated effectiveness in reducing bullying and/or cyberbullying rates. The analysis of these intervention programs revealed a diversity of components and theoretical foundations underlying the approaches adopted. Based on the evaluation of the results and content present in each intervention, the NoTrap! program stood out as the most effective. It was also observed that certain characteristics significantly contribute to the effectiveness of the interventions, such as the involvement of the entire school community in the proposed actions. In the specific case of combating cyberbullying, the importance of including specific content about the phenomenon was noted, such as the anonymity of aggressors and the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).

It is important to emphasize that the results of this review should be interpreted in light of its main limitations. As this research is a mapping review, the objects of study are other scientific articles or book chapters, which have their own biases and limitations. Another important point to consider is the impossibility of consulting all the scientific literature on this topic, either due to the preference for specific databases or the descriptors used in searches. It is also recognized that geopolitical contexts marked by structural inequalities in the field of scientific research may be underrepresented, as nine of the 11 studies included in this review originate from European contexts, which confers a cultural bias on the analyzed evidence. The exclusion or failure to identify studies from Latin America and Africa should not be interpreted as evidence of the lack of antibullying intervention programs in these contexts. On the contrary, such an absence may reflect structural and epistemological limitations of scientific production in these regions.

Furthermore, three main hypotheses can be considered for this scenario. The first concerns the possible existence of local initiatives, often developed by civil society organizations, schools, or public agencies, that are not systematically evaluated and, therefore, do not result in academic publications eligible for indexing. The second hypothesis refers to the variability of the terms and descriptors used to name and categorize such interventions, which can hinder their retrieval in international databases. Finally, it is possible that some studies were excluded because they did not meet the methodological criteria required for inclusion in this review, even though they address relevant experiences.

This finding reinforces the need to foster not only new intervention programs, but also strategies that promote the evaluation, systematization, and scientific dissemination of ongoing experiences. Such an effort is essential to broaden the scope of available knowledge and to promote a truly global agenda in combating bullying.

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Authors' contribution (CRediT Taxonomy): 1. Conceptualization; 2. Data curation; 3. Formal Analysis; 4. Funding acquisition; 5. Investigation; 6. Methodology; 7. Project administration; 8. Resources; 9. Software; 10. Supervision; 11. Validation; 12. Visualization; 13. Writing: original draft; 14. Writing: review & editing.

V. M. R. L. has contributed in 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 13; W. A. O. in 1, 4, 5, 7, 10, 11, 14.

Scientific editor in charge: Dra. Cecilia Cracco.