


## Bullying and learning disruption in high school students in Chilpancingo, Mexico

*Acoso escolar y disrupción del aprendizaje en estudiantes de la secundaria de Chilpancingo, México*

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### ORIGINAL ARTICLE

#### KEYWORDS

Learning, bullying, education, school, violence.

Given the wave of violence in the state of Guerrero, Mexico, it is important to know the effects of this phenomenon on the behavior and academic performance of adolescent students. Likewise, it is necessary to inquire the causes in which the most common violent behaviors manifest themselves, as well as to postulate local and institutional alternatives that improve school care for this highly vulnerable population in the face of organized crime. Having said this, the purpose of this work is to investigate the constitutive elements that generate bullying and disruption of learning in the students of Technical Secondary No. 185 Hermenegildo Galeana in the city of Chilpancingo. For this, qualitative ethnographic work was carried out in order to explain in a dense and detailed way the power relations between students, as well as the conditions in which the teaching-learning process develops. In the same way, we rely on questionnaires, surveys and interviews to better deepen the purpose of this research.

### PALABRAS CLAVE

Aprendizaje, acoso escolar, educación, escuela, violencia.

Ante la ola de violencia que padece el estado de Guerrero, México, resulta importante conocer los efectos de este fenómeno en el comportamiento y rendimiento académico de los estudiantes adolescentes. Asimismo, es necesario indagar sobre las causas en las que se manifiestan las conductas violentas más habituales, así como postular alternativas locales e institucionales que mejoren la atención escolar de esta población altamente vulnerable ante el crimen organizado. Dicho esto, el presente trabajo tiene como propósito indagar sobre los elementos constitutivos que generan acoso escolar y disrupción de los aprendizajes en los estudiantes de la Secundaria Técnica N° 185

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Hermenegildo Galeana de la ciudad de Chilpancingo. Para esto, se llevó a cabo un trabajo cualitativo de tipo etnográfico con la finalidad de explicar de una manera densa y detallada las relaciones de poder entre los estudiantes, así como las condiciones en las cuales se desarrolla el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje. De la misma manera, nos apoyamos de cuestionarios, encuestas y entrevistas para ahondar de mejor manera el propósito de esta investigación.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

School bullying has become one of the social phenomena that has most affected the student society, it occurs with greater force during adolescence and manifests itself in different forms and modalities such as: teasing, physical aggression, verbal and psychological aggression. Despite the prevention campaigns by the Ministry of Public Education (SEP) and the continuous information that circulates in the different media, it has not been possible to reduce its high incidence in public education centers. In this regard, several specialists consider that this problem reduces the social fabric of the schools and, above all, is obliterating the intellectual performance, self-esteem and emotional stability of the students (Santoyo and Frías, 2014; Vega et. Al., 2013 ; Muñoz, 2008; Ayala, 2015; Sánchez, 2013).

This problem is not being considered as one of the elements that hinder the teaching and learning process at school. On the contrary, bullying is considered as an external aspect to this process and that is related to the individual or behavioral character of the student. The idea that bullying is the result of the way society reproduces is rejected, that is, as part of a network of relationships and cognitive that are linked to the very fabric of social and economic structures. Therefore, the interest in knowing the factors that influence young people's behavior and its effects on school performance.

When we talk about bullying, we refer to all aggressive, intentional and repetitive behaviors, in order to cause physical, psychological or emotional harm to one or more people who, for the most part, do not show signs of suffering any aggression (García et. al., 2015; Tresgallo, 2008; Gairín, 2013). In general, those who exercise violence are young people who want to demonstrate superiority over others and do so through constant threats, insults, hitting or shoving (Loredo-Abdalá, 2008; Armero, 2011). Young people who are victims (women and men) of these aggressions manifest isolated behaviors, live intimidated and in constant anguish, suffer fear all the time and often hide what they are suffering. They prefer to remain silent and not denounce the pain caused by the aggression; sometimes, the harassed solves his problem through extreme measures or solutions such as suicide.

This relationship of domination among adolescents has to be taken seriously into account by schools, because it is a complex stage where they deserve more attention, especially in a violent society like ours. Currently, for example, with the use of technology, adolescents have begun to viralize the aggressions of their peers, the exhibitions on social networks and make violence be seen or affected as part of a culture. Bullying should be thought of as a phenomenon that is destroying youth. In this way, we will be able to determine the social, psychological and / or psychiatric behaviors that influence the thinking of adolescents and that lead to devastating decisions such as the fact of taking their own lives. Once these determinations are recognized, the schools will take concrete actions to prevent this anomaly, but they will also create spaces for dialogue among the student population.

During human development, adolescents manifest their psychological changes differently. At school, they find it difficult to communicate with parents and teachers, they prefer to hide certain emotions that externalize them in different ways and social environments. However, this situation is difficult to diagnose and address in educational institutions, especially public ones, because they do not have a specialized psychology area to provide support in the event of a serious problem of school violence.

Given this, we believe that the participation of other government agencies is important to help and resolve the framework that prevents a healthy sociality among educational actors, as well as the academic achievement expected by schools (Tresgallo, 2011; Satoyo et. Al., 2014 ). For this, it is essential to know how school violence is generated and who its agents cause it, these are: colleagues, family, school, and community, understood as a whole as an advocate and transmitter of values (Castro-Morales, 2011; Rodríguez et. Al., 2009; Nocito, 2017).

## 2. METHOD AND MATERIALS

This research stands out for its interpretive and ethnographic nature (Rockwell, 1995; Rueda y Campos, 1992; Bertely, 2000; Jociles, 1999). The work was carried out in three stages:

a) In the first stage, an analytical investigation of the bibliographic and bibliographic sources was carried out in order to know the debate about bullying. This allowed us to build a field of substantive theoretical knowledge so that we can finally interpret the factors that define the behaviors of violence in Technical Secondary School No. 185 in Chilpancingo (Sautu et al. 2005).



b) In the second stage, a field work was launched that allowed a dense and detailed description to be made based on the non-participatory observation of educational actors, victims and student aggressors (Geertz, 1986; Pérez, 2012; Guber, 2001; Bertely, 2000). In this phase, 7 open interviews were conducted and group conversations with the students. Likewise, we worked with 10 students identified as possible school aggressors. To learn more about it, a small survey was conducted with the purpose of investigating the disruptive factors that conditioned student behavior and learning.

c) In the third stage, c) in the third stage the questionnaire was applied: *Cuestionario de clima de aula y de centro para alumnos*, of Fernández et. to the. (2002). The sample was non-probabilistic, it worked with 104 students. These were grouped in the first, second and third grade respectively. Of these students, it stands out that 56 were men and 48 were women. The units of analysis for this study were students. The inclusion criteria are the students enrolled in the current school year and those who voluntarily accepted to be included in the study. Exclusion criteria were those students who did not agree to be included in the study and those who had a disability or physical problem.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### a) Regarding bullying

School bullying is a form of violence that is carried out for a certain time by one or more students and is intended to do physical or psychological harm to one or more students (Enríquez and Garzón, 2015; Pedreira et. Al., 2011). It should be noted that bullying includes three aspects that must be highlighted or taken into account for its understanding: a) the threat is aggressive behavior that involves unwanted actions; b) provocation reaffirms a pattern of behavior that is repeated over and over again; and, c) the threat implies an imbalance of power or force that is exerted on the victim. Accordingly, there are several types of antisocial behavior and these are: a) disruption in the classroom; b) conflicts between teacher and student, c) mistreatment between students; d) vandalism; e) assaults or extortions; f) sexual harassment (Rodríguez et. al., 2011, p.2).

In recent years, the lack of coexistence and lack of discipline at school have become problems that afflict both teachers and those responsible for educational administration. This concern arises because of the frequency of cases of bullying that ultimately break with the good



harmony and coexistence of educational centers. This is undoubtedly due to the difficulty of finding suitable and effective solutions to overcome the conflict between students. Nobody contradicts that coexistence and respect for people are considered as necessary aspects to achieve quality education. However, violence, indiscipline and lack of control in educational centers are on the rise in contemporary society (García et. Al., 2001).

This social fact does not emerge as a phenomenon typical of the school, nor can it be considered as an isolated aspect of the change in social and family relationships that occurs in the world. It means that social transformations directly impact institutional fabrics such as school, family, local political systems, etc. On the other hand, within the values and social attitudes of education is respect for the rules of coexistence as purposes of a more democratic educational system. This helps to understand that there is a moral order in a society where, in addition, self-control and school autonomy can be developed. To this is added the idea that coexistence, respect and school discipline are necessary elements to achieve the aims and objectives of education. Accordingly, we can believe that every student needs rules of coexistence and respect for others such as:

1) El respeto mutuo le da un sentimiento de seguridad al ver hasta dónde puede ir y lo que debe y no debe hacer. 2) Al vivir de acuerdo con ciertas normas, el alumno es capaz de evitar sentimientos frecuentes de culpa que le asustan. 3) Ayuda a desarrollar su conciencia, la “voz interiorizada” que le guía a elegir por sí mismo. 4) Al cumplir las normas de respeto descubre que los demás le aceptan formando y desarrollando su socialización. 5) Aprende a comportarse de manera socialmente aprobado y con el tiempo a tener una sólida autodisciplina y autocontrol. 6) Le sirve de motivación para reforzar su yo y llevar a cabo lo que se espera de él (García, p. 165).

The respect between individuals or the climate of human relations that predominates in schools is one of the variables that most influences student learning (Collino, 2017). This is usually a reflection of the school's own capacities and control management. It means that a school with a good school climate is an academic organization where there is collaboration between principals, teachers, students and parents. Efficiency and school improvement are variables of great importance that help to consolidate the objectives of the school curriculum, regardless of the context in which the student is.

This discussion is brought up, because bullying represents a specific phenomenon of repeated aggressive behaviors in which there is a systematic difference in power between the victimizer and the victim. This may involve physical, verbal, social exclusion actions that affect



the individual or the community (Rodríguez et. Al., 2012; Blanchard et. Al., 2007; Carnety et. Al., 2001)). In fact, it has been pointed out that bullying is difficult to measure since the level of aggression, the intention of the aggressor, as well as the exercise of power among students must be detected (Vega-Cauich, 2018; Albores-Gallo et. Al. , 2011). Given the nature of bullying, we believe that it affects academic results and cracks the school climate in a negative way. It has been found that in schools where bullying prevails steadily, there is a tremendous deterioration in social and cultural capital. Students do not do well academically and generally do not finish or drop out of schools. This is due to the lack of skills or school management to solve conflicts in a strategic and academic way (Hamodi and Jiménez, 2018; Jankue, 2016).

The presence of robberies and assaults of all kinds are violent situations that take place in schools. A good coexistence between students, teachers and managers is positively related to academic achievement, in addition, it indicates that good relationships between different cultures favor student learning (UNESCO, 2007). But, for that the role that the teacher plays in the construction of a dialogical and less violent school is important. A fluid relationship between the student and the teacher would have a high correlation with good academic results, in other words, a good school climate always works in favor of educational agents.

On certain occasions the school may become a space not conducive to learning or social coexistence. This is largely due to the degree of violence that exists in the school and the conditions for the student to join the group. That is, school violence is not necessarily carried out from the complex relationship between students, but also between all educational agents such as the teacher, who, like those who are in charge of managing or administering the school, fail to generate social conditions, optimal for learning.

### **b) Discipline and indiscipline**

There is no single definition of the term discipline, since it depends on the teacher's vision and institutional philosophy. However, we consider this as an inherent aspect of the development of education and that contains a positive or negative character in the classroom. Moreno et. at. (2007) argue that a positive approach refers to all forms of behavior that achieve programmatic objectives or institutional goals, while a negative indiscipline refers to the absence of dialogue between students and / or teachers. This form of behavior necessarily leads to a flat rejection on the part of the educational center and even implies a punishment on the subjects who use power over the other.



To prevent this sanction, it is necessary for educational managers to organize and impose a discipline in order not only to achieve the goals indicated from the beginning of the school year, but also to incorporate responsible citizens with values into society (Vásquez, 2010; Sáenz-López, 1997; Maquilón, 2011). When reference is made to the control or surveillance of the student, the recognition of a variation of behaviors that the teacher diagnoses and affect the development of the class is mentioned. This stage is of great importance, because the neutralization of disruptive and destabilizing behavior of academic relationships depends on this. Accordingly, Gómez and da Resurrección (2017, p. 279) point out that:

El término *disrupción* se refiere a las conductas que llevan a cabo aquellos alumnos dentro de las clases que pueden buscar diferentes objetivos como llamar la atención, reclamar su deficiente historia académica, pero que tienen como consecuencia que el profesorado no pueda llevar a cabo de manera adecuada su tarea profesional de enseñanza, impidiéndole que pueda hacer la explicación de los temas, realizar las actividades oportunas o aplicar las evaluaciones oportunas que considere necesarias.

Disruptive behavior is generated by a certain type of factor that intervenes in the student's way of thinking and alters the “normality” of the school (Orrego, 2014). The solutions to this type of disruption necessarily go through conducting an investigation that identifies the probable causes that cause student discomfort. Broadly speaking, these causes or factors may be: a) Sociodemographic factors, associated with the student's gender, poverty conditions, age, language or ethnicity; b) Educational factors, associated with the educational bureaucracy, plans and programs, institutional philosophy and teaching-learning styles; c) Social factors, associated with the place of origin, the parents' employment status; and, d) Family factors, associated with parental conflict, mistreatment or physical violence (Garbanzo, 2007).

It is possible that these factors contribute to the breakdown of school coexistence and it is probably necessary to intervene from different public instances in the educational system (Escudero, 2005; Mena et. Al., 2010). According to this, disruptive behavior negatively influences teaching practice and also aggravates social and educational relationships at school (Ovalles, 2017, p.32). Given this, teachers must detect how disruptive behaviors affect the development of the class and for this it is necessary to consider as a substantive task an x-ray of the disruptive factors that condition the student's work. This task must go hand in hand with the internal instances of the school that are in charge of carrying out (psychological) care for the student.

In general, this action is carried out with the firm purpose of reducing disruptive acts or behaviors that are detrimental to the interests of the institution. In addition, the diagnosis to be carried out could prevent school failure and dropping out. Disruption is a problem that impacts learning, coexistence and dropping out of school, it also hinders the actions carried out in the classroom and involves harm for both the student and the teacher. These factors force the teacher to dedicate a large part of his time to the attention of students with family, economic or socio-cultural problems.

### c) School violence as field work

On February 7, 2020, a survey was conducted of three groups of Technical Secondary No. 185 Hermenegildo Galeana. This activity was carried out in order to collect data that would help strengthen this research. In this educational center, a first-grade group, a second-grade group and a third-grade group were taken as a sample with a total of 104 students, of whom 56 were male and 48 were female. This activity yielded as a result the following graphs that outline the work carried out before the closure of the schools, a product of the pandemic known as COVID 19 that the world suffers. It should be noted that at the time of applying the survey we realized that many of the students were unaware of some terms considered by the survey (Fernández et. Al., 2002). The complexity of this instrument forced us to explain in a didactic way some topics such as disruption, bullying or school violence, behavior and school achievement with several small groups of 5 or 7 people. The result of this activity culminated in the application of the survey as can be seen.

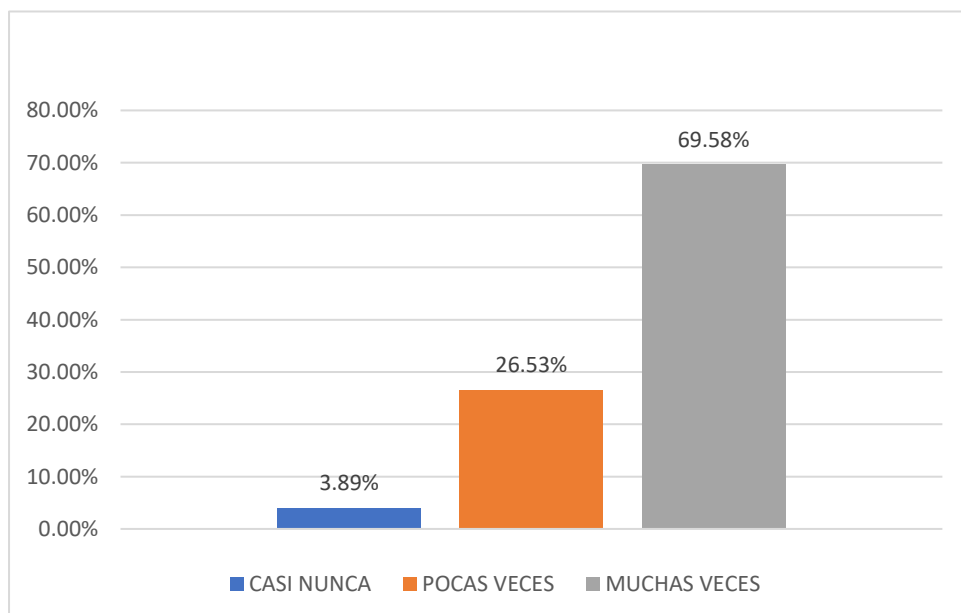


Figure 1: Female students who have suffered some form of school event.



According to the preceding graph, Figure 1, when women were asked if they had been attacked or had ever suffered a form of bullying or school violence by their partners, 69.58% of the 48 women indicated that he had suffered on many or repeated occasions a type of violence. During the fieldwork carried out, we realized that bullying in women was associated with disruptive or behavioral factors coming from the aggressors, who had family, economic and social problems. This was an important aspect of our work, because it allowed us to carry out a survey or survey of a certain number of students, ten actually, who committed, according to the students, acts of bullying or bullying. Harassment was questioned by women, a student told us the following:

Las personas que agreden a las compañeras tiene problemas con sus papás o, algunos, vienen con mucho sueño o trabajan, no sé. Solo vienen a la escuela a molestar. Yo he visto a mucha de mis compañeras que se sienten tristes, las veo decaídas y, a veces, tienen poca autoestima. Los profesores han visto estos casos en clases, pero no les prestan mucha atención. Sus ocupaciones son diversas que hacen otras cosas (Entrevista A, febrero 2020).

Our interviewee's challenge to the bullying caused by her classmates has many meanings. It seems to us that his testimony highlights to some extent what cannot be discussed at school and this has to do with the violence and the power struggle that exists among students, perhaps teachers. When interviewee A indicated that the student "has problems with his parents", we realized that you posted disruptive behavior associated with a family problem or even when he pointed out that his partner goes to school with "sleep and work", evidently referring to a disruptive character of an economic nature.

As indicated above, youth disruption occurs with the intention of attracting attention and somehow causing awkward action at school. Obviously, this implies an immediate response from the teacher and, of course, a prompt neglect of their academic obligations. In other words, the teaching-learning process is blocked by these types of problems that are recurrent in schools where bullying persists. Of course, the resolution or response of the teaching professional is not accompanied by an institutional platform that assists these types of disruptive actions or behaviors on the part of the students. We have noted that, although there is a psychological care center in the Technical Secondary, there is no follow-up of the student as such. Furthermore, the teacher is usually busy with various tasks that prevent him from paying attention to complex behaviors. On the other hand, it is necessary to indicate that in secondary school this problem not only affects women, but also men have suffered from school violence.



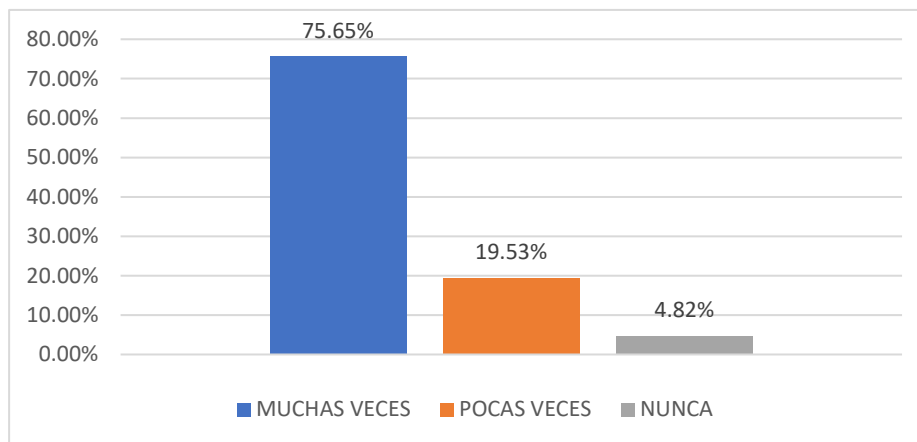


Figure 2: Male students who have suffered some form of school event.

In the table above, Figure 2, it can be seen that 75.65% of 56 men have suffered from repeated or many times bullying. Unlike women, men seem to suffer more harassment than women, but the truth is that the relationships between men are much more aggressive. This data does not imply that this group of men does not exercise any power or violence, on the contrary, men are the most likely to suffer and exercise some form of school violence. In the fieldwork, there was a testimony that caught our attention powerfully, since not only could the struggle between the students be identified, but also the reaffirmation of a problem present in the country, we refer to “machismo”.

El acoso se da más entre varones, las mujeres también participan, pero no es mucho o no se nota, pero si lo hacen. Entre los varones hacemos y decimos cosas. En muchas ocasiones tenemos que aguantarnos, porque se burlarían más. Se reirían o nos molestarían las mujeres [...] En una ocasión vi que a un compañero su puso a llorar y pensaban que era bisexual, por eso le hacían bullying. Le decían que es joto, que es puñal (Entrevista B, febrero 2020).

When interviewee B indicated that his classmates “made fun” of him (possibly) and classified him, what his classmates were doing was reaffirming a school relationship that revolved around masculinity. Norma Fuller (2001), for example, mentions that masculinities are also defined from coercion on the other and, of course, on a social figure generally recognized as male.

In the case that interests us, we point out that this form of discrimination cannot be understood without considering the contradictions of the anatomy of society, in this case, that of Guerrero or Mexico. Teasing about weakness or femininity is an aspect that is constantly reproduced at school. But, it also accounts for a phallogocentric society that legitimizes violence. When an open interview was conducted with a student, he noted the following:

Entrevistador: ¿Conoces a algún compañero que se haya sentido mal después de recibir un insulto? Sí (estudiante). Entrevistador: ¿Cómo lo notaste? Triste, se pone a llorar, le hacemos burlas por que llora (estudiante). Entrevistador: ¿Qué le dicen cuando llora? Que es una niña, cosas feas, que es gay y esas cosas (estudiante). ¿Ese niño actualmente viene a esta escuela? No, ya se fue...creo que tiene vergüenza, ya no estudia (Entrevista C, febrero 2020).

We have noted that violence or bullying that occurs between students is not perceived or is not being considered as a real problem that affects the academic achievement of students. Many of them, that is to say, the victims prefer to keep quiet and not count on the mistreatment they suffer. This is due to the fear and shame that bullying generates at school. The following testimony affirms what has been said:

Una vez grabaron a una compañera...Pues, estaba en los baños y un niño se metió y la grabaron. La niña ya no viene a esta escuela, la cambiaron, se fue lejos. El niño también se fue, no sé a dónde (Entrevista D, marzo de 2020).

Another interviewee points out something similar.

He visto a compañeros en una situación vergonzosa. Algunos han sido grabados y sus fotos o videos se han publicado en las redes sociales. También he visto a mis compañeros jugar muy feo...Una vez a un compañero lo estaban empujando, haciendo feo y lo estaban grabando. El otro no podía defenderse, lo atacaban entre varios. No hizo nada. Solo se estaba riendo, pero se veía que quería llorar (Entrevista E, febrero de 2020).

Violence between young people can get out of control. In high school we observe that young people act without measuring the consequences. There is no institutional project that deals with preventing these acts of violence among students. We have noted that teachers do not wish to acknowledge that this problem is unrelated to the age of adolescents. This is a very worrying

matter. Omission of these cases could create a very difficult situation for secondary school to control. On one occasion, when the students were asked if the teachers did something about it, the answer was that no, indeed, some of them exerted violence among the students or generated them.

No todos los profesores hacen eso...molestan a los estudiantes. Pero, un profesor sí. Una amiga de mi salón tiene el pelo corto y luego [él] le anda pegando cosas, le puso un apodo, pero no me acuerdo como era, la niña le dijo al profe que no se lo dijera (Entrevista F, marzo 2020).

As already indicated, bullying is not necessarily caused by the student, but also by other educational agents. Teachers inadvertently assaulting the student may be normalizing complex relationships between students. Given this, the demand for help from those attacked sometimes manifests itself in a corporal way. We refer to cutting, mutilation of the body, it is a phenomenon that has been growing and goes unnoticed in some schools. In this regard, someone told us the following:

Una vez vi a una compañera que se lastimaba así misma. Iba en mi salón y siempre parecía estar tranquila, pero había ocasiones que reaccionaba de mala manera. Eso fue en primero, no sé si lo siga haciendo, como no vive con sus papás, vive con sus abuelitos y eso le afecta mucho. Se empezó a cortar y así. Le he visto cicatrices...Sí, en sus manos. Yo noto que se siente sola, tiene mucha tristeza, porque la abandonaron con sus abuelos (Entrevista G, marzo 2020).

In Technique No. 185 we have been able to detect that the majority of students have behaviors that are related to certain types of problems or disruptive economic, social and family factors. In this sense, a small survey was made of ten students who were considered by their peers as aggressors. Most of them faced financial problems, the other part had social problems and very few family problems. What strikes us about this aspect is that disruptive factors do affect student performance in class.



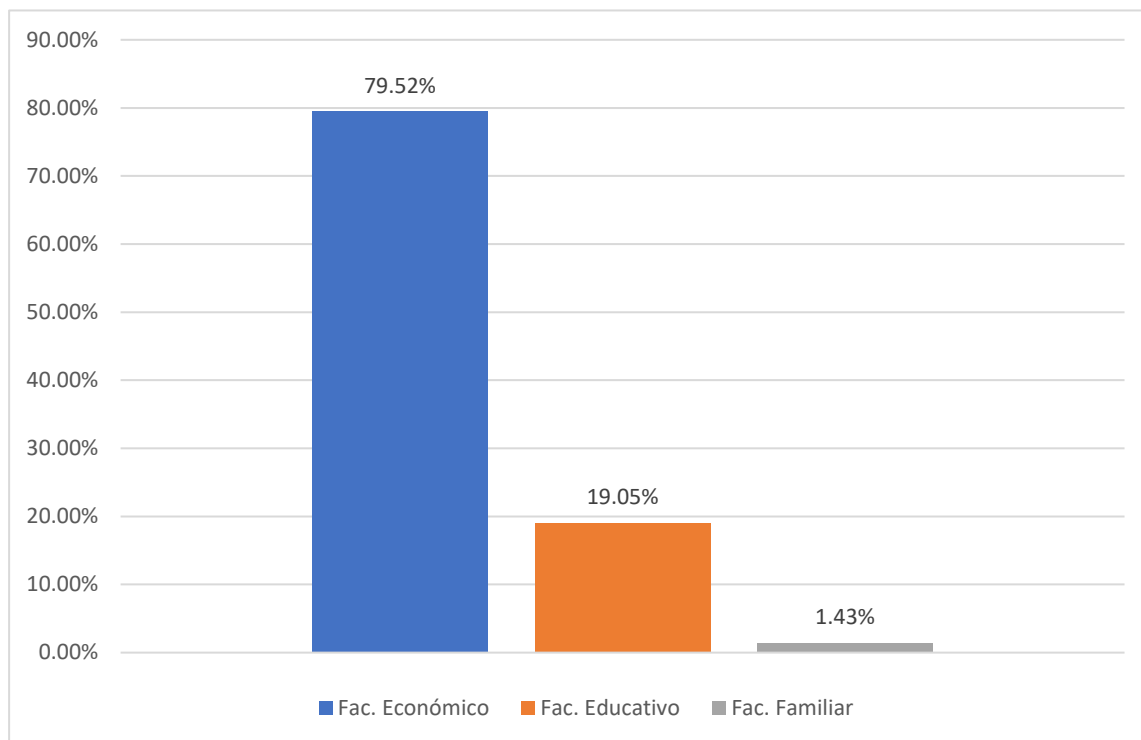


Figure 3: Disruptive factors that affect poor academic performance.

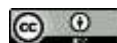
The financial problems the students were referring to had to do with the work the parents were doing. Many of the students pointed out that the parents were away from home all day and that they only saw them for a few hours a day. Also, another sector indicated that, due to the lack of money in their homes, they had to help to cover the expenses. This involved dropping out of school for short periods. Another factor present in the survey was related to learning or educational factor. The students who belonged to this group indicated that they could not capture what they learned, because the classes were not enjoyable or, finally, the teaching styles of the teachers did not attract their attention. Likewise, it was possible to identify in this social factor that school violence was also consensual and, on some occasions, reproduced by the teachers themselves. On the other hand, very few students in this group blamed school administration or attention for the lack of attention or learning in their studies. Finally, the other sector that appears is that of the family, however, the family problem or the problem of parents or the abuse suffered by adolescents is very low with respect to social or academic factors. It would be necessary to develop a more complex work to know for sure if this is a factor that impacts the behavior of the students.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

We believe that work deserves more attention. Unfortunately, the pandemic, COVID19, prevented further development of the analyzed problem. However, in general terms, we can say that bullying continues to be considered an inherent problem in school dynamics. This is not intended as one of the causes that prevent the dislocation of learning and academic performance. However, we believe that bullying has nothing to do with an internal problem, but rather its articulation with the social problems that society (Guerrero) drags. Violence in all its forms are cultural manifestations that are reproduced in all cultural and political spheres. The school is not a separate entity or that is separated from the very behavior of the anatomy of society. In the research carried out, we have found that the bullying problems generated by the aggressor have an explanation that is rooted in the dynamics of everyday life. In other words, the disruptive factors of school and academic relationships, why not behavioral, such as financial deprivation, discrimination and family problems directly affect the student. It has been noted in this work that students who come from families with few economic opportunities are those who carry out acts of physical or verbal aggression against their classmates; very few have family problems or even suffer from some kind of cultural or educational marginalization. Finally, we dare to say that we cannot speak of school violence, but we understand the structural violence that is reproduced in society.

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John Acuña: conceptualización, investigación, metodología, administración del proyecto, recursos, software, supervisión, validación, visualización, escritura - preparación del borrador original, escritura - revisar & edición.

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