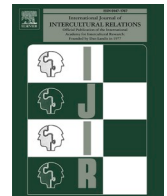




ELSEVIER

Contents lists available at [ScienceDirect](https://www.sciencedirect.com)

## International Journal of Intercultural Relations

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/ijintrel](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/ijintrel)

## Ethnic-cultural bullying among adolescents in multicultural environments: A study in Latin America

Antonio J. Rodríguez-Hidalgo<sup>a,\*</sup>, Yisela Pantaleón<sup>b</sup>, Rosario Ortega-Ruiz<sup>a</sup>, Y. Mauricio Herrera-López<sup>c</sup><sup>a</sup> Department of Psychology, University of Córdoba, Córdoba, Spain<sup>b</sup> Faculty of Education Sciences, Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro de Manabí, Manta, Ecuador<sup>c</sup> Department of Psychology, Universidad de Nariño, San Juan de Pasto, Colombia

## ARTICLE INFO

## Keywords:

Ethnic-cultural bullying  
Racist victimization  
Racist aggression  
Discrimination  
Racism

## ABSTRACT

Ethnic-cultural bullying among schoolchildren is a harmful, discriminatory practice, which is particularly difficult to combat educationally both because it involves a sociocultural dimension closely linked to social identity, and because few validated, reliable instruments have been developed to evaluate and study it. The aims of this research were to validate a scale for measuring ethnic-cultural bullying, fine-tune its specificity, and examine its prevalence in a multicultural school population from Ecuador. A sample of 17,309 students, representative of the adolescent student population in Higher Basic General Education and Baccalaureate, completed the EBIPQ-ECD. The validation showed a two-dimensional structure featuring ethnic-cultural victimization and ethnic-cultural aggression, and had optimal psychometric properties. There were also evident differences in the prevalence of ethnic-cultural bullying in adolescents depending on the ethnic-cultural group, with Afro-descendants and indigenous people more often involved, and whites and mestizos less so, which is consistent with the theory of social dominance. Finally, we discuss the results in relation to the complexity of the construct itself, as well as the suitability and educational potential of evaluating ethnic-cultural bullying in populations which show considerable ethnic-cultural diversity, such as Ecuador and other countries in the Latin-American geopolitical sphere.

## Introduction

In multicultural societies, social exclusion and discrimination, combined with a degree of undervaluation and impunity towards aggression directed at schoolchildren's ethnic-cultural characteristics, have extremely detrimental effects, causing members of minority ethnic-cultural groups to be assigned an inferior social status. The effects of aggression and victimization through ethnic-cultural bullying affect schoolchildren severely, and go beyond merely making them the object of personal attack, as they also affect their psychosocial outlook (Monks et al., 2008; Bayram et al., 2020; Weinstein et al., 2021). They can also alter essential processes of education and school socialization, such as social and regulatory adjustment, or academic performance (Baysu et al., 2016; Benítez et al., 2023,2024), along with more personal processes, such as emotional adjustment, social development and general health (Benner & Graham, 2013; Hawkins et al., 2021). When social exclusion turns into ethnic-cultural discrimination among schoolchildren, with

\* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: [ajrodriguez@uco.es](mailto:ajrodriguez@uco.es) (A.J. Rodríguez-Hidalgo).<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2025.102196>

Received 5 August 2024; Received in revised form 4 February 2025; Accepted 12 April 2025

Available online 24 April 2025

0147-1767/© 2025 The Authors. Published by Elsevier Ltd. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

intentional, repeated attacks in the context of an imbalance of power, the three key characteristics of *traditional* or *personal bullying* (Salmivalli, 2010), and it is combined with a component of immorality (Ortega-Ruiz et al., 2016), it produces a specific phenomenon known as *ethnic-cultural bullying* (e.g.: Iannello et al., 2021; Monks et al., 2008; Kisfalusi et al., 2020; Rodríguez-Hidalgo et al., 2019).

Over the past two decades, due to its pernicious nature, there has been growing scientific interest in the study of ethnic-cultural bullying. Ethnic-cultural bullying - also known as *racist bullying* or *ethnic bullying* (e.g.: Basilici et al., 2024; Tolsma et al., 2013) - is extremely harmful for its victims from a very early age, since its effects are exacerbated by including an inequality bias regarding origin among peers which is not present in other forms of bullying. Several studies have confirmed that this phenomenon has a highly negative impact on its victims, affecting the development of their ethnic-cultural identity, their adaptation processes, their physical and mental well-being, their school performance, their social inclusion (Benner & Wang, 2017), and above all, the way they adapt socially from their own ethnic-cultural identity (Schumann et al., 2013). Furthermore, there is evidence that victimization due to ethnic-cultural bullying is closely linked to depression and suicidal ideation (Cardoso et al., 2017; Robinson et al., 2021).

The purpose of this research is to validate a scale for measuring ethnic-cultural bullying, adjust the parameters of the specificity of the phenomenon and know its prevalence in the multicultural school population of Ecuador. To do this, we start from the review of the most current scientific contributions on ethnic-cultural bullying: its nature and the roles involved in its dynamics, the instruments used in its measurement, as well as the direct and relative prevalence of the general phenomenon of bullying and school violence.

### **Ethnic-cultural bullying: a complex, multidimensional scientific construct**

Ethnic-cultural bullying, like other forms of harassment, is a form of unjustified aggressive behaviour. It includes a major dimension of immorality, which lies at the heart of the injustice and pain it produces in its victims. Just like any other form of bullying, it is a dynamic in which one or more aggressors arrogantly direct harassment, insults or mistreatment towards a victim, who receives the message that their physical features, culture, language or customs are despised or devalued, and who find themselves blamed not only for personal aspects, but also for traits or aspects that are part of their biological or cultural identity. This further heightens the helplessness which any unjustified act of aggression produces. This type of bullying, by focusing on these aspects, further stigmatizes the victim, who is attacked through social stigmas referring to cultural differences, ethnic origin, religion, language and/or immigrant status (Cardoso et al., 2017) and involves a major element of discrimination (Caravita et al., 2020; Rhee et al., 2017). The social stigmas of ethnic-cultural bullying are part of a pattern of social dominance that transcends the individual: it is an asymmetrical scheme based on racial stereotypes or prejudices about their preconceived characteristics, in which the aggressor considers the victim inferior or subordinate to them (Żemojtel-Piotrowska et al., 2020). These unjustified and immoral attacks always incorporate beliefs and manifestations not only about the individual, but also about the victim's social group of reference, which, compared to the majority and/or dominant group, is usually in a minority and/or has an inferior social status. Young people who identify themselves as part of the majority and/or dominant group often consider the presence of students with different ethnic-cultural backgrounds or other group traits as a threat to their norms, cultural values, and dominant status (Bayram et al., 2018). This leads the majority group to hold a distorted image of the ethnic-culturally different other, in other words, individuals from minority groups, who usually become victims of ethnic-cultural bullying (Verkuyten & Thijs, 2006).

There is no doubt that ethnic-cultural bullying includes cognitive-emotional processes of moral disconnection, which include strategies of cognitive distortion involving false or prejudiced cultural assumptions directed towards individuals belonging to the victim's cultural group (Caravita et al., 2019; Lo Cricchio et al., 2022). These cognitive processes develop discriminatory attitudes and behaviour which are justified by dehumanizing attributions and the hostile, discriminatory behaviour shared socially by the majority group (Durkin et al., 2012; Bayram et al., 2020).

Ethnic-cultural bullying also generates a complex, subjective interpersonal experience that depends on the perception and interpretations of both aggressor and victim (Monks et al., 2008; Rodríguez-Hidalgo et al., 2017). For example, racist taunts, while described by their attackers as common and harmless, are by no means innocuous to the victims, who not only blame themselves for what happens to them, but can also blame their own reference group, thus generating high levels of social anxiety (Castranova et al., 2016).

To date, there are very few investigations that have addressed the study of ethnic-cultural bullying with specific instruments to demonstrate the existence of different participation roles, similar to those that have been evidenced in studies on the generic phenomenon of bullying. However, a study carried out in Spain (Rodríguez-Hidalgo et al., 2019) has shown the existence in the dynamics of ethnic-cultural bullying of the roles of ethnic-cultural aggressor, ethnic-cultural victim, ethnic-cultural aggressor/victim and not involved. The latter may or may not be spectators of ethnic-cultural bullying among their peers. Especially interesting is the mixed aggressor/victim role, which refers to individuals who are recognized as both emitters of discriminatory aggressive behavior based on ethnic-cultural differences towards other peers, and as the object of this type of ethnic-cultural aggressive behavior caused by peers.

According to a number of studies, in societies with a high degree of ethnic or cultural plurality, individuals belonging to minority groups are affected more by bullying (Bayram et al., 2018; Vitoroulis & Vaillancourt, 2018). Some researchers also consider that the existence of other contextual factors, such as cultural challenge, disconnection from one's own heritage of origin and living in a new culture, could further heighten the victimization of ethnic-cultural minorities (Shin et al., 2011; Xu et al., 2020). These contextual factors have been widely studied in different culturally-diverse sociocultural contexts of the Western world, but are still under-researched in geopolitical regions of the Global South, particularly in the extensive region of Latin America, which features a high degree of ethnic-cultural diversity with mestizo majority groups, greater socioeconomic inequalities between groups, and struggles for the recognition of ethnic-cultural identities and human rights: it is still very much an unknown world in this respect. Some researchers point out that, in multicultural Latin American societies such as Ecuador, the ideology of miscegenation has led to a denial

of the existence of prejudices and racist discrimination, or a minimization of their negative effects, towards minorities such as indigenous or Afro-descendant people, leading, in turn, to further violence and conflicts between cultural groups (e.g., Moreno, 2024). For all these reasons, there is a special need to study how ethnic-cultural bullying occurs and how prevalent it is in this large region of the world.

### Measuring ethnic-cultural bullying

Despite the fact that ethnic-cultural bullying is still an emerging scientific construct which is currently expanding the specific nature of the unjustified aggression known as bullying (Basilici et al., 2024; Monks et al., 2008), it has also benefited from research into social exclusion and ethnic-cultural discrimination (Benner & Wang, 2017; Weinstein et al., 2021). Therefore, in order to review the instruments available for measuring ethnic-cultural bullying, we first need to look at the contributions made by the scientific literature in these two traditional fields of study (Espelage & Rue, 2012; Salmivalli, 2010).

In studies on social discrimination based on ethnic or social class factors, inventory-type instruments have traditionally been used to record different types of discriminatory behaviour (e.g., Benner & Graham, 2013; Benner & Wang, 2017) and the most commonly used instruments have been scales (e.g., Baysu et al., 2016; Closson et al., 2014; Priest et al., 2014; Shin et al., 2011; Weinstein et al., 2021). For instance, on a sample of ethnic minority adolescent students, Baysu et al. (2016) used the exclusion/rejection subscale of the *Perceived Ethnic Discrimination Questionnaire*, with 6 items covering different forms of victimization such as threats, exclusion or insults based on ethnic differences. Also on a sample of ethnic minority adolescent students, Weinstein et al. (2021) recently used the *Perceived Ethnic and Racial Discrimination Scale*, in a reduced 5-item version, which covers behaviour such as insults or unfair treatment due to differences in race or ethnicity. However, to date, no peer discrimination scales which are also sensitive to unjustified, prolonged, intentional and immoral aggression, such as the violence exerted in peer bullying, have been developed.

In this context, some questions on ethnic-cultural discrimination have been included in certain studies on traditional bullying based on self-reports on large samples of adolescent students without controlling the variable of their ethnic-cultural origin on large samples of adolescent students from schools with ethnic-cultural diversity (e.g., Caravita et al., 2020; Fisher et al., 2015). Arens and Visser (2020) also added a question about unkind treatment based on differences in skin colour, race, or religion: when an affirmative answer was given, the researchers recorded it as a case of racist or ethnic victimization. On other occasions, to probe ethnic-cultural victimization, studies have used a single question about the frequency of being attacked for racist motives through insults about differences in skin colour (Caravita et al., 2020; Fisher et al., 2015; McKenney et al., 2006). These contributions have made it possible to approach the construct of ethnic-cultural victimization from the angle of studies on bullying (Bayram et al., 2020).

Another line of research which has tried to articulate knowledge about bullying and the specificity of ethnic-cultural bullying has taken as its reference models of self-report questionnaires on bullying victimization and aggression on large samples of adolescent students from multicultural schools (e.g., Iannello et al., 2021; Monks et al., 2008; Rodríguez-Hidalgo et al., 2015; Verkuyten & Thijs, 2006). The *Olweus Bullying Victimization Questionnaire* (Solberg & Olweus, 2003) was adapted to obtain records of forms of victimization based exclusively on ethnic-cultural differences. The research of Verkuyten and Thijs (2006) also recorded the frequency of ethnic victimization involving racist insults and/or use of language, as well as the direct social exclusion from games due to ethnic differences. Recently, Bayram et al. (2020), following this model, designed a four-item ethnic-cultural aggression scale, including, for instance, insults and social exclusion based on differences in ethnic origin. Monks et al. (2008) recorded the frequency of ethnic-cultural victimization of three types: direct verbal (racist and/or xenophobic threats or insults/name-calling), direct relational (racist and/or xenophobic social exclusion) and indirect relational (spreading racist and/or xenophobic lies or rumours through third parties). Rodríguez-Hidalgo et al. (2014) used a self-report containing an inventory of nine possible forms of ethnic-cultural aggression, where victims could specify if they had suffered one or more of them, introduced by a question asking how frequently they had been the object of ethnic-cultural victimization. On the other hand, the limitations of the instruments used to measure bullying have also been pointed out, given the specific nature of this type of aggression (Chen et al., 2012; Rodríguez-Hidalgo et al., 2019).

More recently, Iannello et al. (2021) used 4 items to record the frequency of ethnic-cultural victimization and ethnic-cultural aggression, and Rodríguez-Hidalgo et al. (2019), using the two dimensions of the phenomenon (aggression and victimization), produced an adaptation of the *European Bullying Intervention Project Questionnaire-EBIP-Q* (Brighi et al., 2012; Ortega-Ruiz et al., 2016) to include aggression and ethnic-cultural victimization, called the EBIP-ECD-Q. This obtained good psychometric properties, validity and solidity, for a population of Spanish schoolchildren. In fact, the validation of the EBIP-ECD-Q with Latin American schoolchildren is one of the main aims of this work.

### *The perspective of ethnic-cultural aggression*

To date, research into discrimination and abuse with ethnic-cultural connotations has focused on the victimization process; however, to fully understand the phenomenon, we need to look at the complete dynamic, which includes the process of unjustified, cruel and immoral aggression. The EBIP-ECD-Q includes the two dimensions of victimization and aggression. The victim's perspective allows us to observe the negative effects and consequences for the well-being and mental health of those who are unfairly discriminated against, attacked or mistreated; meanwhile, the perspective of the aggressor will give us tips on to how best to re-educate them (Verkuyten & Thijs, 2006). Although little research has focused on the aggressor's viewpoint (Vitoroulis & Vaillancourt, 2018), the study by Larochette et al. (2010) attempted to shed some light on why some young people develop aggressive ethnic-cultural bullying behaviour. Likewise, the study by Bayram et al. (2020) showed that participation in ethnic-cultural attacks is associated with high levels of prejudice towards other ethnic-cultural groups and low moral levels.

Studies from different countries worldwide show that some ethnic-cultural minorities are more vulnerable to being the object of ethnic-cultural victimization than others (Closson et al., 2014; Fisher et al., 2015; Hong et al., 2022; Llorent et al., 2016; Monks et al., 2008; Shin et al., 2011; Tolsma et al., 2013; Vervoort et al., 2010; Weinstein et al., 2021). One set of studies has documented the existence of ethnic-cultural victimization in members of minority cultural groups in different countries, both through verbal means, such as insults and hurtful racist name-calling and/or mockery due to skin colour, origin or religious practices, and through relational means, such as social exclusion (Verkuyten & Thijs, 2006). For instance, young people of Asian origin, both in the United States and in some European countries, reported being subjected to racist insults by students from other ethnic-cultural groups (Shin et al., 2011).

Various studies carried out in North America show that students from certain ethnic-cultural minorities are more commonly subjected to racist or xenophobic victimization than others (Cardoso et al., 2017; Kiang et al., 2018; Maynard et al., 2016; McKenney et al., 2006; Rivas-Drake et al., 2008). Meanwhile, in Canada, it was observed that adolescents from Asian, Latino, European, African and Caribbean ethnic groups reported being victims of bullying due to their ethnic-cultural attributes (McKenney et al., 2006). In the US, young people from ethnic minorities based on immigration criteria, such as non-Hispanic blacks, Hispanics, Asians and Pacific Islanders, all born outside the country, were shown to be more likely to suffer bullying related to religious or racial factors than their US-born counterparts, i.e., Native Americans or Alaskan Natives (Maynard et al., 2016). Other studies, also conducted in the US, have shown a link between depressive symptoms, suicidal ideation and being a victim of ethnic-cultural bullying, with this happening more frequently in certain cultural groups such as Asians (Rivas-Drake et al., 2008) or Latinos (Cardoso et al., 2017).

Another study carried out in Italy (Caravita et al., 2020) revealed that 4.3 % had frequently committed ethnic-cultural attacks and 6.1 % had been victims of these attacks frequently; coming from an immigrant background was related to being more frequently a victim of traditional bullying and ethnic-cultural bullying; natives had higher levels of negative prejudice toward immigrants; and that students who only harassed students of immigrant origin showed significantly lower levels of cultural openness than the rest of their classmates.

In addition, in a study carried out in Sweden by Bayram et al. (2020), 3 % of adolescents acknowledged being involved only in ethnic-cultural attacks and not in traditional bullying attacks. It also noted that 4 % of participants reported engaging in both of these forms of aggression.

The scientific literature on ethnic-cultural bullying shows that, in addition to the fact that the measurement of possible role involvement in this dynamic continues to be a scientific challenge, there are also no systematic observations of possible gender differences in this role involvement (Monks et al., 2008; Rodríguez-Hidalgo et al., 2019). Therefore, the study focusing on the roles of involvement based on the gender of adolescent students can provide very valuable strategic knowledge to design more effective prevention and intervention programs.

However, there are no studies looking into the confluence between social discrimination and the phenomena of ethnic-cultural bullying in regions which feature a varied ethnic mixture together with well-documented school and youth violence (Basilici et al., 2024; Rodríguez-Hidalgo et al., 2019). This is the case of the extensive region of Latin America. In this broad region, Ecuador is a country that has been recognized since its 2008 Constitution as plurinational and intercultural, with the intention of generating progress aimed at recognizing the rights of different ethnic-cultural identities that coexist in its territory. There are multiple ethnic groups in Ecuador: the majority is the mestizo -three quarters of the population- who are descendants of the confluence of indigenous people and europeans; 13 indigenous national identities such as the Chachi, Tsáchia, Awa, Espera, Cofan, Siona-Secoya, Amazonian Quichuas, Waorani, Zápara, Shuar, Achuar, Shiwiar and Andean Quichuas; afro-descendants (black); montubios; and whites. The Montubian ethnic-cultural identity is more modern, emerging as a result of the self-determination in recent decades of a human group that recognizes itself as a descendant of indigenous people, whites and blacks in the coastal area of Ecuador; and that being mestizo, he recognizes himself and is recognized as different due to his own culture and identity (generated in the last two centuries by dedication to independent field work in areas close to the coast) (Hidekazu, 2011; Mendoza, 2012). Among the ethnic-cultural groups described, great asymmetries still persist regarding different aspects, such as economic ones, and conflicts linked to the lack of agreement and/or respect for the different ways of living or understanding development in the territory. There are also situations of social exclusion, discrimination and even violence in relations between different ethnic-cultural groups. Ethnic-cultural stereotypes and prejudices persist, which are symptomatic of the existence of a scheme of social dominance among these ethnic-cultural groups (Żemojtel-Piotrowska et al., 2020). Indigenous and Afro-descendant groups are the ones that suffer the most from power asymmetry and discrimination based on prejudice. Considering this situation, it is of great interest to investigate in multicultural contexts -such as Ecuador- on the violent phenomenon of ethnic-cultural bullying.

## The present study

In this research, we conducted a study of ethnic-cultural bullying within the framework of a multicultural social structure, focusing on its two main facets, ethnic-cultural victimization and racist aggression, with the aim of overcoming the limitations of previous studies in this phenomenon, for example: measurement using a validated scale of aggression and ethnic-cultural victimization; the systematic measurement of the possible roles of involvement present in ethnic-cultural bullying; the possible differences in the involvement in this phenomenon depending on membership in different ethnic-cultural and gender groups; among others. To achieve this, we used a very large, representative sample of the adolescent student population of Ecuador, with a majority of mestizos, together with five minority groups (named in order of size): almost 10 % belonged to two ethnic groups, the Montubio group and the black group (afro-descendants), with one hundred each (just under 5 % of the total); under 2 % were white; a minority of below 1 % were indigenous people; and finally, there was a group of different identities not categorised in the above groups, which were labelled as 'others'. It was therefore a matter of observing how, when the majority belong to a mestizo group, phenomena of unjustified aggression

occur against others for ethnic-cultural reasons.

The first objective was to adapt and validate the EBIPQ-ECD instrument (Rodríguez-Hidalgo et al., 2019) to a population with the characteristics described above. It was expected - and this was our first hypothesis - that the EBIPQ-ECD would show a two-factor structure (ethnic-cultural victimization and racist aggression) with optimal psychometric properties, equally reinforced by ethnic-cultural prejudices. The second objective was to find out if the participation roles we observed maintain the classic distribution observed in traditional or personal bullying. As our second hypothesis, we expected to find in ethnic-cultural bullying the four roles of participation that had been found in a study previously carried out in the Western world: students who were 'not involved', victims of racist aggression, ethnic-cultural aggressors, and victimized ethnic-cultural aggressors (Rodríguez-Hidalgo et al., 2019).

The third objective was to ascertain at which levels there was homogeneity or difference in gender, and in the ethnic-cultural identity of the victimized schoolchildren and/or of the perpetrators, depending on the ethnic-cultural group they belonged to (the majority group or any of the minority groups). The hypothesis put forward here (Hypothesis 3) was that we expected to find differences in the roles of involvement in ethnic-cultural bullying depending on the ethnic-cultural group, consistent with the discriminatory prejudices present in the multicultural social context, as described by the social dominance theory (Zemajtel-Piotrowska et al., 2020).

## Method

### Participants

Based on the *Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador* of 2008, the *Organic Code of Territorial Organization, Autonomy and Decentralization* and the *Organic Law of Territorial Planning, Use and Management of the Land*, this country is territorially planned in nine zones created to decentralize public management. The present study takes its starting population -adolescent students from public, semi-private and private schools- from Zone 4, which is made up of two provinces: Manabí and Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas. The sample was representative of the whole adolescent student population present in Zone 4 of Ecuador and was made up of 17,309 students. The sample meets two stratification criteria consistent with the starting population in Zone 4: a) it is proportional to the student population of the six deductive levels; and b) that it is proportional to the student population present in public, semi-private and private schools. 44 schools meeting these two criteria were randomly selected: institutions of Higher Basic General Education (Sublevel 4) and Baccalaureate (Sublevel 5) in the provinces of Manabí and Santo Domingo de los Tsáchila (Zone 4). 49.9 % were male and 50.1 % were female, with ages ranging between 11 and 20 years old ( $M = 14.76$ ;  $SD = 1.65$ ). In Sublevel 4 of Higher Basic, 12.8 % were from 8th grade, 14.2 % from 9th grade and 17.1 % from 10th grade; in Sublevel 5 of Baccalaureate, 19.1 % were from 1st grade, 19.8 % from 2nd grade, and 17 % from 3rd grade. The sample was distributed in the following way: 88.5 % majority group (mestizos), 4.7 % Montubios, 4 % black, 1.7 % white, 0.8 % indigenous, and 0.2 % the diverse group labelled 'others'. This distribution in percentages of the sample based on the ethnic-cultural variable is somewhat different from what was expected based on the presence of ethnic-cultural groups throughout Ecuador. This may be due to several reasons, such as: the variability of these presence percentages depending on the regions of the country; the mobility of ethnic-cultural groups such as indigenous people to sell their crafts as a way of life (which means that some of their adolescents are not in school or have greater school absenteeism); or the greater early abandonment of school, which tends to occur more among adolescents from more discriminated ethnic-cultural groups and who live in more vulnerable or exclusionary situations, such as indigenous or Black people (Afro-descendants); inter alia.

### Instruments

The *European Bullying Intervention Project Questionnaire-Ethnic-Cultural Discrimination*, or EBIPQ-ECD, was used, which has demonstrated good psychometric properties, validity and robustness when previously used in Spain (Rodríguez-Hidalgo et al., 2019). This instrument is an adaptation of the EBIPQ, which originally serves to record different forms of aggression and victimization of personal bullying. The EBIPQ-ECD is composed of 14 Likert-type items (7 on victimization and 7 on ethnic-cultural aggression) with five response options from 1 to 5, with 1 = never, 2 = once or twice, 3 = once or twice a month, 4 = about once a week, and 5 = more than once a week. The items include: "at school someone has hit me, kicked me or pushed me", "I have insulted and said rude words to someone". However, in the adaptation of the EBIPQ to the EBIPQ-ECD, a prior explanation was introduced that helped and guided the participants to respond to each item, only in the case in which the emission of attacks or being the object of attacks occurred for reasons of ethnic-cultural discrimination. This introductory text was: "Now we ask you about your possible experiences of discrimination within your environment (school, friends, acquaintances), due to your skin color, your country of origin, your culture or your religion in the last 2 months". The internal consistency values of the original test were acceptable and revealed a high degree of test-retest reliability:  $\alpha_{T_{victimization}} = .84$ ,  $\alpha_{T_{victimization}} = .88$ ,  $\alpha_{T_{aggressor}} = .73$  y  $\alpha_{T_{aggressor}} = .69$  (Brighi et al., 2012).

### Procedure

The research design was cross-sectional, ex post facto retrospective, one group, multiple measures (Montero & León, 2007). The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki and was approved by the University of Córdoba Ethics Committee (PSI2016-74871-R). The corresponding permissions were obtained from the management teams -Ministry of Education of Ecuador through the 4th Zonal Coordination and schools- and the families gave their informed consent. Then, from the second half of the school year 2016-2017, the researchers visited the schools to administer the questionnaires, and explained the objective of the study to the schoolchildren, in particular the anonymous, confidential and voluntary nature of their participation. Students answered the

questionnaires on paper using a pencil or pen. The average time taken to fill in the questionnaires was 30 minutes.

To adapt the questionnaire to the Ecuadorian context, the instruments were initially submitted to a panel of expert judges, who assessed the following criteria: suitability of the vocabulary, clarity of the concepts, and coherence and relevance of each item. Finally, a pilot test was carried out with twenty schoolchildren to assess how easy the items were to understand. The items which they found more difficult to comprehend were modified, with synonymous expressions or vocabulary being used.

To establish the different roles of involvement, we followed the criteria established by the authors of the scales (Brighi et al., 2012; Del Rey et al., 2015). Thus, to determine the role of victim, subjects were chosen with scores equal to or greater than 3 (once a month) in any of the victimization items, and a score equal to or less than 2 (once or twice) was considered relevant in all items of aggression. Involvement in the aggressor role was determined by considering subjects with scores equal to or greater than 3 (once a month) in any of the aggression items, and with scores equal to or less than 2 (once or twice) in all the victimization items. Meanwhile, the aggressor-victimized role was obtained with scores equal to or greater than 3 (once a month) in at least one of the aggression and victimization items.

Data analysis

A Mardia coefficient analysis was performed to determine the multivariate normality of the data, using the “R” program (R Development Core Team, 2008) with the “MVN” library (Kormaz et al., 2015). For construct validity, we carried out confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) using the EQS 6.2 program (Bentler & Wu, 2012); for these analyses, we chose the maximum likelihood (ML) estimation method with robust scaling (Bryant & Satorra, 2012) and the use of polychoric correlations (Morata-Ramírez & Holgado-Tello, 2013), recommended for variables of a categorical and social nature. To assess the fit of the models, the following indices were used: Satorra-Bentler chi-square ( $\chi^2_{S-B}$ ) (Satorra & Bentler, 2001), chi-square divided by the degrees of freedom ( $\chi^2/gf$ ) ( $\leq 3$ : optimal), the comparative fit index (CFI), the non-normality fit index (NNFI) ( $\geq .90$  adequate;  $\geq .95$  optimal), the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) ( $\leq .08$ ) and the root mean square value of the covariance residuals (SRMR) ( $\leq .08$  adequate;  $\leq .05$  optimal) (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The Akaike information criterion (AIC) was also assessed to compare the models obtained, with the one with the lowest value taken as best.

To ascertain the generalization of the model, i.e., the degree of robustness of the factor structure, we carried out a configurational invariance analysis (soft invariance), with gender chosen as the analysis criterion. This analysis consists of comparing the fit indices of the models by gender with the general model. Configural invariance was evaluated taking into account the delta values ( $\Delta$ ) of the fit measures NNFI, CFI, RMSEA and SRMR, adopting a change of  $\leq .01$  as a cut-off point to accept the invariance hypothesis (Dimitrov, 2010). Finally, the chi-square difference test ( $\Delta\chi^2_{S-B}$ ) was used, where non-significant differences indicate invariance of the models

**Table 1**  
Skewness, kurtosis and response frequency; EBQP-Ethnic-Cultural (ECB).

Ítems (EBIPQ)	Skew	Kurt						
			1 Fr/%	2 Fr/%	3 Fr/%	4 Fr/%	5 Fr/%	
VB 1	Someone has hit me, kicked me or pushed me. (Alguien me ha golpeado, me ha pateado o ha empujado)	2.71	7.61	12955 74.8 %	3086 17.8 %	504 2.9 %	313 1.8 %	449 2.6 %
VB 2	Someone has insulted me. (Alguien me ha insultado).	1.91	3.14	10156 58.7 %	4948 28.6 %	839 4.8 %	448 2.6 %	913 5.3 %
VB 3	Someone has spoken badly of me. (Alguien ha hablado mal de mí).	1.93	3.38	10800 62.4 %	4292 24.8 %	1071 6.2 %	539 3.1 %	604 3.5 %
VB 4	Someone has threatened me. (Alguien me ha amenazado).	2.66	7.06	13368 77.2 %	2442 14.1 %	745 4.3 %	371 2.1 %	379 2.2 %
VB 5	Someone has stolen or broken my belongings. (Alguien me ha robado o roto mis cosas).	2.41	5.74	12566 72.6 %	3056 17.7 %	856 4.9 %	366 2.1 %	461 2.7 %
VB 6	I have been excluded (taken out) or ignored by other people. (He sido excluido (sacado) o ignorado por otras personas).	2.4	5.66	12621 72.9 %	2968 17.1 %	888 5.1 %	378 2.2 %	451 2.6 %
VB 7	Someone has spread or made up rumors (gossip) about me. (Alguien ha difundido o inventado rumores -chismes- sobre mí).	2.14	4.29	11612 67.1 %	3721 21.5 %	947 5.5 %	437 2.5 %	591 3.4 %
AB 1	I have hit, kicked or pushed someone. (He golpeado, pateado o empujado a alguien).	2.47	6.21	12492 72.2 %	3280 18.9 %	754 4.4 %	329 1.9 %	450 2.6 %
AB 2	I have insulted or said rude things to someone at school. (He insultado o he dicho groserías a alguien en el colegio).	2.19	4.74	11586 66.9 %	3915 22.6 %	893 5.2 %	396 2.3 %	515 3 %
AB 3	I have said insults or rude things to other people about someone. (He dicho a otras personas insultos o groserías sobre alguien).	2.58	6.74	13088 75.6 %	2708 13.7 %	794 4.6 %	355 2.1 %	361 2.1 %
AB 4	I have threatened someone. (He amenazado a alguien).	3.03	9.36	14168 81.9 %	1874 10.8 %	625 3.6 %	312 1.8 %	330 1.9 %
AB 5	I have stolen or damaged something from someone (He robado o dañado algo de alguien).	3.02	9.23	14278 82.5 %	1722 9.9 %	669 3.9 %	339 2 %	297 1.7 %
AB 6	I have excluded (taken out) or ignored someone. (He excluido -sacado- o ignorado a alguien).	2.75	7.56	13656 78.9 %	2197 12.7 %	747 4.3 %	368 2.1 %	336 1.9 %
AB 7	I have spread rumors (gossip) about someone. (He dicho rumores -chismes- sobre alguien).	2.9	8.41	13895 80.3 %	2066 11.9 %	629 3.6 %	346 2 %	370 2.1 %

Nota: Skew= asymmetry; Kurt= kurtosis; VB= victimization; AB= aggression.

(Bollen, 1989; Satorra & Bentler, 2010). This multi-group analysis was performed with the EQS 6.2 program (Bentler & Wu, 2012).

The internal consistency analysis was carried out using the McDonald’s Omega index ( $\omega$ ), recommended for categorical variables and in the absence of multivariate normality (Elosua-Oliden & Zumbo, 2008), and calculated with the Factor 9.2 program (Lorenzo-Seva & Ferrando, 2006). We also measured composite reliability (CR), which indicates the general reliability of the set of items. The cut-off value for considering the composite reliability was .70 (Hair et al., 2005).

To identify differences between the prevalence according to the sociodemographic variables, for example gender, we carried out contrast tests of proportions ( $\chi^2$ ), taking into account the values of the corrected typified residuals greater than + 1.96 (95 % confidence interval) and + 2.58 (99 % confidence interval). The Phi contingency coefficient was included for  $2 \times 2$  according to the number of crossed variables.

The significance level adopted was .05.

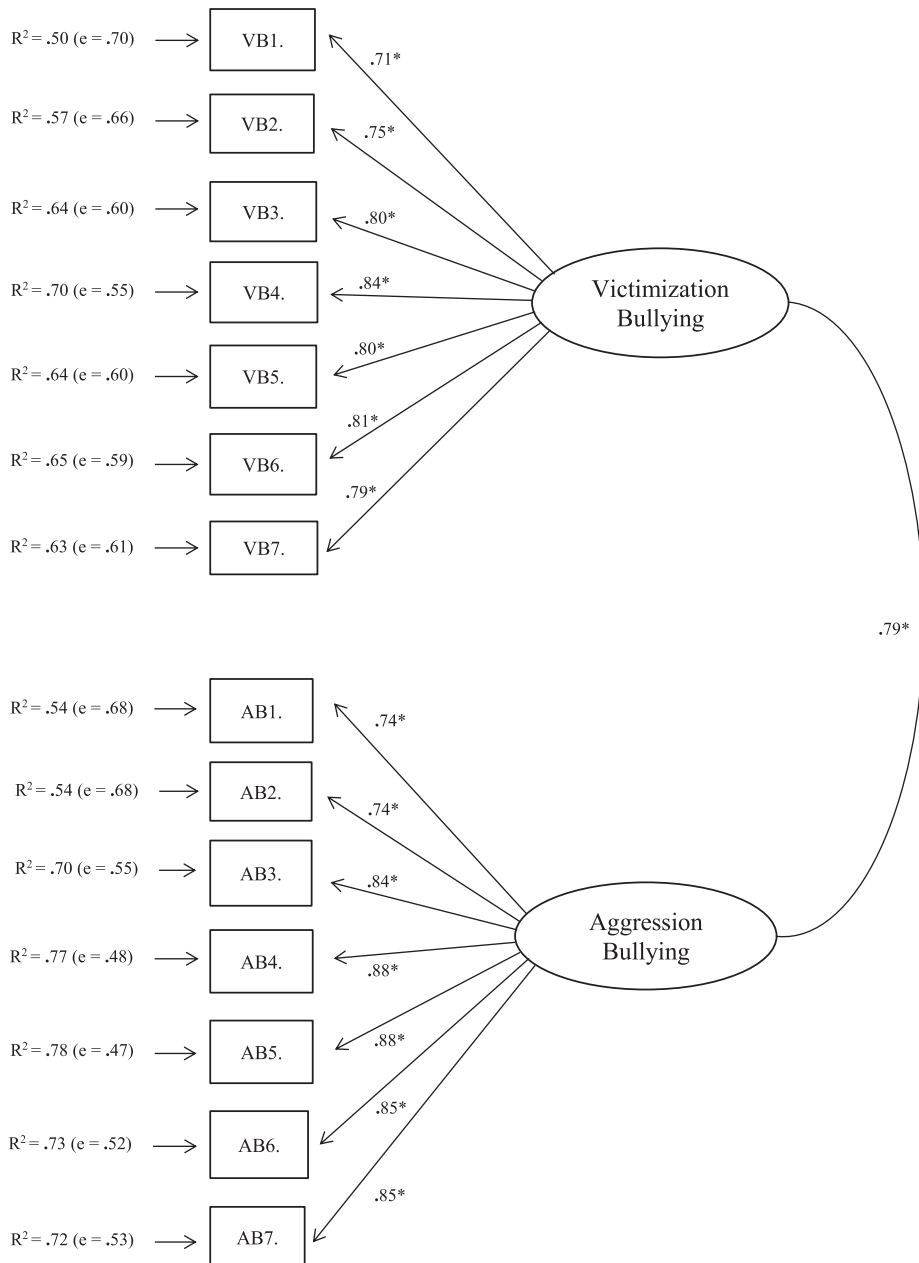


Fig. 1. CFA EBIPQ-Ethnic-Cultural for Ecuador.

**Results**

*Validation of the EBIPQ-ECD instrument in the young population of Ecuador*

Mardia’s analysis yielded an asymmetry coefficient of 100.854;  $p > .001$ , and a kurtosis coefficient of 630.995;  $p < .001$ , indicating non-compliance with the assumptions of multivariate normality of the data (see Table 1). The review by the expert judges did not suggest any significant adjustments, and the pilot test reported a good level of understanding of the items.

To carry out the CFA, we conducted a test based on the unifactorial structure, and obtained the following unadjusted indices:  $\chi^2_{S-B} = 3075.286$ ;  $p < .01$ ; NNFI = .726; CFI = .768; RMSEA = .073 (90 % CI [.071,.074]); SRMR = .078; AIC = 1184.356. Next, we tested the original theoretical structure of two factors, obtaining optimal adjustments for all the indices, especially for the RMSEA and AIC, as well as adequate factor weights and measurement errors:  $\chi^2_{S-B} = 3075.286$ ;  $p < .01$ ; NNFI = .726; CFI = .768; RMSEA = .073 (90 % CI [.071,.074]); SRMR = .078; AIC = 1184.356 (see Fig. 1). These results show that the bifactor model is the most appropriate.

The values obtained for the multi-group analysis revealed the existence of configurational invariance for the bi-factor structure according to gender (see Table 2). Thus, the chi-square ( $\chi^2_{S-B}$ ) differences between the models compared were not significant, and the Delta values ( $\Delta$ ) of the CFI, NNFI, RMSEA and SRMR indices did not exceed the cut-off value ( $\leq .01$ ) established to account for factorial invariance (Dimitrov, 2010).

The values for total internal consistency and for each factor of the EBIPQ-ECD scale for the dimensions of victimization (VB) and aggression (AB) were optimal:  $\omega_{VB-EC} = .85$ ,  $\omega_{AB-EC} = .94$ ,  $\omega_{total-EBIPQ-EC} = .91$ , as were the composite reliability indices (CR):  $CR_{EBIPQ-VB-EC} = .92$ ;  $CR_{EBIPQ-AB-EC} = .94$ .

The calculation of the prevalence showed that of the general sample, 11.2 % were involved as ethnic-cultural victims, 5.8 % as ethnic-cultural aggressors and 15.8 % as ethnic-cultural aggressor-victims; the total prevalence of involvement in ethnic-cultural bullying was 32.8 %. As regards gender (see Table 3), the proportion contrast test only found significant differences in the role of ethnic-cultural aggressor/victim, with boys being the most frequently involved in this role:  $\chi^2(1, 17299) = 101.201$ ;  $p < .001$  ( $Phi = -.076$ ;  $p < .001$ ), and in the role of ‘not involved’, with girls being the least involved in ethnic-cultural bullying:  $\chi^2(1, 17283) = 25.068$ ;  $p < .001$  ( $Phi = .038$ ;  $p < .001$ ).

In the case of the ethnic-cultural groups (see Table 4), it was found that adolescents who self-identified as black and indigenous were the group most frequently involved in ethnic-cultural bullying - in any of the three roles of involvement - with 39.4 % and 39 %, respectively; and the least involved were those who self-identified as ‘others’, with 27.5 %.

In the role of ethnic-cultural victim, black adolescents stand out as the ones most frequently involved, with 13.8 %; and indigenous and ‘other’ adolescents were the least involved, with 9.6 % and 6.9 %, respectively. As ethnic-cultural aggressors, those most involved were indigenous (6.8 %) and black (6.6 %) adolescents, while the white group was the least involved (2.7 %). In the mixed role of ethnic-cultural aggressor/victim, indigenous adolescents (22.6 %) and black adolescents (19 %) stand out as those most often involved, with mestizo adolescents the least involved (15.5 %).

**Discussion**

The first objective was to adapt and validate the EBIPQ-ECD (Rodríguez-Hidalgo et al., 2019) in order to record the current state of ethnic-cultural bullying in an Ecuadorian youth student population; in this regard, we obtained adequate fit indices and good internal consistency, and the CFA analyses confirmed the starting hypothesis. The instrument can be used interchangeably with both sexes, and displays good psychometric properties for a two-factor structure (ethnic-cultural aggression and ethnic-cultural victimization), which allows us to standardize the phenomenon, which has been defined as racist and discriminatory bullying through prejudices based on ethnic and cultural differences between groups, as described in European studies and in general in the Western world.

As regards the second objective, the results allow us to extend the application of this standardisation to other regions of the world, regardless of the extent of their economic development. We can therefore conclude that the four roles described in European literature (‘not involved’, ethnic-cultural victims, racist aggressors and ethnic-cultural victimized aggressors) are also present in the Ecuadorian adolescent population, which corroborates the second hypothesis. However, the proportion of involvement in these ethnic-cultural bullying roles reflects certain key differences with respect to their prevalence, when the population features considerable ethnic-cultural diversity. In Ecuador, one in three adolescents was directly involved in ethnic-cultural bullying as a victim, aggressor or aggressor/victim, compared with Spain, where the proportion is one in four (Rodríguez-Hidalgo et al., 2019). In other words, the relative prevalence of racist bullying and victimization due to discriminatory ethnic-cultural prejudice is greater in this Latin American sociocultural context, in which the majority group is culturally and ethnically mestizo. In total, one in twenty adolescents admits to being a racist aggressor, and nearly one in twenty recognizes themselves in the mixed role of ethnic-cultural aggressor-victim. In this

**Table 2**  
Configuration invariance analysis by gender; EBIPQ-Ethnic-cultural.

	Mod	$\chi^2_{S-B}$	df	p	NNFI	CFI	RMSEA	SRMR	$\Delta \chi^2_{S-B}$	$\Delta$ NNFI	$\Delta$ CFI	$\Delta$ RMSEA	$\Delta$ SRMR
Base		1108.148	76	.001	.963	.960	.058	.074	–	–	–	–	–
Gender	Mod 1	1147.792	76	.001	.959	.961	.062	.079	39.644 (n.s.)	.004	.001	.004	.005
	Mod 2	1168.493	76	.001	.970	.966	.068	.082	12.345 (n.s.)	.007	.006	.010	.008

Nota: Mod 1 = boys; Mod 2 = girls; n.s. = not significant.

**Table 3**  
Prevalence of involvement in Ethnic-Cultural Bullying (ECB) (%) by gender.

Country	Involvement			
	Victimization ECB	Aggression ECB	Bully-Victim ECB	Not involved
Boys (n = 8647)	11.3 % SR = .2	6.1 % SR = 1.6	18.6 %* ** SR = 10.1	64 % SR = - 5
Girls (n = 8659)	11.2 % SR = - .2	5.5 % SR = - 1.6	13 % SR = - 10.1	70.3 %* ** SR = 5

(\*\*\*  $p < .001$ ) (SR: standardized residual)

**Table 4**  
Prevalence of ethnic-cultural bullying in Ecuador, according to ethnic-cultural group.

Group/Rol	Victimization ECB	Aggression ECB	Bully-Victim ECB	Not involved	Total Bullying ECB
White (n = 299)	12.4 %	2.7 %	17.4 %	67.5 %	32.5 %
Half Blood (n = 15321)	11.2 %	5.9 %	15.5 %	67.4 %	32.6 %
Afro-descendant (n = 696)	13.8 %	6.6 %	19 %	60.6 %	39.4 %
Native (Indigenous) (n = 146)	9.6 %	6.8 %	22.6 %	61 %	39 %
Montubio (Half Blood peasant in coastal areas) (n = 812)	10.5 %	4.4 %	17 %	68.1 %	31.9 %
Other (n = 29)	6.9 %	3.4 %	17.2 %	72.5 %	27.5 %

case, there is no difference between adolescents from Ecuador and Spain, with the involvement in the role of ethnic-cultural victim practically the same in both countries, which as is known, share a common language: Spanish. However, of greater interest is the involvement in the roles of racist aggressor and ethnic-cultural victimized aggressor, which in the Latin American sample is double that recorded in the Spanish sample (Rodríguez-Hidalgo et al., 2019). If we compare these prevalences with the results of other European studies (Caravita et al., 2020; Bayram et al., 2020), which used different measurement instruments, the same trend can also be seen, with greater ethnic-cultural victimization and racist aggression in Ecuador, with its high level of ethnic diversity. It is not possible to compare the level of involvement in the different roles observed in the dynamics of ethnic-cultural bullying in the present study with the possible existing ones in the US and Canada, since previous studies carried out in both countries have not been carried out. with specific instruments for registering the roles in this phenomenon.

The third objective of the present study was to learn about possible differences between adolescents in their participation in the different roles of ethnic-cultural bullying depending on gender and the ethnic-cultural group with which each one self-identified. The results show that there are differences based on gender, which reflect a general trend in the phenomenon of bullying (Herrera-López et al., 2017; Ortega-Ruiz et al., 2016): more girls than boys are 'not involved' in ethnic-cultural bullying, while more boys than girls are involved in the role of ethnic-cultural aggressor/victim. This can be interpreted as a masculinization of the violent ethnic-cultural phenomenon in Ecuador, since this phenomenon is significantly more alien to adolescent girls, while their male counterparts stand out in the ambivalent role of ethnic-cultural aggressor/victim. This trend, which has been often described in studies on personal bullying, was also evident in the present study for ethnic-cultural bullying. No precedents have been found for this finding in previous literature.

The adolescents most frequently involved in any of the roles of ethnic-cultural bullying in Ecuador were those who self-identified as black and indigenous (four out of ten, respectively) and the least involved were those belonging to other ethnic-cultural groups (one in four). In the role of ethnic-cultural victims, black adolescents were found to be the most frequently involved, while indigenous people and those from other ethnic-cultural groups were involved the least. Indigenous and black adolescents stand out as ethnic-cultural aggressors, in contrast to whites, who are less frequently involved in this role. In addition, indigenous and black adolescents also stand out as aggressors/victims (one in five, respectively), with mestizos being the least involved in this mixed role. To sum up, the majority group (mestizos) and the small minority group of whites are those least involved and affected, which adds a specific ethnic-cultural element to the general school conditions, with indigenous people and blacks being the most affected in all the roles. As a result, the theory of social dominance is fulfilled: the mestizos are the majority group, with the whites as the ideal reference (Žemojtel-Piotrowska et al., 2020) in a multi-ethnic culture, in which the minorities are most affected in that they are furthest away from the majority tendency to dominate and its ideal racial reference. In fact, the mestizo ethnic-cultural group is believed to have descended mainly from the white group, with which it shares certain ethnic traits and many cultural traits, and shares a degree of cultural affinity, for instance, in language, habits or values, among others. This agreement observed between the levels of involvement in ethnic-cultural bullying depending on the ethnic-cultural group and the theory of social dominance -a hierarchical stratification by ethnic-cultural groups- is in turn consistent with the observations of previous related studies. in the USA (Cardoso et al., 2017; Kiang et al., 2018; Maynard et al., 2016; McKenney et al., 2006; Rivas-Drake et al., 2008), Canada (McKenney et al., 2006), Spain (Monks et al., 2008; Rodríguez-Hidalgo et al., 2014) and Italy (Caravita et al., 2020). These studies carried out in the regions of North America and Europe also attest that adolescents from the most vulnerable ethnic-cultural minorities and/or from other countries are the ones who suffer the most from victimization due to their ethnic-cultural attributes.

Regarding the two ethnic-cultural groups most affected (blacks and indigenous people), it is evident that, being in the minority, they may be more likely to be discriminated against and less valued socially compared to the majority group (mestizos) and their ideal reference (whites). This observation reflects the appreciation of the social imposition of the cultural ideology of miscegenation, which is promoted by the *mestizo* group, who constitute a large majority in this context. This results in both a denial of racism or minimization of its impact on indigenous and Afro-descendant minorities, and an increase in reactivity and conflict among the most oppressed minority groups (Molina et al., 2015; Moreno, 2024).

It is precisely among members of minority and stigmatized groups that the struggle for resources and social adaptation in multicultural contexts is greater (e.g., Xu et al., 2020), and it is likely that this phenomenon of discriminatory social conflict between disadvantaged groups is also reproduced in the school context among adolescents through ethnic-cultural bullying.

It is also rather puzzling that adolescents who do not self-identify as belonging to any ethnic-cultural group (i.e., 'others') are the least involved in all the participating roles in ethnic-cultural bullying. It could be interpreted that, as they do not feel linked to any significant ethnic-cultural group in the context, they feel less risk of becoming involved in this discriminatory phenomenon between peers. This leads us to think that the strengthening of ethnic-cultural identities in the socio-economically disadvantaged Ecuadorian context is based more on competitiveness between groups, in a society which is legally recognized as multicultural, than along the path of cooperation and interculturalism.

Adolescents belonging to black and indigenous groups are those who are most socially harmed by the racial prejudices that underlie social discrimination. We can therefore consider the third hypothesis confirmed: differences do exist in the roles of involvement in ethnic-cultural bullying depending on the majority and/or ideal reference group and minority groups, which are culturally or ethnically devalued due to racist or class prejudices, as dictated by the theory of social dominance (Żemojtel-Piotrowska et al., 2020); in this aspect, blacks are the most frequently involved, followed by indigenous people, with mestizos and whites involved less.

These results are consistent with some observations which feature in previously reviewed scientific literature (Bayram et al., 2018; Vitoroulis & Vaillancourt, 2018). The manifestation of evident ethnic traits and the attribution of prejudices relating to racial and cultural identity clearly disfavours the minorities that display them, but not the minorities whose traits and cultures are the majority or reference ideals. Other studies (Shin et al., 2011; Xu et al., 2020) have pointed out the contribution of processes of cultural challenge, by which being uprooted from their own indigenous and African American heritage to live in a new culture, with a new set of customs, values and beliefs, constitutes a major obstacle to social equilibrium and adjustment. This occurs when the society itself devalues these origins in minorities but does not do so when the minorities belong to another group (whites), whose traits and customs are considered positive or ideal. These results are consistent with those found in Western countries with wide ethnic-cultural diversity and greater economic development, such as the United States of America (Cardoso et al., 2017; Closson et al., 2014; Fisher et al., 2015; Kiang et al., 2018; Llorent et al., 2016; Monks et al., 2008; Shin et al., 2011; Tolsma et al., 2013; Vervoort et al., 2010).

The present study offers an instrument for measuring ethnic-cultural bullying which overcomes the limitations of the instruments available to date (Bayram et al., 2020; Baysu et al., 2016; Closson et al., 2014; Priest et al., 2014; Rodríguez-Hidalgo et al., 2015; Rodríguez-Hidalgo et al., 2014; Shin et al., 2011; Verkuyten y Thijs, 2006; Weinstein et al., 2021). The good psychometric properties of the EBIPQ-ECD for Ecuador are consistent with those recorded in the study carried out in Spain (Rodríguez-Hidalgo et al., 2019) in terms of the roles involved and in some aspects of prevalence. It also registered key trends regarding the theory of social dominance of the majority group and the ideal reference group, and provided us with confirmation of the extent to which the values and traits of the dominant group act as a reference in the harm encountered by the minority group. This instrument permits scalar and exhaustive recording in two dimensions, racist aggression and ethnic-cultural victimization, based on the discriminatory inequality which is present in all societies where a majority group imposes its set of values on the rest while another group seems to suffer the effects in terms of violence based on discriminatory models and inequality. The use of the EBIPQ-ECD adapted to Latin America can also be a valuable resource for the detection of ethnic-cultural aggression and ethnic-cultural victimization in schools in this broad region.

The limitations of the study are linked to the use of self-reports, which always involve the risk of desirability. For future studies on ethnic-cultural bullying, we suggested that recording measures should be added using self-reports and hetero-reports, within the framework of longitudinal designs. This could allow us to triangulate between different potential stakeholders - especially between individuals and inter-ethnic-cultural groups - as well as to observe the evolution of ethnic-cultural bullying. This would be a key factor for studies focusing on the precursors and protective factors of this violent, discriminatory phenomenon between equals. Further scientific knowledge about this harmful dynamic also has strategic value for developing social and educational prevention, and for designing effective and viable palliation policies.

### **Originality, ethical responsibilities and conflict of interest**

This work is original and is currently not being evaluated by any other journal. Ethical responsibilities have been taken into account, and the authors declare no conflicts of interest.

### **Financing**

This research received no external funding.

### **CRedit authorship contribution statement**

**Pantaleón Yisela:** Writing – original draft, Resources, Investigation, Funding acquisition, Data curation, Conceptualization.

**Rodríguez-Hidalgo Antonio Jesús:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Supervision, Resources, Project administration, Methodology, Investigation, Data curation, Conceptualization. **Herrera-López Mauricio:** Writing – review & editing, Validation, Software, Methodology, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization. **Ortega-Ruiz Rosario:** Writing – review & editing, Supervision, Project administration, Investigation, Conceptualization.

## Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank The Spanish National R+D+I Plan for their support under project PSI2016–74871-R, as well as the schools and students who took part in the study.

## References

- Arens, A. K., & Visser, L. (2020). Personal peer victimization and ethnic peer victimization: Findings on their co-occurrence, predictors, and outcomes from a latent profile analysis. *Child Abuse Neglect*, 99, Article 104250.
- Basilici, M. C., Palladino, B. E., & Menesini, E. (2024). The association between social/legal and perceptual aspects of ethnicity and ethnic bullying and victimization. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17405629.2024.2333962>
- Bayram, S., Giles, C., & Özdemiř, M. (2020). Differences and similarities between perpetrators of ethnic and non-ethnicity-based victimization. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 49(9), 1805–1820.
- Bayram, S., Sun, S., Korol, L., Özdemiř, M., & Stattin, H. (2018). Adolescents' engagement in ethnic harassment: Prejudiced beliefs in social networks and classroom ethnic diversity. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 47(6), 1151–1163. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-017-0795-0>
- Baysu, G., Celeste, L., Brown, R., Verschueren, K., & Phalet, K. (2016). Minority adolescents in ethnically diverse schools: Perceptions of equal treatment buffer threat effects. *Child Development*, 87(5), 1352–1366. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12609>
- Benítez, F. J., Rodríguez, A. J., & Herrera-López, M. (2023). Propiedades Psicométricas del Cuestionario Habilidades Socio-emocionales para la Mediación Escolar. *Electronic Journal of Research in Education Psychology*, 21(61), 693–722. <https://doi.org/10.25115/ejrep.v21i61.8499>
- Benítez, F. J., Rodríguez, A. J., & Herrera-López, M. (2024). La Competencia social multidimensional en la Formación de las Habilidades Socioemocionales para la Mediación Escolar. *Electronic Journal of Research in Education Psychology*, 22(62), 151–170. <https://doi.org/10.25115/ejrep.v22i62.8504>
- Benner, A. D., & Graham, S. (2013). The antecedents and consequences of racial/ethnic discrimination during adolescence: Does the source of discrimination matter? *Developmental Psychology*, 49(8), 1602. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0030557>
- Benner, A. D., & Wang, Y. (2017). Racial/ethnic discrimination and adolescents' well-being: The role of cross-ethnic friendships and friends' experiences of discrimination. *Child Development*, 88(2), 493–504. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12606>
- Bentler, R. M., & Wu, E. J. C. (2012). EQS for windows (Version 6.2) [Statistical Program for Windows]. Encino, CA: Multivariate Software, Inc.
- Bollen, K. A. (1989). *Structural Equations with Latent Variables*. New York: Wiley.
- Brighi, A., Ortega, R., Scheitauer, H., Smith, P.K., Tsormpatzoudis, C., Barkoukis, V., Del Rey, R. (2012). European Bullying Intervention Project Questionnaire (EBIPQ). Recovered from (<http://www.bullyingandcyber.net>).
- Bryant, F. B., & Satorra, A. (2012). Principles and practice of scaled difference Chi-Square testing. *Structural Equation Modeling: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, 19, 372–398. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10705511.2012.687671>
- Caravita, S. C., Stefanelli, S., Mazzone, A., Cadei, L., Thornberg, R., & Ambrosini, B. (2020). When the bullied peer is native-born vs. immigrant: A mixed-method study with a sample of native-born and immigrant adolescents. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, 61(1), 97–107. <https://doi.org/10.1111/sjop.12565>
- Caravita, S. C., Strohmeier, D., Salmivalli, C., & Di Blasio, P. (2019). Bullying immigrant versus non-immigrant peers: Moral disengagement and participant roles. *Journal of School Psychology*, 75, 119–133. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsp.2019.07.005>
- Cardoso, J. B., Szlyk, H. S., Goldbach, J., Swank, P., & Zvolensky, M. J. (2017). General and ethnic-biased bullying among latino students: Exploring risks of depression, suicidal ideation, and substance use. *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10903-017-0593-5>
- Castranova, V., Asgharian, B., Sayre, P., Virginia, W., & Carolina, N. (2016). They were just making jokes: Ethnic/racial teasing and discrimination among adolescents. *Cultur Divers Ethnic Minor Psychol*, 22(1), 1922–2013. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10937404.2015.1051611.INHALATION>
- Chen, L. M., Liu, K. S., & Cheng, Y. Y. (2012). Validation of the perceived school bullying severity scale. *Educational Psychology*, 32(2), 169–182.
- Closson, L. M., Darwich, L., Hymel, S., & Waterhouse, T. (2014). Ethnic discrimination among recent immigrant adolescents: Variations as a function of ethnicity and school context. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 24(4), 608–614. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jora.12089>
- Del Rey, R., Casas, J. A., Ortega-Ruiz, R., Schultze-Krumbholz, A., Scheithauer, H., Smith, P., ... Plichta, P. (2015). Structural validation and cross-cultural robustness of the European cyberbullying intervention project questionnaire. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 50, 141–147. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2015.03.065>
- Dimitrov, D. M. (2010). Testing for the factorial invariance in the context of construct validation. *Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development*, 43, 121–149.
- Durkin, K., Hunter, S., Levin, K. A., Bergin, D., Heim, D., & Howe, C. (2012). Discriminatory peer aggression among children as a function of minority status and group proportion in school context. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 42(2), 243–251. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.870>
- Elosua-Oliden, P., & Zumbo, B. D. (2008). Coeficientes de fiabilidad para escalas de respuesta categórica ordenada. *Psicothema*, 20(4), 896–901.
- Espelage, D. L., & Rue, D. La (2012). School bullying: Its nature and ecology. *International Journal of Adolescent Medicine and Health*, 24(1), 3–10. <https://doi.org/10.1515/ijamh.2012.002>
- Fisher, S., Middleton, K., Ricks, E., Malone, C., Briggs, C., & Barnes, J. (2015). Not just black and white: Peer victimization and the intersectionality of school diversity and race. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 44(6), 1241–1250. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-014-0243-3>
- Hair, J., Black, W., Babin, B., Anderson, R., & Tatham, R. (2005). *Multivariate Data Analyses* (6th ed.). Nueva York, NY: Prentice-Hall.
- Hawkins, L. G., Brown, C. C., Goad, C., Rhynehart, A., Hemphill, T., & Snyder, H. (2021). Bullying, family cohesion, and school connectedness: A moderated-mediation multigroup analysis of adolescents. *International Journal of Systemic Therapy*, 32(2), 93–114. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2692398X.2021.1899738>
- Herrera-López, M., Romera, E., & Ortega-Ruiz, R. (2017). Bullying y cyberbullying en Colombia: coocurrencia en adolescentes escolarizados. *Revista Latinoamericana Délelót Psicología*, 49(3), 163–172.
- Hidekazu, A. (2011). Movimientos étnicos y multiculturalismo en Ecuador: pueblos indígenas, afrodescendientes, y montubios. *Revista electrónica Alai Revista Latinoamericana Délelót InformaciÓn*, 33–57.
- Hong, J. S., Kim, D. H., Hunter, S. C., Cleeland, L. R., Lee, C. A., Lee, J. J., & Kim, J. (2022). Racial/ethnic bullying subtypes and alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana use among US adolescents. *Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities*, 9(4), 1443–1453.
- Hu, L. T., & Bentler, P. M. (1999). Cutoff criteria for fit indexes in covariance structure analysis: Conventional criteria versus new alternatives. *Structural Equation Modeling: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, 6(1), 1–55. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10705519909540118>
- Iannello, N. M., Camodeca, M., Gelati, C., & Papotti, N. (2021). Prejudice and ethnic bullying among children: The role of moral disengagement and student-teacher relationship. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, Article 713081.
- Kiang, L., Supple, A. J., & Stein, G. L. (2018). Latent profiles of discrimination and socialization predicting ethnic identity and well-being among Asian American adolescents. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jora.12403>
- Kisfalusi, D., Pál, J., & Boda, Z. (2020). Bullying and victimization among majority and minority students: The role of peers' ethnic perceptions. *Social Networks*, 60, 48–60. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socnet.2018.08.006>

- Kormaz, S., Goksuluk, D., & Zararsiz, G. (2015). Multivariate Normality Tests: Package 'MVN' Versión 4.0. Recuperado el 10 de febrero de 2020 de (<http://www.biosoft.hacettepe.edu.tr/MVN/>).
- Larochette, A. C., Murphy, A. N., & Craig, W. M. (2010). Racial bullying and victimization in Canadian school-aged children: Individual and school level effects. *School Psychology International*, 31(4), 389–408. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0143034310377150>
- Llorent, V. J., Ortega-Ruiz, R., & Zych, I. (2016). Bullying and cyberbullying in minorities: Are they more vulnerable than the majority group? *Frontiers in Psychology*, 7 (OCT), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2016.01507>
- Lo Cricchio, M. G., Stefanelli, F., Palladino, B. E., Paciello, M., & Menesini, E. (2022). Development and validation of the ethnic moral disengagement scale. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, Article 756350. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.756350>
- Lorenzo-Seva, U., & Ferrando, P. (2006). FACTOR: A computer program to fit the exploratory factor analysis model. *Behavioral Research Methods, Instruments and Computers*, 38(1), 88–91. <https://doi.org/10.3758/bf03192753>
- Maynard, B. R., Vaughn, M. G., Salas-Wright, C. P., & Vaughn, S. (2016). Bullying victimization among school-aged immigrant youth in the United States. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 58(3), 337–344. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2015.11.013>
- McKenney, K. S., Pepler, D., Craig, W., & Connolly, J. (2006). Peer victimization and psychosocial adjustment: The experiences of Canadian immigrant youth. *Electronic Journal of Research in Educational Psychology*, 4(9), 239–264. Retrieved from (<http://www.scimagojr.com/journalsearch.php?q=Electronic+Journal+of+Research+in+Educational+Psychology>).
- Mendoza, Z. A. (2012). Diversidad étnica y cultural del Ecuador. *Revista Déléōtt Estudios Universitarios*, 163–173.
- Molina, L. E., Phillips, N. L., & Sidanius, J. (2015). National and ethnic identity in the face of discrimination: Ethnic minority and majority perspectives. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 21(2), 225–236. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0037880>
- Monks, C. P., Ortega-Ruiz, R., & Rodríguez-Hidalgo, A. J. (2008). Peer victimization in multicultural schools in Spain and England. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 37–41. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17405620701307316>
- Montero, I., & León, O. G. (2007). Guía para nombrar los estudios de investigación en Psicología. *International Journal of Clinical and Health Psychology*, 7(3), 847–862.
- Morata-Ramírez, M., & Holgado-Tello, F. P. (2013). Construct validity of Likert scales through confirmatory factor analysis: A simulation study comparing different methods of estimation based on Pearson and polychoric correlations. *International Journal of Social Science Studies*, 1(1), 54–61. <https://doi.org/10.11114/ijss.v1i1.27>
- Moreno, M. (2024). Calling racism by its name: forms of violence in the articulation or omission of racism in Ecuador. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2024.2329342>
- Ortega-Ruiz, R., Del Rey, R., & Casas, J. A. (2016). Evaluar el bullying y el cyberbullying validación española del EBIP-Q y del ECIP-Q. *Psicología Educativa*, 22, 71–79. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pse.2016.01.004>
- Priest, N., Perry, R., Ferdinand, A., Paradies, Y., & Kelaher, M. (2014). Experiences of racism, racial/ethnic attitudes, motivated fairness and mental health outcomes among primary and secondary school students. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 43, 1672–1687. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-014-0140-9>
- R Development Core Team (2008). R: A language and environment for statistical computing [Manual y software de cómputo]. Viena, Austria: R Foundation for Statistical Computing.
- Rhee, S., Lee, S., & Jung, S. (2017). Ethnic differences in bullying victimization and psychological distress: A test of an ecological model. *Journal of Adolescence*, 1–6. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2017.07.013>
- Rivas-Drake, D., Hughes, D., & Way, N. (2008). A closer look at peer discrimination, ethnic identity, and psychological well-being among urban Chinese American sixth graders. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 37(1), 12–21. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-007-9227-x>
- Robinson, L. E., Espelage, D. L., Valido, A., Ingram, K. M., El Sheikh, A. J., Torgal, C., Mintz, S., & Kuehl, T. (2021). Ethnic representation and willingness to seek help as moderators between peer victimization and mental health outcomes among Latinx adolescents. *School Mental Health*, 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12310-021-09419-9>
- Rodríguez-Hidalgo, A. J., Calmaestra, J., Casas, J. A., & Ortega-Ruiz. (2019). Ethnic-cultural bullying versus personal bullying: Specificity and measurement of discriminatory aggression and victimization among adolescents. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10(February), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00046>
- Rodríguez-Hidalgo, A. J., Ortega-Ruiz, R., & Monks, C. P. (2015). Peer-victimisation in multi-cultural contexts: A structural model of the effects on self-esteem and emotions. *Psicología Educativa*, 21, 3–9. (<http://www.scimagojr.com/journalsearch.php?q=21100378341&tip=sid&clean=0>).
- Rodríguez-Hidalgo, A. J., Ortega-Ruiz, R., & Zych, I. (2014). Peer victimization and ethnic-cultural peer victimization: Self-esteem and school relations between different cultural groups of students in Andalusia, Spain. *Revista Déléōtt Psicodidáctica*, 19(1), 191–210. <https://doi.org/10.1387/RevPsicodidact.7909>
- Rodríguez-Hidalgo, A.J., Pantaleón, Y. y Alcívar, A. (2017). La discriminación y la exclusión social: tejer la convivencia intercultural, 81-95. En A. J. Rodríguez-Hidalgo y R. Ortega-Ruiz, R. (coords) Acoso escolar, ciberacoso y discriminación. Educar en diversidad y convivencia. Los Libros de la Catarata: Madrid.
- Salmivalli, C. (2010). Bullying and the peer group: A review. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 15(2), 112–120. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2009.08.007>
- Satorra, A., & Bentler, P. M. (2001). A scaled difference chi-square test statistic for moment structure analysis. *Psychometrika*, 66(4), 507–514. <https://doi.org/10.1007/bf02296192>
- Satorra, A., & Bentler, P. M. (2010). Ensuring positiveness of the scaled difference chi-square test statistic. *Psychometrika*, 75, 243. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11336-009-9135-y>
- Schumann, L., Craig, W., & Rosu, A. (2013). Minority in the majority: Community ethnicity as a context for racial bullying and victimization. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 41(8), 959–972. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jcop>
- Shin, J. Y., D'antonio, E., Son, H., Kim, S.-A., & Park, Y. (2011). Bullying and discrimination experiences among Korean-American adolescents. *Journal of Adolescence*, 34, 873–883. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2011.01.004>
- Solberg, M. E., & Olweus, D. (2003). Prevalence estimation of school bullying with the Olweus bully/victim questionnaire. *Aggressive Behavior*, 29(3), 239–268. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ab.10047>
- Tolsma, J., Deurzen, I. Van, Stark, T. H., & Veenstra, R. (2013). Who is bullying whom in ethnically diverse primary schools? Exploring links between bullying, ethnicity, and ethnic diversity in Dutch primary schools. *Social Networks*, 35(1), 51–61. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socnet.2012.12.002>
- Verkuyten, M., & Thijs, J. (2006). Ethnic discrimination and global self-worth in early adolescents: The mediating role of ethnic self-esteem. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 30(2), 107–116. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0165025406063573>
- Vervoort, M. H. M., Scholte, R. H. J., & Overbeek, G. (2010). Bullying and victimization among adolescents: The role of ethnicity and ethnic composition of school class. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 39(1), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-008-9355-y>
- Vitoroulis, I., & Vaillancourt, T. (2018). Ethnic group differences in bullying perpetration: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jora.12393>
- Weinstein, M., Jensen, M. R., & Tynes, B. M. (2021). Victimized in many ways: Online and offline bullying/harassment and perceived racial discrimination in diverse racial-ethnic minority adolescents. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 27(3), 397. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cdp0000436>
- Xu, M., Macrynika, N., Waseem, M., & Miranda, R. (2020). Racial and ethnic differences in bullying: Review and implications for intervention. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 50, Article 101340. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2019.101340>
- Žemotjel-Piotrowska, M., Sawicki, A., y, & Jonason, P. K. (2020). Dark personality traits, political values, and prejudice: Testing a dual process model of prejudice towards refugees. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 166, Article 110168. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2020.110168>