

# How can we prevent bullying experiences? The benefits of appreciating positive experiences and maintaining good social relationships

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## Background

The scientific literature has examined possible protective factors for victimisation, being peer support and social relationships two of them (e.g., Cortés-Pascual et al., 2020; Košir et al., 2020).

Gratitude is one of the protective factors that could show benefits in social functioning (e.g., Caleon et al., 2019). These benefits could be explained, in part, by Algoe's find-remind-and-bind theory (2012). According to this theory, being a grateful adolescent would favour the finding and reminding of good experiences in social exchanges, facilitating the binding and strengthen social relationships and peer relatedness (e.g., Caleon et al., 2019; Tian et al., 2016), which would help to prevent suffering aggressive behaviours (e.g., Stieger et al., 2020). Nonetheless, there is little research analysing the role of both factors in bullying contexts.

## Objectives

- To examine the possible protective role of gratitude on bullying victimisation.
- To explore the possible mediator roles of positive relationships and classmate support in the linkage gratitude-bullying victimisation.



## Method



604 adolescents

(327 ♀ - 277 ♂)

12-17 years ( $M_{age} = 13.48$ ;  $SD = 1.28$ )

Students from 7<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> grade

3 centres from South of Spain

**Gratitude questionnaire**

(GQ-5; Rey et al., 2018)

**Positive relationships subscale**

(SPWB; Díaz et al., 2006)

**Classmate support subscale**

(TCSS; Torsheim et al., 2000)

**Victimisation subscale**

(EBIP-Q; Ortega-Ruiz et al., 2016)

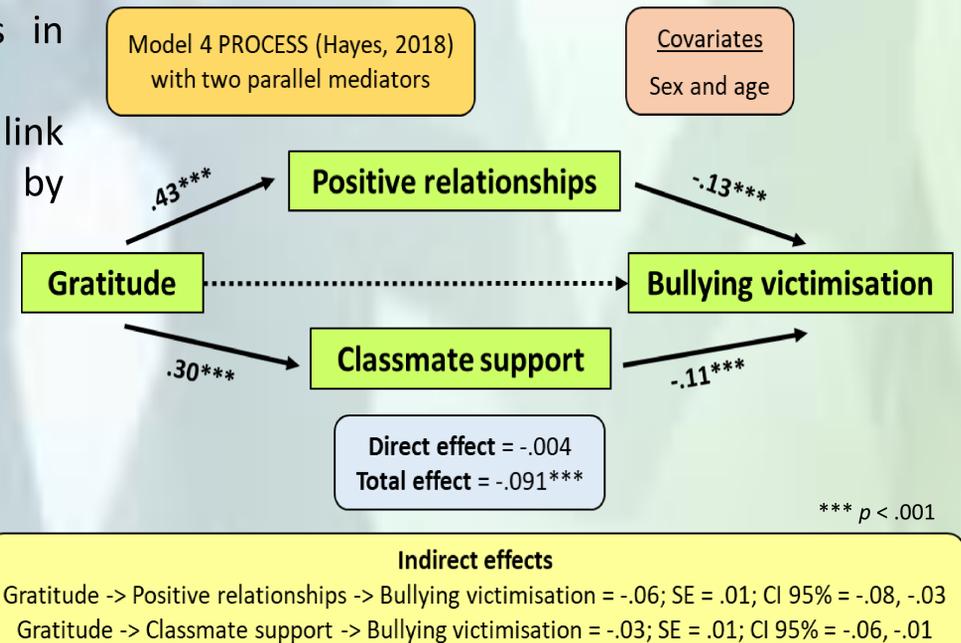
## Results

- ❖ Adequate reliability indices and significant correlations in expected line were obtained (see Table).
- ❖ The results of mediation analyse showed that the link gratitude-bullying victimisation was totally mediated by positive relationships and classmate support (see Figure).

Table. Reliability, descriptive statistics, and Pearson's correlations

	1	2	3	4
1. Gratitude	(.78)			
2. Positive relationships	.41***	(.79)		
3. Classmate support	.38***	.44***	(.82)	
4. Bullying victimisation	-.18***	-.35***	-.28***	(.77)
Mean	5.78	4.44	4.03	.54
Standard deviation	1.09	1.20	.87	.60
Minimum - Maximum	1 - 7	1 - 6	1 - 5	0 - 4

\*\*\*  $p < .001$ . Cronbach's alpha in brackets.



## Conclusion

These findings corroborate the benefits of the development of gratitude on promoting and strengthening social relationships inside and outside classrooms, according to previous studies (e.g., Caleon et al., 2019; Tian et al., 2016). Also, first evidence of the potential protective role of gratitude to prevent bullying victimisation in adolescents is provided, in line to previous research (e.g., Stieger et al., 2020) and theoretical model (i.e., Algoe, 2012).

Future research is needed to deepen and confirm these results in longitudinal designs and with other samples. Nevertheless, these findings suggest that gratitude may be a useful resource to train in adolescents and a complement to current anti-bullying programmes.

## References

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