

The Relationship Between Parenting Styles and Bullying Among Adolescents

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The Indonesian Teachers' Union Federation (FSGI) recorded 23 cases of bullying in educational institutions between January and September 2023. The highest incidence was found at the junior high school (SMP) level, accounting for 50% of cases, followed by elementary school (SD) with 13.5%, senior high school (SMA) with 13.5%, and vocational high school (SMK) with 13.5%. The major contributing factors to bullying among school-aged children include parenting styles, peer influence, and school environment.

Objective: This study aimed to determine the association between parenting styles and bullying behavior among adolescents.

Method: A quantitative research design with a cross-sectional approach was employed. The study population consisted of 1,021 students, from which a sample of 91 students was selected using simple random sampling. Data collection was conducted through questionnaires: parenting styles were measured using the Parenting Style and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ), while bullying incidents were assessed using the Adolescent Peer Relations Instrument. Univariate analysis was performed using frequency distribution, and bivariate analysis was conducted using the Chi-Square test.

Result: The findings revealed a significant relationship between parenting styles and bullying incidents ($p = 0.000$). Bullying among adolescents in schools was influenced by parental upbringing. Parenting styles play a crucial role in shaping children's personality and behaviour. Adolescents raised under authoritarian parenting styles were found to be at greater risk of becoming perpetrators of bullying, as they tend to replicate daily family interactions in their social environment.

Conclusion: This study concludes that parenting styles significantly influence the occurrence of bullying among adolescents. Authoritarian parenting increases the likelihood of adolescents engaging in bullying behavior. Future research is recommended to further investigate the impact of authoritarian and permissive parenting styles on bullying incidents.

Keywords: adolescents, bullying, bullying incidents, parenting styles

Introduction

Adolescence is a developmental period marked by rapid physical, psychological, and social changes and represents a transition from childhood to adulthood (Tsagem, 2022). A key developmental task during this stage is identity formation, which involves seeking peer acceptance, social recognition, and increasing independence and responsibility (Zhang & Qin, 2023). This transitional phase increases adolescents' vulnerability to various physical, psychological, and social problems, often associated with risk behaviors (Kalat et al., 2023). National data in Indonesia indicate significant public health concerns, including unintended pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, smoking behavior, suicide, and rising cases of bullying among adolescents (Yuniarsih et al., 2025).

Bullying remains a major problem among adolescents in Indonesia and globally. International reports indicate that bullying affects a substantial proportion of adolescents worldwide, with high prevalence rates reported in Asian countries, including Indonesia (Erskine et al., 2025). Bullying may involve repetitive aggressive behaviors and often follows a cyclical pattern in which victims may later become perpetrators (Falla et al., 2022). The consequences of bullying are serious and long-lasting. Victims commonly experience psychological distress, social withdrawal, and increased risk of suicidal ideation, while perpetrators are more likely to develop persistent aggressive behaviors that extend into adulthood (Siddique et al., n.d.).

Bullying behavior is influenced by multiple factors, including individual characteristics, peer relationships, and family environment. Parenting style has been consistently identified as a significant determinant, with authoritarian parenting associated with higher risks of bullying involvement (Aminah et al., n.d.). Boşca & Cojocaru (2023) classified parenting styles into authoritarian, democratic, and permissive, each exerting distinct influences on adolescents' emotional and behavioral development. Preliminary observations at SMPN 1 Selawi and SMP Plus Madarikul Ulum indicate that many students have experienced bullying, either as victims or perpetrators, with authoritarian parenting being the most frequently reported background. These findings highlight the need to examine the relationship between parenting styles and bullying behavior among adolescents. Previous studies demonstrate that negative parenting practices, particularly high control and low emotional warmth, significantly increase the likelihood of adolescents' involvement in bullying behaviors (Pinquart, 2017). Conversely, supportive and democratic parenting has been shown to foster emotional regulation and reduce aggressive tendencies among adolescents (Baldry et al., 2019). Furthermore, family-based prevention programs are considered effective in mitigating bullying behaviors when integrated with school-based interventions (Hong & Espelage, 2020). Recent global evidence also emphasizes the importance of parental involvement in creating safe and inclusive school environments (UNESCO, 2023). Longitudinal research suggests that addressing parenting factors during early adolescence can prevent the persistence of bullying behavior into adulthood (Arseneault, 2018; Copeland et al., 2019).

Objective

This study aimed to determine the association between parenting styles and bullying behavior among adolescents.

Method

This study employed a quantitative analytic design using a cross-sectional approach to examine the relationship between parenting styles and bullying behavior among adolescents. The research was conducted at SMPN 1 Selaawi and involved data collection during the 2024 academic year. The study population consisted of all students enrolled at SMPN 1 Selaawi, totaling 1,021 adolescents. A sample of 91 students was selected using a simple random sampling technique to ensure that each student had an equal opportunity to participate. The inclusion criteria were students who were actively enrolled and willing to participate in the study, while students who were absent during data collection or did not complete the questionnaire were excluded.

Parenting styles were measured using the Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ), which assesses three types of parenting styles: democratic (authoritative), authoritarian, and permissive. The PSDQ consists of 32 statements that reflect adolescents' perceptions of their parents' parenting practices, with responses measured using a Likert scale. Bullying behavior was assessed using the Adolescent Peer Relations Instrument (APRI), a standardized and validated questionnaire that measures involvement in bullying as a perpetrator or victim, including physical, verbal, and social bullying.

Data collection was carried out by distributing questionnaires directly to respondents after obtaining informed consent. Prior to data collection, ethical approval was obtained from the relevant research ethics committee (No. 100/09.KEPK/UBK/VII/2024). Confidentiality and anonymity of respondents were ensured throughout the research process. Data analysis consisted of univariate and bivariate analyses. Univariate analysis was used to describe respondent characteristics, parenting styles, and bullying behavior using frequency and percentage distributions. Bivariate analysis was conducted using the Chi-Square test to determine the association between parenting styles and bullying behavior among adolescents. Statistical significance was determined at a p-value of less than 0.05.

Result

This study examined the relationship between parental parenting styles and bullying behavior among students at SMPN 1 Selaawi, involving a sample of 91 participants.

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Parental Parenting Styles Among Adolescents

Parenting Style	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Democratic	23	25.3
Authoritarian	27	29.7
Permissive	41	45.0
Total	91	100.0

The table presents the frequency distribution of parenting styles among the adolescent respondents. The findings indicate that permissive parenting was the most frequently reported style, with 41 respondents (45%) experiencing this type of parenting. This suggests that a considerable proportion of adolescents were raised in environments characterized by high freedom and limited parental control or supervision.

Authoritarian parenting was reported by 27 respondents (29.7%), indicating that nearly one-third of adolescents experienced strict parenting practices with high levels of control and discipline. Meanwhile, democratic parenting was the least common style, reported by 23 respondents (25.3%), reflecting a smaller proportion of adolescents who experienced balanced parenting characterized by warmth, communication, and clear boundaries.

Overall, these results show that permissive and authoritarian parenting styles were more prevalent than democratic parenting among the respondents, which may have important implications for adolescents' behavioral and social development.

Table 2. Frequency Distribution of Characteristics of Bullying Incidents

Bullying behavior	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Non-perpetrator	13	14.3
Perpetrator	31	34.0
Victim	45	49.5
Non-victim	2	2.2
Total	91	100.0

Table 2 illustrates the frequency distribution of bullying behavior among the adolescent respondents. The results show that nearly half of the respondents were identified as victims of bullying, with 45 adolescents (49.5%) reporting experiences of being bullied. This finding indicates that bullying victimization remains a prominent issue among the studied population. A total of 31 respondents (34.0%) were classified as perpetrators, suggesting that a substantial proportion of adolescents engaged in bullying behavior toward their peers. Meanwhile, 13 respondents (14.3%) were categorized as non-perpetrators, indicating that they did not report involvement in bullying others. Only a small number of respondents, 2 adolescents (2.2%), were identified as non-victims, showing that very few participants reported no experience of being bullied.

Overall, the table highlights a high prevalence of both bullying victimization and perpetration among adolescents, emphasizing that bullying is a widespread problem affecting a large proportion of students in the study sample.

Table 3. Frequency Distribution of Parental Parenting Styles Among Adolescents

Parenting Style	Bullying behavior								Total	
	Non-perpetrator		Perpetrator		Victim		Non-victim			
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Democratic	1	50	0	0	19	42	3	25	23	25,3
Authoritarian	1	50	19	61,3	4	9	3	25	27	29,7
Permissive	0	0	12	38,7	22	49	7	50	41	45
Total	2	100	31	100	45	100	13	100	91	100
<i>Chi Square</i>	$X^2 = 0,000$									

Table 3 presents the distribution of bullying behavior across different parental parenting styles among adolescents. The findings indicate clear variations in bullying involvement based on the type of parenting experienced by the respondents. Among

adolescents who were classified as perpetrators of bullying, the majority experienced authoritarian parenting, with 19 respondents (61.3%). This suggests that strict and highly controlling parenting practices may be associated with a greater tendency for adolescents to engage in bullying behavior. In contrast, no perpetrators were found among adolescents raised under democratic parenting, indicating a potential protective effect of this parenting style against bullying perpetration.

In terms of bullying victimization, nearly half of the adolescents who were victims experienced permissive parenting, accounting for 22 respondents (49%). This finding implies that permissive parenting, which is characterized by low control and limited supervision, may increase adolescents' vulnerability to becoming victims of bullying. Meanwhile, 19 victims (42%) were raised under democratic parenting, while only a small proportion of victims experienced authoritarian parenting.

For adolescents categorized as non-victims, permissive parenting was the most common, reported by 7 respondents (50%), followed by democratic and authoritarian parenting, each accounting for 3 respondents (25%). Overall, permissive parenting was the most prevalent style in the study, representing 41 respondents (45%), followed by authoritarian parenting (29.7%) and democratic parenting (25.3%).

The Chi-Square test result (χ^2 , $p = 0.000$) indicates a statistically significant association between parenting styles and bullying behavior among adolescents. This result confirms that parental parenting style is significantly related to whether adolescents become perpetrators, victims, or are not involved in bullying behavior.

Discussion

This study confirms that parenting style is significantly associated with adolescents' involvement in bullying, either as perpetrators or victims. Permissive parenting was the most prevalent style among respondents, followed by authoritarian and democratic parenting. Bullying involvement was most common among early adolescents, particularly those aged 14 years and students in grade VII, with verbal bullying identified as the dominant form.

The dominance of permissive parenting indicates that excessive freedom without clear boundaries may weaken adolescents' self-regulation and behavioral control. As proposed by Zhao (2023), permissive parenting is characterized by high responsiveness and low demands, which may increase adolescents' vulnerability to bullying through poor impulse control or reduced assertiveness. This finding is consistent with previous studies reporting that permissive parenting is associated with behavioral problems and higher bullying involvement (Nur Aziz et al., 2025).

Authoritarian parenting was also significantly related to bullying behavior. Strict control and punitive discipline may foster emotional suppression and aggressive coping strategies, increasing the likelihood of bullying perpetration. This result aligns with earlier research suggesting that authoritarian parenting contributes to maladaptive emotional regulation and aggressive peer interactions (Zhao, 2023).

In contrast, democratic parenting showed a protective effect against bullying involvement. Characterized by warmth, open communication, and consistent boundaries, this parenting style supports emotional stability and social competence, thereby reducing bullying

risk. Similar findings have been reported in prior studies highlighting the positive psychosocial outcomes of democratic parenting (Ulfa et al., 2025).

Bullying was most prevalent during early adolescence, a developmental stage marked by identity exploration and heightened peer influence. Male adolescents were more likely to be perpetrators, whereas females were more often victims, reflecting gender differences in aggression patterns (Gomes et al., 2022). Verbal bullying emerged as the most common form, reinforcing evidence that it is widespread yet frequently underestimated (Barus et al., 2023).

This study is limited by its cross-sectional design, reliance on self-reported data and restricted generalizability. Future research should employ longitudinal designs, include diverse populations and explore parenting-based interventions to prevent bullying.

Conclusion

This study aimed to examine the relationship between parenting styles and bullying behavior among adolescents. The findings indicate that permissive parenting was the most prevalent style and a substantial proportion of adolescents were involved in bullying, either as perpetrators or victims. Statistical analysis confirmed a significant association between parenting style and bullying incidence, highlighting the important role of family environments in shaping adolescents' social behavior. These results underscore the need for parents to adopt balanced parenting practices characterized by clear boundaries, warmth, and consistent supervision to reduce the risk of bullying. Promoting effective parenting strategies may contribute to healthier adolescent development and safer school environments.

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Authors' contribution

Each author contributed equally in all the parts of the research. All authors have critically reviewed and approved the final draft and are responsible for the content and similarity index of the manuscript.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper. This research was conducted independently without any financial, commercial, or personal relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest. All processes, including study design, data collection, analysis, and manuscript preparation, were carried out objectively and without external influence.

Ethical consideration

Not applicable.

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