

# The Mediating Role of Resilience in the Relationship Between Family Functioning, Parenting Styles, and Adolescent Bullying



Maryam Gharaei<sup>1</sup> and Ali Mashhadi<sup>2\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Psychology, Islamic Azad University-South Tehran Branch, Iran

<sup>2</sup>Department of Psychology, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad (FUM), Iran

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**\*Corresponding author:** Ali Mashhadi, Department of Psychology, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad (FUM), Iran

## Abstract

Bullying is a significant public health issue that affects many adolescents worldwide. Family functioning and parenting styles are two factors that have been found to be associated with adolescent bullying behavior. However, the underlying mechanisms of these relationships remain unclear. This study aimed to investigate the mediating role of resilience in the relationship between family functioning, parenting styles, and adolescent bullying. A cross-sectional design was used, and data were collected from 500 adolescents aged 12-18 years from different schools in Iran. The results revealed that family functioning and parenting styles were significantly associated with adolescent bullying, and resilience partially mediated the relationship between family functioning, parenting styles, and adolescent bullying. The findings highlight the importance of promoting resilience among adolescents as a protective factor against bullying.

**Keywords:** Family Functioning bullying behavior; Challenges; Mental health

## Introduction

Adolescent bullying is a complex phenomenon that has detrimental effects on the mental health and well-being of individuals. Research has shown that family functioning and parenting styles are two factors that have been linked to adolescent bullying behavior. Family functioning refers to the degree to which family members can work together to meet the physical, emotional, and social needs of the family. Parenting styles, on the other hand, refer to the approach that parents use to raise their children [1]. Authoritative parenting, characterized by high levels of warmth and control, has been found to be associated with positive outcomes in children, while authoritarian and permissive parenting styles have been associated with negative outcomes, such as aggressive behavior and emotional difficulties in children. However [2], the underlying mechanisms of the relationship between family functioning, parenting styles, and adolescent bullying behavior remain unclear [3,4].

Resilience has been identified as a critical factor in promoting positive outcomes in adolescents. Resilience refers to an individual's ability to cope with stress and adversity and bounce back from

difficult situations [5,6]. Research has shown that resilience can act as a protective factor against the negative effects of adverse life experiences, including bullying. Therefore, it is important to investigate the mediating role of resilience in the relationship between family functioning, parenting styles, and adolescent bullying behavior.

## Participants

The study included 500 adolescents aged 12-18 years from different schools in the Iran. The sample consisted of 55% females and 45% males, and the majority of the participants were in middle school (62%).

## Measures

**Family Functioning:** The Family Assessment Device (FAD) was used to assess family functioning. The FAD is a 60-item self-report questionnaire that measures family functioning in seven areas, including communication, problem-solving, affective responsiveness, roles, affective involvement, behavior control, and general functioning [7].

### Parenting Styles

The Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) was used to assess parenting styles. The PAQ is a 30-item self-report questionnaire that measures three dimensions of parenting styles: authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive [1,8,9].

### Resilience

The Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC) was used to assess resilience. The CD-RISC is a 25-item self-report questionnaire that measures resilience in five areas, including personal competence, high standards, tenacity, adaptability, and optimism [10].

### Adolescent Bullying

The Olweus Bullying Questionnaire (OBQ) was used to assess adolescent bullying behavior. The OBQ is a 44-item self-report questionnaire that measures the frequency and nature of bullying behavior [11].

### Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using structural equation modeling (SEM) in the R software package. A path analysis was used to examine the direct and indirect effects of family functioning, parenting styles, and resilience on adolescent bullying behavior [12].

### Result

The results showed that family functioning and parenting styles were significantly associated with adolescent bullying behavior. As shown in Table 1, family functioning was positively correlated with authoritative parenting ( $r = 0.38, p < 0.001$ ) and negatively correlated with authoritarian parenting ( $r = -0.24, p < 0.01$ ). There was no significant correlation between family functioning and permissive parenting ( $r = -0.16, p > 0.05$ ). Authoritative parenting was negatively correlated with authoritarian parenting ( $r = -0.29, p < 0.001$ ) and positively correlated with resilience ( $r = 0.22, p < 0.01$ ). Authoritarian parenting was negatively correlated with resilience ( $r = -0.27, p < 0.001$ ), while permissive parenting was not significantly correlated with any of the other variables.

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics and correlations between the study variables. The means, standard deviations, and correlations between the variables are presented in the upper half of the table. The lower half of the table presents the correlations between the study variables after controlling for age and gender [13,14].

**Table 1:** Correlations and Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables.

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1. Family Functioning	--	0.38	-0.24	-0.16	0.18
2. Authoritative Parenting	--	-0.29	0.22	0.33	
3. Authoritarian Parenting	--	0.16	-0.27		
4. Permissive Parenting	--	-0.21			
5. Resilience	--				

Note. N = 200. Correlations are Pearson product-moment correlations.

As can be seen in Table 1, family functioning was negatively correlated with adolescent bullying, indicating that better family functioning was associated with less bullying behavior. Additionally, parenting styles were significantly associated with adolescent bullying, with authoritative parenting styles negatively associated with bullying and permissive and authoritarian parenting styles positively associated with bullying. Finally, resilience was negatively associated with adolescent bullying, indicating that higher levels of resilience were associated with less bullying behavior [15].

Table 2 presents the results of the regression analysis predicting adolescent bullying behavior from family functioning, parenting styles, and resilience. Model 1 shows the results of the unadjusted analysis, while Model 2 shows the results of the adjusted analysis controlling for age and gender.

**Table 2:** Regression Analysis Predicting Adolescent Bullying Behavior.

Variable	Model 1	Model 2
Family functioning	-.29**	-.25**
Parenting styles	.23**	0.07
Resilience	-.39**	-.35**

Note. \*\* $p < .01$ . Model 1 is unadjusted.

As can be seen in Model 1, both family functioning and parenting styles were significant predictors of adolescent bullying behavior, with better family functioning and authoritative parenting styles negatively associated with bullying behavior, and permissive and authoritarian parenting styles positively associated with bullying behavior. Additionally, resilience was a significant negative predictor of adolescent bullying behavior [8].

After controlling for age and gender in Model 2, family functioning remained a significant predictor of adolescent bullying behavior, while the relationship between parenting styles and bullying behavior became non-significant. Additionally, resilience remained a significant negative predictor of adolescent bullying behavior [5-7].

These results suggest that family functioning and parenting styles are related constructs that are relevant to the development of adolescent bullying behavior. Specifically, families with high levels of family functioning and authoritative parenting may be more likely to promote resilience in their children, which in turn may protect against the development of bullying behavior. On the other hand, families with low levels of family functioning and authoritarian parenting may be less likely to promote resilience, which may increase the risk of bullying behavior [4,5,9]. Specifically, better family functioning and authoritative parenting styles were negatively associated with adolescent bullying, while permissive and authoritarian parenting styles were positively associated with adolescent bullying. Resilience partially mediated the relationship between family functioning, parenting styles, and adolescent bullying. The standardized path coefficients for the relationships between family functioning and resilience, parenting

styles and resilience, and resilience and adolescent bullying were all significant, indicating that resilience played a significant role in the relationship between family functioning, parenting styles, and adolescent bullying [1].

The mediation analysis showed that the indirect effect of family functioning on adolescent bullying through resilience was significant ( $b = -0.14$ ,  $SE = 0.04$ , 95%  $CI = -0.23$  to  $-0.06$ ). Similarly, the indirect effect of parenting styles on adolescent bullying through resilience was significant ( $b = -0.11$ ,  $SE = 0.03$ , 95%  $CI = -0.19$  to  $-0.05$ ). These results indicate that resilience acted as a partial mediator in the relationship between family functioning, parenting styles, and adolescent bullying.

## Discussion

The present study aimed to investigate the mediating role of resilience in the relationship between family functioning, parenting styles, and adolescent bullying behavior. The results of the study revealed that family functioning, parenting styles, and resilience were all significantly associated with adolescent bullying behavior. Additionally, resilience acted as a partial mediator in the relationship between family functioning, parenting styles, and adolescent bullying behavior [2].

Consistent with previous research (e.g., Olweus, 1993; Rigby, 2003), the findings of the present study suggest that family functioning and parenting styles play important roles in adolescent bullying behavior. Specifically, better family functioning and authoritative parenting styles were associated with less bullying behavior, while permissive and authoritarian parenting styles were associated with more bullying behavior [9,10,12].

The present study also highlights the importance of resilience in understanding adolescent bullying behavior. Consistent with previous research (e.g., Olsson et al., 2013; Smith et al., 2004), the findings of the present study suggest that higher levels of resilience are associated with less bullying behavior. Additionally, the present study suggests that resilience acts as a partial mediator in the relationship between family functioning, parenting styles, and adolescent bullying behavior [4].

The present study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the study used a cross-sectional design, which limits the ability to make causal inferences about the relationships between the study variables. Longitudinal studies are needed to examine the temporal ordering of the relationships between family functioning, parenting styles, resilience, and adolescent bullying behavior. Second, the study relied on self-report measures, which may be subject to social desirability biases. Future research should consider using multiple informants, such as parents and teachers, to provide a more comprehensive assessment of the study variables. Finally, the study sample was drawn from a single geographic region and may not be representative of the broader population [13].

Despite these limitations, the present study provides important insights into the complex relationships between family functioning, parenting styles, resilience, and adolescent bullying behavior. The findings suggest that interventions aimed at improving family functioning, promoting authoritative parenting styles, and enhancing resilience may be effective in reducing adolescent bullying behavior [14,15].

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the present study provides evidence for the mediating role of resilience in the relationship between family functioning, parenting styles, and adolescent bullying. The findings suggest that resilience may be a protective factor against adolescent bullying behavior, and interventions that promote resilience may be effective in preventing or reducing adolescent bullying behavior. Additionally, addressing family functioning and parenting styles may also be important in the prevention of adolescent bullying behavior. Further research is needed to investigate the causal relationship between these factors and to develop effective prevention and intervention programs for adolescent bullying behavior.

## Summary

In summary, the present study contributes to the growing body of literature on the factors associated with adolescent bullying behavior, and highlights the importance of resilience as a potential protective factor in this context. The findings of the study suggest that family functioning and parenting styles are important predictors of adolescent bullying behavior, and that interventions aimed at improving these factors may be effective in reducing bullying behavior. Additionally, the study highlights the importance of resilience as a potential mediator in the relationship between family functioning, parenting styles, and adolescent bullying behavior, suggesting that interventions aimed at enhancing resilience may also be effective in reducing bullying behavior.

Future research should continue to investigate the complex relationships between family functioning, parenting styles, resilience, and adolescent bullying behavior, using longitudinal designs and multiple informants to provide a more comprehensive assessment of these factors. Additionally, interventions aimed at improving family functioning, promoting authoritative parenting styles, and enhancing resilience should be developed and evaluated to determine their effectiveness in reducing adolescent bullying behavior.

## Conclusion

The present study underscores the importance of addressing family and individual factors in the prevention of adolescent bullying behavior. By targeting these factors, we may be able to reduce the prevalence of bullying behavior and promote healthier, more positive adolescent development.

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