

Perceived Parenting Styles and Emotional Control as Predictors of Peer Bullying Involvement

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Abstract

In our study we tested a model of the relationships among students' perceived parenting styles, their emotional control and peer bullying involvement, since family characteristics are understudied and unclear in comparison with individual and school factors of peer bullying. Our sample included 202 students from 7th and 8th grade from 14 lower secondary schools. The resulting model showed that the authoritative parenting style positively predicted emotional regulation and observation of bullying. The authoritarian parenting style positively predicted relational and physical bullying with teasing and observation of bullying, and negatively emotional control. Emotional control as a mediating variable negatively predicted all forms of involvement in peer bullying. The results indicate the importance of promoting self-regulation skills in adolescents. Some practical implications for parents and school staff are discussed.

Keywords:

Parenting Styles, Emotional Control, Peer Bullying, Adolescents

Introduction

Peer bullying at schools is described as aggressive, intentional acts carried out by a group or an individual repeatedly and over an extended period of time against a victim who cannot easily defend him- or herself (Olweus, 1993). Newer definitions add an imbalance of power (physical or psychological) between the victim and the bully (e.g. Volk et al., 2017). Research suggests that it is a widespread phenomenon with serious short- and long-term consequences for students. A meta-analysis by Gini and Pozzoli (2009) revealed that students involved in peer bullying are at higher risk of psychosomatic problems, low emotional adjustment, poor peer relationships, health problems, and problems with academic adjustment.

However, peer bullying is not only the result of the individual characteristics of students who are directly involved in it, but, following Bronfenbrenner's (1979) socio-ecological systems theory, there is an interaction among individual, family, and school factors, as well as the influences of the media and wider society. In our study, we focused on parental style as one of the family characteristics that predict peer bullying involvement. This is based on Nocentini et al.'s



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(2019) identification of three groups of family variables – contextual family variables (e.g. parents' mental health, domestic violence), relational family variables (e.g., authoritative parenting, communication), and parents' individual processes (e.g. parental beliefs about bullying, parental knowledge about strategies to manage bullying situations).

Although these factors have received more attention in recent years (Nocentini et al., 2019), they remain understudied compared to research addressing individual (peer) and school factors.

Because previous research demonstrates that emotional regulation is one of the predictors of adjustment throughout development (Cole et al., 2017), and is one of the links between parenting practices and child adjustment (Eisenberg et al., 2004), this was another construct we considered important in examining the relationship between family characteristics and peer bullying involvement. Furthermore, in a longitudinal study of adolescents, Dickson et al. (2019) found that less favourable parenting was associated with impaired emotional regulation, which predicted a higher likelihood of perpetration of peer bullying and victimization by students in the following year.

Our goal, therefore, was to examine the relationship between students' perceived parental style (family characteristic), students' self-perceptions of emotional control (individual characteristic), and frequency of involvement in peer bullying as perpetrator, victim, or observer.

Parenting styles

Baumrind (1971) proposed three main parenting styles, which are a combination of parental control and parental warmth. She described authoritative parents as controlling and demanding on the one hand and warm, rational, and receptive to the child's communication on the other; authoritarian parents were described as distant, controlling, and less warm; and permissive-style parents were described as noncontrolling, nondemanding, and relatively warm. In her later work Baumrind (2005) proposed that parental behaviour, as perceived by children, has two dimensions – demandingness (i.e., controlling behaviour, setting limits and expectations for the child) and responsiveness (i.e., responding to the child's needs, supporting and maintaining warm communication). Thus, another parenting style was added to the existing three – the disengaged parent who is neither demanding nor responsive. Nonetheless, and despite the fact that some previous researchers have expanded the study of parenting variables beyond parenting styles (e.g., Gómez-Ortiz et al. (2014) added parental use of humour and autonomy support; Georgiou and Stavrinides (2013)

introduced parent-child conflict, parental monitoring, and child disclosure in examining the relationship between family characteristics and peer bullying), for the purposes of this study, we drew on the long tradition of the three parenting styles originally proposed as predictors of emotional control and peer bullying involvement. Several studies have consistently shown that children of authoritative parents are better adjusted (Steinberg et al., 1995) and have greater academic and psychosocial competence (Mahapatra & Batul, 2016).

Parenting styles and emotional control

Fosco and Grych (2012) point out that children's emotional regulation is initially shaped by their first interpersonal context, the family, and that children exhibited more emotional regulation when their parents showed warmth and sensitivity to their emotions. Similarly, in a longitudinal study with adolescents, Herd et al. (2020) found that a positive family environment, as measured by parents' emotional regulation, parenting practices, and the quality of the parent-adolescent relationship, was associated with increases in emotional regulation on later measures. In addition, Morris et al. (2007) argued that the family environment influences the development of emotional regulation in three ways: i) through observation, ii) through specific parental practices and behaviours, and iii) through the family emotional climate (quality of attachment, parenting styles, family expressiveness, etc.). Specifically, the authors found that parental responsiveness and negativity, the most salient features of parental styles which regard to the current study, influence children's emotions, emotional competence, and emotional regulation. In particular, authoritative parenting helps children to acquire more constructive emotion-coping strategies (Chan, 2011) and to have more effective emotional regulation (Mahapatra & Batul, 2016).

Parental styles and peer bullying involvement

Several studies examined the relationship between parenting style and their children's involvement in peer bullying as perpetrators or victims. Georgiou (2008) reported that parenting style was associated only with victimization but not with perpetration of peer bullying, i.e., children of permissive mothers were more likely to be victims than children who received other parenting styles. Malm and Henrich (2019) reached somewhat different conclusions in a longitudinal study – namely that poor relationships between mother and child were found to predict bullying perpetration, but not victimization. Alizadeh Maralani et al. (2019) found that an authoritarian parenting style predicted the role of perpetrators in peer bullying, a permissive style the role of victims, and an authoritative parenting style was characteristic of students who were not involved in peer bullying. Charalampous et

al. (2018) reported that the authoritative parenting style predicted perpetration, but also victimization in bullying. Conversely, the authoritative (or as the authors call it, flexible) parenting style was a negative predictor of all roles in peer bullying, whereas the permissive style predicted perpetration only. Martínez et al. (2019) reported different findings, as in their study permissive parenting style was found to be a protective factor for experiencing peer bullying, while authoritarian parenting style was a risk factor for this. In a meta-analytic study, Lereya et al. (2013) found that positive parental behaviors (authoritative parenting, parent-child communication, parental involvement and support, supervision, warmth, and affection) protected children from becoming victims of peer bullying, while negative parental behaviors (abuse/neglect, maladaptive parenting, and overprotection) predicted a greater risk of children becoming victims or bully/victims. Interestingly, Broll and Reynolds (2021) found no association between parenting styles and bullying offending or victimization. Therefore, the results of the aforementioned studies and the studies included in the systematic review by Nocetini et al. (2019) suggest that the association between parenting styles and bullying involvement is inconclusive. In addition, we found no studies that considered the association between parenting styles and the role of witnesses to bullying among peers (observers).

Emotional control and peer bullying involvement

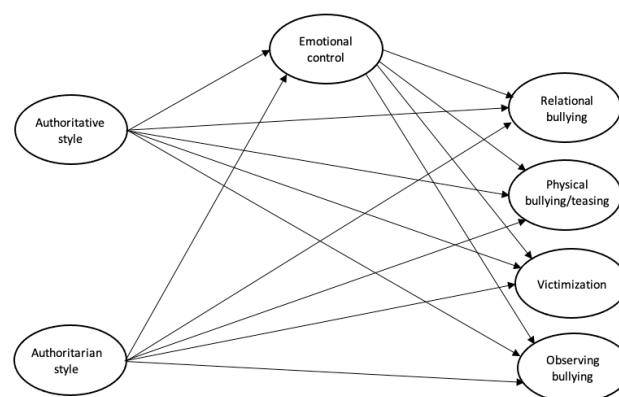
Among the important aspects of successful and adapted functioning in children is emotional regulation. Thompson (1994) defines this regulation as the internal and external processes involved in initiating, maintaining, and modulating the occurrence, intensity, and expression of emotions. One of the features of emotional regulation, which was also used in our study, is emotional control, which Rueda et al. (2022, p. 6) define as "an ability to regulate and modify emotions according to the circumstances in which the person finds themselves, for example, to overcome obstacles in everyday life." In the context of peer bullying, children with low emotional regulation have been shown to repeatedly violate social norms and rules, and were at risk of developing psychological and social maladjustments (Eisenberg et al., 2004). Mahady Wilton et al. (2000) suggest that poor emotional regulation may be a risk factor for chronic victimization. This is also consistent with the findings of an emotional intelligence study of a sample of Australian adolescents, in which Lomas et al. (2012) found that low emotional control was associated with more victimization. Blake et al. (2012) also indicated that adolescents with emotional dysregulation, which includes immaturity, lack of self-control, and poor social skills, may be at risk for peer victimization. However, Bettencourt et al. (2013) noted that such characteristics can also lead to bully/victim and bully roles.

The Aim of the Study

The aim of our study was to investigate the relationships among adolescent students' perceived parenting styles, their perceived emotional control, and their involvement in peer bullying. According to the findings of previous studies presented in the Introduction section, we hypothesized a model in which parenting styles are associated with emotional control, which is in turn associated with involvement in peer bullying.

Figure 1

The Tested Model of the Relationships Among Parental Styles, Emotional Control and Peer Bullying Involvement.



Method

Participants

Our sample included 202 7th (46.5%) and 8th grade (53.5%) students from 14 lower secondary schools from different statistical regions in Slovenia. Girls represented 51.5% of the sample. The average age of the students was 12.94 years ($SD = 0.71$).

Instruments

Students reported their perceptions of parenting styles, emotional control, and involvement in peer bullying.

To examine parenting styles, we used the *Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire-Short Version* (PSDQ-Short Version; Robinson et al., 1995; Slovenian translation and adaptation of the version for parents Hacin, 2019; the version adapted for children was created by the authors). The questionnaire contains 32 items in which students indicate on a 5-point scale how often their parents behave in a certain way (1 - never, 2 - rarely, 3 - occasionally, 4 - often, 5 - always). The questionnaire measures three parenting styles: authoritative, 15 items (e.g., *My mother/father comforts me and understands me when I am upset*, $\alpha = 0.92$); authoritarian, 12 items (e.g., *My mother/father explodes with anger at me*, $\alpha = 0.82$); and permissive, 3 items (e.g., *My mother/father announces punishments but does not carry them out*, $\alpha = 0.56$). Confirmatory

factor analysis showed the marginally acceptable fit (according to the criteria listed by Hu and Bentler, 1999) of the factor structure proposed by the authors of the original questionnaire with regard to our data (CFI = 0.937, TLI = 0.932, RMSEA = 0.058, 90% CI [0.051–0.066], SRMR = 0.089). Items 15 and 24 were excluded from calculating scale scores because of their high modification indices. We also decided to omit the permissive style scale from further analyses due to its low alpha reliability coefficient.

Emotional control was measured with items taken from the *Emotion Regulation Index for Children and Adolescents – Self report* (ERICA-S; MacDermott et al., 2010; translation and adaptation by Romih and Košir, 2018). The questionnaire consists of 16 items that the participant rates on a 5-point Likert scale (1 – strongly disagree, 3 – undecided, 5 – strongly agree). The subscales measure emotional control (7 items, e.g., *When I get upset, I can get over it quickly*), emotional self-awareness (5 items, e.g., *I am a happy person*), and situational responsiveness (4 items, *When adults are friendly to me, I am friendly to them*). For the purposes of the present study, only the Emotional Control subscale was used (for our sample, $\alpha = 0.71$). Confirmatory factor analysis supported the one-factor structure of the items (CFI = 0.988, TLI = 0.982, RMSEA = 0.041, 90% CI for RMSEA = 0.000–0.085, SRMR = 0.043).

Involvement in peer bullying was measured with an abbreviated version of the *Adolescent Peer Relationship Index – Bully Target: Bullying Behaviour/Victimisation* (APRI-BT; Parada, 2000; Slovenian adaptation Košir et al., 2018). We used three items for each form of peer bullying (verbal, physical, and relational) and constructed separate versions of the scale for observers, victims, and bullies/perpetrators. Students indicated on a 6-point frequency scale (1 – never, 2 – once or twice, 3 – 2 to 3 times a month, 3 – once a week, 5 – several times a week, 6 – every day) how often they performed/experienced or observed a particular behaviour during the current school year (e.g., *In the past year at this school, I have seen someone leave a student out of activities or games on purpose*). Exploratory factor analysis using varimax rotation was performed separately for each role in peer bullying, and the results showed a one-factor solution for observers and victims. The common factor explained 53% of item variance for observers ($\alpha = 0.89$) and 58% of item variance for victims ($\alpha = 0.89$, e.g., *In the past year at this school, I was ridiculed by students saying things to me*). For the role of bullies/perpetrators, we found a two-factor structure, namely relational bullying (three items, e.g., *In the past year at this school, I got other students to ignore a student*, $\alpha = 0.75$) and physical bullying with teasing (three items, e.g., *In the past year at this school, I got into a physical fight with a student because I didn't like them*, $\alpha = 0.72$). We dropped three items from this scale because they had high loadings on both factors.

Data collection and statistical procedures

Prior to data collection, the study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Arts at the University of Ljubljana. We also obtained parental consent for the students' participation in our study, as well as consent from students themselves to participate. Data were collected via online survey in April 2022 (Ika, 2022). School counsellors gathered students in computer-equipped classrooms and guided them in completing the survey.

We used SPSS 25.0 IBM for descriptive statistics and exploratory factor analyses and the R lavaan package (Rosseel, 2012) for confirmatory factor analyses and path analyses. It should be noted that we were not able to test the whole structural equation model with all measurement models and a model of relations between latent constructs due to the small sample size, so we decided to first analyse all instruments, calculate scores and then include these scores in the path model.

Results

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of the variables and Table 2 the correlations between the variables included in the model.

Table 1
Descriptive statistics for the constructs included in the model

	N	M	SD	Skew.	Kurt.	α
Authoritative style	202	3.70	0.79	-0.41	-0.70	0.92
Authoritarian style	202	1.83	0.59	1.04	1.29	0.82
Emotional control	202	3.59	0.57	-0.07	-0.36	0.71
Relational bullying	202	1.22	0.46	3.02	10.58	0.75
Physical bullying/teasing	202	1.46	0.67	2.10	4.52	0.72
Victimization	202	1.68	0.85	1.90	3.51	0.89
Observing bullying	202	2.25	0.98	0.84	-0.05	0.89

The results show that on average students perceive their parents' parenting style as occasionally to frequently authoritative, and as authoritarian less often (Table 1). They perceive their emotional control as moderate. Regarding the different roles of involvement in peer bullying, involvement in either form of bullying is least common. Somewhat more frequent is victimization and most common is involvement in peer bullying as an observer. It should be noted that skewness and kurtosis are high for all forms of active involvement in peer bullying (relational and physical

bullying with teasing and victimization), indicating that on average bullying has been observed, performed or experienced less than two or three times a month. The internal consistency coefficients for the variables included in the model are good or very good.

Table 2
Pearson correlations between the variables included in the model

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
1. Authoritative style	-	-.35**	.29**	-.20**	-.18**	-.01	.05
2. Authoritarian style		-	-.41**	.40**	.29**	.23**	.31**
3. Emotional control			-	-.38**	-.36**	-.30**	-.28**
4. Relational bullying				-	.39**	.19**	.38**
5. Physical bullying/teasing					-	.25**	.29**
6. Victimization						-	.40**
7. Observing bullying							-

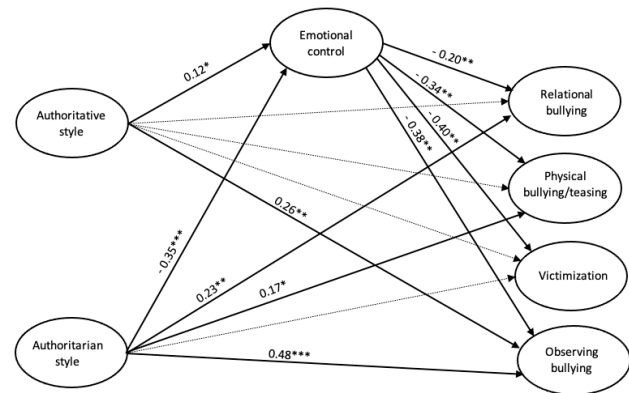
Note. ** p < 0.01

According to the results in Table 2, there is a low, but significant negative correlation between authoritative and authoritarian styles as perceived by the students in our sample. There are also very low but significant negative correlations between student-perceived authoritative parental style and frequency of relational bullying and physical bullying with teasing. Student-perceived authoritative parental style and their emotional control have a low positive correlation. Student-perceived authoritarian style correlates negatively with student emotional control and positively with all roles of involvement in peer bullying. The correlations are low, but significant. Student emotional control is significantly negatively associated with frequency of involvement in all roles of bullying, but the correlations are small. Table 2 also shows that the frequencies of involvement in all roles of peer bullying have low, but significant correlations.

Due to the low reliability of some scales that we used for measuring the examined constructs, we had to exclude some constructs from our model. The model we tested and report here includes only authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles as predictors of emotional control. This acts as a mediator variable and predicts involvement in peer bullying, defined as relational bullying, physical bullying with teasing, victimization, and observation of bullying (Figure 1).

The model in Figure 2 showed an excellent fit with the data, $\chi^2(20) = 195.36, p < .001, CFI = 1.00, RMSEA = .000, 90\% CI for RMSEA = .000-.000, SRMR = .000.$

Figure 2
The Resulting Structural Model of the Relationships Among Parenting Styles, Emotional Control and Peer Bullying Involvement



Note. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Figure 2 shows the relationships among the variables included in the model. The results show that student-perceived authoritative parental style contributes to higher self-perceived emotional control and to a higher likelihood of students being involved in peer bullying as observers. Students' perceived authoritarian parental style negatively predicts their sense of emotional control and positively their involvement in bullying as a relational or physical perpetrator, and as a bullying observer. All forms of involvement in peer bullying were negatively predicted by students' emotional control.

Discussion

In our study, we examined the relationships among students' perceived parenting style, their emotional control, and their involvement in peer bullying. The results in Figure 2 show that students who perceive their parents as more authoritative report having higher emotional control. Although the path coefficient is small (.12), it is significant. It thus seems that children of parents who are more responsive to their feelings and needs, who talk to them and take their opinions into account, who involve them in planning, who set rules and explain to them the consequences of breaking the rules, and who try to comfort and understand them when they are upset, have higher emotional control. It means that these children feel that they are less likely to get upset when something does not go the way they want, and that they are able to calm down more quickly, have fewer outbursts of anger, are less likely to be disruptive at inappropriate times, and do not have such a hard time waiting to get what they want. The findings are consistent with those of Fosco and Grych (2012), whose results showed that children with warm and empathetic parents were better at regulating their emotions. Moreover, in a study of adolescents by Jabeen et al. (2013) an authoritative parental style was shown to have a significant positive effect on the children's emotional regulation. On the other hand, students' perceived

authoritarian parenting style was negatively (-.35) associated with their emotional regulation. Students whose parents used physical punishment, withheld privileges, or threatened or punished them without explanation, yelled at them, and criticized them when teaching order and discipline had weaker emotional control. The same was found in some other studies: negative parenting was associated with less adaptive emotional regulation (Calkins et al., 1998) and strict and conflictual parenting was associated with difficulties in behavioural regulation (Brody and Ge, 2001). Shaw and Starr (2019, deriving from Grolnick et al., 1999 and Sroufe et al., 1996) suggest that punitive or hostile parenting practices (features of authoritative style) could lead to children's suppressing negative emotions instead of discussing them in a supportive environment, and so reduce the possibilities to learn and practice effective emotional control strategies.

In terms of involvement in peer bullying, we found a positive relationship between the authoritative style and observers of bullying (.26). Students who perceived their parents' style as more authoritative were more likely to notice all forms of peer bullying (teasing, deliberate bumping into each other, physical altercations, spreading of rumours, encouragement to ignore, exclusion, and so on). This could perhaps be explained by the fact that parents with an authoritarian parenting style talk more with their children about rules and rule-breaking, and encourage them to talk about their problems and feelings and to express their opinions. We can assume that students with more authoritative parents are more sensitive to rule violations and perceive certain behaviours as peer bullying earlier than most others. We found no associations between the authoritarian parenting style and other forms of peer bullying involvement. These results are consistent with the findings of Broll and Reynolds' (2021) study, which showed no associations between parenting styles and peer bullying involvement. However, the same and even stronger association (.48) was found between authoritarian style and observers of bullying. It is possible that different parenting styles are associated with different roles students engage in as observers. For example, Pečjak and Pirc (2014) found differences between passive and active observers, ignorers, and defenders of the victim. Children with more authoritarian parents could be involved in peer bullying as active or passive promoters of peer bullying. Apart from this relationship, the model in Figure 2 also shows that the authoritarian style predicts relational bullying (.23) and physical bullying with teasing/ridiculing (.17). This means that students with more authoritarian parents are more likely to spread rumours, encourage others to ignore and exclude from activities (relational bullying), ridicule others, crash into or hit them (physical bullying with teasing). A positive relationship between the authoritarian style and perpetration of peer bullying has already been established in previous studies

(Alizadeh Maralani et al., 2019; Charalampous et al., 2018; Espelage et al., 2000).

Some previously established relationships were not significant in our model. For example, we found no association between the authoritative parental style and active bullying involvement (perpetration or victimization), which is not consistent with the findings of Charalampous et al.'s (2018) study, which found that the authoritative parental style negatively predicted peer bullying involvement. In light of previous research (Lereya et al., 2013; Martínez et al., 2019), one might also expect the authoritarian style to be associated with victimization, but we did not find this association in our student sample either. With the inconsistency of associations between parental styles and roles in peer bullying, it is necessary to note that the family is only one of many microsystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) that determines what role the student takes in peer bullying. This is also influenced by the student's personality traits, and most importantly, by the classroom culture, which is co-created by the teachers and students in each classroom with class rules and behaviours when bullying occurs.

Emotional control negatively predicted all forms of involvement in peer bullying. That is, students who had less control over their emotions were more likely to be involved in perpetrating or experiencing peer bullying and observing bullying. The results of several studies showed that poor emotional control was a risk factor for victimization (Blake et al., 2012; Lomas et al., 2012; Mahady Wilton et al., 2000). One possible explanation could be that children who are quick to get upset when things do not go their way, have outbursts of anger and are disruptive at inappropriate moments become targets of peer bullying because their behaviour does not conform to social norms and rules. It is also possible that they are unable to stand up for themselves and have difficulties in calming down and controlling fear, shame or feelings of hopelessness. As Blake et al. (2012) point out, there is a chance that such individuals are perceived as provocative victims by their peers. Lomas et al. (2012) explain these associations with one of the features of peer bullying dynamics, namely a power imbalance. They hypothesize that children with lower emotional management and control skills have less power in a bullying situation, because they are unable to respond appropriately to the perpetrators.

However, we also found a negative correlation between emotional control and bullying perpetration (relational and physical). Apparently, the same lack of emotional control skills that could be a risk factor for victimization could also lead to bullying perpetration. Bettencourt et al. (2013) argue that it is possible that students who are non-victimized perpetrators have other social skills that protect them from victimization.

Finally, more bullying has been observed among students with poor emotional control. It is possible that students who themselves have difficulty responding in accordance with social group norms (e.g., their classroom peer group) are more aware of other situations in which peer bullying occurs.

In summary, our findings suggest that emotional control is an important factor in exploring students' involvement in peer bullying. It appears that better social and self-regulation skills are significant protective factors against any role in peer bullying. Our study also showed that parental style can help or hinder emotional control.

Implications

Two extensive meta-analytic studies (Huang et al., 2019; Tfofi & Farrington, 2011) have shown that it is important to include the parental component in peer bullying prevention programmes. Thus, it is important to incorporate knowledge about the relationships among parental styles and emotional control and peer bullying involvement into such programmes, as previously suggested by Lereya et al. (2013). One way is to directly attempt to change the less appropriate practices that parents use in their interactions with children. It is possible that demonstrating effective strategies for reducing detrimental consequences for students involved in peer bullying to the parents would motivate them to reflect on their practices and change their behaviours. Another way is to encourage parents to put more effort into implementing activities that would promote better emotional control in their children. It is also important to educate parents that one of the most important mechanisms for learning certain behaviours is observation and modelling (Bandura, 1977). Parents should be aware that how they communicate with their children, how they solve problems with them, how they themselves demonstrate emotional control and so on, models for their children how to apply these skills in their interactions with peers.

The important influence of weak emotional control on involvement in peer bullying is also important information for teachers and other school personnel. Our findings suggest that programmes to develop emotional regulation should be implemented in schools, which is emphasized also in "The European Framework for Personal, Social and Learning to Learn Key Competence" (Sala et al., 2020). Since it is realistically difficult to expect that parents will significantly change their parenting styles, the compensatory role of the school in the development of emotional regulation (especially emotional control) is all the more important. Although schools have little or no ability to promote changes in parenting styles, teachers and other school staff could make efforts to implement activities to promote emotional

regulation in students. In addition, it may be possible for schools to identify students with weak emotional regulation skills early on, which would help reach the most vulnerable students and protect them from the potential consequences of involvement in peer bullying (Lomas et al., 2012).

Limitations, Strengths and Future Directions

Although we believe that the results of our study make an important contribution to the research of the relationships among family characteristics, emotional control, and involvement in peer bullying, there are some limitations that should be mentioned. First, our results are based solely on self-reported data, which means that responses could be subject to bias, such as social desirability. In addition, we measured students' perceptions rather than parents' actual behaviours. Second, because of the small sample size, we were unable to define roles in peer bullying as categories; instead, we defined bullying involvement as an interval variable for more or less involvement. Therefore, we were unable to include in our model a group of students who are in both roles – as bully/victims – and who are assumed to be particularly vulnerable. For example, Juvonen et al. (2003) reported that bully/victims have the most problems related to behaviour, school, and peer relationships. According to Bettencourt et al. (2013), aggressive victims are most likely to perceive ambiguous situations as threatening, experience emotional dysregulation, and respond aggressively to peers. Furthermore, we included the group of observers of peer bullying in our model, but without distinguishing between the roles they take in observing bullying, which would need to be considered in future studies. Even though path analysis was used, the direction of the relationships reported here is preliminary. As such, longitudinal studies are needed to determine the directionality of the relationships among the constructs studied. In our study, we included only one specific family relational variable (parental style), so it would be beneficial to include other family and individual characteristics in the model, such as children's relationships with their siblings as a potential mediator or moderator variable in the relationship between parental style and emotional control. Another limitation relates to our instrument for measuring parental style, namely the low internal consistency of permissive style, which prevented us from including one of the three traditionally researched parental styles in the model. In future research, special attention should be paid to the use of valid and reliable instruments when studying the characteristics of parental styles.

Despite these limitations, we believe that one of the strengths of our study is that we focused on adolescents, who are rarely considered when looking at the relationships between parenting

styles and emotional control because most studies have been conducted on young children (Shaw and Starr, 2019). Another strength is that we included the perspective of bullying observers, which to the best of our knowledge has not been considered in previous studies of the relationships between parenting styles and bullying involvement.

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