

# Impact of Personality and Parenting Style on Bullies and Bully-Victims among Adolescents

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## ABSTRACT

This study is carried out with the objectives of investigating the impact of personality and parenting style of the bullies and bully-victim among adolescents. The sample of the present study consists of 300 adolescent boys (150 bullies and 150 bully-victims). Purposive sampling is used for the collection of data. The age range of participants is 15–18 years. The sample is collected from nearby areas of Kanpur and Lucknow. Illinois bully scale by Espelage and Holt, Extraversion-Introversion scale by Singh and Singh, and Parenting scale by Bharadwaj *et al.* (1998) are used as tools. ANOVA have been applied for the analysis. The result revealed that there is a significant difference in the personality and parenting style of bullies and bully victims among adolescents. Findings indicate that bullies are more extroverted in nature in comparison to bully-victims whereas introversion will be higher in bully-victims in comparison to bullies. Bully-victims have comparatively positive parenting in comparison to bullies.

**Keywords:** Adolescent, Bullying, Extrovert, Introvert, Parenting, Personality  
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## INTRODUCTION

India is a land of sages; it has great cultural power which has portrayed a deep impact on the world for thousands of years. The Indian culture has always considered education as worship and its related institution as a temple of learning but with each passing day and increased commercialization, it has turned into the business of making money which has resulted in deteriorating the moral and ethical values of students. Due to this various behavioral and psychological problems have emerged. One such problem is bullying. Bullying is a global problem with severe impacts on the lifelong development and mental health of victims. One most common type of bullying found these days is school bullying. Bullying others is a displacement of anger, rejection and frustration one has faced in life. Bullies are the persons who enjoy exercising power and status over victims and are unable to develop empathy for others.<sup>[1]</sup> Bully victims are the children who are the target of bullying and suffer from negative psychological and social consequences. Parenting style has a great role in bullying. Parents' aggression, frustration, conflicts and behavior toward their children may influence an important factor in bullying. Adolescence is a period full of emotional turmoil and disturbance both mentally and physically.<sup>[2]</sup> Adolescent bullying is an international problem with around 100–600 million adolescents directly involved with bullying globally each year.<sup>[3]</sup> Adolescent bullying is a period where adolescents willingly start to provocation, coerce, assault, intimidate or bully other who is less in power than them. Adolescents who were bullied had a firm belief that victimization caused them various problems including loss of friendships, solitude and hopelessness.<sup>[4]</sup> Other than physical violence bullying can also affect one's self-confidence, self-esteem and performance in school. It will even lead to absenteeism, anxiety, and depression.

Studies on aggression and familial factors have provided considerable support for the association between general aggressive behavior in youth and lack of family cohesion,<sup>[5]</sup> inadequate parental supervision,<sup>[6]</sup> family violence,<sup>[7]</sup> hostile discipline technique,<sup>[8]</sup> and poor modeling of problem-solving skills.<sup>[9]</sup>

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## Personality

Personality has an important role in bullying. Traits such as extraversion and introversion is a central dimension of human personality. The big five-factor model,<sup>[10]</sup> is an important model and theory of personality dimensions, it helps in understanding the relationship between personality and aggressive behavior.<sup>[11,12]</sup> The major personality dimensions in the big five factor model are neuroticism, extraversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, and openness to experience.<sup>[10,13,14]</sup> It is found that under controllers (moderate to high score on extraversion, a low score on agreeableness and conscientiousness) were more likely to bully other children. Bullying has also been linked with callous-unemotional (CU) traits that include lack of guilt, lack of empathy, poor affect, and use of another for personal gain.<sup>[15,16]</sup> The distinct personality trait of bullies is that they are being intolerant of violence, impulsive and indifferent to others.<sup>[17]</sup> There is a heightened level of psychoticism and a modest increase in extraversion and neuroticism among bullies.

## Parenting Style

Parenting plays a very significant role in the development of good mental health and healthy relationships. It helps in the transition of children from one stage of life to another from childhood to adolescents from adolescents to adulthood.<sup>[18]</sup> Parenting is an essential instrument in the socialization of children.<sup>[19]</sup> Parenting style

has a significant role in inculcating bullying behavior in young boys. The families of boys who were bullied were often described as lacking in warmth using physical violence within the family and failing to monitor children's activities outside the school.<sup>[20]</sup> Adolescence is a critical developmental period that requires parents and youth to reconsider their relationship.<sup>[21]</sup> Diana Baumrind is a dominant name in the field of parenting styles with a prominent work in this field is "Baumrind parenting typology." It consists of four types of parenting-

### Authoritative Parenting

This parenting style is characterized as high in responsiveness and demandingness toward a child.

### Authoritarian Parenting

In this type of parenting "the parents have demands, but they are not responsive toward the child."

### Permissive Parenting Style

In the permissive parenting style, the parent is responsive but not demanding.

### Uninvolved Parenting

In the uninvolved parenting style parents are neither responsive nor demanding.

Bharadwaj *et al.* included eight parenting model in their parenting scale which are-

- Rejection versus Acceptance - When a child faces rejection from parents it affects their interpersonal relationship directly. Physical neglect, denial of love and affection, lack of interest and failure to spend time with them exhibits parents' rejection of their child. On the other hand, accepting parents put the child in a position of importance in the home and develops a relationship of personal warmth.
- Carelessness versus Protection - Carelessness means when one or both the parents do not pay adequate attention to the child and his/her activities which may lead to the child's feelings of alienation and negligence whereas the sense of protection in the child make him/her more positive and confident.
- Neglect versus Indulgence - when parents neglect their children time and again it affects their psychological health. It manifests itself in a lack of attention and cooperation with them, ignorance, and avoidance of their genuine feelings. On the other hand, overindulgence of parents with the child develops certain psychological inconsistencies in the latter, in this parent yield to every demand of the child and fails to exercise the needed discipline.
- Utopian Expectation versus Realism - In utopian expectations parents expects superb performance from their kids even against their capabilities. Some parents use their children to fulfill their hidden desires without paying any heed to their abilities and limitations whereas in an attitude of realism parents are well aware of their child's capabilities and constraints in the outside world while setting up any goal and expecting a level of performance.
- Lenient standard versus Moralism - In lenient standard parents place lesser restrictions to the child on deviations from ethical and moral behavior and an attitude showing

indifference against such inhibitions whereas Moralism as a socio-cultural product refers to the doctrine of duties in life, principles, and conduct adhering to what is right and virtuous play an important role in the dynamics of social relations it would be admirable if child inculcates a reasonable degree of moralism in their personality.

- Freedom versus Discipline - Freedom events itself as a right or ability to do or say as one wants. In this child is free to take their own decisions without any questioning or impediments from their parents. On the other hand, parents with a liking for discipline simply pass on the orders to their children who have to follow them without any questioning. Disobedience is followed by punishments whereas obedience is appreciated.
- Faulty role expectation versus Realistic role expectation - In faulty role expectations parenting, the child is always pressurized and embarrassed because of the high expectations of his parents whereas the parents with realistic role expectations present themselves as role models to be followed by children and their consistent and predictable in day to day life.
- Marital conflict versus Marital adjustment - Marital conflicts affect the child's mindset as they witness conflicts between their parents whereas marital adjustment exhibits the calm and loving relationship between the parents creating a peaceful atmosphere in the family.

### The Objectives of this Study are

- To study the impact of personality traits on bullies and bully-victims among adolescents.
- To study the impact of parenting style on bullies and bully-victims among adolescents.

### Hypotheses

On the basis of various studies, it can be hypothesized that-

- H1: There would be a significant difference in the personality of bullies and bully-victims among adolescents
- H2: There would be a significant difference in the parenting style of bullies and bully-victims among adolescent

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Sampling Strategy and Participants

The sample for the present study consists of 300 adolescent boys (150 bullies and 150 bully-victims). For the collection of data almost 900 samples are taken, out of which 150 bullies and 150 bully-victims are found. In this research project, purposive sampling is applied for data collection. For this, we selected various schools and with the permission of respective authorities and with the help of appropriate tools we collected the data. The age range of boys is 15–18 years and the mean age is 16.5 years. A sample will be collected from the nearby areas of Lucknow, Unnao, and Kanpur.

### Measuring Tools

We used three scales to measure students

- Bullying, 2) Personality, and 3) Parenting:
  - Personality Inventory - Extraversion-Introversion scale by Singh and Singh (1971). This inventory consists of 56

questions. The answers were to be given from three options – “Yes,” “No,” and “Don’t know” for agreement, disagreement, and indecision, respectively, with the statements. The reliability coefficient of the test is 0.80 both from the split half and test-retest method whereas the validity of the test is found.54.

- Parenting scale by Bharadwaj *et al.* (1998) - This scale consists of 40 items related to eight different modes of parenting. The obtained reliability of this test by test retest-method is 0.72 whereas the validity of the test is estimated.75
- Illinois Bully Scale by Espelage and Holt (2001). This scale consists of 18 items. It is further divided into three subscales that are -1) victim subscale - The range of this subscale is 0–16 with a higher score indicating more victimization, 2) bully subscale – the range of this subscale is 0–36 with higher scores indicating more bullying prosecution, and 3) fight subscale - The range of this subscale is 0–20 where a higher score indicates more fights against bullying. The scale has been found to have good reliability, that is, 0.88 and validity of 0.49.

## RESULTS

In the present study, the results are very interesting. After analyzing the data, Tables 1 and 2 depict that there is a significant difference in the introvert and extrovert personalities of bullies and bully-victims. The obtained value of F found in introvert and extrovert personalities is 417.69 and 482.59, respectively, which is significant at both 0.01 and 0.05 levels.

Table 3 depicts the parenting styles of bullies and bully-victims. Results revealed that there is a significant difference in the parenting style of bullies and bully-victims. The obtained value of F is found 20.17 which is significant at both 0.01 and 0.05 levels. Other than that significant difference is found in all other subscales such as Rejection versus Acceptance, Carelessness versus Protection, Neglect versus Indulgence, Utopian expectation versus Realism, Lenient standard versus Moralism, Freedom versus Discipline, and Marital conflict versus Marital adjustment. There

**Table 1:** Introvert personality of bullies and bully-victims after scoring the responses of the inventories as per the predetermined scoring procedure score was analysed by analysing ANOVA

Source of variation	SS	Df	MS	F
Between group	10,115.21	1	10,115.21	417.6983**
Within group	7216.533	298	24.21655	
Total	17,331.75	299		

SS: Sum of square, MS: Mean square, \*\* The obtained value of F is found significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels

**Table 2:** Extrovert personality of bullies and bully-victims

Source of variation	SS	df	MS	F
Between group	11,150.8	1	11,150.8	482.5902**
Within group	6885.633	298		
Total	18,036.44	299		

SS: Sum of square, MS: Mean square, \*\* The obtained value of F is found significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels

**Table 3:** Parenting style of bullies and bully-victims

Source of variation	SS	df	MS	F
Between group	29,462.43	1	2946.43	20.17904**
Within group	435,095.3	298	1460.051	
Total	464,557.8	299		

SS: Sum of square, MS: Mean square, \*\* The obtained value of F is found significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels

**Table 3.1:** Parenting style of bullies and bully-victims on the dimension of Rejection Vs Acceptance

Source of variation	SS	Df	MS	F
Between group	8501.363	1	8501.363	250.6032**
Within group	10,109.23	298	33.9236	
Total	18,610.6	299		

SS: Sum of square, MS: Mean square, \*\* The obtained value of F is found significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels

**Table 3.2:** Parenting style of bullies and bully-victims on the dimension of Carelessness Vs Protection

Source of variation	SS	Df	MS	F
Between group	3142.803	1	3142.803	80.70113**
Within group	11,605.23	298	38.94374	
Total	14,748.04	299		

SS: Sum of square, MS: Mean square, \*\* The obtained value of F is found significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels

**Table 3.3:** Parenting style of bullies and bully-victims on the dimension of Neglect Vs Indulgence

Source of variation	SS	Df	MS	F
Between group	4800	1	4800	120.3907**
Within group	11,881.32	298	39.8702	
Total	16,681.32	299		

SS: Sum of square, MS: Mean square, \*\* The obtained value of F is found significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels

**Table 3.4:** Parenting style of bullies and bully-victims on the dimension of Utopian expectation Vs Realism

Source of variation	SS	Df	MS	F
Between group	4446.75	1	4446.75	99.98412**
Within group	13,253.42	298	44.47456	
Total	17,700.17	299		

SS: Sum of square, MS: Mean square, \*\* The obtained value of F is found significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels

**Table 3.5:** Parenting style of bullies and bully-victims on the dimension of Lenient standard Vs Moralism

Source of variation	SS	Df	MS	F
Between group	2301.87	1	2301.87	53.7211**
Within group	12,768.86	298	42.84852	
Total	15,070.73	299		

SS: Sum of square, MS: Mean square, \*\* The obtained value of F is found significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels

**Table 3.6:** Parenting style of bullies and bully-victims on the dimension of Freedom Vs Discipline

Source of variation	SS	Df	MS	F
Between group	4173.87	1	4173.87	119.4011**
Within group	10,417.1	298	34.95671	
Total	14,590.97	299		

SS: Sum of square, MS: Mean square, \*\* The obtained value of F is found significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels

**Table 3.7:** Parenting style of bullies and bully-victims on the dimension of Faulty role expectation Vs realistic role expectation

Source of variation	SS	Df	MS	F
Between group	246.6133	1	246.6133	5.216808
Within group	14,087.31	298	47.27284	
Total	14,333.92	299		

SS: Sum of square, MS: Mean square

**Table 3.8:** Parenting style of bullies and bully-victims on the dimension of Marital conflict Vs Marital adjustment

Source of variation	SS	Df	MS	F
Between group	560.3333	1	560.3333	41.02014**
Within group	4070.667	298	13.65996	
Total	4631	299		

SS: Sum of square, MS: Mean square, \*\* The obtained value of F is found significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels

is no significant difference found in the subscale of faulty role expectation VS realistic role expectation where the obtained value of F is 5.21 is found insignificant at both 0.01 and 0.05 levels.

After scoring the responses of the inventories as per the predetermined scoring procedure score was analyzed by analyzing ANOVA

## DISCUSSION

The present study attempts to examine the impact of personality and parenting style among bullies and bully-victims among adolescents. This study will contribute to the field of school psychology by providing detailed information about bullies and bully-victims, so that the correct measures can be taken to improve the mental health and well-being of bullies and bully-victims.

For this certain hypotheses are made, that is, there will be a significant difference in the personality of bullies and bully victims among adolescents and there will be a significant difference in the parenting style of bullies and bully-victims among adolescents. Table 1 shows the introvert personalities of bullies and bully-victims among adolescents. The obtained value of F found in introvert personality is 417.69 for 1 and 298 df whereas the observed critical value is 3.93 at .01 level and 2.03 at 0.05 level. Results revealed that there is a significant difference in the introverted personality of bullies and bully-victims among adolescents. From the raw scores, that is, 3192 for bullies and 4934 for bully victims it can be concluded that introvert personality is significantly higher in bully victims in comparison to bullies. Table 2 shows the extrovert personality of bullies and bully-victims among adolescents. The obtained value of F found in the extrovert personality of bullies and bully victims are 482.59 at 1 and 298 df which is significant at both 0.01 and 0.05 levels. It revealed that there is a significant difference in the extrovert personality of bullies and bully-victims among adolescents. From the raw scores, that is, 5183 for bullies and 3354 for bully victims it can be concluded that extrovert personality is significantly higher in bullies in comparison to bully victims. Thus, the hypothesis that there is a significant difference in the personality of bullies and bully-victims is approved. In the present study, it is inferred that assertive behavior and power display are the central aspects of extraversion<sup>[22]</sup> which would reveal that subject low on extraversion is more at risk of workplace bullying than those with higher scores. In addition, people with low scores on extraversion often receive less social support<sup>[23]</sup> which also may make them more likely than others to become targets of bullying. The big five personality explored that children who were bullied tended to show a similar pattern of low friendliness, agreeableness, and higher emotional instability. Table 3 emphasized on parenting style of bullies and bully-victims among adolescents. The obtained value of F is 20.17 for 1 and 298 df whereas the observed critical value is 3.93 and 2.03 at 0.05 and 0.01 levels, respectively. Thus the hypothesis that there is a significant difference in the parenting style of bullies and bully-victims gets approved. From the raw scores, that is, 30882 for bullies and 33855 for bully-victims it can be concluded that bully-victims

had achieved somewhat good parenting in comparison to bullies. It was seen that children who observe their parents having a positive attitude toward them, sets limits but respecting their independence as well as taking care of their needs were less likely to engage in bullying. Whereas children who perceived their parents as being more fragmented, more contradictory and less organized tend to indulge in bullying behavior.<sup>[24,25]</sup> According to Georgiou (2008), victimized children view their parents are being overprotective. In the same way, children who bully their peers are more likely to come from authoritarian parents with harsh and punitive child-rearing practices.<sup>[26]</sup> It is also seen that there is a significant difference in various Parenting models such as Rejection versus Acceptance, Carelessness versus Protection, Neglect versus Indulgence, Utopian expectation versus Realism, Lenient standard versus Moralism, Freedom versus Discipline, and Marital conflict versus Marital adjustment which reveals that there is a significant difference in most of the models of parenting among bullies and bully-victims. It means bullies and bully-victims differ in the level of interpersonal relationships with parents. Whereas no significant difference is found in faulty role expectation versus realistic role expectation among bullies and bully-victims which reveals that parents have the same approach and expectation from the kids whether they are bullies or bully-victims.

Thus, it can be said that the personality of the child, parental practices, and parenting style at home are related to the child's bullying and victimization at school.

## Practical Implications

Bullying is a dreadful experience for our children and youth. According to the center for disease, control and prevention, bullying, and cyber bullying affect 20% and 16% of high school students. This study has investigated the effect of personality and parenting style of bullies and bully-victims among adolescents. It investigated the prevalence of bullying in schools and extended support to those who are the victim of bullying and may be at a greater risk of developing interpersonal relationships and self-esteem problems. This study will also encourage the parents to inculcate a good parenting style, develop empathy, understanding, and extend emotional support to the child so that they can deal with the situation with courage and confidence. Other than that building a positive school climate which fosters creativity, healthy development and advances social and emotional learning which involves skills such as balanced decision making and relationship management will also help in inhibiting bullying at school.

## Strength

1. Findings of this study can be utilized for a better understanding of different issues such as effective counseling and guidance of this population in future.
2. From preventive perspective information gained through these findings can be used by parents and teachers to help the students deal with an adverse situation in their life.
3. Findings will educate parents, school staff as well students about bullying which will help stop bullying and engage them in creative works.

## Limitations

1. Data obtained in this study were self-reported, which may lead to socially desirable responses.

2. Second, the sample was limited to the boys of Lucknow and nearby areas therefore it cannot be generalized to girls and other places of India.
3. Other than that impact of media violence as a significant variable of aggression has not been included in the study.

### Future Suggestions

The number of subjects should be increased to get more objective and genuine results. Female candidates should also be included as a sample so that a comparison between the levels of bullying between males and females can be taken out. Other than the school gout sector, hostels, colleges, and day boarding can also be taken into account. The effect of peer pressure on bullying can also be checked.

### CONCLUSION

The results imply that there is a significant difference in the personality and parenting styles of bullies and bully-victims among adolescents. Bullies are generally extroverted, whereas introversion is found higher in bully-victims. The result also showed that bully-victims have got somewhat good parenting in comparison to bullies. Students who experience bullying may feel trauma and severely depressed, support from parents teachers as well as mental health professionals such as a psychologist can help bully-victims retain courage and confidence to deal with the bullying effectively; on the other hand, it will educate the bullies and counsel them to improve their behavior.

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No major conflict of interest was reported by the authors with respect to research, authorship, and publication of this article.

### Data Availability

Due to the sensitive topic of this research, participants of this study did not allow to share their data publicly; hence, supporting data are not available.

### Copyright and Permission Statement

We confirm that materials included in this research do not violate copyright laws. All original sources have been appropriately acknowledged and/or referenced.

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