ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Bullying, Victimization, Rejection Sensitivity, and Self-regulation in Positive Development of Adolescents

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ABSTRACT

OBJECTIVE: To explore interaction of bullying and victimization, rejection sensitivity, and self-regulation on the positive development in adolescents.

METHODOLOGY: Cross-sectional research conducted at the Department of Psychology, the University of Gujrat fromJune - September 2019. In phase, I, Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SRQ), Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire (RSQ), and Positive Youth Development Inventory (PYDI) were translated in Urdu with the permission of their authors by forward-backward translation method. The pretesting was conducted on 130 adolescents selected from random sampling techniques from the public and private colleges of Sara-i-Alamgir. The scales were found reliable with 0.71,0.83, and 0.85 coefficients respectively. In phase II, a stratified random sampling technique was used to select 608 students between the age ranges 16 to 19 years with Yamane Formula and wasgiven Urdu versions of SRQ, RSQ, PYDI, Adolescent Peer Relationship Instrument (APRI), and demographic sheet after taking informed consent. AMOS-21 version was used to analyze the path of interaction among the study variables via the construction of a structural equation model.

RESULTS: Structure Equation Modeling on the data of 608 students confirmed the validity of the model as it was found significant with the p-value <0.001. The model fit indices (CMIN/DF=2.32, CFI=0.99, AGFI= 0.97, GFI, 0.99, TLI=0.98, RMSEA- 0.04, & RMR =0.66) were obtained in acceptable range.

CONCLUSION: The buffering effect of self-regulationplays a significant role in the development of adolescents' personalities positively while safeguarding them against the impact of bullying, victimization, and rejection sensitivity.

KEYWORDS: Adolescent Health, Bullying, Personality Development.

INTRODUCTION

The wellbeing of adolescents could be enhanced by providing them opportunities for growth and development in positive directions[1]. This could serve as a vital agent in propagating huge economic growth of the country in futuristic terms[2]. Positive Youth Development (PYD) is the latest emerged term that is found to be eminently linked with socio-economic indicators on empirical grounds[3]. PYD is defined as one's capacity toexcel in a social, academic, and vocational competitive environment; efficaciously exhibit confidence, show connections with others, have morally strong and integrated character along with a caring and compassionate attitude while interacting with other people.Therefore, contributing to the general wellbeing of thecommunity[4].

Positive youth development has been significantly influenced by the self-regulationstrategies of the individuals[5]. Self-regulation is defined asthe ability to execute biological and behavioral reactions within one's capacities of self[6]. Self-regulation has been found to affect the academic performance of adolescents[7]. It has been observed that rejection sensitivity is monitored by self-regulation[8].

There is a dire need to explore the interaction of the phenomenon of targeted fights and the impact of such fights on overall wellbeing and positive development of the personality in 16 to 19 years of developmental stage in Pakistan. A nation can only acquire good economic growth according to international standards if its youth is fit not only physically but also mentally. No research has been found to explore the hypothetical model developed to investigate the interaction of bullying, victimization, rejection sensitivity, self-regulation, and positive development.It is empirically supported that a nation cannot prosper economically unless and until it has healthy adolescents who are capable of contributing to society. Here, the literature indicates several factors such as bullying, victimization, and rejection sensitivity that can damage this positive development in them. However, proper self-regulatory mechanisms can change the pathway of positive development in adolescents. The hypothesis of the present study derived based on the literature review is stated as there is a significant predictor of positive development in adolescents when bullying, victimization, and rejection sensitivity interact through self-regulationstrategies.

METHODOLOGY

This Cross-sectional research was conducted at the Department of Psychology, the University of Gujrat from June - September 2019 after approval from the advanced studies and research board (ASRB).The methodology is comprised of two phases.

Phase I: Pilot Study
Sample for the Pilot Testing
130 students (with 50% distribution of girls and boys) selected through simple random technique, taken from Government Commerce College for Girls, Gujrat,and Government Commerce College for Boys, Gujrat was given these Urdu versions. There were 49.2% 1st-year students and 50.8% were 2nd-year students with an age range between 16 to 19 years. 52.3% of students studied science and 47.7% studied arts.

Instruments
Adolescent Peer Relations Instrument–Bully/Target (APRI-BT): APRI-BT is a 6-point Likert typescale (having a range between"never"=1 to"everyday" =6) with 36 items and having two broad categories of bullying andvictimization, each comprised of verbal, physical, and social subscales with overall 0.87 reliabilitycoefficient[9]. Out of 36 items, 18 measured bullying with scores ranging between 18 to 108, higher scores indicate the high experience of bullying. Similarly, another set of 18 items measured being targeted or victimized with scores rangingbetween 18 to 108, higher score indicated greater experience of being victimized.

Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire (RSQ): RSQ is a 6-point Likert-type scale (with a range between "not at all anxious/expectation very unlikely" =1 to "very anxious/ expectation very likely"=6) with 18 items and a 0.84 reliability coefficient[10]. The RSQ is having twenty situations that are hypothetical and required rating in terms of rejection experienced by others. There are two options available for a rating of each situation that inturn measured the intensity of anxiety and intensity of concern for the consequences. To obtain, the composite score for the rejection sensitivity, the formula comprised of the score for the degree of anxiety is multiplied by the reverse score for expectations of rejection [7 - the expectation of acceptance] and ranged between 1 to 36, a higher score indicating high sensitivity to rejection.The results of the pilot study showed that the Urdu version has an acceptable reliability coefficient such as α = .71 for the Self-regulation questionnaire, α=.83 for the rejection sensitivity questionnaire.
One item was rejected from RSQ, "After graduation, you can't find a job and ask your parents if you can live at home for a while" In Pakistan, children can stay with their parents even after their stable jobs and marriages, making it irrelevant for adolescents of Pakistan.

Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SRQ): SRQ is a 5-point Likert-type scale (with response categories ranging between "not very like me"=1 to "very like me"=5), having twenty-two items andfour subscales namely, Plan (5 items), Monitor (6 items), Control (6 items) and Reflect (5 items), with 0.89 reliability coefficient[11]. SRQ is used to measure the self-regulation of emotions and behaviour's in adolescents with composite scores rangingbetween 22 to 110. A higher score indicatesa higher level of self-regulatory strategies in the individuals. The results showed that the Urdu version was comprehendible and with adequate reliability coefficient α = .71 for the Self-regulation questionnaire in the pilot study.

Positive Youth Development Inventory (PYDI): PYDI is a 4-point Likert-type scale (with response categories ranging between "strongly disagree"=1 to "strongly agree"=4)with 55 items, with the reliability of (r = .92) reliability and six domains namely;Competence, Character, Connection, Caring, Confidence, and Contribution[12]. PYDI measured the positive qualities withheld by the youth to participate actively in all spheres of life. the composite

score ranged between 1 to 220, with individuals showing high scores indicating better development. The results showed that the Urdu version of the PYDI Reliability Coefficient was $\alpha = .85$ in the pilot study.

Translation and Reliability Analysis: All scales were translated in Urdu with permission fromthe authors by three psychology graduates (Ph.D.) using the forward-backward method[13]. Acommittee of three graduate candidates in psychology (two MPhils degrees and a Ph.D.) selected the bestUrdu version of SRQ, RSQ, and PYDI. Urdu translations were back-translated in English by threebilingual specialists from the English department at the university and three other experts (MPhils)who assessed the suitability and sentence structure of the translated scales in Urdu scales. Contentadequacy of the Urdu version for selected scales was improved by removing unnecessary words and adding understandablewords according to the cultural context of Pakistan.

Phase II: Main Study
Sample
A stratified random sampling technique with two strata was established, one from a Government and the other from private colleges in Sara-i-Alamgir. Two randomly selected colleges from each stratum. A proportionate random sample from each stratum yielded 608 from 1st and 2nd-year students, calculated by using Yamane formula[14].

Procedure
Advanced Studies and Research Board, University of Gujrat approved the present cross-sectional study design to be conducted atthe Department of Psychologyon the sample of college students (June-September 2019) studying in the private and public institutes of Sara – i-Alamgir.Permission from Principals of the colleges was taken followed by the permission of class teachers to collect the data from the students. Written informed consent was taken from all students and they were briefly told about the nature of the study, followed by a request to complete demographic information and the SRQ, APRI, RSQ, and PYDI scales presented in a packet form. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained about personal information and the data completed by the students by coding the information. Structure equation model (AMOS 21)[15] was used to analyse the interactions among bullying and victimization, rejection sensitivity, self-regulation, and positive development and was confirmed by Confirmatory factor analysis.

RESULTS

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) has yielded a model fit summary with a significant CMIN/DF value of 2.32 in the acceptable range, showing the structural relationship among bullying, victimization, rejection sensitivity, self-regulation with positive youth development. The correlation coefficient between bullying and victimization is high positive with r=0.78. However, negligible correlation coefficients are observed for bullying and victimization simultaneously with rejection sensitivity with values 0.04 and 0.09 respectively in the present sample. The values of model fit indices such as GFI, AGFI, CFI, TLI, RMSEA, and RMR (**Table I**) are in acceptable ranges. **Figure I** of the structuralequation model confirms the hypothetical model of the study derived from a review of various researches[5,8].

TABLE I: MODEL FIT SUMMARY FOR VARIABLES OF THE STUDY (n=608)

CMIN/DF	GFI	AGFI	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	RMR
2.32	.99	.97	.99	.98	.04	.66

FIGURE I: STRUCTURE EQUATION MODEL FOR INTERACTION OF BULLYING, VICTIMIZATION, REJECTION SENSITIVITY (RS), SELF-REGULATION (SR) WITH POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT (PYD) IN ADOLESCENTS
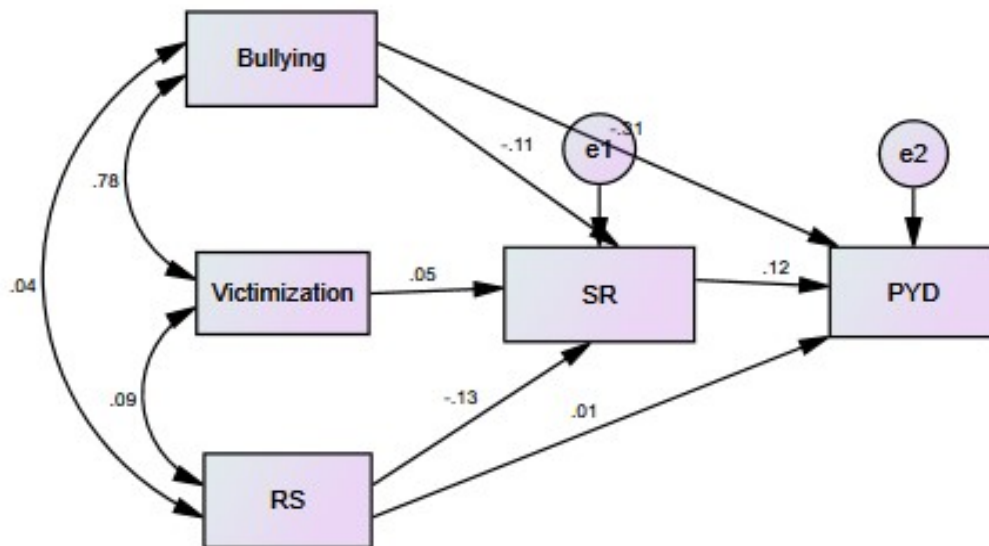
DISCUSSION

No direct research has been conducted to evaluate the issue of rejection sensitivity about PYD. However, researches have indicated detrimental influences of sensitivity issues on the wellbeing and interpersonal relations of adolescents[16,17]. Within the context of interpersonal relationships, the phenomenon of bullying and victimization has been explored in adolescents as it is a critical developmental stage of arousal and aggression[18]. A cluster of defining behaviors in bullying included the reoccurrence of plans to harm in a power imbalanced interaction where one is perceived as strong and another as week[19]. And victimization is week one who suffered the act of bullying by perpetuators[20]. Experimental analyses revealed a significant reciprocal association between bullies and bullyvictims with poorer self-regulation strategies as compared to the control group of non-bullies or non-victims[21].

So far correlations are concerned among bullying, victimization, and rejection sensitivity in the structural equation model, previous researches indicated that there is a strong positive association between bullying and victimization[22], supporting the finding of an association between bullying and victimization found in the present sample. However, in current research bullying is not related to the sensitivity for rejection in adolescents. Previous research showed bullying has a significant relation with rejection sensitivity in the context of racio-ethnic individuals suffering at the hands of the power ideologies of the majority[23]. Since no prejudice issues based on ethnicity are faced bya representative sample, therefore the correlation between rejection sensitivity and bullying is negligible. Another study posited a weak association between victimization with anger-oriented rejection sensitivityrather than anxiety-oriented rejection sensitivity[24]. Hence, anxious sensitivity to rejection is not related tothe victimization experiences of the adolescents in the present study.

The hypothesis of the present study has been confirmed based on the results of the study (**Table I**). It stated an association of fights and targeted discrimination with rejection sensitivity, and all of these factors are buffered by self-regulatory mechanisms to significantly affect the mode of positive development in adolescents (**Figure I**). This model is further strengthened by the findings of the previous researches. It has been found that the stressful situation prevalent due to bullying can be managed well by the incorporation of coping mechanisms and self-regulatory strategies[25,26]. Similar results to adolescents have also been acquired in the sample of adults[27]. In other studies, bullying, victimization, and rejection sensitivity have been linked and have shunned the wellbeing of people[23,24]. A model of PYD can be incorporated in youth development and training programs[28] alongwith the intervention of promoting the development of self-regulation skills in them[29].

CONCLUSION

Conclusively, to enhance the positive development of personality in youth, the structuralequation model suggested working on training the adolescents with appropriate self-regulatory strategies that would minimize the impact of sensitivity to rejection as well.

DATA SHARING STATEMENT: The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS
Shafiq S: Concept & idea, analysis, data collection, drafting
Batool S: Data collection, manuscript writing

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