

Parenting Styles and Social Media Exposure in Relation to Bullying Behavior among Rural Adolescents in Indonesia

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Abstract

Background - Bullying among adolescents remains a persistent socio-behavioral problem in Indonesia, particularly in rural areas undergoing rapid digitalization. The expansion of social media access, coupled with diverse parenting practices, has created complex environments that may shape aggressive and bullying behaviors among adolescents.

Research Urgency - The increasing prevalence of bullying among adolescents in rural Indonesia, driven by rapid digitalization and rising social media exposure, necessitates urgent investigation due to its potential to intensify both traditional and cyberbullying behaviors. This study is essential to provide empirical insights into how parenting styles interact with digital environments, informing the development of family- and community-based interventions to strengthen adolescents' socio-emotional resilience.

Research Objectives - This study aims to examine the influence of parenting styles and social media exposure on bullying behavior among adolescents in Sukaharja Village, Bogor Regency.

Research Method - An explanatory quantitative approach with a cross-sectional design was employed. A total of 245 adolescents aged 12–18 years were selected through stratified random sampling. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and analyzed using Pearson correlation and multiple linear regression to assess both individual and combined effects of the independent variables.

Research Findings - The results indicate that parenting style has a significant negative effect on bullying behavior, suggesting that authoritative and supportive parenting reduces aggressive tendencies. Conversely, social media exposure shows a significant positive effect, indicating that higher digital engagement increases the likelihood of bullying. The regression model explains 35.4% of the variance, with age and gender also demonstrating significant contributions.

Research Conclusion - Effective parenting practices, particularly authoritative approaches combined with active parental mediation of social media use, play a crucial role in mitigating bullying behavior among adolescents.

Research Novelty/Contribution - This study contributes by integrating family dynamics and digital exposure within a rural adolescent context, offering implications for nonformal education through community- and family-based digital literacy interventions to strengthen adolescents' socio-emotional resilience.

Keywords: parenting; social-media; bullying; rural adolescents

How to Cite:

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INTRODUCTION

Bullying has become a pressing social issue in Indonesia. The number of cases continues to increase and attract public attention. The Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) and the Federation of Indonesian Teachers' Unions (FSGI) recorded 2,355 violations of child protection in 2023. A total of 861 violations occurred in educational settings. Physical bullying affected 55.5% of victims. Verbal bullying affected 29% of victims. Psychological bullying affected 15.2% of victims (KPAI, 2023; Vasudewa & Setuningsih, 2023).

This trend shows no signs of decreasing. The Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (KemenPPPA) released a report in November 2024. The report documented 14,308 cases of violence against children. These cases involved 15,886 victims (Sulis Winurini & Timoth Joseph Shekinah Glory, 2024). These statistics cause deep concern. Bullying cases among students continue to rise steadily. Bullying occurs both inside and outside school environments. Schools should be safe places for children, but many students now feel unsafe. They fear becoming the next victims. Parents also worry about their children's safety. They hope schools can protect their children and want bullying to stop immediately. Teachers need better training to handle bullying. Many teachers do not recognize bullying signs, and some ignore incidents completely. The government must create stronger regulations because current laws are not strong enough. Perpetrators often receive only light punishments. Victims suffer from long-term trauma, their academic performance may decline, and some even refuse to attend school.

Physical bullying leaves visible wounds, while verbal bullying damages self-confidence. Psychological bullying destroys mental health. Social media amplifies bullying effects, as cyberbullying reaches victims anywhere. Victims cannot escape even at home. Indonesia needs a collective effort from parents, teachers, and governments. Communities should support bullying prevention programs because children deserve to learn without fear. Every child has the right to feel safe, and schools must fulfill this basic right immediately. Adolescents are the most affected demographic. Bullying in Indonesia most frequently occurs among children aged 12-18 years (Husna Asri et al., 2022; Wasito & Fauziah, 2023), a finding echoed by a 2020 UNICEF survey which revealed that 41% of 15-year-olds had experienced at least two instances of bullying (Unicef, 2020). This period of identity exploration makes adolescents particularly vulnerable; without proper guidance, they may resort to aggression and other social problems (BahmanBeigloo & Khosravi, 2021; Potterton et al., 2022; Samaey et al., 2025). The pervasive influence of social media has exacerbated this vulnerability. With over 191 million social media users in Indonesia—73.7% of the population—teenagers are among the most active users, making gadgets and online platforms central to their social lives and identity formation (Odgers & Jensen, 2020; Panggabean, 2024; Throuvala et al., 2019).

This constant exposure to social media is a significant contributor to bullying. It alters how adolescents form relationships and communicates, often prioritizing virtual interactions over real-world connections. The consumption of violent content and the pressure to project a perfect online image can foster aggression, which may manifest as a desire to dominate or oppress others through bullying (Chen et al., 2025; Craig et al., 2020; O'Reilly et al., 2018).

Compounding this digital influence is the role of the family. Poor communication and parenting practices can entrench bullying behavior (Aminah et al., 2023; Biswas et al., 2022). As Diana Baumrind's theory on parenting styles posits, the consistent patterns of emotional expression, attention, and discipline that parents exhibit profoundly shape a child's personality (Candelanza et al., 2022; Shai & Belsky, 2017). Parenting styles are therefore a critical factor. While an authoritative style—characterized by warmth and clear boundaries—tends to reduce aggression, authoritarian or permissive styles, marked by excessive control or a lack of guidance, have been consistently linked to an increased risk of bullying behavior in adolescents (Hong et al., 2025; Huang & Wan, 2025; Ratih Siti Aminah & Permana, 2024).

The convergence of these factors was starkly illustrated in early 2025 in Sukamakmur Subdistrict, Bogor Regency. The circulation of a video showing teenage girls bullying a peer, causing physical and psychological distress, was a devastating blow to a region already under scrutiny for its high bullying rates (Muhamad, 2025; Sidik, 2025). The perpetrators' subsequent, unabated use of social media, and the video's virality, underscored a clear indication of social media's negative influence and its misuse to assert group dominance.

While previous research has established links between bullying and both parenting styles and social media, these factors have largely been examined in isolation and within urban contexts. There is a significant gap in understanding how these two powerful forces interact to shape bullying behavior among adoles-

cents in rural areas. Rural settings, with their more traditional family structures, evolving digital landscapes, and distinct social dynamics, present a unique context that requires targeted investigation (Swearer & Hymel, 2015; Santoso et al, 2024). This study aims to fill this gap by analyzing the influence of parenting styles and social media exposure on bullying behavior among adolescents in Sukaharja Village, Bogor Regency. By integrating perspectives from developmental psychology and informal education, this research seeks not only to contribute to the academic understanding of adolescent behavior in the digital age but also to provide an empirical basis for community-based interventions that strengthen digital literacy, family communication, and anti-violence initiatives in rural Indonesia.

METHOD

This study employs an explanatory quantitative approach to examine the causal relationships (Sugiyono, 2016) between parenting styles, social media exposure, and bullying behavior among adolescents in rural areas. An explanatory design was chosen to explain the influence of independent variables on the dependent variable through hypothesis testing (Ghozali, 2018). A cross-sectional design was used, collecting data at a single point to describe the variables and their relationships simultaneously. The research population included all adolescents aged 12–18 years living in Sukaharja Village, Sukamakmur Subdistrict, Bogor Regency. Village administrative data indicated approximately 897 adolescents in this age range. However, a preliminary survey revealed that only about 75% ($N \approx 673$) were residing in the village during the data collection period. This adjusted figure served as the finite population for sample size calculation.

A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure proportional representation based on key demographic characteristics (village hamlets and age groups). The sample size was calculated using Cochran's formula with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error, yielding an initial sample of 384. After applying the finite population correction formula for $N = 673$, the final, adjusted sample size was 245 adolescents. Data were collected using a structured, self-administered questionnaire. The instrument was developed based on established theoretical frameworks and adapted to the local context.

It comprised five sections: The research instrument consisted of four main sections for collecting data from adolescents. The first section gathered family demographic data, such as the adolescent's age and gender, as well as parental education, occupation, and income, using nominal and ratio scales. The second section measured parenting styles using the PAQ questionnaire adapted from Buri (1991), consisting of 30 statements on a 4-point Likert scale to measure three dimensions of parenting: authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive. Furthermore, social media exposure was measured through a researcher-developed instrument consisting of 12 items, covering usage frequency, platform types, and content consumed. Finally, bullying behavior was measured using an adapted OBVQ, consisting of 15 items to measure the frequency of physical, verbal, and relational bullying behaviors perpetrated in the past three months.

The instrument's content validity was assessed through expert judgment by two academics in developmental psychology and educational research. Revisions were made based on their feedback. A pilot study was then conducted with 30 adolescents from a neighboring village with similar characteristics to test the instrument's reliability. Internal consistency reliability was measured using Cronbach's Alpha (α). All constructs exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating good reliability:

Parenting Style: $\alpha = 0.84$

Social Media Exposure: $\alpha = 0.79$

Bullying Behavior: $\alpha = 0.88$

Data analysis was performed using SPSS version 25, proceeding through several stages. First, descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were calculated for all variables. Second, classical assumption tests were conducted, specifically the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for normality, the ANOVA test for linearity, and the Glejser test for heteroscedasticity, to ensure the data met the requirements for parametric regression. Third, to test the research hypotheses, a hierarchical multiple linear regression analysis was employed to examine the influence of the independent variables on bullying behavior while controlling for the effect of demographic variables.

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 D_1 + \beta_4 D_2 + \dots + \varepsilon$$

Where:

○ Y = Bullying Behavior

- X_1 = Parenting Style (scores for each style were analyzed separately)
- X_2 = Social Media Exposure
- D_1 = Adolescent's Age
- D_2 = Adolescent's Gender
- $D_3...D_8$ = Other control variables (parental education, family income, etc.)

Control variables were entered in the first block of the regression, followed by the main independent variables (X_1 and X_2) in the second block. This method isolates the unique contribution of parenting style and social media exposure after accounting for demographic factors. A significance level of $p < 0.05$ was used for all statistical tests. It is important to note that of the eight demographic control variables (D_1 – D_8) entered into the model, only adolescent's age (D_1) and gender (D_2) showed a statistically significant relationship with bullying behavior. This suggests that in the context of Sukaharja Village, other demographic factors like parental education and income did not have a significant direct effect when parenting style and social media use were considered.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A quantitative, explanatory statistical analysis involving 245 adolescents from Sukaharja Village was conducted to examine the influence of Parenting Style (X_1) and Social Media Exposure (X_2) on Bullying Behavior (Y), controlling for demographic and socio-economic factors. The distribution of respondents was balanced between males and females in the 12-14 and 15-18 age groups. The majority of parents were educated at the secondary school level (junior high school and senior high school), with 77.9% of parents. Most parents worked in the informal sector and had lower-middle-income levels on average, indicating a typical rural community that is quite dynamic economically but conservative in terms of family values. Descriptive statistics for the main variables indicate that bullying behavior falls in the low to moderate range. However, the relatively high standard deviation value (5.97) indicates considerable variation in bullying behavior among respondents.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Main Variables

Variable	Theoretical Range	Mean	Std. Deviation
Parenting Style	18-90	50.13	5.44
Social Media Exposure	13-65	38.41	4.93
Bullying Behavior	10-50	23.63	5.97

The average score suggests that parenting styles in Sukaharja Village tend to be moderate, combining elements of authoritarian and authoritative approaches, which signifies a strong balance between control and emotional support. Exposure to social media is relatively high, in line with the trend of increasing internet penetration in rural areas. Bullying behavior is at a low moderate level, but still requires attention as more than half of respondents reported having witnessed or been involved in bullying.

Table 2. Parenting Style Sub-Variable (X_1)

Sub-variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
Authoritarian	16.84	4.49	Moderate high
Authoritative	13.68	3.25	Moderate high
Permissive	11.66	3.89	Moderat low
Neglect	11.08	3.77	Moderat low

Authoritarian parenting styles predominate, followed by authoritative ones. These findings suggest that parents offer emotional support, despite emphasizing strict control over their adolescents. This type of pattern is commonly found in rural families that uphold hierarchy and obedience. However, it should also be

noted that this type of parenting pattern has the potential to cause psychological pressure on adolescents, which can manifest in aggressive behavior such as bullying.

Table 3. Social Media Exposure Sub-Variable (X2)

Sub-variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
Platform used	10.32	3.21	Moderate high
Duration/habit	9.77	3.15	Moderate high
Negative content	18.32	4.88	Moderate low

Young people utilize social media extensively for interaction and entertainment, particularly on popular platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook. Although exposure to negative content is relatively low, prolonged use increases the risk of internalizing aggressive behavior.

Table 4. Bullying Behavior Sub-Variable (Y)

Sub-variabel	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretasi
Physical bullying	7.79	2.55	Moderate low
Verbal bullying	8.07	2.49	Moderate low
Relational Bullying	7.77	2.91	Low

Verbal bullying is the most common form of bullying among teenagers, such as mocking, calling someone negative names, and humiliating friends in public. Relational bullying (excluding friends) is relatively low, although it should still be watched out for as it often occurs in a covert form through social media (cyberbullying).

Table 5. Pearson Correlation between Reserach Variables

Variable	X ₁	X ₂	Y
Parenting Style	1.000	0.285**	-0.450**
Social Media Exposure	0.285**	1.000	0.520**
Bullying behavior	-0.450**	0.520**	1.000

Keterangan: **p < 0.01 (2-tailed)

There is a significant negative correlation between parenting style and bullying behavior ($r = -0.450$), indicating that the more positive the parenting, the lower the bullying behavior among adolescents. Conversely, exposure to social media has a significant positive correlation with bullying ($r = 0.520$), meaning that the more often adolescents are exposed to social media, the higher the likelihood of them engaging in bullying. Furthermore, a multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the effects of independent variables on bullying behavior among adolescents.

Tabel 6. Multiple Linear Regression Test Results

Variable	Koef. (B)	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Konstanta)	48.110	5.201	—	9.250	0.000
Parenting Style (X ₁)	-0.380	0.075	-0.347	-5.067	0.000
Social Media Exposure (X ₂)	0.550	0.082	0.454	6.707	0.000
Teenage years (D ₁)	0.120	0.060	0.080	2.000	0.046
Gender (D ₂ , L=1)	1.850	0.810	0.119	2.284	0.023

$R = 0.595$; $R^2 = 0.354$; $F = 15.672$; $p < 0.001$

Based on Table 6, the R^2 value of 0.354 indicates that the variables in the regression model can explain 35.4% of the variation in bullying behavior. The simultaneous test (F test) results show a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), indicating that parenting style, social media exposure, and control variables together have a significant effect on adolescent bullying behavior.

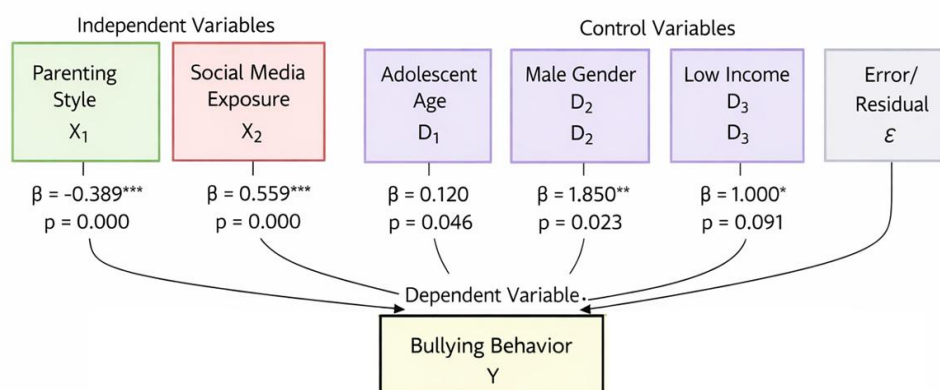


Figure 1. Relationship between Main Variables and Supporting Variables

Partially, parenting style has a negative and significant effect on bullying behavior ($B = -0.380$; $p < 0.05$). These results indicate that the better the parenting (warm and authoritative), the less likely adolescents are to exhibit aggressive behavior. This finding aligns with research (Perez-Gramaje et al., 2020) indicating that positive parenting styles can reduce aggressive behavior in adolescents. Conversely, the authoritarian style of parenting, which is still widely practiced in rural areas, has the potential to increase control and aggression in adolescents, which is then manifested in bullying behavior (Bukhori et al., 2024; Febianingsih & Muryani, 2023).

Social media exposure has a positive and significant effect on bullying behavior ($B = 0.550$), indicating that the intensity of social media use directly increases the risk of bullying behavior among adolescents. These findings show that technology, such as social media, acts as a new agent of socialization for adolescents in Sukaharja Village. Adolescents in the village actively use social media for interaction, obtaining information and social support from virtual interactions, despite the risks of addiction and exposure to negative content on social media. This finding is also reported by Steinsbekk et al. (2024), who state that social media use can be beneficial for the development of social skills and for social interaction with friends during adolescence. Furthermore, Montag et al., (2024) mention that the use of social media also carries the risk of social anxiety, depression, and suicide. O'Reilly et al., (2018) even mention that social media poses a threat to adolescents in the form of mood disorders and anxiety, cyberbullying, and unlimited social media addiction.

There needs to be guidance and control from parents so that adolescents do not become entangled in the risks associated with social media use. Consuming social media without parental guidance can weaken empathy and increase the desire to express oneself through negative behavior (Elsayed, 2021; Jia-Yuan et al., 2025). Parents in Sukaharja Village are aware that teenagers who use mobile phones for social media are at risk of viewing pornographic and violent content that is not in line with social norms. However, parents do not directly supervise their children when they use smartphones for various activities; they only limit the time of use. (2022) reported similar findings: limiting time spent on social media/the internet can indeed reduce online time, but it does not consistently reduce the risk of exposure to negative content or problematic behavior. Its effectiveness varies widely and can even make adolescents more curious, often leading to rebellious behavior. Even adolescents whose use is limited only in time, without parental guidance, still tend to be able to access risky content outside parental supervision (Sevilla-Fernández et al., 2025; Youssef et al., 2024).

There are two types of smartphone use among adolescents in Sukaharja Village, namely: 1) adolescents who have their own smartphones separate from their parents' smartphones; 2) adolescents who share smartphones with their parents, meaning that they use social media on their parents' smartphones. Adolescents who have their own smartphones or smartphones separate from their parents' smartphones have more freedom to use social media. Parents only control usage through time limits agreed upon, such as not bringing smartphones to school, during meals together, and during evening study time. Meanwhile, teenagers who share smartphones with their parents can only access them when their parents are not using them, such as in the afternoon when their parents return from work and on school holidays. Teenagers who have and use their own gadgets separate from their parents have the freedom to access social media without definite control, making them more prone to smartphone addiction and exposure to negative content on social media.

Teenagers who do not have smartphones and access social media only through their parents' smartphones have less time to access social media, and their parents can also monitor what is on their smartphones, directly or indirectly, meaning there is parental control even if it is not realized. Kwak et al., (2018) found in their research that teenagers who use their own gadgets tend to have more freedom to access social media and content on the internet without control, making them more prone to smartphone addiction, exposure to negative content, cyberbullying, and risky behavior. Furthermore, the lack of parental supervision and involvement significantly increases smartphone addiction in teenagers (Widiastuti et al, 2025).

Using gadgets together with parents naturally involves parental control and supervision, even if the usage time is not entirely unrestricted. According to Gong et al., (2022) and Liu et al., (2020), this can be done directly or indirectly, thereby fostering a parent-child relationship that has the potential to reduce the risk of addiction, limit access to harmful content, and promote self-control in adolescents.

Control variables that have a statistically significant influence on bullying behavior include: adolescent age (D1), gender (D1, specifically males), and income (D8, specifically low income). The adolescent age has a value of $B = 0.120$ ($p = 0.046$), indicating that older adolescents tend to be more aggressive. The male gender has a value of $B = 1.850$ ($p = 0.023$), meaning that male adolescents have an average bullying score 1.85 points higher than females. Adolescent age and gender have a significant positive influence ($p < 0.05$), indicating that male and older adolescents tend to have higher bullying scores. These findings are in line with the research by Obregón-Cuesta et al., (2022) and de Oliveira et al., (2024) that male adolescents are more involved in bullying activities, either as perpetrators or victims, compared to female adolescents. Furthermore, older male adolescents tend to be more aggressive than their younger counterparts. Useche et al., (2023) and Cosma et al., (2022) also revealed that male adolescents show greater involvement in passive bullying behavior (victimization) and active harassment (intimidation) compared to female adolescents. Male adolescents are more likely to engage in traditional and cyberbullying, and are also more likely to be victims of traditional bullying than girls.

Family income (D8) refers to low income, with a value of $B = 1,100$ ($p = 0.091$), which shows a trend of increasing bullying; however, this is not statistically significant at $\alpha = 0.05$ or has a weak influence. Tippet & Wolke, (2014) and Stea et al., (2024) found that low-income families have a higher potential to be victims of bullying compared to adolescents from more affluent families. However, the strength of the association is weak because it is not a major factor in bullying among adolescents. Furthermore, Hjalmarsson, (2018) and Wang et al., (2021) found that low family income is more strongly associated with social rejection (peer rejection) than direct bullying. Low income does influence bullying behavior, although this influence is weak and may be due to other factors, such as gender, type of bullying, social context, or even the country (Hosozawa et al., 2021; Pabayo et al., 2022). This means that low family income in Sukaharja Village has a weak influence on adolescent bullying behavior, given the existing social conditions in the village.

CONCLUSION

Parenting styles and exposure to social media significantly influence adolescent bullying behavior in Sukaharja Village. Positive, warm, and communicative parenting styles (leading to authoritative parenting styles) play a role in suppressing aggressive tendencies in adolescents. In contrast, rigid and unempathetic parenting patterns (leading to authoritarian styles) encourage dominant and aggressive behavior that has the potential to trigger bullying, especially peer bullying. Parenting styles in Sukaharja are predominantly authoritarian, although emotional support is still provided, with a strong emphasis on obedience and maintaining social hierarchy within the village structure. High exposure to social media without adequate parental guidance tends to reinforce negative behavior, reduce empathy, and increase adolescents' tendency to engage in bullying, both offline and online. Adolescents in Sukaharja Village intensively use social media. Although exposure to explicitly negative content remains at a moderate level, prolonged duration of use increases the risk of aggressive behavior. In the rural context, these findings confirm that the family remains the primary educational institution responsible for shaping children's social character. However, rapid digitalization presents new challenges that have not been fully balanced by sufficient parental digital literacy. These results also underline the strategic role of nonformal education institutions—such as community learning centers, parenting workshops, and youth development programs—in supporting families through structured guidance and preventive education initiatives.

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