



Exploring Emotional Regulation and Resilience among Young Adults with a history of Bullying

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Abstract: Bullying is a serious negative event that can have an impact on a person's emotional and mental health. The goal of the current study was to investigate resilience and emotional control in young people who have experienced bullying, as well as whether these traits are predicted by bullying experiences and their personal repercussions. The study involved 225 young adults in total. Standardized self-report questionnaires measuring bullying experience, personal repercussions, emotional regulation techniques (cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression), and resilience were used to gather data. The data was analyzed using multiple regression analysis, descriptive statistics, and Pearson product-moment correlation. The findings showed a substantial negative correlation between bullying experience and both expressive repression and cognitive reappraisal. Additionally, there was a substantial negative correlation found between personal repercussions and resilience and cognitive reappraisal. Bullying experience was a strong predictor of both expressive suppression and cognitive reappraisal, according to regression analysis. Nevertheless, resilience was not substantially predicted by bullying experience. Resilience was found to be considerably adversely predicted by the personal effects of bullying. These results imply that while the personal repercussions of bullying have a stronger effect on resilience, bullying experiences have a significant impact on emotional regulation. The study emphasizes how critical it is to address the psychological impacts of bullying and support young people's resilience and emotional control. Bullying

experience was a strong predictor of both expressive suppression and cognitive reappraisal, according to regression analysis. Nevertheless, resilience was not substantially predicted by bullying experience. Resilience was found to be considerably adversely predicted by the personal effects of bullying.

Keyword: *Emotional Regulation, Resilience, Bullying*

1. Introduction

Bullying

Bullying is a prevalent type of interpersonal aggressiveness that is acknowledged as a significant worldwide public health and developmental issue (World Health Organization [WHO], 2020). The broad definition of bullying, according to Olweus (1993), is persistent, deliberate hostile behavior with an imbalance of power between the offender and the victim. This imbalance, which can be physical, social, or psychological in character, sets bullying apart from typical peer disagreement. Bullying can take many different forms, such as relational or social exclusion (e.g., rumor spreading, ostracism), physical aggression (e.g., pushing, hitting), verbal harassment (e.g., name-calling, threats), and cyberbullying via digital platforms (Kowalski et al., 2014; Smith et al., 2008).

Emotional Regulation

The mechanisms via which people control the experience, intensity, duration, and expression of their emotions are referred to as emotion regulation (Gross, 1998). It is essential to both social functioning and psychological equilibrium (Gross, 2015). Gross's Process Model of Emotion Regulation (Gross, 1998, 2015) is one of the most important theoretical frameworks in this field. It suggests that emotions change over time and may be controlled at various phases of the emotion-generative process.

Resilience

Resilience is the capacity to adapt effectively in the face of adversity, tragedy, or high levels of stress (American Psychological Association, 2014). According to contemporary viewpoints, resilience is not a fixed quality but rather a dynamic developmental process including interactions between personal traits and environmental systems (Masten, 2001; Rutter, 2012). In her well-known description of resilience as "ordinary magic," Ann Masten (2001) emphasized that adaptive functioning is based on normal developmental processes including cognitive competence, safe attachment, and supportive relationships.

Bullying and Emotion Regulation's Relationship

According to McLaughlin et al. (2015), emotional dysregulation may act as a mediator between early bullying experiences and subsequent psychopathology in adulthood. Bullying can erode social connections' trust, which limits chances for co-regulation and appropriate emotional expression. Because of this, young adults who have experienced bullying may find it difficult to build strong relationships with others, which exacerbates their regulatory issues (Arseneault, 2018). Bullying victimization and emotional dysregulation are significantly correlated, according to a large body of empirical research (Hawker & Boulton, 2000). Frequent humiliation and rejection by peers can weaken one's sense of self-worth and increase emotional sensitivity, making one more susceptible to anxiety, depression, and unhealthy coping mechanisms (Copeland et al., 2013).

2. Review of Literature

Afrashteh, Hanifeh, & Majzoobi (2025) investigated the relationship between hostile attribution bias, alexithymia, and emotion regulation issues in predicting anger in male adolescents who exhibit high levels of bullying behaviors. 332 male adolescents from Zanjan, Iran participated in the study and filled out standardized self-report questionnaires that assessed their involvement in bullying, anger expression, hostile attribution bias, alexithymia (Toronto Alexithymia Scale), and emotion regulation (DERS). Anger was strongly correlated with both emotional regulation issues and alexithymia, according to path analysis. These correlations were significantly mediated by hostile attribution bias, suggesting that cognitive biases intensify violent emotional reactions. The study emphasizes how crucial it is to focus on both emotional and cognitive processes in therapies meant to lessen male teenagers' anger and bullying behavior.

Chen et al. (2025) investigated the relationship between bullying victimization and self-harm among 3,545 Chinese teenagers (Mage = 12.36 years) in relation to emotion management and peer norms. Results from cross-lagged regression analyses demonstrated that bullying, particularly in schools with low peer support, predicted self-harm through maladaptive expressive suppression. This emphasizes how crucial it is to focus on emotion management in treatments for teenagers who have been bullied.

Zhao & Ye (2025) examined PTSSs, bullying, and cognitive emotion control in 1,695 college students. Maladaptive emotion regulation moderated the association between bullying and PTSSs, but hope buffered this effect, according to research using structural equation

modeling. This suggests that treatments should strengthen adaptive regulation and hope in order to lessen the psychological effects of bullying.

Jesline et al. (2025) investigated the resilience, emotion regulation, and meta-emotions of 667 neglected adolescents in India (Mage = 14.6 years). Fostering resilience helps lessen emotion regulation issues in vulnerable kids, according to mediation analysis, which showed that resilience partially mediated the relationship between meta-emotions and emotion regulation challenges.

Wang et al. (2025) investigated school bullying, resilience, and school belongingness among boarding secondary school students in Hebei, China. Path analysis showed that bullying negatively affected mental health, and both resilience and school belongingness mediated this relationship, highlighting the need for supportive school environments.

3. Methodology

3.1 Aim of the Study

The study's main goal is to investigate resilience and emotional regulation in young people who have experienced bullying in the past, as well as the connections between resilience levels, emotion management techniques, and bullying experiences

3.2 Objectives of the Study

1. To investigate the connection between young people' experiences with bullying and their ability to control their emotions.
2. To investigate the connection between young people' resilience and their experiences with bullying.
3. To investigate if young people' experiences with bullying and its personal effects are predictive of their ability to regulate their emotions.
4. To investigate if young people' resilience is predicted by their experiences with bullying and its emotional repercussions.

3.3 Hypothesis

The present study makes the following assumptions in light of the resilience theory (Masten, 2001), the emotion regulation theoretical framework (Gross, 1998), and the stress-coping models (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984):

H1: “Bullying experiences, emotional regulation (cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression), and resilience in young adulthood will all be significantly correlated.”

H2: “Young adults' cognitive reappraisal will be predicted by their own experiences with bullying and its effects.”

H3: “Young adults' expressive repression will be predicted by their own experiences with bullying and the resulting personal repercussions.”

H4: “Young people' resilience is strongly predicted by their own experiences with bullying and the personal fallout.”

3.4 Study Participants

Young adults between the ages of 18 and 30 made up the sample. Convenience sampling was used to find participants. The research included participants who reported having been bullied at any point in their lives.

Criteria for inclusion

- Between the ages of 18 and 30.
- The capacity to comprehend English.
- Self-reported bullying history

Criteria for exclusion

- People who are older than 30 or younger than 18 and Inadequate answers
- The final sample consisted of 225 people.

3.5 Tools for Gathering Data

Three standardized self-report measures were used to gather data:

Questionnaire on Emotional Regulation (ERQ): The Emotional Regulation Questionnaire, created by Gross and John (2003), assesses two techniques for controlling emotions: Cognitive Reappraisal (6 items) Suppression of Expression (4 things). Ten things in total. A seven-point Likert scale (1 being strongly disagree and 7 being strongly agree) is used for responses.

The BRS, or Brief Resilience Scale: The Brief Resilience Scale was created by Smith et al. (2008) to assess resilience to stress. Six items in all. 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) is the response format It includes: Three things with good wording. Three items with negative wording (reverse scored).

Adult Bullying Scale (BSA): The Bullying Scale for Adults evaluates past bullying events in childhood and adolescence. Total items: (Enter the real amount according to your version; depending on the form, this is often 20–30 items.) Response format: A Likert-type scale that gauges how frequently bullying occurs. The scale evaluates:

- Bullying that is physical
- Bullying with words
- Relationship and social bullying

3.6 Methodology for Gathering Data

A survey was conducted to gather data. The process comprised:

1. A succinct introduction outlining the goal of the research.
2. Informed consent was acquired.
3. Participants finished: The 10-item Emotional Regulation Questionnaire, The 6-item Brief Resilience Scale, Adult Bullying Scale (13 items)
4. Demographic information was also gathered, including gender and age.
5. Confidentiality was guaranteed, and participation was entirely optional.
6. After being converted to Microsoft Excel, the responses were loaded into SPSS for analysis

3.7 Method of Scoring

Questionnaire on Emotional Regulation (ERQ)

- The sum of six pertinent elements is the Cognitive Reappraisal score. • The sum of four pertinent elements is the Expressive Suppression score.
- Greater adoption of that method is indicated by higher scores.
- In ERQ, reverse scoring is not necessary.

Scale of Brief Resilience (BRS)

- The scores for items 2, 4, and 6 are inverted
- Procedure for reverse - One turns becomes five, two turns into four, three is still three. Four turns into two, Five turns into one.
- The total resilience score is determined by: Adding up all six things and using the mean score approach, divide by six.
- Greater resilience is indicated by higher scores. 6

Bullying Scale (BSA)

- The total bullying score is calculated by adding together all the items.
- Greater exposure to bullying events is indicated by higher ratings.
- The scale structure may also affect the calculation of subscale scores.

3.8 Analysis of Data

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to examine the data. The analyses listed below were carried out:

1. Descriptive statistics
2. Analysis of Pearson Product-Moment Correlation
3. Analysis of Multiple Regression (Dependent Variable):

4. analysis of multiple regression (reappraisal as dependent
5. dependent variable in multiple regression analysis is resilience or BRS.

The significance level was fixed at $p < .05$.

4. Result And Discussion

Demographics

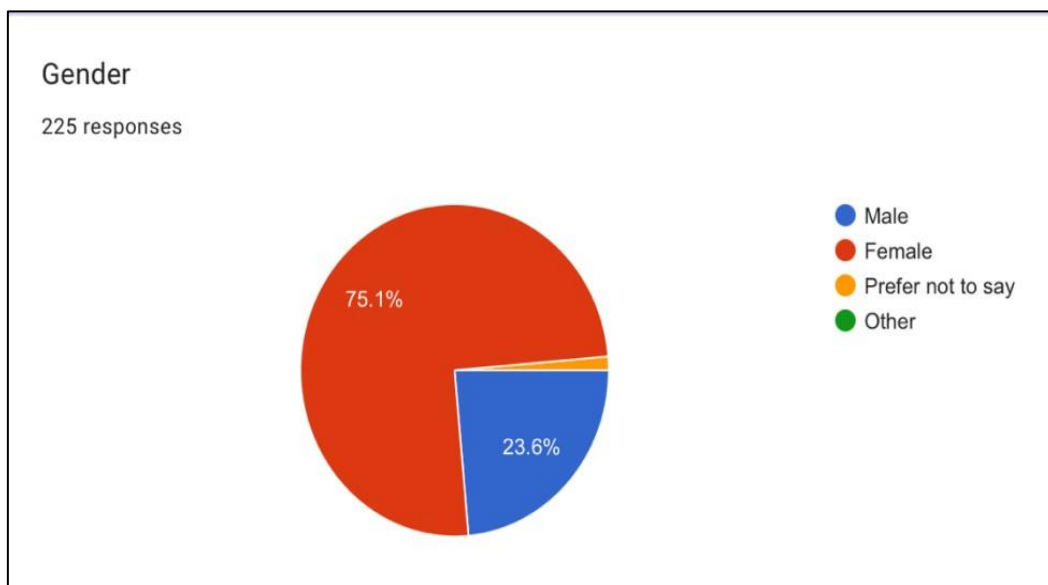
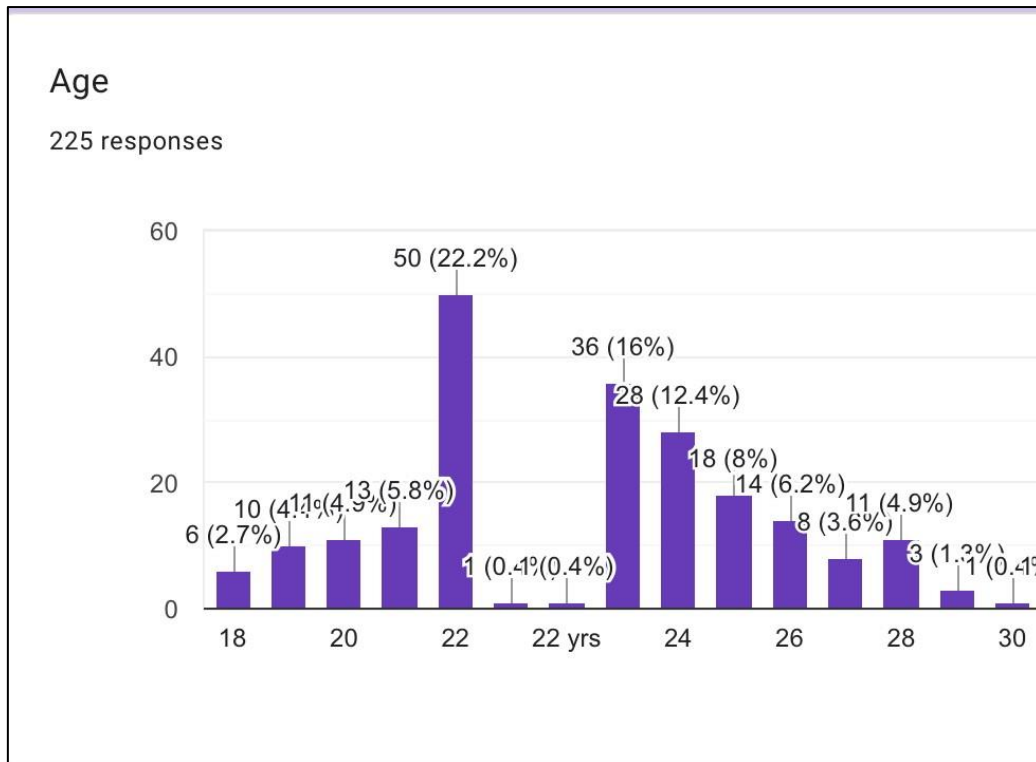


Table 1: *Descriptive Statistics*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
OWN BULLYING EXPERIENCE TOTAL	225	0	30	9.76	6.856
PERSONAL CONSEQUENCES	225	0	24	5.48	5.140
COGNITIVE REAPPRAISAL	225	6	42	29.71	7.576
EXPRESSIVE SUPPRESSION	225	4	28	18.25	5.754
BRIEF RESILIENCE SCALE	225	1	5	3.12	.589
Valid N (listwise)	225				

Descriptive statistics were computed for all study variables. The mean score for own bullying experience was 9.76 (SD = 6.86), and personal consequences had a mean score of 5.48 (SD = 5.14). Cognitive reappraisal had a mean score of 29.71 (SD = 7.58), while expressive suppression had a mean score of 18.25 (SD = 5.75). The mean score for resilience was 3.12 (SD = 0.59). These results indicate the overall levels of bullying experience, emotional regulation, and resilience among the participants.

Table 2: *Bullying Personal Consequences With Cognitive Reappraisal*

		OWN BULLYING EXPERIENCE TOTAL	PERSONAL CONSEQUENCES	REAPPRAISAL ITEMS
OWN BULLYING EXPERIENCE TOTAL	Pearson Correlation	1	.703**	-.233**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	225	225	225
PERSONAL CONSEQUENCES	Pearson Correlation	.703**	1	-.131*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.049
	N	225	225	225
COGNITIVE REAPPRAISAL	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.049	
	N	225	225	225
	Pearson Correlation	-.150*	-.012	.625**

The association between one's own bullying experience, personal repercussions, and cognitive reappraisal was investigated using a Pearson product-moment correlation analysis. The findings showed a substantial negative correlation between cognitive reappraisal and

personal bullying experience ($r = -.233$, $p < .01$). Additionally, there was a strong negative correlation ($r = -.131$, $p < .05$) between cognitive reappraisal and personal repercussions. Furthermore, there was a substantial positive correlation between personal repercussions and one's own bullying experience ($r = .703$, $p < .01$).

Table 3: *Bullying Personal Consequences With Expressive Suppression*

		OWN BULLYING EXPERIENCE TOTAL	PERSONI CONSEQUENCES	REAPPRAISAL ITEMS	SUPPRESSION ITEMS
OWN BULLYING EXPERIENCE TOTAL	Pearson Correlation	1	.703**	-.233**	-.150*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.024
	N	225	225	225	225
PERSONAL CONSEQUENCES	Pearson Correlation	.703**	1	-.131*	-.012
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.049	.859
	N	225	225	225	225
EXPRESSIVE SUPPRESSION	Pearson Correlation	-.150*	-.012	.625**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.024	.859	.000	
	N	225	225	225	225

The association between expressive repression, personal repercussions, and one's own bullying experience was investigated using a Pearson product-moment correlation analysis. The findings demonstrated a substantial negative correlation between expressive inhibition and personal bullying experience ($r = -.150$, $p < .05$). However, there was no significant correlation between expressive repression and personal effects ($r = -.012$, $p > .05$). Personal repercussions showed a substantial positive correlation with one's own bullying experience ($r = .703$, $p < .0$).

Table 4: *Bullying Personal Consequences With Resilience*

		OWN BULLYING EXPERIENCE TOTAL	PERSONI CONSEQUENCES	REAPPRAISAL ITEMS	SUPPRESSION ITEMS	BRS FINAL
OWN BULLYING EXPERIENCE TOTAL	Pearson Correlation	1	.703**	-.233**	-.150*	-.036
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.024	.590
	N	225	225	225	225	225
PERSONAL CONSEQUENCES	Pearson Correlation	.703**	1	-.131*	-.012	-.149*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.049	.859	.026
	N	225	225	225	225	225
BRIEF RESILIENCE SCALE	Pearson Correlation	-.036	-.149*	.036	-.131*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.590	.026	.593	.049	
	N	225	225	225	225	225

The association between resilience, personal repercussions, and one's own bullying experience was investigated using a Pearson product-moment correlation analysis. The findings showed no significant correlation between resilience and personal bullying experience ($r = -.036, p > .05$). However, there was a strong negative correlation ($r = -.149, p < .05$) between resilience and personal repercussions. Personal repercussions showed a substantial positive correlation with one's own bullying experience ($r = .703, p < .01$).

Table 5: *Regression Analysis Predicting Expressive Suppression*

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.200 ^a	.040	.031	5.663	.040	4.608	2	222	.011

a. Predictors: (Constant), PERSONAL CONSEQUENCES, OWN BULLYING EXPERIENCE TOTAL

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	295.601	2	147.801	4.608	.011 ^b
	Residual	7120.461	222	32.074		
	Total	7416.062	224			

a. Dependent Variable: EXPRESSIVE SUPPRESSION ITEMS

b. Predictors: (Constant), PERSONAL CONSEQUENCES, OWN BULLYING EXPERIENCE TOTAL

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	19.410	.659		29.459	.000		
	OWN BULLYING EXPERIENCE TOTAL	-.235	.078	-.280	-3.030	.003	.506	1.975
	PERSONAL CONSEQUENCES	.207	.103	.185	2.001	.047	.506	1.975

a. Dependent Variable: EXPRESSIVE SUPPRESSION ITEMS

To find out if personal repercussions and one's own bullying history predicted expressive repression, a multiple regression analysis was performed. At $F(2, 222) = 4.61$, $p < .05$, the total model was significant and explained 4% of the variance ($R^2 = .040$). Expressive suppression was considerably favorably predicted by personal repercussions ($\beta = .185$, $p < .05$) and strongly negatively predicted by one's own bullying experience ($\beta = -.280$, $p < .01$).

Therefore, there was some evidence for the prediction that bullying experience and personal repercussions will strongly predict expressive inhibition.

Table 6: Regression Analysis Predicting Cognitive Reappraisal

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.237 ^a	.056	.048	7.394	.056	6.611	2	222	.002

a. Predictors: (Constant), OWN BULLYING EXPERIENCE TOTAL, PERSONAL CONSEQUENCES

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	722.819	2	361.410	6.611	.002 ^b
	Residual	12135.403	222	54.664		
	Total	12858.222	224			

a. Dependent Variable: COGNITIVE REAPPRAISAL ITEMS

b. Predictors: (Constant), OWN BULLYING EXPERIENCE TOTAL, PERSONAL CONSEQUENCES

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	32.191	.860		37.424	.000		
	PERSONAL CONSEQUENCES	.094	.135	.064	.693	.489	.506	1.975
	OWN BULLYING EXPERIENCE TOTAL	-.307	.101	-.277	-3.027	.003	.506	1.975

a. Dependent Variable: COGNITIVE REAPPRAISAL ITEMS

To investigate if personal repercussions and one's own bullying experience predicted cognitive reappraisal, a multiple regression analysis was used. Overall, the model explained 5.6% of the variation ($R^2 = .056$) and was significant ($F(2, 222) = 6.61, p < .01$). Cognitive reappraisal was strongly adversely predicted by one's own bullying experience ($\beta = -.277, p < .01$). However, cognitive reappraisal was not substantially predicted by personal repercussions ($\beta = .064, p > .05$). Therefore, there was some evidence for the prediction that bullying experience and personal repercussions will strongly predict cognitive reappraisal.

Table 7: Regression Analysis Predicting Resilience

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.177 ^a	.031	.023	.582	.031	3.591	2	222	.029

a. Predictors: (Constant), OWN BULLYING EXPERIENCE TOTAL, PERSONAL CONSEQUENCES

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2.437	2	1.218	3.591	.029 ^b
	Residual	75.323	222	.339		
	Total	77.760	224			

a. Dependent Variable: BRIEF RESILIENCE SCALE

b. Predictors: (Constant), OWN BULLYING EXPERIENCE TOTAL, PERSONAL CONSEQUENCES

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	3.160	.068		46.623	.000		
	PERSONI CONSEQUENCES	-.028	.011	-.244	-2.624	.009	.506	1.975
	OWN BULLYING EXPERIENCE TOTAL	.012	.008	.135	1.455	.147	.506	1.975

a. Dependent Variable: BRIEF RESILIENCE SCALE

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine whether own bullying experience and personal consequences predicted resilience. The overall model was significant, $F(2, 222) = 3.59$, $p < .05$, explaining 3.1% of the variance ($R^2 = .031$). Personal consequences significantly negatively predicted resilience ($\beta = -.244$, $p < .01$). However, own bullying experience did not significantly predict resilience ($\beta = .135$, $p > .05$).

Thus, there found some evidence for the hypothesis that resilience is significantly predicted by bullying experience and personal repercussions.

5. Discussion

The current study looked at emotional control and resilience among young people who have been bullied in order to ascertain if bullying experience and its personal consequences predict these traits.

The results showed a strong negative correlation between the experience of bullying and both cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression. This implies that those who experienced bullying more frequently reported using less adaptive emotional management techniques. These results are in line with other studies showing that being a victim of bullying is linked to emotional problems and dysregulated affect (Hawker & Boulton, 2000; McLaughlin et al., 2015). Bullying victims may endure protracted emotional anguish, which might impair their capacity to successfully regulate their emotions or reevaluate circumstances (Gross & John, 2003).

Regression studies also showed that the experience of bullying was a significant predictor of both cognitive reappraisal and expressive repression. This suggests that negative interpersonal experiences, including bullying, might eventually affect one's ability to regulate emotions and behavior (Arseneault, 2018). These results are consistent with the emotion regulation hypothesis, which postulates that long-term regulatory patterns may be shaped by repetitive stress exposure (Gross, 2015).

On the other hand, resilience was not substantially predicted by prior bullying experience. According to this research, bullying exposure may not be the only factor that determines resilience. According to resilience theory, resilience is not a single negative occurrence but rather a complex concept impacted by societal, familial, and individual protective factors (Luthar et al., 2000; Masten, 2014).

Nonetheless, the human consequences of bullying greatly lowered the likelihood of resistance. This suggests that resilience levels may be more significantly influenced by the subjective impact or intensity of bullying events than by exposure alone. The idea that internal

processing of adversity promotes long-term adjustment is supported by the possibility that those who suffer more severe emotional or psychological repercussions may have a harder time adapting and recovering from stress (Rutter, 2012).

Overall, the results indicate that while the psychological effects of bullying are more strongly associated with resilience, bullying experience is a substantial predictor of emotional regulation. These findings emphasize how critical it is to address the psychological effects of bullying and put treatments in place that focus on enhancing resilience and emotion control abilities (Compas et al., 2017).

By elucidating the relationship between bullying experiences and early adult resilience and emotional regulation, the current study adds to the body of previous knowledge. It emphasizes the necessity of focused psychological therapies that improve adaptive emotional control and lessen bullying's long-term psychological impacts (Arseneault, 2018).

6. Conclusion

In addition to examining the predictive significance of bullying experience and its individual effects on emotional regulation and resilience, the current study sought to understand emotional regulation and resilience among young people with a history of bullying.

According to the study's findings, emotional management techniques including expressive suppression and cognitive reappraisal were strongly predicted by prior bullying experience. This implies that those who were bullied had variations in their emotional regulation. Lower levels of emotional control were linked to bullying experiences, suggesting that bullying may have a detrimental impact on emotional functioning.

Additionally, the study discovered that resilience was not substantially predicted by bullying experience. However, it was shown that resilience was substantially predicted by the personal repercussions of bullying, with more personal repercussions linked to poorer resilience. This implies that the detrimental effects of bullying—rather than the bullying event itself—have a greater influence on resilience.

The study's overall findings indicate that bullying has a substantial impact on emotional regulation and, through its personal repercussions, indirectly impacts resilience. These results emphasize how critical it is to address the psychological effects of bullying and support young people's resilience and emotional control.

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