


Bullying Victimization Among Ukrainian College Students: The Role of Family Communication and Satisfaction, Corporal Punishment and Child Abuse

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Abstract

Bullying involves aggression that is proactive, intentional, and repeated in a relationship with unequal power. We assessed the association of recent bullying victimization with family processes during childhood using standardized measures in a sample of 1008 young adults attending 10 Ukrainian universities in Ukraine. Structural equation modeling was utilized to examine the associations between family communication and satisfaction, childhood corporal punishment and abuse, and adulthood bullying victimization. The majority of participants had been bullied by a peer or teacher (62.38%) and

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had a history of corporal punishment (63.46%). There were direct effects of child abuse and corporal punishment and family communication style on bullying victimization during young adulthood. The extent of satisfaction with students' families of origin showed indirect effects. The results highlight the present needs of many students, as well as the risk factors associated with bullying victimization during their post-secondary education years.

Keywords

bullying, child abuse, corporal punishment, family communication, family satisfaction

Bullying, a type of interpersonal aggression characterized by intentionality, repetition, and an imbalance of power (Hymel & Swearer, 2015), continues to be a significant concern. Bullying has been a subject of empirical research for the past 40 years (Hymel & Swearer, 2015). While prevalence rates vary, research suggests that between 10% to 51% of students in North America reported being victimized by peers and 5% to 13% of students admitted to bullying others (Hymel & Swearer, 2015; Vaillancourt et al., 2010). Bullying is also highly prevalent in many other countries. Using national samples of children from 40 countries ($N = 29,127$ students), Craig et al. (2009) found that Ukraine had the fourth highest rates of bullying for boys (34.4%) and girls (28.8%). Also, according to a report from the United Nations Children's Fund (2018), 24% of students in Ukraine reported experiencing bullying in school in 2017. These findings indicate that bullying is a significant problem in Ukrainian schools (Martsenkovskiy & Martsenkovskiy, 2014; Šmigelskas et al., 2018).

Researchers have argued that bullying is a social-ecological phenomenon (Espelage, Rao, & De La Rue, 2013; Espelage & Swearer, 2011; Swearer et al., 2012), that is, bullying is a by-product of the interactions between an individual and their social environments (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Swearer & Hymel, 2015). According to the social-ecological framework, bullying and victimization result from both ontogenetic and social environments, including home, school, community, and culture (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). For instance, the risk for bullying and victimization are influenced by factors within the individual's microsystem (e.g., parent-child relationships, peer relationships, and school connectedness), mesosystem (e.g., teachers), exosystem (e.g., parent's employment), macrosystem (e.g. culture and religion), and chronosystem (e.g., changes in family structure) (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). However, a family is a significant contributor to the development of adolescents' socialization. It is therefore likely that family has a major influence on adolescents' risk of bullying and victimization (Holt, Kaufman Kantor, & Finkelhor, 2008).

Research on family-level factors associated with bullying victimization has been widely conducted in various societies. In Ukraine, research is rare, although existing studies have confirmed that abuse (Akmatov, 2011), corporal punishment (Grogan-Kaylor et al., 2018), and bullying victimization (Craig et al., 2009; Šmigelskas et al., 2018) are highly prevalent among Ukrainian adolescents. Also, a bulk of research on bullying has been conducted among children and adolescents in K-12 schools (Hong et al., 2012; Hong & Espelage, 2012; Olweus, 1978, 1999); in comparison, experience in bullying among college students has been relatively underexplored. However, a review of the literature reported that although the prevalence estimates of bullying in college varied, about 20–25% of students in college reported bullying victimization, and 10–15% reported cyberbullying victimization (Lund & Ross, 2017), similar to the national prevalence of bullying in K-12 schools. Rospenda, Richman, Wolff, & Burke (2013) findings from a sample of college freshmen also indicated that as many as 43% of students reported experiencing bullying in school, and 33% of students were bullied at work. These findings suggest that bullying is a significant problem in higher educational settings.

Additionally, college students' adverse childhood experiences, such as prior childhood abuse could potentially have a detrimental effect on their socialization. College attendance has increasingly been viewed as a normative developmental task for young adults; however, the transition from high school to post-secondary education is not always easy for students with child abuse histories. College students with a history of child abuse are at an elevated risk of negative psychosocial outcomes during adulthood (Bryant & Range, 1997; Burlaka et al., 2020; Wright, Crawford, & Del Castillo, 2009), including bullying and victimization (Jenkins, McNeal, Drayer, & Wang, 2020). Further, research on the association between childhood abuse and involvement in bullying (perpetration and victimization) has been widely explored among children and teenage samples. In contrast, research to date has yet to examine the relevance of childhood abuse in college students' experiences in bullying and victimization. To address these research gaps, we investigate the childhood family context of bullying victimization experienced by college students in Ukraine.

Family-Level Correlates of Bullying and Victimization

Risk Factors

A significant amount of research supports a link between risk for bullying victimization and family-level variables. The risk for bullying victimization is shown to be influenced by the increased use of physical and punitive disciplinary practices (Ahmed & Braithwaite, 2004; Duong, Schwartz, Chang,

Kelly, & Tom, 2009; Zottis, Salum, Isolan, Manfro, & Heldt, 2014). Physically punitive parental discipline, especially by mothers, is shown to be correlated with increased aggression and peer victimization in children (Lereya, Samara, & Wolke, 2013). A meta-analysis by Lereya et al. (2013) found that the experience of abuse and neglect were the most significant predictors of bullying victimization. Children exposed to abusive parenting may learn that they are powerless to control their circumstances and feel less confident in themselves and their ability to assert their needs (Bolger & Patterson, 2001). These feelings of powerlessness may negatively affect how they interact with their peers and, regrettably, increase their likelihood of being a target of bullying (Bolger & Patterson, 2001; Wolke & Samara, 2004).

Abuse in childhood is also associated with risk for both bullying perpetration and victimization (Baldry & Farrington, 2005; Holt et al., 2008; Lereya et al., 2013). Children who have experienced both abuse and emotional/physical neglect by their parents tend to experience greater peer rejection in childhood and are more likely to have depressive symptoms (Burlaka et al., 2020). Children raised in abusive homes often experience hostile, conflictual, and distant relationships with their parents (Espelage & Swearer, 2011). Abused children may act more submissive in an effort to shield themselves from violence in their homes (Duncan, 2004). These emotional and behavioral consequences of childhood abuse may increase children's likelihood of experiencing bullying as they become easy targets who are unlikely to defend themselves (Shields & Cicchetti, 2001). Further, children who are abused at home are at an increased odds of developmental, behavioral, and school-related problems (Burlaka, 2016; Burlaka et al., 2020; Vachon, Krueger, Rogosch, & Cicchetti, 2015), which may further elevate their vulnerability to bullying victimization by their peers.

Protective Factors

Protective factors in the family, such as high level of family cohesion, parent involvement and support, warm and affectionate relationships, and family supervision are found to buffer children and adolescents against the risk for bullying victimization (Cross & Barnes, 2014; Forster et al., 2013; Lereya et al., 2013). An important aspect of the parent-child relationship is communication, which influences child behavior (Nocentini, Fiorentini, Di Paola, & Menesini, 2019; Offrey & Rinaldi, 2017). As studies show, children from families characterized as having good communication show more positive behaviors and better socialization outside the home (Lee & Mortimer, 2009). Not surprisingly, the importance of family communication, and more specifically, parent-adolescent communication about adolescents' bullying experiences in school, has been highlighted in several studies on bullying (Holt et al., 2008; Jeynes, 2008; Offrey & Rinaldi, 2017). Holt et al. (2008) study

reported that bullying victimization was higher when parents were unaware of their children's bullying involvement, possibly due to a lack of communication. The authors emphasized the significance of increasing parent–child communication about bullying experiences in school. Jeynes' (2008) findings from a sample of 139 college students and 102 seventh-to twelfth-grade students also indicated that parental involvement, which included communications between parents and children, was related to a lower rate of children's bullying victimization. Open and empathic communication between parent and child, which might include conversations about a personal problem, is likely to protect adolescents from negative socialization outside the home, such as being involved in bullying situations (Nocentini et al., 2019).

Another important aspect of the family context during adolescence is family satisfaction, a subjective evaluation of the various aspects of the relationships in the family, and the degree to which an individual is pleased and gratified with their family (Olson, 2011). However, research to date has not investigated the association between family satisfaction and bullying victimization, although it is reasonable to conjecture that family satisfaction might be related to a lower risk of bullying victimization. As research literature suggests, family dysfunction shows significant associations with higher anxiety and depression (Wang, Tian, Guo, & Huebner, 2020) and life satisfaction (Cheung et al., 2018). Satisfaction with families also relates to bullying perpetration and victimization (Liu, Guo, Weissman, & Liu, 2020).

Contributions of the Present Study

As empirical studies suggest, family-level risk factors, such as parent–child relationships, parental discipline, and abuse correlate positively with the risk for bullying victimization. Although family-level protective factors, including parental support and parental monitoring, have also been documented widely in the research literature, a limited number of studies have investigated whether other protective factors, such as family communication and perceived family satisfaction might be related to bullying victimization risk. To our knowledge, few studies have simultaneously explored whether the protective role of family communication and perceived family satisfaction might attenuate the risk factors associated with bullying victimization. Moreover, no studies have investigated these associations among adolescents in Ukraine where the prevalence of abuse, corporal punishment, and bullying are significant. Considering that poor communication patterns within the family are positively related to child abuse (Paavilainen, Åstedt-Kurki, Paunonen-Ilmonen, & Laippala, 2001) it is reasonable to hypothesize that constructive family communication is likely to reduce the risk of abuse and harsh physical discipline and subsequently, bullying victimization. Moreover, perceived family life satisfaction is related to increased compliance with

parental expectations as indicated in an earlier study (Schumm, Bugaighis, Jurich, & Bollman, 1986), which could then lower the odds of harsh physical punishment and abuse and subsequently, bullying victimization.

Guided by the ecological perspective, which highlights the importance of multiple contexts (e.g., schools and families), the present study proposes and tests a pathway model to investigate the association of family communication and family satisfaction with corporal punishment, child abuse, and bullying victimization in Ukraine. The study hypothesizes that

- child abuse and corporal punishment will be positively related to bullying victimization
- family satisfaction will be negatively associated with child abuse, corporal punishment, and bullying victimization
- higher scores on family satisfaction will be negatively associated with bullying victimization, mediated by lower corporal punishment and child abuse
- family communication will be negatively associated with child abuse, corporal punishment, and bullying victimization
- higher scores on family communication will be negatively associated with bullying victimization, mediated by lower corporal punishment and child abuse

Method

Participants

The cross-sectional sample included 1008 participants from all Ukrainian regions. Participating students were attending undergraduate and graduate degree training programs in medicine, philosophy, cybersecurity, social work, special education, psychology, sociology, law, and criminology. Most participants were females (69%) and age ranged from 17 to 38 years ($M = 19$, $SD = 1.92$). The majority of participants (96%) were Ukrainian, and others were of Russian, Belarus, Jewish, Armenian, Hungarian, Tatar, or Romanian descent. Most participants were single (89%), 10% were married or lived together, and 1% were divorced or widowed. One-fifth of the student had a job (21%) with an average wage of \$32 per month. Most students (69.64%) self-identified as Christians, 26.82% did not practice any religion, 0.6% practiced Judaism, 0.3% practiced Islam, and 2.68% practiced Buddhism, Hinduism, or another religion.

Procedure

Study participants were recruited via announcements that were posted in the classrooms. The participants were informed of the study's aim, which was to

examine Ukrainian students' psychosocial well-being and success. Students who were willing to participate in the research project met individually or in small groups with study coordinators who were faculty members or research assistants. Students used personal tablets and computers or were provided with access to school computers to answer the survey. All participants signed informed consent, and the study was approved by the Committee of Ethics and Deontology of the Ukrainian National Academy of Medical Sciences Institute of Neurology, Psychiatry, and Narcology. Participants spent approximately one-hour answering questions on childhood and family experiences, mental health, and substance use. They were not offered monetary compensation or other incentives. Their answers were collected via a secure online platform.

Measures

Bullying victimization. The Generalized Workplace Harassment Questionnaire (GWHQ; McGinley, Rospenda, Liu, & Richman, 2015) has been used to measure students' experiences with bullying. Participants answered 20 questions reporting on the frequency of experiencing covert hostility (e.g., a fellow student or teacher "ignored you or your contributions to a school or class project"), verbal hostility (e.g., a fellow student or teacher "gossiped about you and/or spread rumors about you behind your back"), manipulation (e.g., a fellow student or teacher "turned others at school against you"), and physical aggression (e.g., a fellow student or teacher "hit, kicked or pushed you, or threw things at you") during the past 12 months. The response options were on a 3-point Likert scale: *never* (0), *once* (1), and *more than once* (2). The previously reported coefficient alpha reliabilities ranged from .89 to .92 (McGinley et al., 2015). In our sample, the Cronbach alpha for GWHQ was .93.

Family communication. The quality of family communication was measured with the 10-item Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scale Family Communication Subscale (FACES-IV; Olson, 2011). The questions included, for example, "When angry, family members seldom say negative things about each other" or "Family members express affection to each other" Response options ranged from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5). Burlaka, Wu, Wu, & Churakova (2019) have previously reported the coefficient alpha reliability of .96. Cronbach's alpha for this study was .95.

Family satisfaction. The satisfaction with family life was measured with the 10-item Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scale Family Satisfaction Subscale (FACES-IV; Olson, 2011). The questions included, for example, "How satisfied are you with your family's ability to share positive experiences" or "How satisfied are you with the amount of time you spend together as a family." Response options ranged from *very dissatisfied* (1) to *extremely satisfied* (5). FACES-IV is a reliable instrument that has been previously used in research with Ukrainian adults (Burlaka et al., 2019;

Burlaka, Graham-Bermann, & Delva, 2017a) with reported Total Circumplex Ratio reliability alpha of .92. Cronbach's alpha for this study was .96.

Childhood abuse. Three questions from the Adverse Childhood Experiences Questionnaire (ACEs; Felitti et al., 1998) were used in the present study, which included question such as, "While you were growing up, during your first 18 years of life, did a parent or other adult in the household often swear at you, insult you, put you down, or humiliate you or act in a way that made you afraid that you might be physically hurt?" and "Did a parent or other adult in the household often push, grab, slap, or throw something at you or ever hit you so hard that you had marks or were injured?" Participants also answered, "Did an adult or person at least 5 years older than you ever touch or fondle you or have you touch their body in a sexual way or try to or actually have oral, anal, or vaginal sex with you?" Response options were *no* (0) and *yes* (1). ACEs have been previously used in research with Ukrainian college students (Burlaka et al., 2020). The Richardson coefficient of reliability for the three items in the present study was .63.

Childhood corporal punishment. Three items from the Alabama Parenting Questionnaire (APQ; Frick, 1991) were used to examine participants' memories of being physically punished by parents in their childhood: "Your parents spanked you with their hand when you had done something wrong," "Your parents slapped you when you had done something wrong," and "Your parents hit you with a belt, switch, or another object when you did something wrong." Response options were: *never* (0) to *always* (4). In previous research with Ukrainian participants, the APQ scales showed good reliability and the Corporal Punishment Scale alpha was .86 (Burlaka, 2016). The Cronbach's alpha for the present study was .83.

Results

Structural equation modeling (SEM; Acock, 2013) was used to allow the combining of measurement models with path analyses using multiple indicators for the latent variables. SEM allows separating the random measurement error from latent variables contributing to greater explanatory power. In this study, the child abuse variable was used as the mediator in the association between family communication and bullying victimization as well as between family satisfaction and bullying victimization. Similarly, we used the corporal punishment variable as the mediator in the relationship between family communication and bullying victimization as well as between family satisfaction and bullying victimization. SEM is a well-established technique used for the estimation of direct and indirect effects that are "routinely included in structural models, assuming such specifications are theoretically justifiable" (Kline, 2011, p. 106). We used Kline's (2011) recommendations to evaluate SEM identification.

The model was fit with the maximum likelihood estimation (Kline, 2016) to examine the fit of the models to the variance–covariance matrices observed. The covariates were regressed on the latent variable of bullying victimization. Stata/MP 14.2 software package was used to fit the model (StataCorp, 2015). The goodness-of-fit was estimated using the comparative fit index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), and the root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA) (Raykov, Tomer, & Nesselroade, 1991). The results were interpreted following the recommended cutoff points, indicating a good fit for CFI and TLI of 0.95 or above and for RMSEA, 0.05 or below (Acocck, 2013). The analyses of the indirect relationships in the model were performed using Stata's delta method-based nlcom command (Acocck, 2013; Phillips & Park, 1988; StataCorp, 2015).

Descriptive Statistics

The majority of the students (62.38%) reported being bullied during the past 12 months. Most often students reported being a target of gossip and rumors (39.44%), receiving negative comments about personality or intelligence (37.51%); being talked down (25.54%); being pranked (24.46%); receiving hostile or offensive gestures (24.01%); feeling embarrassed, humiliated or belittled (13.66%); being hit, kicked or pushed (8.26%). Additionally, 63.46% had reported being raised by parents who had spanked, slapped, and/or hit them with a belt or other objects. One-fifth (19.30%) remembered being emotionally, physically, and/or sexually assaulted by older persons during childhood years (see Table 1).

Measurement and Structural Models

The measurement model was fit to determine the independent association of the study variables with bullying victimization. A model with five latent factors representing the study constructs showed good fit indices: χ^2 (100, $N = 928$) = 243.12, $p < .001$; RMSEA = .04, CFI = .99; TLI = .98 (see Figure 1). All factor loadings were significant for all latent variables. Four latent variables were significantly associated with bullying victimization. In the next step, we fitted the structural model (see Figure 2). The straight lines represent paths, and the values along the lines are standardized path coefficients. This model provided a good fit for the data: χ^2 (108, $N = 928$) = 321.47, $p < .001$, CFI = .98, TLI = .97, RMSEA = .046.

Results suggest that corporal punishment ($b = .11$, $p < .05$) during childhood and being a victim of child abuse ($b = .12$, $p < .05$) had direct associations with higher bullying victimization scores during early adulthood. Better family communication ($b = -.09$, $p = .08$) showed a trend toward significance. However, the direct relationship between higher family satisfaction and bullying victimization was not statistically significant. The

Table 1. Major Study Variables ($n = 1008$).

Variable	%	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	α /KR	Range
Bullied by fellow student or teacher (outcome)	62.38	.23	.35	$\alpha = .93$	0–2
Gossips and rumors	39.44				
Negative comments about personality or intelligence	37.51				
Talked down	25.54				
Pranked, targeted by jokes	24.46				
Hostile or offensive gestures	24.01				
Embarrassed, humiliated, or belittled	13.66				
Hit, kicked or pushed	8.26				
Corporal punishment by parents (predictor)	63.46	1.73	.85	$\alpha = .83$	1–5
Spanked	57.92				
Slapped	27.85				
Hit with belt or object	40.00				
Child abuse by adults in the household (predictor)	19.30	.10	.22	KR = .63	0–1
Sworn at, insulted you, put down, or humiliated	14.71				
Pushed, grabbed, slapped, or thrown things at	9.08				
Sexually touched or fondled, tried, or had sex	5.66				
Family communication (predictor)		3.84	.89	$\alpha = .95$	1–5
Family satisfaction (predictor)		3.42	.96	$\alpha = .96$	1–5
Age (control)		19.16	1.93		17–38
Female (control)	68.75				

Note. *M* = mean; *SD* = standard deviation; α = Cronbach alpha; KR = Kuder–Richardson coefficient of reliability.

participants' age and gender had no direct associations with bullying victimization. Good family communication ($b = -.21, p < .001$) and family satisfaction ($b = -.28, p < .001$) were linked with lower scores on childhood abuse. Likewise, the risk of being physically disciplined was lower for participants who reported higher quality of family communication ($b = -.21, p < .001$) and family satisfaction ($b = -.25, p < .001$).

Family satisfaction had significant standardized indirect associations with bullying victimization, which was mediated by corporal punishment ($b = -.028, p < .05$) and by child abuse ($b = -.033, p < .05$). Family communication had the strongest total standardized effect on bullying victimization ($b = -.14, p < .01$), followed by child abuse ($b = .12, p < .05$), and corporal punishment ($b = .11, p < .05$).

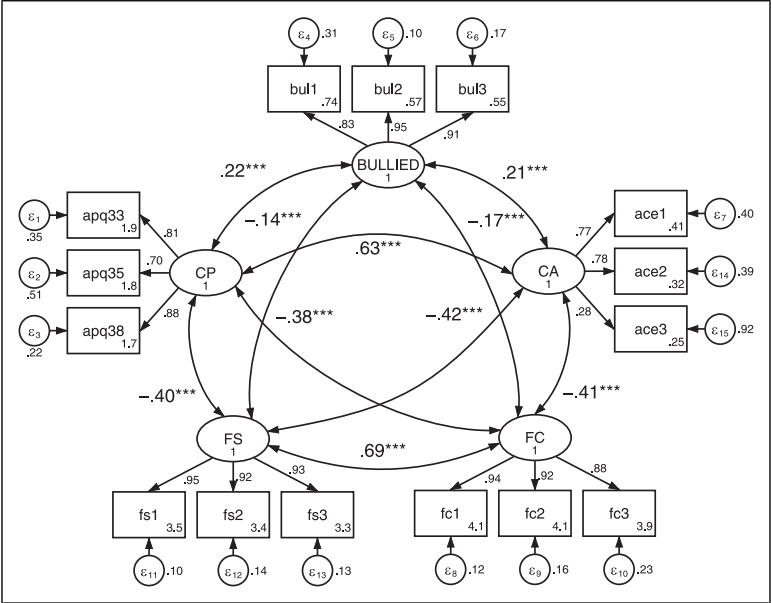


Figure 1. Measurement model. Note. *** $p < .001$. All factor loadings were significant at $p < .001$. All coefficients are standardized. All variables are conditioned on gender and age.

Discussion

To our knowledge, this is the first study to explore the pathways that include the associations of family communication, family satisfaction, corporal punishment, and child abuse with bullying victimization among college students in Ukraine. Findings from the study support the ecological perspective, which highlights the importance of multiple contexts (e.g., college and hoe) and how they may influence individual behavior and socialization. Corporal punishment and child abuse are two major sources of trauma for children and young adults in Ukraine (Burlaka, 2016; Burlaka et al., 2020; Burlaka et al., 2017a). Testing both constructs in the same model provides a unique opportunity to compare the relative strength of their effect on the subsequent increase in exposure to trauma in the form of bullying during emerging adulthood.

Corporal punishment is often related to parents’ perceptions of a child’s performances and behaviors. Both corporal punishment and child abuse include parents hitting the child, yet the former relates to child activities and perceived performance (Frick, 1991) while the latter often stems from the personality characteristics of parents or adults sharing a household with the

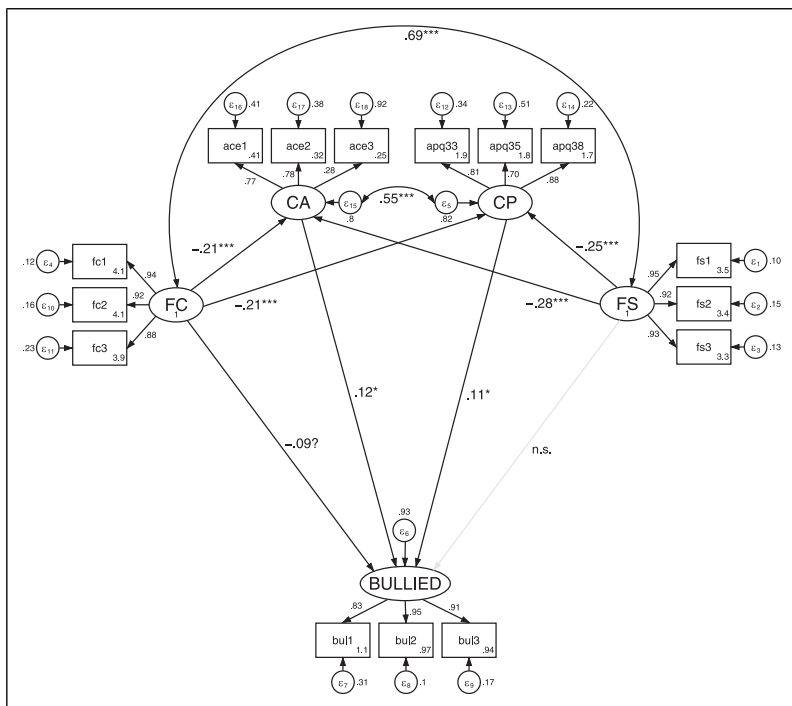


Figure 2. Structural equation model note. Final structural equation model representing effects of family communication, family satisfaction, childhood abuse, and corporal punishment on past 12 months bullying victimization among 1008 Ukrainian college students. Ellipses represent latent constructs. The paths are shown as straight lines and the values along the lines are standardized path coefficients significant at † $p < .1$, * $p < .05$ and *** $p < .001$. n. s. = non-significant. Bullying victimization was conditioned on gender and age. Small circles represent residual variances.

child (Felitti et al., 1998). Child abuse, in addition to hitting, includes emotional and sexual victimization of the child. In previous research with Ukrainian college students, which tested concurrent associations of child abuse and corporal punishment with adult mental health, childhood abuse was found to be significantly associated with adult depression and substance use (Burlaka et al., 2020) while corporal punishment was not. Consistent with our hypothesis, both students who recalled psychological, physical, and sexual abuse experiences and those who recalled receiving corporal punishment were at a higher risk for bullying victimization as emerging adults, although the strength of the impact was slightly higher for students who reported more childhood abuse. These results are consistent with prior studies (Baldry &

Farrington 2005; Holt et al., 2008; Lereya et al., 2013). Our results align well with the meta-analysis of 70 articles with a total sample of 208,778 children, aged 4–25 years, in that parental abuse and neglect predicted bullying victimization (Lereya et al., 2013). In our study, the child abuse construct includes three types of trauma as opposed to corporal punishment that only reflects physical disciplining in the context of parenting. Therefore, experiences in child abuse appear to do more damage to the developing child and could result in bullying victimization.

In this study, students who reported a lower rate of child abuse tended to be raised in families with higher family satisfaction and better communication, which also supported our hypothesis and other studies (Bailey, Brazil, Conrad-Hiebner, & Counts, 2015; Paavilainen et al., 2001). Higher family satisfaction and better communication were also associated with lower parental use of corporal punishment. Corporal punishment and child abuse mediated the relationship between family satisfaction and bullying victimization. Family communication had a direct association with bullying victimization and had the strongest total association with bullying victimization, which is also in line with our proposed hypotheses. These findings could be interpreted in light of prior research with Ukrainian families suggesting that factors that might affect family satisfaction and communication, such as alcohol use, intimate partner violence, lack of cohesion, and flexibility can influence parenting practices (Burlaka, Serdiuk, Nickelsen, Tkach, & Khvorova, 2018). Parents who raise children under the influence of such adversities tend to report lower use of positive parenting discipline, low involvement and monitoring, inconsistent parenting, and corporal punishment of their children (Burlaka et al., 2017a). Increased abuse and neglect in childhood are associated with increased child psychopathology (Burlaka, 2016; Burlaka et al., 2019; Burlaka, Kim, Crutchfield, Lefmann, & Kay, 2017b) as well as bullying perpetration and victimization (Baldry & Farrington 2005; Holt et al., 2008; Lereya et al., 2013).

Limitations

Overall, the study provides important insights into the relationship between family dynamics, childhood trauma, and bullying victimization in Ukraine. However, several limitations warrant further research. This study used data from 10 Ukrainian Universities and the results cannot be directly generalized to all college students. Future studies should consider using a longitudinal study design in examining these relationships. Also, we asked students to report on their adverse childhood experiences, their recollections of such events may not be entirely accurate and may result in recall bias. Although these findings speak to the general family processes and bullying outcomes, the actual prevalence of bullying victimization in Ukraine might differ from

these data. Notwithstanding these limitations, the study findings contribute to a better understanding of the relationship between family dynamics and bullying victimization in Ukraine, which has implications for mental health practice in school settings.

Implications for Practice

As reported by one recent study, in 2017, 33% of Ukrainian schools included anti-bullying programs, 60% included social skills development, 45% included individual or group therapy, 25% provided emotional skills development, and 20% provided peer support (Ferlic & Zaporozhets, 2019). Results from our study highlight the importance of assessing early family life experiences associated with an increased risk of bullying victimization. Our results are consistent with other studies conducted in Australia (Ahmed & Braithwaite, 2004), Hong Kong (Duong et al., 2009), and Brazil (Zottis et al., 2014) suggesting that successful bullying interventions need to consider the family contexts. However, Ukrainian students experiencing psychological distress usually have limited opportunities to receive high-quality mental health services (Burlaka, Churakova, Aavik, Staller, & Delva, 2014b) due to barriers, which are structural or attitudinal (Burlaka, Churakova, Aavik, & Goldstein, 2014a). Services linked to educational settings are not as common in Ukraine as they are in other countries (Burlaka et al., 2014b). As a result, Ukrainian students are highly likely to seek help from friends and intimate partners and turn to alcohol when dealing with psychosocial distress (Burlaka et al., 2014b) such as bullying victimization.

Furthermore, because mental health services are limited in Ukrainian higher education institutions, it is imperative that school personnel, in collaboration with social workers, educate parents and communities about how corporal punishment and abuse might negatively affect children's socialization and future relations with peers (Lereya et al., 2013). School personnel serves an important role in Ukraine where home-school collaborations are strong. Ukrainian teachers make regular house calls, home visits, and family assessments (Ferlic & Zaporozhets, 2019). Ukrainian teachers also reach out to parents of students who are struggling academically or displaying behavioral problems (Ferlic & Zaporozhets, 2019). Social workers are encouraged to collaborate closely with health protection services, family centers, and schools (Chazin, Hanson, Cohen, & Grishayeva, 2002) when working with students involved in bullying or raised in an abusive home environment (Burlaka et al., 2017a, 2019; Grogan-Kaylor et al., 2018).

More importantly, findings from our study demonstrate that bullying and victimization do not cease after K-12 schools, and prevention and intervention to address bullying effectively in colleges are warranted. Staff members in college counseling and mental health centers and student affairs offices are

urged to be trained to assess and address bullying experiences of college students and how bullying would have an impact on students' academic and psychosocial outcomes (Lund & Ross, 2017). Given a strong linkage between childhood adversities (e.g., corporal punishment and abuse) and bullying in adulthood, as indicated in this study, counselors, and psychologists in colleges are encouraged to assess prior family backgrounds of college students in counseling services, and how adverse childhood experiences in the home might have an impact on students' relationships and socialization.

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