

# SELF-EFFICACY, EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, AND BULLYING PROFILES: A STUDY ON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS



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## INTRODUCTION

Research identifies distinct *bullying profiles*: **bullies, victims, bully-victims, and neutral students**, each characterized by specific emotional and behavioral traits (Salmivalli, 1999).

Two key psychological factors influencing bullying dynamics are **self-efficacy** (SEF), the belief in one's ability (Bandura, 1997), and **emotional intelligence** (EI), students' capacity to understand, manage and express emotions in social contexts (Baroncelli & Ciucci, 2014). Involvement in bullying is generally associated with low socio-emotional competencies (Sousa et al., 2021), but EI and SEF are less studied in association with bullying profiles.

## AIMS

- (1) identify different bullying and victimization profiles
- (2) analyze differences in emotional and behavioral difficulties, prosocial behavior, self-efficacy, and EI competencies across these groups.

## METHOD

313 students (14-18 years, M = 16.16, SD = 1.25) from three schools in Rome completed:

1. Florence Bullying-Victimization Scales (FBVS; Palladino et al., 2016)
2. Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ; Goodman, 1997)
3. Self-Efficacy Scale (SEF; Pastorelli & Picconi, 2001)
4. Emotional Intelligence Scale (EI; Grazzani et al., 2009)

**EI Others** refers to the ability to recognize others' emotions.

**Emotional Intelligence (EI)**

**EI Self** is the ability to recognize one's own emotions.

**EI Regulation** is the ability to regulate one's own emotions.

**Self Efficacy (SEF)**

**SEF Regulation** refers to self-efficacy in resisting temptations or impulses.

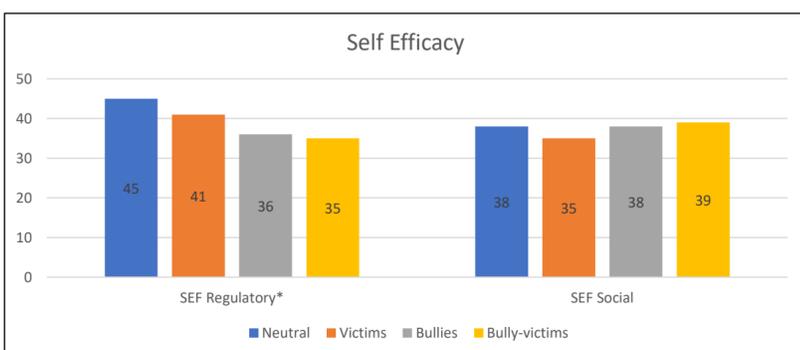
**SEF Social** refers to self-efficacy in social interactions.

## RESULTS

Based on the scores obtained from the FBVS, students were categorized:

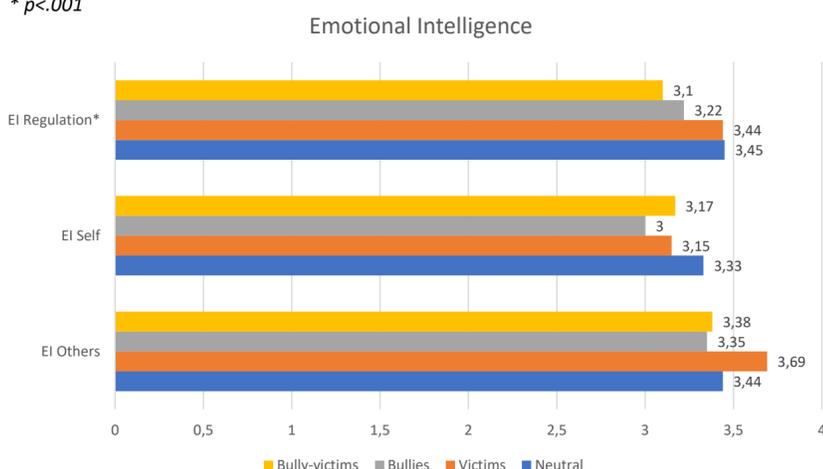
Bullies	bullying scores above the 85 <sup>th</sup> percentile
Victims	victimization scores above the 85 <sup>th</sup> percentile
Bully-Victims	bullying and victimization scores above the 85 <sup>th</sup> percentile
Neutrals	bullying and victimization scores under the 85 <sup>th</sup> percentile

One-way ANOVAs were used to assess group differences.



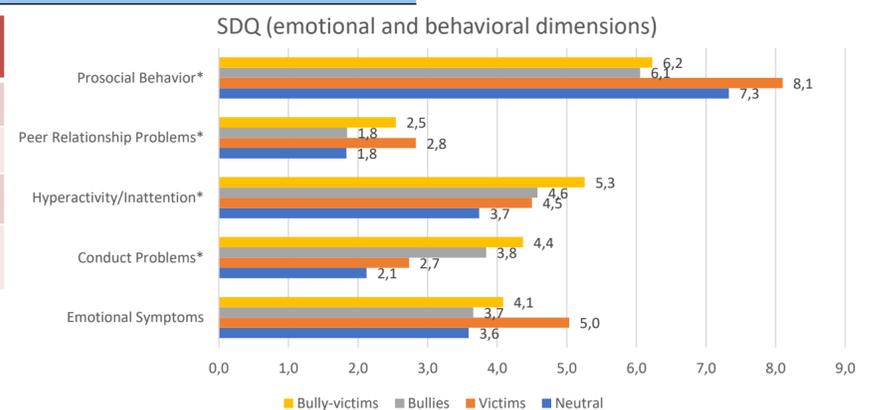
Tab 2. Self Efficacy in the Bullying Profiles

\* p<.001



Tab 3. Emotional Intelligence in the Bullying Profiles

\* p<.001



Tab 1. Emotional and Behavioral Difficulties in the Bullying Profiles

\* p<.001

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The analysis identified four distinct bullying involvement profiles: **Bullies** (12%), **Victims** (10%), **Bully-Victims** (11%) and **Neutral Students** (67%), each associated with unique socio-emotional and behavioral characteristics.

In line with previous research, students not involved in bullying displayed the most favorable profile in terms of both psychosocial well-being and socio-emotional competencies.

**Victims** showed the highest levels of internalizing problems along, elevated prosocial behavior and **high self-regulatory efficacy**, suggesting a strong ability to manage impulses and peer pressure.

**Bullies** and **bully-victims** shared similar characteristics; however, the latter exhibited more severe difficulties, reporting the highest levels of externalizing problems and the lowest scores in **emotional regulation**.

Our findings support the idea that students involved in bullying behaviors experience significant socio-emotional difficulties, particularly in their ability to recognize and regulate emotions, and they do not perceive themselves as capable of resisting external pressures or managing emotional impulses.

Intervention programs should take these results into account, promoting the development of socio-emotional competencies with a specific focus on enhancing both emotional intelligence (EI) and self-efficacy in emotion and behavior regulation (SEF), in order to support more adaptive functioning and reduce aggressive behaviors.

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