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Bullying Victimization among Thai Lower Secondary School Students: Prevalence, Associated Factors, and the Protective Role of Self-Esteem

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ABSTRACT:

Background:

Bullying victimization among adolescents represents a major and growing public mental health concern worldwide. Extensive evidence has demonstrated that exposure to bullying during adolescence is associated with a wide range of adverse mental health outcomes, including depression, anxiety, psychosocial distress, substance use, and suicidal behaviors. Adolescents are particularly vulnerable due to rapid developmental transitions, heightened sensitivity to peer evaluation, and increasing exposure to digital and online environments. Despite the recognized public health significance of bullying, empirical evidence from Thailand that comprehensively examines multiple forms of bullying victimization and psychosocial protective factors remains limited.

Methods:

A cross-sectional analytical study was conducted among 220 lower secondary school students (Grades 7–9) selected through stratified random sampling. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire comprising demographic characteristics, the Thai version of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES-TR-10), and the Revised Olweus Bullying Victim Questionnaire (OBVQ-R), which assesses seven domains of bullying victimization: physical, verbal, social, property-related, threats/harassment, bias-based, and cyberbullying. Descriptive statistics, chi-square tests, and binary logistic regression analyses were performed. Statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$.

Results:

Bullying victimization was highly prevalent, particularly verbal (75.9%) and social bullying (74.5%), followed by physical bullying (62.0%). Approximately one-third of students reported experiences of property-related bullying, threats/harassment, bias-based bullying, and cyberbullying (35.0–36.8%). Female students were significantly more likely to experience verbal and social bullying, while lower grade levels were associated with higher risks of physical bullying and threats/harassment. Family income was significantly

associated with physical bullying victimization. Self-esteem emerged as the strongest protective factor, significantly reducing the likelihood of victimization across multiple domains. Academic performance was significantly associated with cyberbullying victimization.

Conclusions:

Bullying victimization among Thai lower secondary school students remains highly prevalent and constitutes a substantial public mental health burden. Psychosocial forms of bullying exceed physical violence, underscoring the need for early mental health-oriented prevention strategies. Self-esteem plays a robust protective role across multiple forms of bullying victimization. School-based mental health promotion programs that strengthen self-esteem and target high-risk groups are essential for improving adolescent mental well-being and advancing Sustainable Development Goals 3 and 4.

INTRODUCTION

Background and Significance

Violence and bullying during the school years constitute one of the most serious and escalating global public mental health and social problems [31]. Their prevalence has continued to rise in parallel with changes in social structures, increased access to digital technology, and the pervasive influence of new media. Adolescents represent a developmentally vulnerable population, particularly in terms of identity formation, emotional regulation, and social integration. Consequently, exposure to violence or victimization in school settings or online environments can exert profound negative effects on both short- and long-term well-being. These impacts are closely aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3: Good Health and Well-Being, which emphasizes reducing the burden of mental health problems among children and adolescents, particularly depression and suicide, both of which have been causally linked to bullying during the school years [30].

Global prevalence surveys indicate that adolescents aged 12–17 years experience high rates of bullying victimization within a 30-day period. The Middle East reports the highest prevalence at 45.1% (44.3–46.0%), followed by Africa at 43.5%, while Europe reports the lowest prevalence at only 8.4% [1,2]. These geographic patterns suggest that bullying is not merely an individual behavioral phenomenon, but rather a structural issue embedded within broader sociocultural and educational contexts. Cross-regional comparisons further reveal that similar risk factors are involved across settings, including gender, age, emotional regulation, and levels of psychosocial resilience, all of which influence both aggressive behavior and vulnerability to victimization.

In Thailand, reports from the Department of Health Service Support, Ministry of Public Health, indicate that 44.2% of Thai students have experienced bullying, with the majority of incidents occurring within educational institutions (86.9%). The most common forms include teasing related to physical appearance or personality (76.6%), verbal abuse and humiliation (63.3%), and physical aggression (55.1%) [3]. These findings reflect persistent gaps in school safety measures and the management of negative peer relationships within Thai educational settings.

The consequences of bullying victimization are severe and multifaceted, encompassing psychological, emotional, and behavioral domains. Adolescents who are bullied are more likely to experience anxiety, social withdrawal, depressive symptoms, reduced self-confidence, academic difficulties, and long-term impairments in forming healthy interpersonal relationships. Consistent with these findings, studies conducted in Thailand have demonstrated significantly higher levels of depression and stress among victimized adolescents [4]. These adverse outcomes further increase the risk of long-term mental health problems, including substance use and suicidal behavior, which are directly linked to the objectives of SDG 3.

International research has reported that male adolescents tend to be more frequently involved in bullying, both as perpetrators and as victims, compared with females. These gender differences are closely associated with developmental stages, with early adolescence representing a period of heightened vulnerability [5,6]. Individuals with low self-esteem and limited social skills are also more likely to become involved in bullying dynamics than their peers [7–9].

Studies among Thai nursing students have similarly demonstrated that self-esteem and coping skills are significant predictors of individuals' ability to manage social stressors effectively [10]. These findings underscore the critical importance of individual-level protective factors in the context of bullying research and adolescent mental health promotion.

At the family and school levels, emotional support, positive family relationships, effective supervision, and parental involvement in school activities have been shown to significantly reduce the risk of bullying victimization [11,12]. In addition, a learning environment that promotes safety, a sense of belonging, and positive teacher–student relationships plays a key role in reducing social violence within schools [12,13]. Evidence from Thai family studies further indicates that strong family cohesion and effective communication enhance adolescents' resilience to stress and reduce their likelihood of becoming targets of bullying [14]. These findings are consistent with SDG 4, which aims to enhance educational quality by fostering safe, equitable, and inclusive learning environments.

Despite growing recognition of bullying as a critical public mental health issue, empirical research in Thailand that simultaneously examines multiple forms of bullying victimization and psychosocial protective factors using standardized international instruments remains limited. Most existing studies focus on specific bullying forms or lack a comprehensive public health framework. Therefore, the present study was designed to examine the prevalence of bullying victimization among Thai lower secondary school students, as well as associated risk and protective factors, using the Revised Olweus Bullying Victim Questionnaire (OBVQ-R), a widely used international standard instrument that assesses seven dimensions of bullying: physical bullying, verbal aggression, property-related bullying, social exclusion, threats and harassment, bias-based bullying, and cyberbullying [15,16]. The findings are expected to provide robust population-level evidence to inform school-based mental health promotion strategies, support adolescent safety and well-being, and contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals 3 and 4.

Objectives

1. To determine the prevalence and patterns of bullying victimization among Thai lower secondary school students across seven domains: physical, verbal, social, property-related, threats/harassment, bias-based, and cyberbullying.
2. To examine the associations between individual and academic factors (gender, grade level, academic performance, and family income) and different forms of bullying victimization.
3. To identify significant predictors of bullying victimization in each domain using binary logistic regression analysis.

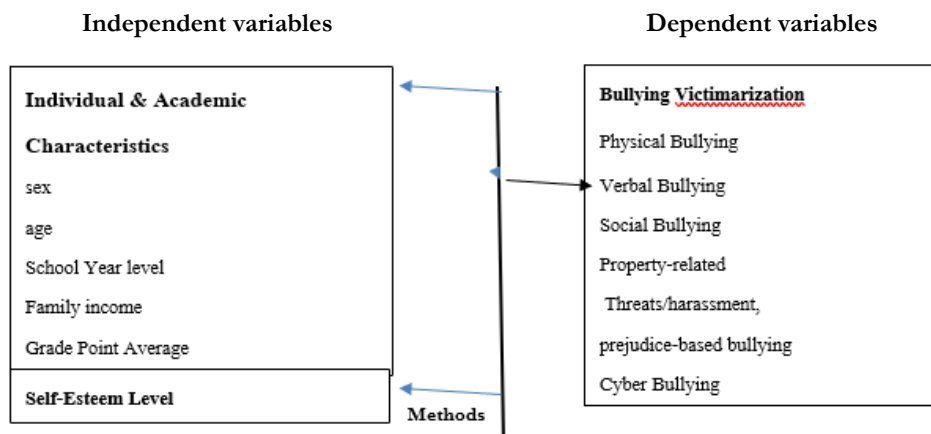
Conceptual Framework

This study was guided by a cross-sectional analytical framework integrating individual, academic, and psychosocial factors.

Independent variables included gender, age, grade level, family income, grade point average (GPA), and self-esteem.

Dependent variables comprised seven domains of bullying victimization: physical, verbal, social, property-related, threats/harassment, bias-based, and cyberbullying.

Self-esteem was conceptualized as a key psychosocial protective factor moderating the relationship between individual characteristics and victimization outcomes.



METHODS

Study Design and Setting

This study employed a cross-sectional analytical design to examine the prevalence of bullying victimization and associated risk and protective factors among Thai lower secondary school students. From a public health perspective, a cross-sectional approach is appropriate for estimating population-level prevalence and identifying vulnerable subgroups that may benefit from targeted mental health interventions.

The study was conducted in a secondary school under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education, Thailand. The total student population enrolled in Grades 7 to 11 at the time of data collection comprised 843 students.

Participants and Sample Size Determination

Sample size estimation was performed using the G*Power program based on chi-square testing to detect associations between individual factors and bullying victimization. The calculation assumed an odds ratio of 0.30, a significance level (α) of 0.05, a statistical power of 0.95, and five degrees of freedom. The minimum required sample size was 207 participants. To account for potential non-response or incomplete questionnaires, an additional 5% was added, resulting in a target sample size of 217 students. Ultimately, complete data were obtained from 220 participants, exceeding the minimum requirement and ensuring adequate statistical power for subsequent analyses.

Sampling Procedure

A stratified random sampling technique was employed to enhance representativeness across grade levels. Students were first stratified by grade (Grades 7, 8, and 9), reflecting key developmental stages within lower secondary education. Simple random sampling was then applied within each stratum to select eligible participants. This approach minimized sampling bias and ensured proportional representation of students from each grade.

Research Instruments

Data were collected using a structured self-administered questionnaire comprising three components:

1. Demographic and Academic Characteristics

A researcher-developed questionnaire was used to collect information on sex, age, grade level, family income, and academic performance, measured by grade point average (GPA). These variables were selected based on prior evidence indicating their relevance to bullying involvement and adolescent mental health [5–9].

2. Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale – Thai Version (RSES-TR-10)

Self-esteem was assessed using the Thai version of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES-TR-10), consisting of 10 items rated on a four-point Likert scale. The instrument was translated and culturally adapted by Professor Nathathai Wongpakaran and

has been widely used in Thai populations. In the present study, internal consistency reliability assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.75, indicating acceptable reliability for population-based mental health research.

3. Revised Olweus Bullying Victim Questionnaire (OBVQ-R)

Bullying victimization was measured using the Revised Olweus Bullying Victim Questionnaire (OBVQ-R), a standardized international instrument widely applied in epidemiological studies of school bullying. The questionnaire assesses the frequency of victimization across seven domains: physical bullying, verbal bullying, social exclusion, property-related bullying, threats and harassment, bias-based bullying, and cyberbullying [15,16].

The OBVQ-R was translated into Thai using forward-backward translation procedures and reviewed by language and content experts. In this study, the Thai version demonstrated high internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.87, indicating strong reliability.

Validity and Reliability Assessment

Content validity was evaluated by a panel of three experts in adolescent mental health and nursing education using the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC). Items with IOC values of 0.50 or higher were retained. A pilot test was conducted with 30 students who were not included in the main study. The overall reliability of the questionnaire was reassessed, yielding a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.875, confirming the instrument's suitability for the study population.

Data Collection Procedure

Approval to conduct the study was obtained from the school director. The researchers provided detailed explanations of the study objectives, procedures, potential risks, and benefits to school administrators, teachers, and students. Participation was voluntary.

Written informed consent was obtained from all participants. For students under 20 years of age, parental consent was also secured. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any time without academic or personal consequences. Completed questionnaires were reviewed for completeness prior to data analysis.

Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to ethical principles for research involving human participants, particularly adolescents. Respect for autonomy, confidentiality, and non-maleficence was emphasized throughout the research process. Ethical safeguards were implemented to minimize potential psychological discomfort associated with recalling bullying experiences, consistent with public mental health research standards.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using statistical software. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize demographic characteristics, self-esteem levels, and the prevalence of bullying victimization across the seven domains. Associations between individual factors and bullying victimization were initially examined using chi-square tests. Variables demonstrating statistically significant associations were subsequently entered into binary logistic regression models to identify independent predictors of bullying victimization. Statistical significance was defined as $p < 0.05$.

Results

1. Participant Characteristics

A total of 220 students participated in the study. Approximately 51.8% were female and 48.2% were male. Participants were relatively evenly distributed across Grades 7, 8, and 9. The majority of students reported moderate academic performance, and more than half of the participants (61.8%) were classified as having high self-esteem based on the RSES-TR-10.

2. Prevalence of Bullying Victimization

Bullying victimization was highly prevalent across multiple domains. Verbal bullying was reported by 75.9% of students, followed closely by social bullying at 74.5%. Physical bullying was experienced by 62.0% of participants. Property-related

bullying, threats and harassment, bias-based bullying, and cyberbullying were reported by approximately one-third of students, with prevalence ranging from 35.0% to 36.8%.

From a public mental health perspective, these findings indicate that psychosocial forms of bullying substantially outweigh direct physical aggression, highlighting less visible yet pervasive threats to adolescent mental well-being.

3. Associations between Individual Factors and Bullying Victimization

Chi-square analysis was conducted to examine associations between individual factors and the seven forms of bullying victimization at a significance level of 0.05.

1) Gender and Bullying Victimization

Female students reported a higher proportion of bullying victimization than male students in several domains, particularly social bullying (58.5%), followed by cyberbullying (57.5%), verbal bullying (57.5%), bias-based bullying (56.0%), and threats/harassment (50.6%). Male students reported a higher proportion of property-related bullying (50.6%). The proportion of physical bullying victimization was equal between male and female students (50.0%).

Chi-square analysis indicated that gender was significantly associated with verbal bullying ($\chi^2 = 8.916$, $p = 0.003$) and social bullying ($\chi^2 = 11.648$, $p = 0.001$).

2) Grade Level and Bullying Victimization

Students in Grade 7 reported the highest prevalence of cyberbullying victimization (40.9%), followed by property-related bullying (39.5%), physical bullying (37.7%), and verbal bullying (35.5%).

Grade 8 students reported the highest prevalence of threats/harassment (44.2%), followed by bias-based bullying (36.0%) and social bullying (34.8%).

Grade 9 students consistently reported lower levels of bullying victimization across all domains compared with Grades 7 and 8.

Chi-square analysis revealed that grade level was significantly associated with physical bullying ($\chi^2 = 6.172$, $p = 0.046$) and threats/harassment ($\chi^2 = 11.498$, $p = 0.003$).

3) Family Income and Bullying Victimization

Students from families with a monthly income of 10,001–30,000 Baht reported the highest prevalence of physical bullying victimization (50.0%), followed by property-related bullying (48.1%), verbal bullying (44.3%), social bullying (41.6%), cyberbullying (40.9%), and bias-based bullying (38.7%).

Chi-square analysis demonstrated a significant association between family income and physical bullying victimization ($\chi^2 = 11.474$, $p = 0.009$).

4) Self-Esteem and Bullying Victimization

Students with high self-esteem reported higher proportions of victimization in verbal bullying (55.1%), cyberbullying (54.5%), property-related bullying (53.1%), bias-based bullying (52.0%), and physical bullying (51.4%). In contrast, students with low self-esteem reported higher proportions of threats/harassment (51.9%) and bias-based bullying (52.0%).

Chi-square analysis indicated that self-esteem was significantly associated with multiple forms of bullying victimization, including physical bullying ($\chi^2 = 16.865$, $p < 0.001$), verbal bullying ($\chi^2 = 13.296$, $p < 0.001$), social bullying ($\chi^2 = 13.147$, $p < 0.001$), property-related bullying ($\chi^2 = 9.511$, $p = 0.002$), threats/harassment ($\chi^2 = 9.511$, $p = 0.002$), and bias-based bullying ($\chi^2 = 9.205$, $p = 0.002$).

5) Academic Performance and Bullying Victimization

Students with a GPA greater than 3.50 reported the highest prevalence of cyberbullying victimization (53.0%), followed by social bullying (51.2%), verbal bullying (49.1%), bias-based bullying (48.0%), physical bullying (43.5%), property-related bullying (45.7%), and threats/harassment (42.9%).

Chi-square analysis revealed that GPA was significantly associated with cyberbullying victimization ($\chi^2 = 9.993$, $p = 0.007$).

3. Predictors of Bullying Victimization

Binary logistic regression analysis was conducted to identify factors predicting bullying victimization across the seven domains (Table 1).

Table 1 Logistic regression analysis of factors associated with bullying victimization among secondary school students at a selected school, disaggregated by domains.

Variable	Physical	verbal	Social	property-related	threats and harassment	bias-based	Cyber
	OR (P-value)	OR (p-value)	OR(p-value)	OR(p-value)	OR(p-value)	OR(p-value)	OR(p-value)
Gender	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Male (ref)							
Female	-	2.311 (0.013)	2.649 (0.004)			-	-
Grade 7 (ref)							
Grade 8	-	-	-		-	-	-
Grade 9	0.469 (0.038)	-	-	-	0.319 (0.038)	-	
GPA <3.00(ref)	-						
3.00-3.50	-	-	-	-	-		0.260 (0.003)
>3.50	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Income (ref) mm	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
< 5,000							
5,001-10,000	4.340 (0.007)	-	-	-	-	-	-
10,001-30,000	7.075 (0.000)	-	-	-	-	-	-
>30,000mm	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Self-esteem							
Low (ref)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hight	0.224 (0.000)	0.278 (0.001)	0.296 (0.002)	0.347 (0.000)	-	0.415 (0.003)	-

For **physical bullying**, students in Grade 9 were significantly less likely to experience physical victimization compared with Grade 7 students (OR = 0.469, 95% CI: 0.230–0.957). High self-esteem significantly reduced the likelihood of physical bullying victimization by 77.6% compared with low self-esteem (OR = 0.224, 95% CI: 0.110–0.460). Conversely, students from families with a monthly income of 5,001–10,000 Baht and 10,001–30,000 Baht were 4.34 times (OR = 4.340, 95% CI: 1.501–12.545) and 7.08 times (OR = 7.075, 95% CI: 2.446–20.463) more likely, respectively, to experience physical bullying than those from families earning less than 5,000 Baht.

For **verbal bullying**, high self-esteem significantly reduced the risk of victimization by 72.2% (OR = 0.278, 95% CI: 0.126–0.612). Female students were more than twice as likely to experience verbal bullying compared with male students (OR = 2.311, 95% CI: 1.190–4.489).

For **social bullying**, high self-esteem significantly reduced the likelihood of victimization by 70.4% (OR = 0.296, 95% CI: 0.138–0.634), while female students were 2.65 times more likely to experience social bullying than male students (OR = 2.649, 95% CI: 1.372–5.112).

For **property-related bullying**, high self-esteem reduced the likelihood of victimization by 65.3% (OR = 0.347, 95% CI: 0.194–0.622).

For **threats and harassment**, Grade 9 students were significantly less likely to experience victimization compared with Grade 7 students (OR = 0.319, 95% CI: 0.108–0.939).

For **bias-based bullying**, high self-esteem reduced the likelihood of victimization by 58.5% (OR = 0.415, 95% CI: 0.234–0.737).

or **cyberbullying**, students with a GPA between 3.00 and 3.50 were significantly less likely to experience cyberbullying victimization compared with students with a GPA below 3.00 (OR = 0.260, 95% CI: 0.108–0.661).

DISCUSSION

Prevalence of Bullying Victimization among Lower Secondary School Students

The findings of this study indicate that bullying victimization among Thai lower secondary school students remains alarmingly high, particularly in the domains of verbal and social bullying, which affected more than three-quarters of the participants (75.9% and 74.5%, respectively). Physical bullying was also prevalent (62.0%), whereas property-related bullying, threats and harassment, bias-based bullying, and cyberbullying were reported at relatively comparable levels, ranging from approximately 35% to 36%.

These results suggest that psychosocial forms of bullying—particularly verbal and social bullying—are more prevalent than direct physical violence, a pattern consistent with international evidence indicating a global shift in school bullying from overt physical aggression toward more subtle, relational, and emotionally harmful behaviors [17–20]. Such forms of bullying are often less visible to educators and school administrators, yet they exert substantial psychological harm and are more difficult to detect and address using traditional disciplinary approaches.

When compared with reports from European countries, where overall bullying prevalence is generally below 30% [1,2], the prevalence observed in this study highlights substantial contextual differences in school safety structures and protective systems. Conversely, the findings are comparable to reports from African and Middle Eastern countries, where school-based monitoring systems and preventive frameworks are often limited. These cross-regional contrasts support the notion that bullying victimization is not merely an individual behavioral issue but a structural phenomenon shaped by educational environments, school culture, and broader social support systems [21,22].

Within the Thai context, the findings are consistent with national reports indicating that a large proportion of students experience teasing, verbal abuse, and humiliation in school settings [23]. This consistency reinforces the conclusion that bullying in Thai schools constitutes a persistent public health and social issue that requires systematic intervention, particularly during early adolescence—a developmental period characterized by heightened psychosocial vulnerability.

Gender, Grade Level, and Socioeconomic Factors as Risk Determinants

Multivariate analysis revealed significant gender differences in patterns of bullying victimization. Female students were at significantly higher risk of verbal and social bullying, whereas physical bullying tended to be more common among male students. These findings align with gender role socialization theory, which posits that girls are more likely to experience indirect or relational forms of aggression, while boys are more frequently exposed to overt physical violence [24,25]. These distinctions underscore the importance of gender-sensitive prevention strategies that account for different bullying mechanisms and experiences.

Grade-level differences were also evident. Students in Grade 7 exhibited higher risks across multiple bullying domains, particularly cyberbullying and physical bullying, while Grade 9 students demonstrated significantly lower odds of victimization. This pattern supports developmental theories suggesting that early adolescence is marked by identity instability, social repositioning, and heightened peer sensitivity, increasing vulnerability to bullying victimization [22,26].

An intriguing finding was the association between family income and physical bullying, whereby students from middle-income households were at higher risk than those from lower-income families. This result challenges conventional assumptions linking poverty directly to bullying risk [27] and may be explained by social comparison processes and perceived resource visibility, which can provoke jealousy or conflict among peers [28].

Academic Performance and Bullying Victimization

The study found that students with lower academic performance experienced higher rates of bullying across several domains, particularly verbal and social bullying. In contrast, students with moderate academic achievement demonstrated a significantly lower risk of cyberbullying victimization. This relationship may operate bidirectionally: academic difficulties can reduce self-confidence and social competence, increasing vulnerability to bullying, while bullying experiences may impair concentration, motivation, and mental health, ultimately diminishing academic performance. This reciprocal dynamic reflects a negative feedback loop between bullying victimization and educational outcomes [3].

The Protective Role of Self-Esteem

One of the most theoretically and practically significant findings of this study is the robust protective role of self-esteem against bullying victimization across nearly all domains. Students with high self-esteem were significantly less likely to experience physical, verbal, social, property-related, and bias-based bullying.

This finding is consistent with Psychological Resilience Theory, which conceptualizes self-esteem as a core internal resource that enhances coping capacity, boundary-setting, assertive communication, and help-seeking behaviors [18,28]. High self-esteem may also facilitate stronger peer relationships and greater access to emotional support, thereby reducing repeated victimization.

From an intervention perspective, these results suggest that bullying prevention should extend beyond punitive or behavior-control approaches and incorporate systematic efforts to strengthen students' psychosocial resources—particularly self-esteem and adaptive coping skills [23].

Academic and Policy Implications

Overall, this study contributes to the growing body of evidence on bullying victimization in middle-income countries by elucidating developmental, gender-based, and psychosocial mechanisms underlying victimization. The findings support a systems-based approach to bullying prevention and align closely with the Sustainable Development Goals related to health and education (SDG 3 and SDG 4), which emphasize safe, equitable, and mentally supportive learning environments.

The high prevalence of verbal and social bullying highlights the need for early detection strategies, teacher training, and school-wide climate interventions that address relational aggression and emotional harm. Additionally, integrating self-esteem enhancement programs into school curricula may represent a cost-effective and sustainable strategy to reduce bullying risk and promote adolescent mental well-being.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that bullying victimization among Thai lower secondary school students remains highly prevalent and constitutes a significant public mental health burden. Psychosocial forms of bullying, particularly verbal and social bullying, exceed physical aggression and pose serious threats to adolescents' emotional well-being and developmental trajectories.

Gender, grade level, family income, and academic performance were differentially associated with specific forms of bullying victimization, highlighting the multifaceted and socially embedded nature of the problem.

Most importantly, self-esteem emerged as a robust protective factor across multiple domains of bullying victimization. This finding underscores the critical role of psychosocial resilience in mitigating mental health risks and supports the integration of self-esteem enhancement into school-based mental health promotion strategies. Addressing bullying through a public health lens—by strengthening individual resources and transforming school environments—has the potential to improve adolescent mental well-being and contribute meaningfully to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals 3 and 4.

Strengths and Limitations

This study has several strengths. It examined bullying victimization across seven distinct domains using a standardized international instrument, providing a comprehensive picture of bullying experiences among Thai adolescents. The use of stratified random sampling and multivariable logistic regression enhanced the rigor and interpretability of the findings. Importantly, the study adopted a public mental health framework, positioning bullying as a population-level risk factor rather than an isolated behavioral issue.

Nevertheless, several limitations should be acknowledged. The cross-sectional design precludes causal inference between bullying victimization and associated factors. The study was conducted in a single school, which may limit generalizability to other educational contexts. Additionally, reliance on self-reported data may introduce reporting bias due to recall error or social desirability. Future research should employ longitudinal designs, include diverse school settings, and integrate qualitative approaches to deepen understanding of bullying dynamics and mental health outcomes.

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