

Article

Parenting Dimensions and Adolescent Peer Aggression: A Gendered Analysis

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Received: 3 June 2020; Accepted: 6 August 2020; Published: 12 August 2020



Abstract: The present study had two main goals. The first was to analyze the differences between parenting dimensions—strictness/imposition and involvement/acceptance—in adolescents' engagement in peer aggression as aggressors, victims, aggressive victims, and non-involved. The second goal was to examine differences between parenting dimensions and peer-aggression roles by gender of both parents and adolescents. Participants were 779 adolescents (49.16% boys and 50.84% girls), aged between 12 and 16 years old ($M = 14.21$; $SD = 1.35$), enrolled in schools in Andalusia (Spain). Findings showed significant differences in parenting dimensions depending on gender of both adolescents (boy or girl) and parents (mother and father). For sons, non-involved adolescents scored higher in mother and father involvement than aggressors and aggressive victims. For daughters, non-involved scored higher in mother involvement than aggressors. Furthermore, girl aggressors and aggressive victims reported higher levels of mother imposition than non-involved. Results and their implications for sustainable development in adolescence are discussed.

Keywords: peer aggression; aggressive victims; parental involvement; parental imposition; parenting dimensions; gender

1. Introduction

Peer aggression and victimization are considered a public health concern [1] that undermines the well-being of many children and adolescents [2] and becomes a barrier to sustaining personal and social development. In their last report about peer aggression in Spain, Save The Children found a prevalence of around 60% for victims and 50% for aggressors. Additionally, this report highlighted the importance of gender as a predictive factor of being an aggressor and victim [3]. Peer aggression has become a public health problem, and both aggressors and victims reported maladjustment outcomes in the short term such as depression, anxiety [4], low self-esteem [5] or poor academic performance [6]. In the long term, suicide is the most extreme consequence of peer aggression [7].

Given the prevalence and negative consequences for both aggressors and victims, special attention has been paid to factors associated with the development and maintenance of these behaviors [8]. The existing literature provides evidence that peer aggression is a complex problem with many interacting factors that influence aggression and victimization, which in turn modulate the risk for maladjustment problems [9]. However, the influence of parent–adolescent relation in both peer aggressors and victims has been understudied [10]. Scientific evidence about peer violence is essential to improve the social sustainability of adolescents at school. In the present study, we focused on the role of parenting dimensions in peer aggression, considering four involvement roles in school-aged adolescents: aggressors, victims, aggressive victims (A-V), adolescents involved in peer aggression as

both aggressors and victims, and non-involved (N-I) adolescents who are not involved as aggressors nor victims.

1.1. Parenting Dimensions and Peer Aggression

The quality of family relations plays an important role in the development of aggression and victimization in adolescents [11]. Research on parenting and peer aggression has been mainly focused on parenting dimensions and parenting styles [12–14]. It has been widely suggested that parenting behaviors are likely to influence adolescents' externalizing behaviors, such as peer aggression [15–18], even with personal and social maladjustment [19], as researchers have questioned whether this could be considered a factor or risk factor [20]. Nonetheless, study results on parenting styles have been inconsistent [21], because several models about parenting styles yielded differences regarding which parenting style is better [17,22]. Therefore, some recent studies have focused on parenting behaviors and dimensions instead of typologies [22,23].

Parenting is defined as a structure composed of organized and consolidated parenting practices. These behaviors have been categorized in two orthogonal dimensions that concern behaviors such as affection, punishment or monitoring [12]. According to Maccoby and Martin [24], and Baumrind [25], parenting behaviors are grouped in two dimensions: demandingness, also labeled strictness/imposition, and responsiveness, also labeled involvement/acceptance [17,26,27]. Considering these two axes, four parenting styles have been labeled: authoritative (high on both strictness/imposition and involvement/acceptance), neglectful (low on both strictness/imposition and involvement/acceptance), authoritarian (high on strictness/imposition and low on involvement/acceptance), and indulgent (low on strictness/imposition and high on involvement/acceptance) [27,28]. Empirical evidence has focused on the relationships between parenting styles and peer aggression and victimization in both offline and online domains [10,12–14]. Moreover, peer aggression has consistently been related to low parental involvement and harsh parenting [29], whereas peer victimization has been associated with low responsiveness, high intrusive demandingness [17], and coercive discipline [30,31]. However, despite the relevance of parenting dimensions that constitute the basis on which parenting styles are identified, studies on peer aggression involvement and parenting dimensions are scarce [17].

Regarding the involvement/acceptance dimension, studies analyzing the influence of warmth and affection on the adjustment of adolescents are quite conclusive. Both sons and daughters who report having more affective relationships with their parents show greater emotional well-being and better psychosocial adjustment [32,33]. In relation to peer aggression, the majority of studies report a negative association between involvement/acceptance and aggression involvement as both aggressor and, to a lower extent, victim [15,34,35]. In addition, parental warmth and affective responsiveness in childhood and early adolescence are associated with positive behavioral adjustment in middle and late adolescence [17,32], whereas low acceptance, low involvement, and poor affection were found to foster children's hostility [23,27], leading to peer aggression [22,36].

Findings confirm the proactive role that parental warmth, acceptance, affection, and involvement may have in preventing peer aggression [15,17]. However, results are less conclusive for victims. Whereas high acceptance and involvement is associated with low scores on peer aggression [33,37], this association seems to be weaker for victims. On the one hand, high involvement/acceptance seems to increase the risk of turning children into potential victims of peer aggression [33]; in fact, very high responsiveness is perceived as overprotective by adolescents, which is related to peer victimization [38]. On the other hand, other studies have found that high responsiveness and affection protect adolescents from peer victimization [16,18] because parental affection and warmth encourages a positive parent–child communication and disclosure [32,39]. Furthermore, positive family relationships, characterized by high parental involvement, family support, positive communication, and cohesion, are related to a reduced risk for engaging in peer aggression [11,15,40] and victimization [31], while bully–victims reported lower levels of parental support compared to aggressors and victims [41].

As Georgiou [42] pointed out, responding to the child's needs, having a warm and positive communication, and being supportive are all negatively related to peer aggressive behavior.

As for strictness/imposition, this dimension refers to the extent to which parents take control and supervise their child's behavior [17]. Parental demandingness encompasses several forms of control that may have differing effects on child development, ranging from behavioral control, linked to positive outcomes for the children, to harsh and psychological control, related to negative development outcomes [22,43]. Through behavioral control, parents convey to children that they care about them [32], whereas psychological and harsh control make it difficult for children to increase their autonomy [43] because adolescents tend to perceive coercive and overcontrolled parental control as a restriction on their autonomy [27]. With regard to peer aggression, it has been shown that demanding parents predicted low levels of victimization [33]. Nevertheless, when different types of parental control strategies are considered, previous findings concluded that harsh control and authoritarian coercive and overcontrolled parental control are associated with higher levels of aggression [22,33,37,44]. Nonetheless, scarce parental control, a lack of supervision, and lower levels of parental monitoring are likely to promote aggressive behaviors as both aggressor and victim [15,33,45].

1.2. Gender, Parenting Dimensions, and Peer Aggression and Victimization

It has been widely concluded that adolescent sons are more likely to be involved in peer aggression as both aggressors and victims [17,46,47]. Although family socialization has been considered a gendered variable [48], studies that take into account both parenting dimensions and peer aggression as gendered variables are scarce and controversial. Overall, prior studies reveal that positive parenting practices such as good parent-child communication, warm and affectionate relationship, parental involvement and support, and parental supervision [31] seem to foster autonomy in sons and family bonding and interactions in daughters [32]. These differences are expressed in parenting behaviors.

Regarding the strictness/imposition dimension, it has been pointed out that the association between controlling discipline and relational aggression is stronger for daughters than for sons, which implies that gender has a moderator effect [21,37]. However, other studies did not find moderator effects of children's gender on the link between parenting dimensions and externalizing behaviors such as peer aggression [22,49]. As for the involvement/acceptance dimension, daughters reported higher levels of warmth and control than sons [32,50].

In addition to children's gender, parents' gender should be included when examining the role of gender in the explanation of the link between parenting practices and peer aggression [12]. For instance, mothers seem to play an important role in predicting adolescents' peer aggression [27,51]. Paternal support was related to increased delinquency in sons but not in daughters, while maternal support was associated with bullying behavior by daughters but not by sons [12]. Furthermore, sex differences were found regarding the parenting-delinquency association. Fathers seem to have more influence on their sons' aggression than mothers [12,52]. Given the lack of studies investigating the influence of parenting dimensions from both mother and father on peer aggression in sons and daughters, future research should further investigate this issue [12].

1.3. The Present Study

Research on family socialization has assumed a dimensional perspective related to parental behaviors, which are encompassed in the axes of involvement/acceptance and strictness/imposition [53]. In this regard, low involvement/acceptance and imposition predicted adolescents' peer aggression [15,16,33,45,54]. Nonetheless, other studies indicated that high levels of strictness and imposition are related to higher levels of both peer aggression (overt and relational) and victimization [22,33,37,44]. Although recent research is giving more attention to parenting dimensions and their relationship to peer aggression, less research has examined how parenting dimensions influence child outcomes within the context of parent-child gender dyads.

The first goal of the present study was to analyze the differences between parenting dimensions—strictness/imposition and involvement/acceptance—in adolescents' engagement in peer aggression as aggressors, victims, aggressive victims, and non-involved. Building upon previous research [15,17,28,42], we expected higher levels of strictness/imposition and lower levels of involvement/acceptance in aggressors and aggressive victims, as compared to victims and non-involved adolescents (hypothesis 1).

The second goal was to examine the differences between the aforementioned parenting dimensions and involvement roles in peer aggression taking into account the gender of parent and adolescent. Since parenting dimensions are considered a gendered variable [55–57] in the present study, we specifically separately examined father and mother parenting dimensions and sons' and daughters' involvement in peer aggression. Other studies reveal that mothers and fathers tend to emphasize affiliation, family bonds, and interpersonal connectedness with daughters and assertiveness and dominance with sons [57]. Additionally, fathers seem to have a strong influence on sons, whereas mothers have a strong influence on daughters. Thus, we expected lower levels of father involvement/acceptance and higher levels of strictness/imposition for sons labeled as aggressors and aggressive victims, but lower levels of mother involvement/acceptance and higher levels of mother strictness/imposition in aggressors and aggressive-victim daughters (hypothesis 2).

The third goal was to investigate the extent to which father and mother involvement/acceptance and father and mother strictness/imposition predict adolescents' involvement in peer aggression as aggressors, victims, and aggressive victims, taking into account gender. Consistent with previous research findings [15,17,28,42], low mother and father involvement/acceptance and high mother and father strictness/imposition were expected to predict the adolescents' role in peer aggression as aggressor and aggressive victim (hypothesis 3).

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Participants and Procedure

Participants in this study were 779 students (49.16% boys and 50.84% girls) that were enrolled in 4 secondary schools (2 public and 2 semi-private) in Andalusia (Spain). Participants' ages ranged from 12 to 16 years ($M = 14.21$; $SD = 1.35$). Random sampling was used to select participants. A sampling error of $\pm 2.5\%$, a confidence level of 95%, and a population variance of 0.50 were assumed. Regarding family variables, the majority of adolescents reported living in a nuclear family with both the mother and the father (83.6%), with lower percentages of single parent families (mother: 12.5% and father 1.1%) and joint custody (2.8%). Additionally, most participants reported that their fathers and mothers had a paid job (fathers: 79.6%, mothers 55.5%).

The selected schools were initially contacted to explain the goals, the scope of the investigation, and to request their participation. We then sent a letter to the students' parents, explaining the investigation and requesting their written consent for their children's participation in the study; among them, only 1% of the sample ($n = 8$) declined to participate in the study. After obtaining the corresponding informed consents, the administration of the instruments was held in three different sessions lasting approximately 45 min. Instrument administration was performed under the imposition of previously trained researchers, in the usual classrooms of each of the participating groups and during a regular class period. The adolescents were informed that their participation in the study was voluntary and anonymous, and that they could withdraw at any time during the process.

In addition, this research was conducted in a study that is part of a larger national research on aggressive behavior in adolescence, which was authorized by the Ethics Committee of the participant universities. The study has also fulfilled ethical values required in research with human beings, respecting the fundamental principles included in the Declaration of Helsinki and its subsequent updates.

2.2. Materials

Peer aggression behavior was evaluated with The Peer Aggression Scale [58,59] consisting of 25 items where students rate, on a 4-point Likert-type scale from 1 (never) to 4 (always), their participation in aggressive attitudes toward other students. Based on the multidimensional measurement of self-reported aggressive behavior, the present study used 3 different subscales: Reactive Aggression—evaluates overt and relational aggressive behavior as a response to the perception of a previous assault, that is, the reactive function of aggression (e.g., “When someone hurts me or injures me, I hit them”, “When someone annoys me, I gossip or spread rumours about that person”); Pure Aggression—refers to aggressions, both overt and relational, independently of their function (e.g., “I am a person who fights with others” “I am a person who treats others with indifference or stops talking to them”); Proactive Aggression—measures overt and relational aggression behaviors that are used as a means to achieve an end, that is, the instrumental or proactive function of aggressions (e.g., “I hit, kick or punch to get what I want”, “To get what I want, I don’t let some people be part of my group of friends”). Confirmatory factorial analysis showed a good adjustment of the model of data measurement ($SB \chi^2 = 725.2593$, $df = 233$, $p < 0.001$, $CFI = 0.915$, $RMSEA = 0.030$, $I.C. 90 (0.027, 0.032)$). The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient obtained for these three scales was 0.90, and for the subscales it ranged from 0.70 to 0.76. The validity of the scale has already been confirmed [5,59].

The second instrument applied was The Peer Victimization Scale [59,60], consisting of 20 items, where students rate situations of victimization. This scale presents three factors: Relational Victimization (e.g., “someone has told rumours about me and has criticized me behind my back”), Physical Manifest Victimization (e.g., “someone has punched me to really hurt me”), and Verbal Manifest Victimization (e.g., “someone has insulted me”). Confirmatory factorial analysis showed a good adjustment of the model of data measurement ($SB \chi^2 = 664.279$, $df = 159$, $p < 0.001$, $CFI = 0.932$, $RMSEA = 0.036 (0.034, 0.039)$). The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient obtained for these three scales was 0.92, and for the subscales it ranged from 0.81 to 0.89. The validity of the scale has already been confirmed [17,59].

Parenting dimensions were assessed with the involvement–acceptance and strictness/imposition dimensions of the Parental Socialization Scale (ESPA29) [61]. This instrument was based on the two-dimensional theoretical model of parental socialization. It is composed of 212 items (106 parallel items for each parental figure; mother and father). The adolescents rated their parents’ actions in 29 situations that were representative of everyday family life in western culture; 16 refer to child behavior that adheres to family rules (e.g., “If I respect the schedules established in my home”), and 13 refer to behavior opposing these rules (e.g., “If I’m dirty and untidy”). For each of these situations, the adolescents rated, on a 4-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (never) to 4 (always), how their parents act in terms of affection (“Shows me love”) and indifference (“Is indifferent”) in the face of adapted behavior; and in terms of dialogue (“Talks to me”), detachment (“Doesn’t care”), verbal coercion (“Scolds me”), physical coercion (“Hits me”), and revoking privileges (“Deprives me of something”) in the face of behavior that disobeys the rule. From these assessments, a global measure on the dimensions of the socialization model—involvement–acceptance and strictness/imposition—was obtained, by which the parenting style was classified as authoritative, indulgent, authoritarian or neglectful. The family scores on both orthogonal dimensions (involvement–acceptance and strictness/imposition) were obtained by averaging the subscales of fathers and mothers. The score on the involvement–acceptance dimension was obtained by averaging the subscales of affection, dialogue, indifference, and detachment (in the last two, the score is reversed because they are inversely related to the dimension). The score in the strictness/imposition dimension was obtained by averaging the subscales of verbal coercion, physical coercion, and revoking privileges. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients for the scale were 0.97, and for every two subscales, 0.82 and 0.94. The scale has been sufficiently used and its validity corroborated [17,28].

2.3. Data Analysis

First, four groups of adolescents were formed according to their different involvement in peer aggression and victimization: According to the boys' and girls' relationship with peer aggression at school, we identified four groups: (1) aggressors, who get the same or greater scores than the median in Peer Aggression and lower than the mean in Peer Victimization ($N = 155$), (2) victims, who get the same or greater scores than the median in Peer Victimization and lower than the mean in Peer Aggression ($N = 158$), (3) aggressive victims (A-V), who get the same or greater scores than the median in both Peer Aggression and Victimization ($N = 233$), and (4) Non-Involved, formed by adolescents who scored lower than the mean in both Peer Aggression and Victimization ($N = 233$). These groups were established separately for boys and girls.

Second, an analysis of correlations was performed to determine the relation between the variables, and descriptive analyses were calculated to examine the distribution of the sociodemographic variables of gender in the variables under study. Additionally, a Student's *t*-test was conducted to examine gender differences among each variable in the study.

Next, analyses of previous asymmetry and kurtosis were carried out in order to confirm the assumptions of normality and homoscedasticity necessary for the ANOVA. The analysis plan made for this investigation was created with two groups of ANOVAs. First, an ANOVA was conducted with the family variables (mother and father involvement/acceptance and mother and father strictness/imposition) as dependent variables and the involvement roles in peer aggression (aggressor, victim, aggressive victim, and non-involved) as the independent variable. Next, a disaggregated gender analysis was carried out and two ANOVAs were conducted for sons and for daughters. Finally, a multinomial regression analysis was carried out to examine the relationship between peer aggression roles (aggressor, victim, aggressive victim, and non-involved) and the following variables: gender, mother and father involvement/acceptance, and mother and father strictness/imposition. Odds ratios with a 95% confidence interval were computed through regression analysis. The software SPSS Statistics, version 24, was used.

3. Results

3.1. Descriptive Analyses

Correlations among the variables under study were made. As shown in Table 1, peer victimization correlated positively with peer aggression. Furthermore, negative correlations between mother and father involvement–acceptance and aggression and victimization were found. Peer aggression and peer victimization correlated positively with strictness/imposition. Moreover, results obtained from the *t*-test revealed that sons reported higher levels of peer aggression than daughters ($M_{\text{sons}} = 1.42$, $SD = 0.25$; $M_{\text{daughters}} = 1.33$, $SD = 0.22$), whereas daughters scored higher than sons in mother involvement/acceptance ($M_{\text{daughters}} = 3.32$, $SD = 0.40$; $M_{\text{sons}} = 3.26$, $SD = 0.40$).

Next, adolescent groups according to their implication in peer aggression are shown in Table 2. These groups were made using the median from aggressive and victimization variables. The group of aggressors showed high scores only in peer aggression (aggressors, 19.9%), victimization (victims, 20.28%), aggressive victims (A-V, 29.91%) or non-involved (N-I, 29.91%). Results are also presented by gender (daughters or sons). We can observe that a high percentage of non-Involved daughters are not engaged in any kind of aggression or victim behavior (31.06%), compared to sons. By contrast, sons have a higher presence in the A-V group (32.38%). Results of the chi-square test indicated that sons' and daughters' distribution in the groups of peer aggression roles showed significant differences ($\chi^2(4) = 18.41$, $p < 0.001$). The standardized residuals showed that there were fewer boys in the group of victims than expected ($r z = -2.2$, $p < 0.05$), whereas the number of girls in the group of victims of peer aggression was higher ($r z = 2.2$, $p < 0.05$).

Table 1. Correlations between variables, average, and standard deviation by gender and *t*-test results.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. PA	-					
2. PV	0.169 **	-				
3. IAM	-0.193 **	-0.106 **	-			
4. SIM	0.101 **	0.190 **	0.178 **	-		
5. IAF	-0.209 **	-0.089 *	0.765 **	0.170 **	-	
6. SIF	0.078 *	0.103 **	0.261 **	0.715 **	0.324 **	-
<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>) sons	1.42 (0.25)	1.41 (0.36)	3.26 (0.40)	1.95 (0.38)	3.19 (0.46)	1.95 (0.42)
<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>) daughters	1.33 (0.22)	1.44 (0.35)	3.32 (0.40)	1.95 (0.39)	3.21 (0.50)	1.91 (0.42)
<i>t</i> (781)	5.25 **	-1.13 n.s.	-2.13 *	0.12 n.s.	-0.58 n.s.	1.36 n.s.

Note: *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$. PA = peer aggression; PV = peer victimization; IAM = mother involvement/acceptance; SIM = mother strictness/imposition; IAF = father involvement/acceptance; SIF = father strictness/imposition; n.s. = no significant.

Table 2. Sample distribution in base student's implication at peer aggression.

	TOTAL		Sons		Daughters	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Aggressive Victims	233	29.91	124	32.38	109	27.53
Aggressors	155	19.90	91	23.76	64	16.16
Victims	158	20.28	58	15.14	100	25.25
Non-Involved	233	29.91	110	28.72	123	31.06
TOTAL	779	100	383	100	396	100

3.2. Differences in Family Dimensions According to the Involvement Roles in Peer Aggression

The ANOVA revealed significant differences in mother involvement/acceptance ($F(3, 775) = 9.827$ $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 p = 0.037$), mother strictness/imposition ($F(3, 775) = 6.906$ $p < 0.01$, $\eta^2 p = 0.026$), and father involvement/acceptance ($F(3, 775) = 13.118$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 p = 0.048$), while father strictness/imposition did not show significant differences. Bonferroni tests ($\alpha = 0.05$) indicated that students from the N-I group obtained statistically significant higher levels in both involvement/acceptance dimensions (mother and father) than Aggressors and A-V. Moreover, victims obtained higher levels than aggressors. We can also observe that A-V obtained significantly higher levels in mother strictness/imposition than the N-I group (Table 3).

Table 3. Mean, standard deviation, and ANOVA.

Variable	Aggressive Victims	Aggressors	Victims	N-I	<i>F</i> (3, 775)	$\eta^2 p$
IAM	3.23 (0.35) ^b	3.20 (0.44) ^{b,2}	3.33 (0.44) ¹	3.39 (0.37) ^a	9.827 ***	0.037
SIM	2.00 (0.32) ^a	1.94 (0.36)	2.01 (0.45) ^a	1.86 (0.40) ^b	6.906 ***	0.026
IAF	3.18 (0.43) ^b	3.08 (0.50) ^{b,2}	3.22 (0.55) ¹	3.35 (0.43) ^a	13.118 ***	0.048
SIF	1.98 (0.38)	1.91 (0.40)	1.95 (0.49)	1.88 (0.43)	2.157 n.s.	0.008

Note: $\alpha = 0.05$, $a > b$; $1 > 2$; *** $p < 0.001$; n.s. = non-significant. PA = peer aggression; PV = peer victimization; IAM = mother involvement/acceptance; SIM = mother strictness/imposition; IAF = father involvement/acceptance; SIF = father strictness/imposition.

In order to analyze intergender differences in the relation between family and implication roles in peer aggression, disaggregated ANOVA were conducted. As shown in Table 4, we found significant differences in both mother and father involvement/acceptance dimensions for sons: (mother ($F(3, 392) = 3.57$, $p < 0.01$) and father ($F(3, 392) = 6.35$, $p < 0.001$)). Results obtained from the Bonferroni Test indicated that sons from the N-I group perceived higher involvement/acceptance from their mothers and fathers than aggressors and aggressive victims. Regarding daughters, significant differences were found in both mother and father involvement/acceptance ($F(3, 392) = 3.568$ $p \leq 0.01$ and $F(3, 392) = 7.666$

$p < 0.001$, respectively) and mother strictness/imposition ($F(3, 392) = 6.869$ $p < 0.001$). Findings from the Bonferroni Test revealed that N-I daughters obtained higher levels in mother involvement/acceptance compared to aggressors. Furthermore, victims and A-V daughters reported higher levels of mother strictness/imposition than N-I (see Table 4).

Table 4. Mean, standard deviation (SD), and ANOVA results by gender.

Variables	Gender	Aggressive Victims	Aggressors	Victims	N-I	F (3392)	η^2_p
IAM	Sons	3.17 (0.38) ^b	3.19 (0.43) ^b	3.33 (0.35)	3.38 (0.38) ^a	7.10 ^{***}	0.05
	Daughters	3.30 (0.29)	3.20 (0.45) ^b	3.32 (0.49)	3.40 (0.37) ^a	3.57 ^{**}	0.02
SIM	Sons	2.00 (0.34)	1.96 (0.36)	1.94 (0.44)	1.89 (0.38)	1.77 ^{n.s.}	0.01
	Daughters	2.00 (0.31) ^a	1.90 (0.35)	2.05 (0.45) ^a	1.84 (0.40) ^b	6.90 ^{***}	0.05
IAF	Sons	3.10 (0.45) ^b	3.12 (0.50) ^b	3.25 (0.42)	3.33 (0.43) ^a	6.35 ^{***}	0.04
	Daughters	3.16 (0.41) ^b	3.02 (0.48) ^b	3.21 (0.61)	3.36 (0.43) ^a	7.67 ^{***}	0.05
SIF	Sons	1.99 (0.39)	1.94 (0.39)	1.96 (0.49)	1.91 (0.44)	0.66 ^{n.s.}	0.01
	Daughters	1.96 (0.36)	1.87 (0.39)	1.94 (0.48)	1.86 (0.42)	1.69 ^{n.s.}	0.01

Note: $\alpha = 0.05$, $a > b$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$; n.s. = non-significant. IAM = mother involvement/acceptance; SIM = mother strictness/imposition; IAF = father involvement/acceptance; SIF = father strictness/imposition. $\eta^2_p = 0-0.3$, small size; $\eta^2_p = 0.4-0.6$, medium size; $\eta^2_p = 0.7-1$, big size.

3.3. Multinomial Logistic Regression

Multinomial regression was calculated to examine whether the parenting dimensions (mother/father strictness/imposition and mother/father involvement/acceptance) and gender predicted involvement in peer aggression as aggressors, victims, and aggressive victims. The interaction between gender and father and mother parenting dimensions was also examined. The non-involved group served as the reference group. Results showed that the regression model was statistically significant: $\chi^2(27) = 108.29$, $p < 0.001$, $-2LL = 1882.37$, Nagelkerke $R^2 = 0.14$. Deviance indicated a good fit of the regression model: $\chi^2(2025) = 1854.83$, $p > 0.05$. However, Pearson's chi-square did not show a good fit: $\chi^2(2025) = 2189.92$, $p < 0.01$.

As shown in Table 5, adolescents in families with low father involvement/acceptance were more likely to be aggressors ($\text{Exp}(B) = 0.14$), victims ($\text{Exp}(B) = 0.28$), and aggressive victims ($\text{Exp}(B) = 0.19$) than not to be involved in peer aggression. Adolescents who reported high levels of mother strictness/imposition were 7.91 times more likely to be victims than to not be involved in peer aggression ($\text{Exp}(B) = 7.91$), and aggressive victims ($\text{Exp}(B) = 3.45$). However, boys who reported high mother strictness/imposition were less likely to be victims than girls ($\text{Exp}(B) = 0.16$). On the other hand, boys who reported high levels of mother involvement/acceptance were less likely to be aggressive victims than girls ($\text{Exp}(B) = 0.15$).

Table 5. Multinomial logistic regression model predicting gender, mother/father involvement/acceptance, and mother/father strictness/imposition among aggressors, victims, and aggressive victims.

Group ^a	Effect	B	SE	Wald	Exp(B)	95% CI
Aggressors	Intercept	2.82	1.48	3.62 ^{n.s.}		
	Gender ^b	0.48	2.01	0.06 ^{n.s.}	1.61	[0.03–82.55]
	IAM	0.31	0.61	0.25 ^{n.s.}	1.36	[0.41–4.48]
	SIM	0.70	0.64	1.20 ^{n.s.}	2.02	[0.58–7.10]
	IAF	−1.94	0.54	12.69 ^{***}	0.14	[0.05–0.42]
	SIF	−0.23	0.61	0.14 ^{n.s.}	0.61	[0.39–4.12]
	Gender ^b × IAM	−1.41	0.90	2.48 ^{n.s.}	1.23	[0.04–1.41]
	Gender ^b × SIM	0.29	0.89	0.11 ^{n.s.}	1.73	[0.23–7.66]
	Gender ^b × IAF	1.34	0.78	2.91 ^{n.s.}	8.43	[0.82–17.66]
	Gender ^b × SIF	−0.14	0.82	0.03 ^{n.s.}	1.14	[0.17–4.38]

Table 5. Cont.

Group ^a	Effect	B	SE	Wald	Exp(B)	95% CI
Victims	Intercept	−0.65	1.37	0.23 ^{n.s.}		
	Gender ^b	0.94	2.09	0.20 ^{n.s.}	2.56	[0.04–151.93]
	IAM	0.47	0.57	0.68 ^{n.s.}	1.60	[0.53–4.85]
	SIM	2.07	0.56	13.88 ^{***}	7.91	[2.67–23.49]
	IAF	−1.28	0.54	6.28 [*]	0.28	[0.10–0.76]
	SIF	−0.49	0.53	0.85 ^{n.s.}	0.61	[0.22–1.74]
	Gender ^b × IAM	−0.55	0.95	0.33 ^{n.s.}	0.58	[0.09–3.75]
	Gender ^b × SIM	−1.82	0.91	4.04 [*]	0.16	[0.03–0.96]
	Gender ^b × IAF	0.74	0.82	0.81 ^{n.s.}	2.09	[0.42–10.46]
	Gender ^b × SIF	0.83	0.83	0.99 ^{n.s.}	2.28	[0.45–11.66]
Aggressive Victims	Intercept	0.49	1.32	0.14 ^{n.s.}		
	Gender ^b	3.18	1.84	2.98 ^{n.s.}	23.82	[0.65–873.45]
	IAM	0.57	0.56	1.02 ^{n.s.}	1.76	[0.59–5.28]
	SIM	1.24	0.56	4.90 [*]	3.45	[1.15–10.34]
	IAF	−1.64	0.50	10.75 ^{**}	0.19	[0.07–0.52]
	SIF	0.26	0.53	0.62 ^{n.s.}	1.30	[0.46–3.67]
	Gender ^b × IAM	−1.87	0.84	4.98 [*]	0.15	[0.03–0.80]
	Gender ^b × SIM	−0.08	0.81	0.92 ^{n.s.}	0.92	[0.19–4.51]
	Gender ^b × IAF	0.97	0.73	0.1 ^{n.s.}	2.63	[0.63–11.04]
	Gender ^b × SIF	0.73	0.74	0.9 ^{n.s.}	1.08	[0.25–4.64]

Note: a = Non-involved was used as the normative group; b = gender (1): Males; $\alpha = 0.05$; * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$; n.s. = non-significant. SE = standard error; CI = confidence interval; IAM = mother involvement/acceptance; SIM = mother strictness/imposition; IAF = father involvement/acceptance; SIF = father strictness/imposition.

4. Discussion

The present study aimed to analyze the differences in parental dimensions as a function of involvement roles in peer aggression (non-involved, aggressors, victims, and aggressive victims), taking into account adolescents' and parents' gender.

The first goal was to analyze differences between parenting dimensions (mother/father involvement/acceptance and mother/father strictness/imposition) among aggressors, victims, A-V, and non-involved in adolescents' peer aggression. Findings showed that, as predicted, non-involved adolescents perceived the highest levels of both mother and father implication and acceptance than aggressors and A-V, who presented the lowest levels of mother and father involvement. These results are in line with those of previous studies [13,17,18,62] and highlight the relevance of warmth and affective responsiveness in childhood and early adolescence to reduce the risk of psychosocial maladjustment and adolescents' peer aggression [16,30,31]. In addition, prior studies have concluded that both indulgent and authoritative parenting styles are the most protective against peer aggression and cyberbullying [14,17,22,53,63]. It is worth highlighting that father warmth was observed to have an important effect modulating aggressive behavior, coinciding with previous literature; and according to recent research [14], this could reflect a change in the trend, with important implications on the raising of offspring. Both styles shared higher levels of involvement/acceptance. Involvement/acceptance encompasses attitudes that encourage a positive parent–child communication and disclosure [30,37], which in turn are related to a better psychosocial adjustment and, therefore, with a lower level of peer aggression and peer victimization [15,17,30,37]. Findings of the present study underlined that adolescents who perceived acceptance, support, and affection from their parents (mother and father) are less likely to be aggressors and V-A. Previous studies have concluded that lack of warmth and affection and low perception of parental support are related to peer aggression [45] and hostility [27], as well as personal and social maladjustment [14,64]. The results of the present study go deeper into the relevance of the affection and involvement of the father and the mother in preventing peer aggression.

In contrast, victims and A-V reported higher levels of mother strictness and imposition than non-involved, whereas father strictness and imposition were similar among groups. Therefore, this part of the first hypothesis was not confirmed by results. Prior studies point out the relationship between peer victimization and highly intrusive demandingness [16] and coercive discipline [29], which is perceived by adolescents as a restriction of their autonomy [16,30]. Findings of the present study also showed that A-V reported higher levels of mother strictness and imposition. Further, A-V adolescents perceived lower levels of care, support, understanding, and affection by both father and mother, as aggressors, and the highest levels of maternal strictness and imposition, which include psychological and behavioral control and coercion. However, no significant differences were found for paternal imposition. This is an important finding in the understanding of maternal and paternal roles in explaining peer aggression. Whereas other studies have pointed out that parental imposition is protective against peer victimization [31,33,65], our findings went beyond previous reports, demonstrating that only maternal imposition is protective, possibly because in Southern European cultures, fathers tend to be stricter and more involved in disciplinary practices. Future research should examine the potential effects of maternal and paternal parenting dimensions.

The second goal was to examine the relationships between parenting dimensions and involvement roles in peer aggression with regard to gender. Disaggregated analysis by parents' and adolescents' gender revealed similarities and differences across genders. As hypothesized, non-involved sons and daughters reported higher levels of father and mother involvement and acceptance than aggressors. Nonetheless, while non-involved sons reported higher levels of mother involvement and acceptance, our results did not yield significant differences among these groups for daughters. These findings might suggest that mother and father involvement and acceptance, which are related to affection, play a similar role in adolescents' peer aggression. Prior studies have shown that father involvement has a greater effect on sons than daughters [35,66]. However, our results suggest that mother and father involvement are equally important for both sons and daughters, protecting adolescents from bullying involvement. Various studies have also highlighted that supportive parenting is associated with lower levels of child disruptive and aggressive behaviors [37,57]. These results coincide with findings in other recent studies in Southern Europe, which question the idea of strict child-raising styles as positive [14]. Significantly, our results underlined that there are no gender differences in the effect of affective and supportive parenting on adolescents' peer aggression.

On the other hand, the results of the present study found important differences in maternal strictness/imposition. Whereas there were no significant differences on paternal strictness and imposition in sons' and daughters' peer aggression, maternal imposition seems to play a different role for sons and daughters. While there were no differences in maternal imposition in sons, in daughters, it was observed that victims and A-V reported greater imposition by mothers than those not involved in peer aggression. The results highlight important differences in maternal strictness/imposition for sons and daughters involved in peer aggression as aggressors and aggressive victims. Along this line, the results of the present study reveal differences in this parenting dimension that contribute to better understand the relationships between mother and father parenting behaviors and sons' and daughters' peer aggression. Future studies should address this important issue.

It has been widely demonstrated that parents tend to use different parenting practices with sons and daughters, mainly for control and imposition [67]. These different patterns are important because maternal and paternal controlling behavior seem to be related to an increase in disruptive and aggressive behavior in children and adolescents [22,31,37]. In contrast, our results revealed that A-V and victim daughters perceived a higher strictness/imposition from their mothers.

Imposition involves not only the amount of control that parents impose on their sons or daughters, but also the practices used by parents to exert this control. Therefore, an important question associated with imposition that might explain these results is related to the type of parenting practices developed by mothers with their daughters. In a meta-analysis, authors found that mothers used more supportive strategies focused on acceptance and affection for imposition with daughters than

with sons [12]. Additionally, these findings might be attributable to cultural differences. In fact, parenting dimensions provide more information than parenting style in ethnic cultural groups [68]. It seems that in Southern European countries (e.g., Spain), higher levels of imposition and control are not mitigated by affection and responsiveness [27]. Moreover, Latino studies have found that parents were higher on demandingness and imposition with their daughters [69,70]. On the other hand, previous studies concluded that overprotection is linked to peer victimization [16,22]. In addition, mothers have traditionally had the main responsibility of child rearing in Latino and Southern European countries [30].

The third goal was to explore the influence of parents' dimensions in a predictive model of involvement in peer aggression as different roles, considering gender. Multinomial logistic regression was partially confirmed. Multinomial logistic regression outcomes seem to point in the same direction as previous analyses, revealing an important influence of parental dimensions in the prediction of peer aggression. Thus, high mother strictness/imposition predicts the role of adolescents in peer aggression as victims and aggressive victims, compared with non-involved.

These results seem to suggest an important influence of parenting over sons' and daughters' roles in peer aggression, relating low father involvement/acceptance with higher probability of participating in any of the roles, compared with non-involved, and high mother strictness/imposition with victims and aggressive victims. A greater emotional well-being and better psychosocial adjustment linked with parents' affective relationship [32,33] seems to be a factor in adolescents becoming victims (or aggressive victims) at school. Aggressors could see these adolescents as targets because they identify behavioral and adjustment differences between them.

Observed influence seems to be especially relevant in boys from their mothers. Thus, high levels of self-reported mother involvement/acceptance predict sons' participation in peer violence as aggressive victims, compared with non-involved. Otherwise, lower levels of mother strictness/imposition are linked with their sons' participation as victims, in the same way, compared with non-involved adolescents.

These results are especially interesting as they attribute the main influence on child behavior to mothers. The effects of mother parenting dimensions are higher than those of the father across genders. A possible explanation is focused on the different role that mothers and fathers play in family relationships. Our results suggest that mothers take more responsibility in family socialization.

Peer violence might have a wrong impact on a sustainable society due to its influence on personal and social maladjustment. These results are important because they show that participating in peer violence can have a great impact on boys' and girls' development. In addition, in our research, this influence was also found differently in boys and girls, which shows the importance of taking gender into account to guarantee a sustainable development of child.

In summary, exploratory and predictive analysis indicated a strong relationship between participating in peer violence (in the different roles described) and parental dimensions. These findings are in line with results reported previously and coincide with studies that have shown that parental dimensions are associated with participation in violence [71,72], although they also highlight the influence of gender. These results can be useful for updating practical information on parenting and family therapies.

Limitations

This study highlights the importance of examining gendered parenting dimensions in both sons and daughters and their relation to peer aggression roles. Nevertheless, it is important to mention some limitations. First, the present study has a cross-sectional design that does not allow us to establish causal relation or identify developmental patterns. Further research should shed light on the effects of gendered parental practices on sons' and daughters' involvement in peer aggression. Moreover, another limitation involves the type of measures related to strictness/imposition. Given that previous studies have pointed out the relevance of parental control in adolescents adjustment [17,22], future studies should include as specific variables psychological, behavioral, as well as supportive control

strategies. More research is also needed to further explore the role of culture in paternal and maternal parenting dimensions in sons' and daughters' adjustment. On the other hand, results of the present study revealed some information about variations within the parenting dimensions among aggressors, victims, aggressive victims, and non-involved as a function of parents and adolescents' gender. Further research should analyze which parenting styles are more related to different roles, taking into account mother and father parenting style and its effect on sons and daughters. Lastly, further work on gender-differentiated parenting should consider parents' and adolescents' gender stereotypes to verify the different parenting strategies that are used by fathers and mothers with their sons and daughters.

5. Conclusions

Parenting dimensions are considered a universal indicator of parenting behavior. However, to date, there is no consensus on the extent to which fathers and mothers are differently involved in their sons' and daughters' education. This study highlights the relationships of parenting dimensions and involvement in peer aggression. More specifically, this study emphasizes that paternal and maternal warmth are important resources for fostering adolescents' adjustment and diminishing peer aggression in both sons and daughters. Peer aggressors and A-V—both sons and daughters—are more likely to perceive lower levels of acceptance and involvement. In contrast, strictness and imposition seem to be a gendered parenting dimension. Significantly, maternal imposition seems to play an important role in daughters. The present study revealed that victims and A-V daughters reported higher levels of maternal strictness/imposition, which might be related to overprotection or negative control practices such as psychological control. Future studies should analyze the link between imposition, control, overprotection, and peer victimization in daughters.

The findings of the present study have several theoretical and practical implications. At a theoretical level, the results provide information about the relevance of parenting dimensions as the axes in which parenting styles are based and the extent to which gender should be taken into account in both parents and children. Practical implications derived from our research could help to minimize the differences in parenting dimensions based on gender. Our data suggest that positive parenting based on a warm and affectionate relationship, parental involvement and support, and parental supervision [31] may help to diminish the likelihood of adolescents' involvement in peer aggression. Along this line, it is important that both fathers and mothers be highly supportive and involved and showing affection to their sons and daughters. In other terms, affection and involvement entail a critical variable in preventing peer aggression in boys and girls. Moreover, mothers' strictness and imposition play an important role in preventing peer aggression in girls. In this regard, our findings might benefit school-based peer aggression prevention programs for students, as well as child rearing programs for parents, thus fostering more effective relations between parents and their adolescent children to reduce peer aggression behavior among adolescents.

Author Contributions: D.M.-M. and B.M.-F. conceived and designed the research. All authors performed the research. D.M.-M., B.M.-F., and D.M.-R. collected data, and D.M.-M. and P.L.-M. analyzed the data. All authors wrote the paper and read and approved the final manuscript.

Funding: This study was funded by the project "Bullying, cyberbullying child–parent violence in adolescence"—reference: PSI2015-65683-P (MINECO/FEDER, UE), and was subsidized by the Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness of Spain and the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund (in Spanish, ERDF)—"A way of making Europe".

Conflicts of Interest: The authors of the present manuscript declare no conflict of interest.

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