

Associations Between Peer Victimization And Academic Achievement Across the School Years

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INTRODUCTION

- According to the United States Department of Education, in 2017 roughly 20% of adolescents reported being victimized (bullied) by their peers at school.
- There has been extensive research examining the impact of peer victimization (PV) on children's psychosocial development and school adjustment.



- In fact, research has consistently shown that children who are victimized by their peers tend to be less engaged in school, report being more lonely, and are more depressed than their non-victimized peers (Ladd et al., 2012).
- Surprisingly, although PV predominantly occurs at school, its impact on academic achievement (AA) has been examined less thoroughly.



- Research exploring the relationship between PV and AA have had mixed findings. However, Nakamoto and Schwartz's (2010) meta-analyses found a small negative concurrent association between PV and AA.

- Nevertheless, there has been no evidence to support the direction of this effect.

- It is typically argued that PV *precedes* academic difficulties (Davis et al., 2018; Fan & Dempsey 2016; Liu, Bullock, & Coplan, 2014).

- Specifically, it is believed that when children are victimized they have difficulty paying attention (Iyer, Kochenderfer-Ladd, Eisenberg, & Thompson, 2010), they disengage from school



(Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1996), and they avoid going to school altogether (Buhs, Ladd, & Herald, 2006) This in turn is believed to lead to poorer academic outcomes.

- However, there is some evidence that children who are performing very well academically may also be targeted for bullying (Schwartz, Kelly, & Doung, 2013).

The Present Study

The aims of this study are to examine:

- the bidirectional relationship between peer victimization and academic achievement across school years.
- to determine whether children who are victimized by their peers are overrepresented in groups of high and low achieving students.

METHODS

Participants

- 383 students who were followed yearly from kindergarten to grade 12
- 193 girls & 190 boys
- 77.8% Caucasian, 17.8% African American, and 4.4% Hispanic, biracial, and other.

Procedure

- This study used a repeated measures multi-informant design
- It included both self-reported and teacher-reported peer victimization
- Data were gathered in the spring of each year
- Only grades three through grade 12 will be included in analyses

Measures

Self-Reported Peer Victimization

A four-item scale that measured the frequency (1 = *no, never* to 5 = *a lot of the time*) in which the student reported that they had experienced physical, verbal, relational, and general victimization.

Teacher-Reported Peer Victimization

A four-item scale that measured the frequency (1 = *no, never* to 5 = *a lot of the time*) in which the teacher reported that the student experienced physical, verbal, relational, and general victimization.

Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT; Wilkinson, 1993)

To measure academic achievement the standardized scores from the WRAT for mathematics and reading will be use.

PROPOSED DATA ANALYSES

- Hypotheses will be tested using cross-panel lagged analysis which will control for correlations within time points (r_{xy}) and stability over time (β_3 and β_4).
- Repeated measures MANOVAs will be used to test whether children who are victimized by their peers are overrepresented in groups of high and low achieving students.

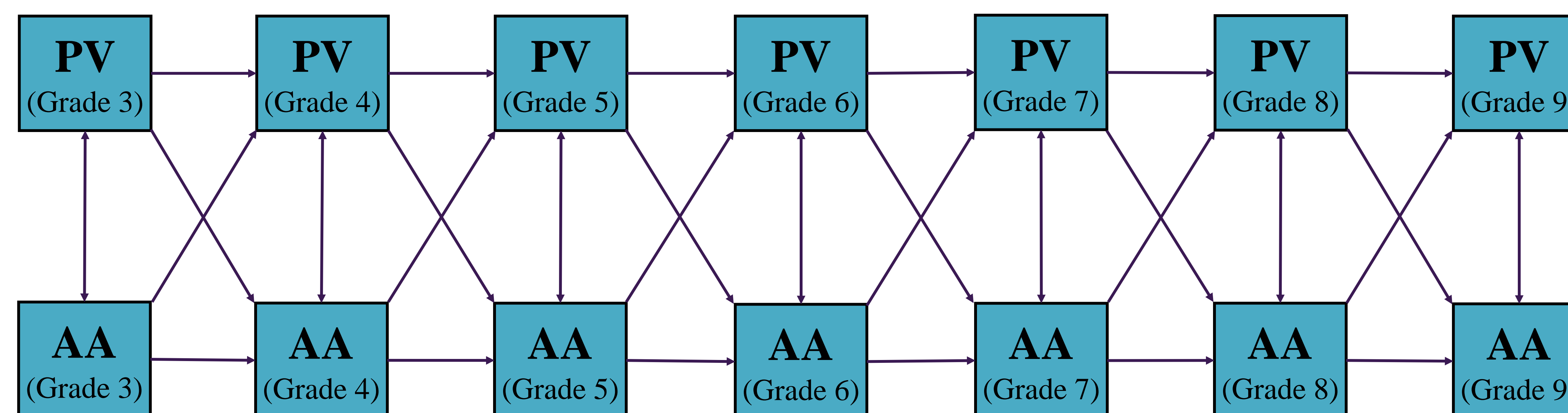


Figure 1. Cross-lagged path model showing the relationships between peer victimization and academic achievement across time. A second model will also be examined from grade 6 to grade 12.

Implications

- Results from this study may be useful in informing schools' anti-bullying efforts by identifying which students are particularly at risk and the periods of times (e.g., transitioning from middle school to high school) when bullying may be especially detrimental to academic achievement both concurrently and in subsequent school years.

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