

# Hostile Attributional Bias & Self-Esteem as Mechanisms Linking Earlier Peer Victimization and Later Internalizing Symptoms

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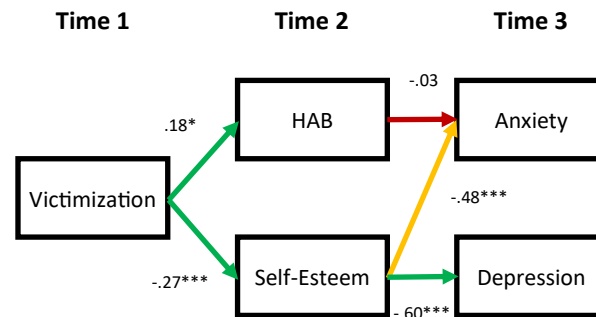
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## Introduction

- Background:
  - Victimization predicts increased hostile attributional bias (HAB; the tendency to assume hostility in ambiguously provocative situations), reduced self-esteem, and increased internalizing symptoms
  - HAB & lower self-esteem predict increased internalizing symptoms
  - First time evaluate all variables in single model
- Current Study Goals:
  - Evaluate HAB & self-esteem as mechanisms linking victimization & anxiety/depression
  - Use longitudinal data across three timepoints
- Hypotheses:
  - Victimization positively predicts anxiety & depression
  - HAB mediates relation between victimization & anxiety; self-esteem mediates relation between victimization & depression
  - Self-esteem pathway stronger for girls than boys

## Modified Path Model



Note: \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$

## Discussion

- Hypothesis 1:
  - Fully supported; T1 victimization predicted later T3 depression and anxiety
- Hypothesis 2:
  - Partially supported; T2 self-esteem mediated the relation between T1 victimization and T2 Depression but T2 HAB does not mediate the relation between T1 victimization and T3 anxiety
  - A surprise mediation was found between T1 victimization and T3 anxiety through T2 self-esteem
- Hypothesis 3:
  - Not supported; gender did not moderate any part of the model
- Fitting Into Literature:
  - HAB relates to externalizing problems more than internalizing symptoms
  - Self-esteem relates to multiple internalizing problems
- Takeaway:
  - Victimization by peers may have important consequences for children throughout development; low self-esteem may act as an indicator that a child is at risk for developing internalizing problems

## Methods

- Time 1:
  - N = 1,191 (50% female;  $M_{age} = 10.15$ )
  - Participants completed the 20-item Comprehensive Scales of Peer Victimization<sup>1</sup> ( $\alpha = .94$ )
- Time 2:
  - N = 150 (56% female;  $M_{age} = 13.53$ )
  - Participants completed the Social Information Processing Application<sup>2</sup> to assess HAB ( $\alpha = .89$ )
  - Participants completed the 10-item Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale<sup>3</sup> ( $\alpha = .86$ )
  - All youth participated at T1
- Time 3:
  - N = 143 (52% female;  $M_{age} = 15.1$ )
  - Participants completed the 39-item Multidimensional Anxiety Scale for Children<sup>4</sup> ( $\alpha = .91$ )
  - Participants completed the 12-item Children's Depression Inventory 2 Self-Report Short Version<sup>5</sup> ( $\alpha = .82$ )
  - 81 youth participated at both T1 & T2

## Results

- Final Data Set:
  - N = 211 youth who participated at 2+ timepoints
- Bivariate Correlations
  - T1 Victimization correlated with T3 Anxiety at .18 and  $p < .05$
  - T1 Victimization correlated with T3 Depression at .23 and  $p < .01$
- Mediational Path Model:
  - Mplus suggested we alter our initial path model; this modified model passed goodness of fit tests [ $\chi^2(4) = 2.73$ ,  $n.s.$ , CFI = 1.00, RMSEA = .00, SRMR = .04]
  - Self-esteem mediated the relation between victimization and depression, but HAB did not mediate the relation between victimization and anxiety
  - Self-esteem mediated the relation between victimization and anxiety
  - No gender moderation ( $\chi^2$  difference (5) = 2.55,  $p = .77$ )

## References

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