



Peer and self-reported victimization: Do non-victimized students give victimization nominations to classmates who are self-reported victims?

Beau Oldenburg^{a,*}, Davide Barrera^b, Tjeert Olthof^c, Frits Goossens^d, Matty van der Meulen^e, Marjolijn Vermande^f, Elisabeth Aleva^g, Miranda Sentse^h, René Veenstra^a

^a Interuniversity Centre for Social Science Theory and Methodology, Department of Sociology, University of Groningen, Groningen, The Netherlands

^b Department of Culture, Politics, and Society & Collegio Carlo Alberto, University of Turin, Turin, Italy

^c Department of Developmental Psychology, VU University Amsterdam, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

^d Department of Educational Neuroscience, VU University Amsterdam, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

^e Department of Developmental Psychology, University of Groningen, Groningen, The Netherlands

^f Department of Pedagogical and Educational Sciences, Utrecht University, Utrecht, The Netherlands

^g Department of Developmental Psychology, Utrecht University, Utrecht, The Netherlands

^h Department of Pedagogical Sciences, Erasmus University Rotterdam, Rotterdam, the Netherlands

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 22 July 2014

Received in revised form 7 May 2015

Accepted 7 May 2015

Available online 10 July 2015

Keywords:

Reporter–receiver agreement

Peer reports

Self-reports

Bullying

Victimization

Dyads

ABSTRACT

Using data from 2413 Dutch first-year secondary school students (M age = 13.27, SD age = 0.51, 49.0% boys), this study investigated as to what extent students who according to their self-reports had not been victimized (referred to as *reporters*) gave victimization nominations to classmates who according to their self-reports had been victimized (referred to as *receivers*). Using a dyadic approach, characteristics of the reporter–receiver dyad (i.e., gender similarity) and of the reporter (i.e., reporters' behavior during bullying episodes) that were possibly associated with reporter–receiver agreement were investigated. Descriptive analyses suggested that numerous students who were self-reported victims were not perceived as victimized by their non-victimized classmates. Three-level logistic regression models (reporter–receiver dyads nested in reporters within classrooms) demonstrated greater reporter–receiver agreement in same-gender dyads, especially when the reporter and the receiver were boys. Furthermore, reporters who behaved as outsiders during bullying episodes (i.e., reporters who actively shied away from the bullying) were less likely to agree on the receiver's self-reported victimization, and in contrast, reporters who behaved as defenders (i.e., reporters who helped and supported victims) were more likely to agree on the victimization. Moreover, the results demonstrated that reporters gave fewer victimization nominations to receivers who reported they had been victimized *sometimes* than to receivers who reported they had been victimized *often/very often*. Finally, this study suggested that reporter–receiver agreement may not only depend on characteristics of the reporter–receiver dyad and of the reporter, but on classroom characteristics as well (e.g., the number of students in the classroom). © 2015 Society for the Study of School Psychology. Published by Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Bullying, defined as the structural and intentional abuse of others who cannot easily defend themselves, is widespread and persistent over time, and poses a substantial threat to the concurrent and later social–emotional development of victims

* Corresponding author at: ICS, University of Groningen, Grote Rozenstraat 31, 9712 TG Groningen, The Netherlands. Tel.: +31 50 3636183.

E-mail address: b.oldenburg@rug.nl (B. Oldenburg).

Action Editor: R.F. Floyd

(Isaacs, Hodges, & Salmivalli, 2008; Olweus, 1993; Scholte, Engels, Overbeek, De Kemp, & Haselager, 2007). Bullying takes place among children and adults, but is especially prominent during middle childhood and early adolescence (Olweus, 1993). During this developmental period, classrooms are a particularly relevant context for bullying research given that students interact with other students within their classroom on a daily basis.

Over the years, researchers have used different methods, instruments, and informants to identify victims of school bullying (Bouman et al., 2012; Graham & Juvonen, 1998; Ladd & Kochenderfer-Ladd, 2002). Students' self-reports are the most commonly used and accepted measurement of victimization (Cook, Williams, Guerra, & Kim, 2009). Advocates of self-reports argue that students themselves provide the most complete and valid reports because they directly experienced their own victimization (Ladd & Kochenderfer-Ladd, 2002). However, students' self-reports may be biased, leading to either over-reporting victimization (i.e., students reporting that they are victimized whereas they are not) or under-reporting victimization (i.e., students denying their victimization) (Graham & Juvonen, 1998).

Recently, peer reports (i.e., students reporting on each other's victimization) have gained popularity as a means of identifying victimized students as well (Cook et al., 2009). Studies using peer reports typically aggregate these reports in such a way that they reflect the proportion of classmates who nominated a certain student as a victim. An advantage of this procedure is that multiple observers are used to identify victims (Bouman et al., 2012; Ladd & Kochenderfer-Ladd, 2002). A disadvantage of using peer reports to measure victimization is that perhaps not all students are equally competent in reporting the victimization of their classmates. For example, it could be that not all students are aware of their classmates' victimization. Even though several studies suggest that most students know that their classmates are victimized and are able to provide accurate information on what happened, this assumption has never been tested explicitly in an empirical study (e.g., O'Connell, Pepler, & Craig, 1999; Salmivalli, Lagerspetz, Björkqvist, Österman, & Kaukiainen, 1996).

In the recent past, many studies have focused on the correspondence between peer and self-reported victimization. These studies generally found that the correlations between the two measurements were moderate at best (e.g., Bouman et al., 2012; Cornell & Brockenbrough, 2004; Graham & Juvonen, 1998; Ladd & Kochenderfer-Ladd, 2002; Österman et al., 1994). Ladd and Kochenderfer-Ladd (2002), for example, found that correlations between peer and self-reported victimization varied from .14 to .42 depending on the age of the respondents.

Using a dyadic approach, the present study further investigated the discrepancies between peer and self-reported victimization. More precisely, this study examined as to what extent students who had not been victimized according to their self-reports (referred to as *reporters*) gave victimization nominations to classmates who had been victimized according to their self-reports (referred to as *receivers*). In other words, this study examined whether non-victimized reporters agreed with the receivers' self-reported victimization. This implies that in the present study all non-victimized reporters within a certain classroom reported on every classmate (or receiver) who had been victimized according to his or her self-report. Even though the term 'reporter–receiver agreement' was used, the reporters did not know whether the receivers had reported to be victimized or not.

In the absence of consensus on an objective measurement of victimization, the aim of this study was not to draw conclusions about 'who is right' when peer and self-reports were discrepant, but to investigate as to what extent victimization nominations given by individual reporters were in concordance with the receivers' self-reported victimization. We argue that it is important to further investigate concordance between peer and self-reports because the discrepancies found in previous studies may imply that a substantial share of students who report being victimized are not perceived as victimized by their peers. When students do not perceive their classmates as victimized, they are also unlikely to help and support them. The present study focused on the perception of non-victimized students, because these students may be in a position to intervene and stop their classmates' victimization (Salmivalli, 2010). Even though research demonstrates that victims can defend each other as well (Huising & Veenstra, 2012), it is plausible that non-victimized students can provide a different type of help than that of victimized students.

Unlike previous studies on this topic, in the present study the correspondence between peer and self-reported victimization was not investigated by comparing self-reports to *aggregated* peer reports, but to peer reports given by *individual* reporters. This dyadic approach enabled investigation of characteristics of the reporter–receiver dyad (i.e., gender similarity) and of the reporter (i.e., reporters' behavior during bullying episodes) that were possibly associated with reporter–receiver agreement.

1.1. Giving victimization nominations: characteristics of the reporter–receiver dyad and of the reporter

1.1.1. Reporter–receiver dyad

Students prefer to associate and bond with others who are similar (Aboud & Mendelson, 1996; Rubin, Bukowski, & Parker, 2006). Sharing common features enhances communication and makes forming relationships easier. Even when reporters and receivers do not consider themselves as friends, it is plausible that they interact and share information with each other more often when they are similar than when they are dissimilar. Especially, similarity in gender might affect reporter–receiver agreement, because several studies have indicated that gender segregation is strong during childhood and early adolescence and that social interaction predominantly takes place in same-gender peer groups (Baerveldt, Van De Bunt, & Vermande, 2014; Rubin et al., 2006; Veenstra, Lindenberg, Munniksmas, & Dijkstra, 2010). Therefore, it is likely that students in same-gender dyads will have more information about social interaction patterns within their own peer groups than about social interactions involving peers of the opposite gender. Accordingly, it can be expected that reporters were more likely to give victimization nominations to receivers who were self-reported victims when the reporter and the receiver were of the same gender than when they were not of the same gender.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/363517>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/363517>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)