

VICTIMS OUT OF SYNC: HOW DISPARITIES IN VICTIMIZATION IMPACT AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR AMONGST ADOLESCENTS

Gintautas Katulis, Goda Kaniušonytė & Brett Laursen
Mykolas Romeris University; Florida Atlantic University

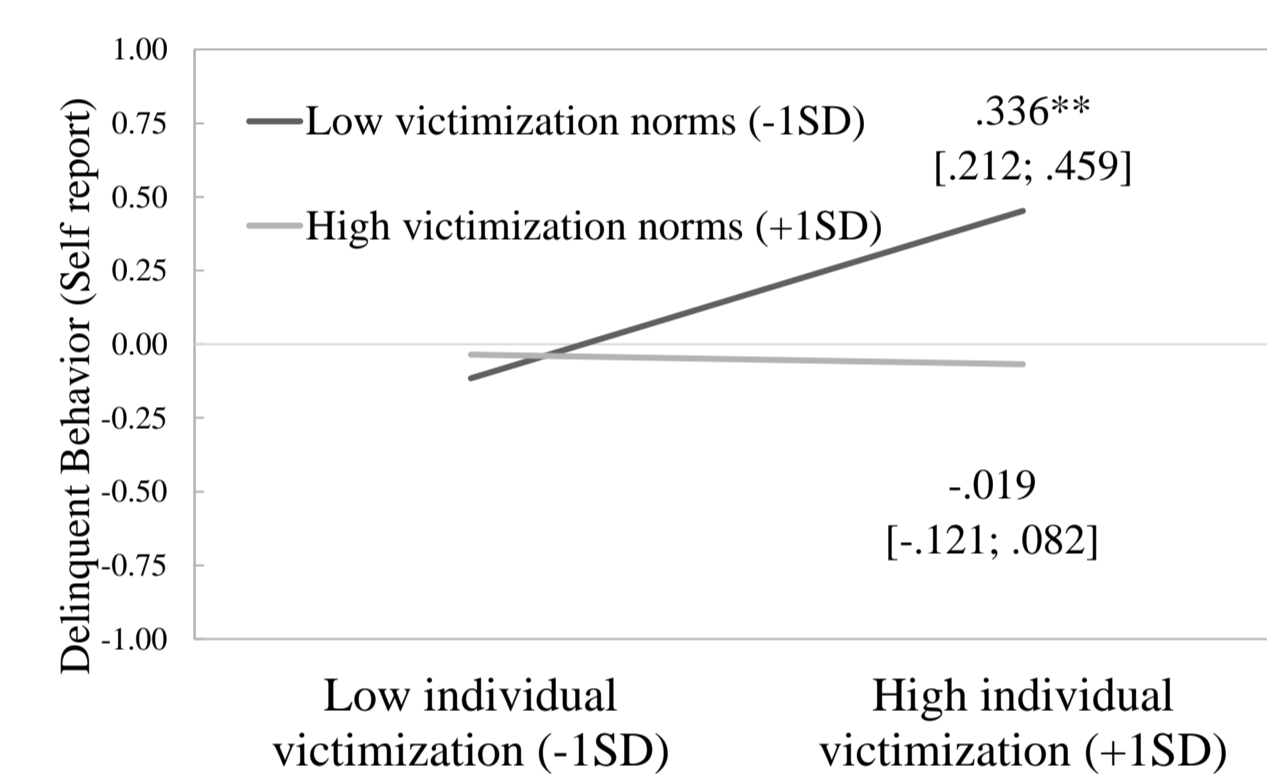
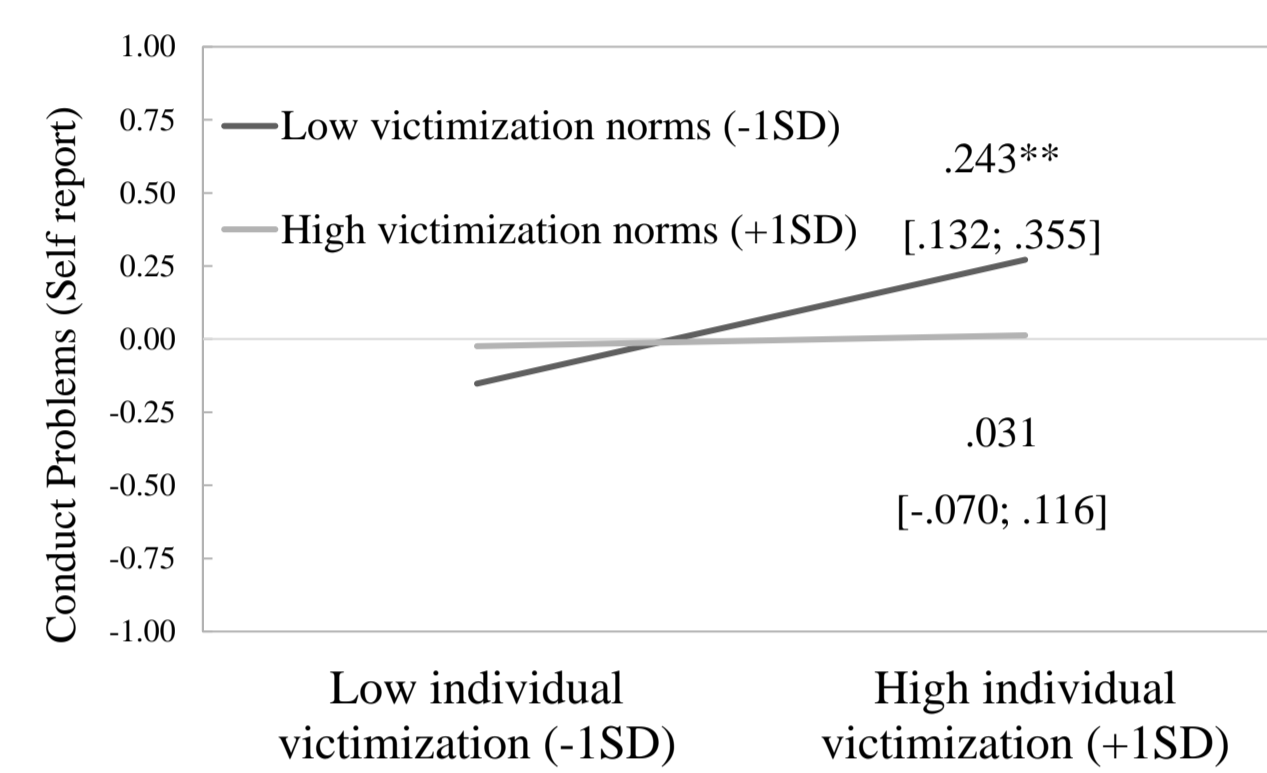
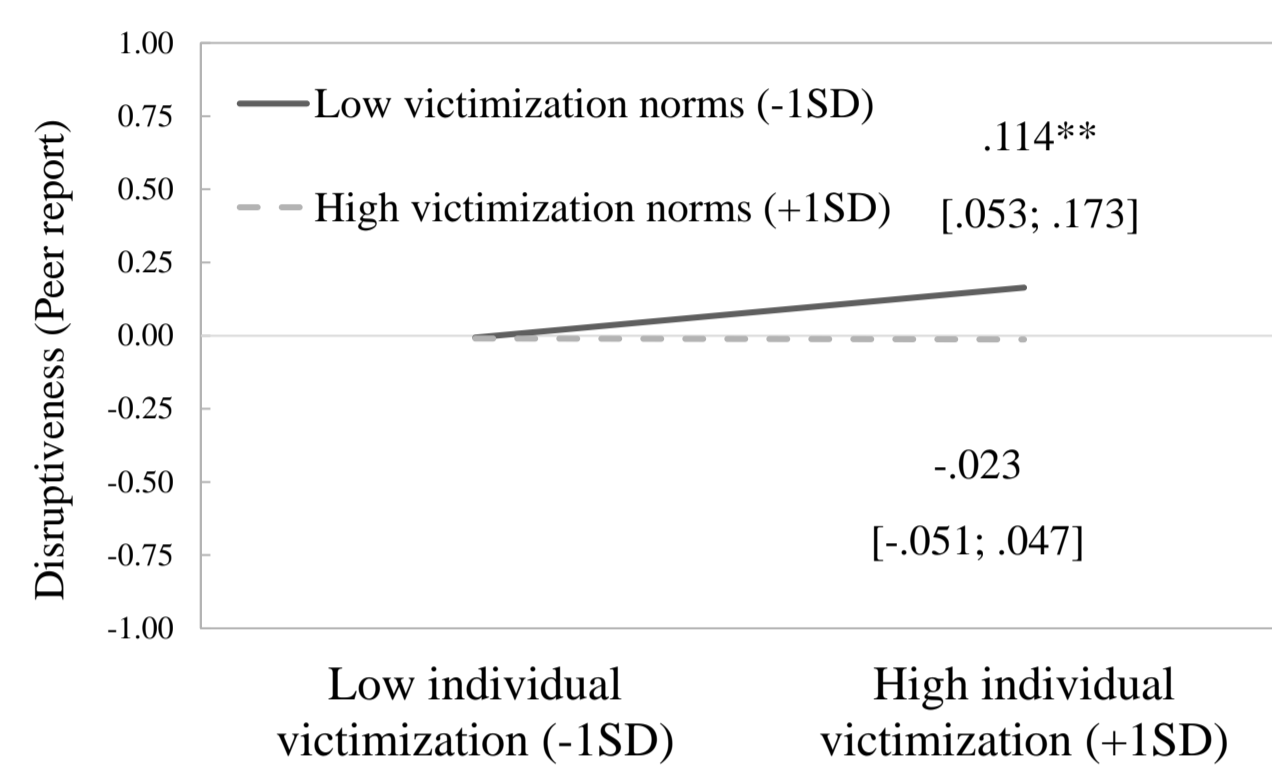
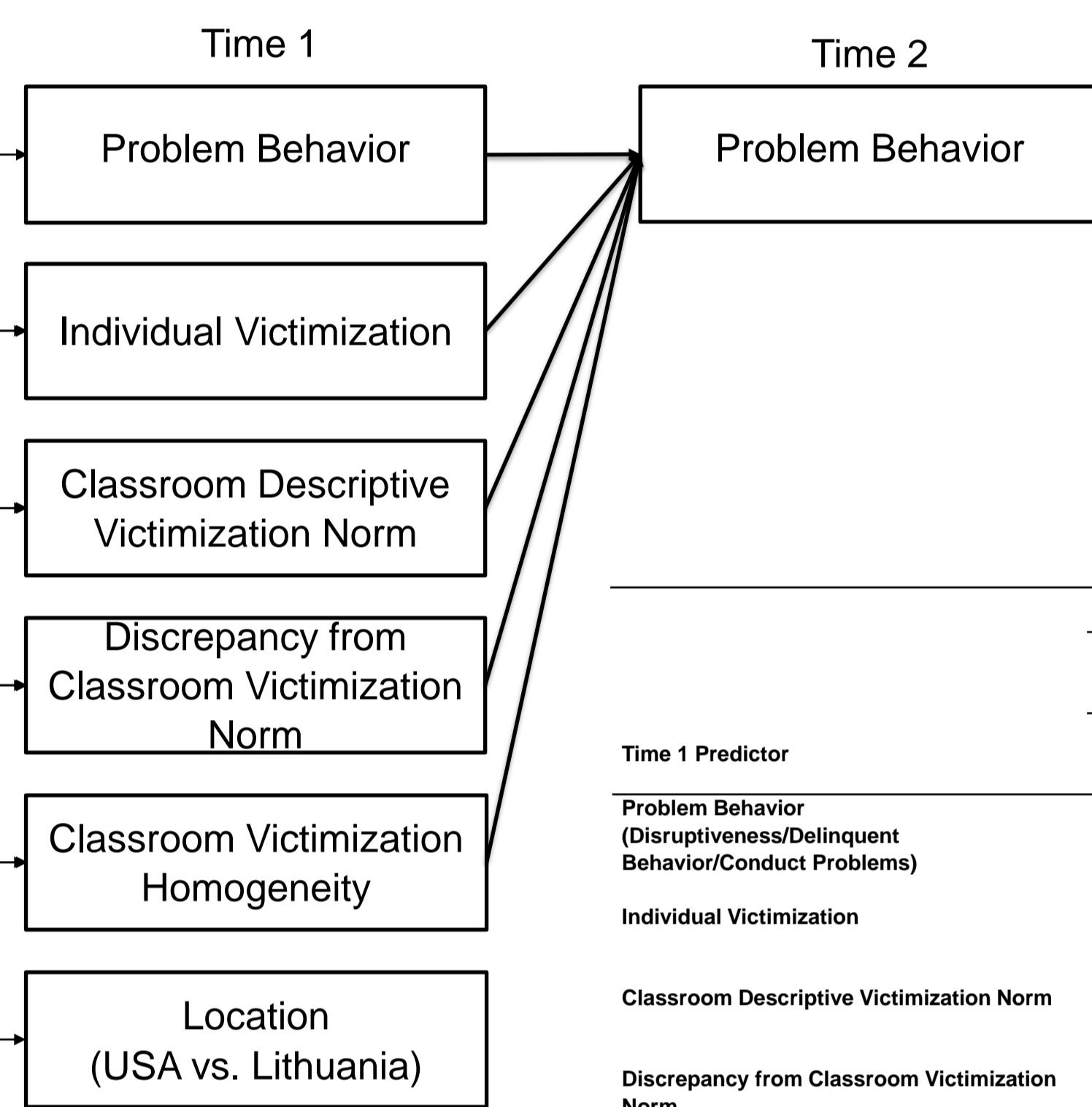


What We Learned

Discrepancy from classroom descriptive victimization norms predicts increases in behavioral maladjustment: disruptiveness, conduct problems, and delinquent behavior.

Results

Conceptual G-APIM model



Time 1 Predictor	Time 2 Outcome					
	Disruptiveness (Peer-report)		Delinquent Behavior (Self-report)		Conduct Problems (Self-report)	
	β	p	β	p	β	p
Problem Behavior (Disruptiveness/Delinquent Behavior/Conduct Problems)	.862	.000	.374	.000	.528	.000
Individual Victimization	-.051	.017	-.071	.394	-.024	.741
Classroom Descriptive Victimization Norm	-.020	.511	-.157	.001	-.063	.130
Discrepancy from Classroom Victimization Norm	-.118	.003	-.241	.008	-.164	.039
Classroom Victimization Homogeneity	.067	.044				

Notes. N = 706; * p < .05; ** p < .001.

G-APIM

Group Actor-Partner Interdependence Model (G-APIM) analyses (Kenny and Garcia, 2012) simultaneously predicts changes in individual outcomes as a function of (a) individual physical victimization; (b) the difference between individual victimization and descriptive classroom victimization norms (i.e., social misfit status); and (c) heterogeneity on descriptive classroom victimization norms (an indication of misfit isolation).

Background

Being different invites difficulties. A social misfit, someone who deviates from group norms, is often viewed with suspicion. According to the person-group dissimilarity model, individual characteristics yield different outcomes, depending on the degree to which the behavior aligns with classroom norms (Wright et al., 1986). For instance, aggressive youth in aggressive classrooms are better liked by peers than are aggressive youth in nonaggressive classrooms (Boor-Klip et al., 2017). Evidence from several bullying interventions points to the perils of being a social misfit. The healthy context paradox refers to iatrogenic effects arising in classrooms that successfully reduced mean levels of victimization. As overall levels of bullying decrease, behavior problems increase among students who continued to be bullied (Huitsing et al., 2019).

Conclusion

We followed samples of pre-and early adolescents over the course of a single school year to examine the extent to which children who are victimized social misfits respond to their outlier status by acting up. G-APIM analyses revealed that students who are more discrepant from the descriptive classroom physical victimization norms early in the school year exhibited higher levels of disruptiveness, conduct problems, and delinquent behavior later in the school year.

Sample

Participants were 706 public primary and middle school students (ages 9 to 14 years, Mage=11.80, SDage=1.13) in the USA (80 girls, 85 boys) and Lithuania (259 girls, 282 boys).

Participants completed two assessments during fall and winter of the 2021-2022 academic year.

Measures

Peer Reports. From full classroom rosters, students nominated unlimited classmates who best fit the following descriptors:

Physical victimization – “someone who is hit or pushed by others”

Disruptiveness – “Someone who acts out or disrupts class”

The number of nominations a participant received was summed, then adjusted using a regression-based procedure that accounts for class size (Velásquez et al., 2013).

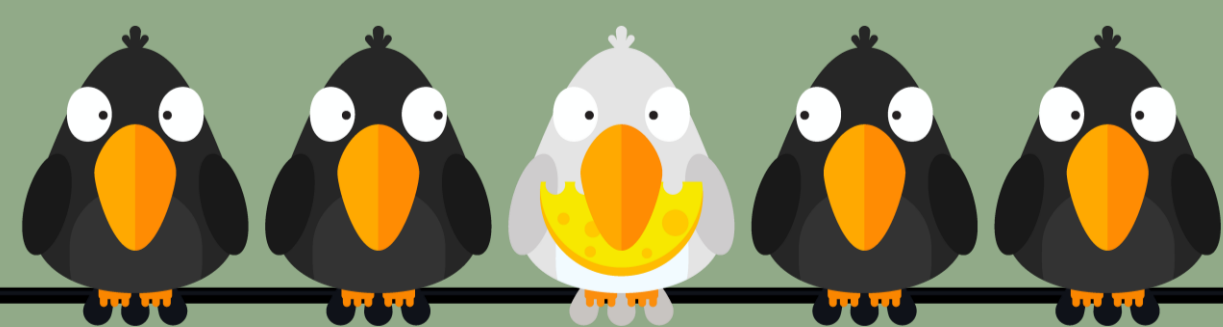
Self-Reports.

Physical victimization: Students completed a 3-item instrument (Crick & Grotpeter, 1996) (e.g., How often has another child hit, kicked, or shoved you).

Conduct problems: Students completed a 5-item instrument (Goodman, 1997) (e.g., I break rules at home, school, or elsewhere).

Delinquent behavior: Students completed a 4-item instrument (Bendixen & Olweus, 1999) (e.g., How often have you taken things from a store without paying).

All items were rated on a scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always). For each variable, item scores were averaged.



References

- Wright, J. C., Giammarino, M., & Parad, H. W. (1986). Social status in small groups: Individual-group similarity and the social misfit. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 50(3), 523. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.50.3.523>
- Boor-Klip, H. J., Segers, E., Hendrickx, M. M., & Cillessen, A. H. (2017). The moderating role of classroom descriptive norms in the association of student behavior with social preference and popularity. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 37(3), 387-413. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0272431816689158>
- Huitsing, G., Lodder, G. M., Oldenburg, B., Schacter, H. L., Salmivalli, C., Juvonen, J., & Veenstra, R. (2019). The healthy context paradox: Victims' adjustment during an anti-bullying intervention. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 28, 2499-2509. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-018-1194-1>
- Kenny, D. A., & Garcia, R. L. (2012). Using the actor-partner interdependence model to study the effects of group composition. *Small Group Research*, 43(4), 468-496. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1046496412441626>
- Velásquez, A. M., Bukowski, W. M., & Saldarriaga, L. M. (2013). Adjusting for group size effects in peer nomination data. *Social Development*, 22(4), 845-863. <https://doi.org/10.1111/sode.12029>
- Crick, N. R., & Grotpeter, J. K. (1996). Children's treatment by peers: Victims of relational and overt aggression. *Development and Psychopathology*, 8(2), 367-380. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0954579400007148>
- Bendixen, M., & Olweus, D. (1999). Measurement of antisocial behavior in early adolescence and adolescence: Psychometric properties and substantive findings. *Criminal Behaviour and Mental Health*, 9(4), 323-354. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cbm.330>
- Goodman, R. (1997). The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire: A research note. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 38(5), 581-586. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-7610.1997.tb01545.x>

Acknowledgments

This project was funded by grants from the U.S. National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (HD096457) and from European Social Fund (project No 09.3.3-LMT-K-712-17-0009) under grant agreement with the Research Council of Lithuania (LMTLT).

Contact

Gintautas.katulis@mruni.eu

