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Character Profile of Relational Bullying Victims

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Binghamton University Autism Lab - Institute for Child Development



Variation in Relational Bullying Victimization by Age and Gender

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Introduction

Background

- Relational bullying studies do not have a clear consensus of likely victims due to ambiguity in rates of reported victimization (Morton et. al, under review).
- Females are at high risk for relational victimization (Espelage & Napolitano, 2003)
- ASD youth may be victimized due to their difficulty with social communication (Sasson et al., 2012).
- Relational bullying increases through middle school years, then decreases during high school (Blake et al., 2012).
- Uncertainty in relational bullying research may be due to to varying rates of relational bullying over the school age years by gender (Sreckovic et al., 2014).

Study Aim

- Determine the character profile of students experiencing relational bullying by age and gender

Method

Materials and Procedures

- Demographic questionnaire, *Assessment of Bullying Experiences (ABE)* questionnaire, *Social Responsiveness Scale, second edition (SRS-2)*
- Online participation through Qualtrics

Participants

- 152 parents of youth ages 6-17

Table 1. Child demographics

	n		n
gender		behavior support plan	
male	113	current or past BSP	74
female	39	never BSP	78
grade		classroom aide	
elementary	71	current aide	33
middle	40	aide in past	30
high school	41	never an aide	89
race		time in general ed	
white	101	100%	56
POC	51	75%	47
sexual orientation		50%	38
heterosexual	130	<50%	11
LGBT	22		

Results

Logistic Regression

- Females are over 2 times as likely to be victimized as males (Odd Ratio(OR) = 2.4, $p = .046$)
- Compared to middle school students, reduced likelihood of relational victimization for elementary school students (OR = 0.41, $p = .07$) or high school students (OR = 0.26, $p = .017$)
- Higher SRS-2 scores are related to greater victimization likelihood (OR = 1.05, $p = .065$)
- Students with a 1:1 aide in the past were more than three times more likely to be victimized compared to students with a current aide (OR = 3.34, $p = .04$)
- Students in general education 50% of the day were less likely to be victimized compared to students in general education all day (OR = 0.35, $p = .049$)

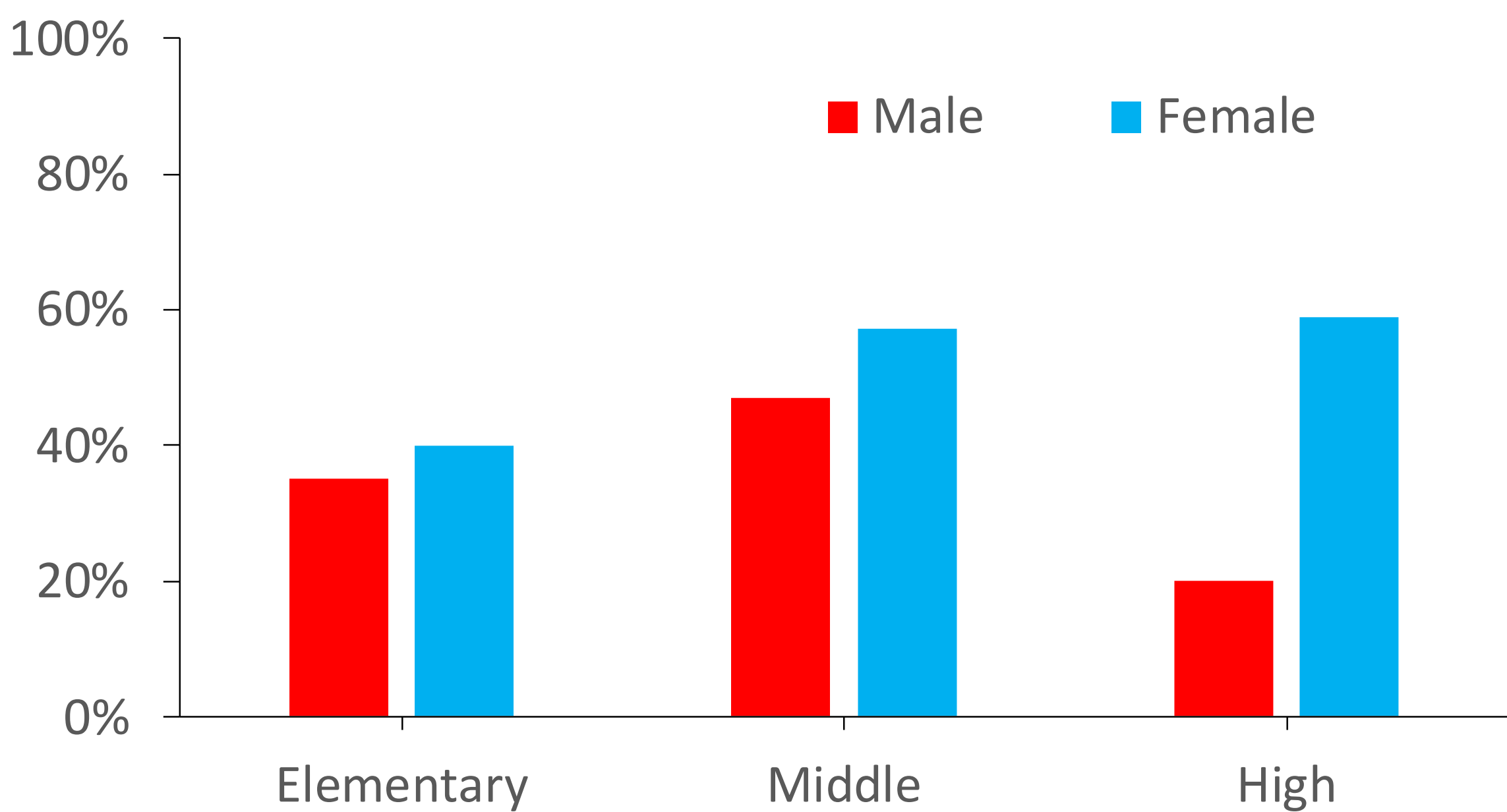
Table 2. Logistic regression predicting likelihood of relational victimization

	OR	SE	t	p	CI
Female	2.49	1.14	2	0.05	1.02, 6.09
Grade					
Elementary	0.41	0.2	-1.81	0.07	0.16, 1.08
High School	0.26	0.15	-2.4	0.02	0.09, 0.78
POC	0.99	0.41	-0.01	0.99	0.45, 2.23
LGBT	2.01	1.08	1.3	0.19	0.7, 5.76
Never BSP	0.63	0.29	-1.01	0.31	0.25, 1.54
Classroom Aide					
Aide in the Past	3.34	1.96	2.06	0.04	1.06, 10.53
Never an Aide	2.04	1.12	1.29	0.19	0.69, 6.01
General Education					
75%	0.87	0.42	-0.29	0.77	0.34, 2.23
50%	0.35	0.19	-1.97	0.049	0.12, 0.99
<50%	0.42	0.34	-1.07	0.28	0.09, 2.04
SRS score	1.045	0.03	1.84	0.065	0.99, 1.09

Postestimation Comparison

- Gender interacts with grade such that female rates of relational bullying victimization increase through high school years whereas male rates of victimization are significantly lower than females in high school ($\chi^2(1)=7.39, p=0.007$)

Figure 1. The interaction of gender and grade for relational victimization



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Discussion

- Females experience greater victimization than males, which is consistent with literature (Espelage & Napolitano, 2003)
- Relational bullying is less common on average in elementary and high school years than middle, which supports previous studies (Blake et al., 2012)
- The significantly reduced likelihood of relational victimization in high school compared to middle school is driven by lower rates of male victimization
- Greater social impairment is correlated with victimization, supporting the theory ASD youth are at risk due to their difficulty in social situations (Sasson et al., 2012)
- Students with a 1:1 aide in the past were victimized more than those who currently have an aide, suggesting an aide could be a protective factor
- Students in a general education classroom 50% of the day were 0.35 times as likely to be bullied as their peers in a regular classroom 100% of the time
- Demographic variables of having a behavioral support plan, sexual orientation, and race did not impact relational victimization likelihood

Limitations

- With a larger sample as seen in previous studies, there would likely be more diversity to better examine race and sexual orientation

Future Directions

- Continue examining age and gender interactions, as well as social impairment and other risk factors for ASD students

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