

Abstract

Background: Although peer-victimization has been documented for numerous of negative effects on adolescents' psychological well-being, the role of self-esteem in regulating the detrimental impact of peer-victimization in adolescents remains unclear.

Aim: To investigate the potential mediating role of self-esteem in the relationship between peer-victimization experience and its psychological consequences of social anxiety and depression.

Method: An online survey or face-to-face survey, consisting of self-reported questionnaires on peer-victimization experience, self-esteem, social anxiety and depression, was completed by 1383 secondary students. A multiple-step validity check procedure resulted in a subsample of 221 students, upon which bivariate correlation analysis and regression analyses were performed.

Result: Mediation analyses reveal that self-esteem partially mediated the relationship between peer-victimization and its consequences of depression and social anxiety.

Conclusion: The experience of peer-victimization could increase levels of depression and social anxiety, partially because of decreased level of self-esteem. The current findings were discussed for the contributions for concepts, and implications for school managements, teachers, parents, psychologists and other mental health professionals.