

PEER VICTIMIZATION AND SCHOOL CONNECTEDNESS OF ADOLESCENTS

Shwe Sin Tun¹, Su Mon Oo²

Abstract

Victimization is commonly recognized as a hostile behavior characterized by a power imbalance and frequent occurrences. In this instance, the victim is the object of persistent targeting; the action is repetitive. The main purpose of this study was to investigate peer victimization and school connectedness of adolescents. Firstly, this study was to validate the Multidimensional Peer Victimization Scale (MPVS) in a sample of adolescents from Basic Education in Myanmar. Furthermore, this study aimed to investigate the difference in peer victimization and school connectedness of adolescents by gender and age. The quantitative study was conducted to explore the peer victimization and school connectedness of adolescents. The sample for this study was chosen from four Basic Education High Schools Located in Kayin State and Yangon Region. A total of 600 adolescents were selected from schools. Multidimension Peer Victimization Scale (MPVS-24) was by Fontaine et al. (2018) and Measurement of School Connectedness (MOSC) was by Sugar (2012) were used. The results of the confirmatory factor analysis indicated that the model fits with two-factor structure model (Chi-Square = 642.131, RMSEA = 0.055, TLI = 0.901, CFI = 0.905, $p < 0.001$). Moreover, this study confirmed the convergent and discriminant validity of the scale. The internal consistency of scale and subscales were satisfactory results. The results of independent samples *t*-test revealed that significant differences were found on peer victimization and school connectedness by gender. ANOVA results revealed that significant differences were found on peer victimization and school connectedness by age. The findings revealed that there was a negatively moderate correlation between peer victimization and school connectedness of adolescents. In addition, regression analysis showed that peer victimization is a significant predictor of school connectedness.

Keywords: Adolescent, Peer Victimization, School Connectedness

Introduction

As children enter puberty, their peer group begins to take on greater significance in their lives. Adolescence, according to Smith, Cowie, and Blades (2003), is a period of transition when a person moves from childhood to adulthood. Peers multiply significantly when an individual matures from childhood to adolescence. Peers can inspire teenagers to excel academically and to participate in extracurricular activities. However, a child encounter with rejection from peers can also have negative effects, since it may lead to victimization or bullying.

Harassment and bullying are terms frequently used to describe peer victimization. Major social issues that impact adolescents and children everywhere in the world include peer victimization and school bullying. The majority of students in schools frequently experience peer victimization, also known as bullying, which is an intentional hostile action meant to frighten and injure others by threatening them with more aggression. As to Adomeh, Ojeli, and Omi-Ujuanbi (2020), peer victimization occurs when a victim who is perceived as comparatively weak is intentionally targeted by a group of peers or a peer acting from a position of strength or power. In their opinion, the perpetrator objective is also to damage the victim's reputation and/or social connections. Another way to conceptualize peer victimization is as an active label for when

¹ Department of Educational Studies, Hpa-an Education Degree College

² Department of Educational Psychology, Yangon University of Education

someone else violates someone else rights. It affects all societal segments and is especially prevalent in school-age adolescents, extending across generations.

Children need to feel comfortable, protected, and secure in their surroundings in order to succeed in school. School connectedness is referred to as students actively participating in the social and academic programs offered by their school because they believe that teachers and other adults are important to both their personal growth and education. It represents students' perceptions that adults and peers at the school value, care about, and encourage both their academic success and personal well-being.

If school is the place of peer victimization, as a result, the victims face difficulty adjusting, loneliness, and a desire to avoid school since they perceive it as an unsafe environment (Olweus, 1993). This study looked at adolescent peer victimization and school connectedness in Myanmar. This research was crucial since the results may help identify the ways in which peer victimization impacts these individuals. This understanding could be useful to educators, parents, and researchers when designing interventions to protect the wellbeing of adolescents who are victimized by their peers.

Purposes of the Study

The main purpose of this study was

- to examine peer victimization and school connectedness of adolescents.

The specific objectives were

- to validate Multidimensional Peer-Victimization Scale of adolescents across Basic Education in Myanmar
- to study peer victimization of adolescents by gender and age
- to examine school connectedness of adolescents by gender, and age
- to investigate the relationship between peer victimization and school connectedness of adolescents
- to predict school connectedness of adolescents by peer victimization

Definitions of Key Terms

Adolescent. Adolescent is the developmental period between childhood and adulthood and is characterized by substantial physical, cognitive, social and affective changes (Lerner & Steinberg, 2004).

Peer Victimization. Peer Victimization as experience of being a target of a peer's hurtful teasing and aggressive behaviors (Hawker & Boulton, 2000).

School Connectedness. School connectedness is defined as the extent to which students feel personally accepted, respected, included and supported by others in the school social environment (Goodenow, 1993).

Related Literature Review

Peer Victimization

Peer victimization is a significant component of school violence, which contributes to children fear of learning and impeding their ability to study. Children at school face this severe problem, for which they receive limited adult support. According to Smith (2000), it was said that the behavior was an unprovoked assault that injured someone physically, socially, or

psychologically. Peer victimization, according to Olweus (1994), is a problem that arises when a student is subjected to unfavorable acts by one or more other students on frequently.

Types of Peer Victimization

Physical victimization. The frequency with which the child has experienced physical abuse, such as being kicked or punched, is referred to as physical victimization. It encompasses all forms of physical aggression and attack, as well as possibly sexual abuse (Panwar, 2021). Physical victimization can take several forms, including actions such as pinching, kicking, shoving, striking, destroying, or stealing someone else property. Physical victimization can be defined as an attack on one physical integrity (Hawker and Bulton, 2002).

Verbal victimization. Using force to criticize, insult, or disapprove of someone else is known as verbal victimization. It is a destructive kind of communication that aims to undermine the other person self-esteem and provoke negative emotions in them, characterized by underlying anger and hostility (Panwar, 2021). To others, it represents a deliberate pattern of action intended to control, manipulate, or take revenge.

Attacks on property. Attacks on property include activities like stealing or causing harm to personal belongings, either with or without the victim's awareness (Panwar, 2021). Stealing and inflicting damage to other people property are a few of examples.

Social Rebuff. The act of socially rebuffing someone by remaining silent and aloof while expressing displeasure or disapproval is known as rebuff (Panwar, 2021). Examples include of ignorance, refuse to talk, etc.

Social manipulation. Bullies that manipulate situations and social groups to their advantage and harm the people they target. By manipulating social networks, a bully would spread false information about the people they harm. These could be made up, or they could be false with a hint of truth mixed together with exaggerated or created facts (Panwar, 2021).

Electronic victimization. It is willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices (Ashley Abramson, 2022).

School Connectedness

According to this study, a student's relationship to school is referred to as school connectedness, which is described as a component of a school environment that fosters a sense of belonging and acceptance (Blum, 2005). It covers the feelings of closeness that student have to the personnel and environment at school as well as their experiences of care at school (Smith, 2004). It has dealt with the students comfort level at school and comes from the feeling of adult care for them. Positive attitudes toward learning, a sense of belonging within the school, and positive relationships with teachers and other students are all components of school connectedness. It comprises the student experiences of attending class and feeling connected to the school environment, and it reflects of how attached is the student to his or her school (Liu & Wang, 2005).

Students cognitive, emotional, and behavioral outcomes in school are related with their sense of school connectedness. According to Brookmeyer et al. (2006), adolescents who

experience a sense of belonging to their school are less likely to engage in violent or delinquent behavior, drink alcohol, or use drugs. According to Goodenow and Grady (1993), students who feel linked to school have low levels of physical and mental suffering during adolescence, high levels of academic motivation, and low levels of misbehavior in the classroom. Students' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral outcomes in school are related with their sense of school connectedness. According to Brookmeyer et al. (2006), adolescents who experience a sense of belonging to their school are less likely to engage in violent or delinquent behavior, drink alcohol, or use drugs.

Method

Research Method

Questionnaire survey method and quantitative research design were used in this study.

Sampling

Simple random sampling technique was used in this study. The participants of this study were grade six, grade nine and grade eleven adolescents who study in No. (3), Basic Education High School and No. (4), Basic Education High School in Hpa-an from Kayin State; and No. (1) Basic Education High School in Hlegu; and No. (1), Basic Education High School in North Okkalapa from Yangon Region during 2023-2024 AY. A total of 600 adolescents participated in this study. Among adolescents, 300 are males and the rest are females.

Research Instrumentation

Multidimensional Peer-Victimization Scale (MPVS-24) questionnaire was used to explore adolescents' peer victimization. This instrument was developed by Fontaine et al. (2018). This instrument is with a total of 24 items questionnaire. Item numbers (1, 5, 9, 13) stand for physical victimization subscale, item numbers (3, 7, 11, 15) stand for verbal victimization subscale, item numbers (2, 6, 10, 14) stand for social manipulation subscale, item numbers (4, 8, 12, 16) stand for attacks on property subscale, item numbers (17, 19, 21, 23) stand for electronic victimization subscale and item numbers (18, 20, 22, 24) stand for social rebuff subscale. Three-point Likert scale was used (1= Not at all, 2= Once, 3= More than once).

Measurement of School Connectedness (MOSC) questionnaire was used to explore adolescents' school connectedness. This instrument was developed by Sugar (2012). This instrument with a total of 24 items questionnaire. Item number 1 to 9 stands for being connected and liked by students, item number 10 to 16 stands for belonging, item number 17 to 20 stands for communication and item numbers 21 to 24 stands for being liked by teachers. Four-point Likert Scale was used (1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= agree, 4= strongly agree).

Data Collection Procedure

After preparing the measurement scale, expert review was conducted for content validity by 8 experts from Yangon University of Education who have special knowledge and close relationship with the field of Educational Psychology. As an initial phase of this study, the pilot testing was carried out at the second of August 2023. Pilot testing was conducted with 60 adolescents from No. (3) Basic Education High School Bahan from Yangon Region and in the light of their responses, some items are revised. Based on the result of the pilot study, the researcher improved the wording or the items and changed kinds of questions which are

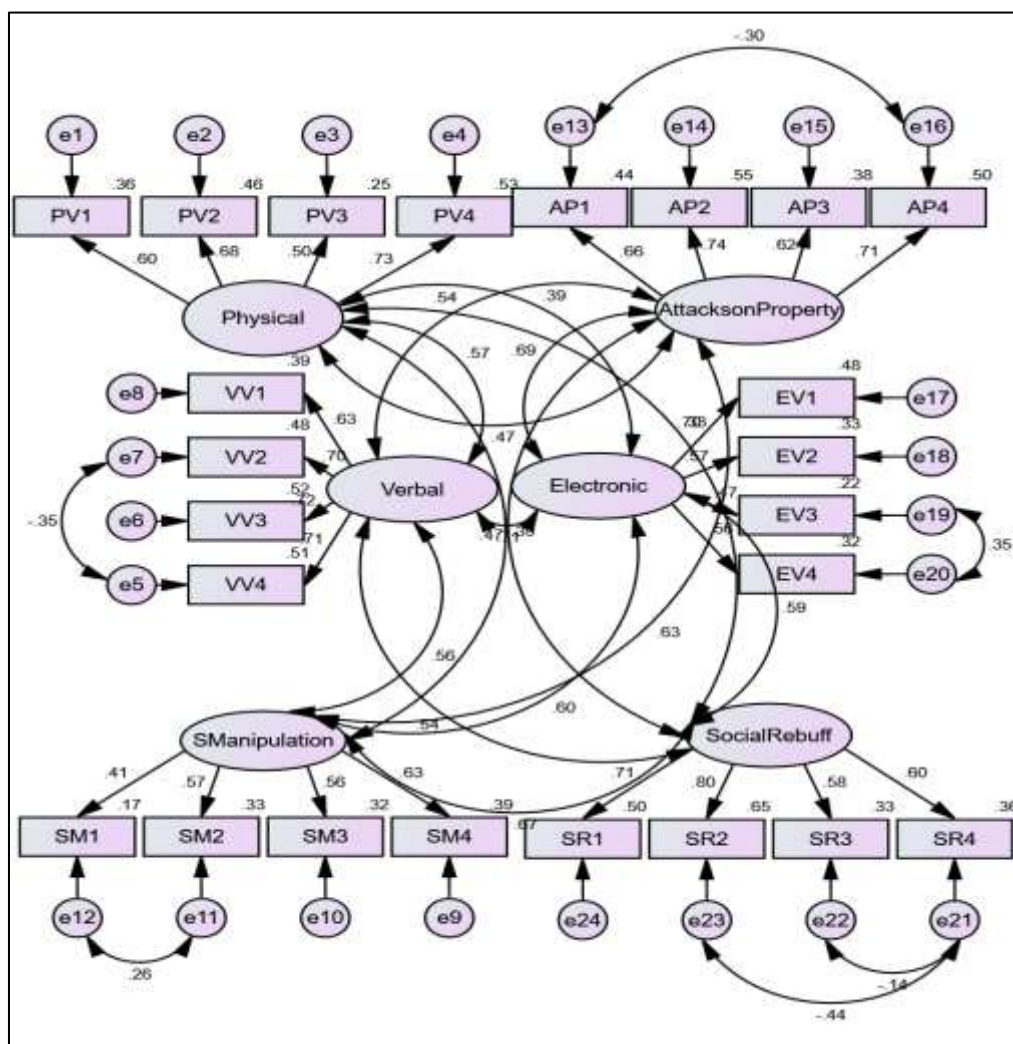
inappropriate and could get incomplete responses. The reliability coefficients Cronbach's alpha was 0.851 for peer victimization and 0.850 for school connectedness.

With the permission of Headmaster of basic education schools, the questionnaire was administered to adolescents from No. (1) Basic Education High School in Hlegu and No. (1), Basic Education High School in North Okkalapa from Yangon Region; and No. (3), Basic Education High School and No. (4), Basic Education High School in Hpa-an from Kayin State during 2023-2024 AY. This study explored adolescents' peer victimization and school connectedness. Finally, by using the self-reported survey questionnaire, the required data were collected during September and October, 2023. The process of collecting data took almost two months in order to get the maximum response rate and to get complete filled in questionnaires back from the selected schools. It was done to eliminate response attribution, i.e., incomplete, missing copies, over-writing or vaguely filled in questionnaires which might be received during this process. The data were analyzed by SPSS version 22 for quantitative data. Then, descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were applied to the data set in order to interpret and report the results. The detailed description of data analysis, findings and interpretation would be presented following.

Data Analysis and Research Findings

Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Multidimensional Peer-Victimization Scale (MPVS)

CFA analysis was performed for MPVS to validate the instruments involved in all constructs and dimensions. In the analysis for this model, a total of 24 items, four items for physical victimization, four items for verbal victimization, four items for social manipulation, four items for attacks on property, four items for electronic victimization and four items for social rebuff. However, this model should be modified in order to improve the fit to this model represents the sample data or real data better.



Chi-Square = 642.131, RMSEA = 0.055, TLI = 0.901, CFI = 0.905

Figure 1 Confirmatory Factor Analysis Model of Multidimensional Peer-Victimization Scale

Convergent Validity of MPVS

To ensure that the measurement model achieves validity, convergent validity analysis was performed. The analysis shows that the AVE values for six factors models ranged from 0.54 to 0.70. The AVE value recorded for this model was $0.5 \geq$ which exceeds the minimum value required to determine the validity of a measurement model as in Table 1.

Table 1 Composite Reliability (CR) Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of MPVS

Factors	No of Items	CR	AVE
Physical Victimization	4	0.71	0.63
Verbal Victimization	4	0.73	0.69
Social Manipulation	4	0.70	0.54
Attacks on Property	4	0.80	0.68
Electronic Victimization	4	0.70	0.58
Social Rebuff	4	0.73	0.67

The value of Composite Reliability (CR) was taken into account in determining the extent to which the researcher can measure the latent construct and to achieve reliability for the

construction of this model. The CR values shown can prove the reliability of the item and assess the internal consistency. The CR values for six factors that met the minimum requirement of $CR \geq 0.6$. The CR values for six factors ranged from 0.70 to 0.80. as summarized in Table 1. These findings prove that, the items in this study had a high reliability value.

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity was used to show that the construct is actually differing from one another empirically. Discriminant validity was evaluated with square root of AVE with correlations of latent constructs. The results were shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Square Root of AVE with Correlations of Latent Factors of MPVS

Factors	PV	VV	SM	AP	EV	SR
PV	0.79					
VV	0.56	0.83				
SM	0.38	0.57	0.74			
AP	0.46	0.53	0.63	0.83		
EV	0.39	0.67	0.61	0.68	0.76	
SR	0.33	0.54	0.68	0.44	0.59	0.82

According to Table 2, all the square root of AVE values was greater than 0.5 and these values were greater than all the inter latent correlations for all factors in the relevant rows and columns. According to Fornell and Larcker (2011), the square root of AVE values should be above 0.5. Hair et al. (2009) argued that the square root of AVE values was greater than the inter latent factor correlations. Thus, the result of discriminant validity of MPVS were congruent with Fornell and Larcker (2011) and Hair et al. (2011) according to Table 2. Overall, discriminant validity can be accepted for the measurement model and discriminant validity between constructs.

Reliability of MPVS

Reliability coefficients of each subscale ranged from 0.70 to 0.76 and the reliability coefficients of MPVS was 0.89. Thus, MPVS was reliable to measure peer victimization of adolescents in the context of Myanmar.

Comparison of Adolescents' Peer Victimization by Gender

In order to conform the gender difference of adolescents' peer victimization, independent samples *t*-test was applied. The mean scores and standard deviations of both male and female adolescents across six subscales as well as total score were reported in Table 1.

Table 1 Means, Standard Deviations and Results of Independent Samples *t*-test for Adolescents' Peer Victimization by Gender

Variables	Gender	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Physical Victimization	Male	300	5.19	1.910	4.3398** *	598	0.000
	Female	300	4.60	1.378			
Verbal Victimization	Male	300	7.09	2.548	3.437**	598	0.001
	Female	300	6.39	2.451			

Variables	Gender	N	M	SD	t	df	p
Social Manipulation	Male	300	4.84	1.427	-0.444	598	0.657
	Female	300	4.89	1.514			
Attacks on Property	Male	300	6.09	2.204	6.163****	598	0.000
	Female	300	5.11	1.651			
Electronic Victimization	Male	300	5.45	1.910	3.415**	598	0.001
	Female	300	4.95	1.643			
Social Rebuff	Male	300	5.74	1.845	-1.759	598	0.079
	Female	300	6.01	2.003			
Peer Victimization	Male	300	34.39	8.624	3.657****	598	0.000
	Female	300	31.96	7.647			

** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Regarding the gender, male's score was found to be significantly higher than female on physical victimization, verbal victimization, attacks on property and electronic victimization. Gender related significant difference was not found to be on social manipulation and social rebuff. It can be concluded that male had higher peer victimization than female on overall peer victimization. This finding was consistent with previous investigations done by Tippanagoudra, Patil and Hunshal (2020) and May Cho Min (2012). They found that boys reported more experience peer victimization than girls.

Comparison of Adolescents' Peer Victimization by Age

To make the confirmation of the significant differences of adolescents' peer victimization by age, ANOVA was calculated.

Table 2 Means, Standard Deviations and ANOVA Results of Adolescents' Peer Victimization by Age

Variables	Age	N	M	SD	F	p
Physical Victimization	12≤X<14 years	259	5.03	1.806	5.231**	.006
	14≤X<16 years	225	4.98	1.733		
	16≤X<18 years	116	4.45	1.204		
Verbal Victimization	12≤X<14 years	259	6.56	2.319	3.243*	.040
	14≤X<16 years	225	7.07	2.747		
	16≤X<18 years	116	6.48	2.357		
Social Manipulation	12≤X<14 years	259	4.88	1.312	2.752	.065
	14≤X<16 years	225	4.99	1.699		
	16≤X<18 years	116	4.59	1.292		
Attacks on Property	12≤X<14 years	259	5.56	2.002	1.988	.138
	14≤X<16 years	225	5.78	2.036		
	16≤X<18 years	116	5.34	1.942		
Electronic Victimization	12≤X<14 years	259	4.93	1.462	8.565****	.000
	14≤X<16 years	225	5.58	2.101		
	16≤X<18 years	116	5.08	1.720		

Variables	Age	N	M	SD	F	p
Social Rebuff	12≤X<14 years	259	5.92	1.907	2.643	.072
	14≤X<16 years	225	6.01	1.990		
	16≤X<18 years	116	5.52	1.830		
Peer Victimization	12≤X<14 years	259	32.87	7.778	5.320**	.005
	14≤X<16 years	225	34.41	9.004		
	16≤X<18 years	116	31.46	7.304		

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

As a results, there was significant difference on physical victimization, verbal victimization, electronic victimization and overall peer victimization by age (see Table 2). After making mean comparison by age, to obtain more detailed information in which age group had differences, the Post-Hoc Test was carried out by Tukey HSD method (see Table 3).

Table 3 Results of Tukey HSD Multiple Comparison for Adolescents' Peer Victimization by Age

Variables	(I)Age	(J)Age	Mean Differences (I-J)	Std.Error	p
Physical Victimization	12≤X<14 years	16≤X<18 years	.583*	.187	.006
	14≤X<16 years	16≤X<18 years	.530*	.192	.016

Table 3 (Continued)

Variables	(I)Age	(J)Age	Mean Differences (I-J)	Std.Error	p
Electronic Victimization	14≤X<16 years	12≤X<14 years	.656***	.162	.000
	14≤X<16 years	16≤X<18 years	.505*	.203	.035
Peer Victimization	14≤X<16 years	16≤X<18 years	2.956**	.934	.005

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Regarding physical victimization, the mean score of 12≤X<14 years old adolescents was significantly higher than that of 16≤X<18 years old adolescent at .05 level and 14≤X<16 years old adolescents was significantly higher than that of 16≤X<18 years old adolescents at .05 level. With regard to electronic victimization, the mean score of 14≤X<16 years old adolescents was significantly higher than that of 12≤X<14 years old adolescents at .001 level and 16≤X<18 years old adolescents at .05 level. In addition to peer victimization, the mean score of 14≤X<16 years old adolescents was significantly higher than that of 16≤X<18 years old adolescents at .01 level.

Comparison of Adolescents' School Connectedness by Gender

Concerning the adolescents' school connectedness, the gender difference was worthwhile to explore. In order to conform the gender difference of adolescents' school connectedness, independent samples *t*-test was applied. The mean scores and standard deviations of both male and female adolescents across four subscales as well as total score were reported in Table 4.

Table 4 Means, Standard Deviations and Results of Independent Sample *t*-test for Adolescents' School Connectedness by Gender

Variables	Gender	N	M	SD	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Being Connected and Liked by students	Female	300	27.08	4.30	2.019*	598	.044
	Male	300	26.40	3.94			
Belonging	Female	300	23.07	3.65	3.277**	598	.001
	Male	300	22.13	3.37			
Communication	Female	300	12.25	2.25	2.295*	598	.022
	Male	300	11.83	2.20			
Being Liked by Teachers	Female	300	12.41	2.41	1.735	598	.083
	Male	300	12.08	2.25			
School Connectedness	Female	300	74.81	10.42	2.834**	598	.005
	Male	300	72.44	10.03			

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Regarding the gender, female's score was found to be significantly higher than male on being connected and liked by students, belonging, communication and school connectedness. Gender related significant difference was not found to be on being liked by teachers. According to result, female adolescents reported more relatedness and belonging with school than that of the males. This finding was consistent with previous investigations done by Loukas, Cance and Batanova (2016). They found that girls reported greater relatedness and belonging than girls. It was also consistent with the previous study of Soe Soe Lin (2019) and Win Win Thandar (2016) who found that the mean score of females were significantly higher than that of males in school connectedness.

Comparison of Adolescents' School Connectedness by Age

To find out the differences between school connectedness by age, descriptive statistics was conducted.

Table 5 Means, Standard Deviations and ANOVA Results of Adolescents' School Connectedness by Age

Variables	Age	N	M	SD	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Being Connected and Liked by Students	12≤X<14 years	259	27.37	3.836	8.597***	.000
	14≤X<16 years	225	26.65	4.182		
	16≤X<18 years	116	25.49	4.418		
Belonging	12≤X<14 years	259	23.81	2.811	31.425***	.000
	14≤X<16 years	225	21.93	3.598		
	16≤X<18 years	116	21.18	4.021		
Communication	12≤X<14 years	259	12.56	2.085	15.680***	.000
	14≤X<16 years	225	11.86	2.269		
	16≤X<18 years	116	11.25	2.202		

Variables	Age	N	M	SD	F	p
Being liked by Teachers	12≤X<14 years	259	12.86	2.222	18.266***	.000
	14≤X<16 years	225	11.94	2.372		
	16≤X<18 years	116	11.47	2.169		
School Connectedness	12≤X<14 years	259	76.60	9.241	24.033***	.000
	14≤X<16 years	225	72.39	10.276		
	16≤X<18 years	116	69.39	10.625		

** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

As a results, there was significant difference on all subscales and overall scale by age. After making mean comparison by age, to obtain more detailed information in which age group had differences, the Post-Hoc Test was carried out by Tukey HSD method (see Table 6).

Table 6 Results of Tukey HSD Multiple Comparison for Adolescents' School Connectedness by Age

Variables	(I)Age	(J)Age	Mean Differences (I-J)	Std.Error	p
Being Connectedness and Liked by Students	12≤X<14 years	16≤X<18 years	1.883***	.456	.000
	14≤X<16 years	16≤X<18 years	1.162*	.467	.035
Belonging	12≤X<14 years	14≤X<16 years	1.881***	.456	.000
		16≤X<18 years	2.634***	.377	.000
Communication	12≤X<14 years	14≤X<16 years	.698**	.199	.001
		16≤X<18 years	2.634***	.3777	.000
Being Liked by Teachers	12≤X<14 years	14≤X<16 years	.915***	.207	.000
		16≤X<18 years	1.392***	.254	.000
School Connectedness	12≤X<14 years	14≤X<16 years	4.216***	.903	.000
		16≤X<18 years	7.214***	1.108	.000
	14≤X<16 years	16≤X<18 years	2.999*	1.133	.023

** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Regarding being connectedness and liked by students, the mean score of adolescents with 12≤X<14 years and 14≤X<16 years was significantly higher than that of adolescents with 16≤X<18 years at .05 level and at .001 level.

With regard to belonging, the mean score of 12≤X<14 years old adolescents was significantly higher than that of 14≤X<16 years old adolescents at .001 level and 16≤X<18 years old adolescents at .001 level.

With regard to communication, the mean score of adolescents from 12≤X<14 years was significantly higher than that of 14≤X<16 years old adolescents and 16≤X<18 years at .01 level and at .001 level.

With regard to being liked by teachers, the mean score of 12≤X<14 years old adolescents was significantly higher than that of 14≤X<16 years and 16≤X<18 years old adolescents at .001 level.

In addition to school connectedness, the mean score of adolescents from $12 \leq X < 14$ years was significantly higher than that of $14 \leq X \leq 16$ years and $16 \leq X < 18$ years old adolescents at .001 level. The mean score of $14 \leq X \leq 16$ years old adolescents was significantly higher than that of $16 \leq X < 18$ years at .05 level. It can reasonably be concluded that $12 \leq X < 14$ years old adolescents were more connected to school than other ages.

Relationship Between Peer Victimization and School Connectedness of Adolescents

The relationship between peer victimization and school connectedness of adolescents. The Pearson product-moment correlation was used to examine the relationship among the variables.

Table 7 Correlation for Peer victimization and School Connectedness of Adolescents

	Peer Victimization	School Connectedness
Peer Victimization	1	-.301***
School Connectedness		1

*** $p < .001$ (2-tailed)

Result revealed that peer victimization and school connectedness were negatively significantly correlated at $r = -.301$. There was a negative correlation between peer victimization and school connectedness of adolescents. It meant that the higher the peer victimization of adolescents, the lower the school connectedness.

Inter-correlation for Peer Victimization and School Connectedness of Adolescents

Further analysis was conducted to explore the relation between peer victimization (six subscales of physical victimization, verbal victimization, social manipulation, attacks on property, electronic victimization and social rebuff) and school connectedness of adolescents.

Table 8 Inter-correlation between Subscales of Peer Victimization and School Connectedness of Adolescents

	PV	VV	SM	AT	EV	SR	SC
PV	1	.450***	.303***	.388***	.269***	.296***	-.174***
VV		1	.414***	.459***	.492***	.455***	-.264***
SM			1	.459***	.422***	.475**	-.164***
AT				1	.502***	.400***	-.208***
EV					1	.458***	-2.46***
SR						1	-.220***
SC							1

Note. PV= Physical Victimization, VV= Verbal Victimization, SM= Social Manipulation, AT= Attacks on Property, EV= Electronic Victimization, SR= Social Rebuff and SC= School connectedness

*** $p < .001$

The result in Table 8 showed that physical victimization, verbal victimization, social manipulation, attacks on property, electronic victimization and social rebuff were negatively correlated with school connectedness. This indicated that adolescents in this study reporting the higher peer victimization, the lower the school connectedness. It can be due to the fact that

negative experiences from peer or group of peers which make adolescents to be fearful of school and inhibit their learning potentials.

Regression Analysis for the Prediction of Adolescents' School Connectedness

In order to determine the best predicting of peer victimization to school connectedness, regression analysis was conducted. The result was shown in Table 9.

Table 9 Linear Regression between Peer Victimization and School Connectedness of Adolescents

Variables	B	β	t	p	R	R ²	Adj R ²
Constant	86.121		51.721***	.000	.301	.091	.089
Peer Victimization	-.377	-.301	-7.731***	.000			

*** $p < 0.001$

According to the result table, the adjusted R square value was .089. So, the regression model predicts 8.9% of the variance of scores in peer victimization of adolescents, $\beta = -.301$ revealed that it is medium effect according to Cohen (1988). Peer victimization will predict school connectedness at the .001 level. However, the correlation coefficient between peer victimization and school connectedness was moderate. Consequently, the regression equation might explain only 8.9% of the variance in occurring school connectedness could be explained from adolescents' peer victimization. Although, it has a significant effect on peer victimization, it may be weak to predict the dependent variable by its model. According to the above results, the model equation to predict adolescents' school connectedness from peer victimization was as follows:

$$SC = 86.121 - 0.377 PV$$

Note. SC= School Connectedness,
PV= Peer Victimization

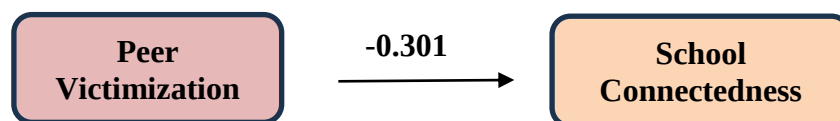


Figure 4.16 Predictive Power of Peer Victimization on School Connectedness of Adolescents

Discussion

This study was to validate the Multidimensional Peer-Victimization Scale (MPVS) in a sample of adolescents from Basic Education High Schools in Myanmar. Overall, the instrument had excellent reliability with a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.89, proving that the MPVS was a reliable instrument of measuring the peer victimization among the sample of the study. The results of the confirmatory factor analysis indicated that the model fits with the two-factor structure model (RMSEA = 0.055, TLI = 0.901, CFI = 0.905, Chi-sq = 0.000). Moreover, this study confirmed the convergent and discriminant validity of the scale. Furthermore, the internal consistency of scale and subscales were satisfactory results. Therefore, the Multidimensional Peer-Victimization Scale (MPVS) was found to be valid and reliable to measure peer victimization of adolescents across Basic Education in Myanmar.

An independent samples *t*-test result by gender indicated that there was statistically significant difference between male and female adolescents in peer victimization. Male adolescents felt more victimized in physical victimization, verbal victimization, attacks on property and electronic victimization. As a result of overall mean score, males had more victimized than female adolescents because males were more aggressive in nature than females (Coie & Dodge, 1998). Thus, males more behaved aggressively than females and had been the target of more aggression other males.

Regarding the age differences, significant difference was found on overall scales as well as two subscales such as physical victimization and electronic victimization. It was observed that the mean score of $12 \leq X < 14$ years old adolescents was significantly higher than that of $16 \leq X < 18$ years old adolescents and the mean score of $14 \leq X < 16$ years old adolescents was significantly higher than that of $16 \leq X < 18$ years old adolescents in physical victimization. The mean score of $14 \leq X < 16$ years was significantly higher than that of $12 \leq X < 14$ years and $16 \leq X < 18$ years in electronic victimization. In addition, overall peer victimization, the mean score of $14 \leq X < 16$ years old adolescents was significantly higher than that of $16 \leq X < 18$ years. According to Olweus (1993), the percentage of students being victims of bullying decrease with age and 9-12 years and 12-14 years experiencing high level of victimization than adolescents of above 15 years experiencing low level of victimization.

An independent samples *t*-test result by gender indicated that there was statistically significant difference between male and female adolescents in school connectedness. Female's score was found to be significantly higher than male on being connected and liked by students, belonging, communication and overall school connectedness. Gender related significant difference was not found to be only on being liked by teachers. It can be concluded that female had higher school connectedness than male on overall scale. This may be due to the fact that female adolescents felt more relatedness and belonging with school and peers than that of the male adolescents. This present result consistent with the pervious study of Loukas, Cance and Batanova (2016) who found that female having higher levels of connected to school. This result also consistent with the previous local study of Soe Soe Linn (2019) and Win Win Thandar (2016) who found that there were female more connected to school as compared to male. This may be the fact that female adolescents were more likely to possess sense of school belonging, felt more relatedness and belonging with school and strong connection with their peers than that of male adolescents.

In addition, significant age differences were found on the overall scale as well as all subscales. The mean score of $12 \leq X < 14$ years and $14 \leq X < 16$ years old adolescents was significantly higher than that of $16 \leq X < 18$ years in being connectedness and liked by students. The mean score of $12 \leq X < 14$ years old adolescents was significantly higher than that of $14 \leq X < 16$ years and $16 \leq X < 18$ years old adolescents in belonging. The mean score of $12 \leq X < 14$ years old adolescents was significantly higher than that of $14 \leq X < 16$ years and $16 \leq X < 18$ years in being liked by teachers. In addition, overall school connectedness, the mean score of $12 \leq X < 14$ years old adolescents was significantly higher than that of $14 \leq X < 16$ years and $16 \leq X < 18$ years. The mean score of $14 \leq X < 16$ years old adolescents

was significantly higher than that of $16 \leq X < 18$ years. It can reasonably be concluded that adolescents with the age of between 12 and 14 years were more connected to school than other ages. It can be said that they were more obedient and believing that school is important to their future and there was less academic stress during this age.

The results of correlation analysis showed that peer victimization was negatively significant correlated with total school connectedness at $r = -.301$. There was a negative correlation between peer victimization and school connectedness of adolescents. It meant that the higher peer victimization, the lower the school connectedness. This result was consistent with the previous study of Sadaf Arif et al. (2020) who found that peer victimization was negatively related to school connectedness of adolescents.

The result of regression analysis showed that peer victimization was a significant negative predictor of school connectedness. This meant that the higher peer victimization of adolescents, the lower school connectedness they experience. Consequently, the regression equation might explain only 8.9% of the variance in occurring school connectedness could be explained from peer victimization. Although, it had a significant on school connectedness, it may be weak to predict the dependent variable by its model. However, the correlation coefficient between peer victimization and school connectedness was moderate.

Suggestions

Peer victimization at school is one of the negative experiences that lead individuals to fear and refuse to go to school. Safety and security issues also impair individuals' basic desires for a sense of relatedness and belonging. Experiencing maltreatment at home or school increases the likelihood of developing behavioral problems. Lower achievement in core subjects at the elementary, middle, and high school levels has been associated to peer victimization. Victimization by peers should not become normal.

- Teachers and schools need to be aware of what is going on in the classroom, and if something is reported, action needs to be done right away.
- Active participation from parents, educators, and educational institutions is necessary to reduce the prevalence of victimization. Thus, it is imperative to implement rigorous policy enforcement together with school-based educational programs and public awareness campaigns that utilize print, electronic, and social media platforms, with a focus on rural and urban areas, in order to provide a secure learning environment.
- Educators and administrators need to be aware of their school's organizational structure. It also means that they ought to be aware of how big their school is and whether the number of the classes is suitable. Students' sense of community can be enhanced by an enjoyable and pleasant school setting as well as a clean and warm classroom environment.
- Educators and administrators have a responsibility to establish the functioning elements of schools, like equitable and clear demands for behavior and heightened parental involvement. Students feel more safe and are also encouraged to take accountability for their actions when they have fair and clear rules in action.
- Children's sense of belonging can also be influenced by the condition of the school environment. Enough facilities that are kept up might encourage students to take part in school activities.

Conclusion

The primary purpose of this study was to explore peer victimization and school connectedness of adolescents. This study was adopted in Yangon Region and Kayin State in the 2023-2024 academic year. There were 600 adolescents in the study. The peer victimization questionnaire with 24 items and school connectedness questionnaire with 24 items were used as the instruments. Each instrument had an internal consistency of .089 and .85 respectively. The pilot testing was carried out at the second week of August 2023 and the main in September and October. The result indicated that there were significant differences in peer victimization and school connectedness by gender and ages.

To conclude, there was a negative moderate correlation between peer victimization and school connectedness of adolescents. If the higher the peer victimization, the lower the school connectedness of adolescents. In addition, peer victimization was a significant negative predictor of school connectedness.

Acknowledgements

We would like to offer respectful appreciation to Dr. Kay Thwe Hlaing, Rector of Yangon University of Education, Dr. Nyo Nyo Lwin, Dr. May Myat Thu and Dr. Khin Khin Oo, Pro-rectors of Yangon University of Education, for their encouragement, administrative support, official permission and providing facilities throughout the research. We are grateful to Dr. Khin Hnin Nwe, Professor and Head of the Department of Educational Psychology, Yangon University of Education for her careful supervision, valuable comments, encouragement and kindness to our study. Finally, we would like to acknowledge all the participants for their cooperation in data collection for this study.

References

- Adomeh, I. O. C., Ojeli, L. A., & Omi-Ujuanbi, G. O. (2020). Peer victimization as correlate of school attendance among senior secondary school students in Uromi Metropolis. Edo State, Nigeria. *East African Scholars Journal of Education, Humanities and Literature*, 3(3). <https://doi.org/10.36349/EASJEHL2020.vo.3io3.005>.
- Ashley Abramson. (2022). Cyberbullying what is it and how can you stop it? *American Psychological Association (APA)*
- Blum, R. W. (2005). A case for school connectedness. *Educational Leadership*, 62(7), 16-20.
- Brookmeyer, K. A., Fant, K. A., & Henrich, C. C. (2006). Schools, parents, and youth violence. A multilevel ecological analysis. *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology*, 35, 504-514.
- Coie, J. D., & Dodge, K. A. (1998). Aggression and antisocial behavior. In W. Damon, & N. Eisenberg (Eds), *Handbook of child psychology, (5th ed.) 3. Social, emotional, and personality development*, 779-862.
- Fornell, A. B. & Locker, C. (2011). Using computer in education: A concerns-based approach to professional development for teachers. *Australian Journal of Educational Technology*, 5(2), 113-131.
- Fontaine, N. M., Hanscombe, K. B., Berg, M. T., McCrory, E. J., & Viding, E. (2018). Trajectories of callous-unemotional traits in childhood predict different forms of peer victimization in adolescence. *Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology*, 47(3), 458-466.
- Goodenow, C. (1993). The psychology sense of school membership among adolescents: Scale development and educational correlates. *Psychology in the Schools*, 30(2), 79-91.
- Goodenow, C., & Grady, K. E. (1993). The relationship of school belonging and friends' values to academic motivation among urban adolescent students. *The Journal of Experimental Education*, 62(1), 60-71. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220973.1993.9943831>
- [Hair, J. F., Jr., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. \(2009\). Rural elementary students' understanding of science and agricultural education benchmarks related to meat and livestock. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 44\(1\), 43-55.](#)

- Hawker, D. S., & Boulton, M. J. (2002). Twenty years' research on peer victimization and psychosocial maladjustment: A meta-analytic review of cross-sectional studies. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 41(4), 441-455.
- Lerner, R. M., & Steinberg, L. (2004). *Handbook of Adolescent psychology* (2nd ed.). John Wiley & Sons, Inc..
- Liu, W. C., & Wang, C. K. J. (2005). Academic self-concept: A cross-sectional study of grade and gender differences in a Singapore secondary school. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 6(1), 20-27.
- Loukas, A., Cance, J. D., & Batanova, M. (2016). Trajectories of school connectedness across the middle school years: Examining the roles of adolescents' internalizing and externalizing problems. *Youth and Society*, 48 (4), 557-576.
- May Cho Min (2012). *Junior high school students' perceived school satisfaction: The role of contextual and intrapersonal factors*. [Unpublished Master's dissertation]. Yangon University of Education.
- Olweus, D. (1993). *Bullying at school: What we know and what we can do*. Oxford, Blackwell Publishers.
- Olweus, D. (1994). *Victimization at School, Long Term Outcomes for the Victims and Effective School Based International Program*. Plenum Press.
- SmitPanwar N. (2021). A study on peer victimization & social & adaptive functioning in adolescents. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 9(1), 666- 674. [https://doi.org/ 10.25215/0901.069](https://doi.org/10.25215/0901.069)
- Sadaf Arif, Saira Khan, Nelofur K. Rauf & Rayna Sadia. (2020). Peer victimization, school connectedness and mental well-being among adolescents. *Pakistan Journal of Psychological Research* 34(4), 835-851.
- Smith, P.K. (2000). Victimization and harassment in School and the rights of children and society 14:294-303.
- Smith P. K., Cowie, H., & Blades, M. (2003). *Understanding children's development* (Fourth Edition). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing
- Smith, H. (2004). School connectedness, anger behaviors and relationships of violent and nonviolent American Youth. *Perspectives in Psychiatric Care*. [https:// www. highbeam.com](https://www.highbeam.com).
- Soe Soe Lin (2019). *School connectedness and academic self-concept of student teachers across teacher education institutions*. [Unpublished Master's dissertation]. Yangon University of Education.
- Sugar, I. (2012). Measuremet of School Connectedness (MOSC), Modified Connectedness Questionnaire for Secondary School. Faculty of The USC Rossier School of Education University of Southern California
- Tippanagoudra, DT., Patil, M. & Hunshal, S. (2020). Peer victimization among high school children: A prevalence study. *International Journal of Current Microbiology and Applied Sciences* 9(03), 3089-3101. <https://doi.org/10.20546/ijcmas.2020.903.354>
- Win Win Thandar. (2016). *Parental attachment on adolescent perception of the school environment and school connectedness of high school students*. [Unpublished Master's dissertation]. Yangon University of Education.