

Reported Frequencies of and Initial Psychometric Properties of Measures of Childhood and Current Peer Victimization in a Sample of American Adults

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E d i t o r	R e v i e w e r s
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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The Recruitment Procedures paragraph reports that participants received “\$.50 USD for completing the survey,” but the manuscript does not report the survey’s approximate completion time or the implied hourly compensation. Because compensation can influence recruitment selectivity, response quality, and ethical appraisal—particularly in MTurk research—the authors should report the median or estimated completion time and discuss whether the payment was proportionate to the task at the time of data collection. The authors should also report whether MTurk approval-rate or completed-HIT eligibility criteria were imposed, as these filters affect sample composition and data quality.

The factor-retention strategy described in the sentence “Eigenvalues of 1 were used as a preliminary cutoff ... supplemented with visual analysis of scree plots” is insufficient for contemporary psychometric evaluation. The eigenvalue-greater-than-one rule frequently overextracts or underextracts factors, while visual scree interpretation is subjective. The analyses should be supplemented with parallel analysis and, preferably, Velicer’s minimum average partial procedure. For the PRB, this is

particularly important because the second eigenvalue was reported as 0.981—essentially at the arbitrary threshold—and the substantive conclusions depend on choosing one rather than two factors.

In the PRB factor-analysis paragraph, the authors state that “an attempt to force a second factor with oblique rotation was unsuccessful,” but “unsuccessful” is not a reproducible statistical description. Please report the extraction output for the two-factor model, including convergence status, factor loadings, communalities, factor correlation, Heywood cases, and the specific criterion used to reject the solution. Because the PRB contains only six items and several conceptually paired domains, a two-factor solution may be empirically unstable even when theoretically plausible. The manuscript should distinguish nonconvergence, inadmissibility, weak factor definition, and poor interpretability rather than combining them under an undefined label.

The RCPVS factor interpretation requires substantial reconsideration because Table 4 shows extensive cross-loadings. For example, “Hit” loads .482 on nonphysical victimization and .871 on physical victimization; “Pushed” loads .530 and .836; “Teased in a mean way” loads .804 and .573; and “Called nasty names” loads .803 and .621. These are not negligible secondary loadings under conventional criteria, and the statement that cross-loading “generally was not observed” is therefore inaccurate. The authors should clarify whether Table 4 presents the pattern matrix, structure matrix, or unrotated loadings. With oblique rotation, interpretation should primarily rely on the pattern matrix, accompanied by the factor correlation and structure coefficients. The revised analysis should explicitly define the cross-loading threshold and discuss whether the factors are sufficiently distinct.

The sentence stating that the two RCPVS factors explained “a combined 71.48% of the variance” should be accompanied by the variance explained by each factor before and after rotation, the initial and extracted communalities, and the correlation between the two factors. Given the high correlations among verbal, exclusionary, and relational items and the substantial cross-loadings between physical and nonphysical items, the results may also be compatible with a strong general victimization factor plus a narrower physical factor. The authors should consider and discuss alternative structures, including a correlated two-factor model, a higher-order model, or a bifactor model, rather than treating the EFA solution as unequivocal evidence of two separable dimensions.

Authors revised and uploaded the document.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

In the paragraph defending MTurk validity, the authors write that the five informed-consent comprehension questions “screened out potential participants who were bots or people just ‘clicking through’ surveys.” This conclusion is stronger than the procedure supports. Comprehension questions may detect some inattentive respondents, but they do not establish that excluded respondents were automated bots, nor do they ensure that respondents who passed were unique or genuine. Please report the actual questions, allowable attempts, IP-address or duplicate-response controls, survey-duration criteria, geolocation verification, and any assessment of patterned or invariant responding. The language should be revised to describe these procedures as attention or eligibility checks rather than definitive bot detection.

The Participants paragraph reports that the sample “represented all 50 states and Puerto Rico,” yet no geographic distribution is presented, and the sampling method was nonprobability-based. This statement may be interpreted as evidence of national representativeness, which the design cannot establish. The authors should either provide the state-level distribution and compare major demographic characteristics with contemporaneous U.S. population benchmarks or use more cautious wording, such as stating that responses were obtained from every state and Puerto Rico. The limitations should explicitly distinguish geographic coverage from population representativeness.

The manuscript needs a clearer conceptual justification for applying the term “peer victimization” to the adapted PRB. In the Measures section, the original stem referring to “other students” was changed to “other people,” meaning that respondents could have considered intimate partners, relatives, supervisors, customers, strangers, or other non-peer perpetrators. The later

limitation acknowledging that the measure may capture workplace or intimate partner violence confirms this ambiguity. Because construct validity depends on the identity and social relationship of the perpetrator, the authors should consistently label the adapted construct as general interpersonal victimization or provide evidence that respondents were instructed to consider peers only. This issue should also be reflected in the title, aims, interpretation, and clinical implications.

In the PRB Measures paragraph, the authors note that the stem was modified from “other students” to “other people,” but no evidence is presented regarding cognitive testing, content validity, or measurement equivalence after this substantive alteration. Changing the referent broadens the target construct and may change item interpretation, base rates, and dimensionality. The authors should explicitly frame the instrument as an adapted version, describe the adaptation process, and avoid implying that psychometric findings for the original student measure automatically transfer to the modified adult version. The Discussion should consider whether the obtained one-factor solution may partly reflect this broadened and heterogeneous referent.

The manuscript reports that the PRB item contained a typographical error and appeared as “teasing them, calling you names...” rather than the intended wording. This is not merely a copyediting issue because the erroneous pronoun could alter the item’s meaning, confuse respondents, and introduce construct-irrelevant variance. The authors should report how many respondents, if any, commented on the wording, consider a sensitivity analysis excluding this item, and state whether the one-factor solution and reliability estimate remain stable without it. The limitation should explicitly acknowledge that the psychometric properties reported here pertain to the administered erroneous version, not precisely to the standard PRB item set.

In the Data Analysis section, the authors state that factorability was evaluated using inter-item correlations, KMO, and Bartlett’s test, but they do not address the ordinal and markedly skewed nature of the item responses. RCPVS items have five ordered categories, and PRB items have four ordered categories with low endorsement rates; conventional Pearson correlations and ordinary principal-axis procedures may therefore yield biased correlations and factor loadings. The authors should justify the estimator used or repeat the analyses using polychoric correlation matrices and an estimator suitable for ordinal data, such as robust weighted least squares. At minimum, item-level skewness, kurtosis, floor effects, and category frequencies should be reported.

Authors revised and uploaded the document.

2. Revised

Editor’s decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.