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Background

- Early adolescence is a vulnerable period both for experiencing online victimization and for difficulties with emotion regulation (ER; Gross, 2013; Landoll, LaGreca, & Lai, 2013).
- Young adolescents are increasingly sensitive to peer evaluation and the negative effects of being bullied (Brown, 1990). They also may experience heightened negative affect, including the persistence of negative moods and increased emotional sensitivity (Graber & Sontag, 2009).
- Given the recent rise in social media victimization, it is essential to investigate pathways linking online victimization and difficulties in ER.
- The present study examined reciprocal pathways between dimensions of ER (persistence, sensitivity, and intensity) and social media victimization. These results may help to inform future interventions.

Methods

Participants

- Participants ($N = 1,341$, $Mage = 12.75$, 51% girls) were recruited from middle schools in the Northeastern United States.
- Data were collected at four time points beginning in fall 2016 and separated by about six months.

Measures

- Social Network Peer Experiences Questionnaire (SNPEQ; Landoll et al., 2013; $\alpha = .81-.90$)
- Emotional Reactivity Scale (ERS; Nock, Wedig, Holmberg, & Hooley, 2008; $\alpha = .81-.97$). This measure includes three subscales: Persistence, Sensitivity, and Intensity.

Results

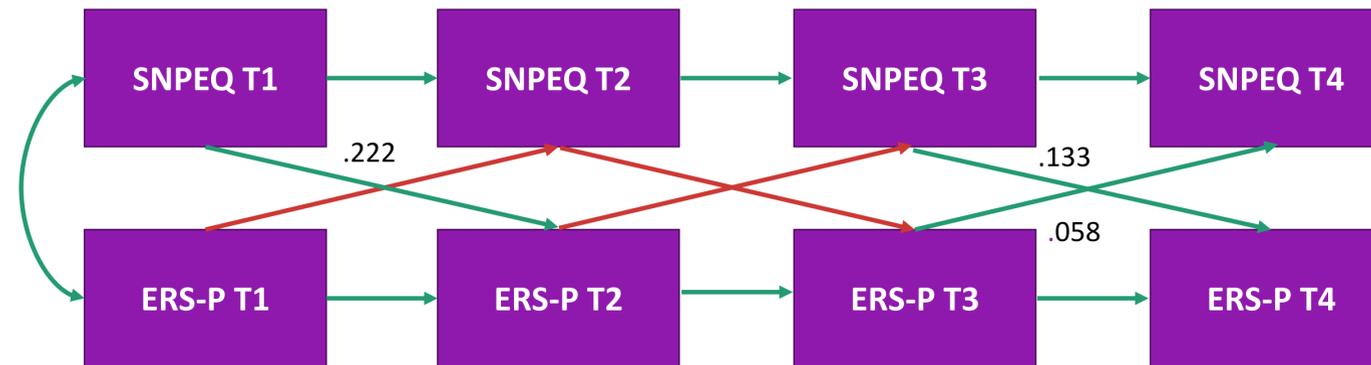


Figure 1. Panel model relating social media victimization and emotional reactivity persistence. Correlation coefficients are only included for significant cross-paths.

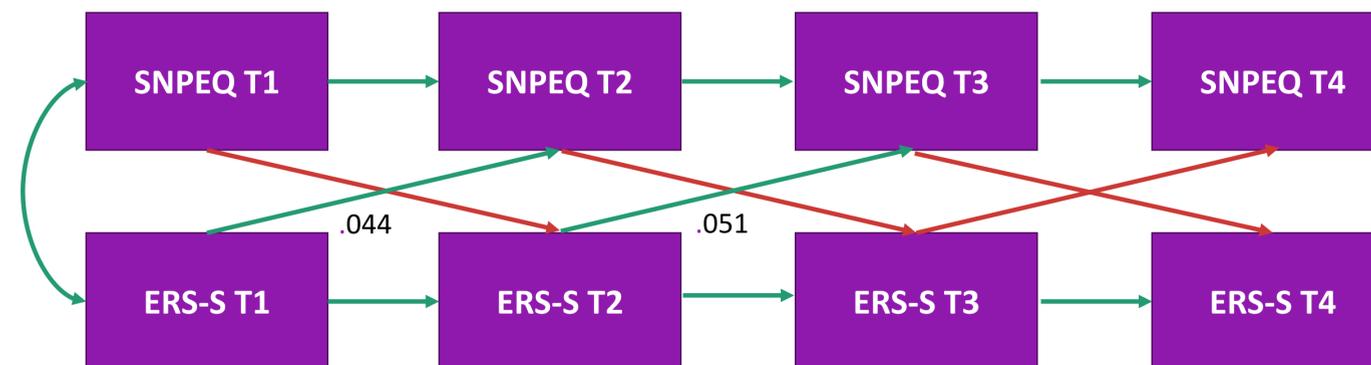


Figure 2. Panel model relating social media victimization and emotional reactivity sensitivity. Correlation coefficients are only included for significant cross-paths.

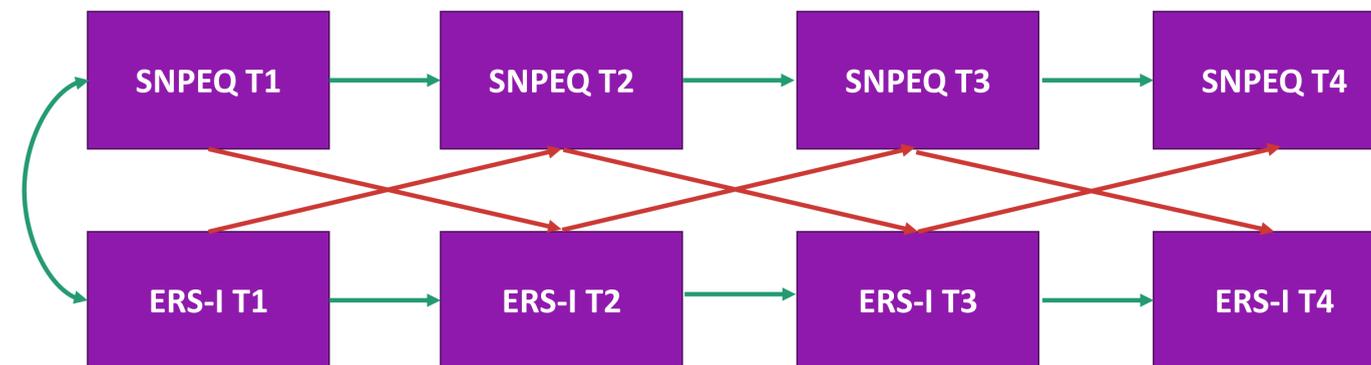


Figure 3. Panel model relating social media victimization and emotional reactivity intensity. Correlation coefficients are only included for significant cross-paths.

Results

Table 1. Panel model fit indices by ER dimension.

Model	χ^2 (df)	RMSEA	CFI	TLI	SRMR
Persistence	9.283 (6)	.018	.999	.994	.015
Sensitivity	10.794 (6)	.022	.998	.989	.016
Intensity	13.393 (6)	.027	.997	.984	.015

Discussion

- A significant cross-path exists from social media victimization at Time 1 to ERS persistence at Time 2. Significant reciprocal paths exist between social media victimization and ERS persistence between Time 3 and Time 4. The latter two pathways suggest a potential negative feedback loop between the two constructs, which may have developed over time. Future interventions should target this association.
- Significant cross-paths exist from ERS sensitivity to social media victimization at Time 1 to Time 2 and again from Time 2 to Time 3.
- No significant were found between these pathways, indicating that the presence of social media victimization does not indicate increased intensity in ER.
- ER is theorized to increase throughout adolescence. To understand the impact of age, future research should explore the relationship between social media victimization and emotional reactivity during late adolescence.