



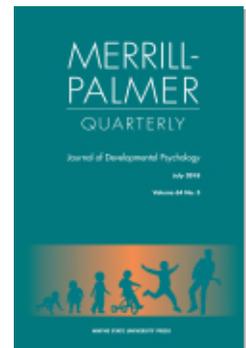
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Anger Inhibition Moderates the Link Between Parental Psychological Control and Peer Victimization

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Studies examining the link between psychological control and peer victimization are limited. The current study extends knowledge of the role of parental psychological control in predicting children's experiences of peer victimization by longitudinally evaluating the moderating role of emotion inhibition. Gender differences in this effect were also examined. Third-grade and fourth-grade students ($N = 177$) completed measures at baseline and a 1-year follow-up that assessed demographics, peer victimization, parental psychological control, and anger and sadness inhibition. Parental psychological control predicted peer victimization over a 1-year period, and this relation depended on levels of anger inhibition. That is, at high levels of anger inhibition ($+1 SD$), parental psychological control showed no associations with peer victimization over time, whereas, at low levels of anger inhibition ($-1 SD$), parental psychological control was associated with increases in peer victimization. Results were similar across gender. Clinical implications and future directions are discussed.

Peer victimization is a complex problem involving several social influences (Vernberg & Biggs, 2010). At the family level, for example, research on the association between particular parenting styles and peer victimization has yielded consistent findings. Specifically, supportive and authoritative

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parenting is negatively associated with peer victimization (Barker et al., 2008), whereas parenting that is described as punitive, harsh, or reactive is positively associated with peer victimization (Baldry & Farrington, 2005; Georgiou, 2008).

Of particular importance to the study of peer victimization is the influence of parental control, considered a “broad band” characterization of the parental approach (as discussed in Barber, Xia, Olsen, McNeely, & Bose, 2012). Indeed, the type of control implemented by parents can result in different outcomes for children (as discussed in Barber, 1996). Barber (1996), following from the tradition of Schaefer (1965), delineated two distinct types of parental control: behavioral control and psychological control. *Behavioral control* includes parental monitoring, limit setting, and consistent discipline and behavioral expectations. In contrast, *psychological control* employs practices such as love withdrawal, guilt induction, explicit expression of disappointment, and possessiveness or overprotectiveness (Barber, 1996; Barber et al., 2012). This exploitation of the parent–child relationship, characterized by disrespect, manipulation, coercion, and intrusion, has been proposed to stifle children’s psychological development by derogating their sense of self and limiting their opportunities for developing self-efficacy (Barber et al., 2012).

A self-determination theoretical framework (Ryan & Deci, 2000) suggests that parental psychological control may negatively impact children’s autonomy, competence, and relatedness not only within the family but also outside of it. Therefore, the extension of the study of parental psychological control to peer outcomes is warranted. Nevertheless, few studies have examined this link explicitly. Rather, extant studies focus on parenting behaviors and typologies that, though similar to psychological control, are somewhat distinct conceptually. For example, a longitudinal study by Barker and colleagues (2008) found that high levels of harsh, reactive parenting predicted higher, more chronic levels of peer victimization, over and above other salient child and family variables, including child aggression. Other studies have demonstrated the protective role of authoritative parenting and identified punitive parenting as a risk factor in the experience of peer victimization (e.g., Baldry & Farrington, 2005).

In addition to the influence of parents, emotion regulation has been examined as a contributing factor to children’s peer victimization experiences (e.g., Cooley & Fite, 2015; Herts, McLaughlin, & Hatzenbuehler, 2012; Rudolph, Troop-Gordon, & Flynn, 2009). To date, however, no studies have examined explicitly the role of emotion inhibition as a moderator of the prospective link between parental psychological control and youths’ peer victimization. The degree to which children inhibit or display negative

emotions, such as anger or sadness, might serve to amplify or mitigate the potentially negative relational schemas (Perry, Hodges, & Egan, 2001) thought to result from negative interactions with parents. Greater knowledge, therefore, of the nature of this pathway from parent influences to peer outcomes, as well as moderating factors, is needed so as to better understand the complex and nuanced phenomenon of peer victimization. Thus, the current study sought to extend the current understanding of the role of parental psychological control in predicting children's experiences of peer victimization, examining emotion inhibition as a potential moderating influence of this relation.

Parental Psychological Control and Peer Victimization

Studies examining the link between psychological control and peer victimization are limited. The only two studies identified to date examining this link longitudinally (i.e., Batanova & Loukas, 2014; Ma & Bellmore, 2012) have yielded somewhat inconclusive findings. One finds evidence of a prospective link between earlier psychological control and later peer victimization (Batanova & Loukas, 2014), whereas the other investigation reveals evidence of the opposite effect (i.e., earlier peer victimization predicting later psychological control; Ma & Bellmore, 2012). Guided by the family relational schema model (Perry et al., 2001), Batanova and Loukas (2014) suggested that children exposed to chronically negative and overcontrolling parenting may begin to exhibit a specific victim schema whereby they become accustomed to the negative interactions and emotional responses within their family and then respond similarly in peer interactions. Additionally, the authors proposed that negative family relational schemas could elicit aggression from children, thereby further increasing their risk for peer victimization. The family relational schema may, therefore, offer a potential explanation for the link between negative parenting and maladaptive peer interactions.

The Role of Emotion Inhibition

Importantly, the ability to regulate one's emotions plays a central role in youths' experiences of peer victimization (e.g., Cooley & Fite, 2015; Herts, McLaughlin, & Hatzenbuehler, 2012; Rudolph, Troop-Gordon, & Flynn, 2009). Emotions serve specific functions within the social environment (Campos, Campos, & Barrett, 1989)—namely, emotions prompt actions that are necessary for the maintenance of well-being because they help individuals to evaluate and cope with events that occur in their day-to-day

lives (Barrett & Campos, 1987; Cole & Hall, 2008). Emotions also have important social-regulatory functions. Beginning in early childhood, youth exhibit an increase in their understanding and use of *display rules*, which refer to the intentional control of emotional expression in order to meet the demands of a particular social context (for a review, see Zeman, Cassano, Perry-Parrish, & Stegall, 2006). Thus, display rules involve the separation of one's internal emotional state from the facial, vocal, and/or behavioral representation of affect that is displayed (Zeman et al., 2006).

Findings from previous observational (Cole, 1986) and self-report (Gnepp & Hess, 1986; Zeman & Garber, 1996) studies indicate that youth are more likely to exhibit display rules in the presence of another person than when alone. Further, Zeman and Garber (1996) found that, in order to avoid negative interpersonal consequences such as ridicule or rejection, children were more likely to control their expressions of anger, sadness, and pain when they were among peers as compared to when they were with their mothers and fathers. It is important to note, however, that when attempting to regulate high emotional intensity and avoid undesired social consequences, individuals may develop stable patterns of inhibition in which they mask or suppress emotional expression while still remaining emotionally aroused (Zeman, Shipman, & Penza-Clyve, 2001).

Although such controlled patterns of emotion inhibition have been linked to a number of negative outcomes, including depressive and anxious symptoms, decreased positive emotion, and poorer social relationships (for a review, see Gross, 2014), they may operate differently with regard to peer victimization. Further, much of the extant literature examining this effect has been observed in adult populations (for a review, see Gross, 2014). Inhibition might operate differently at unique developmental time points. A growing body of research has demonstrated that difficulties managing negative affect are associated with higher levels of victimization over time during both early and middle childhood (Bierman, Kalvin, & Heinrichs, 2015; Hanish et al., 2004; Rosen, Milich, & Harris, 2012), but most of this research has focused on emotion management behaviors such as dysregulation or coping. Emotion inhibition, on the other hand, is relatively understudied in relation to these other dimensions. One of the explanations of the link between parental psychological control and peer victimization suggested by Batanova and Loukas (2014) was that children might be more likely to respond to this type of parental control with aggression, thereby exacerbating their risk of peer victimization. Indeed, another investigation revealed that peers perceived victims as rewarding their aggressors with visible signs of emotional distress, which led to stable patterns of victimization (Perry, Williard, & Perry, 1990). Accordingly, children who display

negative emotional expressions may be more likely to reinforce aggressors, whereas children who inhibit these negative emotions might thereby reduce their risk for experiencing subsequent peer victimization.

The degree to which children inhibit their emotions, therefore, may be an important consideration in the link between parental psychological control and peer victimization. Children who are prone to exhibit more socially acceptable emotional expression might be buffered from the negative impact of parental psychological control as it pertains to peer victimization. Children who are able to appropriately inhibit negative emotions, such as anger or sadness, might be less likely to embody the victim schema proposed by Perry and colleagues' (2001) model to be the outcome of parenting consistent with psychological control. On the other hand, children who are less inhibited in their displays of negative emotion (i.e., emotionally dysregulated) might be more likely to elicit the attention of peers in response to harsh or critical parenting consistent with some forms of psychological control (Barber, 1996).

The Role of Gender

When examining patterns of emotion inhibition, it is also important to consider potential gender differences. Observational studies have demonstrated that, in general, girls tend to inhibit their emotional expressions more than do boys (e.g., Cole, 1986). Still, other findings suggest patterns may differ according to discrete emotions. For example, Underwood, Coie, and Herbsman (1992) revealed that girls tend to self-report the masking of facial expressions of anger more than boys. In contrast, Zeman and Garber (1996) showed that boys are more likely than girls to report inhibiting their displays of sadness. In a review of parent and peer emotion socialization patterns, Miller-Slough and Dunsmore (2016), referencing a study by Zeman, Cassano, and Adrian (2012), argued that parents may also socialize their children differently such that daughters are encouraged to demonstrate sadness while avoiding anger expression, whereas sons might be encouraged to do the opposite.

The general association between parental psychological control and children's peer victimization experiences appears to be inconsistent with regard to gender effects, with some authors arguing for a theoretical amplification of the negative influence of parental psychological control in boys (e.g., Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1996), although other studies (e.g., Ma & Bellmore, 2012) find no such gender effects. Nevertheless, due to the aforementioned emphasis on gender norms in the expression of emotions (e.g., Zeman & Garber, 1996), it might be that less inhibited expressions

of sadness, in combination with the experiences of a parent engaging in psychological control, would amplify the risk of being victimized among boys. Conversely, for girls, uninhibited expressions of anger might convey a similar amplifying effect.

The Current Study

The current study sought to examine the relations between parental psychological control and children's self-report of peer victimization experiences approximately 1 year later. Children's inhibition of their feelings of sadness and anger were considered as potential moderators of this association. The influences of anger and sadness were examined separately to account for any emotion-specific effects (Cole, 2014). It was hypothesized that parental psychological control would positively predict peer victimization at a 1-year follow-up. Anger and sadness inhibition were expected to moderate this relation such that the link between parental psychological control and peer victimization would be stronger for those children exhibiting lower levels of emotion inhibition. Gender was examined as a further moderator of this proposed interaction, and it was hypothesized that the interaction between sadness inhibition and parental psychological control would be more salient for boys than girls, and that anger inhibition and parental psychological control would be more salient for girls than boys, consistent with gender-role display rules (as discussed by Underwood et al., 1992, and Zeman & Garber, 1996).

Method

Participants included 177 children in Grades 3 ($n = 98$) and 4 ($n = 79$) from a public elementary school located in a small, rural Midwestern community in the United States. Recruitment was conducted during parent-teacher conferences and by sending consent forms home to caregivers. At Time 1 (T1), consent forms were returned by 72.4% ($n = 178$) of the total third- through fourth-grade students enrolled in the school ($N = 246$). With the exception of one individual enrolled in special education services, all other participants completed the survey at T1. However, at a 1-year follow-up, 31 of these students did not complete measures at T2 (e.g., were not consented, dropped out/refused participation, moved, or were lost to attrition; $n = 21$ in third grade and $n = 10$ in fourth grade). The final sample was comprised of students (54.8% girls) who ranged 8–10 years of age ($M = 8.74$, $SD = 0.66$) at T1. According to school records, approximately 35% of all students were eligible for free or reduced-fee lunch. Information

regarding students' race/ethnicity was not obtained in the current study. However, census data (US Department of Commerce, 2017) for the geographic location from which data were collected suggest the following racial/ethnic breakdown: Caucasian (85.7%), African American (5.0%), Native American (5.6%), Asian American (2.2%), Hispanic or Latino (3.2%), and multiracial (1.5%).¹

Measures

Demographics. The school provided information regarding students' gender and grade.

Parental psychological control. Perceived parental use of psychological control was measured by using the 10-item version of the Psychological Control Scale (PCS; Barber, 1996). The 10-item version of the PCS contains seven of the original PCS items with three additional items from the original pool of items used to create the original PCS (Barber, 1996). Children responded to items regarding parental psychological control (e.g., "My parent acts like she/he knows what I'm thinking or feeling") on a 3-point scale: 1 = *not like my parents*, 2 = *somewhat like my parents*, and 3 = *a lot like my parents*. Children were not asked to consider one specific parent, but were encouraged to consider their parent(s) as a consensus. Higher average overall scores indicate greater levels of perceived parental psychological control. Work by Barber (1996; Barber et al., 2012) has provided evidence supporting the cross-sample reliability and predictive validity (with regard to a range of youth problem behaviors) of the PCS. The 10-item version has been used in previous research (Frazer & Fite, 2016). In the current sample, this measure demonstrated good internal consistency ($\alpha = .78$).

Emotion inhibition. This was measured by using the Children's Emotion Management Scales (CEMS; Zeman et al., 2001) for self-reports of anger (CAMS, Children's Anger Management Scale) and sadness (CSMS, Children's Sadness Management Scale) regulation. The CEMS consists of three subscales that assess emotion regulation, including coping, inhibition, and dysregulation. The current study focused on anger inhibition (e.g., "I hide my anger") and sadness inhibition (e.g., "I hold my sad feelings in") subscales to assess the perception of the ability to inhibit feelings of anger and sadness. Participants responded to eight items (four of anger and four of sadness) on a 3-point Likert scale: 1 = *hardly ever*,

1. The reason that the total adds up to more than 100% is that the US Census considers being Hispanic or Latino as distinct from ethnicity, thus the 3.2% of Hispanics are also reporting other races listed.

2 = *sometimes*, and 3 = *often*. Mean scores were computed and used for analyses, with higher scores indicating more anger and sadness inhibition. Zeman and colleagues' (2001) original validation of the CEMS (originally focusing on sadness) provided evidence for its test-retest reliability, internal consistency, and convergent and discriminant validity in elementary-school-age samples. In the current sample, both the anger ($\alpha = .82$) and the sadness ($\alpha = .76$) subscales demonstrated adequate internal consistency.

Peer victimization. Exposure to peer victimization was assessed by using a modified version of the Victimization of Self (VS) Scale of the Peer Experiences Questionnaire (PEQ; Vernberg, Jacobs, & Hershberger, 1999). The VS Scale consists of nine items assessing both physical (e.g., "A kid hit, kicked, or pushed me in a mean way") and relational (e.g., "A told lies about me so other kids wouldn't like me") experiences of victimization. Children were asked to rate the frequency of experiences since the beginning of the school year on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = *ever* to 5 = *a few times a week*. Overall scores combining overt and relational experiences of victimization were averaged across all nine items, with higher scores indicating higher frequency of peer victimization. The decision to combine both overt and relational scales into a single score was made for both empirical and theoretical reasons. The results of prior studies suggest that peer victimization in its broadest sense, regardless of form, is most meaningful with regard to students' own perceptions of their status as a victim (Nylund, Bellmore, Nishina, & Graham, 2007), and that both relational and physical victimization have demonstrated similar influences on youths' long-term adjustment (Rudolph, Troop-Gordon, Hessel, & Schmidt, 2011; Rudolph, Troop-Gordon, Monti, & Miernicki, 2014). Further, both physical and relational victimization were highly correlated at both time points (T1 $r = .74$ and T2 $r = .69$). Previous research (e.g., Cooley & Fite, 2015; Dill et al., 2004) provided evidence supporting the reliability (e.g., strong internal consistency) and predictive validity of the VS Scale. The VS Scale demonstrated good internal consistency in this sample ($\alpha = .93$) at T1 and at T2 ($\alpha = .87$).

Procedures

All procedures and surveys were approved by the university's institutional review board as well as the school district administrators prior to data collection. T1 student data were collected approximately 3 months after the start of the fall semester. Surveys were administered in a group format within each classroom, and children provided verbal assent before they began the survey. Children who did not have parental consent or who

did not verbally assent to participate in the study left the classroom with the teacher. To ensure confidentiality and to reduce bias in participants' responses, no school personnel were present. One trained research assistant read each question aloud to the children, providing examples and explanations throughout. Additional trained research assistants walked around the classroom ensuring the students' comprehension and working individually with students who required additional direction or explanation. All surveys were completed and collected before nonconsented students and teachers returned to the classroom. Similar procedures were followed for when T2 self-reported data were collected approximately 1 year later in the subsequent fall semester. At T1, all classrooms, regardless of participation, were compensated for their time with \$75 toward school supplies and class materials. At T2, children were compensated with a small prize for their time.

Results

Data Analytic Approach

Using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS Version 23), unidimensional statistics were first estimated in order to evaluate descriptive statistics, as well as preliminary relations, among study variables. Specifically, means, standard deviations, skewness, and kurtosis were estimated, along with bivariate correlational analyses, for all study variables. To aid in interpretation, all variables were standardized prior to path analyses. Next, using *Mplus* (Version 7.3; Muthén & Muthén, 1998–2014), a main effects path model was estimated in which T2 peer victimization was regressed onto T1 levels of control variables (i.e., gender and grade), parental psychological control, anger inhibition, sadness inhibition, and peer victimization. T1 independent variables were allowed to covary with one another within time. Because the model was completely saturated, with no degrees of freedom, model-fit statistics were not initially available. However, the nonsignificant covariance between gender and grade evident in the original path model was removed (by constraining to a constant value of 0), thereby allowing for the estimation of model-fit statistics. Model goodness of fit was assessed via the model chi-square value, comparative fit index (CFI), Tucker–Lewis index (TLI), and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). Good model fit is indicated by values of $\chi^2/2 < 2.0$, CFI $\geq .95$ and RMSEA $\leq .08$ (Curran & Bollen, 2001; Hu & Bentler, 1999; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). Next, a series of interaction terms were added to the model in order to test the moderation hypotheses. Multiplicative interactions between parental psychological

control and both anger and sadness inhibition were examined in separate models. Significant interactions were probed by conditioning the model at high (+1 *SD*) and low (−1 *SD*) values according to standard procedures (Aiken & West, 1991). Three-way effects with gender were also estimated with each form of inhibition by first creating three-way multiplicative terms between gender, psychological control, and inhibition. Each of these additional models was added to the initial equations, which already included the psychological control and inhibition interaction terms. All models were estimated by using full information maximum likelihood, which has been found to be less biased and more efficient than other strategies (e.g., listwise or pairwise deletion) used to accommodate up to 50% missing data (Arbuckle, 1996). In the current study, approximately 17.4% of the outcome variables were missing due to attrition across the year.

Preliminary Analyses

Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, as well as bivariate correlations between study variables, are presented in Table 1. Skewness and kurtosis of T2 peer victimization were 2.54 and 8.22, respectively, which fall within the range of values recommended by Kline (2011) for the appropriateness of maximum likelihood estimation. Victimization levels, although relatively low, were consistent across boys and girls at both T1 ($t_{175} = 1.21$, $p = .23$) and at T2 ($t_{99.76} = 1.86$, $p = .07$). Further, a series of independent-samples *t* tests revealed that there were no significant differences in study variables at T1 between those who did and did not complete the survey at T2.

Path Analyses

Main effects. A series of path models were then estimated to examine the associations between parental psychological control and peer victimization across time. First, a main effects model (Model 1 depicted in Figure 1) was estimated. Neither control variable—that is, gender ($\beta = -.13$, $SE = .14$, $p = .37$) nor grade ($\beta = .21$, $SE = .14$, $p = .13$)—predicted peer victimization at T2. Peer victimization demonstrated stability across time ($\beta = .41$, $SE = .07$, $p = .00$), with T1 peer victimization predicting T2 peer victimization. As expected, parental psychological control at T1 significantly positively predicted peer victimization at T2 ($\beta = .29$, $SE = .07$, $p = .00$). At baseline, neither anger ($\beta = -.10$, $SE = .08$, $p = .24$) nor sadness ($\beta = -.03$, $SE = .08$, $p = .70$) inhibition significantly predicted peer victimization at T2. Model-fit indices suggested a good fit to the data, $\chi^2(1, N = 177) = .16$, $p = .69$, RMSEA = 0.00, CFI = 1.00.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics (including means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations) for study variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Gender	—						
2. Grade—centered	-.03	—					
3. T1 peer victimization	-.09	-.17*	—				
4. T1 parental psychological control	-.15*	-.12	.29**	—			
5. T1 sadness inhibition	-.13	-.5	.08	.09	—		
6. T1 anger inhibition	.01	.00	.04	.08	.48**	—	
7. T2 peer victimization	-.16*	.01	.49**	.39**	-.04	-.08	—
Mean	54.8% female		1.49	1.44	1.93	1.93	1.36
Standard deviation			0.79	0.38	0.61	0.65	0.53
Minimum			1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Maximum			5.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	4.11

Note. T1 = Time 1.

* $p \leq .05$. ** $p \leq .01$.

Anger inhibition moderation. Next, the two multiplicative interaction terms were added separately to Model 1 in order to examine the potential interaction between parental psychological control and anger and sadness inhibition. While controlling for gender, grade, baseline levels of peer victimization, anger inhibition, and sadness inhibition, a multiplicative interaction term (Parental psychological control \times Anger inhibition) was added to the model (Model 2; see Table 2). Psychological control and peer victimization continued to share a positive predictive relationship with peer victimization at T2, and a significant interaction effect was evident, such that the predictive association between parental psychological control and T2 peer victimization depended on levels of anger inhibition. Path analyses were again estimated after being

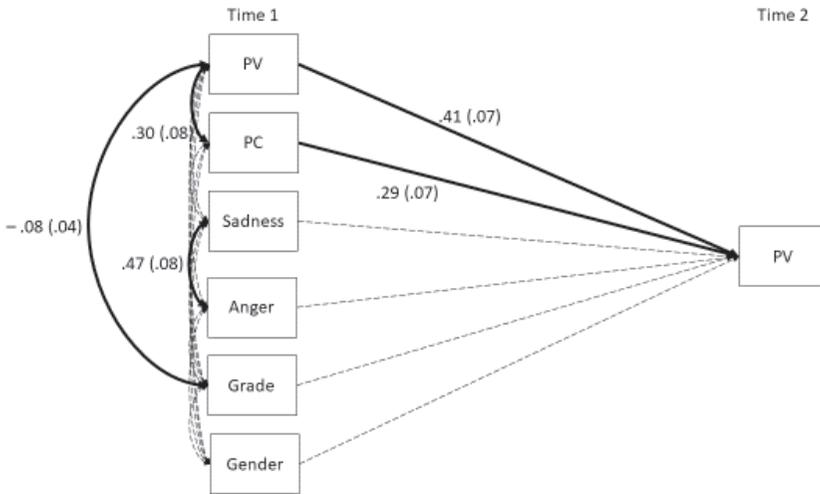


Figure 1. Main effects path model. PV = peer victimization; PC = Parental psychological control.

conditioned at high values (+1 *SD*) and low values (−1 *SD*) of anger inhibition. These simple slope analyses indicated that, at high levels of anger inhibition (+1 *SD*), parental psychological control was unrelated to future peer victimization ($\beta = .10, p = .32$), whereas, at low levels of anger inhibition (−1 *SD*), parental psychological control significantly positively predicted increases in peer victimization ($\beta = .48, p = .00$). See Figure 2 for interaction graphs. As a point of reference, 42 participants reported levels of anger inhibition that were 1 *SD* below the mean, whereas 32 reported levels that were 1 *SD* above the mean.

Next, to determine whether this interaction differed significantly across gender groupings, a three-way interaction was examined. Results of this step are presented in Model 3 (see Table 2). As is evident in Table 2, gender did not play a role in moderating the interaction between parental psychological control and anger inhibition.

Sadness inhibition moderation. The same set of procedures was followed in order to examine sadness inhibition as a potential moderating influence. While controlling for gender and grade, as well as baseline levels of peer victimization, anger inhibition, and sadness inhibition, a multiplicative interaction term (Parental psychological control \times Sadness inhibition) was added to the original Model 1 (Model 4; see Table 3). Psychological control and peer victimization continued to share a positive predictive relationship with peer victimization at T2. However, no significant interaction effect was evident.

Table 2. Models predicting peer victimization, moderated by anger inhibition

	T2 peer victimization			
	Model 2		Model 3	
	β	SE	β	SE
Gender	-.11	.14	-.12	.14
Grade	.21	.13	.19	.13
T1 psychological control	.29**	.07	.33**	.09
T1 peer victimization	.37**	.07	.38**	.07
T1 sadness inhibition	.01	.08	.03	.08
T1 anger inhibition	-.14	.08	-.20	.11
Psych control \times Anger inhibit	-.19**	.07	-.22*	.09
Psych control \times Gender			-.14	.14
Anger inhibit \times Gender			.15	.14
Psych control \times Anger inhibit \times Gender			.14	.14

Note. T1 = Time 1; T2 = Time 2.

* $p \leq .05$. ** $p \leq .01$.

Next, to determine whether an interaction emerged when considering additional gender effects, a three-way interaction was examined. Results of this step are presented in Model 5 (see Table 3). As is evident in Table 3, gender did not play a role in explaining any potential interaction between parental psychological control and sadness inhibition.

Discussion

The current study contributed to the extant literature by further examining the association between parental psychological control and peer victimization over a 1-year interval and by examining emotional inhibition as a moderator of this association. It was hypothesized that children who inhibit

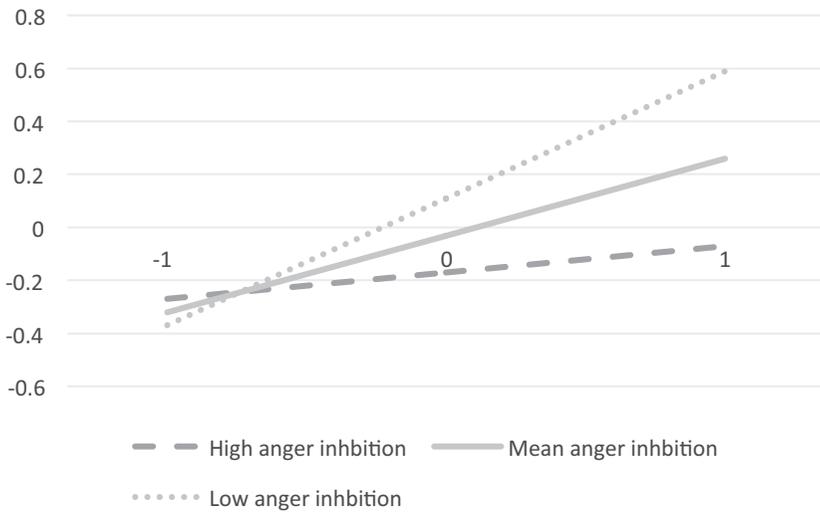


Figure 2. Simple slopes of interaction probed at high, mean, and low levels of emotion inhibition. *High anger inhibition* and *low anger inhibition* represent values at 1 standard deviation above and below the mean, respectively.

negative emotions are at decreased risk of embodying a “victim schema” (Perry et al., 2001) associated with perceived parental psychological control (Batanova & Loukas, 2014). Potential gender differences in the moderating effects of anger and sadness inhibition were also evaluated.

As expected, high levels of perceived parental psychological control were associated with increases in peer victimization over time. These findings are consistent with one previous study examining parental psychological control (Batanova & Loukas, 2014), as well as other studies demonstrating the influence of distinct, but related, parenting variables (e.g., Baldry & Farrington, 2005; Barker et al., 2008). This study may provide additional support for the family relational schema model proposed by Perry and colleagues (2001), which proposes that children learn ways of relating to others from their interactions with their caregivers that then predispose them to be victimized by their peers. Further, the results of the current study bolster this theoretical model by proposing potential child characteristics that might strengthen the risks associated with harsh or negative parenting.

Children’s anger inhibition was found to moderate the prospective link from parental psychological control to peer victimization, such that children who did not inhibit their angry emotions were at greater risk for this proposed parent-to-peer pathway. These findings are consistent with, and

Table 3. Models predicting peer victimization, moderated by sadness inhibition

	T2 peer victimization			
	Model 4		Model 5	
	β	SE	β	SE
Gender	-.12	.14	-.13	.14
Grade	.21	.14	.21	.14
T1 psychological control	.28**	.07	.34**	.09
T1 peer victimization	.40**	.07	.40**	.07
T1 sadness inhibition	-.03	.08	-.04	.11
T1 anger inhibition	-.09	.08	-.09	.08
Psych control \times Sadness inhibit	-.09	.06	-.08	.08
Psych control \times Gender			-.15	.14
Sadness inhibit \times Gender			.02	.14
Psych control \times Sadness inhibit \times Gender			-.02	.14

Note. T1 = Time 1; T2 = Time 2.

* $p \leq .05$. ** $p \leq .01$.

may be related to, the general trend of research demonstrating that difficulties regulating emotion are strongly associated with greater risk for peer victimization (Bierman et al., 2015; Hanish et al., 2004; Rosen et al., 2012). However, it is important to note that the lack of anger inhibition is not the same as dysregulated anger expressions, per se. Nevertheless, it might be the case that children who are more demonstrative with regard to their experiences of anger show a greater propensity to elicit negative attention of peers, thereby compounding the unique risks associated with parental psychological control. Conversely, framing the anger inhibition interaction in a protective or buffering perspective, children who can adaptively inhibit their outward experiences of anger might be less likely to embody the victim schema proposed by the family relational schema

model (Perry et al., 2001), thereby reducing the risk of peer victimization experiences associated with parental psychological control.

In contrast, sadness inhibition did not influence the pathway from parental psychological control to peer victimization, which underscores the importance of studying emotion-specific processes. Consistent with Zeman and Garber (1996), display rules may factor heavily into the decision to express (or not) negative emotions in a specific context. This finding might also support the notion that aggression serves as a mechanism of the link between parental psychological control and peer victimization, of which anger might be a more salient emotional component than is sadness.

Our final hypothesis—that gender-specific effects of emotion inhibition on the pathway from parental psychological control to peer victimization would be evident—was unsupported. In fact, no significant three-way gender effects were observed. The interaction of anger inhibition and parental psychological control in predicting peer victimization experiences appeared to be equally salient for both girls and boys. Although the broader literature on parental psychological control and emotion regulation separately generally suggest that gender might play a key role in these experiences (e.g., Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1996; Zeman & Garber, 1996), our results are consistent with past literature on the interaction of parental psychological control and emotion regulation together that has not yielded significant gender effects (e.g., Luebke, Bump, Fussner, & Rulon, 2013).

Limitations and Future Directions

The findings of the current study must be considered in light of a few key limitations. First, all data were collected through self-report. Constructs such as parental psychological control and peer victimization implicate the involvement of both family and school systems, so the fact that reporters in the current study were limited to the unique perspective of the school-age participant introduces some informant bias. Teacher reports of peer victimization experiences and parent reports of psychological control would provide additional validation of these child reports. Furthermore, although the CEMS has strong psychometric properties (Zeman et al., 2001), emotion self-regulation is a complex phenomenon comprised of both interpersonal and intrapersonal processes. For example, inhibition as it is assessed in the current study may not fully capture the nuances of inhibiting the expression of an emotion versus successfully regulating it. Future studies would benefit from multimethod assessment of all constructs to aid in reliable and valid interpretations of findings. In addition, in our study design, parental psychological control was not assessed at

follow-up. Consistent with findings by Ma and Bellmore (2012), peer victimization may reciprocally influence parental psychological control. Thus, future studies would benefit by examining the longitudinal patterns of both parenting factors and peer victimization experiences to better understand the interactions and influences shared between the two domains. Participants' race and ethnicity were not available for the current study, which precludes meaningful consideration of the influence of these factors in the interaction between psychological control and emotion inhibition. Future studies should examine this and similar interaction in more diverse samples. Finally, it should be noted that the current study had power to detect medium to large effect sizes. The role of gender with respect to the relation between parental psychological control, emotion inhibition, and peer victimization, therefore, might be best explained in light of smaller effect sizes. Future studies would be best served to explore these associations in larger sample sizes.

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