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Children's Social Self-Concept and Internalizing Problems:
The Influence of Peers and Teachers

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Abstract

This study aimed to understand how classroom relationships with peers and teachers contribute to the development of internalizing problems via children's social self-concept. The sample included 570 children. Peer nominations of peer rejection, child reports of social self-concept, and teacher reports of internalizing problems were assessed longitudinally, in the fall and spring of grades 2 and 3. Teacher reports of support to the child was assessed in second grade. Results showed that peer rejection impeded children's social self-concept, which in turn affected internalizing problem development. Teacher support, however, buffered children's social self-concept against the adverse effects of peer rejection but only at the end of second grade.

Keywords: internalizing problems, peer rejection, social self-concept, teacher support, autoregressive cross-lagged analyses

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Children's Social Self-Concept and Internalizing Problems:

The Influence of Peers and Teachers

Social ecological models of development emphasize the importance of social relationships as environmental risk or protective influences on children's development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006; Sameroff, 2000). From this perspective, much attention has been given to children's relationships with peers, such as rejection by peers, as a predictor of externalizing problems among school-aged children. Similarly, although less extensive as on externalizing outcomes, studies have addressed the link between peers influences and the development of internalizing problems (Deater-Deckard, 2001; Ladd, 2006). Despite this, at least two questions remain largely unanswered. The first regards the *processes* by which peer rejection may lead to the development of internalizing problems. A second, question pertains the possible presence of a protective factor within the same social setting, the classroom, namely the teacher. Beside possible peer influences, children's relationships with teachers may also play a role in the development of internalizing problems, and teachers may mitigate the possible impact of peers on children's internalizing problems. This study aims to address these gaps by studying the developmental links between peer rejection, children's social self-concept, and internalizing problem development, and whether individualized support from teachers may provide a context in which pathways from peer rejection to internalizing problems via social self-concept may be prevented.

Positive relationships with peers are vital to children's psychosocial development.

Children who experience difficulties in their relationships with peers, in particular children who

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are rejected, are at increased risk of psychopathology (Deater-Deckard, 2001; Gooren, van Lier, Stegge, Terwogt, & Koot, 2011; Ladd, 2006; Parker, Rubin, Erath, Wojslawowicz, & Buskirk, 2006; van Lier & Koot, 2010; Vitaro, Pedersen, & Brendgen, 2007). The effect of peer problems on the development of internalizing problems in school-aged children has been documented in multiple studies (for a review see Hay, Payne, & Chadwick, 2004). Longitudinal research demonstrates that peer rejection predicts the developmental course of internalizing problems and depression in grade school (Gazelle & Ladd, 2003; Ladd, 2006; Ladd & Troop-Gordon, 2003; van Lier & Koot, 2010). In addition, this effect has been found largely independent of a child's disposition to shyness and social-anxiousness (Ladd, 2006). However, there is little insight in the processes through which peer rejection may influence the development of internalizing problems nor in what context peer rejection may exert its influence.

Process of Influence: Social Self-Concept explaining the Pathway of Peer Rejection to Internalizing Behavior

Being poorly appreciated by peers in day-to-day situations represents a stressful experience. According to the competency-based model, adverse social experiences, such as peer rejection, may cause maladaptive self-perceptions of one's ability to function in the social domain (Cole, 1990; Jacobs, Reinecke, Gollan, & Kane, 2008). Rejection is thus believed to influence children's cognitive self-evaluations in specifically the social domain, referred to as social self-concept (Harter & Pike, 1984). Poor self-concepts, in turn, are considered a cognitive vulnerability factor leading to the development of internalizing problems (Cole, 1990; Jacobs et

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al., 2008). A negative social self-concept is thus thought to link rejection experiences to the development of internalizing problems.

Empirical support for such a developmental pathway is growing. In a cross-sectional study, Zimmer-Gembeck and colleagues (2007) reported an indirect association between peer dislike and self-reported depressive symptoms of 9 to 13 year old children via self-perceived social acceptance. Ladd and Troop-Gordon (2003) found that exposure to rejection in first and third grade undermined children's feelings of being acceptable to peers and themselves (i.e., social self-concept) in fourth grade. Moreover, low social self-concept was associated with concurrent increases in internalizing problems and loneliness. In a follow-up study, focusing on peer victimization and not rejection, Troop-Gordon and Ladd (2005) found that changes in social self-concept (i.e., social self-acceptance and global self-esteem) were associated with changes in peer victimization from grade 4 to 6. Moreover, growth in peer victimization was indirectly associated with growth in internalizing problems via declines in social self-concept.

Thus, there is initial evidence that social self-concept may, at least partly, account for the prospective effects of peer rejection on the course of internalizing problems. However, as described, the previous studies were either cross-sectional or contained longitudinal parts studies at best. To our knowledge, none of the previous studies examined each of the study variables longitudinally and in parallel across multiple waves. To examine developmental processes, autoregressive cross-lagged models (Jöreskog, 1970) have been advocated as optimal, yet conservative tests (Masten & Cicchetti, 2010). Using such longitudinal models, cross-time effects between constructs are modeled, while controlling for the stability of the constructs over time and

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contemporaneous correlations between constructs. The first goal of this study is therefore to explore whether experiences of peer rejection predict internalizing problems through their effect on children's social self-concept in a fully balanced design in which all constructs were assessed in parallel across a two year period.

Studying Peer Rejection in Context: Teacher Support as a Protective Resource

Peer rejection is typically studied by asking children to nominate classmates they don't like. However, children's social classroom experiences are not limited to classmates but involve teachers as well. Relationships between children and their teachers play a significant role in children's development. Positive teacher-child relationships have been found to be protective of a wide range of developmental outcomes including internalizing problems and perceptions of the self (Baker, Grant, & Morlock, 2008; Hughes & Chen, 2010; O'Connor, Dearing, & Collins, 2011; Reddy, Rhodes, & Mulhall, 2003). Moreover, peer- and teacher-student relationships seem to represent qualitatively different sources of social support and stress (Furrer & Skinner, 2003; Hughes & Chen, 2010; Ryan, Stiller, & Lynch, 1994; Silver, Measelle, Armstrong, & Essex, 2010; Verschueren, Doumen, & Buyse, 2012). Both may thus have a unique impact on children's social self-concept. There is preliminary evidence from two small-scale studies that a supportive teacher-student relationship can compensate for the negative effects of peer rejection on children's self-concept. Using a daily diary procedure, the study of Little and Kobak (2003) demonstrated over the course of a school year that when children aged 9-13 feel emotionally secure with teachers, their self-esteem was less affected by conflictual events with peers.

Whereas Little and Kobak (2003) studied self-esteem, a construct related to global self-concept

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or self-worth, Verschueren and colleagues (2012) did find effects on specifically social self-concept: Concurrent association between peer acceptance and social self-concept in first grade appeared weaker under conditions of high teacher-student relationship quality. Thus, there is emerging evidence for the protective role of teachers for the global self-esteem and social self-concept of school-age children poorly accepted by peers. To extend this line of research, we examined whether teachers' supportive interactions with a child could prevent internalizing problems one year later specifically by buffering children's social self-concept against experiences of peer rejection, allowing for the temporal sequencing of the variables. Although research suggests that children's social self-concept will be influenced by particularly individualized support from teachers, we will also test the possibility that classroom-level teacher support has an effect on social self-concept.

Present Study

In this prospective four-wave study in which all study variables were assessed in parallel across grades 2 and 3, we sought to enhance our understanding of how social relationships at school interact with children's development in ways that prevent or contribute to internalizing problems. Based on findings that experiences of peer rejection add to the development of internalizing problems (Ladd, 2006; van Lier & Koot, 2010), two hypotheses are tested. First, we expect that the developmental link between experiences of rejection by mainstream peers on internalizing behavior is indirect. Specifically, we hypothesize that peer rejection predicts declines in social self-concept over time, which subsequently adds to the development of internalizing problems. Second, we hypothesize that the aforementioned developmental pathway of peer

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rejection on internalizing problems via social self-concept is conditional on the level of support children receive from teachers. More specifically, we expect that teacher support mitigates the indirect effects of peer rejection on internalizing problems by weakening the link between peer rejection and children's social self-concept.

To check whether associations between the constructs are influenced by child sex, differences between girls and boys will be examined in multi-group model.

Methods

Participants

The sample included 570 children (49,5% boys) and 30 teachers from 15 regular primary schools located in the Flemish region of Belgium. Written parental consent was obtained from parents (participation rate 97%). At the start of the study (fall of Grade 2), children were on average 7 years and 5 months old ($SD = 4.6$ months). The vast majority of children ($> 95\%$) were of Caucasian origin. Classroom composition did not change between first and second grade; only the teacher changed, which is common in the Flemish educational system. Over the two-year study period, 41 children dropped out of the study because of grade retention or because of changing schools. These children had higher average levels of peer rejection, $t(567) = -4.70$, $p < .001$, oppositional behavior, $t(568) = -5.34$, $p < .001$, conduct problems $t(568) = -5.92$, $p < .001$, and symptoms of depression, $t(568) = -4.67$, $p < .001$. There were no significant differences with respect to symptoms of anxiety ($p = .14$) and social self-concept ($p = .34$). Children participated in a larger randomized-controlled intervention study (Leflot, van Lier, Onghena, & Colpin, 2010):

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Half of the children was randomly assigned to a preventive intervention program, the Good Behavior Game (Dolan, Jaylan, Werthamer, & Kellam, 1989).

Measures

Data were collected in fall and spring of second grade (Wave 1 & 2, respectively), and again in fall and spring of third grade (Wave 3 & 4, respectively).

Peer rejection was assessed by asking children to nominate all classmates that they ‘liked least’ (Cillessen & Bukowski, 2000; Coie, Dodge, & Coppotelli, 1982). The total number of ‘liked least’ nominations was divided by the number of children in the class minus 1 (it was not allowed to nominate oneself). Higher scores indicate higher levels of peer rejection.

Children’s Social self-concept was assessed using the Dutch version of the Self-Perception Profile for Children (SPPC; Harter, 1985; Dutch translation by Veerman, Straathof, Treffers, Van den Bergh, & ten Brink, 1997), adapted by Leflot, Onghena, and Colpin (2010) to make it suitable for children of age 7 onwards. Evidence for construct validity and adequate reliability was found (Leflot et al., 2010). The subscale Social self-concept was rated on a 3-point Likert-scale (“I have a lot of friends”; 6 items; $\alpha = .62-.76$). Higher scores refer to a higher social self-concept.

Teacher ratings of Internalizing Problems were assessed using the Problem Behavior at School Interview (PBSI; Erasmus Medical Center, 2000). Teachers rated pupils’ behaviors on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (never applicable) to 4 (often applicable). Mean scores of the scales Anxiety (“Anxious”, “Easily worried”; 5 items; $\alpha = .73-.80$) and Depression (“Unhappy or depressed”; 7 items; $\alpha = .77-.83$) were averaged as a measure of Internalizing problems (*rs*

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between the subscales were = .67-.81). Higher scores indicate higher internalizing problems. The PBSI has demonstrated adequate validity in multiple studies (e.g., Witvliet, Lier, Cuijpers, & Koot, 2009).

Teacher rated their support for each individual child in their classroom on two occasions (fall and spring) in second grade, using the teacher version of Teacher as Social Context (TASC) questionnaire (Wellborn, Connell, Skinner, & Pierson, 1992). The measure includes three subscales: Involvement (“I enjoy spending time with this student”; 14 items, $\alpha = .84-.88$), Structure (“I find it hard to be consist with this student” – reversed coded; 15 items; $\alpha = .83-.85$), and Autonomy support (“I try to give this student a lot of choices about classroom assignments”; 12 items, $\alpha = .90-.91$). Items are assessed on a 4-point-scale, ranging 0 (not at all true) to 3 (very true). The validity of the scale has been supported in previous research (Skinner & Belmont, 1993).

The total scale was used with higher scores indicating higher levels of Teacher support for the student. The scores over Wave 1 and 2 were significantly correlated ($r = .74, p < .01$) and therefore averaged across waves.

Statistical Analyses

Auto-regressive cross-lagged models were analyzed allowing for testing the temporal sequencing of the constructs using the Mplus program (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2011). The study hypotheses were tested in two steps. First, to test pathways from peer rejection via social self-concept to internalizing problems, a series of four nested models were tested. We started with a baseline model in which only autoregressive associations within constructs were allowed

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(i.e., autoregressive model). In the second model, cross-time links from the predictors (peer rejection, social self-concept) to the outcome (internalizing problems) were added (i.e., direct influence model). The third model allowed for cross-time paths between the predictors to test the possibility of indirect paths to internalizing problems (i.e., indirect influence model). The final model tested was a full transactional model allowing cross-time paths between all constructs (i.e., full transactional model).

Model fit was considered satisfactory when confirmatory fit index (CFI) $\geq .95$, standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) $\leq .08$, and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) $\leq .06$ (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The Satorra-Bentler scaled χ^2 difference test for nested models (two-tailed) was used to compare relative fit of nested models (Satorra & Bentler, 2001). To test for an indirect pathway of peer rejection to internalizing problems through social self-concept, the significance of the indirect pathway was estimated (MacKinnon, Lockwood, & Williams, 2004).

Estimations of intraclass correlations of the study variables suggested negligible levels of between-subject variance for Peer rejection (ICC = .02 - .05) and Social self-concept (ICC = .02 - .03). However, significant between-subject variance was found for Internalizing problems (ICC = .31 - .34). To avoid possible influences of cluster bias due to subjects being nested within classrooms, standard errors of estimated paths were adjusted for clustering of data at the classroom level using a sandwich estimator (Williams, 2000). To account for non-normality of data, a MLR estimator was used.

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In the second stage, the role of teacher support in the pathway of rejection to social self-concept was studied. The intraclass correlation of Teacher support ($ICC = .40$) suggests robust classroom level variance. Therefore, the possible moderating effect of teacher support on the impact of rejection may stem from either a classroom (teacher having a positive relation with the class as a whole) or individual level component (children varying on their positive relation with teacher). We therefore used a multilevel model and tested for moderation of the impact of rejection by teacher support at the classroom and individual level. To test for moderation of classroom level support, a between levels (classroom to individual level) interaction was tested for using a random slope parameter.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 presents means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations of the study variables. All correlations were in the expected direction.

Developmental links between Peer rejection, Social self-concept and Internalizing problems

We tested a series of four nested models: an autoregressive model, a direct influence model, an indirect influence model, and a full transactional model (see Statistical Analyses). Fit statistics of the nested models are given in Table 2. Each newly specified model represented an improvement over the previous model. Thus, the transactional model best fitted the data. The fit of the final model was satisfactory.

Figure 1 presents all significant paths of the final model. In accordance with our hypotheses, Peer rejection at Wave 1 and Wave 2 predicted subsequent declines in Social self-

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concept at Wave 2 and Wave 3 respectively. Social self-concept at Wave 2 and Wave 3 was significantly and negatively linked to Internalizing problems at Wave 3 and Wave 4, respectively.

We ran a number of models to further test the model. First, we tested whether the two pathways of Peer rejection to Social self-concept, and from Social self-concept to Internalizing problems applied equally to boys and girls. A multi-group model was fitted in which the path estimates were compared across the sexes. The model in which parameters were freely estimated across sex was compared to a model with parameters constrained to be equal across sex. The model did not significantly differ between boys and girls, $\Delta\chi^2(4) = 7.727, p = .10$. Second, as half of the children were randomly assigned to a preventive intervention program, the Good Behavior Game (Dolan et al., 1989), we tested whether the pathways applied to both conditions using a multi-group model (control vs. intervention). Path estimates did not significantly differ between intervention children and control children, $\Delta\chi^2(4) = 4.676, p = .32$. We also tested whether the pathways were equal across time in order to retain statistical power. Constraining the path estimates to be equal across time did not significantly change model fit, supporting the cross-time stability of these paths $\Delta\chi^2(2) = 0.648, p = .72$.

Finally, given the significant paths from Peer rejection to Social self-concept and from Social self-concept to Internalizing problems, we tested the significance of the indirect pathway of Peer rejection to Internalizing problems via Social self-concept to obtain support for our main hypothesis. Both the indirect pathway from Wave 1 Peer rejection to Wave 3 Internalizing problems, and the indirect pathway from Wave 2 Peer rejection to Wave 4 Internalizing problems was significant ($\beta = .011, SE = .005, p < .05$, and $\beta = .008, SE = .004, p < .05$, respectively).

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Does Teacher support moderate the link between Peer rejection and Social self-concept?

Next, we tested whether Teacher support moderated the effect of Peer rejection on Social self-concept. Note that Teacher support was measured at the individual (student) level. It is however possible that the measure reflects mainly a teacher or classroom characteristic considering the relatively high intraclass-correlation of .40. Teacher support, could thus reflect also a classroom-level factor. We therefore first explored whether the effect of Peer rejection on Social self-concept would vary across classroom level variance in Teacher support. A multilevel model (children's individual level and classroom level) was fitted. At the individual level, the developmental links between Peer rejection and Social self-concept were modeled: Social self-concept Wave 2 and 3 were regressed on Social self-concept Wave 1 and Wave 2, respectively, and on Peer rejection Wave 1 and Wave 2, respectively.

To test whether the two paths from Peer rejection (level 1 variable) to Social self-concept (level 1 variable) were moderated by classroom level Teacher support, the first step was to test whether there were random slope variances. Random slope parameters were considered to reflect cross-level (classroom to individual level) interaction variables. The second step was to regress the random slope parameters on Teacher support (level 2). However, the random slope parameters were not significant ($B = .000$, $SE = .003$, $p = .99$, and $B = .001$, $SE = .002$, $p = .56$, respectively). Also, the effects of classroom level Teacher support were not significant ($B = .169$, $SE = .135$, $p = .21$, and $B = -.001$, $SE = .105$, $p = .99$, respectively).

We continued testing the moderating effect of individual level Teacher support on the pathways of Peer rejection to Social self-concept. Teacher support and the interaction term

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Teacher support X Peer rejection were added to the final model to predict Social self-concept.

Teacher support did not moderate the effect of Wave 1 Peer rejection on Wave 2 Social self-concept ($\beta = .001$, $SE = .034$, $p = .98$). However, Teacher support did moderate the effect of Wave 2 Peer rejection on Wave 3 Social self-concept ($\beta = .067$, $SE = .031$, $p < .05$).

We probed this interaction effect and examined the region of significance using computational tools provided by Preacher and colleagues (Preacher, Curran, & Bauer, 2006). The region of significance indicates the values of the moderator variable at which the regression lines become significantly different. The results demonstrated that the effect of Peer rejection on Social self-concept was no longer significant when levels of Teacher support were above .58 standard deviations above the mean. Figure 2 depicts the interaction effect: simple slopes are presented at -2 SD below the mean ($B = -.113$, $SE = .038$, $p < .01$), at the mean ($B = -.057$, $SE = .018$, $p < .01$), and at +2 SD above the mean ($B = -.001$, $SE = .039$, $p = .98$) of Teacher support.

Discussion

This study aimed to increase understanding of how social classroom experiences with peers and teachers contribute to changes in social self-concept and internalizing problems over time. We found that the developmental pathway from peer rejection to internalizing problems ran through impeded social self-concept. Importantly, we also found that supportive teachers can compensate the negative effects of peer rejection. When teacher support at the end of the school years was high, rejection by peers no longer impacted the formation of social self-concept, thereby blocking the impact of rejection on the development of internalizing problems.

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This longitudinal cross-lagged study adds empirical evidence that supports the hypothesized developmental links between peer rejection, children's social self-concept, and internalizing problems. As predicted by a competency-based model of depression, social self-concept appeared a mechanism by which stressful life experiences in the social domain (i.e., peer rejection) lead to internalizing problems (Cole, 1990; Jacobs et al., 2008). Children's self-evaluations of being acceptable to peers were found to decline after experiences of rejection. Over time, children thus seem to integrate negative feedback from peers into their sense of self, specifically their social selves. This in turn, lead to increases in symptoms of anxiety and depression as observed by teachers.

Few studies to date have examined peer relationship influences in the context of teacher relationship influences. This is surprising, as both peers and the teacher are part of the social ecology of the classroom. We indeed found support from teachers to be a co-acting determinant in the development of social self-concept. Medium to high levels of teacher support protected the social self-concept of rejected children, which may indirectly influence the course of internalizing problems. These findings confirm and extend the findings of Verschueren and colleagues (2012), positing teacher support as a protective factor rather than a general promotive factor in the formation of children's social self-concept.

It is however important to note that only the negative effects of peer rejection at the *end* of second grade on subsequent development in social self-concept was counteracted by teacher support. The negative effect of peer rejection at the *beginning* of second grade on subsequent change in social self-concept was not buffered by teacher support. This could suggest that support

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from teacher needs to be consistent and steady across a school year in order to be influential enough to compensate for the negative effects of peer rejection. In contrast, a poor appraisal among peers at the beginning of the school year already impacted children's social self-concept. This suggests that although a supportive teacher may be an important resource in promoting children's social concept development and in protecting them from developing internalizing problems, they may not be able to single out all negative influences of peers.

It should be noted that developmental linkages between rejection, self-concept and internalizing problems were not always consistent over time. Peer rejection predicted social self-concept two out of three times. Also, social self-concept at wave 1 was unrelated to internalizing problems at wave 2 but social self-concept at wave 2 and 3 predicted internalizing problems. In addition, a transactional association was found between social self-concept and internalizing problems from wave 3 to 4. One explanation is that the link between maladaptive self-cognitions and internalizing outcomes becomes stronger with age as children's cognitive abilities mature (Jacobs et al., 2008). Jacobs and colleagues (2008) argued for a developmental shift from unidirectional to transactional linkages with age: Because the construction of a self guided by evaluations of personal competencies is a developmental task of middle childhood, negative self-perceptions may lead to depression symptoms earlier in childhood, but transactional relations may emerge later in development when self-perceptions become more stable and less dependent on negative life experiences. This could also explain why peer rejection was no longer a predictor but became an outcome of internalizing behavior problems and low social self-concept in third

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grade. Longitudinal research covering a larger developmental period is needed to test such age-dependent effects.

Strengths and Limitations

This study is among the first to test transactional linkages between peer rejection, social self-concept, and internalizing problems using longitudinal, autoregressive cross-lagged analyses. Different informants reported on different variables in the model (i.e., peer assessments, child reports, and teacher reports from two different classroom teachers). Thus the significant cross-time associations between the variables cannot be explained by shared-source variance. However, no causal inferences should be drawn from non-experimental data. In addition, the results are restricted to a relatively ‘advantaged’ population as the majority of their parents had completed higher education (63% of mothers, 57% of fathers). Furthermore, the results are limited to the middle school years (grade 2 and 3). Given changes in the stability of social self-concept as well as changes in the relative importance of peer groups across different developmental periods, longitudinal research covering different age ranges is warranted. Finally, the results may not generalize to other forms of peer difficulties like peer victimization or lack of close friendships.

Implications

Internalizing problems tend to increase during the elementary school years (Zahn-Waxler, Shirtcliff, & Marceau, 2008). This study demonstrates the impact of peer rejection in explaining, at least partly, this increase. The findings signal the need for interventions aimed at improving peer interactions in order to prevent the development of internalizing problems. In addition, teachers may be a key variable in the process. The study provides some support that teachers can

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compensate for troubled relationships with peers, thereby indirectly altering the developmental course of internalizing problems. However, as this effect was limited to the end of the school year, future research should examine what rejected children need from teachers that can already compensate for the aversive effects of peer rejection at the beginning of a school year.

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Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations, and Bivariate Correlations between Study Variables.

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1.Rejection_W1	0.18	.16												
2.Rejection_W2	0.22	.19	.74											
3.Rejection_W3	0.22	.19	.66	.77										
4.Rejection_W4	0.23	.19	.59	.73	.77									
5.Social SC_W1	2.32	.43	-.14	-.16	-.09	-.11								
6.Social SC_W2	2.36	.45	-.15	-.21	-.16	-.17	.46							
7.Social SC_W3	2.37	.43	-.22	-.24	-.20	-.22	.42	.55						
8.Social SC_W4	2.38	.46	-.17	-.21	-.16	-.23	.37	.43	.62					
9.Internalizing_W1	1.67	.57	.08	.09	.06	.06	-.05	.00	.01	-.04				
10.Internalizing_W2	1.71	.57	.04	.11	.07	.06	-.05	.01	.06	.03	.63			
11.Internalizing_W3	1.80	.61	.09	.14	.09	.12	-.12	-.11	-.03	-.11	.18	.21		
12.Internalizing_W4	1.77	.56	.04	.11	.06	.06	-.10	-.14	-.09	-.14	.21	.19	.68	
13.T Support_W12	3.18	.40	-.26	-.27	-.22	-.26	.07	.07	.10	.08	-.37	-.36	-.05	-.03

Note. Social SC = Social Self-Concept; T = Teacher, W = Wave; Bold entries present significant correlations at $p < .05$

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Table 2. Model Fit Statistics

Models	Model fit			Model improvement			
	χ^2	<i>df</i>	RMSEA	SRMR	CFI	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δdf
Autoregressive model	172.051	45	.070	.084	.932	-	-
Direct influence model	156.274	39	.073	.073	.937	15.777*	6
Indirect influence model	130.602	33	.072	.047	.948	25.940*	6
Full transactional model	115.135	27	.076	.043	.953	13.363*	6

Note 1: $p < .05$

Note 2: RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; SRMR = standardized root mean square residual;
CFI = confirmatory fit index

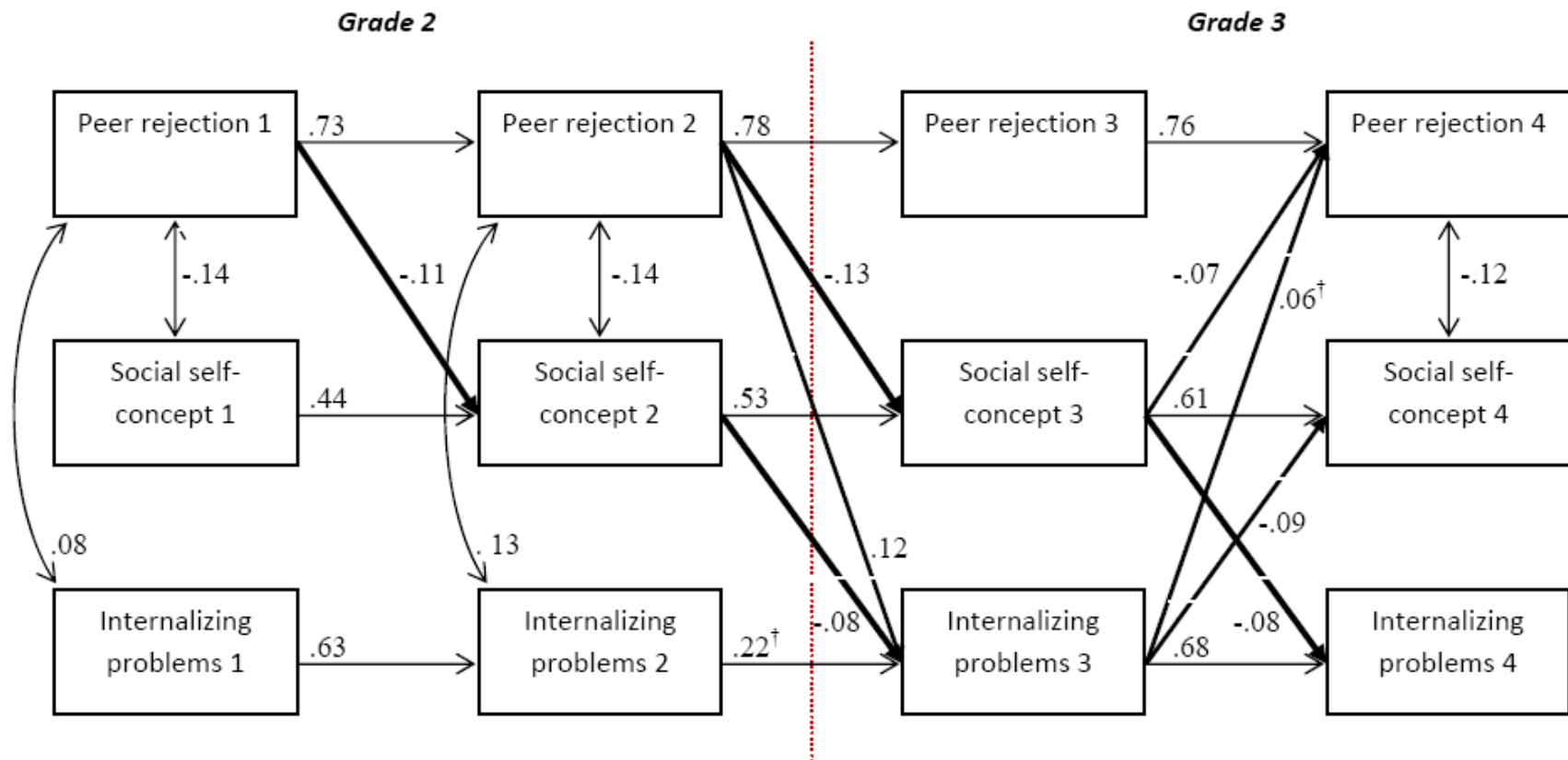
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Figure Captions

Figure 1. Developmental links between Peer rejection, Social self-concept, and Internalizing problems

Figure 2. Teacher Support moderates the Developmental Link between Peer rejection and Social self-concept

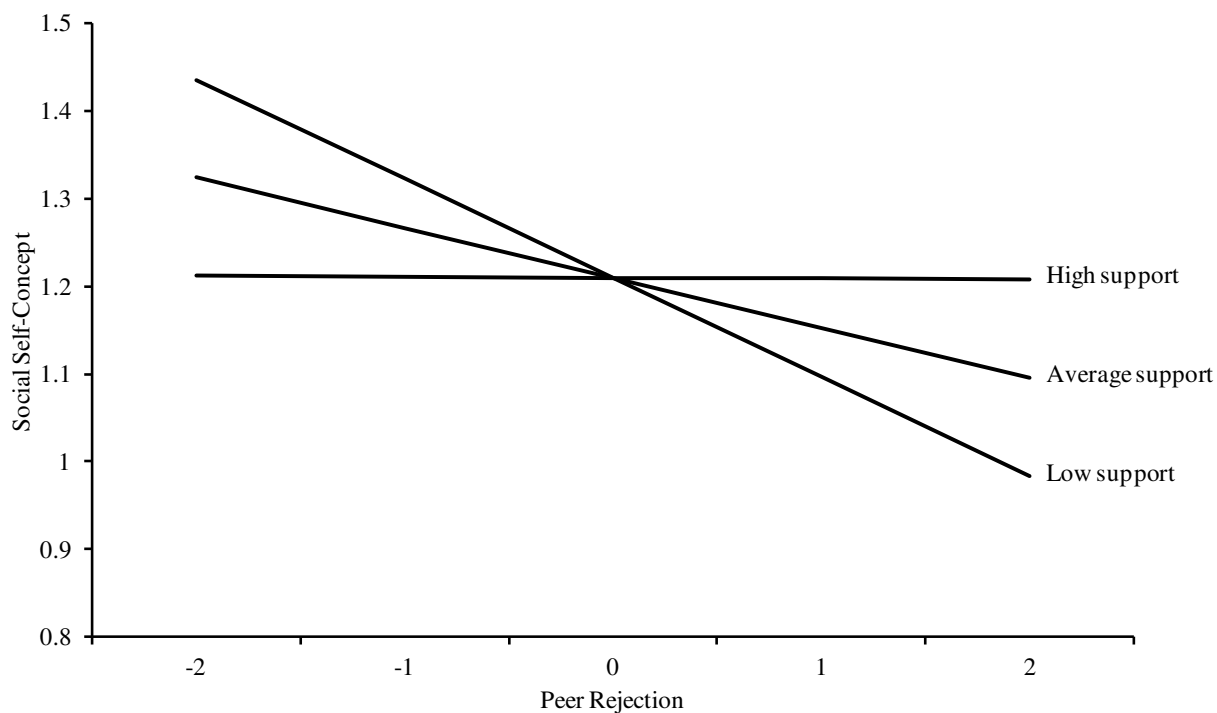
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Note 1: Standardized coefficients significant at $p \leq .05$ are depicted, except † $p < .07$.

Note 2: Single-headed arrows represent autoregressive paths (thin), cross-time paths (medium), and indirect paths (thick). Double-headed arrows represent cross-sectional associations.

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Note. Teacher support and Peer rejection are standardized ranging from -2 to 2 standard deviations from the mean.

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