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Do coping variables mediate the effect of social identity on psychological wellbeing for bullied children?

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Bullying and ethnicity

Bullying is aggression which is:

- physical or psychological
- repeated

Research supports the utility of transactional coping theory (e.g. Lazarus, 1999) when considering children's responses to victimization

To what extent are transactional theories of coping applicable to victimized minority ethnic children?

Ethnic Identity

Ethnic identity is the extent to which someone identifies with a particular ethnic group

- correlated with self-esteem among children and adolescents from minority ethnic groups (DuBois et al., 2002; Phinney, 1992; Umaña-Taylor, 2003; Wong et al., 2003)
- could strength of ethnic identity mediate the relationship between victimization and depression?

Does ethnic identity mediate the effects of bullying on adjustment for Primary school children?

Methodology

Participants:

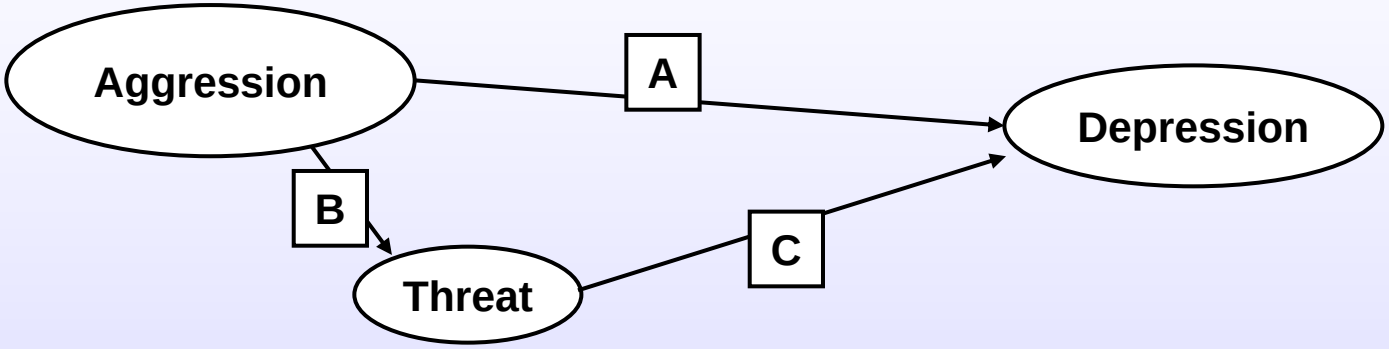
- 925 children from nine schools
- Mean age 9.81 years (SD .91) 54.2% boys
- 60.4% minority religious/ national identity (e.g. Muslim, Chinese etc)
  → much higher than national average (which is approx 13%)

Method and procedure:

- Self-report victimization (Hunter et al., 2004), depression (CDI-S: Kovacs, 1985), coping strategy use (Internalizing, Externalizing, Social Support, Distancing, and Problem Solving: Causey & Dubow, 1992), and cognitive appraisals of control and threat (Hunter et al., 2004)
- Self-report strength of identity measure developed, based on an existing adolescent measure (Barrett, in press)
- Questionnaires were completed in class groups – 55 minutes to complete

Analyses

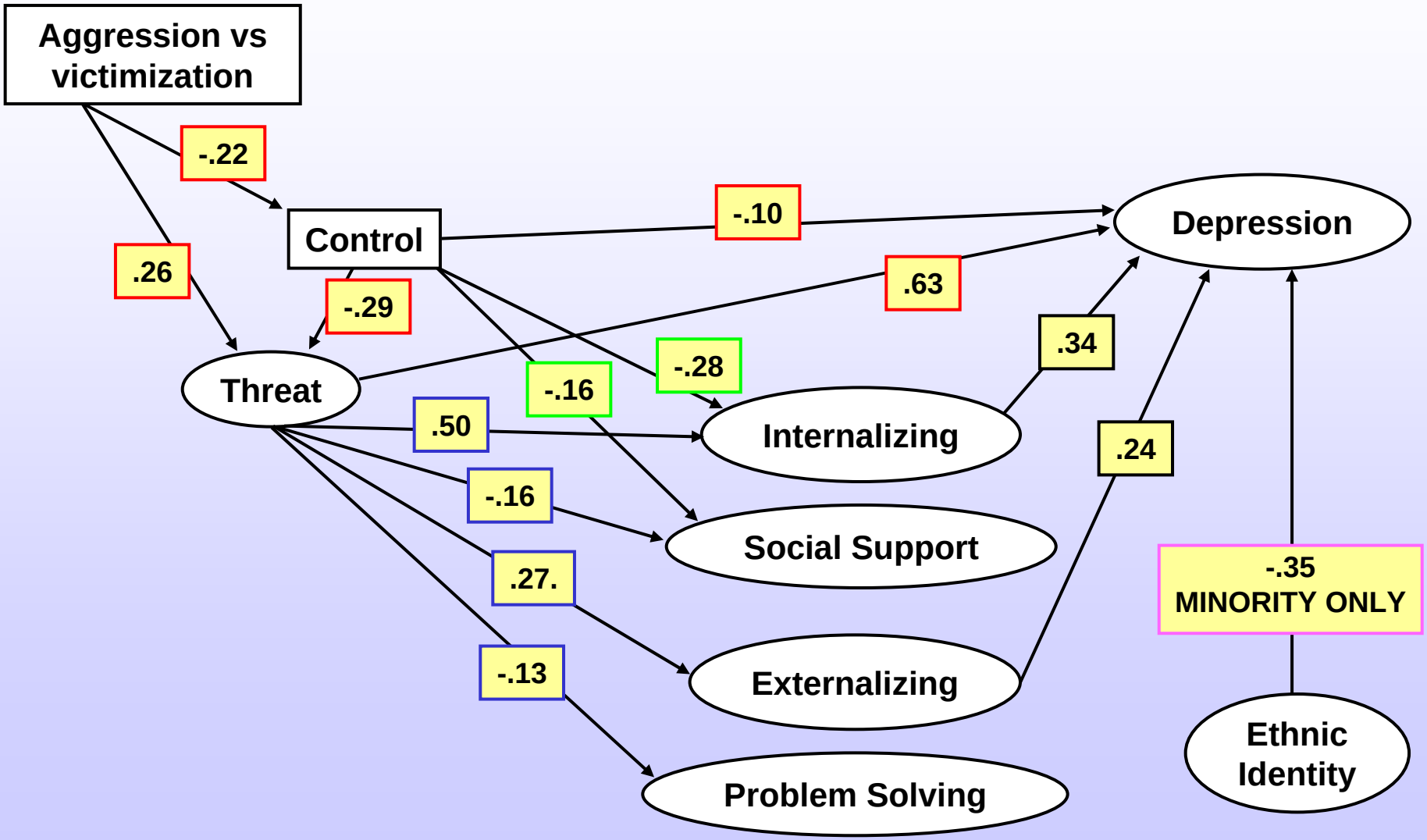
- Do appraisals act as mediators of the effects of aggression on depression?



- Do coping strategies mediate the effect of appraisals on depression?
- Does ethnic identity mediate the effect of aggression on depression?
- Explore relationships between ethnic identity, appraisals, and coping strategies
- Are any of the above moderated by the minority / majority distinction?

Results

Final model, showing *unmediated* standardized paths



Summary & Conclusions

Children's cognitive appraisals are associated with levels of depression

- Need to understand with how children interpret their situation, not just how they cope with it
- This is independent of minority / majority ethnic status

Ethnic identity is a resilience factor for minority ethnic children

- A strong sense of minority ethnic or religious identity should be fostered even among children as young as eight years old

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