

The spillover of violence: The gendered relationship between parental physical violence and peers' bullying victimization

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ABSTRACT

Child welfare and protection are of importance in low- and middle-income countries, yet parental physical violence (PPV) towards children is still widespread in Vietnam. Despite existing research on the adverse consequences of PPV, there is a lack of evidence from developing countries, particularly regarding its peer effects. This study investigated the association between class-level exposure to PPV and an individual student's risk of bullying victimization. Potential gender differences in the association were also examined. This study utilized nationally representative data from the Young Lives: School Survey, Vietnam, 2011–2012 (YLSSV 2011–2012) ($N = 2,508$). This study leveraged quasi-exogenous variation arising from the random assignment of students to classes by employing school fixed effects models. The results of this study showed a significant positive association between a higher proportion of classmates exposed to PPV and an individual student's risk of bullying victimization. This association remained significant even after adjusting for individual-level exposure to PPV and a variety of individual- and class-level covariates. Gender-stratified analyses revealed that PPV among male peers (but not female peers) is significantly associated with bullying victimization risk for both boys and girls. The findings of this study highlight that the negative impacts of violent parenting practices extend beyond the directly affected children, influencing their peers as well. This emphasizes the importance of protecting students from physical violence in the home environment.

1. Introduction

Parental physical violence (PPV), ranging from mild corporal punishment to severe abuse, profoundly affects children's lives (United Nations Children's Fund, 2023a). PPV is a clear violation of children's rights, as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child strictly prohibits any form of violence against them. Despite global efforts to curb violence against children, PPV remains widespread in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) (Lansford & Deater-Deckard, 2012; Ma et al., 2022). In Vietnam, a middle-income country heavily influenced by Confucianism, the cultural belief is clearly captured in the proverb, "Spare the rod, spoil the child (*Thuong cho roi cho vọt*)" (Cappa & Dam, 2014). This phrase reflects the widespread social acceptance of PPV as a somewhat necessary aspect of parenting practice (Tran et al., 2017). Data from the 2020–2021 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey show

that 72 percent of children aged 1–14 in Vietnam were subjected to PPV (United Nations Children's Fund, 2023b).

The detrimental effects of PPV against children have prompted scholars to explore the behavioral outcomes among adolescents who have experienced such violence, with a specific focus on bullying. Bullying is a widespread form of violence within school environments and has a significant impact on adolescents' well-being (Moore et al., 2017; Park et al., 2024; Son et al., 2024). A substantial body of research indicates an association between exposure to PPV and an increased likelihood of engaging in bullying behaviors (Fagan, 2020; Falla et al., 2022). However, the indirect consequences of PPV, particularly its spillover effects on classmates who interact with PPV victims, remain understudied. In fact, a mounting body of research has demonstrated that aggregate peer experiences can predict a wide range of outcomes for individual students, including academic achievement and psychological

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well-being (Becker et al., 2022; Jang et al., 2023b). To address this gap, this study investigates the relationship between class-level exposure to PPV (i.e., the aggregate exposure to PPV among a student's classmates) and individual students' risk of bullying victimization, irrespective of individual-level exposure to PPV (i.e., a student's own experience of PPV) (Jang & Kim, 2023).

1.1. Peers' experience of PPV and students' bullying victimization

The link between peers' experiences of PPV and an individual's subsequent risk of becoming a victim of bullying can be explained through several mechanisms. The intergenerational transmission of violence theory posits that adolescents who have been maltreated are more likely to exhibit violent behaviors towards their peers (Lawrence, 2022; Li et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2020). Indeed, this notion of a "cycle of violence" is supported by several theories (Widom, 1989). According to social learning theory, aggressive behaviors, such as bullying, are acquired and reinforced by observing parental physical aggression (Baldry, 2003; Bandura & Walters, 1977). The home environment serves as the primary context for socialization, where children first observe and learn about interpersonal relationships, develop interpersonal skills, and understand how to interact outside the family (Hong et al., 2012). Consequently, adolescents exposed to PPV may adopt violence as an acceptable method of resolving conflicts, thereby perpetuating violence towards their peers.

General strain theory also supports the idea that adolescents who exposed to PPV are more likely to become bullies. This theory posits that exposure to negative experiences or relationships, such as PPV, can cause individuals to develop maladaptive coping strategies, such as bullying, to alleviate or express negative emotions (Agnew, 1992; Patchin & Hinduja, 2011). PPV is a significant negative stimulus in the parent-child relationship, often leading to adverse emotional responses such as hostility or aggression (Shackman & Pollak, 2014; Sigfusdottir et al., 2012). These negative emotions may prompt victimized adolescents to engage in bullying as a way to mitigate or retaliate against these feelings (Jeong et al., 2021). Building on the concept that violence can escalate and spread across different areas once it is established (Gullone, 2014), exposure to violence within the family can lead to subsequent violence in the classroom, with maltreated adolescents potentially becoming perpetrators of bullying.

On the other hand, there may be a class-level aggregate impact of peer-level PPV that is distinct from the direct bullying conducted by peers who have experienced PPV. For example, a high number of classmates who have experienced PPV can negatively influence classroom norms and attitudes towards violent behaviors. Social norms theory suggests that adolescents' perceptions are influenced by peer norms (Terry & Hogg, 1996), particularly in the context of violence (Waterman et al., 2022). As a result, the view of violence as a normative aspect of interpersonal relationships can become widespread across the class, extending beyond the victims of PPV (Ponce et al., 2004). In such a classroom environment, where violence is tolerated, not only is peer bullying more likely to occur (Velásquez et al., 2021), but also the availability of help-seeking strategies and peer support in victimization scenarios is reduced (Barhight et al., 2017).

Similarly, Exposure to PPV among peers may hinder student integration, which is crucial for preventing peer bullying (Albayrak et al., 2016). Supportive and cohesive classroom environments are important in deterring bullying, promoting social responsibility, adherence to classroom norms, and mutual monitoring among students (Loukas & Pasch, 2013; Shim et al., 2013; Williford et al., 2019). Moreover, extensive research has shown the negative psychosocial impacts of experiencing PPV during adolescence, including externalizing/internalizing behaviors, decreased adaptive skills, and problematic peer interactions (Cho & Jackson, 2016; Pears et al., 2008). These insights indicate that a high number of PPV victims in a classroom can obstruct the establishment of a protective environment against bullying (Abry

et al., 2017), thereby increasing individual students' susceptibility to becoming victims of bullying.

Hypothesis 1 The greater the proportion of classmates exposed to PPV, the higher the likelihood of individual students facing the risk of bullying victimization.

1.2. Consideration of gender differences

Existing research has underscored notable gender differences in the consequences of PPV on adolescents, suggesting that the gender of PPV victims may be a critical factor in how exposure to PPV affects an individual student's risk of bullying victimization. Girls are more likely to exhibit internalizing and affective responses to disruptive relationships with parents, such as depressive symptoms, anxiety, and social withdrawal (Gallo et al., 2018). On the other hand, boys are more prone to externalizing problems, including aggression, delinquency, and rule-breaking behaviors (Maschi et al., 2008). These gender-specific responses indicate that male students, when exposed to PPV, may be more inclined than their female counterparts to engage in bullying (Falla et al., 2022; Lucas et al., 2016). In the school settings, externalizing behaviors are more visible and can significantly disrupt the classroom atmosphere (Abry et al., 2017). Therefore, the exposure of male classmates to PPV may have a more substantial effect on an individual student's risk of bullying victimization compared to the exposure of female classmates.

Hypothesis 2 The peer effects of male classmates' exposure to PPV are greater than those of female classmates.

The influence of classmates' exposure to PPV on individual students may differ based on both the gender of the students and that of their peers. Extensive research has consistently shown that bullying among adolescents tends to occur more frequently within the same gender rather than across genders (Veenstra et al., 2013). The underlying motivation for bullying behaviors, which often includes a desire for social dominance, significant influence, and visibility within the peer group (Pan et al., 2020), particularly underscores this trend. Given that boys often place a higher value on competence and dominance within their social hierarchies, instances of bullying from boy to boy are more prevalent than those involving other gender combinations (Pellegriani & Long, 2002; Veenstra et al., 2013).

Hypothesis 3 Male students, compared to their female counterparts, are more vulnerable to exposure to more male classmates who have experienced PPV.

1.3. The present study

Using data from the Young Lives: School Survey, Vietnam, 2011–2012 (YLSSV 2011–2012), a school-based survey, this study examines whether peers' exposure to PPV is associated with individual student's risk of bullying victimization. The aims of this study are twofold. First, we employ a quasi-experimental research design to address the methodological challenges of endogeneity in peer composition. Our primary independent variable, peer-level exposure to PPV, might reflect individual and parental characteristics influenced by neighborhoods and/or school selection (Jang et al., 2023a). To isolate peer effects from selection bias and confounding factors, this study defines classmates as peers and adopts school fixed effects models (Bifulco et al., 2011). This analytic approach allows us to exploit quasi-experimental variation in classmate composition generated from the random assignments of student to classes within schools. Importantly, we conduct a balancing test to ensure that the class composition is exogenous, conditioned on attending the same school. Second, this study investigates the potential gender differences in the association between peers' exposure to PPV and individual students' bullying victimization. Recognizing the varied dynamics of peer bullying based on the genders

of both the perpetrators and victims, we conduct a set of gender-stratified analyses that consider the genders of the dyads involved.

2. Data and methods

2.1. Data

This study draws on data from the Young Lives: School Survey, Vietnam, 2011–2012 (YLSSV 2011–2012), which is part of the Young Lives Surveys (YLS) project that examines childhood poverty and inequality in four low- and middle-income countries: Ethiopia, India, Peru, and Vietnam. The YLSSV 2011–2012 started with an initial cohort of 1,138 fifth-grade students from five selected provinces in Vietnam—Lao Cai, Hung Yen, Da Nang, Phu Yen, and Ben Tre—in 2011. These students were tracked to their respective schools, and all classes containing students from the initial cohort underwent further sampling. An additional 20 students were randomly selected from each of these classes to participate in the survey, resulting in a total sample of 3,284 students across 176 classes in 92 schools. The survey was administered within the classrooms, and written informed consent was obtained from the participants' parents or guardians. The survey instruments were pre-piloted to confirm their effectiveness and reliability through analytical review. Fieldworkers received comprehensive training and were provided with detailed instructions and survey manuals to ensure consistency and accuracy in data collection. This study was exempt from ethical review as it involved a secondary analysis of publicly available, deidentified data.

The current study employs an analytic strategy which leverages quasi-random variation in peer composition across classes within the same school, valid only for classes that do not engage in student tracking (e.g., allocating students to classes based on academic performance). We excluded 727 students (45 classes) from the analysis based on teacher and head teacher surveys that indicated students were not randomly allocated but rather sorted by individual characteristics such as age, residence, and academic performance. Additionally, 49 students were further dropped from the analysis due to missing information on the dependent variable ($n = 39$), gender ($n = 6$), and individual-level of PPV ($n = 4$), resulting in a final sample size of 2,508. This study uses multiple imputation to address missing values in several control variables (Allison, 2002), including maternal educational level (about 29 % missing data), age in months, ethnicity, number of siblings, birth order, and grade repetition. The chain equations (ICE) procedure in STATA 16.1 was used to implement the multiple imputation procedure. The effect estimates and standard errors reported in this study are combined estimates from the 10 multiple imputation datasets. Ethical review was waived for this study since it is based on a secondary analysis of deidentified, publicly available data.

2.2. Measures

2.2.1. Dependent variable

Adolescents' bullying victimization was assessed based on responses to the following question: "Are you physically bullied at school?" Possible responses were 0 (never or rarely), 1 (sometimes), and 2 (always). We created a binary variable that classifies students who responded with a score of 1 or 2 as victims of bullying. This approach is supported by existing literature, which indicates that even occasional victimization can significantly impact adolescents' psychosocial, behavioral, and health outcomes, and that sporadic instances of bullying often escalate into more frequent and sustained victimization (Brendgen & Poulin, 2018; Klomek et al., 2015; Pengpid & Peltzer, 2019).

2.2.2. Independent variable

Students' exposure to PPV was measured based on responses to the following question: "Are you hit by parents?" with possible responses of 0 (never or rarely), 1 (sometimes), and 2 (always). We coded "always" as

1 and other responses as 0 to focus on more persistent and extreme cases of PPV, which are more likely to manifest in ways that impact peers and trigger the hypothesized spillover effects. To assess class-level exposure to PPV, we calculated the percentage of classmates (excluding the respondent) who are classified as victims.

2.2.3. Control variable

Although peer composition is arguably quasi-exogeneous when conditional on school fixed effects, we included a comprehensive set of covariates to address potential imbalances in students' predetermined characteristics across treatment groups and to enhance the robustness of our estimates. Extensive research has documented that a range of sociodemographic factors—including gender, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and family structure—play significant roles in shaping students' neighborhood and school environments. These factors, in turn, affect the prevalence of parental violence among peers (Jheng et al., 2022; Owens, 2016) and are associated with students' risk of bullying victimization, underscoring the importance of considering them as potential confounders in our analysis (Fu et al., 2013). Furthermore, adjusting for individual-level exposure to PPV, which may increase a student's vulnerability to bullying victimization at school (Shields & Cicchetti, 2001), is crucial to accurately assess the spillover effects of peer's PPV.

Based on these considerations, the empirical analysis includes following individual-level covariates: gender, age in months, ethnic majority, health problem, experience of grade repetition, number of siblings, birth order, maternal educational level, and household consumer durables index, as well as the individual's own exposure to PPV. Ethnic majority indicates whether the student belongs to Vietnam's majority ethnic group, the Kinh. Health problem denotes whether the student currently has at least one health issue (e.g., headaches, sight problems, and hearing problems). Experience of grade repetition captures whether the students has ever repeated a grade. Both the number of siblings and birth order are treated as continuous variables. Maternal educational level is categorized into five groups: never been to school, primary school, lower secondary school, upper secondary school, and higher education (college or university). The household consumer durables index measures the number of items a household owns out of 15 categories of electronics, furniture, and services (e.g., telephone, TV, study desk/chair, internet access, and vehicles), representing the household's wealth and resources. Individual-level exposure to PPV is derived from the same question used to construct our independent variable, identifying students as victims of PPV if they reported being always hit by parents. To determine whether the effect of peers' exposure to PPV was confounded by other peer-level characteristics, we also adjusted for the leave-out mean values of all individual-level covariates.

2.3. Analytic strategy

In this study, methodological challenges may arise from endogenous school selection and nonrandom student allocation to classes when estimating peer effects (Kim et al., 2021). For instance, students exposed to more peers with violent parents might differ systematically from those with fewer such peers. They may come from more disadvantaged family backgrounds, characterized by lower levels of parental education, fewer resources, or less ambitious parents. In such cases, their increased risk of bullying victimization might not directly result from their exposure to peers with violent parents but from these underlying disadvantaged characteristics (Jang et al., 2023a). Additionally, the association between a greater proportion of classmates experiencing PPV and an individual's risk of bullying victimization could also be explained by certain school-level characteristics that not only heighten the likelihood of encountering peers with violent parents but also foster an environment conducive to bullying behaviors.

To address these issues, we employ a quasi-experimental study design leveraging variation generated by the random assignment of

students to classes, within a school fixed effects framework. The main idea of our analytic strategy is that, although students and parents may choose schools based on desired classmate composition, the random class assignment restricts such intentional selections among students enrolled at the same schools. By controlling school fixed effects, we address systematic selection into schools based on family backgrounds and rely on within-school/across-class variation in peer composition (Jang et al., 2023a; Kim et al., 2021). The empirical specification of this study is outlined as follows:

$$y_{ics} = \alpha + \beta PPV_{-ics} + X_{ics}\delta + W_s + \epsilon_{ics}$$

where y_{ics} represents the bullying victimization of individual i in class c of school s . The key independent variable of interest is PPV_{-ics} , which denotes the percentage of classmates exposed to PPV. X_{ics} is the vector of individual-level covariates, including the individual's own experience of PPV. W_s represents school fixed effects, and ϵ_{ics} is the error term. Robust standard errors are clustered at the class level.

3. Results

Table 1 presents summary statistics for variables used in this study. The gender ratio was fairly balanced between girls (47.7 %) and boys (52.3 %). The distribution of maternal educational level was as follows: never attended school (7.1 %), primary school (22.8 %), low secondary school (33.4 %), upper secondary school (17.3 %), and higher education (19.3 %). The average household consumer durables index was 8.833. Approximately 36.6 % of respondents reported experiences of bullying victimization, while about 5.1 % reported exposure to PPV. On average, the percentage of classmates (excluding the respondent) reporting exposure to PPV was 5.1 % ($SD = 0.059$). No statistically significant gender differences were observed across study variables.

This study's empirical strategy is persuasive only for schools that implement random student allocation to classes. We empirically tested whether the combination of random class assignments and school fixed effects models generates quasi-experimental within-school/across-class variation. Specifically, we performed balancing tests to assess whether peer-level exposure to PPV is not correlated with the predetermined individual characteristics of students, conditional on controlling for school fixed effects. The findings, presented in Table S1 in the online supplementary file, indicate that peer-level exposure to PPV is not

correlated with the individual characteristics of students. These results support our arguments that students are not systematically sorted into classes within the same school, and therefore, peers' exposure to PPV can be considered as plausibly exogenous (or quasi-random).

Table 2 presents the estimated association between peer-level exposure to PPV and the individual students' risk of being bullied. Column 1 estimates a bivariate model that controls only for individual students' exposure to PPV. Additional individual-level covariates are included in the model presented in Column 2, while class-level covariates are further incorporated in the preferred model presented in Column 3. Columns 4 and 5 indicate the results from gender-stratified analyses. According to Column 1, there is a positive and statistically significant association between peers' exposure to PPV and individual students' risk of bullying victimization ($b = 0.746$). In Columns 2 and 3, where individual- and class-level are controlled for, the associations remain significant ($bs = 0.746$ and 0.879 , respectively). The minimal changes in estimates observed in the adjusted models further support the notion that our treatment—i.e., peer composition across classes within the same school—is quasi-exogenous, conditional on school fixed effects. The analyses in Columns 4 and 5 reveal that peers' exposure to PPV increases the risk of bullying victimization for both boys and girls ($bs = 0.865$ and 0.865 , respectively). The full results, including the regression coefficients for both independent and control variables, are available in Table S2 of the online supplementary file.

In Table 3, we differentiate our independent variable by the gender of peers. In the total sample (Column 1), male peers' exposure to PPV is associated with increased risks of bullying victimization for individual students ($b = 0.491, p < 0.001$). On the contrary, female peers' exposure to PPV is not associated with individual students' bullying victimization. Columns 2 and 3 show that the significant influence of male peers' exposure to PPV on bullying victimization holds true across both boys and girls. Fig. 1 illustrates these findings by depicting steeper slopes of male peers' exposure to PPV compared to those of female peers.

To shed further light on our findings, we explore whether the effects of peer-level exposure to PPV vary depending on individual-level PPV. Specifically, we included the interaction term of peer-level and individual-level PPV. Table S3 in the online supplementary file indicates that the interaction terms are not statistically significant. This suggests that the impact of peers' exposure to PPV, especially from male peers, on individual students' bullying victimization remains consistent, regardless of their personal experiences of such violence.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics, Young Lives (N = 2,508).

	Full (N = 2,508)				Boys (N = 1,312)		Girls (N = 1,196)	
	Mean or Prop.	SD	Min.	Max.	Mean or Prop.	SD	Mean or Prop.	SD
Dependent variables								
Bullying victimization	0.366		0.0	1.0	0.366		0.365	
Key Independent variable								
Peer-level PPV	0.051	0.059	0.0	0.6	0.051	0.058	0.052	0.059
Individual control variables								
Individual-level PPV	0.050		0.0	1.0	0.063		0.036	
Girl	0.477		0.0	1.0	0.000		1.000	
Kinh (Major ethnic group)	0.926		0.0	1.0	0.930		0.923	
Maternal educational level								
Never been to school	0.071		0.0	1.0	0.071		0.072	
Primary school	0.228		0.0	1.0	0.222		0.234	
Lower secondary school	0.334		0.0	1.0	0.324		0.345	
Upper secondary school	0.173		0.0	1.0	0.173		0.174	
Higher education (university/college)	0.193		0.0	1.0	0.210		0.174	
Grade repetition	0.042		0.0	1.0	0.051		0.031	
Health problems	0.303		0.0	1.0	0.297		0.309	
Age in months	125.202	4.969	95	187	125.312	5.230	125.081	4.663
Number of siblings	1.014	1.306	0.0	14.0	0.979	1.289	1.052	1.324
Birth order	1.927	1.189	1.0	14.0	1.948	1.199	1.904	1.179
Consumer durables index	8.833	2.518	1.0	15.0	8.914	2.540	8.744	2.491

Note. Summary statistics do not contain imputed values. SD = Standard Deviation; PPV = PPV.

Table 2
Regression models of bullying victimization on peer-level PPV.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Sample	Bullying victimization Full	Bullying victimization Full	Bullying victimization Full	Bullying victimization Boys	Bullying victimization Girls
School fixed effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Individual-level controls		✓	✓	✓	✓
Class-level controls			✓	✓	✓
Peer-level PPV	0.746*** (0.216)	0.746*** (0.216)	0.879*** (0.188)	0.865** (0.262)	0.865*** (0.248)
Individual-level PPV	0.205*** (0.045)	0.198*** (0.046)	0.206*** (0.044)	0.241*** (0.060)	0.214* (0.084)
N	2,508	2,508	2,508	1,312	1,196

Note. Robust standard errors, clustered at the class level, are reported in parentheses. Individual-level controls include experiences of PPV, gender, age in months, ethnicity, number of siblings, birth order, consumer durables index, maternal educational level, grade repetition, and health status. Class-level controls include leave-out means of all individual-level covariates. PPV = Parental Physical Violence.

* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01 *** p < 0.001.

Table 3
Regression models of bullying victimization on peer-level PPV, by gender.

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Sample	Bullying victimization Full	Bullying victimization Boys	Bullying victimization Girls
Individual-level controls	✓	✓	✓
School fixed effects	✓	✓	✓
Class-level controls	✓	✓	✓
Peer-level PPV (Boys)	0.491*** (0.109)	0.435* (0.173)	0.555*** (0.149)
Peer-level PPV (Girls)	0.215 (0.209)	0.236 (0.260)	0.091 (0.260)
Individual-level PPV	0.200*** (0.043)	0.240*** (0.059)	0.194* (0.081)
N	2,508	1,312	1,196

Note. Robust standard errors, clustered at the class level, are reported in parentheses. Individual-level controls include experiences of PPV, gender, age in months, ethnicity, number of siblings, birth order, consumer durables index, maternal educational level, grade repetition, and health status. Class-level controls include leave-out means of all individual-level covariates. PPV = Parental Physical Violence.

* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01 *** p < 0.001.

4. Discussion

As the importance of child welfare and protection escalates in LMICs, a growing body of research highlights the detrimental effects of PPV against children. However, the existing literature primarily focuses on the individual-level consequences of PPV, leaving the potential impact of PPV victims on their peers largely unexplored. To address this research gap, our study examined whether peers' exposure to PPV is associated with individual students' risk of bullying victimization. Leveraging school-based survey data of Vietnamese students, this study employed a quasi-experimental research design to overcome several methodological challenges in estimating peer effects. Our findings revealed a significant association between a higher proportion of classmates experiencing PPV and an increased risk of bullying victimization among students.

Our findings offer valuable insights into the extension of negative home experiences to the school environment and their diffusion among classroom peers (Kim et al., 2022). Our analysis lends support to the notion of spillover and crossover effects within and between family and peer contexts (Pu & Rodriguez, 2021). Spillover theory posits that emotions or behaviors triggered in one subsystem can transfer to another, given that individuals are part of multiple social systems (Parke & Ladd, 2016). Consistent with the existing body of research on the victim-bully continuum (Li et al., 2021), our findings reaffirms the idea that violence spills over from the family to the peer domain via PPV victims. On the other hand, crossover effects refer to the behavior transfer within a specific subsystem rather than across different domains (Nelson et al., 2009). Our study provides evidence of the crossover of victimization experiences across classmates, particularly driven by peers exposed to PPV.

Building on this understanding, it is important to acknowledge that the dynamics of peer-level PPV and bullying victimization can vary substantially across different regional and cultural contexts. This variability is largely influenced by distinct legislative frameworks, societal norms, and cultural attitudes towards parenting practices and their regulation. For instance, in regions such as certain southern states in the United States, where corporal punishment remains legally sanctioned, the social acceptability of such practices may diminish the perceived severity of PPV, thereby influencing the nature and extent of its spillover effects on peer victimization in schools (Wadji et al., 2023). Conversely, in sociocultural contexts where regulations on physical violence are strict and its prevalence is low, PPV may be perceived as a more critical threat to victims, potentially amplifying its spillover effects on peers. This highlights the need for future comparative studies across diverse countries and regions, which could further deepen the discourse on the global dimensions of adolescent violence and enhance our understanding of how these dynamics manifest across different settings (Kim & Fong, 2024).

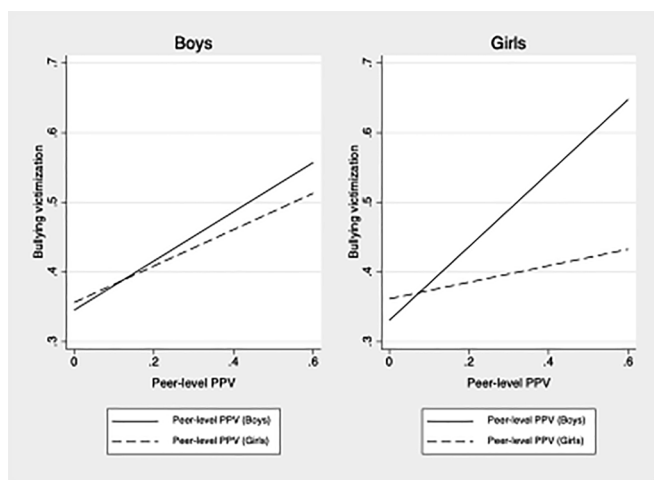


Fig. 1. Predicted values of bullying victimization in relation to peer-level PPV and gender.

Moreover, this study revealed a significant gender difference in the relationship between peers' exposure to PPV and students' experiences of bullying victimization. At the class level, an increase in the proportion of male students exposed to PPV is positively associated with the risk of bullying victimization for both boys and girls. This may be attributed to the tendency of boys to exhibit externalizing behaviors and aggression as reactions to PPV (Eisner & Malti, 2015). Moreover, given our study's emphasis on bullying involving physical components, this result is consistent with previous findings that suggest boys are more likely to engage in physical aggression than emotional or relational bullying (Lucas et al., 2016).

The present study contributes significantly to the existing body of research in several key ways. First, this study broadens the discussion on the negative consequences of PPV against children beyond the individual level. Our findings provide empirical evidence of the peer effects of PPV on students' bullying victimization, which is a critical issue for adolescent well-being. In this study, we employed school fixed effects models to obtain a more accurate estimate of peer effects, while addressing methodological challenges associated with endogenous peer selection and unobserved school-level confounders. Second, our study enhances the understanding of adolescent violence victimization within the context of LMIC, with a specific focus on Vietnam. Much of the existing research on PPV and school bullying has focused on developed countries, leaving a gap in knowledge about adolescents in LMICs. Our study offers insights into the consequences and dynamics of violence in sociocultural settings where PPV against children is still widespread.

Despite its contributions, this study has a few limitations. First, for methodological reasons and due to the conceptual ambiguity surrounding the term "peers," our focus was on classmates as the primary peer group. Hence, this approach excluded the potential influence of peer effects from schoolmates in different classes or grades. The potential school-wide effects of PPV should have been absorbed by school fixed effects and, as a result, omitted in our analysis. Nonetheless, given the significance of the classroom as the most common venue for peer bullying (Salmivalli, 2010), this limitation may not significantly detract from our findings. Furthermore, focusing on the experiences of classmates may contribute to suggesting more effective and direct class-level interventions related to school bullying (Saarento et al., 2015), while also offering methodological benefits to our study.

Second, the measurement tools used for assessing key variables in this study have several limitations. One limitation of this study lies in our operationalization of our key variables. The measure of PPV used in this study cannot capture the intensity and intention of physical forces (Gershoff, 2002). Additionally, the assessment of student's bullying victimization relied on a single question, which is less robust compared to the definition- or behavior-based scales (Bjereld et al., 2020). The interpretation of physical bullying may vary among respondents, and students are more likely to underreport their victimization when responding to a single global question rather than to multiple-item tools (Jetelina et al., 2019). Future research that employs more informative and validated measures of both PPV and school bullying victimization could provide deeper insights into the peer spillover effects of PPV.

Third, the use of a relatively outdated dataset may limit this study's ability to capture more current dynamics of peer effects related to PPV. While the YLSS 2011–2012 was the most suitable for our research objectives given the availability of key variables and data structure, future research should consider using more recent data sources. Such studies could provide a better understanding of contemporary trends and potential periodic changes in the spillover effects of PPV on peer bullying victimization.

This study holds several important policy implications. Our findings indicate that the adverse consequences of PPV against children can extend to other students in the form of peer bullying. As a result, intervention aimed at preventing and addressing peer bullying should not be confined solely to the school contexts but should encompass family environments—the primary social space during adolescence (M.

Bradshaw et al., 2021). Policymakers and practitioners may consider enacting legislation or developing educational programs to enhance public understanding of detrimental implications of PPV against children. At the school level, educators and school personnel can play pivotal roles, being well-positioned to identify and respond to students' exposure to PPV and bullying situations (C. P. Bradshaw et al., 2013). Strategies such as persistent monitoring of students' interaction with parents and peers, counseling services for students, and offering parents-targeted educational programs for eliminating PPV may be effective (Evans et al., 2014). Implementing comprehensive strategies at both the household and school levels could help mitigate PPV among adolescents, thereby enhancing child welfare and health in Vietnam.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chilyouth.2024.107978>.

Data availability

I have shared the link for my data at the acknowledgement section.

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