

International conference on **Adolescent Medicine & Child Psychology**

September 28-30, 2015 Houston, USA

Stability of at-risk student perceptions on externalizing behaviors

Kristen Medeiros

Central Connecticut State University, USA

Research Question: Research has shown that teacher and classroom variables influence student externalizing behavior, but little is known about how the child's interpretations of these factors influence their own externalizing behavior. How do student perceptions of classroom climate, teacher personal support, student academic support and student personal support contribute to teacher-rated school externalizing behaviors over time?

Procedure: Data for this study came from "Project ACT Early," collected from children and teachers over 3 years in 4 elementary schools (K-5) in a small, at-risk, urban area of Georgia.

Measures: The following measures were taken during the studies: Behavior Assessment System for Children (BASC)-Externalizing Behavior Composite was conducted which includes Aggression, Conduct Problems and Hyperactivity. The study splits in to two surveys: Student Survey A includes Children's Questionnaire from Grades K to grade 2 and Student Survey B of Children's Questionnaire from Grades 3 to grade 5 (Score: 0=No; 1=Sometimes; 2=Yes).

- Class Climate (CC) -14 items
- Teacher Personal Support (TPS)-4 items
- Student Academic Support (SAS)-4 items
- Student Personal Support (SPS)-4 items

Analyses: A structural equation model was created to look at stability over time. Error variances, stability of externalizing behavior and paths for student-rated variables were constrained to be the same over time. Missing data was imputed using multiple imputations.

Results: Several findings emerged from this study: Over time, these 4 child perceptions explain more variance in teacher ratings of externalizing behaviors. Externalizing behaviors did not significantly change over time. Each year, student perception of classroom climate was negatively correlated with teacher ratings of externalizing behavior. Student perception of student academic support was positively correlated with externalizing behavior each year. The influence of student perception of teacher personal support on teacher ratings of externalizing behavior was very stable and positive. Student perception of student personal support was not a significant predictor of teacher ratings of externalizing behavior for any year.

Discussion: This study examined the role of student perceptions of classrooms, teachers and peers on teacher ratings of externalizing behavior from Kindergarten through 5th grade. The better the student perceived the classroom climate to be, the lower the teachers rated their externalizing problems. The positive correlation between a student's perception of their peers' academic support and externalizing behavior could be explained in 2 ways: Students get upset and act out when they perceive that other students are performing better or understand the material more than they do, or teachers are mistaking student assistance to their peers for hyperactivity or conduct problems. The more the student perceives the teacher to be providing personal support, the less the teacher perceives the child to be engaging in externalizing behaviors. Student perceptions of their peers' personal support may not show its influence on externalizing behaviors until after 5th grade, when students enter adolescence and encounter changes in the importance of peer groups. The child and teacher variables were collected in the fall of the academic year. These associations could be very different and they reflected perceptions and behavior ratings at the end of the academic year, in the spring.

kristen.n.medeiros@gmail.com