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Factors associated with bullying behavior
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Abstract
School bullying is a common social phenomenon. Results from the ICCS 2009 Italian national option showed that about 8% of the pupils at 8th grade in the country reported to have been bullied at least once a week at school. The present study is based on a representative sample of 3366 Italian pupils from the 172 schools participating in ICCS 2009. Its aim is to examine the relationship between victimization and schools’ levels of achievement and of civic knowledge, taking also into consideration students’ and schools’ background factors. First a multilevel confirmatory factor analysis was performed in order to test the validity of the measure of victimization adopted at the student and at the school level, accounting for measurement and sampling error. This model had excellent goodness-of-fit indices: CFI=.98, RMSA=.02, WSRMR=.02, BSRMR=.02. Subsequently a multilevel structural equation model with background variables at the student (gender, immigration background, socioeconomic status) and at the school level (school socioeconomic status) was tested. The only variable that proved to be significantly related to victimization was socio-economic status at the school level and, as expected, it was a negative relationship. Finally a multilevel structural equation model with posited civic knowledge and student achievement as predictors at the school level was tested, also taking into account resources in the local community and the size of the school. The results for this model showed acceptable goodness-of-fit indices: CFI=.97, RMSA=.03, WSRMR=.05, BSRMR=.13. Students’ school performances, resources in the local community and school size, showed a no significant impact on victimization. On the other hand, civic knowledge at the school level was negatively and significantly related to the frequency of being bullied as reported by the students.