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# Does perceived social support moderate the relationship between peer-victimisation and adjustment?

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BPS Developmental Psychology Section

Annual Conference

September 2017

# Background:

## Peer-Victimisation



Peer-victimisation is a form of aggressive behaviour, experienced repeatedly and over time (Hunter, Boyle, & Warden, 2007).

Includes different forms of aggression:

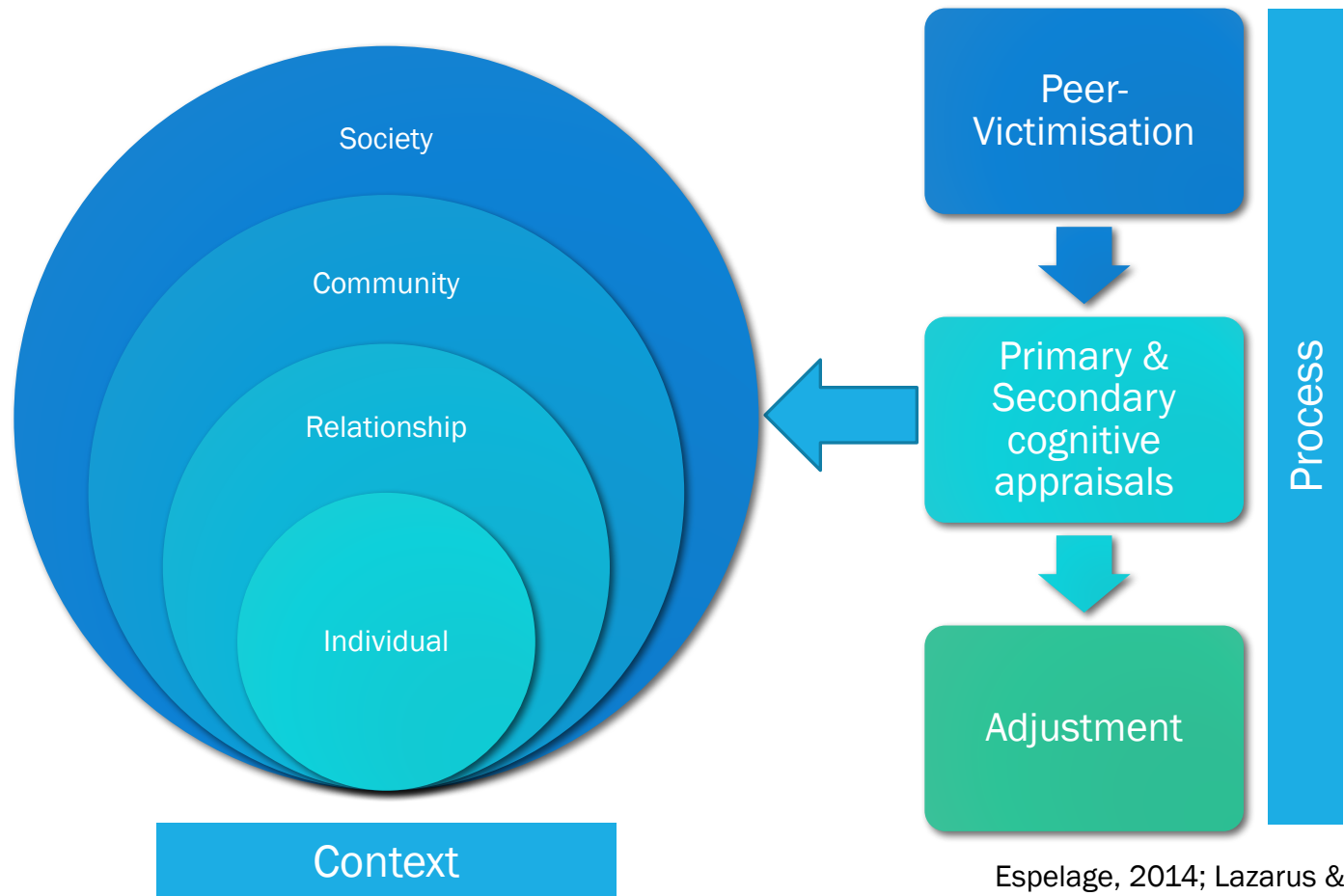
- **Traditional:** Being called names, being hit or kicked, ignoring someone.
- **Cyber:** Nasty, threatening or humiliating texts or social media posts.
- Traditional bullying is more commonly experienced than cyberbullying (Przybylski & Bowes, 2017).

Predicts maladjustment:

- Higher levels of depression & anxiety.
- Lower levels of self-esteem.
- Higher levels of suicide ideation.
- Higher levels of externalising symptoms.
  - See meta-analyses by Hawker & Boulton, (2000); Reijntjes et al., (2011); Reijntjes, Kamphuis, Prinzie, & Telch, (2010).

# Background:

## Integrating the Transactional Model of Stress & the Socio-Ecological Framework of Bullying



# Background:

## Perceived Social Support

One form of secondary appraisal.

Evaluation of the extent to which someone can depend on others for support and guidance when faced with a stressful or challenging situation.

Stress-buffering hypothesis (Cohen and Willis, 1985) posits that perceived social support functions in two ways:

- Reduces the appraisal of a stressor as potentially threatening or harmful.
- Provides coping options for managing the stressor.

Two forms of social support (Pierce, Sarason and Sarason, 1991):

- Global Social Support.
- Domain Specific Social Support.



# Background:

## Perceived Social Support



### Global Social Support

- Did not moderate the relationship between peer-victimisation and: suicide ideation (Rigby & Slee, 1999), wellbeing (Rigby, 2000), or depression (Pouwelse et al., 2011).

### Domain Specific

- **Parent:** Inconsistent findings reported, Tanigawa et al. (2011) found that teacher support moderated the relationship between peer-victimisation and depression in boys but not girls, Davidson & Demaray (2007) found the opposite.
- **Teacher:** Moderated the relationship between peer-victimisation and depression in boys but not girls (Davidson & Demaray, 2007). No moderating role was found by Tanigawa et al. (2011).
- **Peer/ Friends:** Perceived support from a friend moderated the relationship between peer-victimisation and adjustment in boys but not girls (Cheng, Cheung, & Cheung, 2008; Rothon, Head, Klineberg, Stansfield, 2011; Tanigawa et al., 2011). Lim et al. (2011) reported a moderating effect for girls but not boys.

# Background:

## Perceived Social Support

### Not always protective?

- Holt & Espelage (2007) found that victims of bullying, with high levels of social support had higher levels of depression/ anxiety.
- Davidson & Demaray (2008) found that perceived support from a friend moderated the relationship between peer-victimisation and externalising symptoms, the relationship was higher in those with higher social support.

### The current study

- The aim of this study is to examine the moderating role of social support in the relationship between traditional victimisation and adjustment, and between cyber-victimisation and adjustment.



# Method

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## Participants

- 2,499 Year 8 pupils
  - Ages 12 and 13 years old.
- 50.2% were male, 48.2% were female.
- Recruited from 10 schools.
- One local authority region in the North of England.

## Online Survey

- Designed for purposes of the study.
- Administered in class time in exam conditions.

## Survey

### Peer-Victimisation

- Traditional-victimisation ( $\alpha=0.86$ )
- Cyber-victimisation ( $\alpha=0.87$ )

### Perceived social support

- *If you were in trouble or were concerned about something who would you confide in (who would you talk to), please select all the answers that apply to you.*
- Interested in responses to the 'No-One' option.

### Adjustment

- Short version of the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12) (Goldberg, & Williams, 1988) ( $\alpha=0.91$ ).
- *Lost much sleep over worry? Been feeling unhappy and depressed?*



# Results:

## Descriptive Statistics

### Descriptive Statistics

	Total	No Social Support (N=262)	Social Support (N=2,237)
Traditional Victimisation	1.61 (0.83)	1.59 (.80)	1.80 (.97)
Cyber Victimisation	1.20 (0.55)	1.19 (.54)	1.24 (.62)
GHQ	1.76 (0.56)	1.74 (.53)	1.90 (.71)

### Correlations across variables

	Traditional Victimisation	Cyber Victimisation	GHQ
Traditional Victimisation	-	.62*	.43*
Cyber Victimisation	.66*	-	.32*
GHQ	.44*	.48*	-

**Note:**

Results for those with social support are above the diagonal, and those without social support are below the diagonal

# Results: Moderation Analysis

Moderation analysis accounted for 31.4% of the variance in GHQ score ( $r^2=0.314$ ).

	Unstandardised		Standardised		
	b	SEb	$\beta$	SE	95% CIs
<b>Gender*</b>	.25	.02	.43	.04	.35: .51
<b>Traditional Victimisation*</b>	.32	.03	.43	.04	.35: .24
<b>Cyber-victimisation*</b>	.14	.07	.12	.06	.01: .22
<b>Social Support</b>	.08	.12	.14	.20	-.26: .53
<b>Traditional Victimisation X Perceived social support*</b>	-.18	.07	-.31	.12	-.54: -.09
<b>Cyber-victimisation X Perceived social support *</b>	.27	.12	.45	.20	.06: .84

\* $p < 0.05$

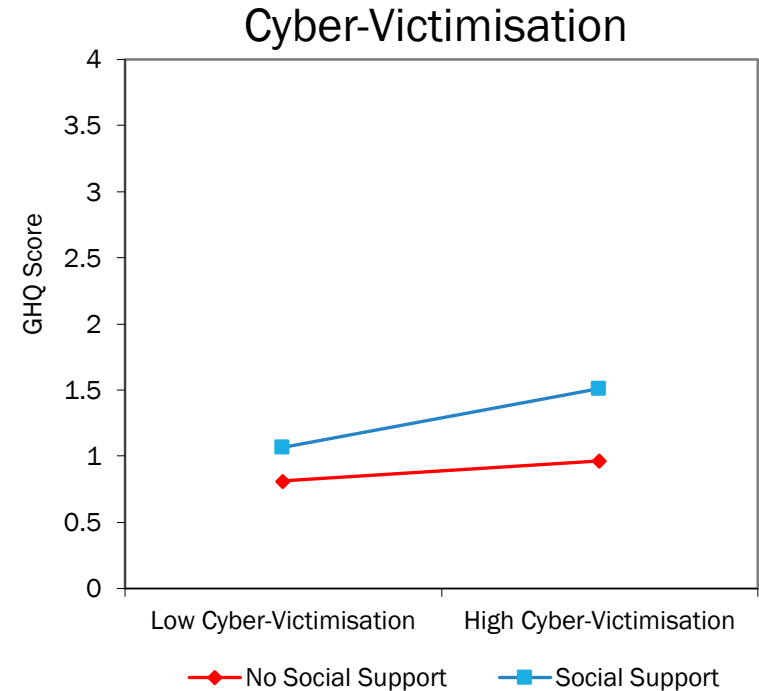
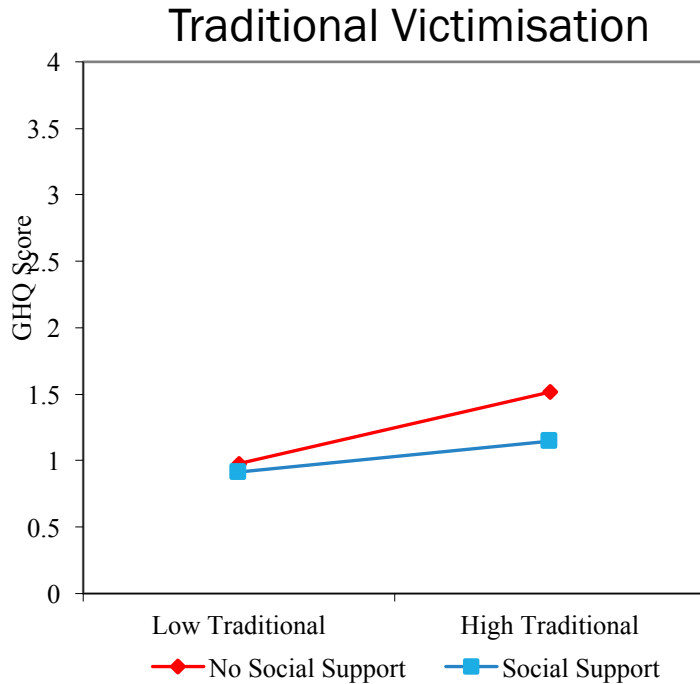
**Notes:**

Social support: 1= has social support, 0=no social support

Gender: 1=Females, 0= Males

**NB:** MPLUS Version 7.31 (Mac) was used to calculate the moderating effects. MLR estimator used due to non-normally distributed data.

# Results: Moderation Analysis



	b	SEb	Sig.	95% CI
Traditional Victimisation: No Social Support	.32	.03	.000	.27:.38
Traditional Victimisation: Social Support	.14	.06	.030	.01:.27
Cyber-Victimisation: No Social Support	.14	.07	.039	.01:.27
Cyber-Victimisation: Social Support	.40	.09	.000	.22:.60

# Discussion

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Perceived social support significantly moderates the relationships between both traditional victimisation and cyber-victimisation, and adjustment.

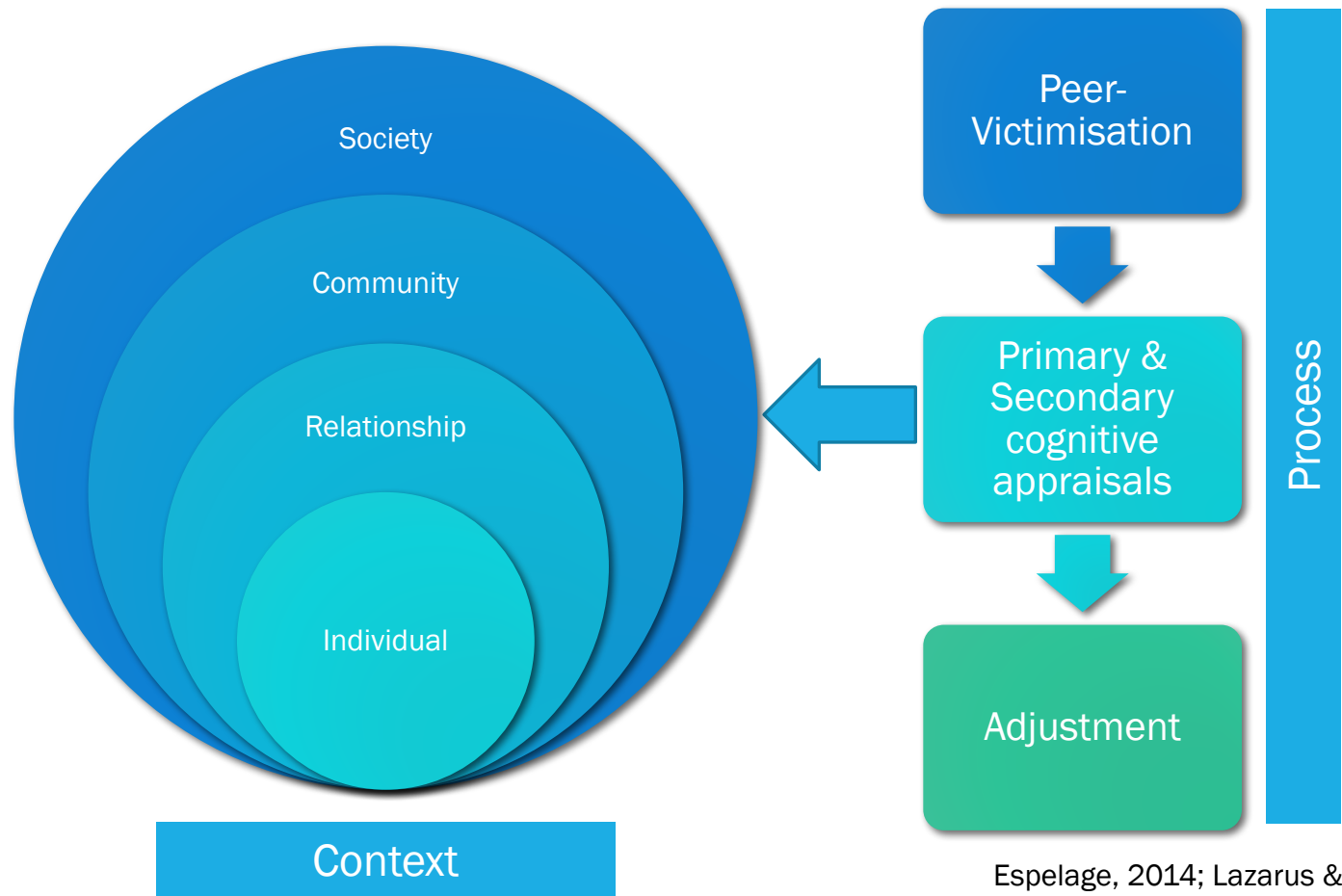
- The nature of this moderating relationship was different for the two types of victimisation.
- Buffering for traditional victimisation, supporting buffering hypothesis.
- Not protective for cyber-victimisation.
  - Social support not worked in the past? May not be an effective source of support?

Cross sectional data: causality?

Findings highlight the role of perceived social support in the relationship between peer-victimisation and adjustment

- Need for longitudinal studies.
- Measure different types of victimisation and different sources of social support.

# Discussion



# Thank you for listening.

More information?

- Email: [n.noret@yorks.ac.uk](mailto:n.noret@yorks.ac.uk).

Acknowledgements

- My supervisors Dr Simon C. Hunter & Dr Susan Rasmussen, University of Strathclyde.
- The Local Authority and participating schools.
- All the pupils who completed the survey

Any Questions?



# Results:

## Perceived Social Support

		Number (Percentage)
	<b>No-One</b>	262 (10.9%)
<b>Support from Family</b>	Parent/ Guardian	1,415 (59%)
	Brother or Sister	606 (25.3%)
	Aunt, uncle or cousin	222 (9.3%)
	Grandparent(s)	282 (11.8%)
	Friend	1,166 (48.6%)
<b>Support from Friends/ Peers</b>	Boyfriend/ girlfriend	236 (9.8%)
	Older pupil	73 (3%)
	Teacher	453 (18.9%)
	School Nurse	59 (2.5%)
<b>Professional Support</b>	School Counsellor	84 (3.5%)
	Chaplain	16 (0.7%)
	PSHE Co-ordinator	28 (1.2%)
	Youth worker	56 (2.3%)
	Peer Mentor	50 (2.1%)
	Non-teaching staff at school	105 (4.4%)