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# The role of cognitive appraisals in the relationship between peer-victimisation and adjustment: A longitudinal study.

Nathalie Noret<sup>1,2</sup>, Dr Simon Hunter<sup>2</sup>, & Dr Susan Rassmussen<sup>2</sup>

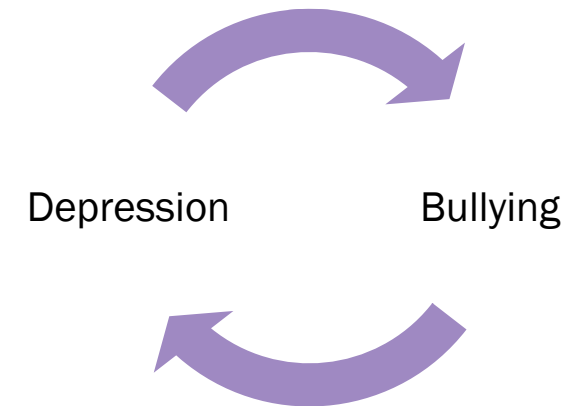
<sup>1</sup>York St John University, <sup>2</sup>University of Strathclyde



# Background

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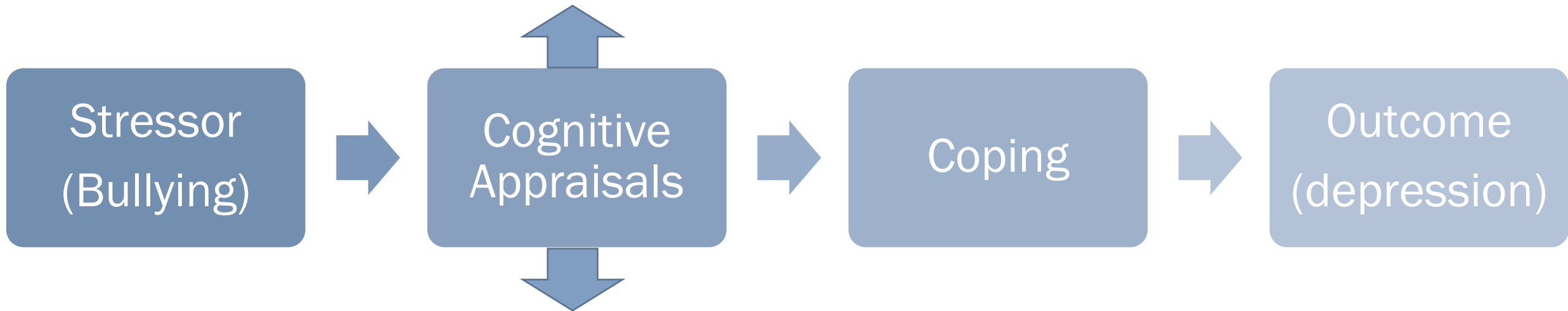
- The relationship between bullying and depression is well established in the literature.
  - Relationship with mental health difficulties in the short and long-term (Ttofi, Farrington, Lösel, & Loeber, 2011).
- Bullying and depression, a vicious circle (Bond et al, 2001)?
- Rejintes et al. (2010) meta-analysis of 15 longitudinal studies:
  - Found a reciprocal relationship between being bullied and internalising symptoms
  - The bullying → internalising symptoms effect was larger compared to the internalising symptoms → bullying effect.
- Not all of those who are bullied report poor mental health (Arseneault, Bowes, & Shakoor, 2010).



# Background

Transactional Model of Stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984)

Primary: An evaluation of the significance of the event for the individual.



Secondary: evaluation of resources you have available to manage the experience.

# Background

## PRIMARY APPRAISALS

### Perception of threat.

- Being bullied leads to greater appraisals (evaluations) of feeling threatened.
- Feelings which then predict anxiety and depression symptomology.

### Perception of being in control.

- Being bullied leads to greater appraisals (evaluations) of feeling out of control.
- Feelings which then predict anxiety and depression symptomology.

### Challenge and blame.

- No studies have studied the role of challenge in this relationship.
- Blame did not mediate the relationship.

Bullying

Primary &  
Secondary  
cognitive  
appraisals

Mental Health

## SECONDARY APPRAISALS

### Perceived social support.

- From parents/ guardians, and from teachers, can buffer the impact of bullying on mental health.
- Is protective, although there are some age and gender differences in this relationship.
  - From friends, not always protective.
- Mixed findings. Sometimes protective, sometimes not.

### Coping Self-Efficacy

- Bullying is found to relate to mental health when confidence in ability to cope is reduced.

# Aim of the current study

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Stressor  
(Bullying)



Cognitive Appraisals

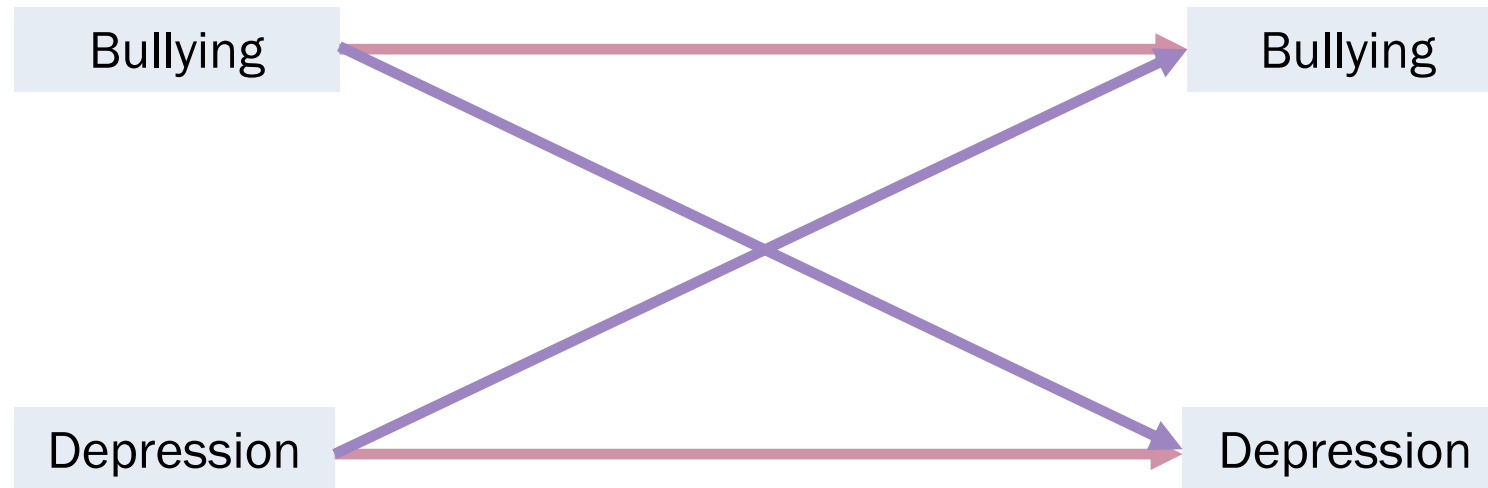


Outcome  
(depression)

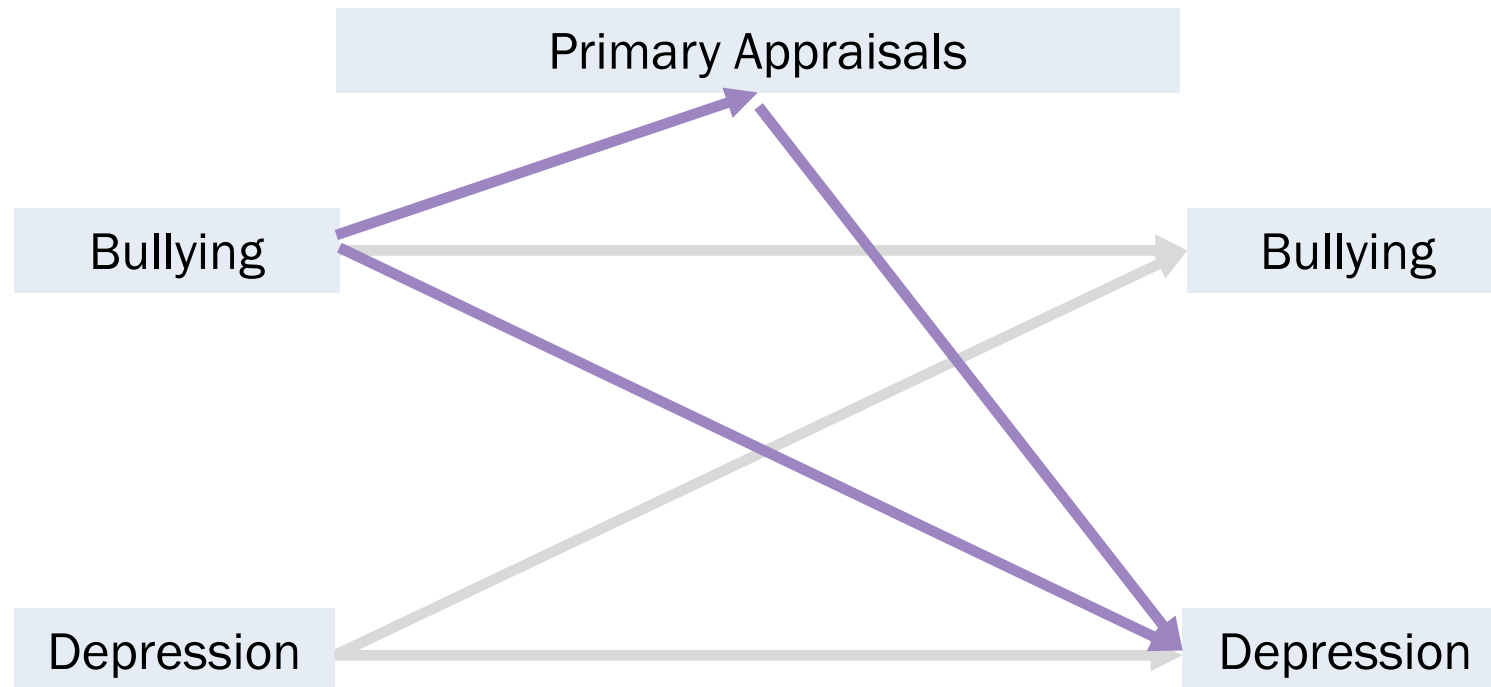
- To further examine the longitudinal cross-lagged relationship between peer-victimisation and depressive symptomology.
- To examine the role of mediating (e.g. cognitive appraisals) and moderating (perceived social support) in this longitudinal relationship.

**H<sub>1</sub>: Peer-Victimisation will significantly predict symptoms of depression over time.**

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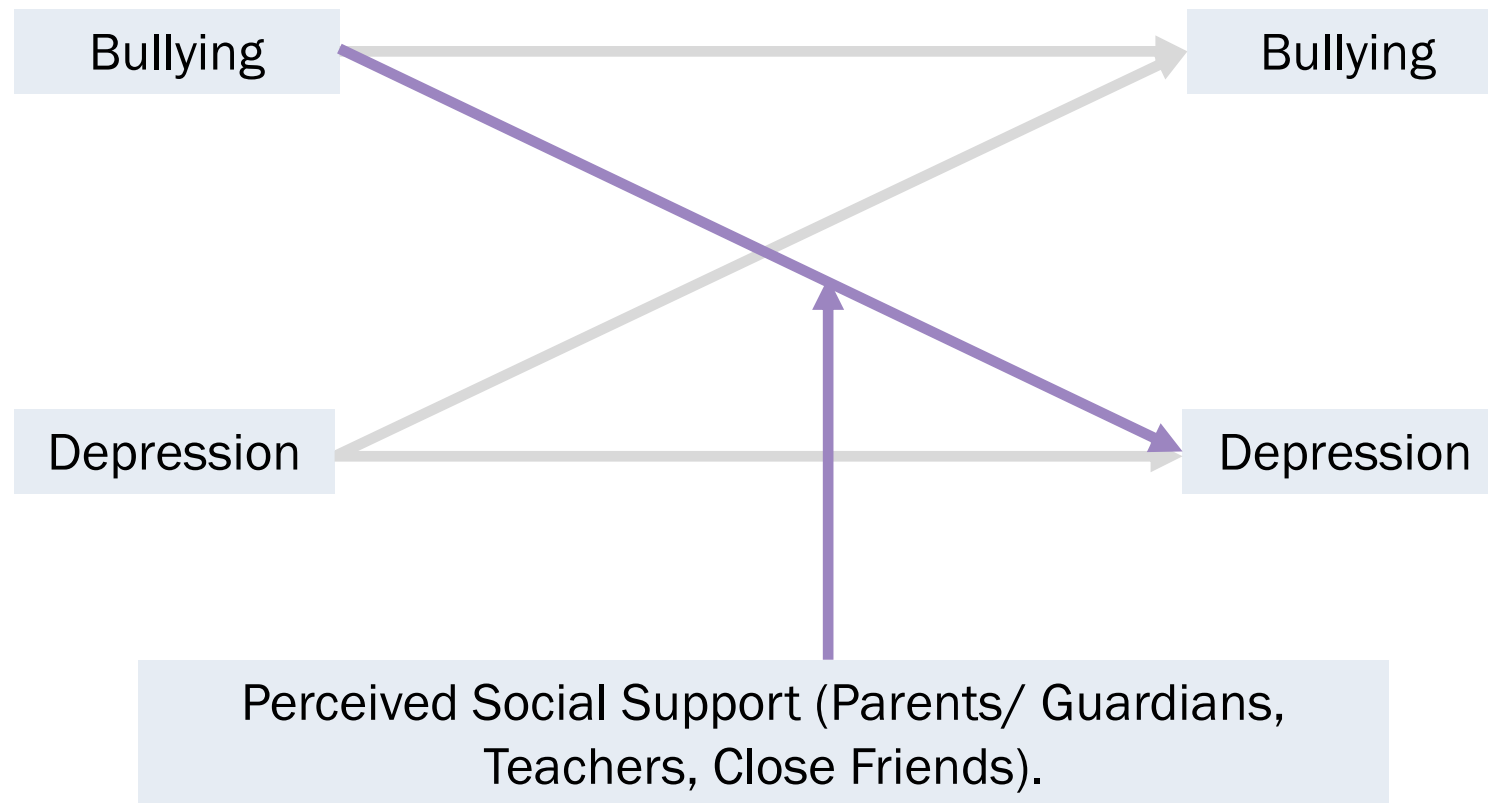


**H<sub>2</sub>: Primary appraisals of threat, blame, challenge and control, will mediate the relationship between peer-victimisation and symptoms of depression over time.**

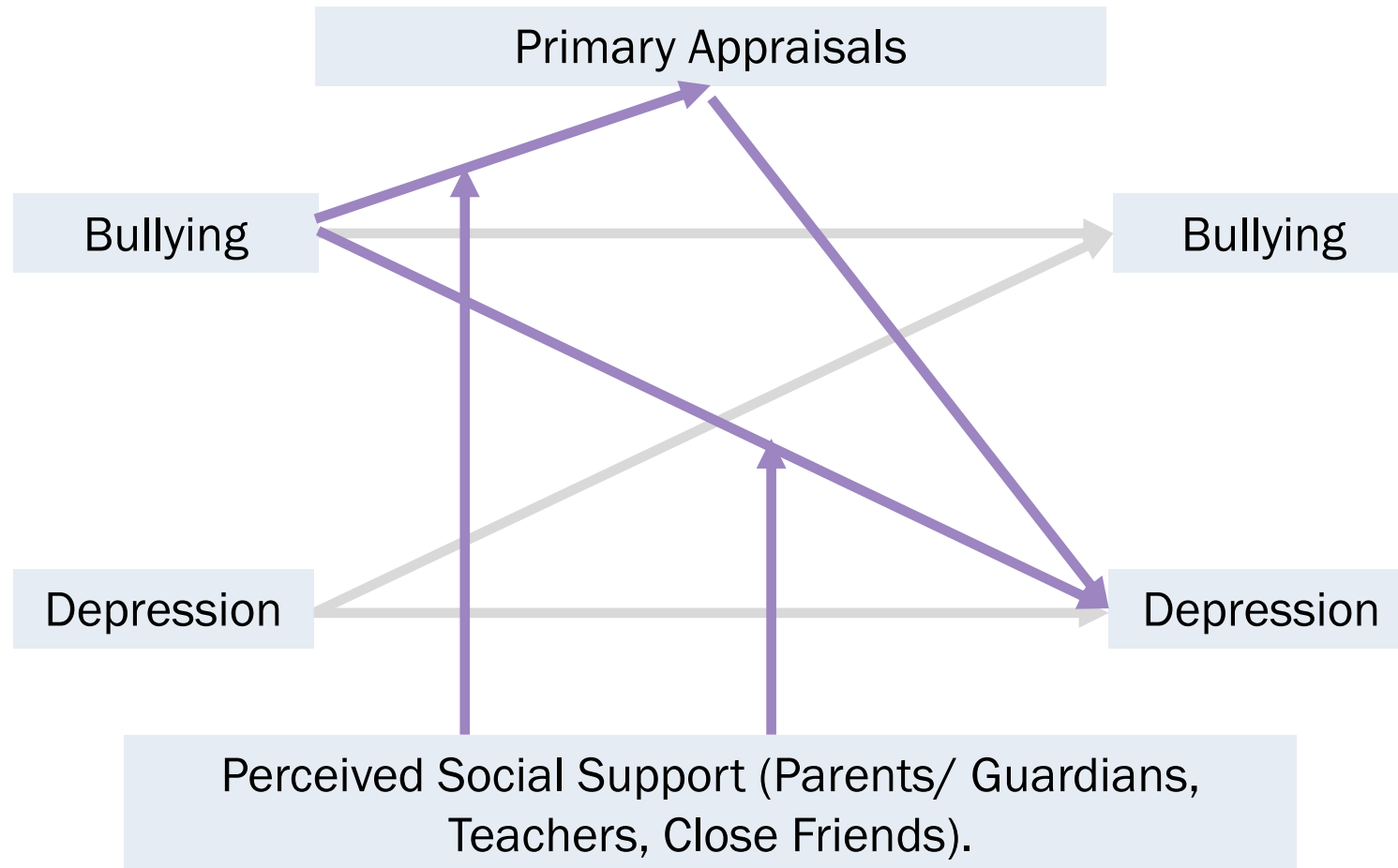


**H<sub>3</sub>: Perceived social support from parents or teachers or close friends will moderate the relationship between peer-victimisation and symptoms of depression.**

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**H<sub>4</sub>: Primary appraisals of threat, blame, challenge and control, will mediate the relationship between peer-victimisation and symptoms of depression over time.**



# Method

Time 1

Bullying, perceived social support,  
primary appraisals, depression.



Time 2

(one month later)  
Cognitive appraisals.



Time 3

(one month later)

Bullying, perceived social support,  
primary appraisals, depression.

- Ethics approval & hypotheses, method and data analytic plan were pre-registered with the Open Science Framework.
- Data were collected from four secondary (high) schools at three time points, one month apart.
- Data were collected in class time, under exam questions.

## Measures

- Peer-Victimisation: The Personal Experiences Checklist (Hunt, Peters, and Rapee, 2012).
- Perceived Social Support: the child and adolescent social support scale (CASSS) (Malecki and Demaray, 2002), parent/ guardian, teacher and close friend subscales.
- Cognitive Appraisals: blame and control (Catterson and Hunter, 2010), threat and challenge (Hunter et al., 2004, Hood, Power, & Hill 2009)
- Depressive symptomology: Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale-revised scale for adolescents (CESDR-10) (Haroz, Ybarra, & Eaton, 2014).

# Method

- Participants were 1,061 adolescents.

Table 1: Sample size at each time point

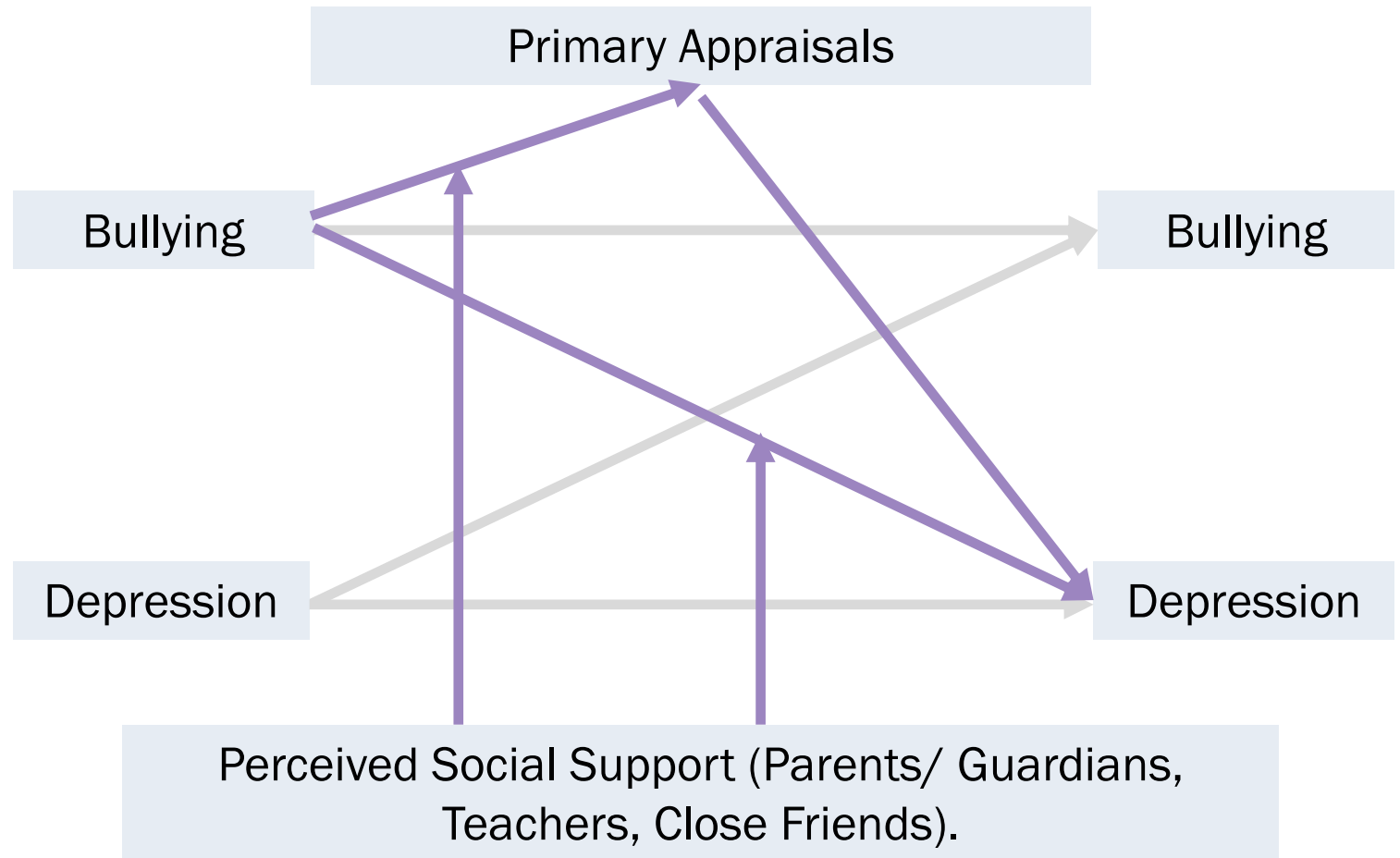
	Frequency	Percent
Time 1 only	193	18.2
Time 2 only	110	10.4
Time 3 only	87	8.2
Time 1 & Time 2	218	20.5
Time 1 & Time 3 only	81	7.6
Time 2 & Time 3	120	11.3
All 3 time points	252	23.8

Table 2: Demographic information at each time point

	Time 1 (N=735)	Time 2 (N=692)	Time 3 (N=532)
<b>Gender</b>			
<b>Male</b>	340 (46.5%)	317 (45.8%)	243 (45.7%)
<b>Female</b>	365 (49.9%)	358 (51.7%)	267 (50.2%)
<b>Prefer not to say</b>	26 (3.6%)	17 (2.4%)	22 (2.6%)
<b>School Year</b>			
<b>Year 7/ S1</b>	258 (35.1%)	315 (46.1%)	183 (35%)
<b>Year 8/ S2</b>	288 (39.2%)	244 (35.7%)	206 (39.4%)
<b>Year 9/ S3</b>	189 (17.8%)	124 (18.2%)	134 (25.6%)
<b>Age (11 to 14 years)</b>	$\bar{x}$ =12.57, sd=0.89	$\bar{x}$ =12.48, sd=0.88	$\bar{x}$ =12.75, sd=0.86

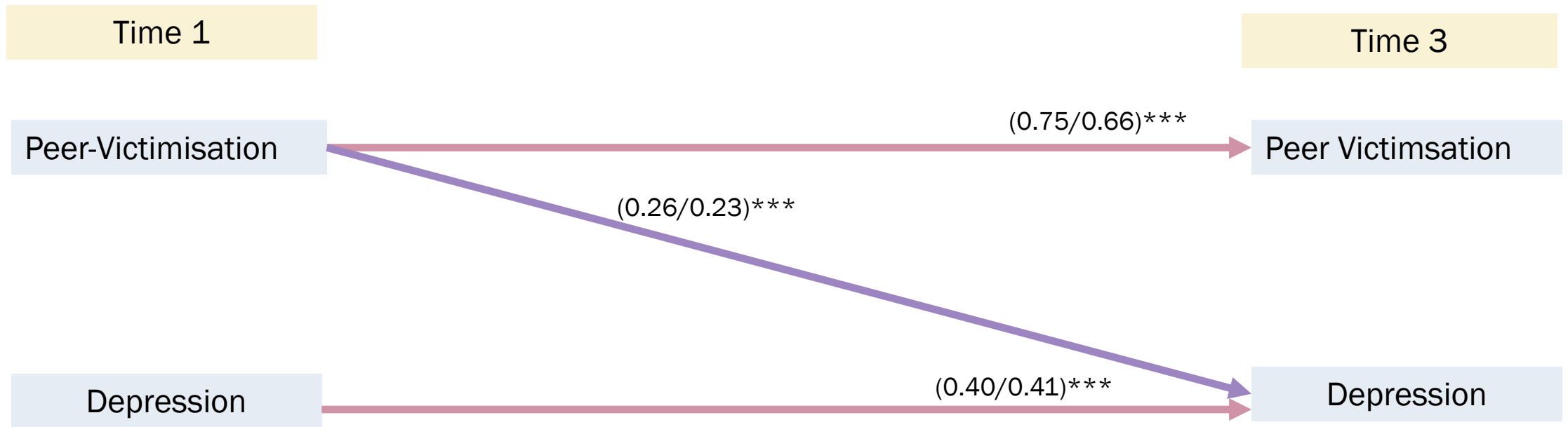
# Data Analysis

- Conducted in MPLUS (v7.31).
- Missing data managed in MPLUS using Full Information Maximum Likelihood (FIML).
- Paths estimated using maximum likelihood estimator (ML) alongside bias corrected bootstrapping.



# Results

H<sub>1</sub>: Peer-Victimisation will significantly predict symptoms of depression over time.

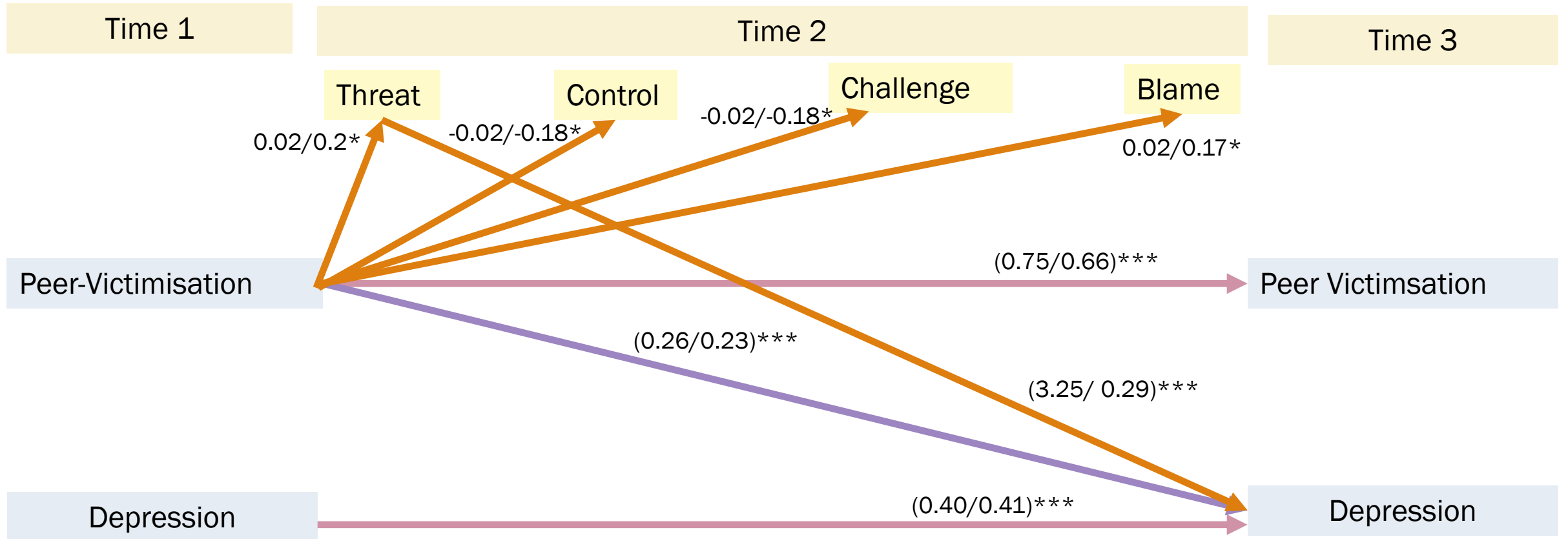


(unstandardised beta/standardised beta), \*\*\*p<0.001

PECK at time 3, R<sup>2</sup> = 0.45, Depression at time 3, R<sup>2</sup> = 0.54 .

# Results

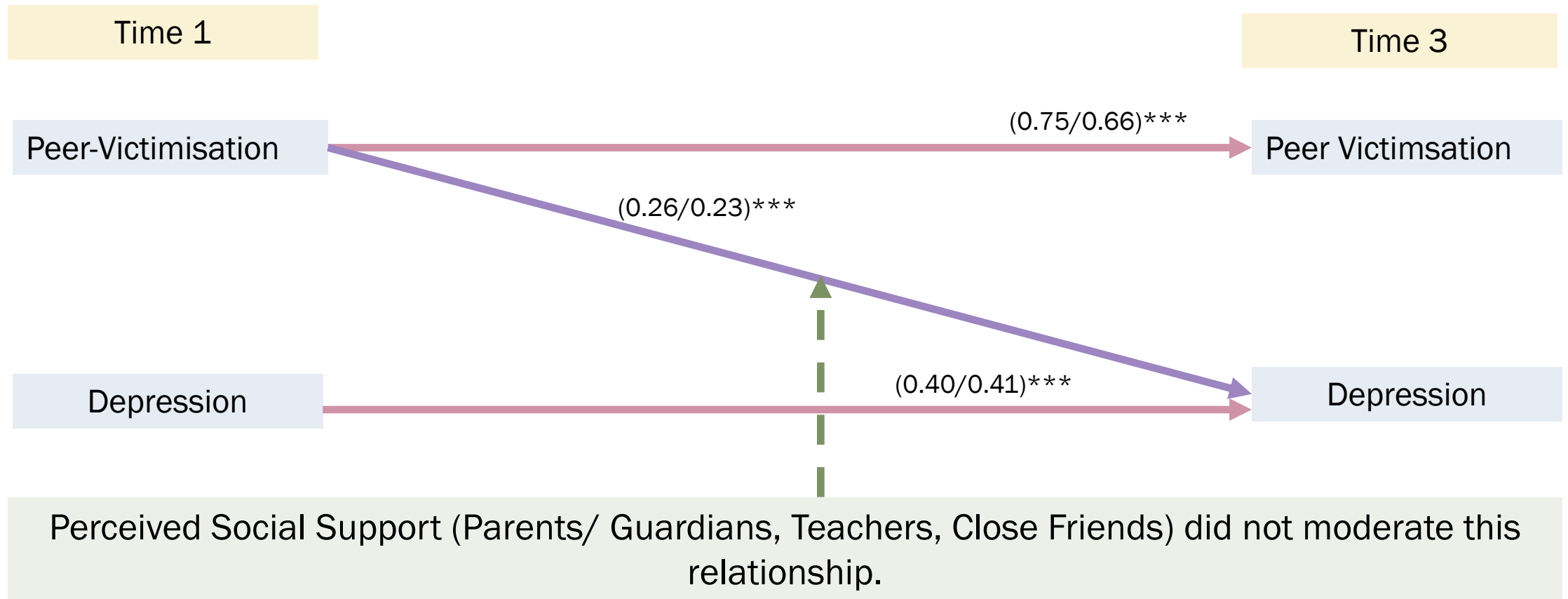
H<sub>2</sub>: Primary appraisals of threat, blame, challenge and control, will mediate the relationship between peer-victimisation and symptoms of depression over time..



(unstandardised beta/standardised beta), \*\*\*p<0.001

# Results

**H3: Perceived social support from parents or teachers or close friends will moderate the relationship between peer-victimisation and symptoms of depression.**

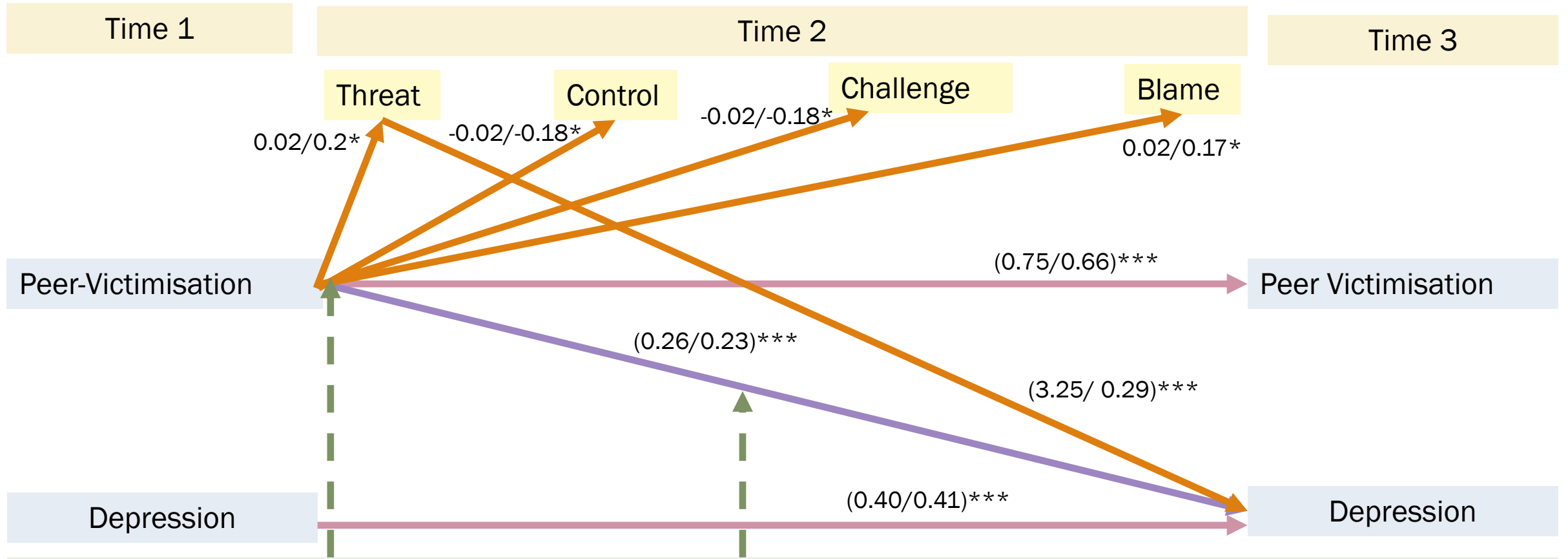


(unstandardised beta/standardised beta), \*\*\* $p < 0.001$

PECK at time 3,  $R^2 = 0.45$ , Depression at time 3,  $R^2 = 0.54$  .

# Results

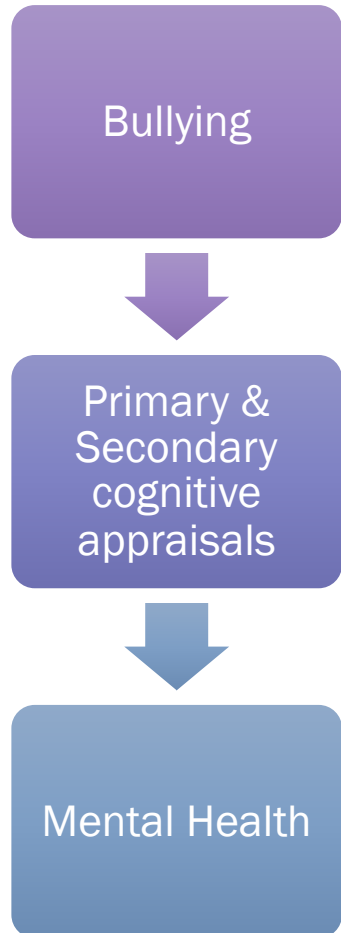
H<sub>2</sub>: Primary appraisals of threat, blame, challenge and control, will mediate the relationship between peer-victimisation and symptoms of depression over time..



Perceived Social Support (Parents/ Guardians, Teachers, Close Friends) did not moderate these relationships.

# Discussion

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## Key findings

- Bullying at time 1 was significantly associated with depression at time 3.
- Depression at time 1 was not significantly associated with bullying at time 3.
- Bullying at time 1 was significantly associated with appraisals of threat, control, challenge and blame at time 2.
  - These cognitive appraisals did not significantly mediate the longitudinal relationship between bullying and depression.
- Perceived social support did not moderate the relationships of interest.

## Evaluation

- Longitudinal study of bullying, cognitive appraisals and depression.
- Measurement
  - Timing?
  - Measure of perceived social support?



Thank you for listening.

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