Peer Victimisation in University Sport in the UK

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the nature and prevalence of peer victimisation in UK university sports. The Transactional model of stress (TMS) is used to examine the relationships between peer victimising behaviours, group cohesion and sport amotivation in the presence of a primary and secondary appraisal. A sample of 207 first-year student athletes from 16 universities in the UK completed an online questionnaire regarding peer victimising behaviours. The questionnaire includes measures of challenge appraisals, perceptions of social support, group cohesion (task and social) and sport amotivation. Two moderated mediation models were conducted to examine if challenge appraisal mediated, and perceived social support moderated, the relationship between peer victimisation and the outcomes variables. The results indicated significant negative relationships peer victimisation and group cohesion. Perceived social support moderated the relationship between peer victimisation and group cohesion. The moderation effect reversed the negative relationship resulting in an increase in group cohesion. Perceived social support moderated the relationship between peer victimisation and sport amotivation. The moderation effect reversed the positive relationship resulting in a decrease in sport amotivation. Challenge appraisals did not significantly mediate the relationship between victimisation and either sport amotivation or group cohesion. This study provides further evidence of the high rate of peer victimising behaviours in university sport in the UK. This study provides support for further research into the use of perceived social support in counteracting the negative impacts of these behaviours.

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Introduction

Peer victimisation, in all its forms e.g. bullying, hazing, harassment, are a global issue. The act of victimizing one's peers has been extensively studied in childhood (Jack and Egan, 2018; Rettew and Pawlowski, 2016), adolescence (Book, Volk and Hosker, 2012; Wang, Iannotti and Luk, 2012) and in the workplace (Valentine and Fleischman, 2018; Ramely and Ahamd, 2017; Verkuil, Atasayi and Molendijk, 2015). These behaviours can have serious and long-lasting consequences for the victims, such as depression (Bowes et al. 2016), anxiety (Stapinski et al. 2015) suicide ideation and suicide (Geoffroy, 2016). These issues have also been identified within sport, throughout all levels of participation and performance. Kick it Out (2019) identified that a total of 520 reports of discrimination/harassment in football had been made in 2017/18. Of those reports, 214 were in the professional game, 105 were in grassroots sport and a further 201 were made in response to discrimination/harassment via social media. In an example of athlete to athlete peer victimisation, cricket players are subject to what is known as 'sledging'. This can consist of verbal insults to psychologically intimidate the opposition (Joseph and Cramer, 2011). Peer victimisation of athletes does not necessarily have to occur between athletes, but can also happen between coaching staff, officials and fans. An independent review found the former British Cycling Technical Director, Shane Sutton, would refer to para-athletes as 'gimps' (UK Sport, 2017). Peer victimisation then, does not necessarily involve a teammate or club mate, but anyone involved with the individual be that coach or administrator.

University sport in the UK encompasses all levels of ability and performance. Offerings for students across universities in the UK can include scholarships for elite level performers to intramural sport for grassroot participants. Most commonly, students' unions, athletic unions or the universities themselves help to support student

managed clubs and sports teams that compete in local and university leagues, namely BUCS (British University and College Sport). These organisations are often student lead, senior positions within the club are often elected by its members to help facilitate its continuation. Membership to these organisations can vary depending on the club's charter, many clubs offer open membership not based on performance or skill, though others do require the prospective members to undergo a trail. Within this framework, students are both the participants and caretakers of the sport and the organisation itself. They are often required to administrate club finance, arrange for training facilities as well as handle internal disputes between members. As more sporting initiatives are implemented, whether its aim is to encourage participation, develop talent or resource elite athletes, the concept ‘Duty of Care’ becomes increasingly pertinent. As discussed by Grey-Thompson (2017), in its pursuit of excellence, the UK sporting sector it could be argued to have encouraged a culture where athlete wellbeing is secondary to results. Grey-Thompson's (2017) definition of the duty of care, seeks to encompass a breadth of issues that range from personal safety to mental health. This multifaceted concept is designed with athlete's welfare at its core. Among the concerning issues, a culture of bullying has been identified in some sports. Peer victimisation has been cited as a problem in almost all age groups in sport, which includes university students. Comparatively little research has been conducted in UK university settings, particularly university student-athletes. Those who are the target of peer victimisation are more likely to suffer from sport burnout (Yildiz, 2015); athletic performances issues (Kavanagh, 2014) and even disengage from the sport (Adler, 2014). As mainstream media and academic research identifies an increasing number of issues, the aim of this study is to examine the nature and prevalence of peer victimisation in university sport in the UK.

Literature Review

The Context of Sport

Sport is considered a vehicle for social and physical development and is thought to be an important component of a healthy lifestyle (Bredemeier and Sheilds, 1986, Vveinhardt and Andriukaitienė, 2017). Sport consists of an extensive network of interactions between multiple people; foremost of these are athlete to athlete interactions (Vveinhardt et al. 2017). Sport can fall into the following broad categories; collision, contact and non-contact, this is in relation to the amount of physicality between participants. Rugby, for example, would be categorised as a collision sport, football as a contact sport and tennis a non-contact sport. Sport can be played by teams (more than one person on the same team) or as individual depending on the game's rules. Team sport participants reported increases in the quality of social relationships and social functioning (Eime et al. 2013). Regardless of sports type, interpersonal relationships between other athletes, be that teammates or co-acting athletes, are an important aspect of an athlete's holistic wellbeing (Vveinhardt et al. 2017). Sports participation has been associated with increased self-esteem, confidence, competence and life satisfaction (Eime et al. 2013). In addition to sport type, it is also worth acknowledging sport exists at different levels of performance. Figure 1 shows the traditional sports development pyramid, it helps to visualise that as performance increases, the number of participants also decreases (Hylton et al. 2013). Holt and Sehn (2008) identified that the benefits of sport can change as the level of competition increases.

Figure 1:

Sport Development Continuum

Teamwork and social skill development are intrinsic to a performance sport environment (Holt and Sehn, 2008). At lower levels of competition, a focus on developing peer relationships was evident; this focus recedes greatly as competition increases (Holt and Sehn, 2008). The sporting context requires participants to work together in pursuit of a shared goal, especially in team sports. The competitive environment promotes the need for collaboration with peers in order to be effective at the game, even in non-team games. This rationale is used to explain why sport is perceived to be of benefit to its participants (Holt et al. 2012). Despite these positive claims, there is a lack in quality evidence as the majority of studies identified in the Eime et al. (2013) literature review lacked a control group, were qualitatively based or were cross-sectional. There are many non-academic sources that echo these claims.

Governing public bodies such as Sport England are responsible for delivering strategies by supporting individual national governing bodies of sport (NGB). These bodies actively seek to promote their sport/s in order to increase participation. For example, Sport England actively promotes sport and cites that engaging in sport benefits participants' physical and mental wellbeing (Sport England, 2016). In higher education, Sport England in partnership with the British Universities and Colleges Sport (BUCS),

the university sport governing body, looked to increase participation in the sport of all university students to 75% by 2017 (Sports England, 2011). Despite evidence that sport leads to positive outcomes, and can be a positive experience, the press and more recent research, has begun to focus on the negative experiences in sport, such as hazing (Diamond et al. 2016; Waldron, 2012; Waldron, 2015; Waldron, Lynn and Krane, 2011; Campo, Poulos and Sipple, 2005), sexual harassment (Fasting and Sand, 2015; Brackenridge and Fasting, 2002; Johansson and Lundqvust, 2017; Johansson, 2013; Muchena, Mapfumo and Dhlomo; 2015) and emotional abuse (Kavanagh et al. 2017; Stirling and Kerr, 2014). The above issues are contradictory to some of the perceived benefits of sport identified by Eime et al.'s (2013) literature review. Within UK university sport, BUCS identified eight themes of anti-social behaviour as part of the #TakeAStand charter campaign. These included racism, sexism, LGBTQ-phobia, disability discrimination and initiations (BUCS, 2014). These issues were highlighted by partners of the campaign including Stonewall UK. These issues exist in sport on a national level and draw on other sporting organisations work such as the FA anti-racism campaign. Although there have been many campaigns to address this behaviour in UK universities, it is apparent that it still exists within sport and on university campuses in the UK (Samuel, 2018). Arguably, these negative behaviours reflect aspects of peer victimisation.

What is Peer victimisation?

There exist definitional inconsistencies and disagreement in the literature when studying aggressive behaviours that occurs within the peer group. The peer group within a sporting context, and for the purposes of this study reflects peers within the same sport team or sport club at university (Donohue et al. 2007). Peer victimisation is defined as being the target of aggression perpetrated by a peer or group of peers (Hawker and Boulton, 2000). However, the term peer victimisation is often confused in the literature

and sport literature specifically, and is used interchangeably with other concepts, such as bullying, harassment, interpersonal violence and hazing (Vertommen et al. 2016). In Hawker and Boulton's (2000) literature review, a list of peer aggressions, individual acts that are encompassed in peer victimisation, were identified within the sampled articles. These included telling lies, rumour spreading, physically hitting and socially isolating peers. These aggressive behaviours can be separated in to two overarching categories of direct and indirect peer victimisation (Mynard and Joseph, 2000), alternatively also termed overt and covert (Kaukiainen et al., 2001). Direct aggression includes physical behaviours such as kicking, punching, biting, and verbal examples like name calling insults or threats (Baldry, 2004). Indirect peer victimisation encompasses psychological and relational aggression such as spreading rumours or character defamation (Eisenberg and Aalsma, 2005). In addition, indirect peer victimisation can occur through technological platforms and the use of internet sites/social media outlets as a medium to perpetrate peer victimisation. At its core, peer victimisation is the experience of any form of repeated peer aggression (Hunter et al. 2007).

Peer victimisation can be used as a 'broader umbrella concept' where bullying and harassment can be included (Hellström, Beckman and Hagquist, 2013). In the sport psychology literature, there has been increasing use of the term interpersonal violence (Fisher and Dzikus, 2017). This operates largely the same as peer victimisation in the bullying literature. Vertommen et al. (2016) for example, categorise sexual violence, hazing and bullying as examples of types of interpersonal violence. Therefore, there are similarities between the definitions of peer victimisation and interpersonal violence. However interpersonal violence can include behaviours perpetrated by adults (Vertommen et al. 2016). Therefore, for the purposes of this thesis, which focuses on university sport peer groups, the term peer victimisation will be used as an umbrella

term for peer-aggression. This next section of the thesis will discuss different forms of peer victimisation and key findings of research exploring these forms of peer victimisation in a sport context.

Bullying as a form of peer victimisation

Bullying as a form of peer victimisation, has been the object of study for many years, particularly within child/adolescent samples (Olweus, 1993). The issue is not limited to a specific country or location and is considered a global issue (Craig et al. 2009). Unlike peer victimisation there are several aspects that are required for a negative peer experience to be considered bullying. The most discussed aspects include repetition, intention to harm and power imbalance. The definition of bullying by Olweus (1993, p. 9) is widely cited within the literature:

> "A person is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons. "

Bullying is defined as a specific form of aggressive behaviour that. is repetitive or takes place over a prolonged time frame (Smith et al 2002). Furthermore, bullying involves an intention on the part of the perpetrator to harm the victim (Olweus, 1993; Olweus & Limber 2010). Volk, Veenstra, and Espelage (highlight how this intention to harm can be inferred by the interpretation and reaction of the victim, and this harm can reflect the frequency and intensity of the behaviour. Finally, bullying occurs in a relationship that is characterised by an imbalance of power, and this characteristic of bullying is seen as behaviour which most distinguishes bullying from aggressive behaviour more broadly.

Asymmetry of power can be demonstrated through several various means. These can include physical stature, sporting prowess, cognitive ability, authority in decision

making or social status (Green, Furlong and Felix, 2018; Kerr et al. 2016). As noted by Volk, Dane and Marini (2014) power imbalances are evident across multiple aspects forming ‘a dynamic ecology’ of power. Physical, social and environmental factors are important in determining whether an individual is more, or less, powerful (Volk, Dane, and Marini, 2014). The perception of an imbalance of power, through its many variables, will be appraised by the individual and can dictate their response. Some aspects of power that are more important b some, may well be disregarded by others (Smokowski & Evans, 2019). The source of power, and its contribution to the imbalance is weighted by the individual. Bullies will usually select targets who they perceive to be vulnerable in some way, this minimises potential risk to themselves (Veenstra et al. 2007). A victim will often be placed in a position where they are not able to easily defend themselves (Langos, 2012). As the power imbalance decreases between the aggressor and target, the characteristics of the 'victim' and the outcome also change (Olweus and Limber, 2010; Volk, Dane, and Marini, 2014). It has been identified that bullying itself can contribute to the imbalance of power or even create one (Smokowski & Evans, 2019). A target who is perceived as having equal power presents a greater threat to the bully and is less likely to be subject to bullying behaviours (Knack et al. 2012). In addition, someone of equal power is less likely to feel helpless and will feel more control of the situation, thus having fewer negative outcomes (Rigby, 2003; Knack et al. 2012). If there are no perceived power imbalances, aggressive behaviour directed at a peer of equal strength remains an example of peer victimisation rather than bullying (Volk, Dane, and Marini, 2014).

The fluidity of relationships between the bully and victim as well as their environment, makes standardised measuring tools unreliable (Finklehorn et al. 2016). Measurements that rely on observation and peer nominations may not necessarily consider all elements of the definition; they do not consider the weighting an individual

will give to any given aspect of power. As such, Volk, Dane and Marini (2014) favour self-reports. This method of investigation is not without criticism. As discussed by Bouman et al. (2012) victims who self-report may consider a negative interaction as being bullying that may not necessarily considered a such. Alternatively, participants may not want to disclose their experience out of shame or embarrassment. Due to the complex and highly subjective nature of these experiences, there are no measurement tools that address all possible weaknesses discussed. It is important however, that bullying specific studies attempt to measure power imbalances, without doing so, the study would simply measure peer victimisation. While there is merit in investigating peer victimisation, confusing this with bullying serves to complicate findings when attempting to differentiate between the two.

Power imbalance is one central determining factor that separates general peer victimisation from bullying. Another factor that has long played a part in bullying research is repetition. Repetition is a core component in the definition of bullying, but one which has been debated in the bullying literature. Studies that employ the Olweus (1993) definition of bullying may exclude any behaviour that is not repetitive. The inclusion of repetition by Olweus was intended to exclude 'trivial incidents of aggression' from what was perceived as more harmful prolonged peer victimisation (Volk, Dane, and Marini, 2014). Olweus (1993, 2013) clarifies that it was never meant to be an absolute requirement, and that singular harmful peer victimisation may still warrant being considered as bullying. The continued use of the definition is problematic as it operates on the literal assumption that singular actions of peer victimisation are typically less serious than repeated long-term bullying. This clause does not feature in the definition. Additionally, the definition does not specify the level of severity required for a negative behaviour to be considered as bullying. For example, a more powerful individual threatening some form of extreme violence only once could

cause the victim prolonged worry/stress (Smith, del Barrio and Tokunaga, 2012). In addition, singular acts of peer victimisation via the internet, such as the unwanted sharing of humiliating photographs, have equally severe outcomes to traditional bullying (Slonje and Smith, 2008; Juvonen and Gross, 2008).

Cyber-bullying can allow the perpetrator anonymity, a reduction in risk, and access to a wide audience (Waasdorp and Bradshaw, 2015). The event is viewable at any time and is sometimes difficult to counteract or remove (Waasdorp and Bradshaw, 2015). Inclusion of repetition as a way of excluding 'trivial' examples of peer victimisation does not function as intended. A study conducted by Land (2003) found that of the 147 students who discussed their experiences of bullying, less than half mentioned repetition as a feature of their experience. This suggests that repetition is not a critical component of an individual's perception of being bullied. As a response to these issues, Volk, Dane, and Marini (2014, p. 328) propose the following definition: 'bullying is aggressive goal-directed behaviour that harms another individual within the context of a power imbalance'. This definition differs from Olweus's as it considers the harm caused, rather than using repetition as an indicator of potential harm. The identification of the behaviour being goal-directed also excludes instances of non-malicious teasing, as was the purpose of repetition. At the core of bullying are the behaviours it consists of, these are the same behaviours as described by peer victimisation with the addition of contextual criteria (Hunter, Boyle and Warden, 2007).

Hazing as a form of peer victimisation

Alongside bullying, hazing is another behaviour which includes inappropriate, and sometimes aggressive, behaviours. Crow and Macintosh (2009, p. 449) define hazing, specifically within a sport context, as:

> "Any potentially humiliating, degrading, abusive, or dangerous activity expected of a junior-ranking athlete by a more senior team-mate, which does not contribute to either athlete's positive development, but is required to be accepted as part of a team, regardless of the junior-ranking athlete's willingness to participate. This includes, but is not limited to, any activity, no matter how traditional or seemingly benign, that sets apart or alienates any team-mate based on class, number of years on the team, or athletic ability."

Hazing is considered by some to be a part of university/college culture, including UK institutions, particularly for sporting males (Anderson, McCormack and Lee, 2012). Unlike other forms of peer victimisation, hazing can be difficult to address due to several factors. Van Raalte et al. (2007) notes that hazing features a willingness on behalf of the victim, a perception that it is required for group acceptance and an element of coerced secrecy. Hazing, as a form of peer victimisation, often features a loose form of consent on the part of the victim to willingly accept these behaviours. This separates hazing experiences from the traditional understanding of bullying as it does not necessarily feature 'unwanted' acts of peer victimisation (Vivolo-Kantor et al., 2014). Hazing does share some similarities with the bullying definition as it occurs within a context of power imbalance. This is exemplified by the perpetrators often being members who are in senior positions (Crow and Macintosh, 2009). A need to belong coupled with the willingness to endure peer victimisation makes hazees unlikely to report their experience to university staff members (Guerrero, Johnson and Holman, 2016). To complicate matters, students understanding of what constitutes hazing is seemingly dependant on whether they willingly participated (Massey and Massey, 2017; Campo Poulos and Sipple, 2005). Further, hazing victims were much more likely to speak with a friend about their experience as opposed to a coach (Guerrero, Johnson and Holman, 2016). This is explained by the victim's assumption and worry that reporting their experience may mean being isolated from the group (Finley and Finley, 2007; Johnson et al. 2018). Hazing behaviours often take place during initiation events, some

institutions in the UK have banned this term which has led to the adoption of the phrase ‘welcome socials’.

Hazing and initiations are often confused as being one and the same. Initiations are defined as an activity/event that senior existing members expect new/prospective members to engage in, as a way of team/group integration (Thompson, Johnstone and Banks, 2018). Initiations are meant to serve the purpose of encouraging integration, the activities required of new members are not always inherently negative (LaFerney, 2016). The activities in which initiations consist of is what determines if it is positive or if it is hazing. This is reiterated by Crow and Macintosh (2009) that if the activity is required for acceptance, but is humiliating or dangerous for the new member, it becomes a form of hazing. Research into initiations show that positive initiation rituals are a contributing factor in fostering feelings of belonging and strengthening group cohesion (Van Raalte et al., 2007). The unification of members in the pursuit of a shared goal has been used to encourage cohesion within college sport teams without the need to humiliate or harm new members (Waldron, 2015). Examples of positive initiations in US colleges include tutoring/mentoring schemes, voluntary community service, organising fundraising events or playing recreational games (Campo, Poulos and Sipple, 2005). Conversely, initiations with mild and severe hazing behaviours are thought to be linked with negative outcomes.

Physical trauma, alcohol poisoning, low self-esteem, depression have all been cited as potential outcomes from hazing activities (Johnson et al. 2018). The severity of hazing was found to be correlated with decreased levels of task cohesion, which is the groups cohesion towards a shared goal e.g. sport performance (Van Raalte et al., 2007). For athletes who have participated in sport and wish to compete competitively, hazing presents a threat to performance resulting in lower task cohesion (Van Raalte et al., 2007). In addition, no correlation was found between hazing on overall group cohesion

(Van Raalte et al., 2007). As the practice involves humiliating, degradation and potentially harmful behaviours, it is understandably not conducive to a cohesive environment (Johnson et al. 2018). In more recent hazing investigations, there is evidence to suggest that athlete perceptions of the potential harm of activities mitigates negative outcomes. Johnson et al. (2018) investigated the hazing experiences of 434 Canadian student athletes using the same measures in Allan and Madden's (2012) US study. The results of the study found that when negative behaviours are endorsed by teammates, initiate student athletes were more inclined to consider the activities as normal (Johnson et al. 2018). When an individual who was hazed regarded this behaviour as normal and harmless, their experience was evaluated as positive (Johnson et al. 2018). This suggests that influential team norms coupled student athlete's appraisal of the situation as being harmless increased the likelihood of positive outcomes. Given the various findings when investigating hazing, there appear to be other factors aside from simply experiencing the behaviour that determine whether the outcome is positive, negative or benign.

The motivation behind hazing and its direction towards first year members is seemingly less to do with the character of the victim, but rather that they are new. New members, regardless of age or ability are subject to the same behaviours with little differentiation. Hazing is cyclical in nature (Massey and Massey, 2017). After experiencing degrading and humiliating 'traditions', victims of this practice are assimilated into the culture where team norms are reinforced (Waldron, 2012). When new members are recruited, those who were victims prior, then become the perpetrators. It is considered by some as a way of reclaiming lost dignity or forcing first year members to 'pay their dues' (Johnson, 2011; Waldron, Lynn and Krane, 2011). There is empirical evidence to suggest that the amount of hazing experienced as a new member was related to the amount of behaviours they would perpetrate as initiators (Hamilton et

al. 2016). It is a practice that is perpetuated year on year for the sake of tradition and to maintain a hierarchy. Senior members who perpetrate hazing behaviours against a new member because they do not like them, could by bullying masquerading as hazing.

Harassment as form of peer victimisation

The definition of harassment features in the Equality Act 2010 and is as follows:

> "Unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual." (ACAS, 2014, p. 1)

Protected characteristics refer to age, disability, gender (and reassignment), race, religion/belief, sex and sexual orientation (ACAS, 2014). There is an additional inclusion of unwanted behaviours of a sexual nature within the Equality Act 2010 that defines sexual harassment (ACAS, 2014). The victim of harassment does not need to identify as having the targeted characteristic, for example a heterosexual person being called gay (ACAS, 2014). The key persistent components of this definition are that the behaviour is aggressive, targeted at a specific characteristic and unwanted. A well investigated form of harassment in sport is sexual harassment. This involves verbal and nonverbal behaviours that are unwanted and offensive/degrading but is distinct from sexual assault/rape (Fasting and Sand, 2015). The aggressors are usually those who hold more power than the victim, many high-profile cases exist regarding coaches using their position to sexually harass athletes (Fasting and Sand, 2015). Racial harassment in sport is also well documented. Cleland and Cashmore (2016) analysed 2500 survey responses regarding English football fans perceptions of racism in football from 2010 to the end of February 2012. Since 2010, 50% of the sample reported witnessing or experiencing racial harassment when attending football games (Cleland and Cashmore, 2016). A total of 83% of the sample stated that they still felt that racism was embedded in the British football culture (Cleland and Cashmore, 2016). The behaviours that constitute harassment are the same as those in bullying and peer victimisation (ACAS, 2014). A similar behaviour that falls within the parameters of peer victimisation that is prominent in sport is hazing.

Banter as form of peer victimisation?

Banter is yet another term that is often citied or used by participants when discussing the behaviours in question. Banter is an Anglo-centric behavioural term that very easily crosses the line from pro-social teasing to peer victimisation (Mills and Carwile, 2009). Within the bullying literature, the term banter is often used by perpetrators to trivialise their behaviour (Myers and Cowie, 2013). Banter within established peer groups can often be seen by outsiders as aggressive or threatening, as the behaviour is comparable to that of bullying or harassment (Dynel, 2008). Example behaviours include verbal name calling based on a topic specific to the victims, e.g. a characteristic, action or previous experience (Gorman and Jordan, 2015). Banter is typical between friends and can be considered a form of bonding with the purpose to promote inclusion, as banter is often jovially reciprocated between those involved (Dynel, 2008). There are two important distinctions between banter and peer victimisation, as the behaviour can often be seen as offensive. The first is the lack of intent to harm (Dynel, 2008). The second is that banter should be 'enjoyed' by those involved and not be unwanted (Plester and Sayers, 2007). The level of aggression or what is seen as appropriate is decided by the group as opposed to those who are not involved, what is accepted in the group may be extremely offensive outside that context (Dynel, 2008). This can cause issues for members of the group when engaging in 'banter' with outsiders, as what is considered acceptable changes. Although banter can be used to increase group cohesion (Dynel, 2008), it can quickly change from jocular to offensive/threatening, particularly with less familiar acquaintances (Dempster, 2009). A recent exchange between law students at the University of Exeter was reported as 'racist and vile', it involved members 'joking' about slavery and using racist slurs (Busby, 2018). This exemplifies how insider norms can deviate far from what is accepted by wider society. Without appropriate methods of determining context and intent, the

behaviours involved in banter are the same as those that are considered peer victimisation.

Similarities & differences between the different forms of peer victimisation

Bullying, which was earlier defined as an 'aggressive goal-directed' behaviour that is used to harm a 'weaker' individual within the context of a power imbalance (Volk, Dane and Marini, 2014), is very similar to the definition of hazing. Bullying is frowned upon, yet hazing is expected (Waldron, Lynn and Krane, 2011). Both hazing and bullying consist of negative behaviours, exist in a structure where there is a perceived (or actual) power imbalance and that the motivation for perpetration has a goal. To be called out as a bully is defamatory (Crawford, 1997), and would likely damage an individual's perceived character. Enforcing team norms and carrying on tradition, on the other hand, is seen as part of their 'expected duty' (Waldron, Lynn and Krane, 2011). The main difference between hazing and bullying is the intent behind the aggressive behaviours. This poses a problem for those investigating the differences between bullying and hazing as measuring intent relies on observations of outsiders or self-reports from the perpetrators/victims. Previous research into the differences between peer victimisation and bullying identified inconsistencies with participant's understanding and reporting their experiences (Hunter, Boyle and Warden, 2007). It is reasonable to suggest then, that this would be further exasperated by the victims of hazing that 'consent' to these aggressive behaviours. At its essence, hazing is another form of peer victimisation, like bullying, that is licensed by its own proselytised membership.

There is a suggestion that the sporting environment is more likely to give rise to peer victimisation (Volk et al. 2015). In sport, aggression is a fundamental element in performance but is not inherently malicious. Understanding and differentiating between

these types of aggression is important. Experiencing physical aggression for example, whilst in the context of a sports match is likely to be considered game aggression as opposed to peer victimisation (Weinberg and Gould, 2014). Kerr (2005) proposes that game aggression can be separated into four categories, these are: play, power, anger and thrill. Of these four, only play is sanctioned as being a form of aggression that is allowed by the written rules and player norms (unwritten rules) of the sport context (Grange and Kerr, 2010). The other forms of aggression are unsanctioned in the sense that they violate the 'spirit of the game' and include unprovoked and reactionary assaults both physical and verbal (Grange and Kerr, 2010). The unsanctioned forms of sport aggression, power, anger and thrill, are not acceptable within the sport context. Although in-game aggression falls outside of the scope of this study, these unsanctioned forms of aggression could be understood as forms of peer victimisation.

In summary, all these concepts share the same aggressive behaviours at their core. The context in which these behaviours occur dictates the appropriate term. Confused use of terminology within the literature makes it difficult for researchers and non-researchers alike to understand what the unique implications are for each behaviour or if they are indeed unique (Crawshaw, 2009). There is some suggestion that the outcomes of these behaviours do differ from one another in relation to severity. A study by Hunter, Boyle and Warden (2007) showed bullied pupils to report more depressive symptomologies than peer victimised participants. It is important to note that peer victimised pupils also reported depressive symptomologies, but to a lesser extent. Using depressive symptomologies as an example outcome, it is apparent that all other concepts have this in common (Campo, Poulos and Sipple, 2005; Espelage and Holt, 2007; O'Reilly et al. 2014). Although there are no studies to date regarding the correlations between sledging and depression, sledging consists of the same behaviours as all the above concepts. Aside from this example of depression, it could be assumed that similar

outcomes are common across all these terminologies. What may differ is the severity to which the outcome manifests, though the empirical evidence is limited. Due to the similarities in behaviours and outcomes (Hunter et al. 2007), it makes sense pragmatically to use the term peer victimisation as the over-arching concept when investigating this topic and sample. Focused, context specific research is useful when developing intervention strategies in fields where there is already an abundance of literature. In this instance, there is little literature that specifically investigates the prevalence of such behaviours in UK university sport. As such, using peer victimisation makes pragmatical sense as it allows for this exploratory investigation into the behaviours that make up these negative peer interactions, without the need to account for fluid and problematic concepts, such as power. The term peer victimisation will be used throughout this thesis when referring to the behaviours outlined in this section.

The Prevalence of Peer Victimisation

Sport consists of a variety of different formats, each of which can potentially have an impact on the prevalence and nature in which peer victimisation manifests. Research into the contact categories has suggested that athletes who are involved in sports that require high levels of aggression and physical contact, e.g. American Football, are more likely to engage in aggressive behaviour outside of sport (Pappas, McKenry and Catlett, 2004; Bredemeier et al. 1987; Messner, 1990). Whether this caused by the sport or is symptom of its athletes is unclear. It is suggested that contact and collision athletes internalise using aggressive behaviour as an acceptable means of achieving a desired goal, in and out of sport (Klimczak et al. 2014). Peer victimisation research in non-sport contexts has shown gender differences in the prevalence and type of peer victimisation that is most used (Hunter, Boyle and Warden, 2004; Campbell et al. 2012 Brighi et al. 2012). Studies relating to bullying in university/collegiate settings

showed prevalence rates ranging from 5% (Sinkkonen, Puhakka and Meriläinen, 2012) to 18.5% (Chapell et al. 2004). It should be noted that the latter figure was based on those who indicated they were bullied once or twice. Given that this study bases the understanding of bullying upon Olweus's definition, this does not meet the criteria of 'repeated over time'. As discussed in Volk, Veenstra and Espelage (2017), discrepancies in measurement and a lack of consistency in the use of agreed definitions can lead to inaccuracies in reporting on this behaviour. This may help to explain the large variance in prevalence studies regarding bullying. Cyber-bullying behaviours in a sample of university students, showed incidence rates in the ranges of 18% to 24.1% (Martínez-Monteagudo et al., 2019; MacDonald and Roberts-Pittman, 2010; Faucher, Jackson and Cassidy, 2014). Accounting for all types of peer victimisation in athletes, specifically hazing, has been shown to range from 36% to 86.3% in studies based in the US and Canada (Campo, Poulos and Sipple, 2005; Hamilton and Scott, 2012; Allan and Madden, 2012, Owen, Burke and Vichesky, 2008; Waldron, 2015; Hoover, 1999). Of the literature discussed above, hazing behaviours appear to be more prevalent than bullying behaviours in higher education samples. There is little empirical evidence for prevalence rates of peer victimisation in UK university sport. Much of the hazing literature is conducted using US and Canadian samples, disproportionately so in comparison to the UK. There are differences in terminology when discussing this behaviour, hazing is not a term that is used frequently in the UK. Hazing behaviours usually occur during initiations and are assumed to be synonymous. Sport is a multi-billion-pound industry (UK), and contributes significantly to the UK economy. Unlike the US, the UK government allocates funding to its affiliated NGB's and has a vested interest in sport success. As such there may be a disproportionate amount of funding given to promoting the positives as opposed to investigating the negatives in UK sport culture.

Drawing from the bullying literature, it is evident that there are gender differences between experiencing and perpetrating peer victimising behaviours, at least in children. Boys have typically been shown to be more likely to bully, as well as be bullied by other boys (Fekkes, Pijpers and Verloove-Vanhorick, 2004). Girls were shown to experience indirect peer victimising behaviours, like the spreading of rumors, more than their male counterparts (Fekkes, Pijpers and Verloove-Vanhorick, 2004). Females develop more quickly than boys and it is suggested that their understanding of peer networks is more advanced, allowing for relational methods of peer victimisation, e.g. peer isolation to manifest earlier. A study of adolescent females who participate in sport were shown to be up to three times more likely to bully and be bullied than non-sporting participants (Volk and Lagzdins, 2009). Females that did not adhere to social constructions of feminism were more likely to be bullied by others (Neversome and White, 2002). On the reverse side of this, there is some suggestion that exposure to aggression via sport may be linked to increases in perpetrating violence (Volk and Lagzdins, 2009). The findings indicate sport participation as being a predictive factor on receiving or engaging in peer victimising behaviours, at least in adolescents. In higher education settings, most studies confirmed that male student athletes were much more likely to engage in more severe hazing practices as either perpetrators or victims (Campo, Poulos and Sipple, 2005; Hoover, 1999). There has been some suggestion that hazing rituals are a way to perpetuate hyper masculine qualities seen as desirable attributes for athletes (Johnson and Holman, 2009). Women were more likely than men to be involved in activities that have been considered positive, when initiating new members (Hoover, 1999; Adler 2014). Despite the severity of American hazing shown to be higher in males, gender was not a significant predictor of being involved in at least one hazing activity (Waldron, 2015). This finding was shared to some extent in Canadian settings, as there appeared to be no significant difference between males and

females in experiencing hazing (Hamilton, 2013). Though unlike the North American literature, there was little difference between males and females regarding severity (Hamilton, 2013). For the UK, there were no differences between males and females for positive initiation rituals, but males engaged in more mild/severe hazing activities (Lafferty, Wakefield and Brown, 2017).

There is limited research that specifically investigates peer victimisation in sport by type of sport. Of the available studies, there are some conflicting findings. In adolescent samples, peer victimisation has been suggested to be more prominent in team sports/interactive sports (Evans et al. 2016). Co-acting sportspersons were less involved in hazing behaviours than their interactive counterparts (Lafferty, Wakefield and Brown, 2017). For team/individual athletes, those in non-contact sport were more at risk of hazing behaviours than their contact sport counterparts in a US collegiate study (Waldron, 2015). The finding was attributed to non-contact athletes desire to compensate for lack of 'masculine' qualities found in contact games (Waldron, 2015). The reverse of this was found in another study and suggests that being a collision athlete was a stronger predictor for hazing than non-collision (Lafferty, Wakefield and Brown, 2017). Waldron's (2015) study results did not support previous findings and the hypothesis that contact sport athletes are more likely to be more aggressive in social situations (Endresen and Olweus, 2005; Bredemeier and Sheilds, 1986). To complicate matters, Hamilton et al (2016) found no significant correlations between level of sport contact and size of sport team with hazing. There is a lack of clarity as to which types of sport are at higher risk of these behaviours, further, there are conflicting results when investigating the rationale for hazing.

Encouraging cohesion is often cited as a reason for perpetuating these behaviours (Lafferty, Wakefield and Brown, 2017). This has often served as justification for the existence of 'institutionalised' hazing practices. In a UK sample, no

significant relationship between mean hazing and cohesion scores were found (Lafferty, Wakefield and Brown, 2017). Most studies agreed that engaging in negative hazing activities (questionable, unacceptable, mild or severe) was not positively related to group cohesion (Waldron, 2015). Only one hazing study suggested that positive initiation activities had the potential for an increase in perceived group cohesion. Of the 4,165 higher education students who responded, 26% (N=1083) indicated a hazing experience; a further 62.8% associated their hazing experience with increased feelings of being part of the group (Alan, Kerschner and Payne, 2018). The findings of the above research suggest there are multiple possible outcomes of being the victim of hazing behaviours. These discrepancies are explained through theories like cognitive dissonance or groupthink (Massey and Massey, 2017). Alternatively, the lack of understanding as to what hazing is on the part of the perpatrator, has been noted by Campo et al. (2005). Researchers suggest that victims of hazing attempt to normalise their negative experience, forcing themselves to think positively about their experience (Massey and Massey, 2017). It is possible that some students genuinely find the experience as fun. The research in this area has not consistently established whether the sport type and the level of contact are significant predictors of increased likelihood of experiencing peer victimising behaviours. Instead it could be suggested that team norms and traditions are a more salient predictor than sport type (Hamilton et al., 2016). In addition, there is no unanimous understanding as to whether hazing practices are entirely negative.

The Impact of Peer Victimisation

A wealth of literature exists relating to the negative outcomes of peer victimisation in childhood and adolescence, particularly relating to poor mental health (Hemphill et al. 2014). Adolescents exposed to peer victimisation were more likely to

experience depression and anxiety (Stapinski et al. 2015). For those in education, being a victim of peer victimisation was associated with a higher risk of absenteeism (Grinstheyn and Yang, 2017) and low levels of academic motivation (Young-Jones et al. 2015). Outcomes of peer victimisation during these periods have been shown to have lasting effects into adulthood (Lereya et al., 2015). Peer victimisation in childhood and adolescence was associated with poor physical health and mental health later in life (Wolke and Lereya, 2015; Wolke et al. 2013, Bowes et al. 2015). Takizawa, Maughan and Arseneault (2014) found associations with poor social adjustment, lower quality of life and financial hardship in adults who reported being bullied as children. It has been shown that younger victims of peer victimisation are more likely to experience it in adulthood as well (Schwartz et al. 2015). Evidence suggests that there are multiple contributing factors which include neurobiological and psychological issues. Wolke and Lereya (2015) note that those who are victimised as children can develop altered cortisol responses to stress. This has been linked to chronic inflammation, depression and hypervigilance when confronted with perceived hostility (Wolke and Lereya, 2015). As a result, cognitive appraisals of potentially stressful situations are at an increased likelihood of being identified by the victim as threatening (Copeland et al. 2013). The literature identifies that peer victimisation in children and adolescents has both short term and long-term effects on those who are targeted by these behaviours.

As there is evidence to suggest that bullying and peer victimisation decreases as children grow older (Due et al., 2005), investigating child, adolescent and adult samples separately may be useful. As such, the workplace bullying literature provides substantial research of peer victimisation in adults. Within the workplace bullying literature, associations between peer victimisation and anxiety, depression, negative affectivity, somatisation (the physical manifestation of stress) and suicidal ideation have been identified in adult samples (Hansen et al. 2006; Nielsen et al. 2015). These outcomes

were not dissimilar from those in childhood/adolescence. Experiencing peer victimisation was deemed a significant predictor of depression and contributed in moderate ways to lower levels of job satisfaction, absenteeism and higher staffing turnover rate (Hague, Skogstag and Einarsen, 2010). Those who experienced peer victimisation reported having lower perceived levels of social support from co-workers and supervisors (Hansen et al. 2006). Both victims and uninvolved peers who were witnesses were more likely to report suffering from anxiety than 'non-bullied' staff members (Hansen et al. 2006). These behaviours also have an impact on the workplace environment with studies reporting lower levels of productivity and increases in employee burnout (Laschinger and Fida, 2014). Peer victimising behaviours can contribute to an environment of incivility, which can lead to a decrease in work satisfaction not limited to victim/aggressor (McDonald, Brown and Smith, 2015).

University students have received comparatively less attention than children/adolescents and adults in the workplace. Of the more recent studies investigating peer victimisation and its outcomes in this sample, cyber-bullying specific behaviours have received increasing attention (Myers and Cowie, 2017; Yubero et al. 2017). As in other sample populations and different forms of peer victimisation, associations with cyber-bullying, depression and anxiety were established (Selke et al. 2015; Tennant et al. 2015). Schwartz et al. (2015) found peer victimisation in adolescence/childhood to be a predictor of peer victimisation in adulthood. Similar findings identified those who suffered peer victimisation during further education were at an increased risk in higher education (Ramsey, DiLalla and McCray, 2016). In addition, peer victimisation in childhood was a predictor of mental health problems and poor physical health in higher education students (Holt et al. 2014). Peer victimisation is suggested to be a contributor to negative feelings towards one's self and their educational ability resulting in a lack of motivation (Goodboy, Martin and Goldman,

2016; Young-Jones et al. 2015). Within the sporting context, peer victimising behaviours can be targeted at sporting performance, as such this can contribute to a reduction in feelings of competence which is a core psychological need (Kerr et al. 2016; Young-Jones et al. 2015). The outcome of these internalising behaviours, like low self-esteem, are believed to increase an individual's vulnerability to being victimised (Schwartz et al., 2015). Einarsen (2005) highlights that certain personality traits, such as low-self-esteem, are also risk factors in being the target of victimising behaviour. As such, it is unclear if peer victimisation is a symptom of low self-esteem, or a cause of low self-esteem. One of the strongest predictors of attrition within higher education samples is academic performance (Stewart, Lim and Kim, 2015). Given the impact of peer victimisation on educational motivation and its connection with academic success (Busato, et al. 2000), peer victimisation may be indirectly related to higher education attrition (Mengo and Black, 2016). In summary, victims of peer victimisation, both prior and during their time in higher education are more likely to suffer further victimisation (Ramsey, DiLalla and McCray, 2016) and struggle to perform academically (Kowalski and Limber, 2013). These are contributing factors leading to an increased risk of dropping out of higher education (Goodboy, Martin and Goldman, 2016).

While limited, research on the impact of peer victimisation in sport spans multiple age groups from childhood to young adulthood. These age groups respond to and experience this problem in a variety of ways. These age groups do share similar outcomes in relation to their interactions with their sporting environment. For example, Evans et al. (2016) found that 36.82% of 353 participants had suffered from at least one peer victimising behaviour (any item listed on the Bullying in Sport Questionnaire). This corresponded with reportedly weakened relationships with team-mates (Evans et al. 2016). Being a target of peer victimisation from a teammate affects the targets

perception of relatedness between themselves and the team (Orr et al. 2018). Similar findings have been established in higher education, with US college students reporting decreased cohesion due to peer victimisation (Van Raalte et al. 2007). In addition to weakened team relationships, peer victimised athletes are also likely to disengage from sport or find themselves 'burned out'.

Group Cohesion & Sport Amotivation

Burn out pertains to a multitude of factors including feelings of exhaustion (physical and emotional), negative self-evaluation and a negative view of sport (Gustafsson et al., 2008). The devaluation of sport is often related to association of negative feelings such as frustration, sadness or lowered self-confidence with the activity (Cardinal, Yan and Cardinal, 2013). Peer victimisation in elite level adult footballers was shown to be related to all the dimensions of burnout (Yildiz, 2015). Outcomes of peer victimisation in the sport environment have consequences for the individual and the surrounding climate. The literature has identified several implications of being a victim in sport, it can lead to a poor perception of not only themselves but of the sport they previously enjoyed (Gustafsson, DeFreese and Madigan, 2017). Positive teammate relationships meet the basic needs of relatedness and help buffer against negative effects of peer victimisation, such as amotivation (McLaren et al. 2017). Conversely, team environments that suffer from weakened teammate relationships are more likely to encourage within-team peer victimisation (Hodge and Lonsdale, 2011). The quality of relationships within sports teams and clubs, be that team or individual sport, are an important contributing factor of an individual's belonging and sense of cohesion.

Group cohesion is an individual's perception of the environment in which they interact with peers (Oh and Gill, 2017). The climate of this environment influences the

individual members' thoughts, feelings and behaviour (Oh and Gill, 2017). This has important connotations regarding the possible impact of peer victimisation. Perceptions of positive overall group cohesion can be an important contributing factor to sporting performance, friendship quality and the perceived availability of emotional support (Wolf et al. 2015). In addition, positive perceptions of group cohesion are associated with team and sport satisfaction (Onağ and Tepeci, 2014). Within the literature, overall group cohesion can be separated into to two elements, task cohesion and social cohesion. Task cohesion or 'task orientation' is concerned with the collective group motivation towards an objective, in a sport setting this would be exemplified by winning the game or match (Burke, Davies and Carron, 2014). Conversely, social cohesion represents the individual's motivation towards intra-team relationships and engagement with teammates (Burke, Davies and Carron, 2014). Anderson (2015) found that group cohesion is an important influencing factor on sport retention and performance anxiety reduction. Associations between positive perceptions of cohesion and lower levels of depressive symptomology have been noted (Storch et al. 2005).

The presence of persistent peer victimisation in sports teams can contribute to an overall negative environment that affects other players perceptions of group cohesion, not just the victims (Van Raalte et al. 2007: Waldron, 2015). Intra-team peer victimisation in sporting contexts is associated with poor physical and emotional well-being as well as sport performance issues (Holt, Knight and Zukiwiski, 2012; Paradis, Carron and Martin, 2014). Qualitative work noted that intra-team team peer victimisation had adverse effects on victim and non-victim teammates in relation to motivation and perceptions of overall cohesion (Bruner et al. 2017). Social isolation and verbal derision aimed at team-mates was identified to be a contributing factor for increased levels of amotivation (Partridge and Knapp, 2016). Previous research has established negative correlations between amotivation and both task and social cohesion

scores (Halbrook et al. 2012). Victims who reported feeling more negative emotions that were linked to decreases in prosocial behaviours that are synonymous with a positive team climate (Partridge and Knapp, 2016). As peer victimisation increases within a team environment, perceptions of overall group cohesion are likely to be negatively impacted. In the presence of peer victimisation and peer conflict, teammate bystanders are also more likely to perceive general group cohesion as lower (Wachsmuth, Jowett and Harwood, 2017).

Amotivation is a state in which the individual feels no autonomy and perceives no importance or desire to engage in an activity, this represents an absence of motivation (Cheon, Reeve and Song, 2016). Perlman (2010) suggests that amotivation is likely to occur when an individual's basic psychological needs: relatedness, competence and autonomy, are not met. Within a sporting context, amotivation has been identified as a predictor of youth sports attrition (Balish et al. 2014). Fitzgerald, Fitzgerald and Ahereme's (2012) literature review identified 3 studies which found associations with peer victimisation and diminished feelings of competence, autonomy and relatedness. These core needs were affected through increased feelings of loneliness (Storch et al. 2006), physique anxiety (Gray et al. 2008), self-consciousness and reduced sport enjoyment (Faith et al. 2002). Autonomy is an individual's ability to make their own choices and is linked to independence and freewill (Ryan et al. 2015). An individual with high levels of amotivation will often perceive the task as being forced upon them and will derive no pleasure from partaking in it, this represents an absence of autonomous regulation (Ratelle et al. 2007). In addition, those experiencing amotivation will also not perceive any extrinsic nor intrinsic benefit (Gillet et al. 2012). Reductions in perceptions of autonomy are also thought to be related with increases in antisocial behaviours, including peer victimisation, directed at teammates (Hodge and Lonsdale, 2011). As a result, environments where an athlete perceives a lack of

autonomy and has high levels of amotivation are more likely to be engaged in teammate peer victimisation. In the sporting context relatedness concerns the quality of social relationships with significant peers (Perlman, 2010), in this instance teammates, coaches and club members. Athletes who are victimised reported lower levels of social relatedness with their teammates (Evans et al. 2016). Peer victimisation in this example damages peer relationships with teammates, increasing amotivation via the disruption of the individual's feelings of relatedness. Self-perceptions of one's competency in sport/physical activity was influenced in part by the level of relatedness to peers (Fitzgerald, Fitzgerald and Ahereme, 2012). Competence is the perception of one's own ability pertaining to the given task/activity (Haslem et al. 2016). Those with higher levels of perceived competency are much more likely to engage in physical activity and sport. On the other hand, low self-perceptions of sporting ability are likely to be present in those who are identified with amotivation (De Meester et al 2016).

To summarise, peer victimisation, regardless of type e.g. bullying, has been shown to have a detrimental effect on those who experience it. This is also true for those in a sporting environment. Being the victim of peer victimisation, when perpetrated by a teammate can lead to several negative outcomes. Further, as exemplified in the hazing literature, victims of hazing often become hazers the following academic year (Johnson et al. 2018). There is also evidence to suggest this occurs in the context of bullying (Hazler and Carney, 2000; Holt and Espelage, 2007). This presents an issue when these behaviours are perpetuated so much so they become tradition. In addition to the more commonly identified negative outcomes of peer victimisation such as depression and anxiety, there are several sport specific negative outcomes. These include a reduction in perceived group cohesion and feelings of amotivation towards sport. Despite much of the evidence to suggest that peer victimisation only has non-significant/detrimental effects on university student athletes regarding the outcomes above, narrative

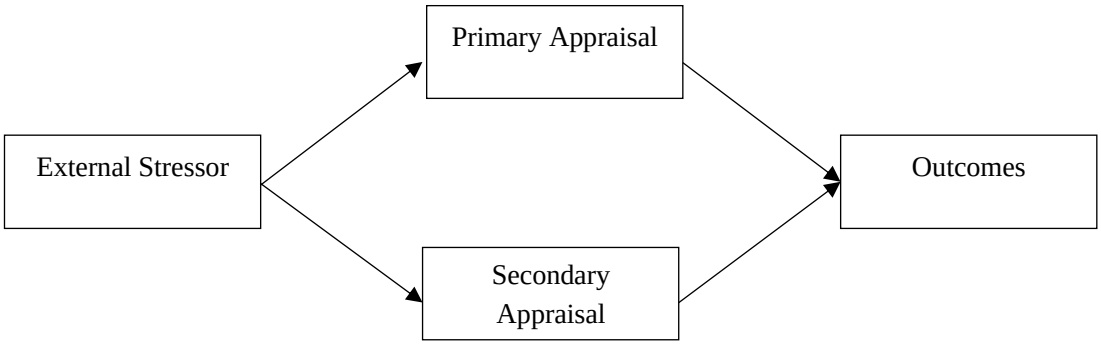
investigations suggest that the opposite is true. Explanations for these outcomes are somewhat limited. Given the uncertainty regarding victim outcomes, it is evident there are other variables that have an impact on these relationships.

Peer Victimisation as a Stressor and the Transactional Model of Stress

Stress is a result of the interplay between an individual and their environment (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). There are a multitude of psychosocial and biological outcomes of this experience. These outcomes include psychological issues such as distress, depression and anxiety (Hague, Skogstad and Einarsen, 2010) as well as physical manifestations of negative outcomes like blunted cortisol response (Hansen et al. 2006; Hansen, Hogh and Persson, 2011). Given this evidence, this study understands that peer victimisation is a stressful experience, as exemplified in Christensen et al. (2017). Understanding peer victimisation as a stressful experience allows the use of the transactional model of stress (TMS) to understand the relationship with positive and negative outcomes. The transactional model of stress (TMS) provides a framework for examining an individual's understanding of a stressor, peer victimisation, in relation to themselves and their environment (Fox and Stallworth, 2010). The framework is useful in understanding the individual differences in reactions to similar stressors. A stressor can be defined as any stimuli, situation or condition which causes a stress response (Matthieu and Ivanoff, 2006). The stimuli/situation/condition must be perceived to have potential adverse consequences on the individual (Matthieu and Ivanoff, 2006). The harmful effects of a stressor can be dependent on the way in which a victim cognitively processes the experience in relation to their goals and personal well-being (Rotenberg, Kim and Herman-Stahl, 1998). The cognitive process in which a stressor is examined can be divided into primary and secondary appraisals. The process of cognitive appraisal is instantaneous, subject to change at any given point and reflects the many transactions between person and environment (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984).

Figure 2.

Diagram of the appraisal process in determining the impact of an external stressor on potential outcomes. Model based on Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) transactional model of stress theory.



The above figure conceptualises the way in which a stressor is assessed by an individual. Cognitive appraisals are a way of recognizing a situations impact upon an individual's own wellbeing or goals. Together, primary and secondary appraisals allow for the assessment and categorisation of a stressor as being irrelevant, benign-positive or stressful (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). The primary appraisal draws upon an assessment of past experiences, situational factors and an individual's traits to make this appraisal (Ben-Zur and Michael, 2007; Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). The importance of these factors can vary depending on the scenario, for example when situational implications are unknown, a greater emphasis is placed on individual traits and prior experience (Hunter and Boyle, 2004). The primary appraisal represents the immediate interpretation of the event in relation to one's health/wellbeing or goals. When a potentially stressful stimulus, known as a stressor, is judged to have no impact on the individual it is deemed irrelevant (Dugdale, Eklund and Gordon, 2002). If a situation has a positive or preservative effect on a person's state or interests, it is considered benign-positive. If a stressor has the potential to negatively impact an individual's wellbeing or goals and places a demand on one's ability to cope with it, this would be considered as a stress appraisal (Coffman and Gilligan, 2002). Stress appraisals, as a

result, are much more likely to lead to negative emotional reactions (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984).

Primary & Secondary Appraisals

Stress appraisals can be divided into sub-categories, threat, challenge and harm/loss (Dugdale, Eklund and Gordon, 2002). It should be stated that these sub-categories are separate constructs but are closely related and can occur simultaneously, they do not exist on a continuum (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). What distinguishes threat and harm/loss appraisals is the perception of potential harm/loss and the actual suffering of loss (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). Harm/loss situations can include losing a loved one or suffering from an ill-health condition (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). Those who have experienced a harm/loss situation can also experience threat simultaneously when contemplating future harm/losses (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). In addition to harm/loss and threat, a stressor can be identified as a challenge. A key distinction between threat and challenge appraisals are the anticipated outcomes, challenge appraisals focus on the potential positive benefits gained from overcoming the stressor (King and Gardner, 2006). Challenge and threat states according to Jones et al. (2009) are also both characterised by feelings of anxiety due to the uncertainty of the situation's outcome. As discussed by Hunter and Boyle (2004), it is these situations where personal traits become increasingly important for determining the appraisal. Those who perceive a stressful situation as a challenge are more likely to be characterised by experiencing positive emotions, e.g. excitement in response to the stressor (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). The appraisal of the situation, e.g. threat, has a strong determining factor on what coping strategies are employed (Hunter and Boyle, 2004). The role of challenge appraisals has been studied in response to experiencing a variety of stressors, including peer victimisation. Challenge appraisals identify a situation where there is a potential for positive outcomes, be that growth or mastery

(Adie, Duda and Ntoumanis, 2008). Further, challenge appraisals, unlike threat or harm appraisals, are usually accompanied by positive emotions such as excitement (Gomes, Faria and Gonçalves, 2013). In addition to challenge, the primary appraisal, perceived social support is used in the place of the second appraisal.

Secondary appraisals, despite the name, do not necessarily happen after the primary appraisal, nor are they any less important (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). Secondary appraisals are a complex interplay between assessment of resources available, what strategy will be employed to deal with the stressor and the expected outcomes of chosen coping strategy (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). Rotenberg, Kim and Herman-Stahl (1998) state that secondary appraisals can be broken down into three parts; level of self-blame, ability to cope and future expectancy. Examples of a secondary appraisal include blame attribution (self or otherwise), perceived social support evaluations (Cohen and Wills, 1985) and feelings of control (Rotenberg, Kim and Herman-Stahl, 1998; Folkman et al. 1986). Primary and secondary appraisals interact and help predict the emotions caused by the stressor in question (Smith and Kirby, 2009). A primary appraisal of threat coupled with a secondary appraisal of limited resources, is likely to illicit feelings of sadness (Rotenberg, Kim and Herman-Stahl, 1998). In order to understand how these primary and secondary appraisals work, the selected statistical analysis moderate mediation, utilises these variables as either a mediator to moderator.

There is evidence to suggest that primary appraisals can have the ability to function as a mediator between peer victimisation and certain outcome variables. Noret, Hunter and Rasmussen's (2018) review of literature found support for the use of the primary appraisal threat and control as mediators of peer victimisation and adjustment. In the sport context, challenge appraisals have been utilised as a mediator to explain both pre-match stress and organisational stress' effect on emotional response (Skinner

and Brewer, 2004; Hanton, Wagstaff and Fletcher, 2012). Those who report higher challenge appraisals in response to peer victimisation were much less likely to suffer from distress than those who viewed it as a threat (Hunter, Mora-Merchan and Ortega, 2004). A mediator can help to explain why the relationship between the independent variable/s and the dependant variable/s exist. For example, Gomes, Faria and Gonçalves (2013) found a direct negative association between occupational stress and burnout, which was partially mediated by challenge appraisal. This meant that those who perceived work as a challenge were not as affected by occupational stress regarding burnout. Partial mediation occurs when the introduction of the mediator reduces the total effect of the causal variable (Baron and Kenny, 1986). Full mediation occurs when the direct effect is reduced to zero (Baron and Kenny, 1986). Given previous research, challenge appraisal may help to explain why peer victimisation predicts differing outcomes in higher education athletes. Further to the primary appraisal challenge, the secondary appraisal, perceived social support, has been used in previous research as a moderator.

Perceived Social Support

Social support refers to the network in which an individual's basic needs of connectedness can be met (Kaplan, Cassel and Gore, 1977). Cohen and Wills (1985) discuss two theories of social support, support as a main effect and support as a stress buffer. The main effect theory suggests that having available social support via a social network can benefit an individual’s wellbeing not just when in the presence of a stressful situation (Cohen and Wills, 1985). The alternate theory is that social support may protect an individual from negative harmful effects of a stressful experience. The later theory is complimentary to the transactional model of stress used in this project (Cohen and Wills, 1985). Social support can be involved at two intervals when confronted with a stressful experience, the first being in the appraisal process whereas

the second occurs during the implementation of coping strategies (Cohen and Wills, 1985). The former takes the form of perceived social support, one of the variables used in this study, and represents an individual's assessment of the potential social support they have available (Thoits, 1995). Perceived social support is identified as a resource in the secondary appraisal process, it is most potent from those who are deemed significant to the individual (Wentzel, 1998). Examples of significant others can include parents and friends, in this case, it is likely to be teammates/clubmates (Kjøormo and Halvari, 2002).

In sport, perceived social support from peers (including teammates) has been associated with several factors that contribute to an athlete's wellbeing. Studies using athletes have demonstrated that perceived social support can have a protective effect against multiple sources of stress. Perceived social support moderated the relationship between performance related stressors and self-confidence (Freeman and Rees, 2010). Perceived social support was also shown to have associations with athlete burn out rates and motivation towards their respective sport (DeFreese and Smith, 2012). Positive teammate/clubmate relationships have the potential to encourage individuals to view one another as an important source of support. It is important to note that received social support in DeFreese and Smith (2012) was not shown to have the same protective effect as the perception of having social support available. Perceived social support can factor into an individual's secondary appraisal as discussed whilst facing a stressor. The perception of having access to social support is thought to potential reduce the perceived impact of a stressor like peer victimisation.

Several studies have identified perceived social support as having a protective effect in individuals who have become victims of peer victimisation (Berkman and Glass, 2000; McDowell and Serovich, 2007; Jayarante, Hilme and Chess, 1988; Cohen and Wills, 1985). These studies lend support to Cohen and Wills (1985) 'buffering'

theory, it is explained that having perceived social support can reduce the perceived severity of stressor and in some cases altering the stress appraisal to one of benignity. Perceived social support was shown to buffer the depressive symptomology associated with peer victimisation in adolescent samples (Tanigawa et al. 2011). Other studies in adult samples found similar buffering effects against negative outcomes caused by peer victimisation (Carroll and Lauzier, 2014; Attell, Kummerow Brown and Treiber, 2017; Warszewska-Makuch, Bedyńska and Żołnierczyk-Zreda, 2015). These studies and theory provide evidence for perceived social supports use as a moderator. A moderator variable affects the strength of a relationship between a predictor and an outcome, as well as when a relationship will hold (Noret, Hunter and Rasmussen, 2018). The secondary appraisal process assesses available resources, such as perceived social support, when identifying whether a situation is stressful. The level and significance of this resource is a determining factor in how stressful, if at all, a stimulus is. As such, perceived social support, as part of the secondary appraisal process, can be used as a moderator when examining the relationship between stressor and outcome (Noret, Hunter and Rasmussen, 2018).

The Current Study

Peer victimising behaviours aim to intimidate another athlete's performance, such as sledging, are seemingly given license within the sport context. Outside of the games themselves, peer victimisation in all its form, has serious implications for the wellbeing of athletes. Within higher education, especially student sport teams, hazing has been identified to be a pertinent issue. The prevalence of peer victimisation type, e.g. severe hazing, within this sample varies greatly. Of the types discussed, hazing was seemingly the most prevalent. Recent investigations found hazing rates of 58% of 434 university athletes (Johnson et al. 2018) with earlier research suggesting a prevalence rate of 80% and above (Hoover, 1999). Of higher education hazing, athletes were a

particularly at-risk group. In Allan and Madden (2012), 74% of the athletes who responded had reported being subject to at least one hazing activity. Comparatively, Mishna et al.'s (2019) study of 122 student athletes found that 48% had been bullied and 6.6% had been bullied through online mediums.

Regardless of peer victimisation type, these terms have similar outcomes despite having theoretically distinct characteristics. Outcomes, regardless of sample, have included many negative psychological effects including depression and anxiety. The implications of these victimising behaviours in sporting contexts have also been linked to poor group cohesion and high levels of sport amotivation. In more recent studies, there has been discord between the findings of being subject to peer victimising behaviours and their outcomes in higher education athlete samples (Waldron, 2015; Lafferty, Wakefield and Brown, 2017; Allan, Kerschner and Payne, 2019). It is apparent that the behaviour alone is not indicative to guaranteeing a negative impact on group cohesion and sport amotivation.

The transactional model of stress provides an understanding of the cognitive process in which a stressor is viewed and how this can shape the outcome for an individual. As the studies previously mentioned investigate the same behaviours, other variables influence the outcome aside from the stressor alone. Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) theory identifies that challenge appraisals allow for a stressor to be identified as having the potential for a positive outcome. The hazing literature identifies that 'rookies' are likely to endure peer victimisation in order to gain acceptance and membership. As a result, the identification of a positive outcome in the form of membership fits with the challenge appraisal assessment. In addition, perceived social support has been identified as key component for athlete's relatedness and overall wellbeing. The aim of this pilot study is to examine the nature of peer victimisation in sport and how this relates to group cohesion and sport amotivation. Furthermore, the

role of perceived social support and challenge appraisals in this relationship will be examined. Alongside a broader investigation of the nature and prevalence of peer victimisation in university sport, the following hypotheses will be addressed:

H_1 Peer victimisation will be significantly associated with group cohesion and sport amotivation?

H_2 The appraisal of control will significantly mediate the relationship between peer victimisation and group cohesion.

H_3 The appraisal of control will significantly mediate the relationship between peer victimisation and sport motivation.

H_4 Perceived social support will significantly moderate the relationship between peer victimisation and group cohesion.

H_5 Perceived social support will significantly moderate the relationship between peer victimisation and sport motivation.

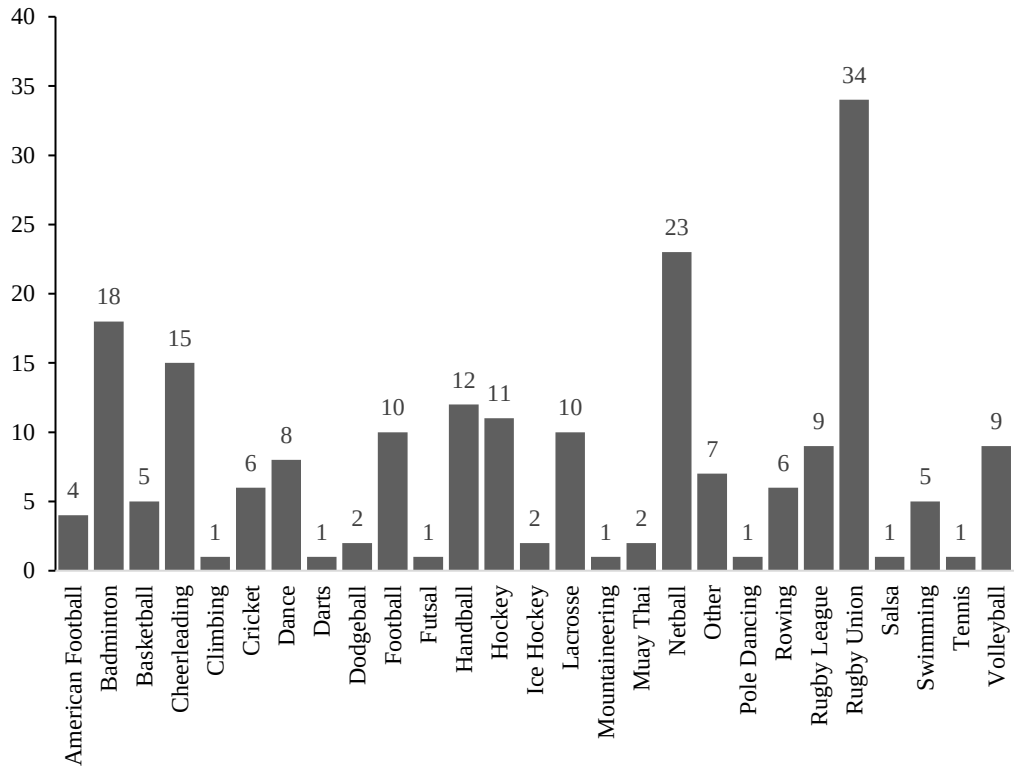
Method

Participants

The total number of responses in this study was 207 first year members of UK university athletes. Participants were recruited through 16 universities and student and athletic unions across England, Scotland and Wales. These participants all completed the first section relating to negative behaviours experienced.

Figure 3:

Frequency of main sport played by participants.



Measures

An online questionnaire was developed for the purposes of this study. The questionnaire included several sections focusing on negative peer victimising behaviours, challenge appraisals, perceived social support, group cohesion and sport

amotivation. A copy of the questionnaire can be found in the appendices (appendix a) Bullying, hazing, sledging, harassment and banter are often used interchangeably when describing these negative experiences (Crawshaw, 2009). Researchers in this area have made the use of the following terms, bully victimisation and peer aggression among other terms when describing peer victimisation (Hawker and Boulton, 2000). To measure peer victimisation in this study, a measure of bullying behaviours and a measure of hazing were included. As this the study is focused on peer victimisation, not bullying, no attempt to measure power imbalance was made. In order to assess the negative experiences of the participants, two scales were used. These scales were the Team Initiation Questionnaire (TIQ) (Hoover, 1999) and the Bullying in Sport Questionnaire's (BSQ) behaviours subscale. This section used items from the BSQ and twelve negative hazing related behaviours from the TIQ.

Bullying in Sport Questionnaire (BSQ) and Team Initiation Questionnaire (TIQ)

The BSQ was altered from an amalgamation of both the Health Behaviours in School-aged Children (HBSC) and Adolescent Peer Relations Instrument (APRI) questionnaires (Parada, 2000; Roberts et al. 2009). The BSQ participants were presented with the following instruction: *'In the past academic year, have you been in situations at university where....*'. Participants were then presented with 16 items of peer victimising behaviours and asked to rate how often they had experienced the listed behaviours on a five-point Likert scale from '*Not at all in in the past few months*' (0), to '*Several times a week' (5)*. There were 2 questions pertaining to racial and religious harassment. As there is little UK based literature, this study was designed to provide an overview of the prevalence and nature peer victimisation, these behaviours are specific and warrant their own investigations. In addition the question '*I sent mean instant*

messages, wall postings, emails or text messages, or created a Web site that made fun of a teammate(s).' was separated into to 2 items '*A teammate creates an offensive or embarrassing webpage/ social media site about you.*' and '*A teammate(s) tricked you into sharing personal information in an e-mail or text message and told other teammates.*' as two distinct forms of cyber-bullying behaviours. Example questions included '*Other teammates told lies or spread false rumours about you and tried to make other teammates dislike you*.' and '*Other teammates left you out of things on purpose, excluded you from the team, or completely ignored you*'. The question '*My username and password was stolen and used by my teammate(s) to send mean messages using my name*.' was altered into '*Your social media account(s) were used by a teammate(s) to send/post mean messages about/to other people*.' to make it more relevant to this age group. This study used 15 items and excluded those specifically about race and religion. The Bullying in Sport Questionnaire was used in Evans et al. (2016), the internal consistency was shown to range from $\alpha = .82$ to .91. To create an overall BSQ score for each participant, their scores were added together and divided by the number of questions they answered. The alpha score for the BSQ subscale used in this study was $\alpha = .95$.

Team Initiation Questionnaire (TIQ)

The TIQ (Hoover, 1999) has been previously utilised by Lafferty, Wakefield and Brown (2016) in a UK sample. Of the 24 items, 14 were used as they related to negative behaviours only. Participants were provided with the same instruction statement and items were listed on the same 5-point Likert scale as the BSQ. Example items included *'You were made to act as a personal servant to others.'* and *'Coerced/forced into engaging in or simulating sexual acts'.* The negative items demonstrated acceptable Cronbach alpha scores of .73. Its use in this study scored $\alpha = .96$ demonstrating

appropriate reliability. Participants were given a mean score for mild hazing, severe hazing and total hazing, which used all hazing items. Additionally, a total peer victimisation score was calculated by creating a mean of all behaviours.

Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS)

To assess perceived social support the 'friends' subscale taken from the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) (Zimet et al. 1988) was used. The four items were preceded by an instruction sentence *'If you have experienced any of the behaviours listed on the previous page, to what extent did you feel the following. If you did not experience any of the behaviours, how do you think you might feel?'.* The rating measured used was a Likert 5 scale that ranged from *strongly disagree* (1), *somewhat disagree* (2), *neither agree nor disagree* (3), *somewhat agree* (4), and *strongly agree* (5). A higher number equated to participants perceiving greater social support from their fellow student athletes. This has been used in several sport related samples including university level athletes (Malinauskas, 2010; Mummery, Schofield and Perry, 2004; Lu and Hsu, 2013). Participants were given a mean score for this section. The 'perceived support from friends' subscale, as used in this study, demonstrated validity and reliability, $\alpha = 0.74$ (Malinauskas, 2010). The alpha score for the scale in this study was somewhat higher, $\alpha = .94$ and was deemed acceptable.

Challenge Appraisal Scale

Challenge appraisal was measured using Hunter and Boyle's (2004) checklist. This has subsequently been used in Hunter, Boyle and Warden (2004) and Hunter, Mora- Merchán, Ortega (2004). The items included in the checklist are: '*You will learn to deal with bullying', 'You will learn to be nice to others', 'You will be a stronger, more confident, person', 'The bully will be punished'* and '*Your situation would become better*'. Participants were given options to answer based on whether they '*Strongly*

disagree', '*Somewhat disagree', 'Neither agree nor disagree', 'Somewhat agree'*, and '*Strongly agree'* with the statement '*If you have experienced any of the behaviors listed on the previous page, to what extent did you feel the following? If you did not experience any of the behaviors, how do you think you might feel?*'. The measure displayed moderate reliability challenge appraisals, α = .56. Within this study the Cronbach's alpha score was higher at α = .62.

Youth Sport Environnent Questionnaire (YSEQ)

In order to assess group cohesion, the Youth Sport Environment Questionnaire (YSEQ) (Eys et al., 2009) was used. The YSEQ's 18 items are divided into three categories, these are task cohesion, social cohesion and spurious negative item. The stem sentence read as follows: '*Please answer the following in relation to the sports team you play the most at university, how strongly you would agree/disagree with the following statements?*'. The scale was scored on a Likert 5 scale, with the same values as in the MSPSS, moving from *strongly disagre*e (1) through *to strongly agree* (5). Higher figured scores were synonymous with high perceptions of group cohesion. The spurious negative items were reversed when conducting the analysis so they would reflect the opposite, e.g. 5 was reversed to 1. Examples of the questionnaires use can be seen in Bruner, Broadley and Côté (2014) as well as translated versions for use in European samples (Junior et al. 2018). Internal consistency values were high for both task (α = .89) and social (α = .94) dimensions, this was also the case in this study, α = .88.

Sport Motivation Scale: Amotivation Subscale (SMS)

The Sport Motivation Scale: Amotivation subscale (SMS) (Mallett et al. 2007) is made up of four items. The stem sentence read as follows: '*Please answer the following*

in relation to the sports team you play the most at university, how strongly you would agree/disagree with the following statements?'. All questions within the survey were related to primary sport as opposed to secondary. As with all scales in this questionnaire, the scale was scored on a Likert 5 scale, with the same values as in the MSPSS, moving from *strongly disagree* (1) through to *strongly agree* (5). For this scale the higher the score the greater the participant felt amotivation towards their chosen sport. The SMS and its variants, SMS-II and SMS-6, have been used frequently within the sport literature. Clancy, Herring and Campbell (2017) reviewed articles that utilised this scale and its revisions. The scale is shown to be to be valid and reliable across multiple studies generally within the following range, $\alpha = .73 - .9$ (Cresswell and Eklund, 2005). The review notes the 'identified regulation' subscale was often identified as being below the alpha requirements, though this was not used in this study. In this study the SMS Amotivation subscale had an alpha measure of .84.

Procedure

Students were asked to participate via email, or via gatekeepers at different institutions, universities, athletic and student unions. A recruitment drive was planned to request students on the campuses of York St John university and the University of York to complete the survey. A social media campaign was launched to try capture other students through snowball sampling. When complete, participants were asked to 'share' the link to the survey on social media platforms. Recruitment strategies varied as access to mailing lists were limited to avoid 'spamming' students. In addition, paper copies were distributed. The invitation email contained a link to the online survey as well as a brief overview of what the survey concerns and how participant information will be used. A study page was created on Call for Participants, the page received 1216 views with 73 individuals following the link to the online questionnaire Recruitment for phase

one began 29th January 2018 and ran through to the end of the academic year in June. The second phase of recruitment began 16th September 2018 and ended on the 31st March 2019. Individual sports teams have different calendars for their events, as a result a larger timeframe helped to increase recruitment.

Ethical Consideration

All participants were 1st year UK university student-athletes and were of consenting age, 18 and above. Ethical approval was gained from York St John University's Cross School Research Ethics Committee on the 8th December 2017 with the reference number 169060895/08122017, see appendix a for further details. As the nature of the topic is sensitive, some participants may have stressful experienced related to peer victimisation (McCosker, Barnard & Gerber, 2001). The main concerns regarding this project were the protection of participants information and their safety. Participants were required to be identifiable by a combination of their birth year and the last 3 digits from their postcode, so that they were able to withdraw from the study if they wished to. As such, anonymity could not be entirely guaranteed, though steps were taken to ensuring participants remained as unidentifiable as possible. After the given deadline had lapsed, this identifying participant ID was deleted to fully anonymous the participant.

When designing the questionnaire, the decision was made to not request the university of study from the participants. As discussed in the literature review, there appears to be a culture pertaining to coerced silence regarding the peer victimising activities of university clubs and sports teams. This decision was made to ensure the safety of participants when reporting on their experiences as to avoid any potential repercussions. Participants were also advised not to complete this questionnaire in the presence of others as to protect themselves further. The information sheet covered

appropriate sources of support and highlighted why such research is necessary in addressing the problems they have faced.

Data Analysis

Of the 207 responses, 93.24% (n=193) participants completed all sections. Of the 205 online questionnaires, 25 were submitted with only demographic information and were excluded from the analysis. This number was supplemented with 27 paper versions collected on the campuses of York St John University and the University of York. Of the 207 participants; 44.9% (n=93) were male, 48.3% (n=100) were female, an additional 6.8% (n=14) selected 'prefer not to say'. Participant ages ranged from 18 to 46 years old. The mean age of the sample was 19.58 years old (SD 2.55). A total of 28 sports and activities were listed by participants including the term 'other'. The most popular of these activities were Rugby Union (16.4%), Netball (11.1%) and Badminton (8.7%).

All data collected via the online survey tool Qualtrics, was downloaded into the statistical analysis programme SPSS. All analysis was computed using SPSS and the PROCESS add on. Descriptive statistics were employed to assess the prevalence and nature of peer victimisation. The frequency procedure was used to compute the amount of peer victimisation by the following categories: total peer victimisation, total hazing, severe hazing, mild hazing and bullying behaviours. The continuous variables were mean centred before conducting bivariate correlations. Several multiple regressions were conducted using the three predictors on each outcome variable prior to conducting the proposed moderated mediation analyses (PROCESS model 8). In both group cohesion and sport amotivation multiple regressions, collinearity statistics including variance inflation factors (VIF) and tolerance statistics, exceeded the threshold of 3.3 for acceptable limits (Kock and Lynn, 2012). VIF statistics ranged from 5.2 to 9.0

across the predictors in both models. As such, separate moderated mediation models for each predictor and each outcome were conducted, resulting in 2 moderated mediation models. The models used peer victimisation as a predictor for group cohesion and sport amotivation. Challenge appraisal was used as a mediator, perceived social support was used as a moderator.

Within the questionnaire, an open-ended question was added to allow the participants to add further comments or thought about their experience. The data helps to illustrate and provide insight into the statistical analysis, particularly in understanding some individual's cognitive appraisal. In turn, a thematic analysis was conducted in order to make sense of the comments in an ordered and descriptive manner (Nowell et al. 2017). The approach to this thematic analysis was a top down approach. Braun & Clarke (2006) highlight that this approach is led by theory or specific research aims as opposed to emerging themes from the raw data. Whilst less descriptive, it allows for a more detailed investigation of specific themes identified by theory, researcher interest or previous research (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). Due to the limited amount of raw data and the brevity of the responses, it was deemed that this approach would be more suitable due to a lack in depth detail.

Whilst collating and familiarising myself with the data it was important to understand where my own experience of this environment was situated. During my time as a member of a sports team at university, I had been a both a victim and perpetrator of peer victimisation in a sporting environment. I was conscious that my experience was largely positive on retrospect, but that may not necessarily be the case for all those involved. There were several statements that I resonated with as being a like to my own experience at the time, though on reflection, I perhaps would not be as accepting of the behaviour if put in a similar position now. Despite my own feelings towards the sporting culture in UK university sport, the data also revealed perspectives that were

contrary to my own. It was important to direct the analysis in a way that acknowledged my experience and understanding whilst drawing on other perspectives from the literature that had employed in depth interview techniques. Several studies such as Johnson (2011), Waldron and Kowalski (2009) and Crow and Macintosh (2009) have conducted qualitative investigations into college/university students and athletes' experiences of peer victimisation that aided the identification of initial order and general order themes.

Results

The descriptive statistics for all variables, alongside the correlations across all variables are presented in table 2. Peer victimisation was significantly related to challenge appraisal and sport amotivation, but not significantly correlated to any other variables. Challenge appraisal was only significantly related to sport amotivation. Perceived social support was significantly positively related to group cohesion, and significantly negatively related to sport amotivation.

Table 2:

Descriptive statistics of correlations for all variables.

	1	2	3	4	5	Mean (SD)
1. Peer victimisation	-	.172*	-.121	-.076	.302***	1.94 (.97)
2. Challenge Appraisal	-	-	-.110	-.118	.187**	3.20 (.78)
3. Perceived Social Support	-	-	-	.676***	-.461***	4.14 (1.04)
4. Group cohesion	-	-	-	-	-.615***	4.00 (.82)
5. Sport Amotivation	-	-	-	-	-	2.17 (1.02)

The prevalence and nature of peer victimisation in university sport in the UK

Figure 4 shows the prevalence of peer victimisation being experienced ‘Once or Twice’ split into the scales in which the items were derived. As this figure shows, the behaviours from the severe hazing scale were the most prevalent category followed by mild hazing scale. The behaviours from the bullying scale were the least prevalent type of peer victimisation. In UK university sport those peer victimising behaviours considered as severe hazing, appear to be used more so on new members than any other. The high prevalence rates of peer victimisation present a cause for concern for stakeholders in UK university sport, be that members, university support staff or sport governing bodies.

Figure 4:

Prevalence rates of experiencing peer victimising behaviour

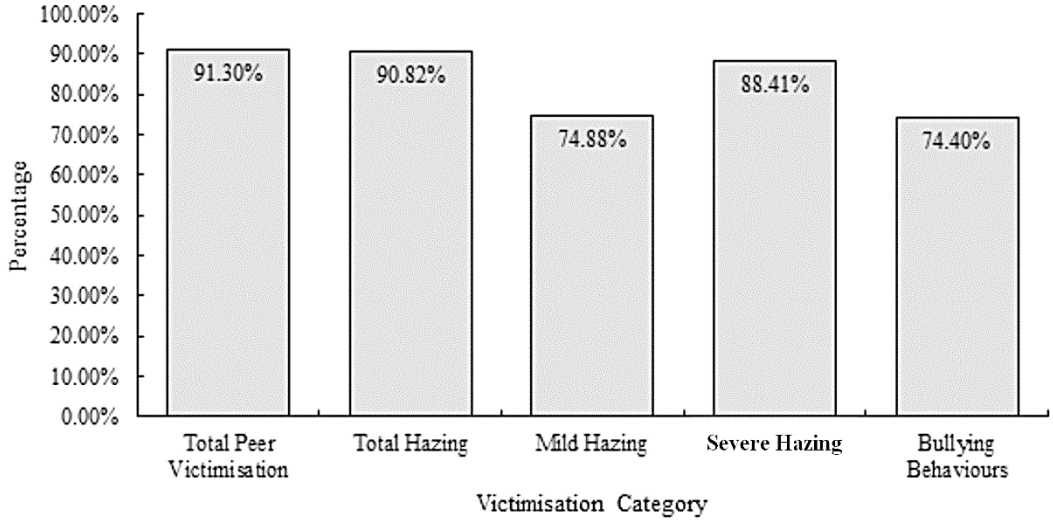


Table 1 (below) shows the results of the prevalence rates of each item from the severe hazing, mild hazing and bullying behaviour scales. The figures show the number of participants who experienced the behaviour, in addition to the percentage of the sample. Of the bullying behaviour items *'Other teammates left you out of things on purpose, excluded you from the team, or completely ignored you'* was the most prevalent occurring *'only once or twice'*. The behaviour experienced by the majority in the bullying behaviour item was '*Other teammates made sexual jokes, comments, or gestures at you*' with 61.8% of the sample reporting this at some frequency. This behaviour was also the most prevalent at the highest frequency '*Several times a week*'. The least prevalent bullying behaviours item were examples of cyber-bullying, '*Your social media account(s) were used by a teammate(s) to send/post mean messages about/to other people*' and '*A teammate creates an offensive or embarrassing webpage/ social media site about you'*.

The most prevalent mild hazing item was '*You were yelled, cursed, or sworn at*'. This behaviour was also the most prevalent behaviour at the highest frequency

'*Several times a week'.* In addition, this item demonstrated a higher prevalence at higher frequencies than other mild hazing behaviour items. The least common in this list of behaviours was '*Had food thrown at you.*', though this was a small difference in respect to the other items. The mild hazing items followed a similar pattern. More participants reported not experiencing these behaviours, with prevalence scores highest in '*only once or twice'* and lowest rates in '*Several times a week*' except for the verbal aggression item discussed above. Severe hazing items did not demonstrate the close spread of prevalence as seen in mild hazing items. The range for experiencing a severe hazing item at least once varied between 14% and 62.1% across the items listed. Only a small number of the sample had indicated experiencing the following item at least once, *'You were coerced into making body alterations (e.g. branding/tattooing, piercing).*', as such this was the least prevalent of the severe hazing items. The most common severe hazing item as experienced by the sample was '*You participated in drinking contest/games (excessive levels)*'. This was the only item of all peer victimising behaviours listed where participants who indicated they had experienced it more '*Several times a week'* than those who reported not experiencing it. The item '*You were made to act as a personal servant to others*' had the highest prevalence rate in the '*only once or twice'* category but drop off significantly in the most frequent category.

Table 1:

Prevalence rates of individual item behaviours separated by bullying behaviours, mild hazing and severe hazing items.

	Not at all in the past few months	Only once or twice	Two or three times a month	About once a week	Several times a week
Bullying Behaviour Items					
Other teammates left you out of things on purpose, excluded you from the team, or completely ignored you.	130 (62.8%)	44 (21.3%)	8 (3.9%)	17 (8.2%)	8 (3.9%)
Something was thrown at you by your teammate(s).	89 (43.0%)	34 (16.4%)	30 (14.5%)	28 (13.5%)	26 (12.6%)
Other teammates told lies or spread false rumours about you and tried to make other teammates dislike you.	145 (70.0%)	34 (16.4%)	8 (3.9%)	13 (6.3%)	7 (3.4%)
A teammate(s) got others in the team to turn against you.	146 (70.5%)	29 (14.0%)	13 (6.3%)	11 (5.3%)	8 (3.9%)
A teammate(s) sent you hurtful instant messages, emails and/ or text messages.	149 (72.3%)	23 (11.2%)	13 (6.3%)	7 (3.4%)	14 (6.8%)
You were threatened to be physically hurt or harmed by a teammate(s).	120 (58.3%)	23 (11.2%)	19 (9.2%)	17 (8.3%)	27 (13.1%)
Your social media account(s) were used by a teammate(s) to send/post mean messages about/to other people.	161 (78.2%)	26 (12.6%)	12 (5.8%)	5 (2.4%)	2 (1.0%)
A teammate(s) hit, kicked, pushed, or shoved you around outside of sport.	130 (63.7%)	22 (10.8%)	24 (11.8%)	15 (7.4%)	13 (6.4%)
Other teammates made sexual jokes, comments, or gestures at you.	79 (38.2%)	28 (13.5%)	19 (9.2%)	35 (16.9%)	46 (22.2%)
A teammate(s) tricked you into sharing personal information in an e-mail or text message and told other teammates.	147 (71.7%)	24 (11.7%)	13 (6.3%)	12 (5.9%)	9 (4.4%)
A teammate creates an offensive or embarrassing webpage/ social media site about you.	161 (78.2%)	25 (12.1%)	7 (3.4%)	5 (2.4%)	8 (3.9%)
Teammate(s) bumped into you on purpose as they walked by.	123 (59.7%)	26 (12.6%)	22 (10.7%)	19 (9.2%)	16 (7.8%)

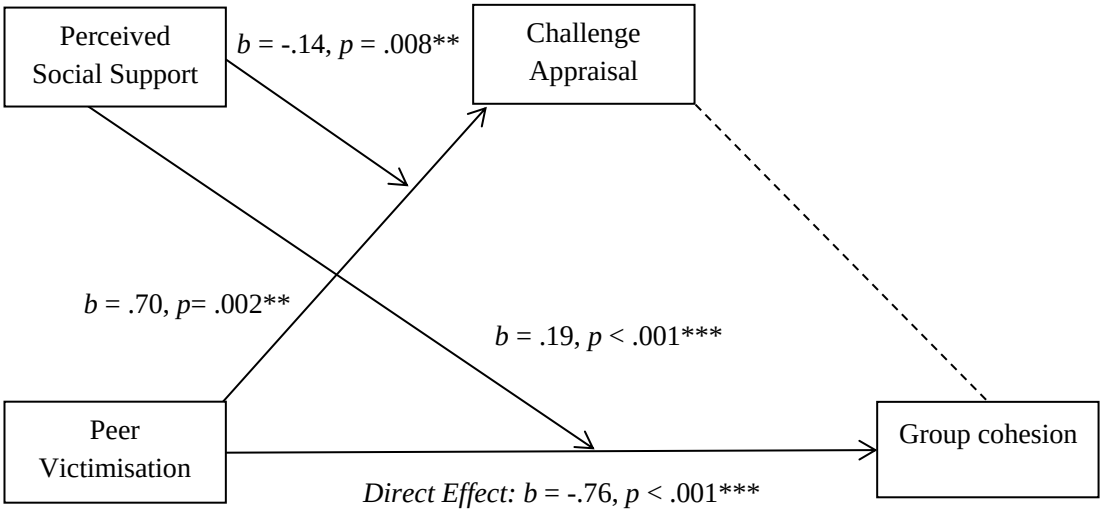
You weren't invited to a teammate's place because other teammates didn't like you.	161 (77.8%)	23 (11.1%)	8 (3.9%)	9 (4.3%)	6 (2.9%)
A teammate(s) called you names, made fun of you, or teased you in a hurtful way.	110 (53.4%)	36 (17.5%)	19 (9.2%)	17 (8.3%)	24 (11.7%)
A teammate(s) took unflattering or inappropriate pictures of you without permission and posted them online.	109 (53.2%)	33 (16.1%)	18 (8.8%)	17 (8.3%)	28 (13.7%)
Mild Hazing Items					
You were pressured to eat something you did not want to.	93 (45.6%)	49 (24.0%)	21 (10.3%)	22 (10.8%)	19 (9.3%)
Had food thrown at you?	100 (48.3%)	42 (20.3%)	23 (11.1%)	27 (13.0%)	15 (7.2%)
You were required to remain silent or were silenced.	89 (43.2%)	52 (25.2%)	20 (9.7%)	27 (13.1%)	18 (8.7%)
You were yelled, cursed, or sworn at.	85 (41.1%)	36 (17.4%)	23 (11.1%)	20 (10.1%)	42 (20.3%)
You were forced to carry around unnecessary objects or items.	94 (45.6%)	37 (18.0%)	27 (13.1%)	31 (15.0%)	17 (8.3%)
Severe Hazing Items					
Coerced/forced into engaging in or simulating sexual acts.	112 (54.1%)	20 (9.7%)	19 (9.2%)	23(11.6%)	32(15.5%)
You were made to act as a personal servant to others.	99 (47.8%)	57 (27.5%)	21 (10.1%)	28 (13.5%)	2 (1.0%)
You were coerced into destroying or stealing property/ or had property stolen/destroyed.	151 (73.7%)	34 (16.6%)	8 (3.9%)	9 (4.4%)	3 (1.5%)
You were deprived of sleep.	78 (37.9%)	51 (24.8%)	31 (15.0%)	27 (13.1%)	25 (9.2%)
You were kidnapped or transported or abandoned.	138 (67.0%)	30 (14.6%)	13 (6.3%)	14 (7.3%)	28 (4.9%)
You participated in drinking contest/games (excessive levels).	43 (21.0%)	37 (18.0%)	13 (14.1%)	41 (20.0%)	55 (26.8%)
You were coerced into making body alterations (e.g. branding/tattooing, piercing).	178 (86.0%)	13 (6.3%)	7 (3.9%)	5 (2.4%)	15 (1.4%)
You were hit, kicked or physically assaulted.	125 (60.4%)	29 (14.0%)	23 (11.1%)	14 (7.2%)	15 (7.2%)
You were tied, taped up, or confined.	126 (61.2%)	36 (17.5%)	12 (5.8%)	21 (10.2%)	11 (5.3%)

Model 1: Does perceived social support moderate the mediating role of challenge appraisal in the relationship between peer victimisation and group cohesion.

A moderated mediational model was calculated to test the association between severe hazing and group cohesion, whether challenge appraisal mediated this relationship, and whether these relationships were moderated by perceived social support. The model was significant; F (4,193) = 50.716, $p < .001$, and accounted for 51.1% of the variance in group cohesion ($R^2 = .511$). As shown in Model 1 and Table 3 (appendix c), peer victimisation was significantly and negatively associated with group cohesion. However, perceived social support and challenge appraisal were not significantly associated with group cohesion. Perceived social support significantly moderated the relationship between severe hazing and group cohesion. However, the index of moderated mediation was not significant, suggesting that challenge appraisal did not mediate the relationship between severe hazing and group cohesion for any level of perceived social support.

Model 1:

Moderated Mediation Analysis of peer victimisation and group cohesion with challenge appraisal as the mediator and perceived social support the moderator.



Index of moderated mediation: $b = .001$, CI_{95} [-.016, .018]

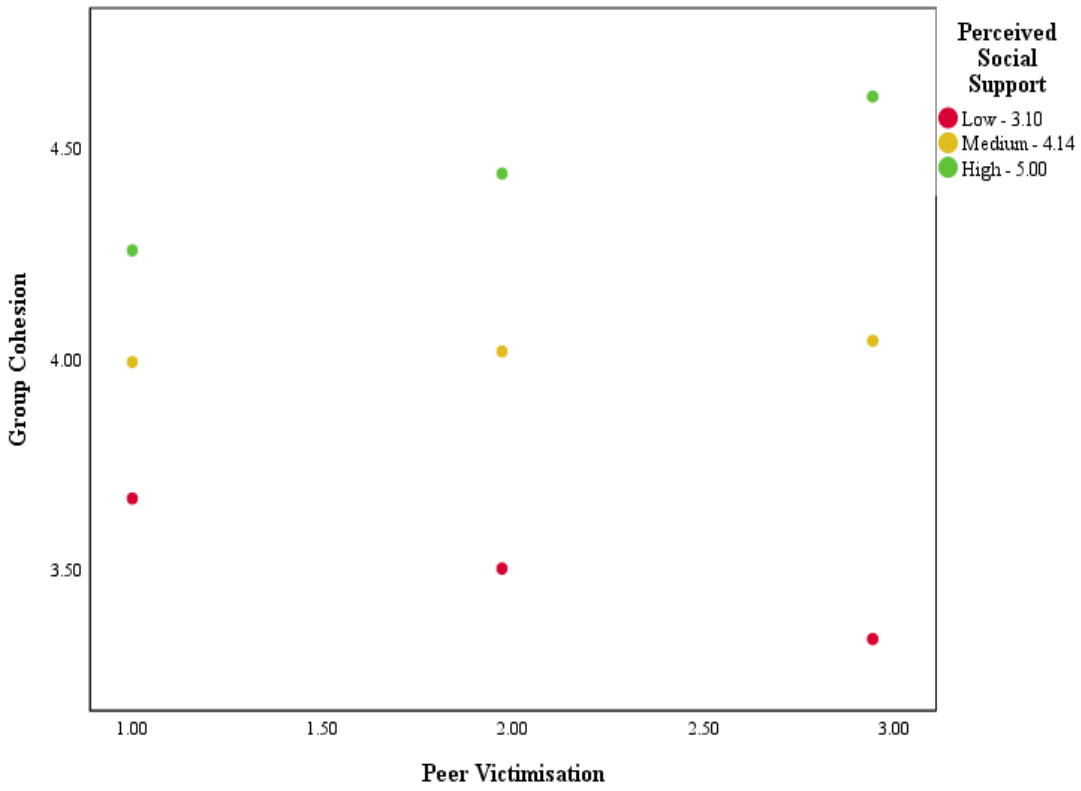
Notes:

*Unstandardised betas are shown outside of the parentheses; Standard errors are shown within parentheses. Dashed lines show a nonsignificant path (p>.05). *p < .05. ** p < .01. ***p < .001.*

Simple slopes analyses were examined for the association between peer victimisation and group cohesion for low, medium, and high levels of perceived social support. As shown in Figure 5 and Table 3 (appendix c) for low level of perceived social support, peer victimisation was significantly and negatively associated with group cohesion (*b effect* = -.17, $p < .01$**). For high social support, peer victimisation was significantly and positively associated with group cohesion (*b effect* = .19, $p <$ .001***).

Figure 5:

Simple Slope Analyses of severe hazing and group cohesion at low, medium, and high levels of social support.



Notes:

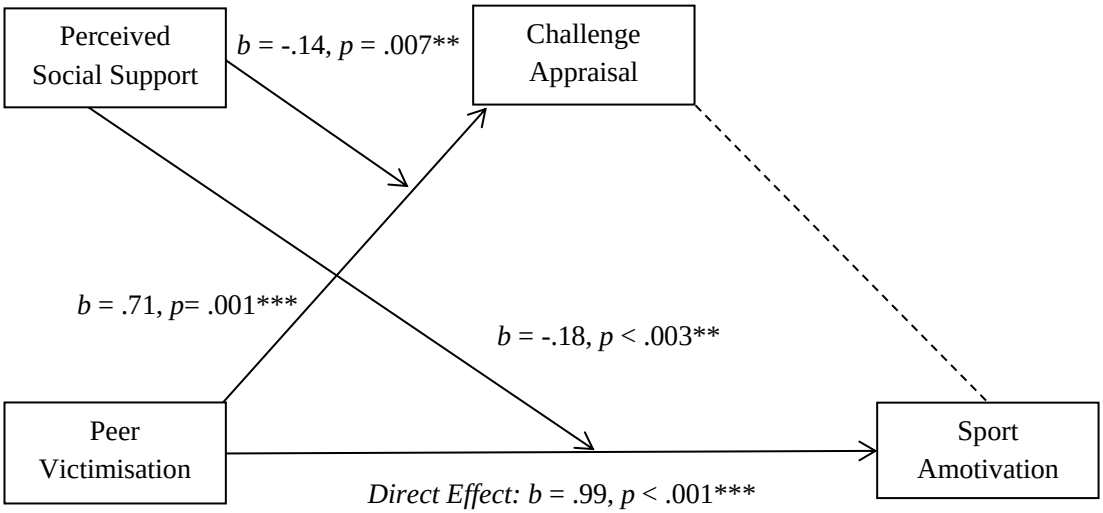
The mean perceived social support score represents medium perceived social support. Low and high perceived social support represent one standard deviation below and above the mean.

Model 2: Does perceived social support moderate the mediating role of challenge appraisal in the relationship between peer victimisation and sport amotivation. A moderated mediational model was calculated to test the association between peer victimisation and group cohesion, whether challenge appraisal mediated this relationship, and whether these relationships were moderated by perceived social support. The model was significant; $F(4,193) = 22.08$, $p < .001$, and accounted for 31.4% of the variance in group cohesion ($R^2 = .314$). As shown in Model 2 and Table 4 (appendix d), peer victimisation was significantly and positively associated with sport amotivation. However, challenge appraisal and perceived social support were not significantly associated with sport amotivation. Perceived social support significantly moderated the relationship between

severe hazing and sport amotivation. However, the index of moderated mediation was not significant, suggesting that challenge appraisal did not mediate the relationship between peer victimisation and sport amotivation for any level of perceived social support.

Model 2:

Moderated Mediation Analysis of peer victimisation and group cohesion with challenge appraisal as the mediator and perceived social support the moderator.



Index of moderated mediation: b = -.01, CI_{95} [-.051, .012]

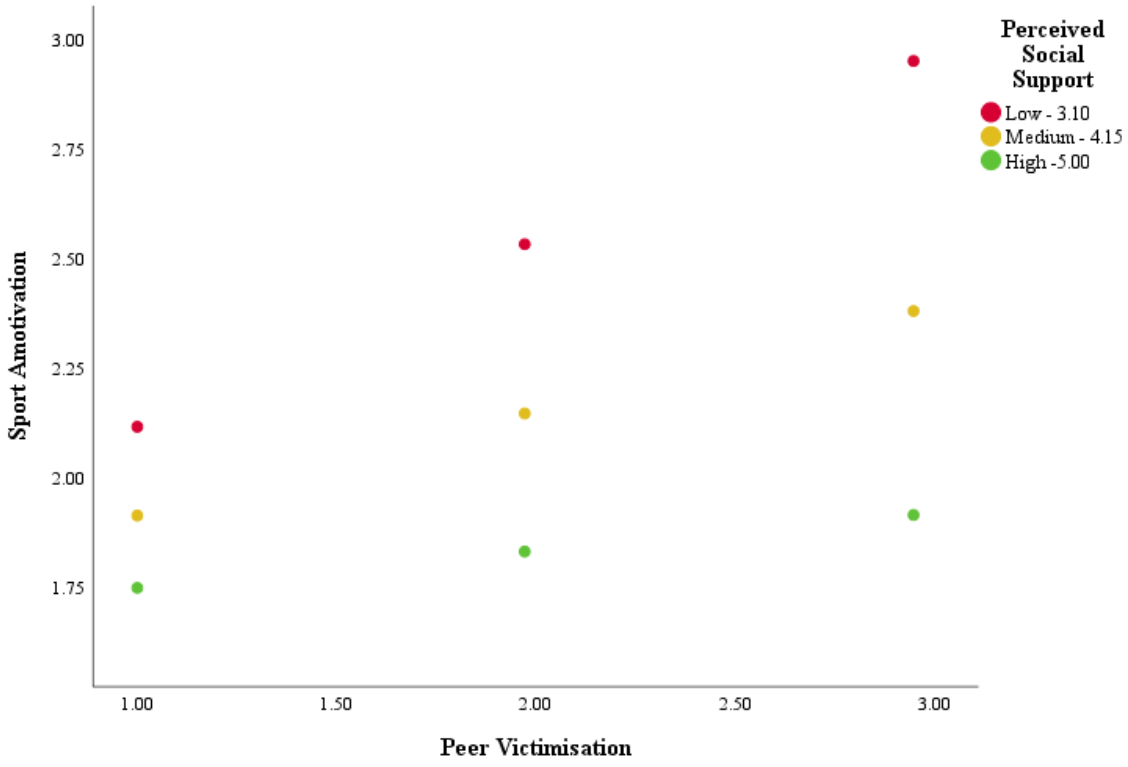
Notes:

*Unstandardised betas are shown outside of the parentheses; Standard errors are shown within parentheses. Dashed lines show a nonsignificant path (p>.05). *p < .05. ** p < .01. ***p < .001.*

Simple slopes analyses were examined for the association between peer victimisation and sport amotivation for low, medium, and high levels of perceived social support. As shown in Figure 6 and Table 4 (appendix d) for low levels of perceived social support, peer victimisation was significantly and positively associated with sport amotivation (*b effect* = .43, p < .001***). For medium levels of social support, peer victimisation was also significantly and positively associated with group cohesion (*b effect* = .24, p < .001***). High levels of perceived social support resulted in a nonsignificant relationship.

Figure 6:

Simple Slope Analyses of peer victimisation and sport amotivation at low, medium, and high levels of social support.



Notes:

The mean perceived social support score represents medium perceived social support. Low and high perceived social support represent one standard deviation below and above the mean.

Thematic analysis

Several initial order themes were identified from the qualitative data that were common concepts discussed within the literature review. The words such as ‘banter’ or ‘jokes’ were particularly prevalent. Answers that used certain phrases tended to discuss very similar concepts. These experiences were both common in this data as well as those discussed in the literature which helped to provide a framework for identifying broader themes. The themes identified centred around the following: concept of fun, intent to harm, justification of the behaviour, the expectation and acceptance of the behaviour, the notion of consent, team norms and identified discrimination.

Jokes, fun and banter

Within the thematic analysis, several core themes were identified from the qualitative data. The data helps to illustrate and provide insight into the statistical analysis, particularly in understanding some individual’s cognitive appraisal. A central theme of this analysis was the understanding that these negative behaviours were deemed as banter, jokes or fun. There is some evidence that fraternity/sorority students perceived hazing as more ‘fun’ than other samples (Campo et al. 2005). As these organisations do not exist in the UK, sporting organisations may well fill this role. Several participants who choose to respond to the open-ended question discuss that all these behaviours were just part of the joke or part of the team’s banter. One participant used the phrase ‘playful’, as to suggest these behaviours non-threatening. It appears that these behaviours and engaging in them are identified as a means of establishing new social relationships, as one participant discusses, ‘this is just a way to make friends’. The perception of new members that this is a requirement for developing teammate relationships is of some concern. This has also been noted by Campo et al. (2005) and suggests that those who engage in the behaviour acknowledge that the hazing is worth

the perceived group acceptance. The literature that discusses banter from a non-sporting perspective, identifies that participants in this form of adult social play engage willingly (Dynel, 2008). Banter can often appear to be negative from an outsider perspective, as appears to be the case in this analysis for those who responded. Other participants commented that they acknowledge this behaviour does appear to be 'nasty'. One participant stated, 'Nothing is ever done nastily, they're all really nice people but this survey makes them sound horrible'. For many participants, they did not believe there to be any intent to

No intent to harm

Several articles note that these behaviours are psychologically, emotionally and physically harmful (Waldron, 2015; Groves, Griggs and Leflay, 2011; Allan and Madden; 2012). Fun and no intent to harm were synonymous with one another in these comments. As discussed by Allan and Madden (2012), students may often downplay or dismiss hazing activities as non-harmful. This was a recurring theme within many participants' comments regarding the list of peer victimising behaviours. In the sporting context being able to 'take the pain' is considered as a desirable trait in athletes (Groves, Griggs and Leflay, 2011). Given that many of the behaviours in the list were examples of physical peer aggression, it is apparent that experiencing physical pain may well be common. One participant stated, '*None of my team has ever been nasty to me or done these things to hurt me properly',* the use of the phrase 'properly', suggests the individual had been hurt to some extent during these behaviours. It may be the case that accepting that they had been hurt would be considered weak, as such, participants trivialise their experience or alternatively under-report it. Despite experiencing pain, those who experienced this behaviour sought to justify it in some way.

Justification of behaviour

Participants appeared to make justifications for these behaviours by identifying that they only occurred at certain times. Comments identified that this behaviour only occurred during designated events or time-periods. One participant suggested that this

only occurred during '*freshers'*, which in the UK refers to the first week/s of university. In addition to '*freshers' week'*, '*socials'* were also identified as an event where these behaviours occur. Another identified event came from a participant who simply stated '*initiations'*. These events are where this behaviour is given licence by its membership including the new members themselves. This is illustrated by a participant who claimed these only ever happened in socials. In addition to being justified and accepted, one participant did discuss the role of an older teammate briefly. The comment identified that one person was particularly '*harsh'* but because she leads the social '*it's kind of her jo*b'. These comments help to highlight that deviant behaviour, although potentially isolated to specific events, is not only encouraged but given a representative to ensure new members confirm to team norms via overzealous means.

The comments grouped under the Team Norms theme identify that much of the '*antics*' would be considered offensive and abusive to outsiders. One participant identified that those who did not conform to team norms, or who couldn't '*handle*' these behaviours, left the group. In addition to this expulsion of members who don't conform, one participant noted that some new members did '*stupid stuff*' on order to gain popularity. Despite the other themes such as banter and jokes, some of these comments illuminate a darker version of events compared to what some see as harmless fun. It is apparent from this analysis and the literature; new members perform these acts to gain acceptance form the group. By engaging in this activity, one participant reported that these events normalised the negative behaviour that occurred. Considering the list of hazing and bullying behaviours provided, the normalisation of these behaviours has potential consequences for both teammate and non-teammate interactions. In addition to being pressured to accept questionable team norms, the use of alcohol at these events was mentioned several times.

Expectation and acceptance

Prior to attending university, the data suggests that many of these participants are not only aware of this culture, but expect to become victims, though it appears they do not view themselves as such (Allan and Madden, 2012). For example, one participant explicitly states they knew that it would happen before they came to university. In some cases, it appears that the behaviour is accepted as part of their university sport experience. One comment of note stated, '*I guess it's what everyone goes through and I just need to man up sometimes*…'. This is discussed in the hazing literature as those who become victims internalise and accept a loss of control (Groves, Griggs and Leflay, 2012). Power imbalance is central theme regarding these behaviours as discussed in the definitions of both bullying and hazing. Forcing new members to capitulate through the fear of being ostracised appears to be evident, '…*I don't want to lose the mates I've got*.' This comment was made in relation to becoming subservient and not 'snapping' regarding being a victim of these negative behaviours. Student athletes who experience this loss of control may attempt to justify this through their '*freely'* given consent.

Consent

Investigation into peer victimisation in higher education has identified that consent is a conflating issue. Consent is often used as a mitigating excuse by those who have suffered the behaviour but have not suffered perceived negative consequences. For example, some participants suggest these activities are voluntary and if they don't wish to participate, they were not forced. As identified by Kirby and Wintrup (2002), arguing that consent justifies these behaviours is flawed. As acceptance is perceived to only be gained via submitting to these behaviours, consent as a result is coerced not freely given. This is exemplified by the comment:

> *'I think it's all part of the fun really. The committee gave us a really timid welcome social so not to scare anyone off, anyone who couldn't handle that left and now we know each other's limits when it comes to games and stuff. It's good because it forces you to make friends.'*

By not accepting the peer victimisation, this participant discussed that some prospective members left. The choice presented to first year student athletes appears to be '*do it or leave'*, accepting the teams' norms is central facet to the continuation of the hierarchy and these traditional practices.

Team norms

A teams' norms are an influencing factor on the behaviours that are deemed acceptable by the group (Waldron, 2015). As in banter, discussed by Dynel (2008), those who engage in this behaviour dictate what is appropriate and what is not, though this may appear to be unacceptable to those outside the group: *'a lot of antics go on which many may find offensive and abusive*'. Comments highlighted earlier that suggested these behaviours seemed '*nasty'* but were described as '*playful'*, this again resembles the dynamics of banter. The differences within this group structure are that those who are new members are humiliated and degraded so that older members can enforce the hierarchy. This banter is seemingly one sided and accepted on the basis that they will in turn become accepted into the group. For example, '*Some girls joined in with stupid stuff because they thought it would make them popular'* demonstrates the willingness on behalf of new members to do stupid things in order to gain acceptance. This participant infers that she did not engage in discussed behaviour to the same extent as her peers as she considered it '*stupid'.* Accepting this behaviour can be difficult for some members, as a result the use of alcohol is often cited as way to encourage them to adapt.

Investigations into peer victimising behaviours in higher education, particularly those considered hazing, have found that alcohol has often played a prominent role (Diamond et al., 2016). Throughout the thematic analysis, alcohol featured in several of the general dimensions. Drinking contests were also noted as featuring as part of their experience. This is not specific to sports clubs as identified by Johnson (2017), as frat/sorority organisation demonstrated utilising this behaviour. Alcohol misuse is perhaps the riskiest behaviour that new members engaging, usually due to the majority of new members being younger. There have been several high-profile cases where US and UK students have died as a result of forced/coerced alcohol consumption during an initiation event. Alcohol has been described in the literature and by those in the thematic analysis as a catalyst for encouraging more dangerous behaviour (Waldron, 2015), *'I don't think anyone in the club would don* [do] *anything to intentionally harms someone but thinks often gets out of hand when drinking is involved'.* Alcohol may have an effect on helping new members to assimilate into the team where behaviours may be offensive and abusive, as one participant notes '*I think it's better to drink more at socials as people either leave you alone or you think what they're doing to you* [and] *other people is funny*'. It has been suggested that using alcohol in events where these behaviours are prominent, allows new members to more easily accept team norms (Groves, Griggs and Leflay, 2012).

Discrimination

Although this was not overly prominent in most participants' answers, there were several notable responses that centred on discrimination. It was not the intention of this project to investigate whether these behaviours were motivated by additional factors such as race, gender or religion. There were comments made around being peer victimised based on being an international student, non-binary, male on a predominately female team, female on a predominately male team as well as being gay. There is little

literature that discusses the individual experiences of the above when experiencing hazing and bullying behaviours in a university sport setting. Those that were of a different gender to the majority commented on not being treated the same as the others. Further research is required to understand the experiences of these groups and how this may affect the rate and kind of behaviours they are subject to.

Discussion

The aim of this study was to investigate the nature and prevalence of peer victimisation in university sport in the UK. The forms of behaviours studied under the umbrella of peer victimisation were taken from both hazing and bullying scales Further, research questions were aimed at exploring how these behaviours were related to group cohesion and sport amotivation. The transactional model of stress was applied to assess individuals' cognitive appraisals, specifically challenge, and if this mediated the relationships between peer victimisation and the outcome variables. As per the theoretical model, a secondary appraisal measure, perceived social support, was employed to understand how this resource moderated the effects of peer victimisation. The study revealed that all negative behaviours were significantly related to a decrease in group cohesion and an increase in sport amotivation. The primary appraisal of challenge failed to mediate the relationship between the predictor and outcome variables. The secondary appraisal measure perceived social support did significantly moderate the negative relationship between group cohesion and all forms of peer victimisation studied. This was also true for sport amotivation, resulting in an overall decrease in amotivation levels.

Correlations between variables

Sports teams and clubs at university are a collection of students who have an interest or a desire to participate in that sport. Peer victimisation is an act of aggression directed towards a peer, in this instance other students affiliated to the club/team. Peer victimisation was significantly and positively correlated to both challenge appraisal and sport amotivation. Challenge appraisal occurs when an individual perceives potential for both threat and growth/gain. As discussed within the hazing literature, a key rationale for accepting peer victimisation, is to become accepted by the group. These initial

correlations, in addition to the qualitative data, suggests that this may be the case. This goes someway in explaining the range of responses found in the thematic analysis, as some individuals praise and accept the behaviours, where others condemn it. Although the potential for positive outcomes is present, there is a significant correlation between peer victimisation and sport amotivation. Being victimised by other club members, or teammates in the case of team sports, has the potential to increase amotivation towards the sport itself. Although peer victimisation was not significantly correlated with group cohesion or perceived social support, sport amotivation was related to group cohesion. Both outcome measures were shown to be significantly related to one another in the initial correlation analyses. As group cohesion increases, sport amotivation decreases and vice versa. This relationship suggests that these negative behaviours contribute to a less than desirable environment. In turn this may impact the quality of the relationship between peers or even the ability to form positive relationships with other members. Peer victimisation may have an indirect damaging affect to group cohesion by way of sport amotivation. The importance of establishing a quality support network at university has been suggested to be an important factor in student's wellbeing (Stewart, Lim and Kim, 2015). Sport is a popular pursuit within UK universities, many students may be exposed to behaviours and cultures that are contradictory to its espoused values and have serious repercussions. These relationships, low group cohesion and high amotivation together, are potential precursors to sport drop out and disengagement. In addition, if the individual was drawn into the group based on the opportunity of establishing a support network, the potential wellbeing issues that arise from peer victimisation are far reaching.

The prevalence of peer victimisation

One of the aims of this study was to assess the prevalence rate of peer victimisation in sport in UK universities. The findings suggest that the behaviours studied were all

highly prevalent with over 90% of the sample experiencing at least one of these behaviours in their university sport experience. Those from the severe hazing scale were the most common type of peer victimisation, with the bullying scale behaviours being the least prevalent by a small margin. The rate in which these behaviours occur generally decreases in frequency with a few exceptions such as '*You participated in drinking contest/games (excessive levels)*'. This behaviour provides some empirical evidence to the perception that university sports have an unhealthy drinking culture. The prevalence of these behaviours is a cause for concern for stakeholders in university sport, particularly when comparing these findings to other studies of a similar nature.

There have been several studies of peer victimisation in the form of hazing, predominately focused in North American samples. Campo et al. (2005) studied the nature and prevalence of hazing at a single US college institution across multiple student groups, including athletes and Greek organisations, (n = 736). Waldron (2015) using the same hazing scale as Campo et al. (2005) investigated the prevalence in a sample of US college and high school athletes (n=287). More recently, a Canadian study of university athletes (n = 434) investigated similar behaviours but the listed items were not from the same scale as this study (Johnson et al. 2018). The most prevalent severe hazing behaviours in Campo et al. (2005) included involvement in excessive drinking (17.1%), being deprived of sleep (14.9%) and being kidnapped /transported/abandoned (5.4%). Waldron's (2015) prevalence rates were found in a similar range, though acting as a servant was the third most prevalent (12.1%). In Johnson et al. (2018), the prevalence of sleep deprivation was found to be 7.8% and being made to act as a servant was 4.1%. The behaviours listed in Johnson et al. (2018) did not include alcohol-related, sexual and other severe hazing items due to an online formatting error with the survey. The results of this study found the prevalence of these behaviours were significantly greater: involvement in excessive drinking (71%), being

deprived of sleep (62.1%), forced to act as a personal servant/slave (52.2%) and being kidnapped/transported/abandoned (33%). The individual prevalence of the listed severe hazing category in comparison to these studies were significantly higher.

Of the available research on the prevalence of athlete peer victimisation, the hazing literature produced several studies that were available for comparison. In total, 36% of participants in the Campo et al. (2015) study reported experiencing at least one hazing behaviour. In Waldron (2015) 50% of the sample reported experiencing at least one type of hazing and 42% experiencing at least one severe hazing behaviour. Johnson et al. (2018) found that 57.8% of athletes had experienced at least one hazing behaviour. All results were relatively smaller in comparison to 90.82% of participants who reported experiencing one kind of hazing behaviour in this study. There may be some issues when comparing these to the current study. In Campo et al's (2005) sample, athletes only made up 11%, despite this, being an athlete was a significant predictor of being hazed. In addition, Waldron (2015) used both college and high school athletes which may conflate the prevalence rate for the over 18 sample. Given the error with the questionnaire format in Johnson et al (2018), severe hazing items were not available for comparison. In addition, cultural difference may explain some of the potential discrepancies between the prevalence in these samples. Nevertheless, the results of this study and the aforementioned studies, support that there is an evident problem within sport in higher education. Although the supporting studies were predominately US-based, the high prevalence in this study highlights the need for further investigations with larger sample sizes in the UK.

At the time of writing, the BSQ has not been applied to university athlete samples and as such the only samples available for comparison are based on adolescents. Evans et al (2016) found 14% of 359 adolescent athletes reported their experience of being victimised in sport. There is a wealth of literature that has studied bullying in sport at

younger age groups. In a review of literature conducted by Noret et al. (2015), the highest victimisation rate noted was 64%, though the study was relatively small (n – 47). The largest sample study reviewed (n = 11,152), Vaillancourt et al. (2010), found that 47% of 11 to 18-year olds had been victimised during intramural sport. As in Evans et al (2016), the prevalence rates were based upon experiencing the behaviour at least once, 74.4% of participant in this study reported experiencing at least one bullying behaviour. This study did not seek to measure bullying, only the prevalence of behaviours often considered when researching this type of peer victimisation. In comparison to previous research, this study found the highest prevalence rates of peer victimisation regarding bullying and hazing behaviours. Despite the suggestion that bullying decreases as children mature into adults (Due et al. 2005), it appears that this behaviour is notably prevalent in university student-athletes in the UK. As discussed by Volk and Lagzdins (2009) it was reported that experiencing bullying behaviour in a school sport setting was up to three times higher than the national average, at least for adolescent females. As with this study, the sample consisted of athletes, it is proposed that athletic aggressiveness may be a contributing factor to this increase (Volk and Lagzdins, 2009).

The list of behaviours used in this study contain several items that under certain circumstances may be used in a jovial manner. For example, '*You were yelled, cursed or sworn at.*' had almost 60% of the sample report this happened at least once in the past month with 20% of the sample reporting this happened several times a week. Other behaviours are much less defensible, from both a perpetrator and a victim perspective. The bullying behaviours scale specifically state the perpetrators perceived intent in many of the items. Peer victimisation in the form of isolating behaviours are particularly damaging for those seeking acceptance by the group. Around 30% of the sample had experienced a form of peer victimisation that was perceived to have the intent to

discredit, isolate or change other teammates perceptions about the individual in a negative way. Teammates who perceive there is competition for their desired playing position may operationalise these behaviours to increase their chances of securing it (Volk et al. 2015). The competitive environment may be an exacerbating factor in the use and prevalence of peer victimisation in UK universities.

The prevalence rates discussed above demonstrate the severity of the issue investigated by this study. In comparison to the US/Canadian studies, where this behaviour is glorified through TV media like Blue Mountain State or American Pie, peer victimisation in UK universities is seemingly ubiquitous. Cultural differences between the UK and US may go some way as to explaining why such large discrepancies exist in relation to prevalence. Hazing behaviours on US college campuses can often result in fines, expulsion and even prison sentences depending on severity. All but 6 US states have instituted anti-hazing laws (Stop Hazing, n.d.). In the UK, there is little support for anti-hazing legislation specifically, and no legislation exists regarding peer victimisation, though there is some guidance regarding bullying. Higher education institutions in the UK do not condone any form of peer victimisation, though specific interventions and stances vary between university to university. Initiations is often the term used when referring to UK-centric hazing behaviour, and are universally banned by all UK universities. How this is enforced appears to be questionable given the prevalence data. The use of law-based punishment in the US may serve to reduce the prevalence when comparing the current study to those in the US. It is also plausible, given the ‘coerced secrecy’ that surrounds initiation-based activities that law interventions may serve to drive the behaviour further underground. If the low prevalence rates found in the US are to be taken as an underrepresentation, the data from this study suggests that UK university athletes are more open about the types of behaviours experience than our North American counterparts.

The relationship between peer victimisation and sport amotivation

Peer victimisation was found to be significantly associated with sport amotivation. Orr et al. (2018) explain that peer victimisation from teammates can have in impact on an individual's core psychological needs, relatedness and competence and indirectly influence feelings of autonomy. This is pertinent when considering the types of behaviours that were frequently reported in this study, e.g. teammates spreading false rumours and being socially excluded. This is a contributing factor in student-athletes increased likelihood of dropping out of sport (Guzmán and Kieran, 2012). Conflict between teammates has previously been negatively correlated to environments where there is low self-esteem enhancement as well as a low level of supportiveness (McDonough and Crocker, 2006). Through peer victimisation, particularly when based on sporting ability, individuals may avoid situations where they are pressured to perform (Orr et al. 2018). Environments where peer victimisation is prevalent are associated with athlete burnout and sport amotivation (Bartholomew et al. 2011). In school sport, being exposed to peer victimisation has been associated with dropping out of sport and becoming inactive (Noret et al. 2015). Given the understanding that sport amotivation is anathema to sport adherence (Calvo et al. 2010), peer victimisation presents a significant threat to the continuation of playing sport for student athletes in UK universities. Those with a duty of care to UK university athletes, as well as the athletes themselves, must pay greater attention to the negative implications associated with peer victimisation. As a stressor, peer victimisation is potent predictor of both negative outcomes in this study. As previously shown in the correlations, peer victimisations impact is twofold. The negative impact caused directly by peer victimisation on sport amotivation is also seemingly exacerbated by amotivation's correlation with group cohesion.

The relationship between peer victimisation and group cohesion

Peer victimisation can be degrading, humiliating and dangerous as evident from recent media reports in both the UK and US (Van Raalte et al. 2007; Waldron and Kowalski, 2009). In the second model, peer victimisation as a predictor demonstrated a significant negative relationship with group cohesion. As peer victimisation increases, group cohesion also decreases. Previous research has suggested that group cohesion (task and social), are important in sport adherence (Spink, 1995). The scale used in this study contains measures of both task and social cohesion. Further, it is suggested by Steinfeldt et al. (2012) that in environments where negative behaviours are ubiquitous, there is an increase of these behaviours being considered 'normal' as participants attempt to endure and assimilate. Qualitative interviewing by Partridge and Knapp (2015) identified a theme relating to a reduction of perceived group cohesion when intra-team victimisation was present. The predominant rationale behind this peer victimisation was based upon competition over playing time or positions. The findings of this study and previous literature suggest that high levels of peer victimisation contribute to an environment that is not conducive to the fostering of group cohesion. As seen in the prevalence rates, it is likely then that the first-year athletes will also become perpetrators in the following academic year (Massey and Massey, 2017; Waldron, 2012). Considering how many participants were exposed to this behaviour in this study, this cyclical pattern is a cause for concern. This study demonstrates that these behaviours have the potential to have a negative impact on the perception of group cohesion. This study; however, did not identify the perpetrators of this behaviour other than being teammates, as such, these may be enacted by other first year members or older teammates. Hazing-related behaviours are usually committed by senior members of the team, as to establish themselves as more powerful, thus maintaining a constructed hierarchy (Johnson, 2011). Qualitative interviewing by Johnson (2011) highlighted the aversion to this misuse of

power and identified individuals who question the belief that hazing encourages group cohesion. When analysing the direct effect, it is apparent that for this sample, behaviours from the mild and severe hazing scales do have a negative impact on group cohesion. Many of these behaviours revolve around the degradation and humiliation of the individual within the context of a hierarchy (Keating et al. 2005). Student-athletes may find themselves at the 'bottom' where they were previously the oldest members in their former educational institution (Dias and José Sá, 2014). This sudden loss in social status and requirement to be subservient, as exemplified by the behaviour '*You were made to act as a personal servant to others*', may serve to reduce feelings of cohesion.

The mediating role of challenge appraisal in these relationships

Challenge appraisals were used as the primary appraisal measure and filled the role of the mediator. Challenge appraisals may explain why positive outcomes occur, particularly in relation to peer victimisation. It is noted that hazing victims often perceive their experience as positive when they feel they have conquered a task (Keating et al. 2005). Sillars and Davis (2017) note that challenge appraisals were increasingly more common in older samples than threat appraisals. In their study, 68.5% of the undergraduate student sample (n = 110) reported experiencing challenge appraisals across all three types of stressor. This was as opposed to 48.7% of children (n = 184) reporting challenge appraisals in response to the same three stressors (Sillars and Davis, 2017). Given the age of this sample and the potential for perceived positive outcomes (acceptance), challenge appraisal seemed the more likely primary appraisal for university student athletes when confronted with peer victimisation. The investigate behaviours in this study was significantly related to an increase in the appraisal of challenge. This suggests that the student athletes appraised peer victimisation in a way that did allow for potential positive outcomes. With the introduction of perceived social

support, the direction of the relationship changed. The interaction between perceived social support and peer victimisation served to decrease challenge appraisal scores. As explained by Cohen and Wills (1985), perceived social support can reduce the perception that an event is stressful. When an individual perceives that peers will be or can be there to support them, the appraisal of the event becomes less stressful (Cohen and Wills, 1985). As such, perceived social support from teammates has the potential to alter the perceptions that intra-team/club peer victimisation is no longer stressful. This again is supported by the qualitative analysis and the perception that these behaviours are only 'banter'. Challenge appraisal was not related significantly to either sport amotivation or group cohesion in any model. Challenge appraisal also did not function significantly as mediator for any model. As both models demonstrated, the interaction between perceived social support and the different forms of peer victimisation resulted in a reduction in challenge. It could be suggested then that perceived social support helped to make these behaviours less stressful.

The moderating role of perceived social support

The interaction effect between perceived social support and peer victimisation was significantly related to group cohesion. Perceived social support significantly moderated the negative relationship between peer victimisation and group cohesion, reversing the direction. Overall, the interaction effect served to increase group cohesion. It is evident that there are multiple effects when considering the varying levels of perceived social support. At low levels of perceived social support, bullying maintained its negative effect on group cohesion, though reduced in comparison to the direct effect. For those with the mean level of social support, bullying behaviours were no longer a significant predictor of group cohesion. The addition of mean level perceived social support mitigated the significance of bullying as a predictor. For high levels of

perceived social support, peer victimisation had a significant and positive impact on group cohesion. Although there are no studies that have been conducted using these same variables on this sample, there is a wealth of evidence that examines the effects of perceived social support on peer victimisation outcomes. Rigby (2000) found that low social support and peer victimisation were significantly related to poor mental health. This supports the finding that bullying behaviours as a form of peer victimisation are still associated with negative outcomes in the presence of low social support. In addition, Noret et al.'s (2018) literature review identified six articles that supported a moderating effect between perceived social support and peer victimising behaviours. Depending on the type of perceived social support, e.g. friends or family, increases in perceived social support can reduce the effect of peer victimisation (Noret et al. 2018). Murray (2006) found positive correlations between perceived social support from sports coaches and group cohesion. Although Murray's (2006) study did not assess perceived social support from teammates, these findings suggest it is an important resource for building group cohesion in the sport context, regardless of the source. This study establishes that peer support from other athletes belonging to the same team or club has a buffering effect on peer victimisation that is also perpetrated by other teammates.

The interaction effect between perceived social support and peer victimisation in model 2 also reversed the direction and strength of peer victimisations direct effect on sport amotivation. From this analysis, the 'buffering effect' of perceived social support as discussed by Cohen and Wills (1985) is evident when considering sport amotivation as an outcome measure, not just group cohesion. Perceived social support served to protect the individuals from the harmful effects of peer victimisation. At the various levels of the moderator, peer victimisations positive relationship with sport amotivation was incrementally reduced as the level of perceived social support increased. At low and medium levels of perceived social support, peer victimisation still served to

increase sport amotivation. At high levels of social support, the effect peer victimisation has on sport amotivation become non-significant. This finding aligns with McLaren et al.'s (2017) assertion that having teammates who are friends meets the basic need of relatedness, having high levels of perceived social support from teammates resulted in an increase in group cohesion. There were some comments made in the thematic analysis that suggests there was no perceived intent to harm and this is 'banter'. Given the previous work regarding the sporting environment and team norms (Waldron, 2012), acceptable behaviours are defined by the team. If this behaviour is seen as accepted, perhaps it doesn't carry the same outcomes as peer victimisation in non-sporting environments, despite the behaviour being the same. It should be noted that for this to be the case, the individual must perceive they have strong teammate relationships, otherwise these behaviours lead to increases in sport amotivation as seen at low and mean level perceived social support.

In summary, all negative behaviours functioned in a similar manner when using group cohesion as an outcome. In addition, challenge appraisal did not function as a significant mediator. The protective effect of perceived social support as a secondary appraisal measure may trivialise the potential stress associated with peer victimising behaviours in this sporting environment. The significant interactions between perceived social support and peer victimisation showed an increase in group cohesion, a reversal of the direct effect of peer victimisation. In addition, the interaction between perceived social support and peer victimisation on sport amotivation was also reversed. Perceived social support demonstrated significant moderating effects. The simple slopes analysis differed when considering each outcome. Sport amotivation showed different outcomes at the various levels of the moderator than in the group cohesion models. Increase in sport amotivation persisted at both the low and medium levels of perceived social support. The differences between these results may lie in their motivation. Given the

competitive nature of sport and the desire to secure a desired playing position, new members may utilise bullying behaviours against one another to demotivate another member (Volk et al. 2015). In addition, older members may utilise different behaviours with other outcomes, such as establishing dominance and maintaining a hierarchal structure.

Study Evaluation

This pilot study was the first to apply the transaction model of stress to understanding the implications of peer victimisation on group cohesion and sport amotivation in UK university sport. The study found high prevalence rates when compared to other countries where the studied behaviour is reputedly high. The results of this study established positive relationships between peer victimisation and group cohesion, when perceived social support was present. This is one of the first studies to demonstrate this relationship through quantitative research. The available literature concerning these behaviours in a similar setting have previously found only negative outcomes. The nature of the perpetrator and victim relationship is seemingly much more complex as the source of peer victimisation and of perceived social support are potentially the same. Using the transactional model of stress to investigate the appraisals process, perceived social support has been identified as potential buffering resource. The study demonstrated good internal consistency and validity, as shown by the alpha scores, though the challenge appraisal was somewhat lower than the other measures. This perhaps explains why challenge appraisal was non-significant as a mediator, though as previously discussed, perceived social support may be significant enough to alter the stress associated with peer victimisation. In addition, multiple appraisals would yield a better understanding of the appraisal process regarding peer victimisation. In order to limit the already sizable questionnaire, challenge appraisal was selected due it's potential to offer positive outcomes as oppose to threat. In addition, the

use of the YSEQ was not the most appropriate measure due to its target audience being much younger the sample in this survey, the Group Environment Questionnaire (GEQ) would be more suitable.

The sample was drawn from multiple institutions across most of the UK except for Northern Ireland. Given similar hazing and bullying investigations into this sample (Van Raalte et al. 2007; Lafferty, Wakefield and Brown, 2017), the sample size was also appropriate for this initial investigation. This study provides further understanding of the nature of peer victimisation experienced by student athletes in UK higher education institutions. The data provides an appropriate foundation and rationale for the further study of peer victimisation in UK university sports. The high prevalence should be a significant cause for concern for all those who have a responsibility for the welfare of these student athletes, this includes student unions, universities, BUCS as well as the concerned sport's national governing bodies themselves. Due to the nature of this investigation, there were concerns regarding participant's truthfulness given the behaviours they were asked to report. As identified by Van Raalte et al. (2007), those who are involved in hazing related are coerced/forced into maintaining an element of secrecy. Despite taking steps to ensure that the respondent and their teams/university of study were unidentifiable, this may still have affected the results. When compared to the North American based studies, it does appear that UK university students are possibly more forthcoming about what happens in UK institutions. The original design of this study was intended to capture the changes pre-initiation in semester one and post-initiation in semester two in a longitudinal design. One of the original intentions of the project was to identify any participants who had dropped out of university sport as a result of the peer victimisation. Due to a lack of engagement with the study, the initial recruitment period was extended and another recruitment period in the following year was incorporated to increase the sample. As a result, a cross-sectional study design was

adopted. Although high sport amotivation and low group cohesion are potentially indicators of an individual's intention to discontinue playing sport, it could not be inferred by this study. Due to the changes made, inferences on causality are not appropriate (Price and Murnan, 2004). It is unclear as to whether the outcome measures had any influence on the rate of experienced peer victimisation or were a symptom of these behaviours.

This study utilised only one type of primary appraisal. Taking into consideration the nature of the predictor, a type of stress appraisal seemed most appropriate. As demonstrated in the moderated mediation models, challenge did not function as hypothesised. There is some suggestion that for some of these behaviours, participants did not feel 'stressed'. The addition of positive appraisal measures may have helped substantiate this theory. As such this would require further investigation. In addition to challenge appraisal not functioning, there are several limitations to using mediation in cross sectional data. It is stated by Stone-Romero and Rosopa (2008) that mediation analysis is least appropriate for non-experimental designs, such as this. The core criteria for mediation analysis as suggested by Shadish, Cook and Campbell (2002) are temporal precedence, correlation between predictor and outcome and a lack of confounding variables that also help explain the correlation. This study meets the second criteria but not the first or third. Due to sampling issues the study was altered to a cross-sectional analysis as opposed to longitudinal. As such this study does not provide any evidence of causality. The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between variables, despite the change to cross-sectional the analyses were still able to analyse the relationships. Future studies should employ a longitudinal design in order to establish whether peer victimisation has causal relationship with group cohesion and sport amotivation.

Future directions

The design of this study and previous peer victimisation literature identified first year members as being at a higher risk of peer victimisation by older members as a result of hierarchal power imbalances. It was theorised that the majority of peer victimisation would be perpetrated against 'freshers' by those who are senior. What this did not account for was the perpetration of peer victimisation by first years against other first years. When investigating the prevalence rates, there are several other behaviours that may be employed by other first year members in order to establish themselves over others. Investigations into children and adolescents demonstrate how peer victimisation type changes as social structures and friendship groups become more important (Veenstra and Dijkstra, 2011). First year student's vulnerability regarding entering a new environment and having little immediate perceived social support from peers may encourage bullying behaviours between first year themselves when vying for popularity within the group. This warrants further investigation into the transition experience of first year student-athletes. Given the finding that peer victimisation appeared to have such a negative effect in the absence of high levels of perceived social support, this warrants further study. Furth study would be appropriate where both peer nomination and self-report questions are employed, as recommended by Volk, Veenstra and Espelage (2017), to assess who engages in peer victimisation at all levels of the team (all years).

Considering BUCS and Sport England's (2011) ambition to raise student participation in sport to 75% for all UK higher education students, hazing and bullying behaviours present a threat to sport adherence. The interaction effect with mean and above levels of perceived social support suggest that peer victimisation may result in an increase in group cohesion and decrease in sport amotivation. Though it appears that significant teammate relationships need to exist in order to achieve these positive

outcomes. This raises the question as to why a university sport team would risk losing members should they not perceive there to be adequate social support. As funding for most university teams comes from membership fees and their own fundraising endeavours, more members pragmatically equate to more monetary capital for club development and increased provision. The findings of this research suggest that perceived social support is a strong resource in protecting against the negative implications of these prevalent behaviours. Therefore, non-victimising team bonding exercises/events may help to increase perceived social support from teammates, thus increasing a resource that is shown to buffer any negative effects caused by hazing/bullying behaviours. If successful alternatives are identified in fostering better teammate relationships, it eliminates the need for hazing behaviours entirely (based on the team building rationale). As noted by Lafferty, Wakefield and Brown (2017), students' unions have banned initiations and the use of the phrase, though this appears not have had much of an impact considering the prevalence of peer victimisation. It is recommended that students' unions and universities become more engaged with changing the culture of peer victimisation in UK university sport. Changing a team's norms is difficult to facilitate (Waldron, 2015), as such, continued intervention with the newest members of a team may begin to phase out 'traditional' hazing activities.

Perceived social support was shown to be effective as moderator when accounting for peer victimisations direct effect on both outcome measures. Perceived social support as a moderator should be investigated further as a secondary resource measure with other outcome measures. As discussed by Orr et al. (2018), variables such as group cohesion and the various levels of peer victimisation may have moderating effects on one another. The Pearson's correlations demonstrated that sport amotivation and group cohesion were significantly and negatively related. Future studies should consider the use of other study designs such as a cross lagged panel model in order to investigate

these relationships. In addition, as recommended below, investigation into how perceived social support can be increased in university student-athletes may present alternatives to these behaviours. Due to the competitive nature of sport and as shown in the prevalence rates of this study, the use of peer victimisation appears to be prolific. A larger, incentivised study with backing from governing bodies or higher education institutions may help to build a more detailed picture of peer victimisation culture in UK university sport. As previously discussed, the high prevalence suggests that UK university students are possibly more open to answering questions around this behaviour than found in other international studies. As there are no law-based punishments for general peer victimisation currently, this provides for an opportunity to do further investigation with a look to implement alternative interventions than those used in North America. Intervention work based on the findings of this study should champion perceived social support as a method of mitigating negative aspects that appear to be inherent in sport culture. As demonstrated, perceived social support from teammates can help to increase team cohesion in environments where peer victimisation is embedded as normality. Encouraging an environment where perceived social support is fostered is important, as many of these teams and clubs are student lead, empowering students to action change is one potential way in which to reduce the amount of peer victimisation experienced.

Conclusion

Peer victimisation demonstrated significant adverse effects by decreasing group cohesion and increasing sport amotivation. With the addition of perceived social support, the negative effects of this peer victimisation can be moderated to varying degrees depending on the outcome. Student athletes with low perceived social support from teammates are a particularly at-risk group. On the other hand, high perceived social support groups demonstrated increases in group cohesion when subject to peer

victimising behaviours. The use of the transactional model of stress allows for the identification of appropriate resource, in this case perceived social support, in helping student athletes to deal with this prevalent stressful issue. Regardless of perceived social supports moderating effect, these behaviours present a threat for many UK university student athletes wellbeing. In line with NGB and NGO aims to increase sport participation, further work in challenging these behaviours is required to reduce the risk of university sport attrition. Duty of care and the wellbeing of athletes should be paramount and come before attempting to expand participation rates.

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Appendices

Appendix a: Questionnaire

Peer Victimisation in UK University Sport

The aim of this survey is to better understand UK University first year students' experiences of victimisation in university sport. The survey should help us understand what forms of victimisation are experienced in sport, and how such behaviors relate to negative outcomes (e.g. sports participation) in UK universities. This research project has been approved by the York St John University Cross School Research Ethics Committee (Health Sciences, Sport, Psychological and Social Sciences and Business).

What will you do in the project?
Participation in this survey will require you to complete a questionnaire that should not take more than 20 minutes to complete. The questions are related to experiences in team sports played at university. The questionnaire will ask you about any experiences of victimisation in sport and your current levels of engagement with the team. We are seeking participants to take part in the questionnaire twice, once at the end of their first term/ semester of their first year and again at the end of the academic year (2017/18). The second survey will be available towards the end of April, and an email with this link will be sent closer to the time.

Do you have to take part? Participation in this survey is completely voluntary and all participants have the right to withdraw at any point up until the data is anonymized (31st July 2018). After the data are anonymized it will not be possible to identify your responses. To withdraw please email me using the contact information below, with your date of birth and the last three digits of your post code. There are no repercussions for choosing to withdraw.

Why have you been invited to take part?
The survey requires all participants to be first year students who are engaged in University sports. You have been identified as someone who meets these criteria, which is why we are inviting you to participate in this study.

What are the potential risks to you in taking part?
We don't anticipate that you will be affected in any way by participating in this study. However, as the topic of study relates to potentially distressing experiences, a list of appropriate sources of support are provided at the end of the survey.

What happens to the information in the project?
As we are asking people to complete the questionnaire twice, some personal information is required in order to match the surveys. In order reduce the amount of personal information kept; only your date of birth and the last three digits of your post code will be required. Once the data collection is complete this information will be deleted. Please be aware that your responses will not be identifiable in the completed thesis, or any other future publications. All personal data provided will be confidential and be kept in line with the York St John University's research data protection policy (A link can be found below). This will not be shared with third parties. Your information will be stored securely on a password protected hard drive. You can access the York St John University Research Data Protection Policy: https://www.yorksj.ac.uk/add/research/documents-policies-and-forms-/.

Thank you for reading this information – please ask any questions if you are unsure about what is written here.

What happens next? If you would like to participate please continue onto the next page and you will be asked to complete a consent form. If you no longer feel you wish to participate I thank you for taking the time to read this

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If you have any questions/concerns, during or after the investigation, or wish to contact an independent person to whom any questions may be directed or further information may be sought from, please contact:

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Please read and complete this form carefully. If you are willing to participate in this study, tick the appropriate responses. If you do not understand any of the information and would like more information, please contact me (e.morgan@yorksj.ac.uk):

	Yes	No
I have had the research satisfactorily explained to me in a written form by the researcher.		
I understand that the research will involve completing two surveys and have been informed of the dates these are required.		
I understand that I may withdraw from this study at any time up to the 31st July 2018. In order to withdraw I understand that I must email the researcher with my date of birth and the last 3 digits of my postcode.		
I understand that all information about me will be treated in strict confidence and that I will not be named in any written work arising from this study.		

I understand that you will be discussing the progress of your research with Nathalie Noret and Prof. Andy Smith at York St John University

I consent to being a participant in the project

Please write your date of birth and the last 3 digits of your postcode. This will be used to create your participant ID so your name is kept anonymous.

_____

About you and the sports you are involved in

Are you…. (Please tick)

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say
- Other (please state):

How old are you (in years)?

_____

Regarding sport that you are currently involved in?

	What is the main team sport you play at university?	**Do you participate in any other sports at university?** ***You can tick all that apply to you.***
American Football	☐	☐
Basketball	☐	☐
Cheerleading	☐	☐
Cricket	☐	☐
Football	☐	☐
Futsal	☐	☐
Gaelic Football	☐	☐
Handball	☐	☐
Hockey	☐	☐
Korfball	☐	☐
Rowing	☐	☐
Rugby League	☐	☐
Rugby Union	☐	☐
Volleyball	☐	☐
Netball	☐	☐
Lacrosse	☐	☐

Other *(Please state below)*	☐	☐

In the past academic year (since September 2017), have you been in situations at university where....

	Not at all in in the past few months	**Only once or twice**	**Two or three times a month**	**About once a week**	**Several times a week**
You were made to act as a personal servant to others.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
You were coerced into destroying or stealing property/ or had property stolen/destroyed.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other teammates left you out of things on purpose, excluded you from the team, or completely ignored you.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Something was thrown at you by your teammate(s).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other teammates told lies or spread false rumors about you and tried to make other teammates dislike you.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
You were deprived of sleep	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Coerced/forced into engaging in or simulating sexual acts.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Had food thrown at you?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other teammates made sexual jokes, comments, or gestures at you.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
A teammate(s) got others in the team to turn against you.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
You were kidnapped or transported or abandoned.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
You were required to remain silent or were silenced.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
A teammate(s) sent you hurtful instant messages, emails and/ or text messages.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
You were forced to carry around unnecessary objects or items.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
A teammate(s) called you names, made fun of you, or teased you in a hurtful way.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
You participated in drinking contest/games (excessive levels).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
A teammate(s) tricked you into sharing personal information in an e-mail or text message and told other teammates.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Not at all in in the past few months	Only once or twice	Two or three times a month	About once a week	Several times a week
You were pressured to eat something you did not want to.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
A teammate(s) took unflattering or inappropriate pictures of you without permission and posted them online.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Teammate(s) bumped into you on purpose as they walked by.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
You were yelled, cursed, or sworn at.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
You were threatened to be physically hurt or harmed by a teammate(s).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Your social media account(s) were used by a teammate(s) to send/post mean messages about/to other people.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
You were hit, kicked or physically assaulted.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
You were tied, taped up, or confined.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
A teammate(s) hit, kicked, pushed, or shoved you around outside of sport.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
You were coerced into making body alterations (e.g. branding/tattooing, piercing).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
You weren't invited to a teammate's place because other teammates didn't like you.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
A teammate create an offensive or embarrassing webpage/ social media site about you.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

If you would like to expand on your answers, please use the space below:Page Break
If you have experienced any of the behaviors listed on the previous page, to what extent did you feel the following? If you did not experience any of the behaviors, how do you think you might feel?

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Your situation would become better.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
You would become a stronger, more confident person.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Your teammates would be punished.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
You would just learn to deal with the behaviors.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
You would learn to be nicer to others.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

In your current team have you:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Friends that you can count on when things go wrong.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Friends that really try to help you.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Friends that will stick by you through the good and bad times.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Friends that you can talk to about your problems.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Page Break

Please answer the following in relation to the sports team you play the most at university, how strongly would you agree/disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
We all share the same commitment to our team's goals	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I invite my team mates to do things with me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
As a team, we are all on the same page.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Some of my best friends are on this team.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I like the way we work together	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I do not get along with members of my team.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I don't seem to be enjoying sport as much as I previously did.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
We hang out with one another as much as possible.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I'm unsure of myself; I get the impression of being incapable of succeeding in this sport.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
As a team, we are united.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Contact my teammates often (phone, text, instant message).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
It is not clear to me anymore; I don't really think I belong in this sport.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
This team gives me enough opportunities to improve my performance.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I spend time with my teammates	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am going to keep in touch with my teammates when term finishes	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am happy with my team's level of desire to win.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Our team does not work well together.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I don't know if I want to continue to invest my time and effort as much into my sport.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
We stick together outside of practice.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My approach to playing is the same as my teammates.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
We often contact each other (phone, text, instant message).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
We like the way we work together as a team	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Page Break

Thank you for your time, it's greatly appreciated.

Participation in this survey is completely voluntary and all participants have the right to withdraw at any point up until the 31st July. After the data are anonymized it will not be possible to identify your responses. To withdraw please email me using the contact information below, with your date of birth and the last three digits of your post code. There are no repercussions for choosing to withdraw.

As this topic relates to potentially harmful and traumatic experiences, it is advised that you seek appropriate help should they feel upset. It is recommended that you also seek support from your respective university's wellbeing/student support team. Below is a list of appropriate external support resources:

National Bullying Helpline:

Contact Number: 0845 225 5787
Website: http://www.nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk/

Samaritans:

Contact Number: 116123
Email: jo@samaritans.org
Website: https://www.samaritans.org/

Bullying UK:

Contact Number: 0808 800 2222
Website: http://www.bullying.co.uk/

Kind regards,
Elliott Morgan

Appendix b: Ethical Approval

York St John University,
Lord Mayors Walk,
York,
YO31 7EX

08/12/2017

York St John University Cross School Research Ethics Committee
(Health Sciences, Sport, Psychological and Social Sciences and Business)

Dear Elliott,

Title of study: Victimisation in UK University Sport
Ethics reference: 169060895 /08122017
Date of submission:06/11/2017

I am pleased to inform you that the above application for ethical review has been reviewed by the Cross School Research Ethics Committee and I can confirm a favourable ethical opinion on the basis of the information provided in the following documents:

Document	Date
Ethics form	06/11/2017
Responses to feedback	07/12/2017

Please notify the committee if you intend to make any amendments to the original research as submitted at date of this approval, including changes to recruitment methodology or accompanying documentation. All changes must receive ethical approval prior to commencing your study.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Anna Macklin

Appendix c: Moderation Mediation Model Output (Model 1-6)

Table 3: Does perceived social support moderate the mediating role of challenge appraisal in the relationship between severe hazing and group cohesion.

	R^2	*b*	*SEb*	95% CI
Model 1: Severe Hazing				
CA	.05*			
Severe Hazing ➔ CA		.72*	.27	.18, 1.25
PSS ➔ CA		.22	.14	-.05, .49
TC	.50***			
Severe Hazing ➔ TC		-.70**	.21	-1.12, -.28
CA➔ TC		-.02	.06	-.13, .09
PSS ➔ TC		.17	.11	-.04, .38
PSS X SH		.18***	.05	.08, .28
Simple slopes for path a (SH➔CA)				
Low PSS		-.14*	.07	-.28, -.00
Mod PSS		.05	.06	-.04, .13
High PSS		.20***	.06	.08, .32
Simple slopes for path c' (SH➔TC)				
Low PSS		-.01	.01	-.04, .02
Mod PSS		-.00	.01	-.02, .01
High PSS		.00	.01	-.01, .02

Notes:
**p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001*

Table 4: Does perceived social support moderate the mediating role of challenge appraisal in the relationship between mild hazing and group cohesion.

	R^2	*b*	*SEb*	95% CI
Model 2: Mild Hazing				
CA	.06*			
Mild Hazing ➔ CA		.45**	.17	1.52, .78
PSS ➔ CA		.14	.11	-.07, .36
TC	.51***			
Mild Hazing ➔ TC		-.54	.13	-.80, -.29
CA➔ TC		-.01	.05	-.12, .10
PSS ➔ TC		-.20	.08	.03, .36
PSS X MH		.14	.03	.08, .20
Simple slopes for path a (MH➔CA)				
Low PSS		-.12*	.05	-.21, -03
Mod PSS		.03	.03	-.04, .09
High PSS		.15***	.04	.06, .23
Simple slopes for path c' (MH➔TC)				
Low PSS		-.00	.01	-.02, .02
Mod PSS		-.00	.01	-.01, .01
High PSS		.00	.00	-.01, .01

Notes:
**p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001*

Table 5: Does perceived social support moderate the mediating role of challenge appraisal in the relationship between bullying behaviours and group cohesion.

Model 3: Bullying Behaviours				
CA	.08**			
Bullying Behaviours ➔ CA		.64**	.20	.25, 1.04
PSS ➔ CA		.22	.12	-.02, .45
TC	.51***			
Bullying Behaviours ➔ TC		-.69***	.16	-1.00, -.37

CA➔ TC	-.00	.06	-.11, .11
PSS ➔ TC	.16	.09	-.02, .34
PSS X Bullying	.17***	.04	.10, .25
Simple slopes for path a (B➔CA)			
Low PSS	-.16**	.06	-.27, -.05
Mod PSS	.02	.04	-.07, .11
High PSS	.17**	.06	.05, .28
Simple slopes for path c' (B➔TC)			
Low PSS	-.00	.02	-.03, .03
Mod PSS	-.00	.01	-.02, .02
High PSS	.00	.01	-.01, .01

Notes:
**p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001*

Table 6: Does perceived social support moderate the mediating role of challenge appraisal in the relationship between severe hazing and sport amotivation.

	R^2	*b*	*SEb*	95% CI
Model 4: Severe Hazing				
CA	.05*			
Severe Hazing ➔ CA		.72*	.27	.18, 1.25
PSS ➔ CA		.22	.14	-.05, .49
SA	.30***			
Severe Hazing ➔ SA		1.14***	.31	.53, 1.75
CA➔ SA		.11	.08	-.05, .27
PSS ➔ SA		.02	.16	-.28, .33
PSS X SH		-.22**	.071	-.37, -.08
Simple slopes for path a (SH➔CA)				
Low PSS		.45***	.10	.24, .65
Mod PSS		.21**	.06	.08, .34
High PSS		.02	.09	-.15, .19
Simple slopes for path c' (SH➔SA)				
Low PSS		.03	.03	-.01, .10
Mod PSS		.01	.01	-.00, .05
High PSS		-.00	.01	-.05, .01

Table 7: Does perceived social support moderate the mediating role of challenge appraisal in the relationship between mild hazing and sport amotivation.

Model 5: Mild Hazing				
CA	.06*			
Mild Hazing ➔ CA		.45**	.16	.12, .77
PSS ➔ CA		.14	.11	-.07, -.35
SA	.30***			
Mild Hazing ➔ SA		.76***	.08	.38, 1.13
CA➔ SA		.11	.20	-.05, .27
PSS ➔ SA		-.06	.12	-.30, -.06
PSS X MH		-.15***	.04	-.24, -.06
Simple slopes for path a (MH➔CA)				
Low PSS		.29***	.07	.16, .42
Mod PSS		.13**	.05	.03, .23
High PSS		.00	.06	-.12, .13
Simple slopes for path c' (MH➔SA)				
Low PSS		.02	.02	-.01, .07
Mod PSS		.01	.01	-.00, .04
High PSS		-.00	.01	-.02, .02

Table 8: Does perceived social support moderate the mediating role of challenge appraisal in the relationship between bullying behaviours and sport amotivation.

Model 6: Bullying Behaviours				
CA	.08***			
Bullying Behaviours ➔ CA		*.65	.20	.26, 1.04
PSS ➔ CA		*.22	.16	-.01, .45
SA	.32***			
Bullying Behaviours ➔ SA		.77***	.23	.32, 1.23
CA➔ SA		.08	.08	-.08, .24
PSS ➔ SA		-.12	.13	-.38, .14
PSS X Bullying		-.12*	.06	-.23, -.01
Simple slopes for path a (B➔CA)				
Low PSS		.40***	.08	.24, .56
Mod PSS		.27***	.07	.15, .40
High PSS		.17*	.08	.00, .34
Simple slopes for path c' (B➔SA)				
Low PSS		.02	.03	-.03, .56
Mod PSS		.01	.02	-.01, .05
High PSS		.00	.01	-.01, .04

Appendix d: Thematic analyses

Themes	***Quotes***
Banter, Jokes and Fun	
	'…it's all done as jokes.'
	'The lads are my best mates, it's all done as jokes'
	'It sounds like all this was done really nastily but it was actually pretty funny'
	'All acts that I confirmed happened in a playful way'
	'Nothing is ever done nastily, they're all really nice people but this survey makes them sound horrible'
	'It's just banter it's how you make friends'
Team Norms	
	'a lot of antics go on which many may find offensive and abusive'
	'It affected me as a person and normalised everything that I was doing…'
	'The drinking contest involved all freshers on the team, so it wasn't necessarily a personal thing'
	'I think it's better to drink more on socials as people either leave you alone or you think what they're doing to you or other people is funny'
	'anyone who couldn't handle that left and now we know each other's limits'
	'It's good because it forces you to make friends.'
	'Some girls joined in with stupid stuff because they thought it would make them popular'
	'The line between bullying and banter has become so blurred'
	'things often get out of hand when drinking is involved'
	'I think the girls go in really hard on the freshers who are good too'
Expectation and Acceptance	
	'Everything done to me was banter…'
	'It only happened at freshers and has gotten better since'
	'…other lads got it worse than me, so I didn't say anything'
	'My older brother is president of the sport, so I think I've got off lightly'
	'I know these things are just jokes and so I don't get upset by them.'
	'I personally had no problem with anything that went that was aimed at me'
	'…anyone who couldn't handle that left and now we know each other's limits'
	'I don't think anyone in the club would don't anything to intentionally harms someone but thinks often gets out of hand when drinking is involved'
	'I guess it's what everyone goes through and I just need to man up but sometimes I've come close to snapping but I don't want to lose the mates I've got'
	'I knew it would happen when I first came to uni'
	'…she prewarned me what initiations would be like, so I was ready.'
	'I don't know what can be done to stop this.'
Consent	
	'The excessive drinking was completely voluntary…'
	'Any of this was done under the knowledge that I was willing to do it otherwise it wouldn't have been done.'
	'Everything that happens is a choice.'
	'If you don't want to do things then you don't have to'
No Intent to Harm	

	‘…its amusing and not malicious’ ‘They don’t do it to be nasty or anything’ ‘None of my team has ever been nasty to me or done these things to hurt me properly’ ‘The committee gave us a really timid welcome social so not to scare anyone off’ ‘I know these things are just jokes and so I don't get upset by them.’
Justification of Behaviours	
	‘The excessive drinking was completely voluntary and part of a pre-drinks/social.’ ‘I was also personally guilty on some occasions of commuting some of the above acts to others as that was the ‘done’ thing in the group’ ‘No one was personally victimised and if they were they had the sort of personality that reveled in the attention and could give the abuse back.’ ‘One girl was really harsh, but she is leads all the socials so it’s kind of her job’ ‘These things were only ever done in socials’ ‘Initiations’ ‘it’s how you make friends’
Discrimination	
	‘As international student I think students are not as much likely to invite me to their house for social activities.’ ‘I think everyone is a lot nicer to me because I'm a woman and they're all men’ ‘some of the student have never met a person who isn't cis. There needs to be more education on how to address people, even starting with basic pronouns.’ ‘I'm not sure if I'm treated different because I'm a guy’ ‘I’ve recently told a lad on the team that I might be gay… The guy I told was the one who started a page about me’