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

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Background:

Peer-Victimisation

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

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

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

Background:

Integrating the Transactional Model of Stress & the Socio-Ecological Framework of Bullying
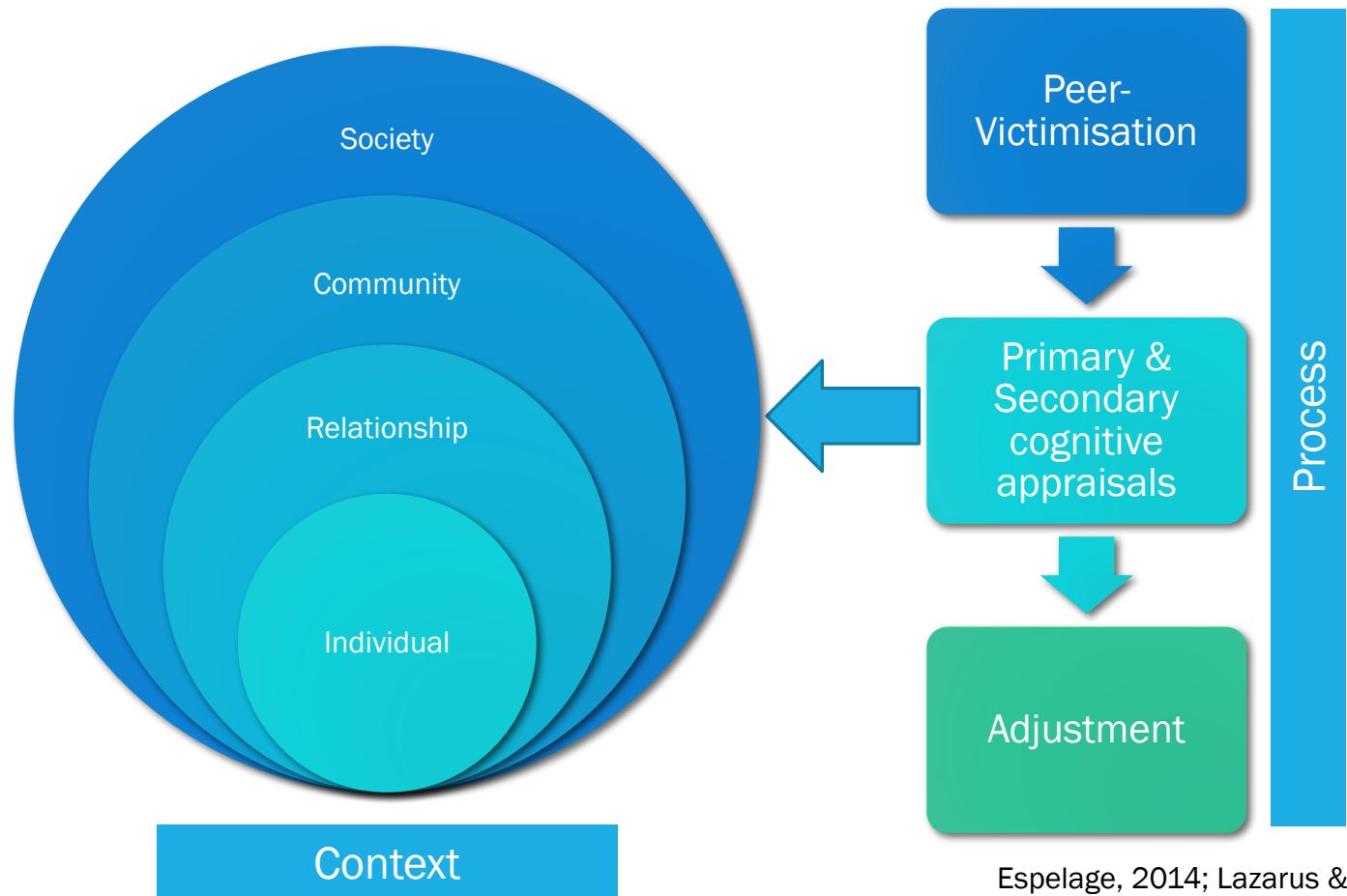
Espelage, 2014; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984

Background:

Perceived Social Support

One form of secondary appraisal.

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

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

➢ Reduces the appraisal of a stressor as potentially threatening or harmful.

➢ Provides coping options for managing the stressor.

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

➢ Global Social Support.

➢ Domain Specific Social Support.

Background:

Perceived Social Support

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

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

Background:

Perceived Social Support

Not always protective?

➢ Holt & Espelage (2007) found that victims of bullying, with high levels of social support had higher levels of depression/ anxiety.

➢ Davidson & Demaray (2008) found that perceived support from a friend moderated the relationship between peer-victimisation and externalising symptoms, the relationship was higher in those with higher social support.

The current study

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

Method

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

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

Survey
Peer-Victimisation
- Traditional-victimisation (α=0.86)
- Cyber-victimisation (α=0.87)

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

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

Results:
Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistics

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

Correlations across variables

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

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

Results: Moderation Analysis

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

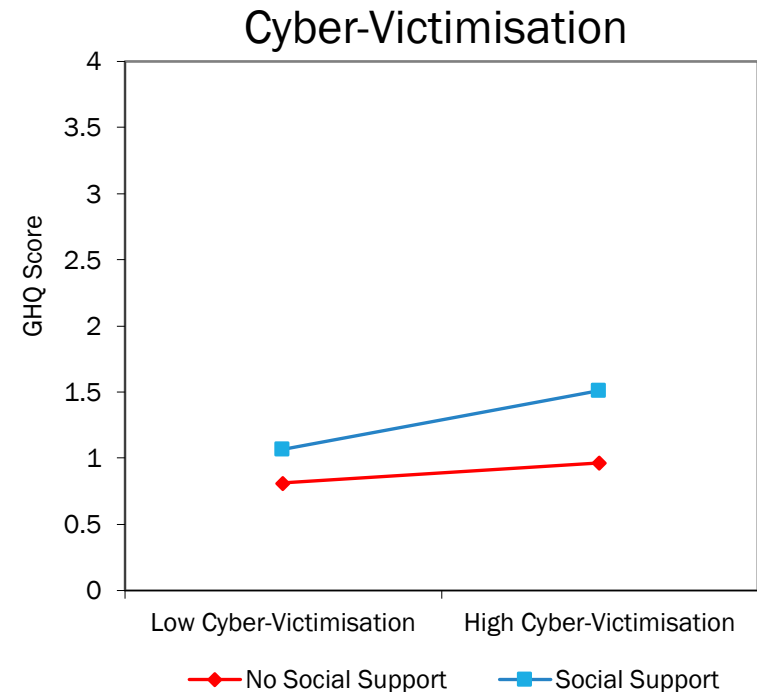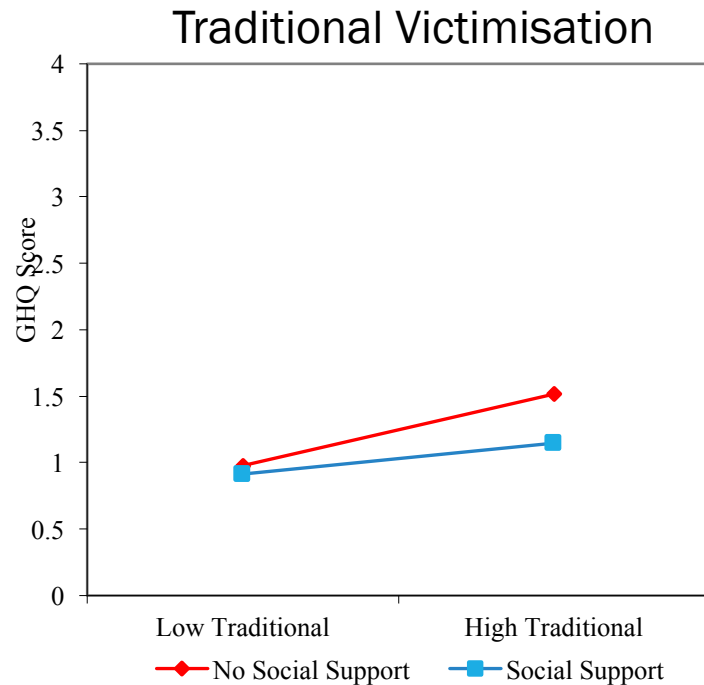|	Unstandardised		Standardised		
	b	SEb	β	SE	95% CIs
Gender*	.25	.02	.43	.04	.35: .51
Traditional Victimisation*	.32	.03	.43	.04	.35: .24
Cyber-victimisation*	.14	.07	.12	.06	.01: .22
Social Support	.08	.12	.14	.20	-.26: .53
Traditional Victimisation X Perceived social support*	-.18	.07	-.31	.12	-.54:-.09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

*$p<0.05$

Notes:
Social support: 1= has social support, 0=no social support
Gender: 1=Females, 0= Males

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

Results: Moderation Analysis

Traditional Victimisation

GHQ Score (y-axis: 0 to 4)
x-axis: Low Traditional, High Traditional

◆ No Social Support   ■ Social Support

Cyber-Victimisation

GHQ Score (y-axis: 0 to 4)
x-axis: Low Cyber-Victimisation, High Cyber-Victimisation

◆ No Social Support   ■ Social Support

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

Discussion

Perceived social support significantly moderates the relationships between both traditional victimisation and cyber-victimisation, and adjustment.
- ➤ The nature of this moderating relationship was different for the two types of victimisation.
- ➤ Buffering for traditional victimisation, supporting buffering hypothesis.
- ➤ Not protective for cyber-victimisation.
  - ➤ Social support not worked in the past? May not be an effective source of support?

Cross sectional data: causality?

Findings highlight the role of perceived social support in the relationship between peer-victimisation and adjustment
- ➤ Need for longitudinal studies.
- ➤ Measure different types of victimisation and different sources of social support.

Discussion
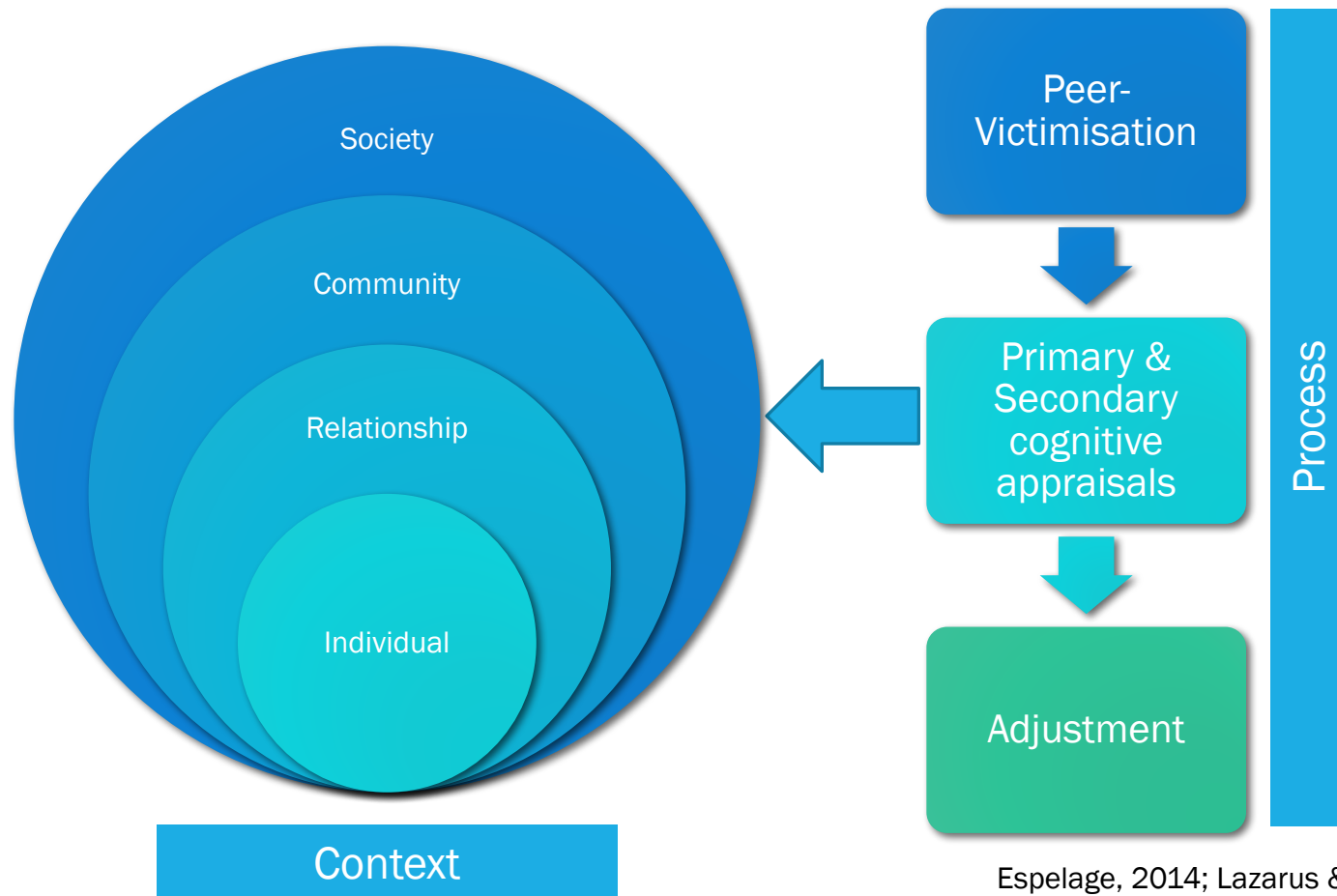
Espelage, 2014; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984

Thank you for listening.

More information?

➢ Email: n.noret@yorksj.ac.uk.

Acknowledgements

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➢ The Local Authority and participating schools.

➢ All the pupils who completed the survey

Any Questions?

Results:
Perceived Social Support

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