Children's Decisions to Support Victims of Bullying:

Friend and Peer Influences and the Effects of a Cross-Age Teaching of Social Issues Intervention.

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Declaration

The material being presented for examination is my own work and has not been submitted for an award of this or another HEI except in minor particulars which are explicitly noted in the body of the thesis. Where research pertaining to the thesis was undertaken collaboratively, the nature and extent of my individual contribution has been made explicit.

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Abstract

Bullying among school children is a social phenomenon that is now recognised as a widespread and serious problem across the globe. While decades of research have generated valuable insights as regards prevalence, main correlates and detrimental health consequences, many questions and gaps remain. For instance, it is unclear why the great majority of peer bystanders not intervene to support victims in a bullying conflict despite holding anti-bullying beliefs. Furthermore, great efforts have been made in the area of peer support and anti-bullying initiatives however there is still no intervention that has shown to be effective long term and cross-culturally. This thesis consists of two empirical studies. To advance knowledge of factors that influence pupils' victim support behaviour, the first study examined the role of perceived friend and peer consequences in predicting intentions to three types of help: provide emotional support, help to stop the bully and get adult support. Structural equation modelling revealed that perceived friend consequences were significantly associated with each of the victim support behaviours studied. Additionally, perceived peer reactions predicted intentions to get adult help. These findings suggest that friends play a more important role than peers in affecting victim support. Some significant gender effects emerged, showing that the overall pattern of associations held for boys, but not for girls. The findings highlight the concerns children hold with regard to their (dis)approving views related to victim support. Outcomes further suggest that victim defending should not be regarded as a broad homogeneous construct. The second study assessed the effectiveness of a cross-age teaching of social issues intervention (CATS) on enhancing pupils' knowledge on three victim support behaviours, and their awareness of the value of helping. In small cooperative groups older pupils were invited to step into the tutor role to prepare a lesson and teach it to two years younger tutees. An experimental-control group design was employed to test participants' performance at three time points over a six to eight week period. CATS tutors significantly improved their knowledge and awareness of the provictim behaviours studied while no positive changes were evident for participants in the control group. Furthermore, children who participated in the project expressed high satisfaction with the intervention. Based on the positive findings it was concluded that CATS is a viable technique for enhancing pupils' knowledge and awareness on prosocial topics. Helping children to see the value of supporting victims of bullying, in any of the ways studied, could help them avoid anticipating negative reactions from friends and peers, and in turn make it more likely that they would choose to help if the need arose.

Structure of Thesis

Chapter 1 introduces the topic of school bullying by providing basic background information including definition, prevalence, health related issues, and the change in research focus from the bully-victim dyad to the wider peer group. This chapter also touches on measures that have been developed to increase victim defending behaviours among bystanding peers and combat bullying aggression.

Chapters 2 and 3 consist of the empirical research that has been undertaken as part of this work. Chapter 2 presents a survey study that investigates specific factors that may prevent pupils from engaging in selected provictim behaviours.

Chapter 3 illustrate a novel theory-based cross-age teaching intervention for promoting safe victim support among primary school pupils.

Chapter 4 provides a summary of the findings of the two empirical studies and concluding remarks that arose from undertaking/conducting research in school settings.

Chapter 1   General Introduction

This thesis explored the association between pupils' perceptions of friend and peer consequences if they considered helping a bullied peer and their intentions to enact provictim behaviours. This work further assessed the effects of a cross-age teaching of social issues intervention (CATS) on enhancing pupils' knowledge of victim support. To introduce the topic of school bullying, this chapter provides a brief outline of some key facts such as the origins of bullying research, how bullying has been defined, including prevalence rates, and the impact of peer victimisation on pupils' well-being. Furthermore, this chapter illustrates the shift in bullying research from the bully-victim dyad to the wider peer group while considering the factors that can affect victim defending behaviours. Finally, the author will also address peer support and anti-bullying measures that have been employed in the past to reduce bullying and promote provictim behaviours among bystanding peers.

1.1 The Origins of School Bullying Research

School bullying is now recognised as a global problem that occurs in most classrooms if not in all (Smith, 2014; Smith & Brain, 2000). Initial research on school bullying has its origins in Scandinavia where Dan Olweus was the first to empirically study this type of aggression (1973; 1978; Smith, 2010). Since then bullying has received increased research attention across many countries on all continents (e.g. Stephenson & Smith, 1989; Wolke, Woods, Stanford & Schulz, 2001; DeSouza & Ribeiro, 2005; Swart & Bredekamp, 2009; Huang & Chou, 2010; Craig et al., 2009; Rigby & Johnson, 2005a; Smith et al.,1999). The initial Swedish word 'mobbing' was introduced by Heinemann (1972) who borrowed the term from studies on animal behaviour (Lorenz, 2004) where it was utilised to describe collective attacks by a group of animals on a single target. In the seventies Olweus began to empirically investigate mobbing and found that a substantial amount of bullying also occurred in one-to-one conflicts which led him to reject the initial 'all against one' conceptualisation of the term (Bullying prevention program, as cited in Smith et al., 1999). He therefore decided to utilise the term bullying instead of mobbing. In his later studies Olweus (2006) realised that in the majority of cases

there were small groups of two to three pupils who used to attack one peer, although, his findings also revealed that up to 40% of victims were targeted by a single perpetrator. It is worth mentioning that research on bullying-like behaviours also has a long tradition in Japan and Korea where the Japanese term 'ijime' was found to best describe this type of harassment (Smith, 2014). However, Eastern studies in the peer bullying domain only recently gained increased attention when Asian and Western researchers begun to collaborate and publish findings to the Western audience (for details see Smith, Kwak & Toda, 2016).

1.2 Definition and Types of Bullying

 Researchers hold the opinion that bullying is a subtype of aggression (Espelage, Bosworth, & Simon, 2000; Smith, Cowie, Olafsson & Liefooghe, 2002), even though, with regard to the definition of the term there is still no universal agreement among scholars (Smith, 2014). Nonetheless, most of the Western research literature seems to adopt Olweus' bullying definition (Bullying prevention program, as cited in Smith et al., 1999) which entails three defining criteria. First, bullying involves intentional aggressive actions that are meant to cause physical or psychological harm to another person. Second, the harassment is enacted repeatedly over a period of time which implies that single incidences of harmful behaviour cannot be regarded as bullying. Third, bullying must involve a power imbalance between the victim and the perpetrator/s. This entails that the victim is unable to defend him/herself for numerous reasons. These may include the lack of physical strength, comprised verbal competence, comprised confidence or self-esteem, being outnumbered, being in a rejected social position in the peer group or having no friends and social support (Smith, 2014; Swearer, Espelage, & Napolitano, 2011).

Some experts have argued that the repetition criterion may not be as central for the definition as the other two criteria because 'repetitive' is very difficult to conceptualise (e.g. Smith, 2014; Smith, del Barrio & Tokunga, 2013). In other words, does repetition relate to serious attacks only or is, for example, verbal threatening also included? Furthermore, how many repetitive actions (of which kind) would count as bullying. As an example, according to Leymann (1996) only systematic harassment that occurs once per week, over a six month period, towards the same target should be regarded as bullying. Other scholars in the field endorse a

supplement to Olweus' three criteria by proposing that bullying is "an unjust use of power" (Rigby, 2002, p. 51) or as Smith and Sharp word it "a systematic abuse of power" (1994, p. 2).

Initial research on school bullying focused mainly on two types of bullying, physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, pushing or destroying personal belongings) and verbal (taunting, name calling, teasing, threatening; Smith, 2014). Later on studies classified bullying as overt or direct agression and relational or indirect victimisation (Björkqvist, Lagerspetz & Kaukiainen, 1992; Crick & Grotpeter, 1995; Wolke, Woods, Bloomfield & Karstadt, 2000). The former refers to physical and verbal bullying and the latter was conceptualised as social exclusion, ignoring someone and/or spreading malicious rumors about an individual. In the literature these three forms are typically referred to as traditional bullying. With the mass use of electronic communication tools and the ease of internet usage, a new form of bullying has emerged, which is cyberbullying. Definitions of cyberbullying have been loosely based on Olweus' three criteria, with the inclusion of some terminology that specifies the realms of cyber space to distinguish this form from traditional bullying (Olweus, 2012; Smith et al., 2013). As mentioned earlier, cyberbullying is a relative new form of victimisation that is carried out through various types of social media (e.g. text, picture or video messages, email, phone calls, chat rooms) using electronic communication devices (e.g. smart phones, computers, tablets). There is no consensus whether cyberbullying should be regarded as a unique type to contrast the traditional forms of bullying. Many researchers, however, agree on the notion that there is a considerable overlap between the two types (e.g., Smith et al., 2008; Beran & Li, 2008; Dehue, Bolman & Völlink, 2008). Children who have been bullied in traditional ways are often also victims of cyber aggression and many cyberbullies also qualify as traditional bullies or bully-victims. Therefore, cyberbullying can be viewed as a contemporary amplification of the original forms of harassment.

1.3 Prevalence

Prevalence rates of bullying perpetration identified in the extant literature differ greatly which makes it problematic to provide precise estimates. Some of the reasons are attributable to the lack of a universally agreed definition of bullying among researchers (Smith, 2014) and the lack of a universal understanding of the term

among children and adults (Menesini, Fonzi & Smith, 2002). Another problem is that there is no identical meaning of the term across countries (Smorti, Menesini & Smith, 2003). Furthermore, bullying rates are also affected by the employed research methodology including type of informant (self- or peer reports, teachers, parents), forms of victimisation (indirect and/or direct forms), the time frame that pupils were asked about (e.g. last month, last term, last year) and the characteristics of the participant sample (e.g. age, gender; Smith, 2014). Other issues may arise from the design of the questionnaires in terms of whether (or not) a detailed definition of bullying is included. A study that compared the effects in this regard found that this criterion substantially influenced the prevalence rates (Kert, Codding, Tryon & Shiyko, 2010). Some evidence showed, when a bullying definition was provided in the questionnaire, compared to the same measure instrument without a reference to it, the bullying rates were almost halved. Nevertheless, a reasonable account of prevalence data is collected every four years by the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children surveys (HBSC, World Health Organization, 2016 http://www.euro.who.int/en/publications/abstracts/growing-up-unequal.-hbsc-2016-study-20132014-survey). The survey conducted 2013/2014 included a bullying definition that incorporated the three essential criteria proposed by Olweus (intent, repetition and power imbalance). This representative source provides cross-national data about health issues and well-being from over 200,000 children at the age of 11, 13 and 15 years in 42 countries in Europe and North America. Data collection was based on anonymous self-reports and the results were based on school victimisation that occurred (at least) two to three times per month, in the past couple of month. The rates for *being bullied* averaged out at 10% for girls and 12% for boys. Gender differences in one third of the countries indicated that boys were targeted more often than girls and this peaked at the age of 11 and 13, respectively. Overall, it seemed that being victimised decreased with children's increasing age. Prevalence rates for *bullying perpetration*, with the same cut off points as for victimisation, were on average 6% for girls and 11% for boys. Bullying perpetration generally increased with pupils increasing age. Across context there were extremely large cross-national differences with particularly high rates observed in Latvia and Lithuania, and very low incidences in Scandinavian countries such as Sweden and Iceland. This study also revealed considerable gender disparities in almost all surveyed countries. The cyberbullying rates reported in the HSBC were considerably lower than those

observed for traditional bullying and cross-national variation was less pronounced than that for traditional forms. With regard to gender differences the findings were equivocal, in some countries girls were more often cyberbullied than boys and in others the opposite pattern was observed.

Other data derived from around 1,000 children in 25 European countries showed that 12% of the participants reported being a bully, with 7% saying that it happened less than once or twice per month (Livingstone, Haddon, Görzig & Olafsson, 2011). On average 19% of children reported being victimised by their peers with 10% saying that they were targeted less than once or twice per month. However, this study was not anonymous, and the questionnaire did not specify the term bullying per se in the definition that was provided. Yet another study, based on single country data (England) from around 35,000 pupils, reported a prevalence rate of 44% for being bullied in school over the past 12 months (Benton, 2011). These findings exemplify the great variations across studies. Thus, absolute bullying rates are meaningless without additional details on the set parameters. Regardless of the aforementioned inaccuracies in victimisation rates, being tormented by peers can substantially impair a child's well-being in various aspects and this issue will be addressed in the following section.

1.4 The Impact of Bullying Victimisation on Children's Well-being

There is ample evidence to suggest that being victimised by peers negatively affects children's well-being. Bullying victimisation has been associated in particular with internalising problems including depression, anxiety, withdrawal, loneliness (e.g. Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Reijentjes, Kamphuis, Prinzie & Telch, 2010; Cook, Williams, Guerra, Kim, & Sadek, 2010) and externalising issues (Perren, Ettekal & Ladd, 2013). Furthermore, victimised children are two times more likely to experience psychosomatic symptoms such as headaches, stomach aches, bed wetting and sleeping problems (Gini & Pozzoli, 2009; 2013).

However, the interpretation of these negative outcomes is not straight forward. Most of the studies investigating the consequences of school bullying were generated by cross-sectional research which precludes the direction of effects (Smith, 2014). Indeed, some evidence from longitudinal studies suggests that the association between peer victimisation and internalising problems can be bidirectional (e.g.

Reijentjes et al., 2010; Hodges & Perry, 1999; Boivin, Hymel, & Bukowski, 1995). That is, victimisation can be both a predictor as well as an outcome of internalising problems.

Yet, other longitudinal findings support the view for victimisation as a predictor of internalising problems (Zwierzynska, Wolke & Lereya, 2013; Ttofi, Farrington & Lösel, 2011). Additional support for a direct causal link between victimisation and self-harm comes from a twin study which demonstrated that the bullied sibling had a higher risk for self-harming than the non-victimised child, even after accounting for prior emotional distress (Fisher et al., 2012). An extreme manifestation of self-harm, although rare, is suicide and suicide ideation. Victimisation was found to be a significant contributor to these serious problems (Klomek et al., 2009; Kim, Leventhal, Koh, & Boyce, 2009). A recent systematic review also confirmed the causal relationship between being bullied and poor mental health, and substance use (e.g. alcohol, illegal drugs; Moore et al., 2017). These authors reported significant links between bullying victimisation and somatic symptoms (e.g. stomach ache, headaches, sleeping problems), poor social functioning (e.g. loneliness, poor life satisfaction) and poor academic attainment. However, with regard to the latter associations, Moore et al. (2017), again, warn that the majority of data in their review came from cross-sectional designs, and some of the evidence was equivocal. This suggested that causality cannot be concluded. Moore's study also points to a dose-response association showing that frequent, versus occasional, bullying victimisation substantially increases the risk for depression, loneliness, suicide ideation and substance use (e.g. tobacco; Moore, et al., 2017). Other evidence suggests that the negative impact of childhood bullying is long lasting and extends into adult life (e.g. Boulton, 2013b; Takizawa, Maughan, & Arseneault, 2014). In addition, childhood bullying was also found to compromise men and women's employment opportunities as well as their ability to amass wealth (e.g. general savings, home-ownership; Brimblecombe et al., 2018).

Although not the focus of this work, it is important to note that the negative consequences of bullying aggression extend beyond those observed for the targeted pupils. Being involved in peer victimisation as a bully or a bully-victim has also been associated with internalising problems, poor academic performance (e.g. Cook et al., 2010) and somatic symptoms (e.g. Gini & Pozzoli, 2009). Indeed, children who bully

others *and* are themselves victimised, appear to have the highest risk for negative mental health outcomes (e.g. Moore, Norman, Sly, Whitehouse, Zubrick & Scott, 2014).

Beside those directly involved in bullying conflicts, witnessing pupils may also be affected by bullying acts especially if they are regularly exposed to physical (33% of bystanders) or verbal aggression (60% of bystanders; McLaughlin, Arnold & Boyd, 2005). Menesini and associates found that a considerable percentage of primary (48% in Italy, 26% in England) and secondary schools (60% in Italy, 12% in England) children reported feeling very upset when witnessing their peers being victimised (Menesini et al., 1997). Elsewhere, witnessing bullying events was associated with negative mental health outcomes such as anxiety, depression, somatic complaints and paranoid ideation (Rivers, Poteat, Noret, & Ashurst, 2009). Rivers et al. and other researchers speculate about different reasons for the obtained findings. Firstly, it is possible that witnesses fear about being targeted themselves at some point. Secondly, children who have been targeted in other environments, not the school, or at other times may re-experience the psychological pain through identifying with the victimised peer (D'Augelli, Pilkington & Hershberger, 2002). Thirdly, bystanders who perceive the desire to support a victimised peer, but ultimately do not intervene to act upon their prosocial attitude, may encounter cognitive dissonance which results from the described discrepancy (Craig & Pepler, 1998; for a detailed description of the cognitive dissonance theory please refer to Chapter 3, section 3.1.6). This experience may contribute to an elevated mental health risk above and beyond that of children who are involved in an incident as a victim or a bully. Taken together, it becomes evident that school bullying concerns all pupils, as posited by the participant role approach, and can negatively affect each child in one way or another. Due to the adverse long term consequences of bullying some psychologists proposed the revision of clinical psychological practice and assessment so that a patient's previous bullying experiences can be taken into consideration by the therapist (Samara et al., 2017). Clearly, the notion of negative health outcomes from bullying involvement reinforces the need for effective whole group prevention and intervention programmes. Study two of the present work (see Chapter 3) aimed to make a contribution towards this necessity by focussing explicitly on the promotion of victim support behaviours.

Beside all the negative outcomes related to bullying, there are also encouraging news that have been reported from investigations in this field. In the past two decades, the researcher community has come to acknowledge that peer bystanders can play a fundamental role in ending bullying (e.g. Salmivalli, 2014; for details, see Section 1.5 below). Having children in the classroom environment who defend a victimised peer has been linked to lower bullying rates (e.g. Sentse, Veenstra, Kiuru & Salmivalli, 2014; Salmivalli, Voeten & Poskiparta, 2011) and a reduced likelihood of being bullied (e.g. Kärnä, Voeten, Poskiparta & Salmivalli, 2010). The positive aspect, from a victim's perspective, is that being defended by one's peers has been related to fewer psychological and social problems (e.g. Sainio, Veenstra, Huitsing & Salmivalli, 2011). As a result of this insight, psychologists have aimed to mobilise peer bystanders to engage in provictim behaviours through various anti-bullying initiatives (e.g. Polanin, Espelage & Pigott, 2012). While the basic idea certainly seems promising, the actual effects on pupils' provictim involvement have been rather limited (e.g. Salmivalli, 2014; Espelage, Green & Polanin, 2012). Therefore, it is essential to investigate why victim support is so difficult for pupils to enact, and what factors may predict it. Study one in this thesis (presented in Chapter 2) addressed this issue by looking at some of the barriers that may prevent school children from supporting a bullied peer. The next paragraph introduces the concept of victim defending in the school context. Note that defending, intervening, protecting, helping and supporting the victim are used interchangeably henceforward to describe prosocial actions from peers.

1.5 The Participant Role Approach

During the 1990s researchers began to empirically explore the idea that the peer group may maintain, or even reinforce, bullying victimisation. They realised that when systematic harassment manifests, the vast majority of pupils are well aware of it because they are almost always present when it occurs (Salmivalli, 1999; O'Connell, Pepler & Craig, 1999). The fact that there is an audience in bullying incidences seems to have an effect on the continuation of bullying episodes (O'Connell et al., 1999). Consequently, during the last two decades of anti-bullying efforts, researchers have come to acknowledge that to effectively tackle this particular type of aggression, we need to shift our focus from the victim-bully dyad to the entire classroom population. Most influential in this movement has been

Christina Salmivalli's work with the *participant role approach* (Salmivalli, Lagerspetz, Björkqvist, Österman & Kaukiainen, 1996). The participant role approach has changed the way researchers set about investigating the dynamics in peer victimisation today. The more recent literature has also established the term 'bystanders' which has been increasingly utilised to refer to peers, or classmates, who happen to be a witness in a bullying conflict (Polanin et al., 2012). The participant role approach has facilitated our understanding in the sense that it enabled researchers to recognise the importance of group processes in bullying situations beyond the traditional bully-victim dynamics. By means of peer nominations (instead of self-reports) Salmivalli and her colleagues (1996) identified six different participant roles that children may occupy in a bullying incident. In addition to the bully, who initiates and perpetrates the harassment, and the victim who is targeted by the aggressor four other roles emerged: the assistant, the reinforcer, the defender and the outsider. Assistants participate by helping the ringleader/s, and reinforcers signal their support of the bullying by cheering and/or laughing. Defenders act on behalf of the victim. That is, they intervene in the conflict or try to support the victimised peer in other ways. Outsiders, represent a passive audience who neither approve nor disapprove the bullying acts in an active manner. Therefore, they are sometimes also referred to as passive bystanders (e.g. Pozzoli & Gini, 2010; Cowie, 2000; Menesini, Codecasa, Benelli & Cowie, 2003). These roles appear to be quite stable across time. Even though, most pupils disapprove bullying (e.g. Thornberg, 2010; Thornberg, Thornberg, Alamaa & Daud, 2016) as actual bystanders they may not intervene on behalf of the victim (Craig, Pepler & Atlas, 2000; O'Connell et al., 1999) or decide to engage in probullying acts (assistants, reinforcers). Since the launch of the participant role approach, the paradigm has been adapted and employed in many different countries including the UK, Italy, the Netherlands and Germany (e.g. Sutton & Smith, 1999; Menesini & Gini, 2000; Goossens, Olthof & Dekker, 2006; Schäfer & Korn, 2004, respectively). Overall, the findings of these studies confirmed that most children do nothing to protect the victim. At best, approximately 20% of them take on the defender role and intervene to stop the bullying or help the victim otherwise. Around 20-30% happened to silently watch the incidents as passive bystanders and a worrying 20-30% engage in probullying behaviours as assistants and reinforcers. There are countless factors that seem to determine whether or not bystanders intervene on behalf of the victim (e.g. Thornberg, Landgren & Wiman,

2018) and an extensive outline can be found in the introduction of study one of this work (see Chapter 2, Table 2.1 in Section 2.1.2). As mentioned earlier, victim support is a complex behaviour that cannot be defined by isolated correlates. Research has provided some insights in terms of the characteristics that children hold who assume the role of a defender. Lambe and colleagues report that defenders tend to be girls, and they express high levels of empathy and low levels of moral disengagement (Lambe, Cioppa, Hong & Craig, 2018). Furthermore, defenders are popular children who perceive the relationships with their teachers, and the school in general, as supportive. Victim supporters who were asked about their motivation to help, reported reasons such as a sense of social justice, the perception that someone needed their support, or they instinctively wanted to help a troubled peer (Cappadocia, Pepler, Cummings & Craig, 2012).

Taken together, one of the key conclusions from the participant role literature as well as from other research accounts in this area (e.g. Cowie & Smith, 2010) is that peer support is imperative for victims. Peers can help victimised children to cope with their experience and get out of the humiliating role to readjust their well-being. This, in turn, may also reduce bullying incidences and improve school safety in general.

1.5.1 Defending a Victimised Peer

Defending a victim of bullying is a very complex behaviour that psychologists are still investigating in order to better understand what factors aid and impede children's willingness to defend a victimised peer. In the anti-bullying literature body defending (or intervening) is viewed as prosocial behaviour that implies support for a victim by either seeking help from adults, directly stepping in during a conflict or providing comfort to the targeted peer (Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004).

Psychologists generally acknowledge that provictim behaviours are predicted by both individual (or personal) and contextual factors (Peets, Pöyhönen, Juvonen & Salmivalli, 2015). With regard to the former, evidence has shown that children who score high on affective empathy (Pöyhönen, Juvonen & Salmivalli, 2010; Barchia & Bussey, 2010; Caravita, Di Blasio & Salmivalli, 2009) and possess high self-efficacy for defending are more inclined to defend a bullied peer (Pöyhönen, Juvonen & Salmivalli, 2012; Pöyhönen et al., 2010; Gini, Albiero, Benelli & Altoé, 2008). In addition, a pupil's social standing in the peer group (i.e. popularity) was also found

to predict victim support (Pöyhönen et al., 2010; Caravita et al., 2009). As bullies tend to be popular children (e.g. Sandstrom & Cillessen, 2006; Cilessen & Mayeux, 2004; Caravita et al., 2009) researchers speculated that victim defenders would need to match bullies' high social status in order to be brave enough to side with the victim (Peets et al., 2015). Another factor that may contribute to this complexity is the fact that defending carries a social risk, not least because bullies are often perceived as well-liked children among their peers (Vaillancourt, Hymel & McDougall, 2003). That is, the fear of becoming the new victim often prevents bystanders from siding with a victimised peer (Kanetsuna & Smith, 2002).

A problem, however, is that very few students act upon their personal attributes and social competencies and this issue appears to be routed in social-ecological factors (e.g. Swearer & Espelage, 2004; Bronfenbrenner, 1977) meaning predominantly the school environment. In terms of the contextual variables, evidence suggests that victim defending is more frequent in classrooms with low bullying rates (e.g. Salmivalli et al., 2011; Espelage et al., 2012), and where students reported higher levels of anti-bullying beliefs (e.g. Salmivalli & Voeten 2004). Also, defending behaviours seem to be more frequent in classrooms where children hold higher provictim attitudes and where they perceive greater peer pressure for intervening (Rigby & Johnson, 2006; Pozzoli, Gini & Vieno, 2012). Hence, based on the social-ecological perspective, Espelage (2014) argues that bullying patterns and bystander behaviours are created, and maintained, as a result of the interactions between intra- and interpersonal factors. This in turn makes victim support a complex behaviour to study, and difficult for children to enact (e.g. Peets et al., 2015). Nonetheless, psychologists have been working intensely on the development of interventions that utilise the potential of peer bystanders, who can help alleviate victims' painful experiences and reduce bullying rates. Peer support comes in different shapes and sizes and the following section will illustrate some of the peer support measures that have been implemented in schools to achieve those aims.

1.6 Peer Support Schemes and Large Scale Anti-Bullying Initiatives

1.6.1 Peer Support Schemes

Peers appear to be one of the most important resources, beside parents and teachers, that psychologists can draw from in order to help victimised children and minimise bullying incidents in schools. The notion that peers provide a great potential for challenging bullying proactively led to the development of peer support initiatives, conducted in single schools, and to larger scale anti-bullying (pre)intervention programmes. Peer support initiatives (sometimes also referred to as peer counselling) were often implemented as a response measure to deal with bullying aggression but they may be used for other purposes as well (Cowie & Sharp, 1994). Peer support schemes build on the notion that people have an inborn desire to cooperate with others and form supportive relationships. This may prompt young people to first seek support from their peers. In other words, such measures try to make use of this instinct and foster it by training pupils in prosocial skills which enables them to deal with interpersonal conflicts in a proactive and peaceful way (Cowie & Smith, 2010). Cowie and other research scholars have argued that we may underestimate children's capacities to empathise with distressed peers or to offer age and context appropriate support to them (Cowie & Sharp, 1996).

Peer support training also includes the facilitation of communication skills, perspective taking, active listening and empathising with others. With the acquisition of such skills peer supporters can then, in a structured way, help troubled children directly or suggest and organise other means that help resolve the problems. Peer support schemes can improve the school climate in general which may manifest in pupils' increased liking of school and more positive feelings of safety. As Cowie and Smith (2010) have pointed out, peer support schemes can also enhance the relationships among students. They may involve techniques such as befriending initiatives, peer mentoring, peer mediation or peer counselling which can be implemented as one-to-one sessions, structured games or involving older students in the training of younger children. Houlston and colleagues found that some 62% of schools in England used structured peer support schemes (Houlston, Smith & Jessel, 2009).

There is ample evidence to suggest that the great majority of children who used peer support schemes regarded these measures as helpful (e.g. Houlston & Smith, 2009; Cowie, Naylor, Talamelli, Chauhan & Smith, 2002; Naylor & Cowie, 1999; Cowie & Olafsson, 2000; Smith & Watson, 2004). Users also reported that they would utilise the service again (Smith & Watson, 2004), and be happy to recommend it to their friends and peers (e.g. Naylor & Cowie, 1999). Having such peer support measures in schools seems to be beneficial not only for vulnerable children who use the service but also for the school climate in general. Both teachers (Smith & Watson, 2004) and students (Lane-Garon & Richardson, 2003) perceived the school environment as safer with such programmes in place than without. Furthermore, in another study Cowie and Sharp (1996) noted that reporting bullying incidents became more of an acceptable reaction among pupils as a result of the peer support initiative. Other important benefits of peer support interventions relate to positive effects for the students who took on the role of a supporter. Among the most frequent gains for peer supporters were a boost of confidence, a sense of self-worth and a sense of responsibility for the quality of life in the school (Cowie, 1998). Interestingly, peer supporters' feedback also included some negative experiences. They reported that some peers expressed hostile comments about their work or doubted the usefulness of the service altogether.

Some authors reported that the uptake of peer support schemes varied considerably between schools and only around half of the students knew someone who had used the service (Smith & Watson, 2004). This notion has been confirmed elsewhere, suggesting that in some cases neither the pupils nor school staff were aware of the peer support programme in their school (Cowie, Hutson, Oztug & Myers, 2008; Naylor & Cowie, 1999) which indicates serious failure in introducing the service to all parties concerned (Naylor & Cowie, 1999). This also indicates poor communication and little commitment by both teachers and students (Cowie, Bordman, Dawkins & Jennifer, 2004). Importantly, Cowie and colleagues observed that children who did not know about such services were more concerned about being victimised, they were less likely to approach someone to express negative incidences, and felt less safe compared to those who knew about the programme (Cowie et al., 2008).

A relatively new form of peer support is cybermentoring, a virtual peer support scheme developed by Beatbullying (a UK charity). This format operates via a website where young people, trained as cybermentors, provide support to children and adolescents who were cyberbullied. The website can be accessed anonymously and the cybermentors can refer mentees to more professional support (e.g. counselling) if required. The evaluation of the scheme, which is part of the DAPHNE III programme (2009-2010, available from http://www.bullyingandcyber.net/en/) revealed that in the UK 40% of cybermentees found the cybermentors' advice very helpful. They also reported that they would use the scheme again and were happy to recommend it to a friend. Some 44% of the mentees found that cybermentors were very easy to contact and 35% stated that it was very ease for them to speak to a mentor.

In sum, Cowie and Smith (2010) reported that overall pupils condemn bullying and welcome peer support initiatives in their school, but there is still a proportion of them who do not trust in such services. These authors further criticised the lack of objective data that could reliably demonstrate an effect of peer support schemes on aspects such as school climate, liking of and perceived safety in school.

1.6.2 Large Scale Anti-Bullying Programmes

Other measures that were developed to counteract bullying represent large scale whole-school anti-bullying interventions that have been tested in more than one school with systematic evaluations (Smith, 2014). These programmes built on the assumption that bullying is a group phenomenon and a systemic issue, which implies that anti-bullying initiatives need to involve a wider circle of people, not only the victims and the bullies. This resonates with the participant role approach described earlier in Section 1.5. A great advantage of whole-school (and whole-class) designs is that further stigmatising of victims and bullies can be avoided. The first comprehensive whole-school intervention was the Olweus Bullying Prevention Programme (OBPP), carried out as a nation-wide campaign in 42 schools in Norway (1983-1985) with around 2,500 students aged 11 – 14 years in the baseline assessment (Olweus, 1993). This was a multi-component package that included detailed materials (booklet, video) and advice for pupils, teachers and parents outlining what bullying is, and what one could do to counteract this behaviour. At the

time this project was highly effective in reducing victimisation in schools on average by approximately 50%. Later on, Olweus' OBPP has been replicated in many European countries and the United States. The findings reported from these studies varied considerably from moderate effects to non-significant results, or even negative outcomes (e.g. Smith 2014, Smith, Schneider, Smith & Ananiadou, 2004). The explanations for the great inconsistency of the findings are numerous. They include the high quality of Scandinavian schools with small classes and well trained teachers, adherence to the original design, rigorous implementation across schools that was (or was not) closely overseen by the guiding researchers.

In the meantime, various other large scale whole-school programmes have been developed and tested in different countries with some still adopting Olweus' OBPP or only specific components of it. Such anti-bullying programmes include ZERO in Norway (Roland, Bru, Midthassel & Vaaland, 2009), the Sheffield project in England (Smith, Sharp, Eslea & Thompson, 2004), Fairplayer in Germany (Scheithauer & Bull, 2008; 2009), ConRed in Spain (Ortega-Ruiz, del Rey & Casas, 2012), Be-Prox in Switzerland (Valkanover & Alsaker, 2008), the Donegal project in Ireland (O'Moore & Minton, 2004), the WiSK in Austria (Strohmeier, Atria, & Spiel 2008) and KiWa in Finnland (Kärnä, Voeten, Little, Poskiparta, Kaljonen, & Salmivalli, 2011). The success of these whole-school interventions in reducing bullying and victimisation rates varied, again, from moderate to (in some rare cases) negative outcomes. Effects were dependent on factors such as the motivation of school personnel, implementation integrity and monitoring of the intervention process and the assessments.

Overall, whole-school programmes have their strength and can be effective in reducing bullying and victimisation. However, so far, they are by no means a universal remedy as effect sizes appear to be small or negligible, and many programmes were only effective with primary school children. Smith and associates speculated that one of the reasons for the small effects may be, that pupils' raised awareness of the issue subsequently influences their reporting of bullying incidences in the post-test, which may then conceal the actual positive outcomes of the intervention (for a synthesis of results see Smith et al., 2004). Therefore, significant findings, albeit small, should not be disregarded. It is obvious that, for instance, Olweus' original scheme (OBPP) cannot be employed exactly in the same way as it

was implemented in Bergen. Schools in other countries have generally fewer resources and much larger classrooms. This inevitably requires an adaptation of the programme to local conditions which can dilute the outcomes. This issue, it has been argued, is further aggravated if authors fail to precisely report the alterations made to an original design. Reporting amendments is key as it allows conclusions on the link between the specific components, that were utilised in a particular study, and the obtained results (Smith et al., 2004).

The evidence reviewed seems to suggest that both small scale peer support schemes and large scale interventions can be beneficial to a certain extend in decreasing bullying and supporting victimised children but they also have their problems that need further attention to be resolved. To date there is no evidence that other initiatives have been superior to these programmes. Therefore, it is imperative that researchers continue efforts in exploring new ideas that can reduce bullying behaviours and ameliorate the negative experiences of vulnerable children.

In a meta-analytic review Ttofi and Farrington (2011) aimed to identify the most relevant components that such large scale anti-bullying programmes should include. Among the components that have been linked to successful programmes were: teacher training, parent training, improved playground supervision, disciplinary methods, a whole school policy, classroom rules, cooperative group work, and longer and more intensive intervention programmes for pupils and teachers. Based on their findings, Ttofi and Farrington also made suggestions for policy such that developers of novel interventions should consider the specific components that were found to be effective and disregard those that were not. Interestingly, one of their recommendations, that sparked a debate among other professionals in the field (Smith, Salmivalli & Cowie, 2012) was that the involvement of pupils should be avoided. This suggestion stands in contrast to both the evidence of peer support schemes that has revealed positives effects in different aspects (as has been described above), and the participant role approach that stresses the involvement and contribution of all children in a classroom. Indeed, Flygare and colleagues who compared individual components of several anti-bullying programmes in schools in Sweden, found that involving pupils to actively participate in bullying prevention (but not in the peer mediator role) emerged as one of the most successful elements in

their evaluation (Flygare, Frånberg, Gill, Johansson, Lindberg, Osbeck & Söderström, 2011).

Also, allowing children and adolescents to step into the role of peer supporters and provide feedback on their experiences has been regarded as a good way for including them in policy development (e.g. Cowie & Smith, 2010). Many countries have made bullying prevention programmes in school a legal obligation and yet, despite all these efforts to reduce bullying, peer victimisation is still a serious problem across the globe. To date, many open questions remain, using Louise Arseneault's recent phrasing "are we doing the right thing? And are we doing enough?" (Arseneault, 2018, p. 406). Some of the valuable insights from past scientific efforts include the recommendation to mobilise those students in anti-bullying interventions, who do not belong to the bully's network, but passively observe the conflicts as bystanders (e.g. Frey, Hirschstein, Edström & Snell, 2009; Salmivalli 1999; Kärnä, Voeten, Little, Poskiparta, Kaljonen & Salmivalli, 2011; Polanin et al., 2012). This suggestion was based on the assumptions that bystanders' behaviour is easier to change than consolidated aggression in bullies and this, in turn, may also eradicate the perpetrators' desired social rewards including the motivation to engage in bullying altogether.

1.7 The Objective of this Work

To date, the empirical literature on victim defending shows that the majority of bystanding pupils do not intervene in support of a victimised peer in an actual bullying conflict. This is a serious problem that requires utmost attention from psychologists, school practitioners and policymakers. The work in this thesis builds on the notion, which many of the professionals in the area share, that we need to utilise the input of all pupils if we want to be successful in tackling anti-social and harmful behaviours in our schools. To efficiently use this great potential, the pupils, we first need to correctly understand their concerns and perspectives related to provictim behaviours. To facilitate understanding, the first empirical study of this work (presented in Chapter 2) aims to fathom one of the issues, namely the fear of peer/friend disapproval, that children seem concerned about when thinking about helping a victimised peer. In the second study (presented in Chapter 3), the author will utilise the gained insights of study one to test a novel cross-age teaching of

social issues intervention (CATS). This intervention aims to provide children with knowledge on safe victim support strategies, which can help them overcome their fears and engage more confidently and more frequently in provictim activities. In addition, CATS aims to increase pupils' awareness about the importance and value of victim support as they may be oblivious of the extent of negative health consequences that bullying can have on the targeted peer. Equally important is that children learn about *their role* in rectifying peer victimisation. That is, pupils need to become more conscious of how their typical behaviour during a bullying conflict contributes to the continuation or termination of peer aggression. The present research will take account of both children's concerns, and the relevant theoretical and empirical knowledge base. With this work, the author hopes to facilitate positive changes in victim support by empowering peer bystanders to take anti-bullying action. Pupils' increased sense of responsibility and prosocial engagement in bullying incidences can alleviate a victim's suffering and foster a friendlier school climate.

Chapter 2   Predicting Adolescents' Intentions to Support Victims of Bullying from Perceived Reactions of Friends versus Peers

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents study 1 of this thesis and addresses the impact of students' perceived reactions from friends and peers on their intentions to victim support behaviours in the school environment. It opens with a detailed introduction that will discuss the theory and the relevant empirical literature including the hypotheses. The introduction is followed by the methods and results section and concludes with a discussion of the relevant findings and their implications for future research and practice. Although self-contained, study 1 is part of a wider project and was specifically designed to capture information on specific variables which would then inform the subsequent experimental study (in Chapter 3) which concerns the testing of a novel anti-bullying prevention- and intervention programme.

Given the crucial role of bystanders in combating bullying in schools (Chapter 1), psychologists need to understand in more detail the reasons why children may not intervene on behalf of a victimised peer. To set the scene, the introduction of the present study will firstly present some key data on the prevalence of victim support and provide a tabulated summary of the common barriers identified in the extant empirical literature. Secondly, it presents an outline of the barriers relevant to the present study including a review of the empirical literature and supporting theories. Together, this will aid understanding of the link between outcome expectancies and victim support. Thirdly, this section will explore and discuss the issue of the current literature, that has evaluated victim support as a single generic construct alongside its interrelation with gender differences and the limitations identified. Finally, the hypotheses of this study will be presented.

2.1.1 Prevalence of Victim Support

Since school bullying has been recognised as a group phenomenon, past research has shown that bystanders are often present (79% - 88% of the time) when peer victimisation occurs (Craig et al., 2000; Atlas & Pepler, 1998; Tapper & Boulton, 2005). Despite the fact that most children attest their anti-bullying attitudes and report that they would defend the victim in a bullying situation (Boulton, Trueman & Flemington, 2002; Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004; Rigby & Slee, 1991; Rigby & Johnson, 2006), they intervene only in a minority of cases. Studies employing naturalistic observations have shown that only in 9% to 19% of bullying acts peers happened to step in on behalf of the victim (Tapper & Boulton, 2005; Atlas & Pepler, 1998; Hawkins, Pepler & Craig, 2001). This discrepancy may partly result from students' perceived barriers to helping other peers. In spite of these rather discouraging findings, there is a considerable proportion of children who refrain from bullying. They have been classified as outsiders and defenders, and can possibly be mobilised through adequate prevention and intervention programmes to engage more in victim support behaviours (Olthof, Goossens, Vermande, Aleva & Van der Meulen, 2011). Some evidence has shown that peers who support victims can help alleviate their suffering (Sainio, Veenstra, Huitsing & Salmivalli, 2010). Hence, it is crucial to identify the factors that prevent children from supporting a victimised peer in a bullying incident.

Before proceeding with the introductory section, it is necessary to emphasise that in the present study defending, support, help, standing up, siding with, and protecting the victim are used interchangeably with reference to students' prosocial behaviours that are intended to benefit a victim of bullying in a caring and thoughtful manner. Further, where not otherwise specified, the term *bystander* refers to a pupil who witnesses a peer being bullied in the school environment.

2.1.2 Common Barriers for Victim Support

A literature review on the impediments to victim defending behaviour reveals an array of factors that can prevent bystanders from intervening on behalf of a victimised peer. Table 2.1 summarises the common barriers of victim support identified in the existing empirical literature. From this list those barriers (1 – 4) that

are relevant to the present study will be addressed and discussed in the following paragraphs of the introduction.

Table 2.1 Summary of the Common Barriers of Victim Support

No	Barriers	Reference/s
1.	fear of social reputation damage	Thornberg, 2007, 2010; Rigby & Johnson, 2005b
2.	relationship status among students	Bellmore, Ma, You & Hughes, 2012
3.	perceived pressure from significant others	Pozzoli, Gini & Vieno, 2012; Pozzoli & Gini, 2012; Rigby & Johnson, 2006; Boulton, Boulton, Down, Sanders, & Craddock, 2017
4.	gender	Pozzoli & Gini, 2010; Rigby & Slee, 1993; Thornberg & Jungert, 2014; Pozzoli, Gini & Vieno, 2012; Caravita, Di Blasio & Salmivalli, 2009; Baldry, 2005; Cowie, 2000; Macaulay & Boulton, 2017

5.	individual moral disengagement	Gini, Pozzoli & Bussey, 2015; Thornberg & Jungert, 2013, 2014
6.	lack of self-efficacy	Gini, Albiero, Benellini & Altoe, 2008; Pöyhönen, Juvonen and Salmivalli, 2010; Rigby & Johnson, 2005b
7.	uncertainty about what to do	Bellmore, Ma, You & Hughes, 2012; Hazler, 1996
8.	not being friends with the victim	Forsberg, Thornberg & Samuelsson, 2014; Pronk,Goossens, Olthof, De Mey & Willemen, 2013; Chen, Chang & Cheng, 2016; Thornberg, Landgren & Wiman, 2018
9.	worry to exacerbate the incident and worsen the situation	Unnever & Cornell, 2004; Hazler, 1996; McLaughlin, Arnold & Boyd, 2005

No = numbering

Table 2.1 (continued) Summary of the Common Barriers of Victim Support

No	Barriers	Reference/s
10.	experience negative emotions:	i) Chen, Chang & Cheng, 2016; Thornberg, Tenenbaum, Varjas, Meyers, Jungert & Vanegas, 2012
	i) disliking the victim,	ii) Chen, Chang & Cheng, 2016
	ii) fear of retaliation,	iii) Cowie & Olafsson, 2000; Boulton, 2013a; Juvonen & Galván, 2008; Hazler, 1996; Chen, Chang & Cheng, 2016
	iii) fear of becoming a victim	
11.	thinking the incident is not one's own business	Cappadocia, Pepler, Cummings & Craig, 2012; Rigby & Johnson, 2005b
12.	perceptions of low severity of the bullying	Sokol, Bussey & Rapee, 2015; Thornberg et al. 2012; Forsberg et al., 2014; Macaulay & Boulton, 2017
13.	blaming the victim	Sokol, Bussey & Rapee, 2015; Thornberg et al., 2012; Thornberg et al., 2018
14.	type of victim responses: i) conveying confidence – not helplessness, ii) angry reactions – not sadness	Sokol, Bussey & Rapee, 2015; Forsberg et al., 2014
15.	lack of responsibility	Forsberg et al., 2014; Thornberg et al., 2018
16.	responsibility transfer to:	
	i) teachers	i) Forsberg, et al., 2014; Thornberg & Jungert, 2014
	ii) peers	ii) Forsberg, et al., 2014; Thornberg & Jungert, 2014
	iii) victim's friends	iii) Bellmore et al., 2012; Thornberg, 2007, 2010; Thornberg et al., 2012
	iv) the bullies	iv) Bellmore et al., 2012; Thornberg, 2007, 2010; Thornberg et al., 2012

No = numbering

Table 2.1 (continued 2) Summary of the Common Barriers of Victim Support

No	Barriers	Reference/s
17.	age	Pöyhönen, Juvonen & Salmivalli, 2010
18.	promote own status by behaving like the powerful bully	Juvonen & Galván, 2008; Hazler, 1996
19.	friendship with the bully	Thornberg, Tenenbaum, Varjas, Meyers, Jungert & Vanegas, 2012; Forsberg et al., 2014
20.	admiration for the bully	Rigby & Johnson, 2005b
21.	attitude misperception - children underestimate peers' anti-bullying attitudes	Sandstrom, Makover & Bartini, 2013
22.	fear of ostracism	Chen, Chang & Cheng, 2016
23.	collective moral disengagement	Gini, Pozzoli & Bussey, 2015; Thornberg & Jungert, 2013, 2014
24.	lack of affective empathy	van der Ploeg, Kretschmer, Salmivalli & Veenstra, 2017; Macaulay & Boulton, 2017

No = numbering

2.1.3 Barriers Relevant to the Present Study: The Fear of Negative Peer Consequences as a Barrier to Victim Support

Past research that has investigated the reasons behind bystanders' non-action to support the victim in a bullying incident revealed a rather complex picture. This is not least because human behaviour is influenced by a multitude of parameters which pertain to individual as well as social, or contextual factors. Table 2.1 illustrates a long list of barriers that were identified in the extant literature. However, the studies that examine the role of perceived negative (social) consequences on children's victim support behaviours is rather limited and requires researchers' attention. It is this empirical literature alongside the theoretical basis that will be addressed in the following paragraphs. The research reviewed below has investigated underlying factors, which substantially impact on bystander responses and may fuel students' fear of negative consequences when they anticipate victim help. Four support constraining factors will be considered: fear of social reputation damage, the role of relationship status among students (friends and general peers), the effect of perceived pressure from significant others (friends, parents, teachers, peers), and gender. Furthermore, the relevant theoretical underpinnings will also be explained and critically discussed.

2.1.3.1 Fear of Social Reputation Damage

Social power as indexed by social status and popularity seems to play a key role in the victim defending process. In fact, evidence suggested that such social factors can be as strong as to mediate the relationship between personal determinants (self-efficacy, affective empathy) and defending behaviour (Pöyhönen et al., 2010). This is not surprising, as bullies often have great power within the peer group (Teräsahjo & Salmivalli, 2003; Juvonen & Galván, 2008; Salmivalli, Kärnä & Poskiparta, 2010), and it may take a good social standing to stand up against the perpetrators and not risk becoming the next victim. While non-intervening may be seen by some children as self-protection from bullying, others may use it as a means to promote their social status by behaving similarly like the powerful bullies (Juvonen & Galván, 2008).

A review of the literature provides evidence that clearly underscores the relation between social reputation and victim support. To illustrate, Thornberg (2010) employed ethnographic observations to investigate 26 incidents of bystander situations (in two primary schools) where students witnessed another peer in distress. The field observations were followed up with informal conversations where children were asked to explain the reasons behind their reactions (helping versus not helping) in the immediate incident. Children's main concerns for not intervening included fears of being excluded, teased, humiliated, victimised or otherwise punished by their peers. Some students also expressed the risk of embarrassing themselves or looking foolish in the situation when trying to help a peer in need. The association between helping and embarrassment was also reported in an earlier study by the same author (Thornberg, 2007). Such anxieties are likely to stem from situational factors which relate to the well known bystander effect that is outlined in the paragraph below. More specifically, the author will provide an account of the literature and theory that explain the potential reasons behind bystanders' reluctance to intervene in a bullying situation.

The *bystander effect* and related situation-specific characteristics that influence helping behaviour will be discussed next. When trying to investigate the factors which inhibit children's victim support behaviour, it seems essential to consider the well known *bystander effect*, an umbrella term that unites several theoretical processes that were found to affect people's helping behaviours. It is likely that bystanders' sense of responsibility to help a victim is diminished when other witnesses are present. Latané and Darley (1968) identified the phenomenon of the *bystander effect* with adults in emergency situations. The process by which each bystander divides the entire responsibility to other witnesses present at the scene has been referred to as *diffusion of responsibility* (Latané & Darley, 1970). In the school environment, diffusion of responsibility may also be linked to social roles and competency issues. Thornberg's research (2007) showed that children and adolescents may view a victim's friends as the main caretakers, and regard the teacher as being the more competent person to deal with bullying issues.

Another process that may lead to inaction is *pluralistic ignorance* (Latane & Darley,1970). This occurs when bystanders misinterpret the bullying incident as not serious enough based on how other witnesses at the scene behave. If children look

around and find that no one of their peers reacts to the event, they may then infer that the situation does not require any intervention at all (Thornberg, 2007). Thus, bystanders may only intervene when they interpret that something is seriously wrong in that situation, and a peer needs their help.

Witnesses of a bullying incident may also remain passive if they fear to embarrass themselves or look foolish in front of other peers when trying to intervene. Such worries have been viewed as social blunders or what has been termed the *audience inhibition* phenomenon (e.g. Bierhoff, 2002; Latané & Darley, 1968; 1970). The audience inhibition effect refers to a process where bystanders of an emergency situation remain passive because they are worried about embarrassing themselves in front of other people if they would step in to help (Latané & Darley, 1970).

Some empirical evidence is consistent with the aforementioned theoretical propositions in suggesting that children may believe that they can avoid reputation damage if they do not get involved in a bullying incident. Indeed, Thornberg (2010) suggested that the social status among bystanders may also be an important factor in victim support processes. Importantly, he found that this effect (fear of embarrassment) was not apparent in high-status students as their intervening power seemed to be taken for granted among their peers. Also, leaders and high-status students themselves have attested to not consider potential consequences from peers (e.g. social disapproval, embarrassment, potential personal harm) but rather enact the behaviour that they think is adequate in the immediate event. In contrast, middle-status and low-status students (who constitute the majority of the bystanders) admit that they do consider the potential social cost that may result from intervening on behalf of the victim. Hence, it seems the two latter groups lack the privilege of acting upon empathic arousal or empathy-driven emotions (experiences of aversive arousal caused when someone witnesses a person in danger, in pain or in general discomfort; Dovidio, Piliavin, Schroeder, & Penner, 2006; Hoffman, 2000). Thornberg (2010) argued, that this experience in turn is likely to create a moral conflict for the witnessing peer. Consequently, this may mean that a witness would hold back victim support despite feeling compassion for the victimised peer which may then leave both the victim and the bystander in emotional distress.

Beside the merits it is important to note some shortcomings in Thornberg's (2007, 2010) research such as the generalisebility of the findings which derive from the methodology employed. Both, the ethnographic observations as well as the follow-up informal conversations employed, relied on the researcher's interpretation of the data which were drawn from 26 bystander incidents in two schools only. Also, the incidences studied were not restricted to bullying perpetration but included a wide range of bystander situations involving generic aggression or harassment of various degrees. Other situations included lower levels of distress such as a child missing a toy, or asking a peer for help in a math exercise. Yet another limitation is that Thornberg does not provide any reference to the frequency of each participant statement (among the 141 students) that describes the reasons for not intervening. It is therefore difficult to gauge the relevance of a specific factor (i.e. the fear of peer consequences) in preventing victim support among bystanding peers.

Other research conducted by Rigby and Johnson (2005) examined whether and how students would intervene in a hypothetical bystander scenario. In their study, participants were exposed to a video with cartoons (using children voices) which showed different types of bullying (physical, verbal and sexual coercion). While watching the scenarios, students were instructed to indicate their behavioural intentions on a questionnaire which included four options of bystander reactions: ignoring the incident, supporting the victim, supporting the bully, and getting teacher help. The authors found that students' responses varied widely among the four possible options. In terms of non-intervention, between 34% and 52% (primary school and secondary school students, respectively) reported that they would ignore the bullying conflict. One of the reasons for not helping was, indeed, the fear of negative consequences as children said that they were concerned that their reputation would suffer.

Researchers have argued that children's profound considerations of social consequences from victim help cannot be regarded as an isolated process but are influenced by members within the social environment (Thornberg, 2010). That is, with regard to reputation factors, in classes where popular children are frequently involved in bullying perpetration, the negative behaviour is more accepted than when less popular peers perform identical actions (Dijkstra, Lindenberg & Veenstra, 2008). Dijkstra and collaborators (2008) observed that children are more inclined to imitate

behaviour that is performed by popular bullies than less popular peers. This suggests that in groups where bullying is associated with high social prestige it may be more difficult for pupils to defend a victimised peer.

Contrasting research conducted by Pöyhönen and colleagues illustrates that aspiring for a higher social status can also be achieved through prosocial behaviour (Pöyhönen et al., 2012). These authors investigated the importance of students' personal outcome expectations on three different bystander responses in a bullying situation: defending the victim, passive bystanding and reinforcing the bully. The researchers focussed on the effect of three motives that may guide a pupil's behaviour namely, the expectation that the victim feels better, the expectation that the bullying decreases and the expectation that one's own social standing would rise. In terms of the latter, findings showed that children who expected that defending would help them to promote their social status in the peer group would act upon their expectations and support a victim in need. In contrast, results also revealed that students who anticipated that defending may lower their social status among peers tended to support the bully. Passive bystanders, however, seem not much concerned about their social standing. They prefer to keep a low profile perhaps in order to avoid undesired consequences, the authors argued. Considering the literature reviewed above, it is noteworthy that social power allows pupils to engage in more challenging tasks. This is very promising as it implies that a popular social status can also be utilised in positive ways, which promote prosocial behaviour, and not only to encourage other peers' humiliating activities.

Let us now turn to the theoretical basis of the social-cognitive mechanisms that are believed to underlie children's complex decision-making process as whether to help or ignore victimisation. Bandura (1989) proposed in his cognitive learning theory, that in a salient social context, children adopt others' behaviour through social reward and punishment as well as through modelling, and vicarious experiences of valued peers. For example, watching classmates frequently support others, and acknowledging the social rewards related to the behaviour, might enhance one's inclination and ability to engage in the same (or similar) acts in alike situations. In addition, Bandura (1977; 1986) suggested that human behaviour is influenced by *outcome expectancy*. In social learning theory this component appears to be interrelated with self-efficacy and actual behaviour. The term 'outcome expectancy'

refers to judgements about an outcome that a specific behaviour may produce. Related to pupils' victim support behaviours, this may suggest that even if they feel highly efficacious to intervene, they may choose to refrain from provictim activities if they believe that this will lead to undesired effects (e.g. peer disapproval, decrease in one's popularity). Interestingly, the interrelation between self-efficacy and outcome expectancy has led to some important debates among researchers that deserve some consideration here and will be addressed in the following paragraph.

In the extant research on victim defending a great deal of attention has been given to self-efficacy as a core predictor of peer interventive action in bullying situations (e.g. Peets et al., 2015; Pöyhönen et al., 2010; Pöyhönen et al., 2012; Gini at al., 2008). The researchers based their work on Bandura's influential *social cognitive theory* to provide a theoretical rational for investigating self-efficacy. A more critical inspection, however, shows that social cognitive theory is not *one* precisely defined theory but unifies a set of theoretical constructs which are interrelated and not self-contained, or even contradictory. This becomes particularly evident in the investigation of the association between the concept of outcome expectancy and self-efficacy. More than two decades after the postulation of self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1977) researchers have started debating over a conceptual contradiction that resulted from Bandura's explanation (1978; 1984) that i) an individual's self-efficacy evaluation is causally influenced by the expected outcome but ii) outcome expectancies cannot causally determine self-efficacy. Williams (2010) vigorously argued that most authors paid little attention to this contradiction. Therefore, we can now find a disproportionate emphasis on self-efficacy as 'the' causal predictor of behaviour to the expense of the outcome expectancy concept. As a result, self-efficacy has gained great importance (deservedly, as a powerful predictor of behaviour; e.g. Peets et al., 2015; Pöyhönen et al., 2010; for a meta-analysis, see Moritz, Feltz, Fahrbach & Mack, 2000) in psychological theory and the research literature. At the same time, however, researchers' focus on the influence of outcome expectancies on self-efficacy has ceased. Despite this trend, there is empirical evidence in various domains (e.g. health behaviours including smoking, Corcoran & Rutledge, 1989; anxiety related avoidance, Kirsch, 1982; pain related behaviour, Baker & Kirsch, 1991) that provides robust support for the causal effect of outcome expectancies on self-efficacy. Acknowledging Williams' line of argument, the

present study utilises outcome expectations, which have been conceptualised here as perceived reactions from peers and friends, to predict participants' intentions to victim support (see Figure 2.1).

In summary, the previous section reviewed some key aspects regarding the implications of the bystander effect on students' behaviour. Further, it becomes more obvious how helping a victim can influence social reputation in two opposing directions, positive and negative, depending on a pupils' social standing. For popular students, supporting a victim can further promote their social status in the peer group whereas middle- or low-status bystanders might perceive the risk for decreasing their social standing (even more) if they choose to side with the victim. Finally, it is clear that perceived outcome expectations play a crucial role in children's decision making through cost-benefit considerations, as provictim behaviour can lead to higher or lower social reputation. Another key factor that appears to influence students' victim support is the relationship among bystanding peers which will be addressed next.

2.1.3.2 The Relationship Status among Students and its Influence on Victim Defending

The past literature robustly shows that whether bystanders intervene on behalf of the victim crucially depends on the nature of the relationship between the peer witness and the victim. Evidently, children are most likely to step in when the victim is regarded as being a friend compared to an acquaintance, a classmate or an unknown student (Forsberg, Thornberg, & Samuelson, 2014; Chen, Chang & Cheng, 2016; Pronk et al., 2013, Bellmore, Ma, You & Hughes, 2012; Tisak & Tisak, 1996). Another important component of peer relationships seems to be solidarity (Piaget, 1965; Youniss, 1980) and students are skilled enough to recognize that there is a discrepancy between peers' expected behaviour (what the peer/s would do) and their prescribed behaviour (what peers should do; Tisak & Turiel, 1988). In a study conducted by Tisak and Tisak (1996), participants reported that bystander intervention to resolve an aggressive incident would be greater if either the perpetrator or the victim was a good friend, compared to an acquaintance.

Interestingly, as regards the mutual influence among bystanders, the author found only one study that examined how the relationship among bystanders affects

children's willingness to support a victim of bullying. Bellmore and colleagues (2012) assessed in their study how the relationship between bystanding peers, in addition to that with the victim, affected victim support in a bullying conflict. Participants were asked to respond to vignettes in which both the relationship with the victim (friend, classmate, unknown) and the relationship with another bystander (classmate, friend, teacher, or no one else being present) were manipulated. The authors found that participants' willingness to tell a teacher about the bullying incident, differed as a function of their relationship with both the victim *and* another bystander who was present in the attack. When the victim was an ordinary classmate of the bystanding peer, students were least likely to refer to a teacher for help when the other witness was also identified as being (only) a classmate. Bellmore and colleagues (2012) argued, that a pupil's responsibility to protect the victim becomes diluted the greater the relationship distance is between the parties present on the scene. This outcome demonstrates the powerful influence of *relationship status among bystanders* on children's provictim behaviour. Thus, it seems worthwhile to further investigate the impact of friends and neutral peers/classmates on pupils' victim support behaviours. The present study, therefore, focused on students' individual perceptions of friends' and generic peers' reactions when they anticipate victim help. This association may be best explained through three psychological frameworks: i) the influential work by Ajzen and Fishbein (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Ajzen, 1991) whose efforts sought to identify the predictors of human action, ii) the concept of perceived peer pressure (e.g. Calder & Ross, 1973), and iii) the homophily phenomenon (Cairns, Cairns, Neckerman, Gest & Gariépy, 1988). Each framework will be considered in turn in the following paragraphs alongside some empirical evidence.

2.1.3.3 Perceived Pressure from Significant Others: The Association Between Expectations from Others and Victim Support

While seeking to explain the discrepancy between attitudes and behaviour, Ajzen proposed (1991) the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) which is the modified version of an earlier model, the theory of reasoned action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). The TPB has been employed by researchers largely to

investigate the impact of motivational factors on intentions to act, and behaviour per se. Theorists believe that behavioural intentions are the most immediate predictors of behaviour (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). Ajzen (1991) suggested, human behaviour is influenced by a person's salient beliefs that are related to a particular behaviour. As proposed by the TPB, behaviour is determined (via intentions) by three parameters: 1) an individual's attitude towards the behaviour, 2) the perceived subjective norm, and 3) an individual's perceived control over the behaviour in question. The second component is particularly important for the present study. The perceived subjective norm is a social-cognitive element and encompasses the normative beliefs that a person holds. These beliefs represent an individual's perception of what significant other people expect, how he/she should act in a specific situation. To relate the theory to the present research, it is assumed that bystanders witnessing a bullying incident will first assess their beliefs about peers' and/or friends' expectations to provide support to the victimised peer (or not). Based on the outcome, a pupil may then decide whether to comply to the expectations, or not. After the two remaining components of the TPB (individual's attitude towards the behaviour, individual's perceived control over the behaviour) have also been considered, the student ultimately selects the preferred intention which, in turn, is likely to guide the behavioural action: intervene or ignore the incident. Prentice (2008) approvingly argued that it is the perception of what is acceptable in the peer group which crucially influences behaviour. This, however, may not necessarily correspond with an individual's attitudinal aspect (e.g. disapproving of bullying). A better understanding in these aspects is essential as it will guide future anti-bullying (pre-) intervention programmes.

To relate the psychological theory to empirical research, Rigby and Johnson (2006) assessed the role of students' perceived expectations from parents, friends and teachers on their willingness to support a victimised peer. The participants watched a video (cartoons using children voices) that presented different bystander reactions during a physical or verbal bullying incident. The scenes depicted three behaviours: victim support, bully support or ignoring the bullying acts. The authors found that parental and friend expectations significantly predicted intentions to victim support. More importantly, expected friends' reactions turned out to be a greater predictor than expected parents' reactions. Perceived teacher expectations, however, failed to

make a contribution to victim defending. Rigby and Johnson concluded, that in upper primary school and even more in secondary school, teachers' influence to promote provictim behaviours decreases. There is some evidence suggesting that with increasing age, adolescents prefer to deal with peer conflicts themselves and object to teachers' views (Rigby & Bagshaw, 2003). The author now moves on to consider the effect of perceived peer pressure on students' behaviours which will be followed by a brief outline of the homophily framework in the context of victim defending.

2.1.3.4 Perceived Normative Pressure

Bullying, more than generic prosocial behaviour, appears to be context-dependent since research findings showed a significant variability between classrooms (Peets et al., 2015; Saarento & Salmivalli, 2015). As for bystanders' behaviour, witnessing the responses of classmates to a bullying incident is likely to determine other students' behaviour: defending, passive bystanding or favouring bullying perpetration (Pozzoli et al., 2012). This in turn can result in the formation of a social norm, which can be positive or negative. Social norms are situational variables that can indeed influence people to behave inconsistently with their attitudes. They are more likely to manifest as behaviours if an individual identifies with a social group including its normative characteristics (Calder & Ross, 1973). These group subjective norms are shared beliefs about the behaviour that is viewed as acceptable by an individual in the group in a particular situation (Cialdini, Kallgren & Reno, 1991). Social psychology distinguishes two types of norms: descriptive norms and prescriptive (or injunctive) norms. The former refers to what most group members 'do' and the latter defines what group members 'should do'. To relate this to the bullying issue, children observe their peers in a bullying situation and infer that if they refrain from helping, the incident cannot be serious enough to require any action (Salmivalli, 2009). Taking this notion a step further, not intervening over time can have a more profound (negative) effect since the more often a particular (negative) behaviour is performed in class, the more it is approved by its group members. It follows, that a pupil may conform to a descriptive norm (what most classmates do) if he/she wishes to "fit in" with the group and accentuate his/her belonging (Garandeau & Cillessen, 2006).

A study conducted with primary and secondary school children investigated pupils' perceived expectations to support the victim by considering peers and teachers as a

source of influence in a bullying incident (Pozzoli et al., 2012). The authors termed this kind of perception, of what other people expect from a person, as perceived normative pressure. The findings showed, perceived expectations (of provictim actions) from peers and teachers were positively correlated with victim support, and negatively related to passive bystanding behaviour. However, a closer inspection of the data revealed that only perceived peer expectations emerged as a significant predictor of victim defending. Similar findings have been reported in another study by Pozzoli and Gini (2012) showing that perceived expectations from significant others (in this case peers and parents) significantly predicted participants' intervening behaviours (defending and passive bystanding) in a bullying conflict. The evidence of these two studies suggests that it is crucial for research on victim support to consider such contextual factors (like peer pressure) beside mere individual characteristics (e.g. attitudes, personal responsibility, coping). While both studies addressed only (generic) peers in their research, Pozzoli and Gini (2012) recommended, their findings should be extended by exploring peer pressure at a more fine grained level. They suggested that researchers should test for friend and non-friend (generic peer) pressures. With the present study the author will respond to Pozzoli and Gini's (2012) recommendation.

More recent research, again, underscores the powerful effect of student's beliefs of negative consequences if they consider victim support through school personnel. To investigate this important issue Boulton and colleagues (Boulton, Boulton, Down, Sanders, & Craddock, 2017) conducted three related studies. Their first study examined the reasons why students would refrain from seeking teacher help when they were victimised. The most frequent response given by participants was their concern about peer disapproval. More specifically, the response entailed a negative reaction from peers such as being called a tell-tale by one's peers. The second study tested how widespread such beliefs are among students who think that asking a teacher for help would lead to negative consequences. The results showed that 96.9% of participants indicated that peer disapproval was the barrier that would prevent them from seeking teacher help. In their third study the authors explored whether the perceived concern of negative outcomes would be strong enough to stop students from help seeking, even if this would end the bullying attacks. Sadly, findings revealed that three quarters of the participants would not be willing to turn to their

teacher for support if peer disapproval was the consequence, even if bullying perpetration would stop. It becomes clear, that children's anticipated costs of peer disapproval override the positive effects of putting an end to peer victimisation. These findings highlight not only how salient such fears can be, but also how prevalent these beliefs are among the student population. Boulton's work raises high concerns about pupil's wellbeing, if they are unwilling to disclose harassment issues, and demands imperative attention by researchers. Yet, studies investigating students' perceptions about peer approval/disapproval in the context of victim support are still limited.

The present study followed the call by Pozzoli and Gini (2012) and built upon the work of Boulton and associates (Boulton et al., 2017) to investigate specific bystander influence by distinguishing between participants' expected friend reactions and their expected peer reactions in the prediction of provictim behaviours. The following section will address a theoretical explanation that can further elucidate the underlying processes of friends' and peers' powerful influences.

2.1.3.5 The Homophily Phenomenon

Friendships and other supportive relationships within the classroom can help to protect children from ongoing victimisation, reduce bullying acts within a group and promote moral values (Sainio et al., 2010; Boulton, Trueman, Chau, Whitehand & Amatya, 1999; Hoffman, 2000). However, the influential power of peers and friends may operate in two opposing directions, positive and negative, by conveying specific expectations of how an individual should behave in a bullying incident.

Research conducted by Pozzoli and Gini (2013) with a large sample of preadolescents and adolescents highlights the influential power of friends on two factors that are related to bystander behaviour. These were: similarity among reciprocal friends in (anti-) bullying attitudes and the sense of responsibility to intervene on behalf of the victim. For both variables, results confirmed that significant similarities exist among reciprocal friends and this effect was even stronger when the proportion of reciprocal friends within the classroom was high. Importantly, in this study boys showed a greater tendency to conform to their friends' anti-bullying attitudes than girls. This finding seems to contradict other research as boys (more so than girls) were usually found to be more influenced by

peers in terms of negative behaviours such as misconduct (e.g. Prinstein & Dodge, 2008).

Pozzoli and Gini (2013) based their study on the concept of peer/friend homophily (Cairns et al., 1988) which is grounded in selection and socialisation processes. These processes explain the phenomenon whereby young people choose peers and friends who express similar attitudes or behaviours as themselves (selection). Similarity in this respect then grows over time as a result of mutual peer/friend influence (socialisation). For example, research has shown that early adolescents change their behaviour over time to match their friends' behaviour in terms of moral disengagement (Sijtsema, Rambaran, Caravita & Gini, 2014). In line with the homophily concept, another study found that defenders tend to befriend classmates who are similar in their victim supporting behaviours (Ruggieri, Friemel, Sticca, Perren & Alsaker, 2013). Despite the fact that students cannot choose their classmates but are confined to share much of their time together, they seem to build peer and friend networks that consist of likeminded pupils (Kandel, 1978).

It is clear that peers and friends affect each other in various aspects (e.g. in bullying behaviour; Olthof & Goossens, 2008; Witvliet, Olthof, Hoeksma, Goossens, Smits & Koot, 2010). Therefore, it is important to investigate how such processes may operate specifically with regard to peers' and friends' influences on victim support behaviours. In the present study the author proposed a theoretical model, where expected friend' reactions and expected peer' reactions were entered as two separate exogenous variables (predictors) to test their unique contribution to victim support intentions (Figure 2.1).

So far, the introduction has outlined some of the key factors and barriers that can substantially affect the complex decision-makingd process that children undergo in a peer bullying situation. In addition, the impact of normative peer pressure on defending, as conceptualised by expectations from peers and friends, has been discussed. The following section will outline the extant victim defending research with respect to conceptual and measurement issues. Most importantly, the author will illustrate how 'defending' has been operationalised in previous studies along with the concurrent implications.

2.1.4 "Victim Defending" – Subdividing the Generic Construct

After reviewing the past literature, it became apparent that very few studies differentiated between different types of victim help. In the studies that did, the number of help strategies that were evaluated varied largely, as did the methodological procedures. To address these issues, a new theoretical model will be proposed, which enables the investigation of separate support strategies which in turn will generate a better understanding regarding pupils' reluctance in victim defending.

The definition of defending has arisen from the research by Salmivalli and associates who initiated the participant role approach to identify the roles that bystanders take on in a typical bullying event (as referred to in Chapter 1, section 1.5; Salmivalli et al., 1996). The participant role approach has been employed extensively thereafter to investigate the dynamics of peer victimisation and support processes among pupils (e.g. Salmivalli, 1998; Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004; Pöyhönen et al., 2010).

Much of the past research on defending utilises the defender scale developed by Salmivalli and colleagues (or adaptations; e.g. Salmivalli, Lappalainen & Lagerspetz, 1998; Gini, Albiero, Benelli, Altoé, 2008; Sutton & Smith, 1999; Menesini & Gini, 2000; Ruggieri et al., 2013) to identify prosocial bystanders who take on the defender role (see Chapter 1, Section 1.5). This scale has been designed to capture various behaviours in support for the victim, specifically: comforting the victim, telling a teacher about witnessed bullying incidents, and intervening in an attack to try to either stop the harassment or tell other peers to stop it. Reports on victim support behaviours (gathered via peer nominations) were largely operationalised by averaging each participant's defending scores to generate one single score. This score then represented 'defending' as a broad homogeneous construct which could then be included in statistical calculations. These researchers were less interested in specific types of defending but aimed to investigate the different roles that pupils tend to occupy in a bullying situation. It is important to note that this procedure (to combine various support behaviours into a single score) was adequate for their purpose. However, as a result, researchers in the field used to view defenders as a uniform group whereby defending serves a single function which is, to help ease the suffering of victimised children (Reijntjes et al., 2016). In doing so, authors might underestimate the variations batanovaamong 'defenders' that may stem, for example,

from different motivations to defend and/or from personal factors (social standing, ability, age, gender). For instance, compared to consoling the victim, actively opposing the bully not only takes great courage but also bears a considerable risk for the defending peer. That is, a defending pupil may have to face a group of powerful bully supporters who may retaliate and start harassing the defender.

While studying this issue, Belacchi (2008) noted that defenders might not constitute a homogenous group and altered Salmivalli's scale by adding to the 'defender' role two more specific roles, the mediator and the consoler. Whereas the mediator attempts to reunite victim and perpetrator, the consoler does not actively intervene in the conflict but tries to care about and comfort the victim. Even though Belacchi's (2008) extended version of the participant role model received some support in subsequent studies (Belacchi & Farina, 2010) the three prosocial roles (defender, consoler, and mediator) were again conjoined into a generic defender role.

In another study Rigby and Johnson (2005) distinguished between 'direct support' and 'indirect support' for the victim. Both types were presented to the participants in video clips that showed bystanders performing the different support behaviours. The authors operationalised indirect support as asking a teacher for help to deal with the incident. This video clip procedure has also been utilised by other authors to measure victim defending but these researchers, again, did not clearly specify the constructs "support for the victim" (McLaughlin et al., 2005) or "object to the bullying" (Baldry, 2005). They did, however, include "get a teacher" as an interventive option to help the victim.

More recently, Reijntjes and colleagues (Reijntjes et al., 2016) acknowledged the theoretically meaningful subdivision of the 'overall defending' construct. They assessed 'bully-oriented' (focussed on the bully to stop) and 'victim-oriented' support (focussed on supporting the victim) separately. According to these authors, the distinction between the two types of defending is sensible as they identified significant variations in the degree, and type of victim support among their participants. Three defender subgroups emerged from their research, one group (10%, mostly girls) scored high on both types of defending, the second group (13%, mostly boys) scored high on bully-oriented defending, and the third subgroup (25%) scored high on victim-oriented but low on bully-oriented defending (for details see Reijntjes et al., 2016). It is important to note that in their study victim-oriented

defending comprised both support directly addressed to the victim (e.g. consoling, saying not to worry about the incident) and support devoted by asking an adult to help out.

Similarly, van der Ploeg and associates evaluated different types of victim-oriented (comfort the victim, encourage the victim to disclose bullying) and bully-oriented (tells others to stop the bullying) support behaviours which were, again, amalgamated into one composite 'defending variable' (van der Ploeg, Kretschmer, Salmivalli & Veenstra, 2017). Even though their findings indicated that affective empathy and self-efficacy predicted defending behaviour over time, it remained obscured which factor is more (or less) required in the prediction of a particular sub-type of helping behaviour. The researchers therefore acknowledged that employing separate measures for distinct types of victim support would aid a deeper understanding of the relationships between the variables under study. The author implemented these researchers' recommendations and subdivided generic victim support into three sub-types to enable separate calculations which then generate unique effects. As peer help can take different forms, this subdivision seems sensible as it will reduce erroneous interpretations of the predictor – outcome link.

By using a qualitative design, Tisak and Tisak (1996) distinguished between two types of bystander intervention namely, "confronting the perpetrator to resolve the situation" or "involving an authority" to help out. Again in another study, participants were asked to indicate their choice of response to bullying acts from 12 different options (Trach, Hymel, Waterhouse, & Neale, 2010). However, only six of the 12 possibilities can be regarded as victim support behaviours. These were: help the victim, talk to an adult, tell the bully to stop, talk to bully's friends, do something to distract the bully/ies and get your friends to help solve the problem. The remaining six response options involved other potential reaction strategies such as walk away, ignore or avoid the bully/ies, get your friend to get back at the bully/ies, stay at home, talk to another teen/youth about it, and do nothing. Trach and associates (2010) found that the most frequent reaction to bullying reported by participants was 'help the victim' followed by 'tell the bully to stop'. From the literature mentioned above the extent of variation in methodological approaches including the operationalisation of the victim support variable becomes evident. Such disparities in the empirical literature considerably impede the comparison of the results.

Furthermore, the rational for subdividing generic help in the present study was also derived from a study that indicated that bystanders themselves differentiate between multiple victim support strategies. Employing structured interviews, Kanetsuna and colleagues (Kanetsuna, Smith & Morita, 2006) asked students how bystanders should behave when they witness a bullying incident. Participants responses included three main ways of helping i) to take direct action against bullies, ii) seek help (from teachers, parents and others) and iii) support the victim. Hence, the present study followed the insights of Kanetsuna et al.'s research and investigated three intervention strategies in order to cover victim-oriented, bully-oriented and adult-oriented help.

Similarly, Bellmore and colleagues (Bellmore et al., 2012) also distinguished between three types of intervention strategies. In response to bullying vignettes participants who reported they would intervene to help were then asked to indicate whether they would choose to 'comfort the victim', 'tell a teacher or school official', or 'tell the bully to stop'. The authors found that all subtypes of victim support were positively associated with a person's empathy. However, only 'telling the bully to stop' was linked to low levels of self-perceived victimisation. In addition, the relationship with the victim also played a key role in predicting victim support. That is, relationship status was associated with both 'telling a teacher' and 'confronting the bully'. As for 'comforting the victim', this subtype of help was not related to the relationship between bystander and victim.

The aforementioned findings presented in this section clearly highlight how type of support can mediate the relationship among the correlates under study (e.g. empathy – type of help, relationship status – type of help) which generated detailed effects that would have remained concealed if 'help' was included as a single generic construct. That is, subdividing generic help can better aid our understanding of the processes involved in children's decision making and advance our knowledge on the unique links between prominent factors in the victim support context.

There is yet another key reason that provides a rational for subdividing *general victim support* into more specific types of help namely, potential gender differences in this context. This aspect will be addressed next in the section that follows below.

2.1.5 Gender: Its Impact on Victim Support

As discussed above (Section 2.1.4), most of the existing studies on victim support investigated provictim behaviour as a general construct and some of the researchers also tested for gender differences in defending. A review of the literature that accounted for gender specific effects found considerable variations in how boys' and girls' respond when faced with peer victimisation. Overall, there is a general tendency showing that girls are more inclined to help victims and they also intervene more frequently in bullying situations than boys (Reijntjes et al., 2016; Thornberg, 2010; Salmivalli et al., 1996; Gini et al. 2007; Goossens et al., 2006; Pöyhönen & Salmivalli, 2008; Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004; Pozzoli & Gini, 2010 Thornberg & Jungert, 2014; Pozzoli et al., 2012, Pronk et al., 2013; Cappadocia et al., 2012; Caravita et al., 2009; Baldry, 2005; Macaulay & Boulton, 2017). Yet, the question about why girls and boys behave differently in a bullying event is still not answered.

Archer and Parker (1994) have attempted to explain the gender heterogeneity by suggesting that such differences, observed in response to aggression, may stem from the different reproductive strategies of the two genders. That is, girls tend to exhibit more expressive responses to bullying, they report to be more upset and more emotionally affected, and this manifests in more sympathetic attitudes towards victims. More recent research has confirmed this notion. Compared to boys, girls experience more anger, sadness and empathy in response to same-sex bullying (Sokol, Bussey & Rapee, 2015; Hektner & Swenson, 2011). Boys, on the other hand, seem more inclined to instrumental responses (addressing the bully/ies directly) and report a higher willingness to action, which may stem from their greater aspiration to be in control (Menesini et al., 1997; Reijntjes et al., 2016). Even though, girls are by far more actively engaged in challenging bullying (Cowie, 2000), they refrain from actual intervening in a bullying incident, as they are generally physically weaker than boys and much of the bullying is executed by boys (Whitney & Smith, 1993). Another study has confirmed this gender disparity with respect to 'getting teacher help' (McLaughlin, Arnold & Boyd, 2005). Again, the authors found a higher inclination for bystanding girls to call for adult help, compared to male bystanders.

The evidence here, however, is not straight forward and reveals some inconsistencies regarding the two genders' involvement in victim defending

behaviours. For example, some researchers report, in situations involving physical harassment it was usually boys who intervened physically to oppose the aggressor in order to protect the victim (Reijntjes et al., 2016; Thornberg, 2010). This confirms the gender stereotype of boys, being strong and showing a preference for fighting. In contrast to Thornberg's (2010) qualitative research findings Trach et al.'s (2010) results were drawn from quantitative data and suggested quite the opposite, that girls were more likely than boys to address the bully directly. To complicate things further, Sainio and associates (2010) reported that victim defending predominantly occurs among same-gender peers, however, among the few cross-gender-support cases boys were more often nominated as defenders by girls than vice versa. Moreover, some evidence has shown that girls, compared to boys, are more influenced by contextual factors (as concluded from large unexplained variance in behaviour) but not particularly by classroom norms (Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004). While some authors employed a cross-sectional design and relied on self-reports (e.g. Trach et al., 2010) and ethnographic observations (e.g. Thornberg, 2010) others adopted a more representative longitudinal approach and utilised peer nomination measures (e.g. Reijntjes et al., 2016). Therefore, research findings are difficult to compare and contrast in a systematic way. To date it is unclear whether these gender related variations are due to inconsistencies in the study design, the measurement, data analysis, or perhaps a combination of these factors plus genuine gender differences. Consequently, further research is required to generate more precise indications in terms of the heterogeneity among genders and its effect on specific helping behaviours.

Hence, when summarising the evidence on gender effects across existing studies without the consideration of methodological issues, it becomes apparent that girls are generally more inclined to engage in *generic victim support* than their male counterparts. However, there is hardly any research demonstrating that this trend may hold across specific support behaviours. Therefore, to advance understanding on how gender may affect specific sub-types of help beyond 'generic defending', the author subjected all three support behaviours under study to a gender moderation test.

2.1.6 The Theoretical Model

From the literature reviewed above, it becomes evident that children's motivation to engage in victim defending differs considerably due to a multitude of parameters, three of which have been scrutinised in the present study: the relationship status among bystanders (friend versus non-friend), type of support behaviour and gender differences. With regard to relationship status, past evidence has shown that one of the most important motivators to victim defending is a bystander's friendship with the victim (e.g. Pronk et al., 2013; Chen et al., 2016; Forsberg et al., 2014). In other words, students seem to feel more responsible to enact victim support if it is their friend who has been targeted by the bully/ies. Conversely most bystanders appear to not feel a moral duty to defend a victim if the bullied student is not one of their friends. Even though the evidence is sparse, one reason for not helping a general peer (non-friend) is that bystanders seem to leave the responsibility for helping with the victim's friends. While the aforementioned literature has focused on the bystander-victim relationship and identified friendship as a major influencing factor of victim support, there is little insight, so far, on how the relationship among bystanders may affect their helping behaviour. As mentioned earlier, the author found only one study that tested the mutual influence between bystanders (Bellmore et al., 2012). Results from this research indicated, that children's motivation to intervene decreases with increasing relationship distance between the bystanders present in the bullying event. Moreover, according to social-cognitive theories such as Bandura's (1977; 1986) outcome expectancy framework and Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behaviour, people's actions are considerably affected by what other individuals in their close environment expect. Indeed, Pozzoli and Gini (2012), who found some evidence that perceived expectations from peers can predict victim support, suggested that future research could elaborate on this association by comparing the effect of friend and non-friend expectations on victim help. To respond to this recommendation, the author investigated the effect of relationship status among bystanders on provictim behaviours and included friends and general peers as two independent predictors in a new theoretical model.

Based on the past literature, beside relationship status, victim defending also differs as a function of type of support which seems to be interrelated with gender differences in the defending context. While more recent evidence suggested that boys

are more inclined to bully-oriented defending and girls tend to engage more in victim-oriented support (Reijntjes et al., 2016; Van der Ploeg et al., 2017), the vast majority of the literature in this field reports the findings on bystander intervention from a composite score that represent generic victim support (e.g. Salmivalli et al., 1998; Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004; Gini et al., 2008; Pöyhönen et al., 2012). This methodological approach, however, may be problematic as it might obscure boys' and girls' preferences and barriers to specific types of help. In order to promote victim support among pupils we need a deeper understanding about who engages in which type of help (or not), and about the underlying reasons to do so (or not). Thus, to identify unique effects in the prediction of specific helping behaviours researchers are required to subdivide *generic victim support*. To the author's knowledge, this study is the first to investigate three sub-types of victim support behaviours in relation to perceived negative outcomes from defending and include them as separate constructs in one structural model.

A critical view of the extant evidence ultimately guided the design of the proposed theoretical model depicted in Figure 2.1. It illustrates the pathways that link the predictors i) expected peer reactions, and ii) expected friend reactions, each specified to a distinct type of help, with the corresponding support behaviour. That is, this model was utilised to determine the importance of participants' perceived friend and peer consequences in predicting three specific helping behaviours: consoling the victim, addressing the bully, and getting adult help. In addition, with the original model it was also possible to address the heterogeneity among boys and girls in this regard. In practice, this required to test the original model (Figure 2.1) repeatedly, for the girls' and the boys' sub-sample separately.

Note, Table 2.2 provides a description of the factors included in the model, and their operationalisation is explained in detail in the method section of this chapter (Section 2. 2).
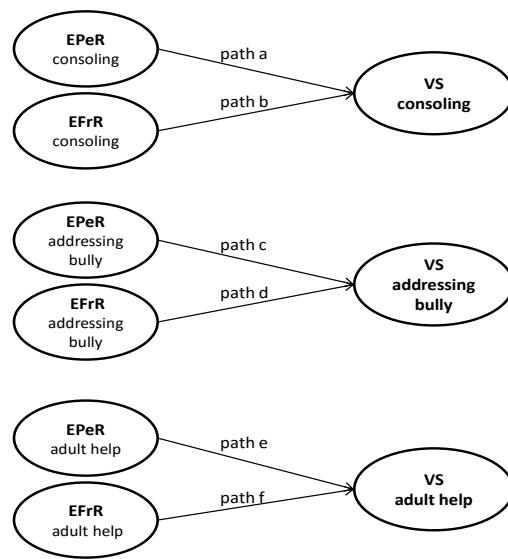
Figure 2.1 The theoretical model illustrating the pathways from expected peer (EPeR) and friend reactions (EFrR) to predict three types of victim support. Note: EPeR = Expected Peer Reactions; EFrR= Expected Friend Reactions; VS = Victim Support.

Table 2.2 Describing the Factors Illustrated in the Theoretical Model

Factor label	Description
EPeR consoling	Expected peer reactions if supporting a victim by consoling him/her
EFrR consoling	Expected friend reactions if supporting a victim by consoling him/her
EPeR addressing bully	Expected peer reactions if supporting a victim by addressing the bully/ies
EFrR addressing bully	Expected friend reactions if supporting a victim by addressing the bully/ies
EPeR adult help	Expected peer reactions if supporting a victim by getting adult/teacher help
EFrR adult help	Expected friend reactions if supporting a victim by getting adult/teacher help
VS consoling	Intentions to victim support by consoling
VS addressing bully	Intentions to victim support by addressing the bully/ies
VS adult help	Intentions to victim support by getting adult/teacher help

2.1.7 Hypotheses

The aim of the present study was to explore the association between children's *expected peer reactions* versus *expected friend reactions* on three subtypes of victim support: consoling the victim, addressing the bully and getting adult help. This was accomplished by means of the proposed theoretical model (Figure 2.1). A

subordinate aim was to test whether the findings generated by the original model (for the overall participant sample) would differ from gender specific results.

Main Aim - To test the unique contribution of i) expected peer reactions and ii) expected friend reactions in predicting intentions to victim support by (a) consoling, (b) addressing the bully, and (c) getting adult help the following hypotheses were framed:

1.1 It was proposed that expected peer reactions (EPeR) related to a specific type of help would uniquely predict a participant's intentions of the corresponding support behaviour (please refer to Table 2.3).

1. 2 It was also proposed that expected friend reactions (EFrR) related to a specific type of help would uniquely predict a participant's intentions of the corresponding support behaviour (please refer to Table 2.3).

1. 3 Furthermore, it was proposed that EFrR would be a stronger predictor in the model than EPeR, irrespective of the type of support tested (please refer to Table 2.3).

Note, hypotheses 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 were not tested directly but rather indirectly through a set of hypotheses as shown in Table 2.3.

Subordinate Aim - Testing for gender differences

2. It was proposed that the predictions generated by the original model would not hold across the two gender specific findings. Due to the scarce and inconsistent extant evidence no direction of the findings could be stated.

Table 2.3 Specifying the Hypotheses that Match each Pathway Illustrated in the Model Depicted in Figure 2.1

No	Path	Hypotheses
1.1		
1.1 a	**a**	Expected peer reactions to *consoling* a victimised peer will significantly predict intentions to victim support by *consoling*
1.1 c	**c**	Expected peer reactions to *addressing the bully/ies* will significantly predict intentions to victim support by *addressing the bully/ies*
1.1 e	**e**	Expected peer reactions to *getting adult help* will significantly predict intentions to victim support by *getting adult help*
1.2		
1.2 b	**b**	Expected friend reactions to *consoling* a victimised peer will significantly predict intentions to victim support by *consoling*
1.2 d	**d**	Expected friend reactions to *addressing the bully/ies* will significantly predict intentions to victim support by *addressing the bully/ies*
1.2 f	**f**	Expected friend reactions to *getting adult help* will significantly predict intentions to victim support by *getting adult help*
1.3		
1.3.1		Path b will be stronger than path a
1.3.2		Path d will be stronger than path c
1.3.3		Path f will be stronger than path e

Note: No = numbering related to the hypotheses in the text body

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2.2 Method

2.2.1 Participants

Six hundred and thirty students (297 girls and 333 boys, $M_{age} = 12, 5$) were recruited from three public secondary schools, from two small adjacent towns in Germany. Schools were contacted and invited to participate via email and telephone. Socio-economic data were not gathered, nevertheless, the participant sample included students from a wide range of social classes (low and working class through to middle-class) which results from the various kinds of schools (Hauptschule, Realschule and Gesamtschule) that are conceptualised in Germany to serve different academic levels. Approval for the study was received from the local Department of Psychology Ethics Committee (see Appendix 2.4) in agreement with the British Psychological Society guidelines. Permission to take part was solicited in writing from school principals, and for two schools this consent was given in loco parentis which did not requires further permission from parents/guardians. In one of the participating schools additional permission had to be obtained from parents/guardians via active consent letters (see Appendix 2.3). Participants, also, gave their consent verbally on the day of data collection which took place in their classrooms during regular school hours.

2.2.2 Procedure

Prior to the actual assessment the author explained the purpose of the study and the procedure involved by reading out an information script (Appendix 2.2). This included a notion of the confidentiality of the responses and a reminder that students were not tested in any way, nor were there right or wrong answers. The author, also, stressed that honest responses were desired. Participants were requested to use the whole classroom space to enable them to sit spread out and refrain from copying other peers' responses. Furthermore, children were asked to focus entirely on their own questionnaire and avoid conversations about their reports during and after data collection. In order to increase students' trust and their motivation to provide their personal opinion, the author explained that she did not belong to the school nor were there any intentions to judge individual participants' responses, but to investigate general psychological belief patterns. Participants were provided with the definition

of bullying (Olweus, 1993) that was written on the black board and read out loud by the author to highlight the specific characteristics of this type of aggression that may take on different forms (physical, verbal, relational, cyber). The main criteria as per Olweus' definition included intentional harmful actions that occur repeatedly over time and involve an imbalance of power. Children were then invited to complete the questionnaire while the author was prepared to answer any questions that arose during the assessment process. Although present at all times, class teachers took no active role in data collection.

2.2.3 Measures

A 30-item questionnaire was developed by the author and an experienced German teacher screened the wording of the items to assure the adequacy of the language in order to cater for students' diverse education standards. In order to enable the English speaking supervisors and the Ethics Committee to follow the methodology of the present study, the original German version of the questionnaire was translated into English (see Appendix 2.1). This was accomplished in a joint effort by the author and the aforementioned German scholar who teaches German and English (as a foreign language) in high school for the age groups included in this research.

As mentioned earlier in the introduction of this chapter (Section 2.1), the present survey was designed to yield new insights regarding students' (non-) engagement in victim support, which would then inform the subsequent experimental study presented in Chapter 3 of this thesis. With this in mind, the measures that have been employed here were specifically designed to generate the information that fed into the predictors and the outcome variables operationalised in the proposed theoretical model (see Figure 2.1).

Expected peer reactions (EPeR). To measure participants' expected peer reactions, a scale was developed to tap students anticipated general peers' reactions if they would support a victimised peer. The scale consisted of three sub-scales whereby each sub-scale entailed 4 items that referred to a specific type of victim support namely, consoling, addressing the bully and getting adult help. As an example, one of the four items pertaining to the EPeR – consoling sub-scale read as follows: "If I helped someone who was being bullied to feel better about themselves, other pupils would ...". To supplement the lead-sentence, participants could choose from five response

options: two graded negative statements (1 = like me a lot less; 2 = like me less), one neutral statement (3 = no change) and two graded positive statements (4 = like me more; 5 = like me a lot more). In the EPeR-addressing the bully sub-scale and the EPeR-getting adult help sub-scale the lead sentence would read, "If I helped someone who was being bullied by trying to stop the bullies doing it, other pupils would ...", and "If I helped someone who was being bullied by getting an adult to help, other pupils would ...", respectively. Note, while the lead-sentence differed according to each specific type of help, the response options were identical for all three sub-scales. A complete list of the response items is presented in Table 2.4 (see also questionnaire, Appendix 2.1) Scale scores were calculated by averaging participant's responses across the four items pertaining to each type of support. High scores represented more socially approving (positive) reactions for providing support to a victim. The three EPeR sub-scales were tested for reliability and the resulting Cronbach's α coefficients indicated very good internal consistency with the current sample: .87 for EPeR - consoling; .88 for EPeR - addressing the bully and .91 for EPeR - getting adult help.

Expected friend reactions (EFrR). Expected friend reactions was measured in exactly the same way as described above for general peers. That is, the content items including their sequence in the expected friend reaction scale was identical to that described in the preceding paragraph except that "other pupils" was substituted by the word "friends" in the lead sentence. To provide an example, one of the four items of the EFrR – consoling sub-scale read as follows: "If I helped someone who was being bullied to feel better about themselves, my friend/s would ...". As described above, the lead sentence was again adapted for each EFrR sub-scale to correspond with each type of support under study (EFrR – addressing bully, EFrR – getting adult help). A list of all response options is shown in Table 2.4 and these were identical with those utilised for the three expected peer reactions sub-scales. Again, scale scores were calculated for each participant with higher scores indicating more socially approving (positive) reactions for providing support to a victim. All three EFrR sub-scales were reliable measures as shown by the high Cronbach's α coefficients: .87 for EFrR – consoling; .89 for EFrR – addressing the bully; and .89 for EFrR – getting adult help.

The three outcome variables (VS consoling, VS addressing the bully, VS adult help) in the hypothesised model (Figure 2.1) were operationalised as participants' intentions to support a victimised peer in one of the three ways specified. In order to do this, two new measures were designed, the *past victim support experiences scale* and the *intentions to victim support scale* which together generated the data that ultimately constituted the outcome variables employed in the model. Participants' past experiences of supporting a victim were assessed because people's experiences in a specific domain have been suggested to contribute later on to their decision making, through gauging outcome expectations (Bandura, 1997). Intentions to victim support were measured since intentions to action have been proposed as the immediate predictor of the behaviour in question (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980).

Past victim support experiences scale. Past victim support was assessed with a 3-item measure whereby each item pertained to one of the three types of help. For example, the item that captured past victim consoling read: 'In the past, how often did you help someone who was being bullied to feel better about themselves?'. Items were scored on a 4-point scale as follows 1 = never, 2 = sometimes, 3 = most of the time and 4 = all of the time, with higher scores indicating a higher frequency of past victim support. The reliability test revealed a Cronbach's alpha of .75.

Intentions to victim support scale. Students' willingness to intervene on behalf of the victim in a future bullying incident was also tapped with a 3-item measure, similarly as described for the past victim support experiences scale. To provide an example, the item that assessed intentions to victim consoling read as follows: 'In future, when I witness a peer who is being bullied, I will comfort him/her'. Items were scored on a 4-point scale as follows, 1 = very unlikely, 2 = unlikely, 3 = likely and 4 = very likely. Again, each item matched one of the three types of help, and a high score indicated a higher willingness to support a victimised peer in the future. The reliability test revealed a Cronbach's alpha of .63.

A complete list of the items included in the past victim support experiences scale and the intentions to victim support scale are presented in Table 2.5 and Table 2.6, respectively.

The following example pertaining to VS consoling will facilitate understanding of the operationalisation of the outcome variables in the model. That is, *VS consoling*

was created by combining two scores, the score a participant obtained for past experiences of consoling a victim and the score he/she received for intentions to do so in the future. The remaining two outcome variables *VS addressing the bully* and *VS adult help* were composed in exactly the same way.

Table 2. 4 Response Items to Supplement the Lead Sentence in each of the Three Sub-scales[1] Pertaining to the Expected Peer Reactions and Expected Friend Reactions Scale

Response items

1. liked me a lot less, liked me a bit less – NO CHANGE - liked me a bit more, liked me a lot more

2. thought a lot I was a silly person, thought a bit I was a silly person – NO CHANGE - thought a bit I was a sensible person, thought a lot I was a sensible person

3. thought a lot I was a weak person, thought a bit I was a weak person – NO CHANGE - thought a bit I was a strong person, thought a lot I was a strong person

4. would want to spend a lot less time with me, would want to spend a bit less time with me – NO CHANGE - would want to spend a bit more time with me, would want to spend a lot more time with me

[1] consoling, addressing the bully, getting adult help

Table 2. 5 Items of the Past Victim Support Sub-scales[1]

Items
In the past, how often did you help someone who was being bullied to <u>feel better</u> about themselves?
In the past, how often did you help someone who was being bullied by trying <u>to stop the bullies</u> doing it?
In the past, how often did you help someone who was being bullied by <u>getting an adult</u> to help?

[1] consoling, addressing the bully, getting adult help

Table 2. 6 Items of the Intention to Victim Support Subs-cales[1]

Items
In future, when I witness a peer who is being bullied, I will <u>comfort him/her</u>
In future, when I witness a peer who is being bullied, I will try to <u>stop the bullies</u> doing it
In future, when I witness a peer who is being bullied, I will <u>get an adult</u> to help him/her

[1] consoling, addressing the bully, getting adult help

2.2.4 Statistical Analysis

As mentioned previously in the introduction, the proposed theoretical model (see Figure 2.1) was conceptualised to capture a wider range of victim support strategies (consoling the victim, addressing the bully, and getting adult help) and to, also, address the heterogeneity among students. In order to examine the latter aspect, the original model was tested repeatedly for girls and boys separately. Ultimately, this meant that three models were scrutinised: one for the overall participant sample, one for female participants only, and another one for male participants only.

In order to identify the relative predictive contribution of *expected friend reaction* and *expected peer reactions* on three victim support behaviours, the present study employed rigorous statistical methods. That is, structural equation modelling (SEM) was utilised to test the proposed theoretical model (see Figure 2.1). Structural equation modelling (SEM) is a statistical technique for testing theoretical constructs through analysing multivariate data (Byrne, 2012). Structural equation modelling is a combination of path analysis and factor analysis. Its benefits include the analysis of both observed and latent variables within one structural model to test postulated relationships which are grounded in theory and empirical research. SEM procedures excel traditional multivariate methods by correcting for measurement error. The construct validity and dimensionality of the models was assessed using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) with multiple likelihood robust estimation (MLR) in Mplus version 6.12 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2010). As recommended in the literature (Boduszek & Debowska, 2016), a range of goodness-of-fit indices are required to assess the construct validity and dimensionality of the models. These are: the chi-square goodness of fit statistic (χ^2), the comparative fit index (CFI; Bentler, 1990), the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI; Tucker & Lewis, 1973), the root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA; Steiger, 1990) with 90% confidence interval (90% CI), and the standardised root-mean-square residual (SRMR; Bentler, 1995). As for chi-square, this method is sensitive to sample size and therefore it is often considered to be limited in modern confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). It often remains unclear whether a significant chi-square result (which ideally should be non-significant) is due to poor model fit or due to sample size. Chi-square values will, nevertheless, be

provided for consistency reasons. The standardized root-mean-square residual (SRMR – error) and the root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA) are more reliable goodness-of-fit statistics for assessing the model fit with the actual data set. RMSEA has been regarded as the most important test statistic. It is a flexible index that relies on chi-square but takes parsimony into account and generates confidence intervals (Browne & Cudeck, 1989). SRMR is an absolute measure of fit and represents the standardised difference between the actual correlations and the predicted associations. This index decreases as the sample size and the number of parameters in the model increase (Joreskog &Sorborn, 1981). RMSEA values and SRMR values less than .05 suggest good model fit and values below .08 indicate a reasonable fit (Browne & Cudeck, 1989). CFI and TLI are incremental fit indices that indicate how well a model fits a data set compared to a baseline model, where all variables are uncorrelated. For CFI and TLI values above .95 indicate good model fit and values above .90 indicate adequate fit (Bentler, 1990; Hu & Bentler, 1999).

2.3 Results

The general aim of the present study was to investigate whether students' perceptions of peer and friend reactions to victim support behaviours would influence their future intentions to engage in provictim activities. More specifically, the study sought to test the unique effect of participants' i) expected peer reactions, and ii) expected friend reactions in predicting their intentions to three types of support: consoling the victim, address the bully/ies, and get adult help. A new theoretical model was proposed to explore the aforementioned predictions which would then answer the stated hypotheses (see Section 2.1.7). In terms of the statistical analysis, structural equation modelling was chosen to test the proposed theoretical construct. In the following paragraphs, the findings will be presented beginning with the descriptive statistics and followed by the inferential results pertaining to the overall sample model. Finally, the findings obtained from the two gender specific models will be stated.

Table 2.7 displays the means and standard deviations for all measures and the correlations between the two predictors (EPeR, EFrR) and the three sub-types of victim support, separately (consoling the victim, stopping the bully and getting adult help). Significant associations among the latent variables ranged from .11 to .72. The

positive zero order correlations between the two factors **expected friend reactions** and **expected peer reactions** varied by type of support. They were for consoling .38, for addressing the bully .52, and for getting adult help .54. Overall these moderate to large associations indicate a significant overlap between the predictors which is not surprising as both friends and general peers belong (beside the family) to children's closest environment where they play a pivotal role, day in day out. Also, the two roles may (at times) be transient or not delimited, depending on subjective perceptions or children's age-related development. However, further scrutiny of the correlations between each of the factors (friend and peer) and each subtype of victim support revealed noteworthy differences. This was most evident for consoling where the association between friend expectations and this type of support was statistically significant (.21 at $p< .01$) whereas the correlation between peer expectations and consoling was not (.07). This disparity in the associations between each predictor and the criterion variable indicates that friends and peers are (despite some statistical overlap) conceptually not identical as their impact (in this case, perceived consequences to provictim behaviour) on other psychological variables can vary. Together, this information is revealing as it reflects the underlying theoretical basis, and justifies the inclusion of the two predictors in one model while considering each of them as *unique* factors. The three subtypes of victim support (VS) were also positively associated, and correlation coefficients ranged from small to large.

Table 2.7 Descriptive Statistics and Inter-Correlations between all Variables by Type of Support.

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Gender	1									
Consoling the victim										
2. EPeR	-.06	1								
3. EFrR	.09*	.38**	1							
4. VS	.17**	.07	.21**	1						
Addressing the bully										
5. EPeR	-.07	.66**	.40**	.08*	1					
6. EFrR	.05	.43**	.72**	.21**	.52**	1				
7. VS	.04	.08	.18**	.65**	.15**	.23**	1			
Getting adult help										
8. EPeR	-.04	.50**	.30**	.04	.51**	.27**	.01	1		
9. EFrR	.10**	.40**	.50**	.12**	.34**	.53**	.02	.54**	1	
10. VS	.04	.11**	.14**	.42**	.07	.13**	.26**	.29**	.32**	1
Mean		10.01	10.96	2.49	9.97	11.01	3.03	8.85	9.67	2.79
SD		2.25	2.15	.70	2.43	2.37	1.16	2.51	2.11	1.03

Note. EPeR = Expected Peer Reactions; EFrR = Expected Friend Reactions;
VS = Victim Support. *p < .05; **p < .01.

2.3.1 Results Obtained from the Overall Sample Model

In the proposed model, expected peer reactions (EPeR) and expected friend reactions (EFrR) scores were included as exogenous latent variables (predictors) for each type of help separately (see Figure 2.2). Victim support represented the endogenous latent variable (outcome variable) specified, again, in correspondence which each sub-type of help tested. The assessment of the overall fit of the model yielded the following SEM statistics χ^2 (381) = 1355.87, p < .001, CFI = .90, TLI = .90, RMSEA = .06

[90% CI = .06/.07], and SRMR = .05 indicating an acceptable fit of the model with the present data. The standardized path coefficients for the six predictions tested in the model are presented in Figure 2.2. The results pertaining to each pathway in the model will be presented next in line with the corresponding hypothesis.

Hypothesis 1.1 tested whether **expected peer reactions** (EPeR) to specific types of victim support (consoling, addressing the bully/ies and getting adult help) would predict a participant's intention of the corresponding help behaviour.

1.1e As for *getting adult help* support, results showed (path e, Figure 2.2) that expected peer reactions to this type of help uniquely predicted a student's intention to enact this particular behaviour (significant at $p < .01$). This finding confirmed the prediction of hypothesis 1.1e suggesting that participants' support actions in terms of approaching a teacher for help are dependent upon their anticipated peer responses towards getting adult help in a bullying conflict.

1.1c As for the peer related pathway c (path c, Figure 2.2), results revealed that expected peer reactions did not emerge as a significant predictor of students' intentions to support a victimised peer by *addressing their perpetrator/s*. However, a closer inspection of the zero order correlation between EPeR and addressing the bully suggested a significant (albeit small) association between these two variables ($r = .15$ at $p < .01$). Yet, according to the rather conservative analysis in the present study with SEM techniques, hypothesis 1.1c could not be confirmed.

1.1a With regard to *consoling the victim* EPeR did not predict students' future intentions to provide emotional support to victims of bullying. As illustrated in Figure 2.2, path a was statistically non-significant which means that the prediction in hypothesis 1.1a was not met.

In sum, the model results show that of the three hypothesised peer related associations (1.1 $_{a/c/e}$) only the prediction pertaining to the request of adult help support (hypothesis 1.1e) was confirmed.

Hypothesis 1.2 tested whether **expected friend reactions** (EFrR) to the three specified types of victim help (by consoling, addressing the bully/ies and getting adult help) would predict a participant's intention of the corresponding support behaviour. SEM results show that irrespective of the subtypes of victim support tested, expected friend reactions emerged as a significant predictor of the three help behaviours (see Figure 2.2).

1.2b Findings revealed that path b emerged as the strongest association among the friend related links in the model (significant at p < .001, Figure 2.2), indicating that perceptions of reactions from friends to *consoling* a victim play a major role in predicting children's willingness to engage in emotional helping behaviours.

1.2d With regard to support via *addressing the bully* (path d, Figure 2.2) model results showed that expected friend reaction uniquely contributed to students' intentions of this victim support strategy (significant at p < .01).

1.2f As for the third sub-type of support investigated, which was *getting adult help*, again a significant relationship emerged between the corresponding latent variables indicating that students' perceived friend consequences significantly predicted their intentions to ask a teacher (or other trusted adult) for help (significant at p < .01).

Taken together, all three predictions pertaining to hypothesis 1.2 $_{b/d/f}$ were confirmed and suggest that students' provictim behaviours are substantially influenced by the perceived views of significant other people, specifically by their friends.

Hypothesis 1.3

As outlined earlier in the introduction of this study, children's decision of whether to offer their support to a victimised peer or not is also determined by their perceptions of what significant other people, including peers and friends, expect of them in a specific situation. Building on this knowledge it was hypothesised that the pathways related to friends (b, d and f; Figure 2.2) would be stronger than those related to ordinary peers (path a, c and e; Figure 2.2). Put differently, it was proposed that expected friend reactions (EFrR – consoling, EFrR – addressing bully, EFrR - adult help) would be a stronger predictor of the corresponding victim support behaviours than expected peer reactions. Hypothesis 1.3 was confirmed as results showed that irrespective of type of support, the associations between expected friend reactions and victim support were stronger than those between expected peer reactions and victim support. In terms of getting adult help both expected friend reactions *and* expected peer reactions significantly contributed to the model. Expected friend reactions, however, was a slightly better predictor than expected peer reactions. For the pupils in the current study, this suggests that a friend's opinion or anticipated consequence matters more than that of a typical peer. Overall, this means that with regard to the victim defending context, students seem more concerned about being disliked or rejected by their friends than by their peers.

The smallest difference between the associations compared in the current model were observed for 'getting adult help' support between path e and path f (.26 – peers and .28 – friends, respectively; both significant at p < .01). Especially with regard to consoling and addressing the bully, results suggest that *friends* play a more important role than *general peers* in children's decision making to provide support to a victimised peer. Although, 'getting adult help' also seems to be salient in some regards.

As for the amount of variance accounted for by each predictor in the outcome variable, R^2 values indicated that the model explains 9% of the variance for consoling, 8% for stopping the bully, and 23% for getting adult help. So far, consistent across all three types of help, the model showed that students' expected *friend* reactions were positively associated with victim support behaviours. This indicates that perceived negative friend reactions predicted weaker intentions in students to support a victimised peer.
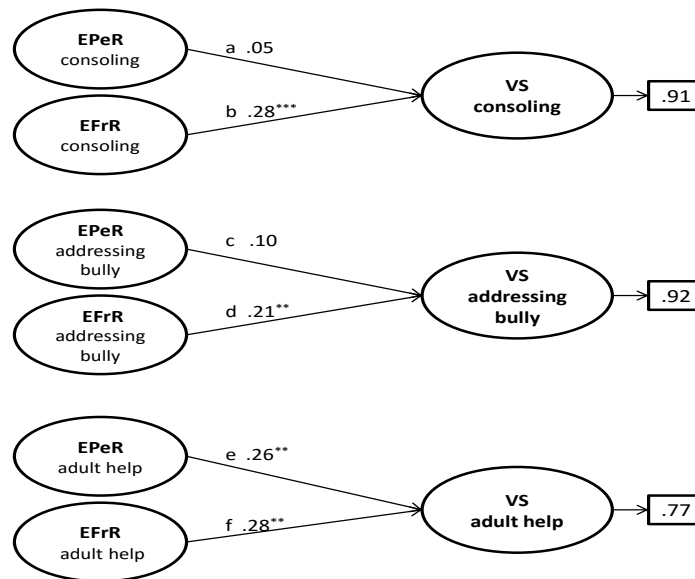
Figure 2. 2 Structural equation model of perceived peer/friend reactions predicting three types of victim support. Path coefficients represent standardised values.
Note: EPeR = Expected Peer Reactions; EFrR = Expected Friend Reactions; VS = Victim Support. a – f = pathways; **p < .01. ***p < .001.

2.3.2 Results Obtained from the Gender Specific Models

Hypothesis 2: Gender moderation test

To investigate gender differences, the author followed Thornberg and Jungert (2013) and tested the original model for boys and girls separately (see Figure 2.3 and Figure 2.4, respectively). Model-fit statistics for the boys' sample (n = 333) χ^2 (381) = 853.91, p < .001, CFI = .90, TLI = .90, RMSEA = .06 [90% CI = .06/.07], SRMR = .06 and the girls' sample (n = 297) χ^2 (381) = 1038.33, p < .001, CFI = .90, TLI = .90, RMSEA = .08 [90% CI = .07/.08], SRMR = .07 dropped slightly, but they still indicated an acceptable fit with the current data set. As for the gender specific analyses, the question was whether the predictions observed in the original model would also be evident for boys and girls, independently. Hence, model fit indices are relevant although of secondary importance in terms of the gender moderation test.

Hypothesis 2 proposed that the results obtained with the original model would be moderated by gender. There was no prediction made in terms of the direction of the findings for boys or girls due to the limited and inconsistent literature regarding *bystander outcome expectancies* for the sub-types of support specified in the present study. The standardised path coefficients for the boys' sample are illustrated in Figure 2.3 and findings revealed that the pattern of significant positive relationships, which was found in the overall model, was precisely replicated. That is, irrespective of the three subtypes of victim support tested, for boys, expected friend reactions significantly predicted the corresponding help behaviours.

In terms of the associations pertaining to general peers' reactions, only the prediction concerning *adult help support* reached statistical significance. As already observed for the overall sample (Figure 2.2), both expected friend reactions *and* expected peer reactions significantly contribute to the model. However, expected friend reactions was (again) a slightly better predictor of intentions to get adult support than expected peer reactions. Overall, this indicates that for boys their friends' responses to victim defending appear to matter more in this context than potential disapproval/approval from neutral peers.
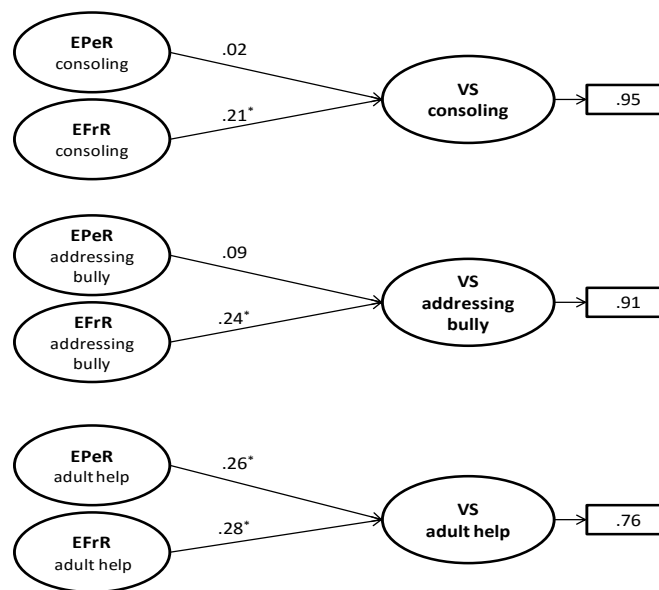
Figure 2.3 Boys. Structural equation model of perceived peer/friend reactions predicting three types of victim support. Path coefficients represent standardised values.
Note: EPeR = Expected Peer Reactions; EFrR= Expected Friend Reactions; VS = Victim Support; *p < .05.

As can be seen in Figure 2.4, for the girls' sample only one significant correlation emerged which belonged to support solicited by consoling the victim. More specifically, in the girls' model expected friend reactions for victim consoling emerged as a significant predictor of this subtype of help. This finding is remarkable as SEM results demonstrated that this relationship was not only considerably stronger (.34 significant at p < .05, Figure 2.4) than that observed in the boys' model (.21 significant at p < .05, Figure 2.4), but it also turned out to be the strongest association among all the predictions tested in this study. With regard to support solicited by addressing the bully and requesting adult help, the findings revealed that girls are less affected by their friends' consequences compared to their male counterparts. Interestingly, the victim support prediction pattern observed in the boys' model did not hold in the girls' model.
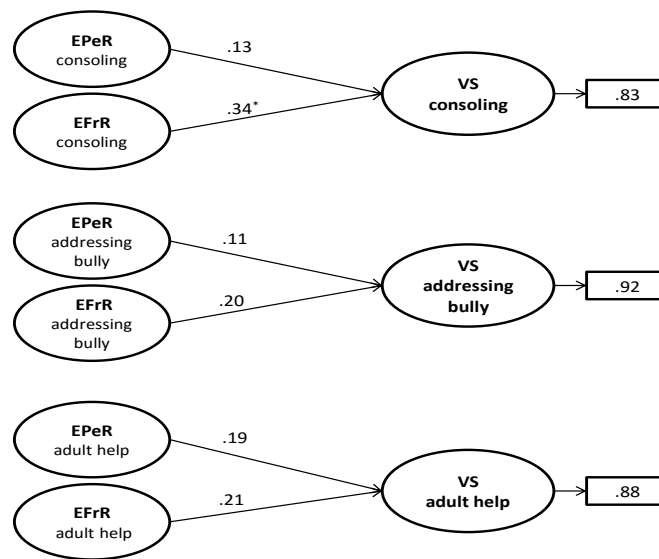
Figure 2.4 Girls. Structural equation model of perceived peer/friend reactions predicting three types of victim support. Path coefficients represent standardised values.

Note: EPeR = Expected Peer Reactions; EFrR= Expected Friend Reactions; VS = Victim Support; [*]p < .05.

The findings from the gender specific tests have shown that boys and girls do differ substantially in aspects related to perceptions of friend and (partly) peer reactions. Taken together, hypothesis 2 was confirmed as analyses revealed that gender moderated the predictions tested in the original model (Figure 2.2).

The proportion of variance explained by the predictors in the outcome variables regarding the two gender specific models were for boys, 5% for consoling, 9% for addressing the bully, and 24% for getting adult help. The percentages for girls were as follows 17% for consoling, 8% for addressing the bully, and 12% for getting adult help. That is, in the boys' model the highest proportion of variance accounted for by the predictors was observed for getting adult help support whereas in the girls' model the largest proportion was found for consoling the victim.

In summary, the results of the present investigation indicate that perceptions of negative consequences from friends (if defending a victim by one of the three strategies tested) pose an important barrier to students' helping behaviours. With regard to perceived disapproval from neutral peers, this factor was particularly salient in predicting victim support by requesting adult help. According to the theoretical model tested in the present study, students' fear of negative outcomes from friends appears to be more of a concern than their worries regarding peer

disapproval. Moreover, the findings obtained from the boys' and the girls' model suggest that gender does moderate pupils' decision-making processes in terms of the barriers identified in this study. It is important to acknowledge, that boys and girls must not be regarded as a homogeneous group when investigating their provictim behaviours. The next section moves on to discuss the current findings alongside their theoretical and practical implications while also acknowledging the shortcomings herein.

2.4 Discussion

The main aim of the present study was to explore whether students' perceived peer and friend consequences from provictim actions would pose a barrier to future victim helping behaviours, which were specified as three separate types of support (consoling the victim, addressing the bully/ies, and getting adult help). To test the proposed hypotheses, a theoretical model was created that allowed an analysis of the relevant predictions with structural equation modelling techniques. The discussion of the model results will be structured around the hypotheses (an outline of the hypotheses can be found in Section 2.1.7).

Hypothesis 1.2

The most interesting finding generated by the theoretical model relates to the set of **friend** related hypotheses 1.2 $_{b/d/f}$ which tested whether **expected friend reactions** (EFrR) to the three specified types of victim help (by consoling, addressing the bully/ies and getting adult help) would predict pupils' intentions of the corresponding support behaviour. Indeed, the results showed that perceived friend reactions to specific subtypes of victim support uniquely predicted intentions to each corresponding helping behaviour studied. That is, a clear pattern emerged from the model showing that the proposed associations, between expected friend reactions and victim support, were significant across all three support strategies: consoling, addressing the bully/ies, and getting adult help. This result is revealing. It suggests that whether bystanders intervene on behalf of the victim may depend on whether they expect approving or disapproving reactions from their friends. In other words, this finding indicates that children who expect positive reactions from friends (e.g. respect), increased liking or friendship consolidation will be more inclined to defend a victimised peer. Conversely, students are less likely to offer support to victims

when they perceive that siding with a 'weak' peer may lead to friends' disapproval and could possibly damage their social role within the friend network. What these findings indicate, is that if children fear some kind of social costs such as being liked less or being regarded as a 'weak person' by friends, or even a loss of friendship they will most likely deny support to the victim.

From developmental psychology we know about the importance of friends (and peers) during the adolescent years (e.g. Brechwald & Prinstein, 2011; Mash & Wolfe, 2007). Thus, maintaining friendship bonds as well as maintaining one's social standing in a group of friends becomes key. It can gain adolescents highly valued rewards (e.g. acceptance, a sense of belonging). As noted in the empirical literature, friendship is related to morality and helping, particularly when the victim happens to be a friend (e.g. Forsberg et al., 2014). Also, friends have been found to serve as moral role models which then leads to adaptation processes to match one's friends behaviour (Caravita, Sijtsema, Rambaran & Gini, 2014) including his/her bullying attitudes (Pozzoli & Gini, 2013). Among already established friendships, Pozzoli and Gini (2013) found that friends shared a sense of helping responsibility and (anti-)bullying attitudes.

Furthermore, some evidence has suggested that pre-adolescents gradually assimilate with their friends in terms of defending behaviour over time (Sijtsema et al., 2014) and that there is a tendency among defenders to befriend peers who are similar in this behaviour (Ruggieri et al., 2013). The present findings underscore the aforementioned research, that has identified friendship as an important factor which can influence bystanders' victim support behaviour. Pupils tend to deny help to the victim not only when they happen to be friends with the bully/ies in order to maintain their friendship and not disapprove their friends' actions, but also when the victim happens to not be their friend (Forsberg et al., 2014). It seems that the friendship factor remains operant even if students believe that bullying is unacceptable. Furthermore, Forsberg and colleagues (Forsberg et al., 2014) noted that some children become distressed when they empathise with the victim and feel a moral obligation to help, on one hand, but may fear friend disapproval on the other. This is a problem and must not be underestimated by both psychologists and school practitioners. Not intervening to reduce victimisation may leave not only victims, but also an unknown number of witnessing bystanders in distress. The author speculates,

that pupils who feel emotionally distressed will not be able to concentrate their minds on the academic subjects. This, in turn, may compromise both their academic attainment and their psychological wellbeing in the long term.

Hypothesis 1.1

Moving on to **peer** effects, a set of hypotheses 1.1 $_{a/c/e}$ tested whether **expected peer reactions** (EPeR) to specific types of victim support (consoling, addressing the bully/ies and getting adult help) would predict a participant's intention of the corresponding help behaviour. With regard to peer related outcomes, the model results revealed a significant effect for 'getting adult help' support (hypothesis 1.1 e). The outcome suggests that perceived negative peer reactions predicted weaker intentions in students to approach a teacher for help. This result confirms previous findings by Pöyhönen and collaborators (2012) who reported that students who anticipate a negative outcome from peers (if supporting the victim) such as a decline in reputation refrain from helping. Conversely, those who expected approval from the peer group and a boost in their social standing would engage in victim support behaviours. Yet, in their study (like in the great majority of victim defending research) it remained unclear which specific type of victim support participants would choose to enact as, Pöyhönen and colleagues (2012) combined different ways of helping into a compound defending variable. This approach obscured specific details related to particular dimensions of victim support. By subdividing 'generic help' in the present study, analyses generated more detailed information about the beliefs that students hold towards each subtype of help. In other words, with the current model the author was able to elucidate that expected peer reactions did not predict victim support by consoling and addressing the bully. Why these two pathways (predicted in hypothesis 1.1a and 1.1c, respectively), did not reach statistical significance in the proposed model remains unanswered and leaves room for speculation.

Firstly, it is possible that pupils fear to become ridiculed by peers if they seek teacher support, as this may bring about the reputation of a tell-tale among classmates. This can then lead to, additional, aggravated consequences such as subsequent exclusion from the peer group. For example, Thornberg (2010) found that reporting peer aggression to a teacher was associated with social consequences by bystanders since

this was regarded as squealing. Thus, telling a teacher about the problems opposed the peer culture's social norms. In fact, in Thornberg's study some children expressed their fear of being excluded from play and the fear of being attacked themselves, as a consequence of requesting teacher help in a peers' conflict.

This interpretation ties in with psychological theorising which proposes that one of the fundamental driving sources of human behaviour is the need to be accepted and recognised by others (Maslow, 1943; Tay & Diener, 2011). Moreover, having enjoyable relationships with peers and others has been postulated in social psychology as a basic human need namely, the need for relatedness. This has been explained as an individual's desire to build and sustain caring bonds and positive alliances with other people, that are characterised by emotional gratuity and love (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Deci & Ryan, 2000). With this in mind, it is no surprise that children and adolescents are greatly concerned about at least two aspects a) what other valued people may think about them and b) the potential consequences that may arise when one's behaviour deviates from others' expectations. The mere thought of being rejected by peers or (even worse) by one's friends can be very disturbing if 'belonging' is what an individual strives for. It becomes clear that to satisfy this important need, children will be inclined to conform with the expectations of others, and with the prevailing social norm in their immediate environment (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980), be it pro-social or anti-social.

Another possible explanation could be that students tend to refrain from requesting adult support as they might believe they are capable enough and should therefore deal with disagreements among peers autonomously (e.g. Nucci & Nucci, 1982). Indeed, it has been suggested that early adolescent development implicates an increased desire for autonomy and peer orientation, and it seems that concerns about peer approval/disapproval peak at this developmental stage (Eccles & Midgley, 1989).

The fact that one of the three peer related pathways (getting adult help) in the model was significant and the other two (consoling, addressing the bully) were not is a key finding in this study. It provides support for the present theoretical approach to consider each subtype of help as a conceptually separate construct, instead of amalgamating help into one single generic factor. 'Getting adult help' seems to

evoke greater salience in the current participant sample than the other two strategies of victim support tested. This unique detail would have been obscured if all sub-types of help were collapsed into a single construct, that is *generic victim support*. These results are important as they raise further questions about why getting adult help appears to stand out from other types of support.

In contrast to the three dimensions of victim support in the present study, Reijentjes and colleagues (2016) included the option of *seeking adult help* together with consoling in one factor which they conceptualised as 'victim-oriented defending'. Although, they did acknowledge that requesting adult help cannot be considered as active emotional support for the victim. The present findings highlight that adult help plays a significant role in the victim support context. For example, in incidents where the perpetrators are extremely aggressive and consoling ('victim-oriented' defending) and stopping the bully ('bully-oriented' defending) may be unsafe to pursue, asking an adult for help becomes crucial for victims and bystanders, alike. Not only will the victim be helped (Smith, Talamelli, Cowie, Naylor & Chauhan, 2004) but it can also be a relief for bystanders, who may feel distressed by an inner conflict when they would like to help but feel unable to act upon their empathy or moral attitude. Therefore, turning to an adult for support can help resolve this moral dilemma and perhaps motivate passive bystanders to become defenders. It is for future researchers to continue investigations into the uniqueness of this helping dimension.

Please note that the issues addressed in the following three paragraphs of this section will relate equally to friends and peers.

The results obtained from the theoretical model (see Figure 2.2) are important and confirm both the notion that a person's behaviour is motivated by perceived expectations of significant people in the environment (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980), and they also underscore Bandura's idea that outcome expectancy affects human behaviour via intentions to the corresponding actions (Bandura, 1977, 1986). In terms of the former theoretical aspect, the present findings corroborate one of the key components in Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behaviour, which highlights the role of normative beliefs that an individual holds and which ultimately contributes to his/her actions. As for the latter framework, the result provides support for the

concept of outcome expectancies in affecting students' intentions to three types of victim help. With reference to the literature (e.g. from health related behaviours; Corcoran & Rutledge, 1989) that has demonstrated the causal contribution of outcome expectations on self-efficacy, the present findings are an important share to current knowledge in this area as they emphasise once more the powerful role of perceived outcomes.

As for pro-social attitudes, the present study also aids understanding of earlier research that showed that bystanders deny support to victims in spite of holding pro-victim attitudes (O'Connell et al., 1999; Atlas & Pepler, 1998). Even though attitudes were not a factor in the present model, it is likely that in the cognitive decision-making process, students' fear of negative outcomes from helping overrides personal factors such as morally sound attitudes. Moreover, it is possible that perceived negative outcomes also overrule other personal factors such as empathy and self-efficacy beliefs for provictim activities. This is an important issue for future research to consider, and further attention should be payed to the investigation of competing contributing factors (social versus personal factors) in the prediction of bystander responses to peer victimisation.

It becomes evident that victim defending is a complex undertaking. To unravel why some pupils engage in victim support and others do not is rather difficult to work out. Therefore, an array of factors need to be taken into account. For instance, potential consequences from peers/friends may also depend on the defenders' actual social standing in the peer group as social risks seem to be considerably lower if a student already enjoys a high social reputation (e.g. Reijentjes et al., 2016). Yet, this is not to say that popular students always behave morally correct. Rather, whether popular students engage in provictim versus antisocial behaviours might also depend on the social reward system in class, whether peer support is rewarded or punished. Evidence suggests, in classrooms where bullying is penalized, defending may be a vehicle that popular students could utilise to uphold their high reputation (e.g. Peets at al., 2015). In contrast, in a class where bullying is well accepted, students may refrain from defending as they might fear losing their social status in the peer group. In support of the latter line of reasoning, longitudinal data have shown that victim support led to a decline in peer-perceived liking (Meter & Card, 2015). As suggested by the authors, it is likely that children may well be aware of such potentially

negative consequences which may consequently fuel their worries of being disliked, and their fears of social reputation damage or ostracism. While Meter and Card's study focussed on ordinary peers, such anxieties may be even stronger pronounced in terms of students' perceptions of friend disapproval, compared to anticipated social disapproval from neutral classmates.

Hypothesis 1.3

With regard to the comparison between expected consequences from friends and expected consequences from general peers, it was hypothesised that the friend factor would have a more profound impact on participants' victim support intentions than the peer factor. The model results were in agreement with the prediction. That is, expected friend reactions was a stronger predictor of victim help than expected peer reactions irrespective of type of support. Even for the most salient helping strategy, which was "getting adult help", and where both factors emerged as significant predictors of this behaviour, the friend path (path f in the model, Figure 2.2) was stronger than that for peers (path e in the model, Figure 2.2). This result is not surprising from a *relationship status* point of view as friendships are generally higher valued than ordinary peer relationships. The present findings are consistent with the idea that motivation to sustain friendship is likely to yield favouritism toward friends versus non-friends (Keller, 2004; Hoffman, 2000) as an individual may feel a greater moral obligation to a friend than to other peers. In the specific context of bystander engagement in victim support, the superiority of friends over general peers is an important new insight.

There is hardly any knowledge on how individual perceptions of friend and peer (dis-)approval (related to provictim actions) may affect bystander helping behaviours in a bullying incident. So far, previous evidence only showed that bystanders are more willing to intervene and help when the victim happens to be a friend (e.g. Forsberg, et al., 2014; Chen et al., 2016). Evidently, children seem to command a clear sense of responsibility in incidences where a friend needs their help, since this is an explicit factual situation. In contrast, in the case of *perceptions of friend consequences,* a child's reasoning is based merely on his/her cognitions. Cognitions, however, can be ambiguous or even contradictory, or simply false. That is, students' minds may be preoccupied with questions such as, 'what costs or rewards does my behaviour bear

in terms of the existing friendship?'. Such cognitive decision processes are difficult to tap. This is why the current results need to be interpreted with caution until future replications may (or may not) confirm the present findings.

To the author's knowledge, cost-reward examinations have not yet been conducted in psychology research with scenarios that involved mutual friends as witnesses of a bullying victimisation incident. According to the *cost-reward model of helping behaviour* (Piliavin, Dovidio, Gaertner & Clark, 1981) people typically aim to maximise personal gains and minimise losses. In other words, they may intervene on behalf of the victim if they expect either low intervention costs or high intervention rewards, or high non-intervention costs. Applied to the expected friend reactions factor in the present study (as an example), this could mean that pupils witnessing a bullying conflict would evaluate the following: whether friend disapproval was unlikely to occur from helping the victim (low costs); whether helping the victim would result in even greater likability by one's friend/s (high reward); or whether denying help to the victim would lead to friend disapproval which could pose a threat to the existing friendship (high non-intervention costs). Studies that have tested this cost-reward model mainly involved adult participants in experimentally manipulated emergency incidences who did not know each other personally (e.g. Fischer et al., 2011). Familiarity with other bystanders (be it friends or classmates), however, may differently influence a witness' reaction in a bullying situation due to stronger emotional arousal or prior knowledge (Forsberg et al., 2014). Thus, future research could address this issue and investigate the role of friends, the role of familiar peers (i.e. classmates) and that of unfamiliar peers (children from other classrooms) in predicting victim support from a cost-reward analysis perspective.

With regard to the role of 'relationship status' in the victim defending context the present outcome broadly mirrors some of the findings by Bellmore and collaborators (2012). These authors reported that children were less likely to help out if both the victim and another witnessing bystander were not a friend. Even though the present study must not be compared one-to-one with the aforementioned authors' research, the central message seems consistent namely, relationship status (friends and non-friends) can determine a bystander's behavioural intentions in a bullying situation. Moreover, from this finding it seems plausible to infer that friends belong to the group of 'significant other people' whereas ordinary peers may not automatically fall

into this category. As reported by Rigby and Johnson (2005), children's beliefs that their friends expected them to support a victim of bullying significantly determined their motivation to defend. Hence, this aspect underscores, again, Ajzen and Fishbein's (1980) theory of planned behaviour which suggests that a person's perception, of what significant others expect from them, significantly predicts intentions to enact a particular behaviour (in this case, to provide support to a victim - or not). Indeed, friends appear to play a very important role in children's decision-making process. Although, from a general peer's point of view, this fact can also lead to non-helping. There is some evidence suggesting that hierarchies within the school (i.e. teachers as school authorities) and the classroom can evoke a responsibility transfer in bystanders. At classroom level, responsibility may be left to a victim's friends, upon which not intervening is easier to justify (Thornberg, 2010). In other words, some witnessing students deem victim's friends as the first source of support in an incident, and therefore they may strip off their moral obligation to intervene. Thornberg (2010) coined this effect 'social-hierarchy-dependent morality' which can indeed restrain helping behaviours and lead to a loss of responsibility on part of the students.

Overall, the model result corroborates the influential role of friends by showing that the importance of friends exceeds that of ordinary peers. Researchers must be aware that victim defending cannot solely be explained by an individual's perceived friends' consequences. However, previous research has shown that bullies have a walk-over in groups characterised by low-quality friendships and a lack of cohesion (Garandeau & Cillessen, 2006). More recent evidence additionally emphasised the importance of quality relationships for victim defending in general, irrespective of the relationship status (friends or non-friends; Thornberg, Wänström, Hong & Espelage, 2017). The authors reported that in classrooms where student-student relationship quality was high (characterised for instance by kindness and caring attributes) pupils were more inclined to engage in victim defending even when their moral disengagement[1] was high.

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[1] According to the social-cognitive theory of human agency (Bandura, 1999, 2002), moral disengagement refers to socio-cognitive processes through which people may disengage from humane and moral acts and instead engage in inhumane behaviours without feeling guilty, remorseful or ashamed.

2.4.1 Gender as a Moderator of the Relationship Between Outcome Expectancies and Subtypes of Victim Support

With regard to moderating variables hypothesis 2 proposed that the effects revealed by the original model, for the overall participant sample (see Figure 2.2), would differ as a function of gender. The direction of potential effects was not specified due to the limited knowledge base on the factors included in the current study. To investigate whether gender would moderate the initially generated outcomes, the theoretical model was repeatedly tested for boys and girls separately. As expected the gender specific analyses revealed a great variation between boys' and girls' intentions to intervene on behalf of a victimised peer. Irrespective of the three types of support tested, for boys **expected friend reactions** was predictive of the corresponding support behaviours. In other words, the outcome suggested that boys who expected that supporting a victim may lead to decreased liking by one's friends, were significantly more likely to disengage from all three sub-types of support. The same was true for the relationship between **expected peer reactions** and getting adult help. This particular helping strategy stood out in the boys' model (see Figure 2.3) as the only path to reach statistical significance. For boys, the findings from the moderation test mirror precisely the pattern of results obtained initially for the whole participant sample in the original model (see Figure 2.2). This pattern, however, did not hold for the girls' results (Figure 2.4) where only one significant association emerged namely, **expected friend reactions** significantly predicted victim consoling. What is more, this association was considerably stronger for girls than the analogue relationship observed for the male counterparts.

This finding is important as it highlights the heterogeneity among pupils, and raises our awareness about substantial differences between boys' and girls' perceptions of friend and peer consequences in the victim defending context. The results of the present study cannot be compared one-to-one to previous research since, to the authors knowledge, this is the first study that tested perceived consequences from friend and peers in relation to distinct sub-types of victim help. However, the moderation effect evident in the girls' sample for '*consoling the victim*' is consistent with trends in the extant literature which evidenced that girls are more likely to engage in emotional victim support than boys (Reijentjes et al., 2016). For instance,

among the victim-oriented defenders (included consoling and getting adult help) Reijentjes and colleagues found that over 80% were girls. This tendency has been attributed to girls' gender specific norms, and stronger nurturing and psychological caring characteristics (Eisenberg & Mussen, 1989). Conversely, in the bully-oriented subgroup (stop the bully/ies' harassment) the majority of defenders were boys, who tend to primarily confront the perpetrators and refrain from comforting the victim. These explanations tie in with other evidence which emphasised both girls' higher inclination to defend victims (Thornberg & Jungert, 2014) and their higher degree of basic moral sensitivity[2] which contrasts boys' higher moral disengagement[3] (Thornberg & Jungert, 2013).

Based on the present findings, it generally seems that boys are more concerned about potential negative consequences from friends and peers if they anticipate victim support, than girls. To speculate, it is possible that girls' motivation for prosocial behaviour is rooted in an underlying weaker concern about how friends and peers may react to their provictim actions. This could, indeed, be one of the reasons why substantially more girls than boys have been nominated as defenders (by their peers) in previous research (Goossens et al., 2006; Salmivalli et al., 1996; Gini et al.,2007).

Whereas most researchers, with very few exceptions, conceptualised defending as a generic construct and regarded defenders as a homogeneous group (e.g. Pöyhönen et al., 2012), they might have underestimated the heterogeneity among bystanders (see Reijentjes et al., 2016). The subdivision of generic victim support in the present study was highly important, as it allowed the author to capture unique gender effects dependent on specific support strategies. The proposed theoretical model accounted better for the heterogeneity in bystanders than previous investigations. More specifically, the outcome revealed that victim support devoted by approaching an adult for help, seemed to evoke a particular salience among boys. This sub-type of support was the only one that generated a significant association with both predictors, expected friend *and* expected peer reactions. The finding is particularly

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[2] Moral sensitivity has been defined as the ability to construe other people's feelings and reactions, to perceive empathy with others and make inferences from their behaviours in intricate situations (Rest, Narvaez, Bebeau & Thoma, 1999).
[3] According to the social-cognitive theory of human agency (Bandura, 1999; 2002), moral disengagement refers to socio-cognitive processes through which people may disengage from humane and moral acts and instead engage in inhumane behaviours without feeling guilty, remorseful or ashamed.

interesting as it indicates that requesting teacher support in a bullying conflict seems a problematic step for boys to enact. This variance, between boys and girls, is consistent with the gender effect recently reported by Boulton and associates (2017). The authors found that more boys than girls would abstain from telling a teacher about bullying experiences, if this led to peer disapproval, even if it would stop the harassment. These results are striking as they provide an indication of the degree to which boys seem to be concerned about negative consequences from friends and peers (e.g. fear of being disliked, being regarded as a week person) as a result of disclosing bullying experiences.

Furthermore, the gender differences observed here resonate with earlier studies on peer support schemes which reported that the majority of peer supporters, as well as students who participate in such services, were girls (Cowie, 1998; Naylor & Cowie, 1999). This literature also showed that pupils who were part of a peer support system received unpleasant comments from non-involved peers, in particular from male students. It is possible that requesting help from a teacher poses the greatest risk to male students for reputation damage, in comparison to the other two helping strategies tested (consoling the victim and addressing the bully). In an attempt to explain such gender effects, some researchers argue that most boys intend to convey a masculine and powerful self-image which can be threatened, in their own view, if they would engage in provictim activities (Peterson & Rigby, 1999; Cowie, 2000). Asking a teacher for help, in particular, seems to counteract the role of a strong and admirable male that boys may wish to represent. Nevertheless, regardless of the gender differences detected, the author argues that calling upon a teacher's support is certainly a valuable option for more anxious or less assertive children, and for those who may lack self-efficacy for active intervening.

Further on peer effects, some evidence suggested that boys show a higher susceptibility to peer group influences than girls (e.g. Sim & Koh, 2003). Again elsewhere, it has been argued that the susceptibility or resistance to peer influence can also depend on factors such as the type of behaviour in question (i.e. prosocial, malicious, or neutral) and/or on the nature of the relationship between the influenced person and the influencer (e.g. intimacy, support; see review by Brechwald & Prinstein, 2011).

In contrast, some observations have pointed to within-gender variations such as boys being sensitive and caring, and girls who can be rude and non-empathic (Thornberg, 2010). Therefore, researchers need to be cautious in their interpretation of gender patterns as these may reflect only a tendency of a specific behaviour and not a universal trait. In fact, Thornberg (2010) also stresses the importance of the situational context which can determine an individual's acute actions. As an example from his study, even typically emphatic girls were found to deny help to a peer in an acute bystander situation. It remains for future research to investigate in more depth children's proclivity to victim support and test for gender disparity.

Irrespective of gender differences, it is also important to acknowledge another aspect that can make defending very problematic for pupils namely, the social risk that may emerge from intervening since victims often carry a social stigma (Teräsahjo & Salmivalli, 2003). Indeed, this problem was also exemplified in Boulton's (2013a) "associating with victims is risky" phenomenon which demonstrated that students avoid befriending a victimised peer. In Boulton's research, pupils feared that being associated with a victim of bullying may results in being targeted themselves. Building on this notion, it can mean that pupils' beliefs about whether their friends (and peers) would agree with provictim behaviours, and protect them if they become a target, may operate as both *a barrier* or *a catalyst* for undertaking provictim actions.

Albeit the new insights from the present study, researchers advocated to also consider the interplay of personal factors (e.g. attitudes towards bullying, coping strategies) and social variables (e.g. perceived expectations from significant others) from a child's microsystem in order to gain a better understanding of bystander behaviours in bullying situations (Pozzoli & Gini, 2013). The current findings evidently highlight the weight of social factors (expected friend/peer approval or disapproval) that can prevent or enable personal factors (e.g. empathy, self-efficacy, prosocial attitudes) to manifest in bystanders' actual behaviour. This notion has been proposed by the child-by-environment viewpoint suggesting that behaviour is the result of interactive effects of an individual's personal characteristics (e.g. empathy) and the context (e.g. peer acceptance; Pozzoli & Gini, 2013; Hodges, Malone & Perry, 1997; Ladd, 2003). In other words, prosocial behaviour may be best

understood when taking into account the interaction between disposition and environmental context (Graziano, Habashi, Scheese & Tobin, 2007; Bandura, 1986).

Taken together, the findings of the present study contribute to the broader knowledge on students' complex decision-making processes by underscoring Boulton et al.'s (2017) research that yielded the first understanding on how adolescents trade off the anticipated personal costs (in their case, peer disapproval) against the most valued collective outcome, which is stopping bullying perpetration in school.

2.4.2 Critical Evaluation

The present study has a number of strength and weaknesses which should be considered in the interpretation of the results and will be addressed next.

The current findings are based on cross-sectional data which do not allow causal relations between the predictors and the outcome variable even though the interpretation of the direction of effects is logically consistent with the underpinning theory (theory of planned behaviour by Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980 and the effect of outcome expectancy by Bandura, 1977; 1986). Due to the key role that friends have on children's social wellbeing, it is theoretically sound to infer that expected friend reactions influence pupils' decisions whether to help a victimised peer, or not. However, it is left for future research to test the causal direction of effects more reliably. That is, a replication of the current research would benefit from a longitudinal design. With a wider time schedule researchers could investigate how students' perceived negative consequences would manifest over time in actual (un-) favourable behaviours. This would also allow elaboration on whether, and how, victim support (or non-support) experiences encountered across time may affect students' initial perceptions in this regard.

The present study relied solely on self-report measures in order to tap the relevant variables, which can be viewed as another limitation. While self-reports are viewed as inexpensive, least obtrusive and most efficient, the data can easily be inflated by social desirability bias as individuals tend to make self-favouring attributions (Cornell & Bandyopadhyay, 2010). Nevertheless, given that participants were asked to provide their subjective perceptions which they may not necessarily express

publicly, self-reports are a valuable method that seems appropriate for the assessment of the constructs studied (Newmann, Murray & Lussier, 2001; Newmann, 2008). Yet, it cannot be ruled out that intentionally exaggerated answers and/or careless marking by some participants may have inflated the estimates. The author tried to allay social desirability bias by pointing out during the assessment that only honest responses are helpful as they can reliably inform effective anti-bullying interventions. It is also possible that some associations are heightened due to a potential effect of shared method variance (Cornell & Bandyopadhyay, 2010). That said, one of the strength of this study certainly is the employment of *structural equation modelling* (SEM) which is regarded as a very conservative and rigorous analytical method that excels other traditional multivariate test (i.e. multiple regression; Byrne, 2012). Subjecting the current data set to SEM scrutiny allows the author to be more confident about the obtained results as this procedure corrects for measurement error. A robust analysis is crucial as subsequent studies, certainly the experimental project in this thesis (Chapter 3), can then be built on more reliable and meaningful empirical grounds.

As for the employed measures, the present study assessed participants' intentions and not their actual victim support behaviour. A note of caution is due here as some research has shown that actual victim support from bystanders is less frequent than reported intentions of helping behaviours (Pepler & Craig, 1995). However, this does not imply that intentions to action are negligible. As suggested by Ajzen (1991) past experiences with a specific behaviour affects not only later intentions, but also actual performance of that behaviour, even more so when a person is influenced by the corresponding attitudes and a degree of social pressure.

Referring further to the utilised measures, even though most reliability coefficients suggested very good internal consistency, for two of the scales the (past victim support experiences scale and intentions to victim support scale) Cronbach's alpha was somewhat weaker. Each of these scales consisted of only three items which leaves only a single item to capture a specific support behaviour (consoling, addressing the bully, and getting adult help). Thus, future research replicating the present study could strengthen the results by improving the single item measures and include additional items that capture each of the three victim support dimensions. Despite the aforementioned single-item measures the theoretical model still allowed

a very detailed assessment of the three victim support dimensions, which is another strength of the current study. More specifically, the model generated effects that are unique to specific types of victim help which clearly demonstrates that victim support is not *one general construct*. In fact, with the subdivision of generic victim help it was possible to empirically show that students represent a heterogeneous group as girls' and boys' perceptions of friend/peer consequences differ considerably in terms of the support behaviours assessed. To the author's knowledge, this is the first study to assess three sub-types of victim support and include them as separate constructs in one structural model. So far, researchers in the field have included defending as a generic factor in their theoretical models whereas the current findings suggest the investigation of specific dimension of victim help.

Another shortcoming of the present research was that the proposed model did not account for age moderating effects. It is possible that the fear of friend/peer disapproval varies as a function of age. So far, the past evidence has been inconclusive. While some studies have shown that victim defending decreases with increasing age (Caravita, Gini & Pozzoli, 2012; Pozzoli et al., 2012; Pöyhönen, et al., 2012), other research did not confirm a link between age and defending (Reijentjes et al., 2016; Menesini et al., 2003). Furthermore, group norms seem to have a higher impact on preadolescents than on younger children (Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004). Elsewhere, it has been suggested that conformity to peer pressure is highest between 11 and 13 years (Costanzo & Shaw, 1966). Other reports have suggested that conformity with prosocial pressures peaks around 11-12 years, whereas conformity to antisocial pressures peaks at a slightly later age (Berndt, 1979). Hence, further theoretical and empirical work is warranted in order to elaborate the original model and include age as an additional factor.

In terms of assessing perceptions of friend (EFrR) and peer reactions (EPeR) it is possible that pupils may have had different definitions in mind for whom they consider to be a friend and whom they would regard as a common peer. It cannot be rule out that a potential friend-peer overlap in students' understanding may have led to some inconsistencies in participants' responses to the EFrR and EPeR measures. Therefore, replications of this study should provide participants with unambiguous definitions that clarify the distinction between peers and friends.

Another strength of this study was its large sample size that not only allowed the employment of more reliable analytical methodology (i.e. structural equation modelling), but it also generated more robust results that, in turn, permit more confident interpretations. Still, some caution is warranted as participants in the present study consisted of German pupils only, which raises the issue of the generalisability of the findings. The current student sample was drawn from a particular area in Germany and may, or may not, be similar to other student populations. It is for future research to answer the question whether perceived consequences from peers and friends would differ cross-culturally.

Finally, the author is aware that victim support behaviour is influenced by an array of variables, personal and contextual, which can be interrelated to different degrees and need to be considered carefully in interpretations related to students' provictim behaviours. For example, bystanders' decisions to help the victim may also depend on correlates such as who is being bullied (e.g. same sex versus opposite sex peer) and on pressures perceived from high status versus low status friends. Hence, controlling for such moderators in future research would deepen our understanding on friend and peer influences in the victim defending context.

2.4.3 Implications for Future Research and Practice

The findings of this study have ample implications for the development of anti-bullying prevention and intervention programmes that, in turn, may guide future practice in schools. The following paragraphs will present methodological as well as more practice focussed recommendations.

Based on the unique effects observed in predicting distinct sub-types of victim support, the author endorses the recommendations of van der Ploeg and colleagues (2017) to subdivide generic victim support in future research for at least two reasons. Firstly, gender differences in helping should not be underestimated and these can only be detected if researchers investigate victim support at micro level. Secondly, developmental stages, from childhood to adolescence, are accompanied by different cognitive and social competencies which enable varied behavioural responses to a bullying conflict in school. As shown in the empirical literature, to the question of how bystanders should react when witnessing bullying, older students (grade 8) indicated that bystanders should oppose the bully whereas younger participants

(grade 4) suggested the involvement of an authority as the best response option (Tisak & Tisak, 1996). Hence, in order to increase bystander engagement in victim support, future interventions should offer pupils a range of helping strategies from which they can then choose, depending on their personal abilities and the severity of the conflict. While victim-oriented help (e.g. consoling) is essential as it affects victims' psychological wellbeing directly (Sanio et al., 2010), asking an adult for support might be an easier way of helping for less assertive and younger bystanders. The latter strategy may also be more sensible in severe bullying attacks where direct bystander intervention can involve a safety risk.

Notwithstanding the significant findings of the present study with regard to victim support, future research should simultaneously consider measures that tap the motivation behind the sub-types of defending to unravel whether bystanders intervene mainly for instrumental reasons (i.e. to boost their social standing), or out of their moral responsibility. Some theories such as the 'evolutionary approach of human behaviour' (Alexander, 1987) and resource control theory (Hawley, 1999) suggest that people tend to engage in seemingly altruistic or moral behaviours (e.g. defending) merely to achieve their own goals. Should this, indeed, be true for student bystanders, schools may do well to implement regular measures that facilitate moral education.

Additional research is required in order to understand the effect of perceived consequences on pupils' intentions to specific helping behaviours. It is likely that the processes that underlie the *bystander effect*, specifically, audience inhibition, pluralistic ignorance and diffusion of responsibility also add to children's fears of peer disapproval in the prediction of victim help. Hence, future research could incorporate these factors in a theoretical model to test their relative predictive contribution in parallel to the friend/peer disapproval factors.

The present results clearly highlight the importance of friends in the victim defending context. They suggest the inclusion of measures in intervention programmes that foster friendship bonds among peers in general, but also with victims. This may also be accomplished, for example, through increased daily teamwork throughout the academic year, not only as 'a one-off session' aimed to facilitate social relationships among classmates. The current findings have also

implications for general moral values education in schools, as friend loyalty has to be challenged if it conceals personal responsibility and reinforces anti-social behaviour. In addition, assertiveness training on a whole class basis can encourage passive bystanders to stand up for the victim, overcome the fear of potential negative consequences, and resist pressure from friends (or significant others) if they disapprove helping. Past research has shown that initially passive bystanders who were trained in the role of peer supporters can act as a valuable resource for victims of bullying (Cowie, 2000).

As psychologists, we need to get a better understanding of why the disclosure of bullying and help-seeking is so problematic for students to endorse given that victims (in particular) experience such high levels of distress (Reijentjes et al., 2010; Hawker & Boulton, 2000). Hence, encouraging bystanders to help disclose witnessed bullying to a trusted teacher, who has more resources per se, is essential. Victims often refrain from speaking out because they feel helpless and ashamed about their humiliating experiences (de Lara, 2012). Therefore, future intervention must stress the importance of disclosing bullying incidents and emphasise multiple types of victim support to cater for a diverse bystander audience. In order to reduce victims' suffering, it is vital that researchers continue the development of programmes that promote victim support strategies, as defended victims are less frequently harassed than undefended targets (Sainio et al., 2010). Sainio and colleagues (2010), also, found that those victims who receive peer support, tend to adjust much better in terms of their self-esteem level and their social status within the peer group.

In the meantime, teachers would do well to monitor their daily practice and routinely encourage students to disclose witnessed bullying. Hereby, it might be reasonable to communicate to pupils, that asking for help in a bullying conflict requires a certain degree of personal strength and maturity and should therefore not be considered as a persons' weakness. Boulton (2014), for example, has shown that teachers who were alert of how to better deal with bullying related problems and felt more confident in doing so, were more likely to address such issues in a positive and efficient manner.

Researchers should be vigilant that students' fear of friend/peer disapproval as a consequence of victim defending, may sometimes be overstated or simply unjustified due to biased cognitions. Erroneous beliefs about the outcomes of victim support

pose a considerable barrier to enacting prosocial behaviour which needs to be tackled in order to help alleviate victims' plight. From what we know so far, it seems that defenders are well liked by victims (Sainio et al., 2010) as well as non-victims (Pöyhönen & Salmivalli, 2008; Goossens et al., 2006) and they are also perceived as popular peers (Caravita et al., 2009; Sainio et al., 2010; van der Ploeg et al., 2017). Thus, if popular students could be mobilised to engage in victim support, this may then spark the motivation of other peers to imitate the positive behaviours. In other words, defenders who command great social skills could act as role models for those students who need to improve their social behaviour. Some psychologists believe that popular students may even be capable to (re)shape group norms in terms of bullying aggression and victim support behaviours (Dijkstra et al., 2008).

Hence, it is imperative that teachers communicate to those who fear peer/friend disapproval that quite likely the contrary can be expected. That is, victim support can generate positive outcomes. As evidence has shown, students who participate in anti-bullying peer support programmes reported valuable personal gains from helping others such as improved confidence and self-worth (Cowie, 1998). It is crucial that novel anti-bullying (pre-) interventions incorporate this topic and discuss students' prevailing cognitions in this regard. Measures can then be taken to demystify and adjust potentially erroneous perceptions. To aid the restructuring of false cognitions it is, also, imperative to encourage students to overtly express their provictim stance in school as most of them seem to condemn bullying (Boulton et al., 2002; Rigby & Johnson, 2006). Furthermore, earlier evidence has shown that pupils regard student-led anti-bullying programmes as more effective than teacher guided interventions (Peterson & Rigby, 1999). That is, teacher-led programmes seem not always endorsed by students and therefore less fruitful. In all, such measures can help to reduce the development of anti-social norms which are more likely to be established when pupils assume that bullying conflicts are harmless. This assumption, however, is critical as it may lead to pluralistic ignorance which means that students learn to ignore harming behaviours.

It is also essential that teachers mobilize their students by stressing each pupil's moral responsibility to help, and raise their awareness of the hurtful effects of bullying perpetration. This in turn may facilitate bystanders' understanding for why their support to victims is indispensable. Moreover, future intervention efforts need

to address this issue on a whole class basis to assure that all members adopt a pro-victim and moral stance. This can shape a supportive class environment, where helping and siding with the victim is viewed as a strength (not a weakness) that can dispossess bullies' power. Also, to make a difference, intervention programmes should be tailored to encourage pupils to explicitly verbalise their private anti-bullying attitudes in order to reduce the misinterpretation of behaviours. Flawed interpretations can then create false norms that only depict the attitudes of a small sub-group of popular bullies (e.g. Juvonen & Galván, 2008).

2.5 Summary

Victims of school bullying seem to fare better if they are supported by their peers. To date, however, very few peer bystanders stand up to defend a victimised student (see Section 2.1.1). This can have far reaching consequences, as the longer victimisation is sustained the greater the negative health consequences for the victim and the negative impact on the class/school climate (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4). There are ample barriers that appear to prevent students from victim support. The aim of the present study was to shed light on two factors that may additionally constrain provictim behaviours in bullying situations. More specifically, the present study investigated whether anticipated friend and peer consequences from helping would affect bystanders' future intentions to engage in three distinct types of victim support. To test a set of hypotheses, a new model was created based on the theoretical assumptions that outcome expectations and perceived pressure from significant others can predict intentions to behavioural actions. With only few exceptions, the empirical literature has operationalised victim support as a generic construct which seems to preclude detailed information in the victim defending research. To close this gap, in the present study victim support was subdivided into three separate helping dimensions (consoling, addressing the bully, and getting adult help) which were then included in a theoretical model. The results revealed the superior role of friends over general peers in predicting victim support from outcome expectations. More specifically, the findings indicated that perceived negative consequences from friends can pose a barrier to children's willingness to engage in victim help, irrespective of the three sub-types of support studied. Perceived negative outcomes from peers were also found to significantly affect students' intentions to approach a teacher for help. Furthermore, the proposed model generated some

important gender effects that showed that boys were generally more concerned about their friends' and peers' reactions than girls. Taken together, the findings of this study suggest that generic victim support should be broken down in at least three sub-types of help in order to detect unique effects in the prediction of provictim behaviours. These new insights contribute in different ways towards the knowledge base of bystanders' engagement, and non-engagement, in victim support behaviours. Importantly, the present findings provide the rational for the following experimental study in this thesis. That is, the cross-age teaching intervention presented next in Chapter 3 offers strategies that may encourage bystanders to support victimised peers without risking their safety or potential peer disapproval.

Chapter 3   Enhancing Knowledge on Victim Support in Primary School with a Cross-Age Teaching of Social Issues Intervention

3.1 Introduction

The second empirical study in this thesis tested a novel, cross-age teaching of social issues intervention (CATS). It invited participants to cooperatively work together in small groups as tutors, to design and deliver a short lesson about victim support to younger students (tutees, henceforward). The present project builds upon the preceding empirical study in Chapter 2 by acknowledging that participants' fear of peer and friend disapproval can pose a barrier to victim support behaviours. This evidence subsequently informed the content material of the present experimental study that aimed to promote a variety of safe victim support behaviours, not only for students who may fear peer disregard from helping, but also for those who feel confident to help but may lack intervening strategies. The present study also intended to emphasise the gains of peer helping for both the victim and the helper. Intervention effects were assessed for tutors, not for tutees.

While it will not be possible to completely prevent bullying in schools, researchers can think about new ideas with regard to raising peer bystanders' awareness of this problem and mobilise them to help alleviate victimised peers' suffering. The following introduction section will provide a rationale for the initiation of a novel anti-bullying intervention study and emphasise the gains of victim support including the potential of peer-led intervention programmes. As the present study is predicated on a cross-age teaching approach, the next paragraphs will also present a summary of the extant peer-assisted learning literature and its methodological shortcomings. Furthermore, this section will apprise the reader of the theoretical background that has guided the development of the present CATS study and endorses its distinctive design features. The introduction continues with the rationale for the included learning points that tutors were asked to incorporate in their lesson for the tutees. The subsequent paragraphs provide a consideration of the gender differences in students'

responsiveness to anti-bullying interventions and finally introduce the proposed hypotheses/research questions.

3.1.1 Why develop a new intervention? The need for an intervention that enhances victim support

Bullying can be a very stressful experience for children and adolescents as mentioned in the introductory chapter of this thesis (Chapter 1). Moreover, peer victimisation can lead to increased rejection if it continues over a longer period of time (Hodges & Perry, 1999). Therefore, victimised students urgently need the support of peers, teachers and parents to end their suffering. The problem, however, is that many victims do not disclose being bullied (Cowie, 2000; Boulton, 2005; Hunter, Boyle, & Warden, 2004; Smith & Shu, 2000; Smith, Talamellii, Cowie, Naylor & Chauhan, 2004). This implies that they cannot be helped if they do not tell anybody about it which in turn may lead to aggravated problems. Conversely, on a more positive note, some literature suggests that victim support, such as peers telling teachers about witnessed bullying and comforting gestures, can make a difference (Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004). That is, peer support can improve a vulnerable student's adjustment to the problematic situation and help them to enhance their emotional wellbeing. Researchers more and more acknowledge that witnessing peers can play a vital role in the reduction of this specifically harmful type of violence (Salmivalli, 2014) and that they can also provide a valuable resource for victims of bullying aggression (Cowie, 2000). Victim support can also be beneficial for the helping student (Cowie, 1998) as will be illustrated below in more detail. Unfortunately, evidence also showed that most children choose not to get involved in the crossfire (e.g. Boulton et al., 2017; Espelage, Green, & Polanin, 2012) and so far interventions that have aimed to prevent and reduce bullying in schools have yielded limited success (Bauer, Lozano, & Rivara, 2007, Vreeman & Carroll, 2007; Smith, Ananiadou, & Cowie, 2003). Therefore, the development of new anti-bullying prevention and intervention programmes that promote victim support is fundamental. The following paragraphs discuss some of the benefits related to peer helping, identified in the reviewed literature, for both victims of bullying and their supporters.

3.1.1.1 The Gains of Support for Victims and their Supporters

How may defending benefit victims of bullying? First of all, research has demonstrated that defending is associated with a lower frequency of bullying behaviour (Salmivalli et al., 2011). Moreover, in classrooms with defending peers, in particular rejected and socially anxious children have a lower risk of being bullied than in classrooms where bystanders tend to reinforce bullying behaviours (Kärnä et al., 2010). A comparison of undefended and defended victims has shown that targets who had at least one classmate who comforted and supported them, or intervened directly during the incident fare better than those without peer support (Sainio et al., 2010). This was reflected in victims' higher self-esteem and higher social standing within the peer group. This trend remained significant irrespective of the frequency of the victim being bullied. On a contrasting note, however, some evidence has shown that bystanders are generally more inclined to help those victims who adopt a sad and passive response compared to those who react in an angry or confident manner, even if their anger was exclusively a result of the bully's harassment (Sokol et al., 2015). This appears paradoxical, considering that a victim's passive response and signs of distress are likely to encourage the continuation of bullying as the bully tends to conclude that this peer is an easy target (Perry, Williard & Perry, 1990). Hence, it seems like victims cannot win in this battle. While this inconsistent evidence highlights the complexity of the issue, Sainio's (2010) aforementioned findings are particularly meaningful as they were based on data from different informants, namely self-reports and peer evaluations. Hence, their results underscore all the more the valuable potential of bystanders in attenuating victims' suffering and in the battle against bullying in general. One of the reasons why peers appear to be such a precious resource of help for vulnerable children is because they function and communicate at the same wavelength in terms of their language and the peer group culture in general (Cowie & Sharp, 1996). This in turn makes it easier for children and adolescents to approach a peer in need (and vice versa) which explains why they are happy to disclose personal problems to peers but not to their parents or teachers (Smith & Sharp, 1994). Evidently, the natural pre-conditions for peer support are already provided but the idea of encouraging more bystanders to become defenders now needs to be increasingly translated into intervention practice, as the majority of

bystanders still refrain from intervening on behalf of a bullied peer (Espelage et al., 2012). Pöyhönen and colleagues (Pöyhönen et al., 2010) found that victim defenders hold positive expectations about the beneficial effect their defending would elicit on the victim. Therefore, it is important to change those bystanders' views who may not belief that their support to victims could contribute positively to a bullied peers' wellbeing. The present study answers the call by Pöyhönen and colleagues who argue that interventions should intend to "teach children and adolescents effective strategies to defend victimized students and encourage them to do so" (2010, p. 159). The present intervention takes up the issue by promoting victim support through an indirect whole class approach which aims to mobilise all students to get involved in provictim actions.

What is the gain for victim supporters? Besides the notion that anti-social and aggressive conduct have been regarded as efficient ways to gain a popular status among peers (Salmivalli, 2014), there is also evidence that suggests that pro-social behaviour is related to popularity in the peer group (Slaughter, Imuta, Peterson & Henry, 2015). Recent research has confirmed the latter findings by showing that students dislike peers in the pro-bully role (bullies, bully-reinforcers) and favour those in the defender and outsider role (Pouwels, Lansu & Cilessen, 2017). By intervening in support of the victim a student displays dominant behaviour within the peer group (Meter & Card, 2015) in particular to the bullies who are often viewed as being very popular (Garandeau & Cilessen, 2006; Caravita et al., 2009). In other words, by taking sides with the victim, providing comfort or asking others for help, defenders demonstrate power as they are confident enough to stand up against the bully/ies (Salmivalli et al., 2011). This assertive behaviour makes them stand out in the crowd of passive bystanders which amplifies their visibility and in turn their popularity. Together, this is likely to disempower dominant bullies. While cross-sectional research has shown that popularity and a high social status predict victim support (Caravita et al., 2009; Pöyhönen et al., 2010; Sainio, et al., 2011), recent longitudinal evidence indicated the converse direction of effects and popularity emerged as an outcome of victim help (Van der Ploeg, Kretchmer, Salmivalli & Veenstra, 2017). Indeed, these authors reported that defending a victimised peer predicted an increase in perceived popularity over time. Another remarkable finding in Van der Ploeg's study was that the association between victim support and popularity was significant regardless of a participant's victim status (victim versus

non-victim). To control for victim status is reasonable as self-reported victimisation has been linked to a higher preparedness to help (Batanova, Espelage & Rao, 2014). Other gains from peer helping have also been reported. Cowie, for example, found that children's participation in peer support schemes positively affected their confidence and self-worth (Cowie, 1998). The same author further observed that helping other peers increased a sense of citizenship in the helpers, and they also learned to appreciate more the value of other people (Cowie & Hutson, 2005). Such findings are promising and the notion that supporting victims is likely to be rewarded, in one way or the other, could be utilised in future intervention as a motivator to encourage passive bystanders to become active victim supporters.

3.1.2 Peer-led versus Teacher-led Interventions

According to a review conducted by Ttofi and Farrington (2011), the effectiveness of educational teacher-led programmes to reduce victimisation has been inconsistent. While some evidence suggests that students appreciate anti-bullying interventions led by teachers (e.g. Crothers, Kolbert & Barker, 2006), other studies did not find any positive changes in terms of attitudes towards bullying and victims, or the number of bullying incidents reported per year (e.g. Hunt, 2007).

The latter negative outcome echoes reports where researchers found that friends' expectations on helping a victim matter to a far greater extent than expectations from teachers (Rigby & Johnson, 2006). Rigby and Johnson (2006) noted that with upper primary and secondary school pupils, teachers' influence on bystanders in promoting provictim behaviour is no longer effective. The authors claim that it is insufficient for teachers to simply express their expectations which convey to students that they should intervene on behalf on the victim. Instead, they advocate more indirect methods, such as classroom exercises designed to facilitate bystanders' understanding of victims' painful experiences, promote sympathy and encourage safe and effective means for intervening, including the explicit articulation of bullying disapproval. In a similar vein, Craig and associates assumed that in most bullying incidents bystander inaction may not be due to a lack of students' sympathy with the victim but it may stem from a lack of helping strategies (Craig et al., 2000). Consistent with this assumption, Pronk and colleagues demand that bystanders "need

to become more aware of the possibilities they have to safely and competently execute interventions" to protect the victim (Pronk et al., 2013, p. 680).

There is more research that has confirmed students' negative views regarding anti-bullying lessons that are taught by teachers (Boulton & Boulton, 2011). More specifically, Boulton and Boulton (2011) found that over 80% of primary school children reported that they ignore anti-bullying advice from their teachers. Among the most common reasons children mentioned were: firstly, they are not bullies themselves and therefore it is not their business; secondly, children's perception that they know enough about the bullying topic; thirdly, that they were bored about hearing the same message over and over again; and finally, that it is only teachers' duty but they were not really interested in stopping bullying. Other research appears to echo Boulton's findings. For example, Flygare and colleagues (2011) evaluated and compared individual intervention components in terms of their usefulness for effective anti-bullying programmes. These authors found that the provision of explicit lessons on the bullying issue did not arouse students' interest and turn out to be even counterproductive to an initiative. In contrast, mobilising pupils to actively engage in preventing peer victimisation turned out as one of the most effective elements, among others, in the eight anti-bullying schemes that were reviewed.

Although most students suggest that schools should increase their bullying prevention efforts, on one hand, they doubt teachers' abilities and/or willingness to deal with these kinds of problems on the other (Bradshaw, Sawyer & O'Brennan, 2007; Rigby & Bradshaw, 2003). In fact, some students even assume that teachers may exacerbate bullying conflicts (Bradshaw et al., 2007). Other confirming evidence that is based on teachers' perspectives regarding the implementation of anti-bullying interventions showed that they do not perceive themselves as sufficiently skilled to deliver such programmes (Boulton, 2014).

Hence, based on the arguments above and the positive evidence observed with peer tutoring on academic subjects it appears plausible and worthwhile to utilise peers as an alternative source of support in the battle against school bullying. The present CATS intervention aims to follow the suggestions of the aforementioned authors. The content for the tutors' lesson was designed to pinpoint specific provictim

behaviours that bystanders can enact to soothe a bullied peer's suffering (see the Smart Peer Helping Booklet in Appendix 3.4).

3.1.3 Review of the Peer-assisted Learning Literature

Students tutoring other students is not a novelty in education but has been utilised throughout human history. In the 1960's when the benefits of tutoring programmes became obvious, teachers and researchers demanded studies of higher scientific rigour, and the initial idea of cost effective tutee teaching shifted to an approach that promoted learning for the tutors and the tutees, alike (Cohen, Kulik & Kulik, 1982; Bloom, 1984; Britz, Dixon & McLaughlin, 1989). The term 'peer-assisted learning' is used broadly to indicate the assistance among students within curricular subjects (Slavin, 1995). Besides cooperative learning techniques, researchers distinguish between 'peer tutoring' which refers to same aged pupils, and 'cross-age tutoring' which involves older students (tutors) assisting younger peers (tutees). While cooperative learning refers to pupils working together in small groups and engaging in a shared goal, peer tutoring and cross-age tutoring typically involves student dyads (but not exclusively) where one student has the responsibility to assist another pupil (Robinson, Schofield & Steers-Wentzell, 2005; Topping, 2005). The interaction among peers is qualitatively different from teacher-student interconnection as the capabilities of a peer tutor are more proximate to those of the tutee. Moreover, in Topping's understanding of peer-assisted learning the tutor is also supposed to 'learn by teaching'.

A substantial body of research has demonstrated the benefits of peer tutoring and cross-age tutoring with both, primary and secondary school students addressing mostly academic subjects mainly mathematics and literacy but also other disciplines (for reviews see Hartley, 1977; Cohen, Kulik & Kulik, 1982; Rohrbeck, Ginsburg-Block, Fantuzzo & Miller, 2003; Robinson et al., 2005, Shenderovich, Thurston & Miller, 2016). This existing literature is mostly concerned with the enhancement of academic skills for the tutees. However, some evidence (albeit scarce) suggested that children who served as tutors acquired a better understanding of the subject covered in the tutorial (Cohen et al., 1982). Moreover, the positive effects of peer-assisted learning programmes were found to extend to an array of other school- related outcomes, such as increased school attendance (Nazzal, 2002), increased on-task

time (Ginsburg-Block & Fantuzzo, 1997; Polirstok & Greer, 1986) positive attitudes towards the tutored academic subject (Nazzal, 2002; Hilger, 2000; Cohen et al., 1982) and towards school in general (Nazzal, 2002; Fantuzzo, Polite & Grayson, 1990).

Psychological or socio-emotional benefits have not been the major target in previous peer-assisted learning research. In fact, few authors refer to these factors as a *by-product* of peer tutoring and cooperative learning programmes (Robinson et al., 2005; Topping, 2005). It is therefore not surprising that the limited research of peer-assisted learning which has tested for psychological or socio-emotional improvements, has only delivered inconsistent outcomes. That is, some of the reviewed studies attested positive effects such as an increase in sense of belonging (Good, Haplin & Haplin, 2000; Nazzal, 2002), confidence, motivation, enjoyment, self-esteem and self-concept (Cohen et al., 1982; Fantuzzo, Davis & Ginsburg, 1995; Early, 1998; Sprinthall & Scott, 1989). Yet, others did not report any effects at all regarding psychological gains for either the tutors or the tutees (e.g. Bar-Eli & Raviv, 1982; Menikoff, 1999).

Schunk & Zimmermann (1994) argue that socio-emotional changes are crucial for the sustainability and generalisation of the gains as they seem to enhance internal attribution for success and self-belief which in turn affects the self-regulation of future learning behaviours. While the general message from the reviewed peer tutoring research is clear that tutoring can have positive effects on academic performance, school related and psychological outcomes - the improvements are not guaranteed. The effectiveness of peer-assisted learning programmes depended on a multitude of factors, as will be illustrated in the following paragraphs, which in turn aggravates the evaluation of the programmes.

3.1.3.1 Methodological Issues

For example, Rohrbeck and colleagues reviewed 90 studies, of which 40 involved student dyads, 43 small groups of 3-6 students, yet others used a combination of both (Rohrbeck et al., 2003). With regard to students' ability level, the majority (61%) of the studies assigned participants to cross-ability groups while 30% do not report on the ability grouping at all. Some employed same-ability grouping while others used both same-ability and cross-ability grouping. The reports on intervention dosage,

again, underlie great variation. In studies that report on this variable (58 studies) dosage ranged from 3-1,080 hours according to the calculation 'duration in weeks x sessions per week x duration of the session'. Moreover, there was consensus regarding 'structured' versus 'unstructured' peer interaction. In structured interventions students were assigned roles to steer the interaction within the peer group. While some researchers reported higher achievement effects for tutees in structured interventions (e.g. Cohen et al., 1982), Rohrbeck and collaborators (2003) did not. This is not surprising as there is no clear definition of "structured" interventions. Still, this component deserves scientific consideration in the assessment of effective peer-assisted learning programmes because there appears to be a relationship between structured tutoring conditions, and motivation and achievement (e.g. Koestner, Ryan, Bernieri & Holt, 1984; Fantuzzo, King & Heller, 1992). Taken together, Rohrbeck and colleagues have criticised older reviews for considerable methodological issues such as non-transparent study inclusion criteria which inevitably led to great variations in effect sizes.

Hence, overall the effect sizes of peer tutoring programmes with both academic and psychological variables tend to be generally modest. In terms of participants' age, Rohrbeck et al. (2003) suggest that peer-assisted learning interventions are more effective with younger (grade 1-3) than older students (grade 4-6) whereas other authors found no relationship between grade level and achievement effects in cooperative learning (Johnson, Maruyama, Johnson, Nelson, & Skon, 1981). Effectiveness seemed also dependent upon the employment of locally developed tests versus nationally standardised scales and Cohen et al. (1982) found larger effects with the former.

A more recent meta-analysis, evaluating peer tutoring in literacy and mathematics, also reported on the range of factors that are likely to affect the effect size of such programmes (Zeneli, Thurston & Roseth, 2016). Besides the parameters that have already been mentioned above the authors highlight the key impact of the research design (pre-post design versus control-group design) on the findings. They found, for example, that control-group studies employing cross-age tutoring had larger effect sizes than those with same-age tutoring. Moreover, while the majority of the studies involved mixed gender compositions some studies (using a control-group design) reported larger effect sizes with same-gender participants. Other relevant factors,

reported by Zeneli and colleagues (2016), were intervention length and dosage, tutor training, use of rewards, grade level, socio-economic status and minority percentage.

Other issues that aggravate the comparison between studies were reported from cross-age tutoring research, again within the academic teaching domain, where many programmes employ adult tutors such as university students and community volunteers, rather than peers (Vogelwiesche, Grob & Winkler, 2006; Shenderovich et al., 2016, a review). These designs are, however, not compatible with some researchers' idea that tutors are themselves supposed to benefit from teaching others, even though the main focus still remains on tutees' improvements (e.g. Topping, 2005). Therefore, employing adult tutors in cross-age teaching programmes surely drifts away from the initial peer-assisted learning model that relates to assistance on curricular subjects among students. This poses a considerable problem for researchers' attempts to review and compare the quality of the extant literature if studies happen to differ profoundly in, for example, their design. Finally, there is of course the publication bias problem, with a considerable amount of studies that never get published due to non-significant findings (Rosenthal, 1979). According to Newman (2008), research bias constitutes the greatest threat to the soundness of educational studies.

To relate the past literature to the present intervention, in CATS the author combined two methods, cross-age tutoring and cooperative learning. In practice, this involves tutors working together in small groups to prepare and deliver a lesson to younger tutees. The present CATS programme adopted the cross-age teaching technique, which has previously been utilised primarily in the domain of academic subjects, and applied it to social issues, more specifically to the promotion of pro-social skills in the area of victim of bullying support. To overcome some of the methodological limitations that have been identified in the aforementioned literature the author will provide a detailed description of the features of the CATS design (see below section 3. 1. 4 Distinctive features of CATS). Also, to allow comparisons with other research and the replication of the outcomes, the present study will give a transparent and precise account of the intervention procedures, the operationalisation of the dependent variables and the statistical analyses that have been used to investigate the data. Contrary to the large majority of aforementioned peer-assisted learning literature the present study follows the 'learning by teaching' idea, in the sense that

the present CATS study will focus on tutors' improvement, not on that of the tutees. The following section will describe the novel CATS approach and its very distinctive features.

3.1.4 The CATS Approach and its Distinctive Features

CATS is, compared to other peer-mentoring or counselling approaches, an integral whole-class technique. It invites all pupils (tutors) in the classroom, regardless of their social standing, the participant role that they currently hold (e.g. victim, bully, passive bystander) or other personality characteristics to work together in small groups to design and deliver a lesson about victim support to younger pupils (tutees). Also, it is important to note that the present study was not conceptualised to address solely a subgroup of students who are particularly concerned about peer disapproval as a consequence of vouching for a victimised peer. That is, CATS is a non-obtrusive and non-stigmatising approach that treats all students equally, as no child is pulled out of the comfort of the classroom to receive special treatment. This inclusive design seems particularly important for victims who should be treated with compassion, and any additional stigmatising must be avoided. Evidence not only showed that students object to being singled out from their class for extra support, but also revealed that teachers failed to appreciate that this strategy is a very delicate issue that requires the utmost sensitivity (Boyle, Lynch, Lyon & Williams, 2011). Through dealing cooperatively in a group with the subject material, victims may benefit from the present intervention without being identified as such or pointed at. By participating in the project they may learn that it is not appropriate to blame oneself for being bullied, and that it is important and helpful to disclose their problems to a trusted adult in order to prevent further suffering.

 Another important feature of this design is its indirect strategy, in the sense that intervention objectives are not emphasised as typical learning objectives that are habitually enforced by teachers or parents who want children to do well in any respect. CATS involves in essence "learning by teaching". If children perceive the pressure that they have to learn a certain skill or master a task, one of their usual reactions is resistance. Through this indirect approach the author may be able to bypass pupils' resistance by conveying to the tutors that the primary focus of this project is on the tutees. That is, tutors are told that it is the younger pupils who

should learn about how to help a victimised peer and why this is so important. In other words, if tutors do not perceive that *they* are expected to learn the subject material, there is nothing to resist against. Through this indirect path, CATS may provide a possibility for teachers to make their pupils more receptive to anti-bullying initiatives, as evidence suggests that over 80% of primary school children do not bother about listening to their teachers' pastoral lessons (Boulton & Boulton, 2011).

With regard to promoting engagement in the intervention, the CATS programme allows and encourages tutors to develop a sense of ownership for their lesson. This in turn is likely to add to the sense of responsibility that an individual perceives for the task that they have taken on (see Role Theory 3.1.6.1), in this case, to design and deliver a short lesson on victim support to younger students (tutees). Tutors' sense of responsibility may even be amplified through their superior role as 'teachers' which generates a kind of caring towards the younger children (Robinson et al., 2005; Biddle, 1986).

Also, some psychologists assume that stepping into the role of a tutor will promote effective learning, simply because tutors are required to look closely into the subject material in order to prepare it for their actual teaching (Thurston et al., 2007). This idea is consistent with cognitive theory which proposes that cross-age teaching offers pupils the opportunity to rework the subject material and thereby build connections with their existing knowledge. This interlink, in turn, is thought to aid the development of more advanced cognitive structures (Thurston et al., 2007; Slavin, 1996; Topping & Ehly, 1998). Related to the present study, this suggests that by engaging in the CATS programme, by preparing and delivering a lesson about victim support, tutors may start to reflect on their own actual behaviours and views in this particular regard. This, in turn, can help them restructure and adjust their perspectives in accordance with what they have been teaching to the tutees.

Furthermore, giving the children the freedom to choose the visual aids and mode of delivery (e.g. poster, quiz, board game, role play, song) introduces an important element of autonomy, where they are allowed to include their own creative ideas which will most likely increase the fun of the CATS experience. Some studies have found a positive relationship between autonomy and the acceptability of group based and peer-guided intervention programmes (Stukas, Clary, & Snyder, 1999;

Blatchford, Kutnick, Baines, & Galton, 2003). Also, research on different intervention programmes which have dealt with reducing problem behaviours, has shown that giving participants the autonomy to choose some elements of the programme contributed to its effectiveness (Shogren, Faggella-Luby, Bae & Wehmeyer, 2004).

Moreover, in the CATS intervention tutors have the opportunity to collaboratively work together with their peers in small groups of approximately five pupils where they get the chance to learn from each other. Through collaboration, children who lack pro-social skills or those who tend to gain attention through predominantly aggressive behaviour, can learn from well-mannered peers by observing how they engage and deal with the pro-victim subject material, including their views about helping others. Social cognitive theory posits that vicarious experience is a crucial element in social learning and cognitive development, as children learn through observation, imitation and modelling (Bandura, 1986). In cases where a person has little or no experience, or is uncertain about their own capabilities, observation can become an important source of information. Observing others may indirectly teach the less skilled student that there are various perspectives to every issue, and it can be worthwhile to engage in victim helping behaviours. In other words, popularity and attention can also be gained through positive demeanour not only through anti-social behaviours. Moreover, with regard to seeking help from adults, knowing that one's peers do not condemn telling a teacher about bullying incidents, may reduce potential fears of peer disapproval. This way, bystanding peers may be encouraged to not hold back this form of victim support when bullying occurs, and victims may gain more confidence to tell someone if they perceive that disclosing is accepted by other class mates.

Taken together, it is perhaps the combination of all the aforementioned features that make up this novel intervention and distinguish it from other anti-bullying interventions. Hence, CATS lends itself well to the promotion of discrete as well as overt pro-victim behaviours in school children. In the following paragraphs the author will review the research studies that are most relevant to the present work.

3.1.5 Cross-age Teaching of Social Issues – the most Relevant Existing Studies

It is worth noting that at the time when this study was conceived there was no publication in the empirical literature which employed this specific cross-age teaching of social issues design. CATS is a new approach that, in the present study, addresses exclusively socio-psychological issues. In contrast, as mentioned above, the existing peer tutoring literature, irrespective of the method employed, has focussed primarily on academic subjects, and mostly regarded socio-psychological benefits (if at all) as a by-product or secondary aim. Therefore, at the time there was no past research with an identical design to draw from except for the insights from the peer-assisted learning literature that has been described above in Section 3.1.3. Also, the existing literature mainly reports on outcomes for the tutees and fewer studies have addressed changes in tutors' skills. However, some evidence has shown that there are higher gains for children who take on the tutor role than for those acting as tutees (Robinson et al., 2005). Hence, the present study was designed to explore and test specifically the benefits of the CATS programme on tutors, not tutees. CATS is therefore considered a novel intervention and the distinctive features of this approach have been presented in section 3.1.4.

However, today there are three studies that have been published in the meantime and which utilised the same core cross-age teaching design as the present study. These studies, conducted by Boulton and associates (Boulton et al., 2016; Boulton & Boulton, in press; Boulton & Boulton, 2017), constitute the most directly relevant empirical literature that exist for the present work. It is for this reason that they will be discussed and critically evaluated in more detail than the aforementioned peer-assisted learning research. The three studies have been numbered here from 1 – 3 in order to help distinguish them in the following paragraphs where they will be discussed next (Study 1: Boulton et al., 2016; Study 2: Boulton & Boulton, in press; Study 3: Boulton & Boulton, 2017).

As mentioned above, all three studies replicated technically the same (experimental) cross-age teaching design and they employ a pre-post control-group design whereby the experimental groups were always age-matched with the control groups. The procedure of the programme involved that tutors work co-operatively in small teams

of five peers, to prepare a lesson which they then deliver to a same sized group of approximately two years younger students (tutees). While adopting the same CATS study design, Boulton and colleagues' studies do differ in terms of the learning content, number of assessment times, dosage and the targeted population (tutors or/and tutees). That is, in the present study the CATS approach, as described in section 3.1.4, is applied for the very first time to the issue of victim of bullying support and the gains related to helping.

Study 1 (Boulton et al., 2016) did not involve socio-psychological topics but aimed to promote primary school children's knowledge on online dangers and how to stay safe while searching the World Wide Web. The authors reported that the programme was effective in terms of enhancing tutors' knowledge of online risks/safety. They also found an improvement in tutees' abilities on how to avoid online dangers. Boulton and Boulton's consecutive two studies, which tested the effectiveness of the cross-age teaching approach as employed in the present CATS study, addressed exclusively socio-psychological issues (Boulton & Boulton, in press; Boulton & Boulton, 2017). It is for the aforementioned reason that the two latter studies will be described and discussed in more depth than Study 1 in the following paragraphs.

Study 2 (Boulton & Boulton, in press) focussed on the promotion of capabilities in handling peer provocations and hostile attribution bias for both, primary and secondary school pupils. Participants (year 6 and year 10) were assessed three times over a period of eight weeks. Time 1 data (T1) represented the baseline measure, which was then compared with the T2 scores (recorded after the intervention had ended) and T3 data (approximately four weeks later). In terms of dosage, the intervention group (tutors) received four 60-minute sessions over three weeks, where students prepared a short lesson on the basis of the materials provided by the research team. The subject material included helpful/unhelpful thoughts and emotions (hostile bias) which are likely to be generated as a response to typical provocations by peers. The control group was exposed to the same lesson material and a subsequent discussion about it, but they then followed their usual school routine. The authors reported significant improvements for the experimental group, but not for the controls, in terms of increased helpful thoughts and how to shun hostile bias. Improvements on both variables were still evident in the one-month follow-up test compared to the baseline performance. However, Boulton and Boulton

reported that there was a considerable reduction in helpful thoughts from T2 to T3. In addition to the aforementioned variables the authors also assessed participants' (tutors' and tutees') preference for being taught by peer tutors versus teachers. They found that the vast majority of the sample (90, 2%) favoured older peers to teach them about the issues studied. The researchers explain this result with the typical reluctance observed in students when being taught by teachers in socio-emotional issues (Boulton & Boulton, 2011), as well as in online safety topics (Boulton et al., 2016).

Study 3 (Boulton & Boulton, 2017) assessed the effects of the intervention on self-blame attributions, self-esteem and disclosure of being bullied in a sample of previously victimised secondary school students. Participants were again tested at three different time points. In this project the experimental group was subjected to an extra two intervention doses (60-minute duration) between T2 and T3. The typical dosage, as utilised in the other two studies, consisted of four 60-minute sessions administered between T1 (the baseline test) and T2 (post-test). The researchers did not mention that the subject material may be particularly relevant to this particular sample of participants but stressed that the lesson would benefit the younger tutees. A wait-list control design assured that tutors who initially acted as controls were not denied the intervention but engaged time-delayed in the proceedings. Results showed a positive effect of the programme as significant improvements were reported across all dependent variables (self-blame attributions, self-esteem and disclosure), but only when tutors actively engaged in the intervention sessions. No effects were apparent in the wait-list control group before they had the opportunity to prepare and deliver their lesson. With regard to additional dosage effects, findings revealed further improvements on all the variables studied. In other words, having experienced two extra intervention sessions which implied additional time to engage with the subject material, seemed highly beneficial for this participant sample. Another interesting finding revealed that positive changes in self-blame beliefs and in self-esteem mediated tutors' willingness to tell a teacher about being bullied.

3.1.5.1 Critical Evaluation of the Most Relevant Existing Studies

The following paragraphs will summarise the main strengths and limitations of the aforementioned cross-age teaching studies. Irrespective of the diverse topics addressed in these studies, Boulton and colleagues found substantial positive effects of this cross-age teaching approach. The favourable effects were evident in tutors' higher performance on the variables tested, compared to the results for the control participants. The effect sizes across the three studies ranged from medium to very large which is rather impressive compared to the majority of studies in the extant literature on peer tutoring (see Rohrbeck et al., 2003 for a review) and on cross-age teaching (e.g. Shenderovich et al., 2016; a review). As mentioned earlier in the introduction, effect sizes observed in the past literature were often small and erratic. In terms of gender moderation effects, the authors did not find any significant variation in scores across the three studies which suggests that this particular cross-age teaching programme may be equally effective for girls and boys. Similarly, in terms of age this intervention appears to be equally effective among primary and secondary school students. The researchers did, however, report that older students expressed a greater desire for autonomy than younger pupils. That is, secondary school students preferred more freedom in their choice of the lesson content and the mode of delivery. Furthermore, they also found a high acceptability of the intervention among those who took part in the experimental condition. With regard to elements that appear unique to this design, in study 2 (Boulton & Boulton, in press) tutors rated autonomy as a highly important factor. That is, they stressed the value of being able to choose the content of the material and the means how to deliver it. This resonates with other research where autonomy has been linked with higher acceptability ratings of group-based and peer-delivered programmes (Blatchford et al., 2003; Stukas et al., 1999). Overall, Boulton and collaborators provide detailed information about the structure of the programme, the implementation and assessment process, the time investment, as well as the utilised measures and their analysis. In contrast, meta-analytic reviews have repeatedly criticised the lack of and/or incomplete description of such crucial methodological and procedural issues in the extant literature (e.g. Rohrbeck et al. 2003; Robinson et al., 2005). Let us now turn to the shortcomings of the three studies.

While this novel intervention design appears to be highly effective with the variables studied, the authors acknowledge that is has not been compared yet to other programmes that may bring about similar improvements. Related to this, so far it remained obscured as to which factors of this particular cross-age teaching design contributed to the positive effects. For example, was it the time spent thinking about and elaborating on the subject matter or the superior role of being in the tutor position that induced change? In terms of the resources required to implement this intervention, Boulton and associates do not report how much personnel they employed to assist the tutor teams during the lesson preparation process. Researchers know well that resources in schools are very scarce. Therefore, this information is key in order to allow schools and policymakers to gauge whether an intervention is affordable or not. Furthermore, it is important to consider that the number of schools from which the samples were drawn was rather limited, as participants for both study 2 and study 3 were drawn from three schools only. Another limitation concerns the sample size, as study 3 relied on 41 participants in the experimental condition and 21 in the control group. Sample sizes in the past peer-tutoring literature have been very diverse and ranged from two tutor-tutee dyads (Gumpel & Frank, 1999), with many below 100 participants (see Rohrbeck et al., 2003, Shenderovich et al., 2016 for reviews) up to an exceptional 4,903 (Cabezas, Cuesta, & Gallego, 2011). Also, in study 3 the mediator variables (self-blame and self-esteem) were assessed at the same time as the outcome variable (disclosing bullying). Even though it is conceptually rather unlikely, it may be that disclosure intentions mediated the improvements detected in self-blame and self-esteem scores. In terms of disclosure of bullying experiences, this appears to be a very sensitive topic as it is linked with feelings of embarrassment and shame. Therefore, caution is warranted in the interpretation of results that were obtained with self-report measures as was the case in study 3. Finally, with regard to Study 1 there was no follow-up assessment to test whether knowledge gains were sustained over time without administering additional intervention doses. While acknowledging the robust intervention design, the above limitations may constrain the generalisebility of the findings to some degree.

As mentioned earlier, these new insights generated by the three studies reviewed above were not available at the time when the present CATS intervention was conceived and implemented. That is, there was no published research in the extant

literature that matched the distinctive features (see Section 3.1.4) of the current CATS approach as closely as Boulton's work and which could have guided the implementation of the present study in this thesis. Hence, the present CATS intervention is the first attempt to investigate the novel CATS approach in the area of victim of bullying support.

3.1.6 Theoretical Background of the Present Study

The theoretical basis of the present CATS intervention will be presented in the following paragraphs beginning with role theory and followed by cognitive dissonance theory.

3.1.6.1 Role Theory

Role theory provides a key theoretical rationale for the present CATS intervention. According to role theory, people's behaviour is to a certain extent determined by the role they hold (Biddle, 1986) which reflects a particular set of behaviours and attitudes related to a specific identity (i.e. teacher, medic, student) that is acknowledged and accredited by society (Turner, 2001). In other words, when a person adopts a specific role, he/she is likely to develop and opine attitudes coherent with that role and act in a role-consistent manner. By applying role theory to the present study, the author expected CATS tutors to take on the attributes of the 'teacher role' which include the teaching of new knowledge and the responsibility for the activity. Being a tutor not only implies responsibility but also involves a degree of independence. In the present case, it allows tutors to be creative and free to choose how the new information may be conveyed to the tutees. The role of a teacher is also associated with authority, competence and prestige. Allen and Feldman (1976) argue that a pupil who inherits the role of a teacher, by assuming the position of a tutor, is likely to adopt the teacher-typical characteristics. As a result, and in line with role theory, it can be assumed that children who become tutors will think, feel and act differently in this new role than they used to in their previous function as a typical student. Linked to the present study, tutors' responsibility encompasses the preparation of the lesson material (see Smart Peer Helping Booklet, Appendix 3.4) in a way that is visually appealing and easy to understand. Related to a good understanding of the lesson material, tutors would have to be prepared to listen

patiently, answer their tutees' questions and reassure themselves that the younger students did grasp the important points of the topic.

Taken together, this may lead to a discrepancy between the role that a pupil held prior to become a tutor and it is likely to be even greater for those who have never been a 'model-student' (Robinson et al., 2005). The following paragraph will aid understanding how the aforementioned discrepancy may affect tutors' subsequent behaviour which should then translate into measurable intervention effects. Robinson and collaborators have utilised the manifestation of discrepancy in order to explain the improvements observed in students who participated in tutoring programmes. Such improvements include, for example, tutors' attitudes towards school, the academic performance in the tutoring subject, but also benefits beyond the specific tutored topic. While the latter, so-called, 'spillover-effects' mostly refer to academic matters in Robinson and Schofield's review, the present study will adopt role theory to test social issues such as victim support and the value of helping. Indeed, evidence has shown that after tutoring tutors rated themselves as more skilful and smarter than the tutees did, despite the fact that the tutees outperformed the tutors on the taught subject (Bierman & Furman, 1981). Elsewhere (Allen & Feldmann, 1976), research has shown that students who assumed the tutor role were found to perceive themselves as more competent after tutoring.

Furthermore, in an attempt to explain the processes underlying the improvements evident in tutors (regarding academic attainment), participants in the tutor role have reported a higher awareness of their own learning techniques as a positive outcome of the tutoring practice (Good, Halpin & Halpin, 2000). Another interpretation for the positive effects documented for tutors appears to be their awareness of representing a role model for the tutees (Allen & Feldmann, 1976; Good et al. 2000). The notion of being a role model for other students may be even easier to reach when there is an age gap between the tutor and the tutee, as happens to be the case with *cross-age teaching*. In turn, tutors' awareness that there are younger students who look up to them, may also motivate them to behave in a role consistent way (Smead, 1984). It is for the aforementioned reasons that the cross-age teaching technique has been chosen for the present experiment.

With regard to the present *social topics,* this would mean that tutors may become more aware about their social behaviour in general, but even more so about how they

treat particularly vulnerable peers in their school environment. That is, in an attempt to live up to their role model position, tutors may begin to behave in a provictim manner by expressing sympathy, take sides with the victim and intervene on their behalf. Importantly, such friendly and supportive behaviours appear more consistent with the role of a caring teacher than with a passive or ignorant student bystander. The discrepancy discussed above relates to the shift from the common pupil entity to a well recognised and prestige-associated 'teacher position'. This shift between two very disparate social positions (status) may affect more than one cognitive or emotional process. The theory of cognitive dissonance can further aid our understanding regarding why 'cross-age teaching' can be effective in changing students' anti-social behaviour. Festinger's (1957) idea that people generally dislike inconsistency, takes us to another important theoretical paradigm that has guided the present study, and which will be addressed in the following section.

3.1.6.2 Cognitive Dissonance

According to Festinger (1957), an individual commonly strives to attain a state of internal consistency between one's beliefs, opinions, attitudes and behaviour. Despite this human need, there are situations where people fail to conciliate current cognitions or new information and behaviour, even after attempts to rationalise the inconsistency. In this case, Festinger proposes that a person enters a state of cognitive dissonance that comes along with a psychological discomfort. This unpleasant situation then motivates the individual, if the dissonance is sufficiently important, to actively reduce the experience of cognitive inconsistency and regain consistency. In other words, the person will try to avoid any situation and information that increases dissonance.

There is a wealth of literature that evidenced the existence of the phenomenon of cognitive dissonance and its pivotal effects on attitude and behavioural change (see Draycott & Dabbs, 1998 for a review). To provide an example of Festinger and Carlsmith's (1959) work, the authors tested a classic counter-attitudinal experiment that is based on induced compliance to generate dissonance. The two authors asked participants in 3 different conditions (1dollar, 20 dollar and control condition) to lie about a boring task they had performed and tell another person that the task was interesting and fun. The researchers claim that the dissonance that arises between

one's private opinion and the performed behaviour (saying something contrary to their opinion) should lead to opinion change in order to reduce dissonance. That is, the participant will try to bring his original attitude into closer correspondence with his behaviour. The two authors found support for their hypothesis. Specifically, the participants who were offered the one dollar reward rated the boring task as significantly more interesting than those in the other two conditions. Being paid this small amount of money seems not sufficient to overcome the discomfort of lying. Therefore, these participants tried to make themselves believe that the task was interesting and fun in order to reduce the dissonance they experienced and restore balance between their cognitions and their behaviour. This finding is in line with similar experiments (e.g. King & Janis, 1956; Linder, Cooper & Jones, 1967 cited in Draycott & Dabbs, 1998), that confirm that a higher reward (representing higher pressure) somehow justifies counter-attitudinal actions, making them consonant with the original attitude and reducing the tendency of attitude change through dissonance. That is, insufficient justification of an effort increases the motivation of opinion change. Some of the past literature however has suggested that behaviour change will only occur when a person engages in counter- attitudinal overt behaviour that evokes dissonance (see Draycott & Dabbs, 1998).

In contrast, Harmon-Jones, Peterson and Vaughn (2003) investigated dissonance that was experimentally induced by empathy for a sick boy, and participants' awareness of the past situation where they did not behave in accord with the action tendency (to help) generated by the experienced empathy in the experiment. The researchers demonstrated that dissonance can be induced by raising contradictory cognitions (in this experiment, emotions of empathy and past failures to help a person in need) without having to perform behaviour inconsistent with one's cognitions. Evidently, participants in the 'high empathy and reminder of past failures to help' condition would offer considerably more help (time and money) to a cancer patient, in order to reduce the induced dissonance, than participants in the 'low empathy and reminder of past neutral events' condition. This finding is very important as it shows that behaviour change experiments can be conducted with large groups of participants (e.g. classrooms) since there is no need of one-to-one interaction to generate a specific behaviour, as proposed by earlier dissonance paradigms (e.g. 'induced compliance', Festinger & Carlsmith,1959; 'hypocrisy paradigm', Aronson, 1999).

Despite the somewhat inconclusive perspectives, the underlying key element of the theory is clear. That is, a clash of cognitions should generate some feelings of discomfort in any typically developed individual. Related to the present research, it is expected that unsupportive children may experience some unpleasant thoughts and feelings if they behave inconsistently to what they 'preach' in their lesson.

Both concepts, cognitive dissonance and the previously mentioned discrepancy that arises when children transition from the student role to the tutor role, seem particularly important for the present study and may have a major impact on *all tutors*, irrespective of the participant role they use to hold in a bullying incident (be it a bystander, a victim or a bully). As for the bystanders, who represent the great majority of indirectly involved students, being in a superior tutor role will hopefully empower and motivate them to increasingly live up to this role and practice provictim behaviour even after the actual intervention sessions.

Moreover, even though the primary focus of the present intervention was to promote bystanders' pro-victim behaviours (as they represent the majority among classmates), it is very likely that victims and perpetrators may also experience some eye-opening clash in their thinking patterns in terms of the role they hold in an actual bullying conflict (accidentally as a victim or intentionally as a bully). To speculate, victims may experience a disharmony between their earlier passive behaviours (e.g. the reluctance to disclose bullying) and beliefs, and the literally contrary advice that they will advocate in their teaching. In other words, a victimised student who has been reluctant to seek help from teachers and has blamed themselves for being harassed by hostile peers, suddenly steps into the tutor role with the clear aim to teach younger children not to suffer in silence but seek help and not blame oneself for being bullied. Evidence has shown that, compared to non-victims, victims are more likely to think of less helpful coping strategies such as internalising the issue and avoiding the bully instead of actively seeking help from adults (Vollink, Bolman, Dehue & Jacobs, 2013; Sittichai & Smith, 2018). Taking on the higher status tutor role may lead to an increase in self-esteem which may reduce their self-devaluating beliefs and consequently encourage victims to seek help. Empowering victims of bullying to disclose harassment is a highly important issue, not least because some research suggests that bystanders may not always be able to identify a victimised peer among classmates due to misperceptions or misinterpretations of witnessed conflicts

(Oldenburg, 2017; Teräsahjo & Salmivalli, 2003). This finding shows that although bystanders' support is crucial in the battle against bullying, intervention developers must not rely solely on their efforts.

A similar effect is likely to occur within the perpetrators who, while engaging with the anti-bullying lesson material (see Smart Peer Helping Booklet, Appendix 3.4), may start to question and reflect their past behaviour because their teaching is designed to convey pro-social behaviour and condemn bullying. This should, according to the cognitive dissonance principle, generate some kind of uneasiness. Stepping into a positive role model position may help bullies to feel recognised and gain attention through a prosocial activity which in turn could make the engagement in nasty behaviours redundant.

Taken together, thinking and behaving in accordance with the subject material may reduce discomfort, and restore balance between existing beliefs or behaviours and the newly adopted ones. This was thought to apply for each student in the experimental condition. The aforementioned theoretical paradigms sit well with the present CATS intervention as an integral approach that has the potential to reach *all students* irrespective of their actual social standing within the peer group or the participant role they currently occupy in a bullying incident (passive outsider, victim, bully, bully assistant).

3.1.7 Rationale for the CATS Subject Material to be Included into Tutors' Lesson

The subject material that had victim support as the overarching topic was structured around three areas: i) emotional support, ii) instrumental support and iii) gains from supporting a victimised peer. In the next paragraphs, the author will firstly offer a more general rationale for the inclusion of the aforementioned subject material, which will then be followed by more specific accounts that pertain to each of the three areas included in the to be learned material.

According to the results obtained in the foregoing study of this work (see preceding study in Chapter 2), bystanders' reluctance to support victims appears to be partly induced by their fear of peer disapproval. This finding, calls for an intervention that suggests alternatives of how students can still support a vulnerable peer. The present

experimental study was designed to tackle the identified barrier. The subject material to be included in the tutors' lesson emphasised victim helping behaviours that can be enacted overtly but also in a more discrete manner. This is not to say that overt or public help to victims should not be prioritised when the conflict situation allows safe intervening, and the bystander feels confident to provide victim support. However, if fear of peer disapproval or other negative consequences pose a substantial obstacle to provictim behaviour, then discrete support can be a valuable option. As mentioned earlier in Section 3.1.4, the present study was not aimed to address exclusively a subgroup of students who are particularly fearful of peer consequences as a result of victim defending behaviours. Instead, the CATS approach lends itself well to the promotion of discrete as well as overt victim support behaviours. Even though the extant literature suggests that popular students are the ones who are mostly nominated as defenders by their peers (Pöyhönen & Salmivalli, 2008; Caravita et al., 2009), a less popular peer who offers quiet support in the background might be just as valuable for a victim's psychological adjustment (Sainio et al., 2010). Psychologists' recommendations for the involvement of bystanders in anti-bullying programmes is based on the assumption that their behaviour seems easier to change than that of aggressive perpetrators, and this in turn is likely to deprive bullies of the social rewards that appear to be associated with their antagonistic behaviours, including the motivation to bully (Salmivalli, Kärnä & Poskiparta, 2010; Frey, Hirschstein, Edstrom & Snell, 2009; Herbert, 1989). Clearly, the more students campaign against bullying, the less attention and reinforcement will be given to those who endorse or approve bullying within the classroom. Leaving the disclosure of bullying solely to the victims is critical if these children are themselves fearful to tell someone about their plight, and the acceptance of anti-social conduct over time may lead to the establishment of anti-social norms even when these do not mirror students' private attitudes (Juvonen & Galván, 2009; Gini, 2006; 2007; Espelage, Holt & Henkel, 2003). In other words, if bullying within a class room or the entire school becomes consolidated, it may take even stronger efforts to change pupils' anti-social behaviour into provictim demeanour.

In considering how victim help may be best solicited in practice, the author drew on the evidence of the preceding study (presented in Chapter 2) which suggested victim support should encompass different forms of help, *emotional* as well as *instrumental*

help. More specifically, the findings suggested that it is most sensible to provide different intervening strategies in order to account for the diversity among bystanding peers. One important finding in the preceding study regarding individual differences among bystanders in victim support was gender disparity. Intentions to support a victim in a specific way appears to vary as a function of sex (see preceding study, Chapter 2). While the strongest effects for boys were found for instrumental support ('getting adult help'), girls' results indicated a particular salience with regard to emotional support ('consoling the victim'). Other empirical literature has also shown that girls were more often nominated as defenders than boys (Thornberg & Jungert, 2014; Salmivalli et al., 1996), and girls preferably engage in emotional support strategies, whereas boys seem to avoid this type of psychological help (Reijntjes et al., 2016). Based on this evidence, two forms of victim support were included in the subject material that tutors incorporated in their lesson for the tutees: emotional and instrumental support. Besides these two classes of victim support, the CATS material also consisted of a third area that relates to the gains that may result from victim support behaviours. Together, the subject material was compiled into the Smart Peer Helping Booklet that constituted the road map for tutors' teaching (for details see Appendix 3.4).

In the following paragraphs the author continues to provide a rationale for the inclusion of the to be taught subject material by referring in turn to each of the three knowledge areas: i) emotional support, ii) instrumental support and iii) gains from supporting a victimised peer.

Emotional support. Victims may feel lonely and believe that no one cares about them. Being bullied in public is humiliating and this motivates victims to withdraw from social interactions with peers to seek safety in the problem environment in order to abate embarrassment (Hazler & Denham, 2002). Hazler and Denham (2002) therefore strongly recommend that schools take action to reduce victims' isolation. Isolation is likely to maintain peer abuse (Pepler & Craig, 1995) which in turn can lead to even greater health problems, not least to suicidal ideation (Pfeffer, 1990) or attempted suicide (Carney, 2000; Topol & Reznikoff, 1982). Elsewhere, researchers have suggested that the lack of social support experienced by victims of bullying constitutes a major factor in the development of suicidal ideation (Rigby & Slee, 1999). Therefore, peer social support is important. Victimised children should be

reassured about not feeling ashamed for being bullied as it is not their fault when they are targeted. It is important to convey to victims that it is the bullies who are in the wrong and who try to gain attention and prestige through tormenting other peers. Hence, any kind of positive peer interaction that is intended to *console* the victim can be helpful for their adjustment. Yet, comforting gestures might be insufficient in cases where victims' self-beliefs, for instance if they hold irrational cognitions such as 'not being good enough' (clever, popular etc.), are obdurate. Therefore, it is also important to specifically interrupt a victim's self-blaming thoughts and their beliefs that they deserve the humiliating treatment. Some evidence has shown that there is a link between victimisation and a child's self-blaming ideation (Shelley & Craig, 2010; Graham & Juvonen, 1998). Due to such erroneous thoughts victims may even be unable to grasp the possibility that their situation can be changed if they were willing to allow other people to support them. In fact, Boulton and Boulton's (2017) efforts to explore the effect of self-blame on help seeking revealed that disclosure (or non-disclosure) is dependent upon a victim's self-blame beliefs. In an earlier study with adults, Boulton (2013b) also reported that self-blame played a mediating role in the relationship between victimisation in junior years and adult social anxiety. He therefore strongly recommended interventions that oppugn and modify maladaptive cognitions, such as self-blame, that vulnerable students may hold as justifications for their maltreatment. It was for these reasons that *emotional support* to victims was included in the subject material. This type of support was then operationalised as two dependent variables, consoling and the reduction of victim self-blame (see Measures 3.2.5).

Instrumental support. Past evidence has shown that many victims are reluctant to tell their teachers (Fekkes, Pijpers & Verloove-Vanhorick, 2005) or anyone else that they have been victimised (Boulton & Boulton, 2017). It is therefore imperative that psychologists consider this problem in the development of new anti-bullying school programmes. Of course, victims need to be aware that there *is* help but that they cannot be helped if they do not speak out. To vigorously promote disclosure, it is crucial to mobilise the bystanding peers, who are constantly present in school bullying conflicts (Atlas & Pepler, 1998; Craig et al., 2000), to show victims a helpful alternative to their suffering. This may be achieved by encouraging a victimised peer to break the silence and tell parents and trusted teachers about the

bullying. Victims may feel that they are left alone with their plight which may discourage their help seeking even more. Clearly, peers can play a crucial role in supporting a vulnerable peer to reframe their view from 'I am lonely and nobody cares' to 'there is someone who understands and helps'. It is obvious that instrumental support, in this case, goes hand in hand with emotional help and cannot be strictly segregated. That is, encouraging the target to seek help also demonstrates empathy and caring in general, and bystanders may not be aware about how important it is to a socially isolated peer to be noticed and to be offered company for help seeking. Therefore, based on the aforementioned arguments, one of the learning points in the Smart Peer Helping Booklet marks the recommendation to victims to tell someone about their problems and peers could also offer their company in approaching a teacher or other school personnel for help (see Appendix 3.4).

Gains from supporting a victimised peer. What if bystanders are unable to see the benefits of supporting a victimised peer? This paragraph will address the gains that provictim behaviours may bring about for both the victims and their supporters. According to some evidence, one of the problems related to non-intervening is that students sometimes do not believe that bullying would decrease as a result of victim support and some of them (bully reinforcers and passive bystanders) also do not value this outcome (Pöyhönen et al., 2012). It is possible that such beliefs develop when students blame the victims for getting bullied. Indeed, some evidence has suggested that students tend to make the victim responsible for their plight (Teräsahjo & Salmivalli, 2003; Hara, 2002; Schuster, 2001). As outcome expectations can affect a person's intentions to act and, in turn, their behaviour (Bandura, 1977; 1986) Pöyhönen and colleagues advocate that interventions that aspire to enhance students' engagement in victim support should "target children's beliefs about the possible consequences of defending and the extent to which they value those outcomes" (Pöyhönen, et al., 2012, p. 737). The author regards this recommendation as imperative because even the smallest gesture of help may make a difference to a troubled victim (Rigby, 2000). What is more, considering that bullying is a group process, it seems rather futile to attempt to modify individual students' attitudes and values. Instead some authors have recommended that interventions should target the whole group as this is more likely to produce an environment that eases children's support to vulnerable peers (Pöyhönen et al.,

2012). This in turn may duplicate the effect of restructuring students' cognitions and values, and eventually affect existing social norms that prevent bystanding peers from provictim acts. The present study therefore sought to follow this recommendation and addressed the issue regarding the value of helping in the present CATS intervention. Other aspects regarding to potential *gains* resulting from peer support, for both the victim and the helper, have already been emphasised at the beginning of the introduction in Section 3.1.1.1. For the comprehensive Smart Peer Helping Booklet please refer to Appendix 3.4.

Taken together, the findings of the foregoing study (Chapter 2), together with the past empirical evidence, ultimately informed the content of the Smart Peer Helping Booklet which constituted the backbone upon which tutors were invited to develop their lesson for the younger tutees in cooperative group work sessions.

3.1.8 Gender Differences in Dealing with Bullying Conflicts

According to the extant literature, children's victim defending behaviours seem to be considerably moderated by their gender. Generally speaking, girls were more likely to intervene on behalf of the victim than boys (e.g. Salmivalli et al., 1996; Thornberg & Jungert, 2014; Pozzoli et al., 2012; Reijntjes et al., 2016; Cappadocia et al., 2012). For example, a recent longitudinal study found that 80% of the children who engaged in victim directed defending (emotional support) were girls (Reijntjes et al., 2016). In contrast, these authors also reported that in terms of bully directed defending (addressing the bully/ies) boys outnumbered the girl defenders. In other words, it seems that boys not only prefer to oppose the perpetrators but they also tend to refrain from comforting behaviours that would support the victim. Yet other research on gender disparity confirmed that girls express a higher preparedness to intervene in bullying situations (Pronk et al., 2013), which may be routed in their stronger sympathetic attitudes towards victims (Archer & Parker, 1994). However, when discussing gender differences with regard to victim support, it is important to bear in mind that victim defending predominantly occurs among same-gender peers (Sainio et al., 2010). Sainio and colleagues (2010) emphasise, that among the few cross-gender-support incidences, boys seem to be more often nominated as defenders by girls than vice versa. Clearly, researchers have to be cautious in their interpretations of gender disparity in relation to victim supporting students due to such

inconsistencies in the empirical literature which can impede a systematic comparison of the findings.

Nevertheless, boys and girls can differ greatly in how they deal with bullying experiences, be it as a victim or as bystanders in a bullying incident. As for victims, in terms of coping strategies research suggests that girls are far more likely than boys to consider 'telling someone' as an option of dealing with bullying conflicts in general (Sittichai & Smith, 2018; Naylor, Cowie & del Rey, 2001; Hunter, Boyle & Warden, 2004). In terms of social support Hunter and colleagues (2004) reported that girls were more likely than boys to view this type of resource as the best option for stopping the harassment and facilitate coping. With regard to bystanders, again, more girls than boys seem to tell a teacher when they witness bullying in school (e.g. Trach et al., 2010) and provide support to victims (e.g. Trach et al., 2010). The outcome of the preceding study of this work (see Chapter 2) has shown that the relationship between getting adult help and pupils' perceptions of expected friend and peer approval/disapproval was significant only for boys but not for girls. This may suggest that boys could see their masculinity threatened if they would approach a teacher for help which in turn could evoke the fear of peer or friend disapproval. Indeed, seeking social support and internalising behaviours, as a way of coping, are more frequently reported by girls than boys (Kristensen & Smith, 2003).

In contrast, more boys than girls report that they would fight back as a way to cope with a bullying situation (Smith, Shu & Madsen, 2001; Sittichai & Smith, 2018). Boys also seem to favour the building of new friendships as a helpful protection against victimisation, which has been confirmed as a wise coping tactic elsewhere (Fox & Boulton, 2006). As for the protective role of friendships, some researchers have suggested that peer support schemes and befriending initiatives can be a successful means to help children build more friendships (Cowie & Smith, 2010). Related to this notion, the cooperative group work in the present study may not only foster vicarious learning with respect to the learning points included in the lesson plan (e.g. disclosure of bullying), it could also facilitate friendship building among tutors.

With regard to victim support initiatives research has shown that girls are more receptive to anti-bullying interventions and that they also hold more favourable

attitudes towards victims than boys (Olweus & Endresen, 1998; Menesini et al., 1997). This tendency has been confirmed elsewhere and evidence suggests that girls are significantly more actively engaged in peer-support interventions that challenge bullying compared to boys (Boulton, 2005; Cowie, 2000). This pattern may be attributed to girls' gender specific stronger nurturing, and stronger psychological caring characteristics (Eisenberg & Mussen, 1989). The explanation also ties in with previous findings that emphasise girls' higher degree of basic moral sensitivity that stands in contrast to boys' higher moral disengagement (Thornberg & Jungert, 2013). Extrapolating from the evidence above, it is possible that girls are more susceptible to the present CATS intervention than boys. Therefore, it is important to test whether gender would moderate the effectiveness of CATS. This can provide valuable insights in terms of the suitability of CATS as an integral whole-class intervention or whether some extra emphasis on the importance of victim support needs to be embedded into the CATS lessons (perhaps for boys) if significant gender differences emerge.

3.1.9 Social validity

Given that many school-based anti-bullying programmes yield modest effects (e.g. Farrington & Ttofi, 2009) it seems reasonable to consider the perspectives of the students as the consumers of the present intervention. It has been suggested that criteria regarding the evaluation of school-based programmes should also include pupils' responsiveness (Greenberg, Domitrovich, Graczyk & Zins, 2005). Intervention developers assume that if participants like the programme and actively engage in it, they may be more accepting of the initiative and more likely to benefit from it. Students' responses to an intervention will ultimately also influence whether or not a programme will be adopted and sustained by the school teachers (Cunningham, Vaillancourt, Cunningham, Chen & Ratcliff, 2011).

Social validity was first used in the field of applied behavioural analysis and has now become a very broad and sometimes confusing term utilised in various disciplines with numerous definitions (Carter, 2010). Meanwhile, there is an array of other terms that have been used interchangeably with social validity such as social importance, social significance, consumer satisfaction, ecological validity, applied relevance and many more. The terms social validity (Wolf, 1978) or acceptability (Kazdin, 1977)

have also been utilised to describe participants' judgement of how effective, appropriate and socially relevant interventions are. This conceptualisation will be used in the present study to obtain an idea about whether or not tutors think that CATS is an acceptable and useful intervention. Beside the magnitude of intervention effects estimated from the variables studied, the aspect of social validity will add additional information to the evaluation of the present study from the receiver perspective that would otherwise remain unnoticed.

To provide an example, students who evaluated a self-help intervention that was based on the cognitive behavioural approach reported that they disliked being singled out from their class in order to receive resilience training as they do not wish to feel different to their peers (Boyle et al., 2011). Moreover, they mentioned that they would prefer someone else than their form teacher (e.g. a nurse) to guide them through class-based intervention programmes. In line with this, Peterson and Rigby (1999) report that anti-bullying initiatives directed and implement by students themselves were most popular among pupils.

Other studies which have asked students to rate the utility of new school-based anti-bullying interventions (Cunningham et al., 2011; Booren & Handy, 2009) or cross-age peer mentoring programmes (Willis, Bland, Manka & Craft, 2012; Topping & Bryce, 2004), reported generally positive student responses. However, these studies did not ask questions about social validity per se but addressed, for example, factors such as skill acquisition (e.g. how to intervene, Booren & Handy, 2009), engagement in the programme (Willis et al., 2012) or attitudes towards the subject material taught (e.g. literacy; Topping & Bryce, 2004). In general terms, the purpose of social validity assessments is to provide information about whether or not an intervention is sustainable (Schwartz & Baer, 1991).

With regard to student responsiveness to the three cross-age age teaching studies that most closely match the present CATS design (for CATS' distinctive features see Section 3.1.4), Boulton and colleagues reported high acceptability rates which indicated that tutors (and tutees) enjoyed participation in the programme and considered it useful for their needs (Study 1: Boulton et al., 2016; Study 2: Boulton & Boulton, in press; Study 3: Boulton & Boulton, 2017).

Given that CATS is a novel intervention, with distinctive features (see Section 3.1.4) that has not been tested before in the specific context of victim support, the author was interested in tutors' feedback regarding the acceptability and the relevance of the programme. More details regarding the questions utilised to capture social validity can be found in the Method section below (see Measures, Section 3.2.5).

3.1.10 Hypotheses

In the present study, the author predicted that the CATS intervention would have a positive effect on children in the intervention group but no effect would be evident for participants in the control group who did not receive any kind of treatment. The following paragraphs illustrate the hypotheses/research questions that were proposed in order to test the effectiveness of CATS. This was accomplished by testing five dependent variables (DV), two of which refer to emotional support (consoling, reducing victim self-blame), one which relates to instrumental support (support victim to disclose bullying) and two which reflect the gains of helping (personal gain and victim gain). These five variables were regarded as micro-level variables. The present study also tested a composite variable, overall help, which combines consoling, reducing victim self-blame and supporting the victim to disclose bullying into one so called macro-level variable (for further details see Measure section 3.2.4). These six variables were tested at three different time points, time 1 (T1: pre-test), time 2 (T2: post-test) and time 3 (T3: follow-up test). The two independent variables for the overall participant sample analyses were group and time.

Five main hypotheses were proposed, each predicting that:
"There would be a significant group (CATS, control) x time (T1, T2, T3) interaction for each micro-level DV studied."

Hypothesis 1 - consoling the victim

Hypothesis 2 - reducing victim's self-blame for being bullied

Hypothesis 3 – support to the victim to disclose bullying to a teacher/an adult

Hypothesis 4 - personal gain from helping a victim

Hypothesis 5 – victim gain from helping

Related to each main hypothesis, a series of six research questions were proposed to explore further a potential effect of the CATS intervention. These were numbered consecutively from 1-6 and follow the number of the original hypotheses (as presented above) that correspond with one of the dependent variables.

The following propositions 1.1-1.6 pertain to hypothesis 1: consoling the victim.

1.1 It was assessed whether CATS and control participants would score differently in the pre-test (T1).

1.2 It was predicted that the CATS group would score higher in the post-test (T2) than the control group.

1.3 It was also predicted that the CATS group would score higher in the follow-up test (T3) than the control group.

1.4 Furthermore, it was assessed whether i) CATS scores and ii) control scores would significantly differ between T1 and T2.

1.5 It was assessed whether i) CATS scores and ii) control scores would significantly differ between T1 and T3.

1.6 It was also assessed whether i) CATS scores and ii) control scores would significantly differ between T2 and T3.

Note the same six-proposition pattern, as exemplified above for Hypothesis 1. (consoling), was adopted for each main hypothesis respectively: Hypothesis 2 - reducing victim's self-blame (2.1-2.6), Hypothesis 3 - support to the victim to disclose bullying to a teacher/an adult (3.1-3.6), Hypothesis 4 - personal gain from helping a victim (4.1-4.6), Hypothesis 5 - victim's gain from helping (5.1-5.6).

Hypothesis 6. This hypothesis predicted that there would be a significant group (CATS, control) x time (T1, T2, T3) interaction for overall help.

Testing for gender differences in CATS effects

Five additional hypotheses were proposed to test whether gender (male, female) would moderate the effect of CATS. This would be indicated by a statistically significant three way interaction group x time x gender for each dependent variable

investigated. Regarding the analysis of the gender specific sub-samples the three independent variables were *group* (CATS and control) *time* (T1: pre-test, T2: post-test, and T3: follow-up test) and *gender* (boys, girls). The six dependent variables were the same as in the analyses for the overall participant sample. Note, the letter 'a' identifies the boys' sample and 'b' the girls' sample.

The five main hypotheses predicted that:
"There would be a significant group (CATS, control) x time (T1, T2, T3) x gender (boys, girls) interaction for each micro-level DV studied."

Hypothesis 1$_{a/b}$ - consoling

Hypothesis 2$_{a/b}$ - reducing victim's self-blame for being bullied

Hypothesis 3$_{a/b}$ - support to the victim to disclose bullying to a teacher/an adult

Hypothesis 4$_{a/b}$ - personal gain from helping

Hypothesis 5$_{a/b}$ - victim gain from helping

The series of propositions that were stated for the overall sample were also adopted for the boys' sample (1a – 6a) and the girls' sample (1b – 6b) to explore potential intervention effects further.

The following six propositions (boys 1.1a -1.6a; girls 1.1b – 1.6b) pertain to **Hypothesis 1$_{a/b}$** – consoling the victim.

Boys

1.1a It was assessed whether CATS boys and control boys would score differently in the pre-test (T1) on each DV investigated in the study.

1.2a It was predicted that CATS boys would score higher in the post-test (T2) than control boys.

1.3a It was also predicted that CATS boys would score higher in the follow-up test (T3) than control boys.

1.4a Further it was assessed whether i) CATS boys' scores and ii) control boys' scores would significantly differ between T1 and T2.

1.5a It was also assessed whether i) CATS boys' scores and ii) control boys' scores would significantly differ between T1 and T3.

1.6a Additionally, it was tested whether i) CATS boys' scores and ii) control boys' scores would significantly differ between T2 and T3.

Girls

1.1b It was assessed whether CATS girls and control girls would score differently in the pre-test (T1) on each DV investigated in the study.

1.2b It was predicted that CATS girls would score higher in the post-test (T2) than control girls.

1.3b It was also predicted that CATS girls would score higher in the follow-up (T3) test than control girls.

1.4b Further it was assessed whether i) CATS girls' scores and ii) control girls' scores would significantly differ between T1 and T2.

1.5b It was also assessed whether i) CATS girls' scores and ii) control girls' scores would significantly differ between T1 and T3.

1.6b Additionally, it was tested whether i) CATS girls' scores and ii) control girls' scores would significantly differ between T2 and T3.

Again, the same six propositions as exemplified above for Hypothesis $1_{a/b}$ (consoling), was adopted for each of the remaining hypotheses, respectively: Hypothesis $2_{a/b}$ - reducing victim's self-blame (boys 2.1a - 2.6a; girls 2.1b – 2.6b), Hypothesis $3_{a/b}$ - support to the victim to disclose bullying to a teacher/an adult (boys 3.1a - 3.6a; girls 3.1b – 3.6b), Hypothesis $4_{a/b}$ - personal gain from helping a victim (boys 4.1a - 4.6a; girls 4.1b – 4.6b), and Hypothesis $5_{a/b}$ - victim's gain from helping (boys 5.1a - 5.6a; girls 5.1b – 5.6b).

Hypothesis 6a/b. This hypothesis predicted that there would be a significant group (CATS, control) x time (T1, T2, T3) x gender (boys, girls) interaction for overall help.

Social validity. As a supplement enquiry the present study also included three questions that would provide an idea about tutors' acceptance of the CATS intervention (for further details see Measures, Section 3.2.4).

3.2 Method

3.2.1 Participants

A sample of 196 year six students (M_{age} = 10,5) from six primary schools in the north of England were recruited on a convenience basis. From the overall sample, 143 students (76 boys, 68 girls) acted as CATS tutors in the experimental condition and 53 age-matched participants (22 boys, 31 girls) took part in the control group. A sample of 144 year four students (M_{age} = 8,3), who belonged to the same primary schools as the year six students, participated only indirectly in the study and served as "tutees" in the CATS intervention. Further details regarding tutees' involvement are provided below in the procedure (Section 3.2.2). Participants were predominantly of white ethnic background which reflected the composition in the local area of 94% white and 6% black and minority citizens. Approval for the study was received from the local Psychology Ethics Committee (Appendix 3. 7) in agreement with the British Psychological Society guidelines. Permission to take part was solicited from head teachers *in loco parentis* and all students after they were informed about the study procedures (see the participant information protocol, Appendix 3. 5). All participants agreed to take part.

3.2.2 Procedure

As part of the CATS intervention, the author invited all year six students assigned to the experimental condition to step into the role of a tutor, design a short lesson and teach it to year four pupils (tutees). It is important to note that the present study tested the effectiveness of CATS on tutors – not on tutees. Further details for this practice have been described earlier in the introduction section (see Section 3.1.4).

The subject material for the tutors' lecture was provided by the author in form of a booklet (see the Smart Peer Helping Booklet in Appendix 3. 4) and contained specific knowledge that related to different victim support behaviours (consoling, reducing victim self-blame and support to disclose bullying) and the gains that may occur as a result of helping (personal gain and victim gain). The intervention involved five sessions of approximately 1-hour duration and was conducted during regular school hours, with around one session per week. Beginning with the first meeting of the participants and continuing throughout the entire intervention process, the author avoided the position of authority in accordance with the 'friendly researcher' role (Ravet, 2007). She treated the participants as competent and valuable contributors using a non-judgemental approach. The author stressed that she was not a teacher but a visitor who was interested in new intervention programmes for school children. With this demeanour the author hoped to establish a friendly relationship with the participants that conveyed trust and a non-threatening atmosphere, which in turn would increase children's enjoyment in the process and generate more honest responses in the assessments.

The following paragraphs present a detailed description of the CATS implementation proceedings from session one to five. In session one the researcher introduced the CATS project and read out an information protocol (see Appendix 3. 5) to the participants emphasising the confidentiality of the responses as well as participants' right of withdrawal (consistent with the BPS guidelines). Additional questions from students were clarified first before they were asked to indicate their consent by raising their hands. Participants were assessed on a whole class basis in their usual classrooms, and instructed to focus on their own questionnaire and not try to copy other peers' responses. Students were assured that this was not an academic test and that there were no right or wrong answers which was expected to generate more honest responses. They were then asked to fill in the time 1 questionnaire (T1) which represented the baseline data in the subsequent analyses and the evaluation of the CATS intervention. The author read out each item of the questionnaire, allowing sufficient time for the participants to write down their response in order to ensure integrity of data collection. Children were encouraged to raise their hand and quietly ask for clarification if they felt they needed further explanation of the questions. This was, however, rarely the case with the present sample. While present at all times for

safeguarding reasons, class teachers were not actively involved in the CATS procedure but used the time for other jobs (e.g. marking).

Participants were then asked to form small groups of four to five students. In some cases, the class teacher nominated the teams' compilation to ensure a more balanced group dynamic. The author introduced the Smart Peer Helping Booklet (see Appendix 3. 4) which included the subject material which tutors were asked to include in their teaching. After discussing the content of the booklet with the CATS tutors, the teams were instructed to make a start by brainstorming creative ideas on how to embed the knowledge provided in the booklet into a short lesson of 20-25 minutes. Teams could choose the mode/s of delivery (e.g. poster, quiz, board game, song, power point presentation, song, drama) as long as they utilised a poster, which was the minimum requirement for their teaching task.

Tutor teams' preparations of the CATS lesson continued from session two to session four. During these intervention sessions the author highlighted repeatedly typical team working skills (e.g. distribution of the workload, everyone's chance to contribute and use their individual talent, sorting out disagreements early) and good communication skills (e.g. focussing on the message to be taught, use of different aids, repeating important information, checking that the tutees understood the lesson contents). While the teams were encouraged to work autonomously and take ownership of their work, the author was available at all times to answer potential questions or to provide support if needed. Tutors were advised to keep a note of the course of actions and write a short script for themselves that included their actual task in the final presentation. Each session was ended with a very short update, where each team could summarise the achievements of that day and report open tasks. The Smart Peer Helping Booklets were collected at the end of each session and given out again in the following meeting. As mentioned earlier in the description of the CATS approach (see Section 3.1.4) at no point tutors were told that they were the main target of this intervention which may have induced some kind of pressure, conveying that they needed to change their behaviours or beliefs.

In session five, each tutor team delivered their lecture to a small group of four to five tutees which also marked the end of the CATS programme. After a brief feedback conversation with the tutor teams and a short break, tutors were invited to fill in the

T2 questionnaire which consisted an appendage with social validity questions (see Appendix 3.2). The T3 assessment (follow-up test) was conducted approximately two weeks after the T2 test. The questionnaires were identical across the three assessment points (see Appendix 3.1) except for the aforementioned addition in the T2 test. Participants in the control group did not receive any kind of treatment but were invited to respond to the same measure instrument, as the experimental group, with the exception that their T2 test did not include the social validity supplement.

3.2.3 General Coding Procedure

The questionnaire for the present intervention study was developed by the author and included 6 open-ended questions. The inclusion of open-ended questions in the measure instrument, was expected to provide richer information about participants' knowledge on victim support behaviours and their perspectives on the benefits of helping. In order to statistically analyse the written responses, the original narrative data had to be converted into numerical data. Therefore, responses from open-ended questions had to be consistently coded prior to data analysis. The coding procedure is a crucial part of the data analysis, not least because it affects the consistency and replication of the methodology employed (Syed & Nelson, 2015). Furthermore, to increase the credibility of the outcomes it is a marker of rigorous research to subject findings to intercoder reliability (ICR) assessment (see Section 3.2.4). The following paragraphs will present details regarding the compilation of the codebook and the ICR assessment in the present study.

3.2.3.1 Compilation of the Codebook

There are two main approaches that are generally proposed for the compilation of the codebook, which constitutes the backbone of a robust and successful coding scheme: a theory-driven top-down approach and an inductive data-driven bottom-up approach (Chi, 1997). In the present study the author used a combination of the two approaches to maximise the relevance of the narrative data, and facilitate sound results for the research questions (Syed & Nelson, 2015). This procedure has been suggested in the literature as it reduces the number of coding rounds (iterations) and increases initial intercoder reliability (Hruschka et al., 2004). Relating to the present work, the coding scheme has been derived from the subject material included in the

Smart Peer Helping Booklet (top-down approach), that CATS participants were asked to include in their lesson for the tutees (see Appendix 3.4). To create codes that closely reflect the content of the open-ended data, the author (primary coder) read a substantial number of random participant responses (bottom-up approach) before developing the actual codebook. That is, the coding scheme was developed to enable the classification and quantification of participants' responses. The codes, including their definitions, were recorded in a codebook (see Appendix 3. 3) which constituted the road map for the coding process. The presence of a code in a participant's response was indicated by "1" and its absence was marked with "0". The number of codes applicable to a question varied from 1 to 3 (for further details please refer to measures in Section 3.2.5 and Table 3.1). A code only applied if the response either included the exact wording of that code or if a different wording meaningfully depicted the behaviour stated in that specific code. The codes corresponded exactly to the number of dependent variables relevant to a particular question. Each code/variable was counted only once in each of the questions, even if a participant's response included more than one mention of that particular code/variable. The scores that resulted from the coding process were then suitable for testing the proposed hypotheses/research questions. The following section will illustrate some of the conventions for intercoder reliability assessment and then provide a description of the ICR assessment practice in the present study.

3.2.4 Testing Intercoder Reliability

Intercoder reliability measures the degree to which two or more researchers' coding matches, when each persons' coding is done independently without any negotiation. This procedure is imperative to minimise subjectivity and error. Coding becomes an art when researchers try to simplify the coding scheme by reducing the number of codes in order to reach high reliability agreement. On the other hand, they need to be wary not to sacrifice illuminating information for the study, when codes cannot capture fine differentiations among the meaning in the narrative data (Campbell, Quincy, Osserman & Pedersen, 2013).

There are no clear guidelines regarding the proportion of the data set which should be subjected to reliability assessment. This decision depends on the nature and complexity of the data, and the size of the data set. It has been considered as

adequate to code a sub-sample of the data, especially when time and costs constrain multiple codings of the narrative data (Krippendorff, 2004a; 2004b). Some researchers have proposed the coding of 20% of the total data set as a common figure (e.g. McLean & Pratt, 2006; Lilgendahl & McAdams, 2011) while others assessed 10% of their whole sample data (Kanetsuna et al., 2006). Guided by the above mentioned literature, in the present study 25% of the entire data set was subjected to ICR assessment.

There are a number of reliability statistics that can assess inter-coder agreement. However, those tests that rely solely on a percentage of inter-coder agreement, can dramatically inflate the coefficient as they do not take chance agreement into account. Also, the suggestions in the literature on which reliability test to consider, have been inconsistent (see Hruschka et al., 2004). Despite the criticism of Cohen's kappa statistic (k) for its conservative estimation and its dependence on code frequencies, some researchers have advocated the precedence of this test among others. Cohen's kappa prevents an overestimation of the true intercoder reliability by correcting for chance agreement (Cohen, 1960; Hsu & Field, 2003). For these reasons, the current study relied on the more stringent intercoder assessment statistic and utilised Cohen' kappa statistic which ranges from 0 to 1, with 1 indicating "perfect agreement" among coders and 0 representing "agreement no better than chance". Differing taxonomies for the interpretation of kappa values have been suggested. For example, Landis and Koch (1977), and Everitt (1996) proposed the following conventions, kappa coefficients from .41 - .60 = moderate; .61 - .80 = substantial or satisfactory and .81 – 1 = almost perfect.

There was little training required to familiarise the second coder with the specific codes as he was familiar with the research project and helped with the data collection on one occasion. One example question was utilised for the assessment of inter-coder reliability in the current data set and this was question 1 in the questionnaire. There were three codes which could be applied to question 1: code 1 - help the victim either explicitly or implicitly to feel better about themselves; code 2 - reduce victim's self-blame, by saying for example "it is not your fault that you have been bullied – you are much better"; and code 3 - help the bullied person tell a teacher/the parents/other trusted adult about the problems (see Codebook in Appendix 3.3). Each of the codes corresponds to a dependent variable that was utilised in the subsequent statistical

analyses. Code 1 corresponds to *consoling*, code 2 to *reduce victim's self-blame* and code 3 to *support victim to disclose bullying* (for more details on the coding definitions please refer to the codebook in Appendix 3.3).

It was assumed that if solid reliability agreement was reached for one of the open-ended questions, the two coders would not substantially deviate from their coding concepts on the other text data and the primary coder (author) can code the remaining data with integrity. The two coders read the codebook together and clarified potential confusion or misinterpretations of the codes. After agreeing on the codes' definitions, the actual independent coding was initiated. The coding involved to identify whether, or not, a participant's response would meaningfully mirror the behaviour defined in a specific code. Each coder had his own codebook, the same participant data and an additional data sheet in front of him where the presence or absence of a code was recorded with 1 or 0, respectively. Each coder coded the narrative data independently. The coding procedure required three coding rounds (iterations). The first and the second coding round were regarded as training for the coders to ensure that they fully understood the coding scheme. In the first coding round coders did not reach high agreement among the three different codes. The outcome was discussed in order to obtain clarification on the disagreements that could be related to potential misinterpretations or too laxly interpretations of a code, or even to a child's language skills. In the second coding round the two coders reached considerably higher agreement among the three different codes which justified the implementation of the actual inter-coder reliability assessment. It is important to note, each coding round included new uncoded data, so that inter-coder reliability could not be contaminated by potential discussions among the coders. The third coding round represents the actual inter-coder reliability test in which 25% (n = 51 participant responses) of the total data set was assessed. The coded sub-set was then subjected to code-specific kappa calculations. Following the conventions mentioned above, the obtained kappa values for the three codes that were tested indicated empirical support for an inter-rater agreement that ranges from "substantial" to "perfect" (k = .73 for code 1, k = .85 for code 2, and k = 1 for code 3). Again, disagreements were discussed until consensus was reached among the two coders. In one single incident, where the two coders could not agree, a third coder was approached who then resolved the issue. This good result provided evidence for

the suitability of the developed coding scheme which in turn increased the author's confidence in terms of the obtained findings.

3.2.5 Measures

The questionnaire included 6 open-ended questions that are illustrated in Table 3.1. From these, five dependent variables (DV) were operationalised which enabled the assessment of participants' knowledge on the subject material. These were consoling, reducing victim self-blame, support to the victim to disclose bullying, personal gain from helping and victim gain from helping. These five variables can be viewed as micro-level DV's since they were analysed separately and revealed unique effects, in contrast to composite measures that combine several related variables into one compound score. As can be seen below in Table 3.1 the five micro-level DVs were derived from multiple questions and corresponded one-to-one to the codes in the coding scheme (see Codebook in Appendix 3.3). For further details about the coding please refer to section 3.2.3.1. There were three questions that captured consoling and reducing victim self-blame, four questions that measured support to disclose bullying and two questions that tapped personal gain and victim gain from helping. It is important to note that each micro-level DV was counted only once in each of the questions. For example, even if a participant's response included more than one mention of that particular variable/code, it was still counted as one.

An additional composite variable was also tested namely, overall help. Overall help can be regarded as a macro-level variable due to its more generic nature in contrast to the specific DV's (e.g. consoling, reducing victim self-blame) at micro-level testing. Overall help was employed in order to generate a preliminary indication about what was going on in the current data set. Further details about this composite variable are presented below in the specified description of the measure.

To the authors knowledge, there are no insights in the literature with regard to children's knowledge about the specific micro-level DV's that have been investigated in the present study. Hence, a novel questionnaire was developed by the author to deliberately include unprompted and prompted questions. While the use of unprompted questions can be valuable in eliciting rich and unbiased information, for some participants this may have constituted an excessive demand if there is no hint to the subject matter (e.g. a particular helping behaviour). In other words, if a

participant does not understand the question and is perhaps reluctant to ask the researcher for clarification, the outcome of the assessment would be equal to zero. Therefore, including prompts may help children to gently guide their line of thought towards a specific behaviour (i.e. the DV that was measured). However, utilising only prompted items may, also, have its downside. Children may then be too much influenced by the wording of a question which would allow less freedom to think for themselves. Furthermore, depending on participants' prior encounter with the peer victimisation topic they may have different levels of knowledge in terms of the aspects under study (e.g. types of victim support, the value of peer helping). Therefore, employing a combination of unprompted and prompted items in the questionnaire seemed to be a good compromise. The questions that related to victim support strategies gradually prompted the participants to the specific helping behaviours beginning with no prompts and increasing stepwise in specificity. The first two questions in the questionnaire contained no prompts. Question 3 then prompted participants towards emotional victim support by priming them towards comforting behaviours that could soothe a victim's psychological pain. Question 4 was, again, prompted and guided children to instrumental support, more specifically, to support the victim to disclose their problems to a trusted adult. Finally, the two questions (question 5 and 6) which referred to the gains of victim support included no prompts. More details will be provided next in the separate descriptions of the measures.

Consoling the Victim. This variable was operationalised on the basis of the responses to questions 1, 2 and 3 which are shown in Table 3.1. These questions asked participants about how they could provide support to a victimised peer, and help him/her to feel emotionally better. The code utilised to capture consoling was defined as any activity that involved a verbal or behavioural interaction with the victim that was aimed (explicitly or implicitly) to comfort him/her. This code applied if a participant's response meaningfully depicted the code description (see codebook in Appendix 3.3). Examples of consoling responses identified in the data set were "go somewhere private with them and comfort them", "ask them to play with you after school", "cheer them up and tell a joke". The scores were summed across the three questions and could range from 0 – 3, where the highest score reflected consoling behaviours mentioned by the participant for all three questions.

Reducing Victim Self-blame. This variable was operationalised in the same way as consoling, on the basis of the responses to questions 1, 2 and 3 as illustrated in Table 3.1. The three questions asked participants about how they could provide support to a victimised peer, and help him/her to feel emotionally better. The code utilised to capture this behaviour was defined as any activity that involved a verbal or behavioural interaction with the victim, that was aimed to release a victim's self-blame and negate his/her responsibility for being victimised. This code applied if a participant's response meaningfully depicted the code description (for Codebook see Appendix 3. 3). Example responses reflecting advise for reducing victim's self-blame included "say: it's not your fault, you are not what they say about you", "say it's not your fault and not to feel down", "tell them it's not their fault and what they say is not true". The scores were summed across the three questions and ranged from 0 – 3 and the highest score reflected a self-blame reducing mention by the participant for all three questions.

Support to the Victim to Disclose Bullying. Disclosure was operationalised on the basis of the responses to questions 1, 2, 3 and 4 as shown in Table 3.1. In comparison to the first three questions, question 4 related solely and specifically to the issue of victimisation disclosure. Question 4 asked participants how they could support a victim to speak to an adult about their bullying experiences. The code utilised to capture disclosure was twofold and defined i) the suggestion/encouragement to the victim to tell an adult and/or ii) the offer to accompany the victim (if they would prefer this) to see an adult. This code applied if a participant's response meaningfully depicted the code description (for Codebook see Appendix 3.3). Note, regardless of whether i) or ii), or both strategies were mentioned in the same participant response, the code was only counted once. Example responses identified in the data included "you can convince the victim that it is a good thing to tell", "whisper: if you tell an adult you will feel better and maybe a bit less upset" and "ask them if they would like you to come with them (to the teacher) and support them". Scores were summed across the four questions and could range from 0 – 4 where the highest score reflected support for disclosing bullying for all four questions.

Personal Gain from Helping. This variable was operationalised on the basis of the responses to questions 5 and 6 as illustrated in Table 3.1. These questions asked participants about whether they could see any value in helping a victimised peer. The

code utilised to capture personal gain was defined as some kind of asset for the helping pupil (social, emotional or material) and applied if a participant's response meaningfully depicted the code description (for Codebook see Appendix 3.3). Example responses identified in the data for personal gain were "they will help me back when I get bullied", "I will gain a new friend" and "nobody will bully you because they know that you are strong". Scores were summed across the two questions and could range from 0 – 2 with the highest score reflecting a benefit for the helping child on both questions.

Victim Gain from Helping. This variable was operationalised on the basis of the responses to questions 5 and 6 as shown in Table 3.3. The questions asked participants about whether they could see any value from their helping as to benefit a victimised peer in some way. The code utilised to capture victim gain was defined as some kind of asset (e.g. improved emotional well-being) for the victim and applied if a participant's response meaningfully depicted the code description (for Codebook see Appendix 3.3). Example responses identified in the data for victim gains were "the bullied pupil will be happy again", "you are helping someone enjoy school more" and "it will make the bullied person feel better". Scores were summed across the two questions and could range from 0 – 2 with the highest score reflecting a beneficial effect for the victim on both questions.

Table 3.1 Illustration of the Variables that were Operationalised on the Basis of the Responses to Specific Questions

Question	Variable/Codes*
Three types of victim support	
1.[a] How could you help a bullied pupil, without causing other pupils to think bad things about you?	Consoling Reducing victim self-blame Support to the victim to disclose bullying
2.[a] How could you help a bullied pupil, in a way that will not make the bully/ies pick on you?	Consoling Reducing victim self-blame Support to the victim to disclose bullying
3.[b] How could you help a bullied pupil to feel better about him/herself, in a way that other children would not know about?	Consoling Reducing victim self-blame Support to the victim to disclose bullying
4.[c] How could you help a bullied pupil to tell an adult about the problems, in a way that other children would not know about?	Support to the victim to disclose bullying
Two types of gain	
5.[a] Might there be good things for you, if you helped someone who has been bullied? - If YES, what might this be?	Personal gain Victim gain
6.[a] Can you think why helping a bullied pupil might be a good thing for you to do?	Personal gain Victim gain

[a] No prompts; [b] Prompted emotional support; [c] Prompted instrumental support. * Note, the dependent variables correspond to the codes in the codebook in Appendix 3. 3

Overall Help. This macro-level variable was operationalised by combining three associated micro-level DVs into one composite score which can be regarded as overall victim support. That is, the individual scores from the three support-related DVs consoling, reducing victim self-blame and support to disclose bullying were totalled to create a new compound DV, overall help.

Social Validity. Participants satisfaction with the CATS intervention was assessed with three items: 1) "How much did you enjoy working on and giving your CATS lesson?"; 2) "How much would you like to do CATS again next year?"; and 3) "How much did doing CATS help you learn useful things about helping a bullied classmate?"(see Appendix 3. 2). All three items were scored on a 3-point scale and response options were "not at all = 1, a bit = 2, and a lot = 3" and high scores indicated greater liking of the CATS programme. Responses from each question were analysed separately as they taped different aspects of satisfaction.

3.2.6 Statistical Analysis

As mentioned above all measures had open ended formats (except the three satisfaction questions) and text data were coded to obtain numerical performance scores for each participant which were then subjected to statistical analysis (see general coding procedure in Section 3.2.3 and measures in Section 3.2.5). The questionnaires were identical for all participants (CATS and controls) in all three assessments (T1, T2, T3) with only one exception, the T2 assessment included a satisfaction measure for CATS participants only (see Appendix 3.2).

Following other researchers' practice in the peer-tutoring field (e.g. Boulton & Boulton, in press; 2017; Vogelwiesche et al., 2006; Fantuzzo, King, Heller, 1992) mixed model analysis of variance (ANOVA) and simpler versions of ANOVA tests were employed to analyse the effects of CATS. Greenhouse-Geisser correction was applied in cases where Mauchley's test revealed a violation of the sphericity assumption.

A series of 2 (group: CATS, control) x 3 (Time: T1, T2, T3) mixed model ANOVAs were computed. At the macro-level a preliminary analysis was performed on a composite score representing *overall help* which combined all three victim support

behaviours investigated in this study (consoling, reducing victim self-blame, support victim to disclose bullying). This test assessed the impact of CATS on participants' *overall help* score. At the micro-level the same test was repeated five times for each of the dependent variables in turn (consoling, reducing victim self-blame, support victim to disclose bullying, personal gain and victim gain) which then generated single score results. It is important to note that the author will only focus on significant interaction effects, not on main effects. For consistency reasons main effects will nevertheless be presented in the results section, but they will not be interpreted. The present study tested both between-group and within-group effects which will be described next.

Between-group follow-up analyses. To test for significant group (CATS, control) x time (T1, T2, T3) interactions, factorial ANOVAs were conducted for each DV with group as the between-subjects factor and time as the within-subjects factor. Significant interaction effects were then further explored with post hoc independent samples t-tests in order to identify specific variations at each level of the two independent variables (group, time).

Within-group follow-up analyses. In order to test for *within-group effects* additional calculations were computed for the experimental and the control condition, separately. To test whether, and how, participants' scores would differ across time within each of the conditions (CATS and control), one-way repeated measures ANOVAs were computed with time (T1, T2 and T3) as the within-subjects factor. Again, significant findings were then further analysed with post hoc repeated measures t-tests for each DV to determine differences in performance between each assessment point.

G*ender moderation analyses.* For each of the five dependent variables 2 (group: CATS, control) x 3 (time: T1, T2, T3) x 2 (gender: boys, girls) mixed-model ANOVAs were conducted to test whether gender would moderate the effect of the CATS intervention. In these analyses time (T1, T2, T3) represented the within-subjects factor, and gender (boys, girls) and group (CATS, control) were the between-subjects factors.

There are various statistical techniques, parametric and non-parametric tests, that allow the assessment of significant differences between groups. These tests do vary in terms of their power to correctly identify whether differences between groups are a result of chance, or whether they occurred due to the manipulation of the independent variable. There are specific assumptions regarding the sample data that apply to each, parametric and non-parametric tests. Non-parametric techniques, however, have fewer

and less stringent assumption and are less sensitive to outliers compared to parametric tests. The latter are considered to be more powerful techniques in detecting differences between groups, provided that the assumptions have been met (Pallant, 2013). Typical assumptions that prevail to parametric techniques (e.g. ANOVA, t-tests) are random sampling, normal distribution of scores on the DV for the samples and homogeneity of variance (similar variability of scores for the experimental and control group). Particularly in social sciences research, these assumptions are often violated. However, parametric tests such as ANOVA are reasonably robust of modest violations of these assumptions. As mentioned earlier in this section, the author followed other researchers' practice in the field and employed parametric tests as these should be favoured if the available data are suitable for this technique (Pallant, 2013).

As the size of the two samples (CATS and control) were not equal and the random sampling assumption was not met, the confidence in the findings may be somewhat compromised. Also, an inspection of the present SPSS outputs showed that in some cases Levene's Test and Box's Test indicated that the homogeneity of variances assumption was violated. Therefore, the author followed other researchers' advice to report Wilks' Lambda test statistic. Wilks' Lambda is robust to violations of multivariate normality and can accommodate unequal sample sizes (Field, 2011).

 Nevertheless, in order to obtain greater confidence with the findings and try to rule out potential Type 1 and Type 2 errors, additional non-parametric tests were conducted where this was possible. There is, however, no non-parametric alternative available that would capture interaction effects between independent variables with multiple levels as mixed-model factorial ANOVAs do. Therefore, with respect to more complex interaction effects, the study relied on parametric results. This warrants some caution in the interpretation of the findings. For simpler analyses, additional non-parametric tests were performed. These were: the Friedman test for one-way repeated measures ANOVA, the Mann-Whitney U test for independent samples t-test and the Wilcoxon Signed Rank test for repeated measures t-tests. It is important to note that every result that was significant with the parametric test was also significant with the non-parametric test. Therefore, any interpretation of the findings later on in the results section (Section 3.3) and in the discussion section (Section 3.4) will be based on the parametric results.

3.2.7 Effect Size

Effect sizes (ES) were also calculated since these provide an indication of the relative magnitude of an experimental effect and permit comparisons between intervention programmes (Pallant, 2013; Thalheimer & Cook, 2002). The most commonly used ES indices for the comparison of different groups are partial eta squared (η^2) and Cohen's d (Pallant, 2013). Both ES indices were employed in the present study, partial eta squared for ANOVA outcomes and Cohen's d for t-test results. The author computed ES for both between-group and within-group effects and the exact ES value for each statistical test performed will be reported in the results section (section 3. 3).

Partial eta squared provides an index of the variance in the DV that is explained by the impact of the IV. For ANOVAs, SPSS calculates this information automatically as part of the output. The specified guidelines for eta squared values (Cohen, 1988) may also be used for the interpretation of partial eta squared which uses a slightly altered formula (Pallant, 2013; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Eta squared values that range from .01 to .05 are regarded small, those between .06 and .12 medium and those $\geq$ .13 are considered large.

Cohen's d is a conventional ES statistic proposed by Cohen (Cohen, 1988), that provides an indication of the difference of an effect across groups or across assessment points. It is calculated based on the standard deviation units. Cohen's d was employed to enable the interpretation of the ESs detected between the CATS and the control condition, and for the degree of change across time within each of the two conditions. Cohen's d ES values from .20 to .49 are deemed small, those between .50 and .79 medium, and those $\geq$ .80 are deemed large. An online calculator (https://www.campbellcollaboration.org/escalc/html/EffectSizeCalculator-SMD2.php) was utilised to determine the ES for the results where SPSS did not generate this information as part of the output.

To obtain additional insights of the actual magnitude of the CATS effect, difference mean scores were computed by subtracting a preceding test score from a subsequent score (T2 minus T1, T3 minus T1, T3 minus T2). Independent samples t-tests were then conducted on the difference mean scores to examine potential differences in the performance between CATS and the control group. The results were then fed into the

online calculator to determine Cohen's d ES statistic. The exact values are illustrated in Table 3.3 (column 'd').

Along with the ESs pertaining to the between-group effects the author also reports the 95% confidence intervals of the obtained ES value. Confidence intervals are useful for researchers as they provide an indication about the variation in ESs that can be expected in replications of the present study with an equal sample size.

3.3 Results

Descriptive statistics will be presented first followed by the inferential results. Table 3.2 summarises the mean scores and standard deviations for all variables under study and where appropriate the values are presented for each time point, and each gender separately for both the CATS and the control group. As can be seen in Table 3.2 social validity accounts only for CATS participants after completion of the intervention at T2 assessment.

Social validity. To obtain information about tutors' acceptance of the CATS intervention, participants provided their views about how satisfied they were with the programme on three questions. The mean scores which could range from 1-3 are shown in Table 3.2. The majority of tutors reported that they enjoyed taking part in the project, 'a lot' was indicated by 60% of the tutors, 'a bit' by 37,8%, and 'not at all' was reported by 2,2%. To the question whether they would like to participate again in the programme, 'a lot' was reported by 44,4%, 'a bit' by 42,2%, and 'not at all' was stated by 13,3% of the CATS tutors. The third item referred to whether CATS provided children with useful information about victim support, 'a lot' was reported by 57,6%, 'a bit' by 40,9% and 'not at all' was indicated by 1,5% of the tutors.

In terms of gender variation, overall both boys and girls seemed to be satisfied with the CATS programme as they scored similarly on the three social validity items (see Table 3.2).

Boys

The majority of boys reported that they enjoyed participation in the project, 'a lot' was indicated by 57,4%, 'a bit' by 38,2% and 'not at all' was reported by 4,4%. As regards the question whether they would like to participate again in the programme, 'a lot' was reported by 38,2%, 'a bit' by 42,6%, and 'not at all' was indicated by 19,1% of the

boys. With regard to whether CATS provided boys with useful information about victim support, 'a lot' was reported by 55,4%, 'a bit' by 41,5% and 'not at all' was stated by 3,1% of the boys.

Girls

As regards girls' perspectives on satisfaction, the majority reported that they enjoyed participation in the project. 'A lot' was indicated by 62,7% and 'a bit' by 37,3%. None of the girls seemed to dislike CATS ('not at all'= 0%). As regards the question whether they would like to participate again in the programme, 'a lot' was reported by 50,7%, 'a bit' by 41,8%, and 'not at all' was stated by 7,5% of the girls. In terms of whether CATS provided girls with useful information about victim support, 'a lot' was reported by 59,7% and 'a bit' was indicated by the remaining 40,3% of girls. 'Not at all' was not an option for any of the girls in the current sample ('not at all'= 0%).

Table 3.2 Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables at Three Assessment Points, T1, T2 and T3 and Social Validity (SV) for CATS at T2

Dependent variable	n	CATS Overall M (SD)	CATS Boys M (SD)	CATS Girls M (SD)	n	Control Overall M (SD)	Control Boys M (SD)	Control Girls M (SD)
Consoling								
T1	143	1.65 (.99)	1.51 (1.05)	1.81 (.90)	53	1.45 (.91)	1.36 (1.00)	1.52 (.85)
T2	142	2.36 (.83)	2.09 (.93)	2.65 (.59)	52	1.04 (.96)	1.00 (1.02)	1.07 (.94)
T3	108	2.44 (.81)	2.19 (.98)	2.69 (.50)	42	1.36 (1.05)	1.53 (1.17)	1.22 (.95)
Reduce victim blame								
T1	143	.01 (.11)	.03 (.16)	.00 (.00)	53	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
T2	142	.51 (.72)	.32 (.59)	.71 (.79)	52	.04 (.19)	.00 (.00)	.07 (.25)
T3	108	.38 (.65.)	.34 (.64)	.42 (.65)	42	.10 (.29)	.05 (.23)	.13 (.34)
Support to disclose								
T1	143	.70 (.68)	.67 (.68)	.74 (.68)	53	.47 (.57)	.55 (.67)	.42 (.50)
T2	142	1.10 (.88)	1.05 (.84)	1.15 (.93)	52	.65 (.78)	.59 (.85)	.70 (.75)
T3	108	1.03 (.87)	.91 (.90)	1.15 (.82)	42	.76 (.75)	.58 (.76)	.91 (.73)
Personal gain								
T1	143	1.19 (.82)	1.11 (.79)	1.28 (.84)	53	1.23 (.75)	1.00 (.75)	1.39 (.71)
T2	142	1.58 (.69)	1.49 (.74)	1.69 (.62)	52	1.33 (.67)	1.09 (.68)	1.50 (.63)
T3	108	1.69 (.59)	1.55 (.66)	1.82 (.47)	42	1.14 (.81)	.95 (.84)	1.30 (.76)
Victim gain								
T1	143	.27 (.50)	.25 (.54)	.29 (.45)	53	.34 (.51)	.32 (.47)	.35 (.55)
T2	142	.41 (.66)	.28 (.58)	.54 (.72)	52	.12 (.379)	.18 (.50)	.07 (.25)
T3	108	.33 (.62)	.21 (.49)	.45 (.71)	42	.10 (.29)	.05 (.22)	.13 (.34)
Overall help								
T1	143	2.36 (1.12)	2.20 (1.16)	2.54 (1.04)	53	1.92 (1.22)	1.91 (1.44)	1.94 (1.06)
T2	142	3.96 (1.50)	3.47 (1.34)	4.50 (1.39)	52	1.73 (1.21)	1.59 (1.29)	1.83 (1.15)
T3	108	3.85 (1.26)	3.43 (1.29)	4.25 (1.09)	42	2.21 (1.26)	2.16 (1.42)	2.26 (1.14)
Social Validity for CATS tutors at T2								
SV-Var 1	135	2.60 (.54)	2.53 (.59)	2.63 (.49)				
SV-Var 2	135	2.31 (.67)	2.19 (.73)	2.43 (.63)				
SV-Var 3	135	2.60 (.53)	2.52 (.56)	2.60 (.49)				

SV-Variable 1 = enjoyed doing and delivering CATS; SV-Variable 2 = would like to do CATS again; SV-Variable 3 = CATS helped tutors learn useful things about helping.

As for the inferential statistics, it is important to note that every result that was significant with the parametric test was also significant with the non-parametric test, which robustly confirms the present findings. Therefore, the results described in the following paragraphs, and their interpretation later on in the discussion section (Section 3.4) are based on the parametric results. The non-parametric results will, nevertheless, be presented in parenthesis below the parametric test values in the corresponding tables (Table 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7 and 3.8).

To answer the proposed hypotheses the author has focused on significant interaction effects only which were then further explored to identify specific differences at each level of the two independent variables (group, time). Main effects are also presented for consistency reasons (see Table 3. 2) but will not be interpreted. Note, the hypotheses numbering is consistent with the numbers assigned to the results illustrated in the corresponding tables (Table 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7 and 3.8).

3.3.1 Between-group Results

In terms of the five main hypotheses a significant interaction effect between group (CATS, control) and time (T1, T2, T3) was predicted for each micro-level DV in the study: consoling, reduce victim's self-blame, support to disclose bullying, personal gain and victim gain (DV's relate to Hypothesis 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, respectively).

Indeed, analysis revealed a significant interaction effect for four of the five micro-level DVs tested: consoling, reduce victim's self-blame, personal gain and victim gain, which indicated that participants' scores in the two conditions differed across the three assessment stages (T1, T2, T3). These findings supported the predictions stated in hypothesis 1, 2, 4 and 5 and the exact results are illustrated in Table 3.3. As for the support to disclose bullying variable the interaction effect did not reach statistical significance which indicated that hypothesis 3 was not supported.

To interpret the significant interactions further post hoc independent samples t-tests were conducted for each of the three assessment points and these results will be presented next.

 For the baseline test (T1) results reveal a consistent pattern such that participants' scores in the CATS group did not differ from those in the control condition for consoling (m = 1.65 versus m = 1.45), reduce victim's self-blame (m = .01 versus m =

.00), personal gain (m= 1.19 versus m = 1.23) and victim gain (m = .27 versus m = .34). For all these variables effect sizes at T1 were small, that is below .49 (Cohen's d). This finding answered research questions 1.1, 2.1, 4.1 and 5.1 (for further details see Table 3.4, 3.5, 3.7 and 3.8, respectively), and indicated that the two groups did not differ at baseline in terms of their knowledge of victim support (consoling, reduce victim's self-blame) and their awareness of the value to help a victimised peer (personal gain, victim gain).

As for the T2 assessment (post-test) there were significant differences between CATS and control scores, whereby CATS participants scored substantially higher than controls for consoling (m = 2.36 versus m = 1.04), reduce victim's self-blame (m = .51 versus m = .04), personal gain (m= 1.58 versus m = 1.33) and victim gain (m = .41 versus m = .12). Personal gain was significant at p < .05 and all other variables were significant at p < .001. Effect sizes were very large for consoling and reduce victim's self-blame (d = 1.51 and d = 1.14, respectively), medium for victim gain (d = .62) and small for personal gain (d = .37). This outcome consistently supported the predictions 1.2, 2.2, 4.2 and 5.2 (for further details see Table 3.4, 3.5, 3.7 and 3.8, respectively).

What these results show is, after tutors' engagement in the CATS intervention, they reported more knowledge on how to support a victimised peer and they recognised a greater value in helping than the control group.

Support was also obtained for the prediction that the CATS group would score higher than the control group in the T3 assessment. Findings revealed a significant difference in scores between CATS and control participants. This demonstrates that the intervention group outplayed the controls in the two-week follow-up test for consoling (m = 2.44 versus m = 1.36), reduce victim's self blame (m = .38 versus m = .10), personal gain (m = 1.69 versus m = 1.14) and victim gain (m = .33 versus m = .10). Victim gain was significant at p < .01 and the other three variables were significant at p < .001. Effect sizes were, again, very large for consoling (d = 1.22) and medium for reducing victim self-blame, personal gain and victim gain (d = .66, d = .71 and d = .57, respectively). This result supported the predictions 1.3, 2.3, 4.3 and 5.3 (for further details see Table 3.4, 3.5, 3.7 and 3.8, respectively). It becomes evident that T3 results consistently replicate the T2 findings and they underscore the positive effects observed for the experimental group, and the lack of such for the control group.

A preliminary analysis at the 'macro-level' tested *overall help* which combined all three victim support behaviours examined in this study: consoling, reducing victim self-blame and support to victims to disclose bullying to an adult. Analysis revealed a significant time x group interaction Wilk's Lambda = .71, F(2,146) = 29.77, p< .001 which indicated some variation in participants' *overall helping* score between the CATS and the control group, as well as across the three time points (T1, T2, T3). In order to identify more specific effects, analyses were then pursued at the 'micro-level' for each single DV separately. The between group results have already been presented above and the within-group findings will follow below.

In order to obtain further insight of potential differences between CATS and controls, additional calculations were computed for each condition separately to test whether, and how, participants' scores would differ across time. Outcomes for the CATS group will be presented first and followed by the results for the control group.

3.3.2 Within-group Results

CATS group. As for the CATS group analysis revealed a significant effect for time for four of the five dependent variables tested: consoling, reduce victim's self-blame, support to disclose bullying and personal gain. In terms of victim gain ANOVA did not produce a significant effect (see Table 3.4, 3.5, 3.6 and 3.7, respectively).

To scrutinize significant findings in more detail, three repeated measures post-hoc tests were conducted for each DV to determine differences in performance scores between each assessment point (T1, T2 and T3). Analyses revealed that CATS scores differed significantly between T1 (baseline test) and T2 (post-test) for consoling (m = 1.65 versus m = 2.36), reduce victim's self-blame (m = .01 versus m = .51), support to disclose bullying (m = .70 versus m = 1.10) and personal gain (m = 1.19 versus m = 1.58). A consultation of the mean scores indicated that CATS participants scored considerably higher after taking part in the intervention compared to the T1 baseline scores (see also Table 3.2). All variables were highly significant at p < .001 and effect sizes were medium for disclosure and personal gain (d = .50 and d = .52, respectively) and large for consoling and reducing victim self-blame (d = .78 and d = .94, respectively). This finding supported predictions 1.4, 2.4, 3.4, and 4.4 (for further details see Table 3.4, 3.5, 3.6 and 3.7, respectively).

Note, despite a non-significant ANOVA result for victim gain, out of interest a follow up repeated measures t-test was still performed for this DV. Interestingly, this test revealed a significant difference in victim gain scores between T1 and T2 indicating the same pattern as observed with the other four DVs above. That is, CATS participants scored higher on victim gain after the intervention (T2, m = .41) compared to their baseline score (T1, m = .27). This effect was significant at p < .05 and the effect size was small d = .23 (for further details see Table 3. 8).

The same positive results pattern also emerged from the findings that compared CATS tutors' T1 and T3 assessment scores, indicating (again) a better performance at T3 compared to the baseline outcome for consoling (m = 2.44 versus m = 1.65), reduce victim's self-blame (m = .38 versus m = .01), support to disclose bullying (m = 1.03 versus m = .77) and personal gain (m = 1.69 versus m = 1.19). Support to disclose bullying was significant at p < .01 and all other variables were significant at p < .001. Effect sizes were large for consoling (d = .98), medium for reducing victim self-blame and personal gain (d = .72 and d = .57, respectively) and small for disclosure (d = .36). This outcome supported predictions 1.5, 2.5, 3.5 and 4.5 (for further details see Table 3.4, 3.5, 3.6 and 3.7, respectively). The finding also showed that the positive effect observed directly after the intervention, at T2, was sustained over an approximately two-week period even though there was no additional intervention dosage.

Post-hoc analysis comparing CATS's T2 and T3 scores revealed no significant differences except for one variable, reduce victim's self-blame, where students scored lower at T3 (m = .38) compared to T2 (m = .51). This effect was significant at p < .05 and the effect size was small (d = .26). This outcome answered research question 2.6 (for further details see Table 3. 5).

For all other DVs (consoling, disclosure, personal gain and victim gain) the finding suggests that there was neither an increase in knowledge nor a significant decrease over the two-week time period between the post-test (T2) and the follow-up assessment (T3). This finding answered research questions 1.6, 3.6, 4.6 and 5.6 (for further details see Table 3.4, 3.6, 3.7 and 3.8, respectively).

Control group. For the control group repeated measures ANOVA revealed no significant effects across the three assessment points for four of the five DVs under study: consoling, reduce victim's self-blame, support to disclose bullying and personal gain.

However, a significant result was obtained for victim gain (see Table 3.8). A repeated measures post-hoc tests showed a significant difference in victim gain scores between T1 and T2, and between T1 and T3. It is important to note that these differences were in the opposing direction, compared to those observed for the CATS participants. That is, control participants' victim gain scores significantly decreased from T1 to T2 (m = .34 versus m = .12) as well as from T1 to T3 (m = .34 versus m = .10). In the T1 – T2 comparison victim gain was significant at $p < .01$ and in the T1 - T3 analysis at $p < .05$. The effect size of the former result was medium (d = .51) and that for the latter small (d = .43). For more details please refer to Table 3.8.

Taken together, the within-group findings supported the proposed predictions by demonstrating that performance scores increased between T1 and T2, and between T1 and T3 for the CATS group - but not for the control group. This outcome confirms the predictions stated under 1.4, 2.4, 3.4, 4.4 which relate to the T1- T2 comparison and the predictions stated under 1.5, 2.5, 3.5 and 4.5 which refer to the T1-T3 comparison (for further details see Table 3.4, 3.5, 3.6 and 3.7, respectively).

In conclusion, it seems likely that the improvement in performance observed in the experimental group was brought about by tutors' participation in the CATS programme.

Table 3.3 Results: Interactions (3-way, 2-way), Main effects, and Difference Mean Scores for all Study Variables

Dependent variable	Effect (H#)	Wilk's Λ	Test statistic		df	p =	Effect size		
			F	t			partial η^2	d	95% CI
Consoling									
	group*time*gender (1a/b)	.97	1.62		2,144	.200	.02		
	group*time (1)	.74	25.47***		2,146	.000	.26		
	group		41.61***		1,147	.000	.22		
	time	.93	5.30**		2,146	.006	.07		
	T2-T1[a]			6.63***	191	.000		1.07	.74, 1.41
	T3-T1[a]			5.65***	147	.000		1.03	.65, 1.40
	T3-T2[a]			1.41	148	.161		.25	.10, .61
Reduce victim blame									
	group*time*gender (2a/b)	.98	1.32		2,144	.269	.02		
	group*time (2)	.88	9.40***		2,146	.000	.11		
	group		19.38***		1,147	.000			
	time	.83	14.36***		2,146	.000	.16		
	T2-T1[a]			6.69***	180	.000		.71	.38, 1.03
	T3-T1[a]			3.38**	143	.001		.45	.09, .81
	T3-T2[a]			2.80**	145	.006		.37	.02, .73
Disclosure									
	group*time*gender (3a/b)	.99	.17		2,144	.838	.00		
	group*time (3)	.99	.76		2,146	.466	.01		
	group		7.95**		1,147	.005	.05		
	time	.92	5.78**		2,146	.004	.07		
	T2-T1[a]			1.53	191	.127		.25	.07, .57
	T3-T1[a]			.11	147	.912		.01	.31, .35
	T3-T2[a]			1.00	148	.317		.18	.17, .54

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001; (H#) hypothesis number; a group*time follow-up test comparing CATS and controls on 'difference mean scores'; Λ = lambda; η^2 = eta squared

Table 3.3 (continued) Results: Interactions (3-way, 2-way) and main effects, and difference mean scores

Dependent variable	Effect (H#)	Wilk's Λ	Test statistic		df	p =	Effect size		
			F	t			partial η^2	d	95% CI
Personal gain									
	group*time*gender (4[a/b])	.99	.27		2,144	.760	.00		
	group*time (4)	.92	5.85**		2,146	.004	.07		
	group		11.81**		1	.001	.07		
	time	.92	5.99**		2,146	.003	.08		
	T2-T1[a]			2.47*	88	.015		.41	.08, .72
	T3-T1[a]			3.38**	147	.001		.61	.25, .97
	T3-T2[a]			1.01	148	.314		.18	.17, .54
Victim gain									
	group*time*gender (5[a/b])	.96	2.67		2,144	.072	.04		
	group*time (5)	.94	3.97*		2,146	.021	.05		
	group		4.73*		1	.031	.03		
	time	.99	.58		2,146	.557	.01		
	T2-T1[a]			3.28**	191	.001		.53	.21, .85
	T3-T1[a]			2.41*	147	.017		.44	.07, .74
	T3-T2[a]			.58	109	.562		.09	.26, .44

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001; (H#) hypothesis number; [a] group*time follow-up test comparing CATS and controls on 'difference mean scores' ; Λ = lambda; η^2 = eta squared

Table 3.4 Tests Results for Consoling (following up time*group interaction – hypothesis 1)

Hypothesis	Comparisons between	Wilk's lambda	Test statistic		df	p =	Effect size		
			t	F			d	95% CI	partial η^2
	CATS - Control								
1.1	T1		1.26		194	.208	.20	.11, .51	
			$(3324/-1.38)^c$			.169			
1.2	T2		9.32***		192	.000	1.51	1.15, 1.86	
			$(1253/-7.45***)^c$			.000			
1.3	T3[a]		6.02***		60	.000	1.22	.04, 1.60	
			$(1007/-5.69***)^c$			.000			
	CATS across time	.53		46.50***	2,105	.000			.47
				$(78.76***)^e$	2	.000			
	CATS								
1.4	T1 – T2		7.98***		140	.000	.78		
			$(- 6.69***)^d$			.000			
1.5	T1 – T3		8.86***		106	.000	.98		
			$(- 6.69***)^d$			.000			
1.6	T2 – T3		.41		107	.682	.04		
			$(-.42)^d$			.675			
	Control across time	.86		3.06	2,40	.058			.13
				$(8.21*)^e$	2	.017			
	Control								
1.4	T1 – T2		2.94**b		51	.005	.44		
			$(- 2.93**)^d$			.003			
1.5	T1 – T3		1.25		41	.215	.24		
			$(-1.24)^d$			.214			
1.6	T2 – T3		1.07		41	.290	.18		
			$(-1.09)^d$			.275			

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001; [a] no equal variances; [b] controls score lower at T2; [c] Mann-Whitney U/ z-value result; [d] Wilcoxon result; [e] Friedman χ^2 result

Table 3.5 Tests Results for Reducing Victim Self-blame (following up time*group interaction – hypothesis 2)

Hypothesis	Comparisons between	Wilk's lambda	Test statistic t	Test statistic F	df	p =	d	95% CI	partial η^2
	CATS - Control								
2.1	T1		.86		194	.389	.14	.17, .45	
			$(3736/-.86)^c$			.388			
2.2	T2[a]		7.06***		182	.000	1.14	.80, 1.48	
			$(2365/-4.78***)^c$			.000			
2.3	T3[a]		3.66***		144	.000	.66	.30, 1.02	
			$(1779/-2.72**)^c$			.006			
	CATS across time	.63		29.83***	2,105	.000			.36
				$(55.94***)^e$	2	.000			
	CATS								
2.4	T1 – T2		7.92***		140	.000	.94		
			$(- 6.65***)^d$			.000			
2.5	T1 – T3		5.66***		106	.000	.72		
			$(- 5.10***)^d$			.000			
2.6	T2 – T3		2.48*		107	.015	.26		
			$(- 2.33*)^d$			.020			
	Control across time	.88		2.70	2,40	.079			.12
				$(5.20)^e$	2	.074			
	Control								
2.4	T1 – T2		1.42		51	.159	.28		
			$(- 1.41)^d$			.157			
2.5	T1 – T3		2.07*		41	.044	.45		
			$(- 2.00*)^d$			.46			
2.6	T2 – T3		1.35		41	.183	.28		
			$(- 1.34)^d$			.180			

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001; [a] no equal variances; [c] Mann-Whitney U/ z-value result; [d] Wilcoxon result; [e] Friedman χ^2 result

Table 3.6 Tests Results for Disclosure (following up time*group interaction – hypothesis 3)

Hypothesis	Comparisons between	Wilk's lambda	Test statistic t	F	df	p =	d	95% CI	partial η^2
	CATS - Control								
3.1	T1		2.16*		194	.032	.35	.03, .66	
			$(3129/-2.08*)^c$			.037			
3.2	T2		3.18**		192	.002	.51	.19, .83	
			$(2592/-3.42**)^c$			.001			
3.3	T3		1.74		148	.084	.31	.04, .67	
			$(1892/-1.70)^c$			.089			
	CATS across time	.87		7.46**	2,105	.001			.125
				$(12.75**)^e$	2	.002			
	CATS								
3.4	T1 – T2		5.23***		140	.000	.50		
			$(- 4.81***)^d$			.000			
3.5	T1 – T3		3.09**		106	.003	.36		
			$(- 2.99**)^d$			.003			
3.6	T2 – T3		.46		107	.648	.04		
			$(-.48)^d$			.630			
	Control across time	.91		1.94	2,40	.156			.09
				$(2.69)^e$	2	.261			
	Control								
3.4	T1 – T2		1.29		51	.201	.25		
			$(-1.17)^d$			.242			
3.5	T1 – T3		1.98		41	.054	.38		
			$(-1.89)^d$			.058			
3.6	T2 – T3		.868		41	.391	.15		
			$(-.84)^d$			.403			

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001; [a] no equal variances; [b] controls score lower at T2; [c] Mann-Whitney U/ z-value result; [d] Wilcoxon result; [e] Friedman χ^2 result

Table 3.7 Tests Results for Personal Gain (following up time*group interaction – hypothesis 4)

Hypothesis	Comparisons between	Wilk's lambda	Test statistic t	Test statistic F	df	p =	Effect size d	Effect size 95% CI	Effect size partial η^2
	CATS - Control								
4.1	T1		.29		194	.771	.05	.26, .36	
			$(3734/-.17)^c$			.866			
4.2	T2		2.29*		192	.023	.37	.05, .69	
			$(2845/-2.86**)^c$			.004			
4.3	T3^a		3.93***		58	.000	.71	.35, 1.08	
			$(1424/-4.20***)^c$			.000			
	CATS across time	.70		20.45***	2,105	.000			.28
				$(40.64***)^e$	2	.000			
	CATS								
4.4	T1 – T2		6.43***		140	.000	.52		
			$(- 5.59***)^d$			.000			
4.5	T1 – T3		5.65***		106	.000	.57		
			$(- 4.93***)^d$			.000			
4.6	T2 – T3		.46		107	.642	.05		
			$(-.47)^d$			.635			
	Control across time	.95		1.02	2,40	.370			.05
				$(1.91)^e$	2	.385			
	Control								
4.4	T1 – T2		.89		51	.374	.13		
			$(-.97)^d$			.332			
4.5	T1 – T3		.62		41	.534	.19		
			$(-.48)^d$			.631			
4.6	T2 – T3		1.43		41	.160	.12		
			$(-1.43)^d$			.153			

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001; ^{a} no equal variances; ^{c} Mann-Whitney U/ z-value result; ^{d} Wilcoxon result; ^{e} Friedman χ^2 result

Table 3.8 Tests Results for Victim Gain (following up time*group interaction – hypothesis 5)

Hypothesis	Comparisons between	Wilk's lambda	Test statistic t	F	df	p =	Effect size d	95% CI	partial η^2
	CATS - Control								
5.1	T1		.82		194	.415	.13	.18, .44	
			(3518/-1.00)[c]			.316			
5.2	T2[a]		3.82***		158	.000	.62	.29, .94	
			(2890/-3.05)**[c]			.002			
5.3	T3[a]		3.14**		142	.002	.57	.20, .93	
			(1899/-2.19*)[c]			.029			
	CATS across time	.94		2.91	2,105	.059			.05
				(4.64)[e]	2	.098			
	CATS								
5.4	T1 – T2		2.22*		140	.028	.23		
			(-2.23*)[d]			.026			
5.5	T1 – T3		1.36		106	.175	.20		
			(-1.41)[d]			.159			
5.6	T2 – T3		1.27		107	.207	.11		
			(-1.26)[d]			.207			
	Control across time	.85		3.59*	2,40	.037			.15
				(7.02*)[e]	2	.030			
	Control								
5.4	T1 – T2		2.86**[b]		51	.006	.51		
			(-2.68**)[d]			.007			
5.5	T1 – T3		2.71*[b]		41	.010	.43		
			(-2.53*)[d]			.011			
5.6	T2 – T3		.37		41	.710	.07		
			(-.38)[d]			.705			

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001; [a] no equal variances; [b] controls score lower at T2; [c] Mann-Whitney U/ z-value result; [d] Wilcoxon result; [e] Friedman χ^2 result

3.3.3 Gender as a Moderator of CATS Effects

In terms of gender moderation effects analyses revealed no significant group x time x gender interaction for all five micro-level DVs under study (for exact results see Table 3.3). This outcome made all subsequent predictions and analyses redundant and answered the five research questions $1_{a/b}$ - consoling, $2_{a/b}$ - reduce victim's self-blame, $3_{a/b}$ disclosure, $4_{a/b}$ personal gain and $5_{a/b}$ victim gain, suggesting that the CATS intervention may have a similar effect on both boys and girls. Mean scores and standard deviations for boys and girls are presented in Table 3.2.

3.4 Discussion

The aim of the present study was to evaluate a novel theory-based, cross-age teaching intervention, which could help school children to learn about safe victim support strategies and raise their awareness of the value of helping in a bullying incident. More specifically, this study sought to assess the impact of CATS on pupils' i) knowledge of three victim support behaviours (consoling, reducing victim self-blame and support to disclose bullying) and ii) their awareness of the gains of victim support for both the victim and the helper. It was hypothesised that the intervention would have a positive effect concerning the study variables on children in the experimental group, but no improvements would manifest in participants who were assigned to the control group and only followed their usual school routine. The performance of all participants was assessed at three different time points, where the T1 test provided the baseline measure, T2 represented the post-intervention test, and T3 functioned as a two-week follow-up assessment. The three performance scores were analysed to detect potential differences between the CATS and the control group before and after administering the intervention. In the following paragraphs, the author will discuss the present findings and offer various explanations for the obtained outcomes. The discussion will further consider the issue of effect sizes and dosage, and critically evaluate the strength and weaknesses of the study. Finally, the implications of the present findings for future intervention research and practice will also be addressed.

Note, critical remarks of the present study as well as recommendations and implications for future research and practice can be expected throughout the

discussion section and not only in the designated passages (Section 3.4.8 and Section 3.4.9).

3.4.1 Between-group Findings

As regards the between-group findings, following engagement in the preparation and delivery of the CATS lesson, findings revealed significant positive changes in CATS participants' knowledge with respect to four of the five variables investigated. That is, after the intervention (T2), the experimental group reported more often consoling and reducing self-blame as support strategies for a bullied peer, and they also reported a higher awareness of the personal and the victim's gains as a result from helping victimised peers. No improvements were evident in the T2 assessment for participants in the control condition, who were not exposed to the CATS intervention and simply followed their usual school routine. This is an important finding, since CATS and control participants did not differ with regard to their baseline knowledge on these variables prior to the intervention (T1). Furthermore, this positive pattern of results was precisely replicated in the two-week follow-up assessment (T3), which demonstrates that the observed increase in CATS participants' victim support knowledge was sustained without additional intervention doses. Control participants' performance remained unchanged over time. The present findings suggest that the provictim behaviours, and the increased awareness of the benefits of helping for both victims and helping peers, are less likely to be obtained along a student's daily life routine without any additional input that, in this case, was generated through pupils' participation in the CATS intervention. Taking part in the present scheme required challenging and reworking the subject material on victim support to then incorporate it in the lesson for the younger tutees. Note, explanations for the findings presented above will be given in relation to the theoretical basis and the distinctive features of CATS at a later stage in the discussion, after all important outcomes have been presented (see Section 3.4.3).

With regard to support to victims to disclose bullying, the T1 findings showed that CATS and control students reported different levels of knowledge in the baseline assessment, with higher scores for CATS participants. This outcome was unexpected. Moreover, during the authors' field work, when children were asked about what they could do to support a victimised peer, it became obvious that there was something

particular about this specific type of support. It was apparent that "telling the teacher" generally seemed to be the very first idea that came into children's mind when they considered how to help a peer in a bullying conflict. This observation resonates with Kanetsuna et al.'s findings, where pupils also suggested 'help seeking from adults' (beside, 'taking direct action against the bullies') to the question of what bystanders should do when they witness bullying (Kanetsuna et al., 2006). Together, this notion challenges some authors' views that bystanders' reluctance to support victims may be due to not knowing what to do to help a troubled peer (Cappadocia, Pepler, Cummings, & Craig, 2012; Craig et al., 2000). This somewhat ambiguous set of evidence leaves open questions that require further exploration. It is possible that most children are aware of the opportunity to go to a teacher or parent for help, yet there might be highly salient factors such as children's fear of peer disapproval that interfere with this option of help seeking. The author will return to the disclosure issue later in the following section (Section 3.4.2) to discuss this outcome in more detail.

3.4.2 Within-group Findings

To corroborate the effects observed through between-group analyses, the author also tested for within-group changes in victim support knowledge across the three assessment points. With respect to the CATS group, the findings confirmed the improvements in knowledge from T1 to T2 and from T1 to T3 on consoling, reducing victim's self-blame, and for personal gains from helping. As expected, for the control group there were no significant positive changes apparent across time for any of the five variables under study. While the positive effects in the CATS group generally seemed to persist from T2 to T3, some caution is advised with regard to reducing victim self-blame support. For this type of help findings showed a significant, albeit very small, reduction in tutor scores from T2 to T3. Despite this slight decrease, the improvements measured at T3 (the follow-up test) were still considerably higher than those observed prior to administering CATS (at T1). In fact, in the baseline assessment participants literally had no awareness at all of this victim support option (m = .01). Thus, the improvements observed for reducing victim's self-blame are all the more valuable, and contribute to the extant anti-bullying knowledge base. Future anti-bullying initiatives should address the issue of victim self-blame as, based on the current findings, children seem not aware of this problem

that victims tend to justify their mistreatment with negative self-attributions. Some theorists have raised this issue in the past, pointing out that stressful social experiences also appear to be associated with elevated self-blame for maltreatment by other people (Garety, Kuipers, Fowler, Freeman & Bebington, 2001). Other authors also found that there is a link between peer victimisation and self-blame (Shelley & Craig, 2010; Graham & Juvonen, 1998) which may well persist into adulthood (Boulton, 2013b).

Whit regard to the CATS tutors, the within-group findings also revealed an additional positive result with respect to support to victims to disclose bullying. This result is rather interesting. As mentioned earlier, in the between-group analysis, this type of support did not emerge as a significant intervention effect in the CATS-control comparison. The within-group testing, however, unearthed that CATS tutors significantly improved their knowledge with respect to support to the victim to disclose bullying experiences after taking part in the intervention. This finding is surprising, in a positive sense, since CATS participants already outscored the control group prior to engaging in the intervention proceedings. In other words, if scores happen to be at ceiling in the baseline assessment, it is more difficult to induce (and subsequently detect) additional improvements if there is little room for it. As regards the control group, there was no significant increase in disclosure responses evident across the three assessments (from T1 to T2 and from T1 to T3). This outcome was expected, as control participants simply followed their school routine, and it provides an indication that the engagement in the CATS programme may be responsible for tutors' improved performance.

Importantly, the fact that students seem to be highly aware of the support option of telling a teacher about witnessed bullying, as evidenced in the present study and elsewhere (Kanetsuna et al., 2006) should not be viewed as a justification to omit this type of victim support from future intervention programmes. It seems contradictory that, even though for pupils 'tell the teacher' is apparently the most obvious thing to do, reports indicated that in an actual bullying incident, victims (Fekkes, Pijpers & Verloove-Vanhorick, 2005) as well as non-victims (Boulton et al., 2017c) *do not* consider seeking help from teachers/adults. It is for this reason that instrumental support, as operationalised by supporting victims to disclose bullying, was included in the present study. The notion that victims typically remain quiet and avoid telling

their teachers about the problems have been confirmed in other studies (Naylor, Cowie, del Rey, 2001; Boulton, 2005). This is a problem because it may result in a continuation of the harassment, which poses a particular threat to the victim's wellbeing (e.g. Moore et al., 2017), as they will not receive the social support that they would desperately need (e.g. Boulton, Smith & Cowie, 2010). In contrast, some research also reports positive news as regards bullying disclosure. Smith and collaborators found that talking to someone about bullying problems was the best strategy to cope with the distress, and that those children who eventually managed to get out of the victim status were those who spoke to someone about their plight (Smith et al., 2004).

The results of the preceding study in this work (see Chapter 2), and other reports (Boulton et al., 2017c) provide an explanation for the contradiction that bystanders are aware of the 'tell the teacher/parent' option, but ultimately do not consider enacting this behaviour. The evidence shows that seeking help from teachers/adults is particularly problematic for bystanding students, as it is associated with a perceived risk of peer disapproval. Therefore, it is crucial to raise children's awareness about the importance of disclosing bullying incidents, as this can aid bystanders' appreciation for disclosure as one of several options of victim support. It is crucial to mobilise peer bystanders to disclose witnessed victimisation, and explicitly encourage victims to abandon feelings of shame and actively seek help for mistreatment by other peers. Clearly, the present study makes a valuable contribution to the extant anti-bullying intervention literature, by highlighting and (partly) explaining the issues that surround pupils' help seeking reluctance. Moreover, bystanders who are unable to recognise any value in provictim behaviours are less likely to engage in it (Pöyhönen et al., 2010). Even though the present findings related to bullying disclosure must be interpreted with caution, it seems that CATS provides an important means for raising pupils' awareness of this support option and encouraging them to take action if the need arises.

Another explanation for not seeking help from adults, despite pupils' awareness of this means of support, may be linked to a child's perceptions of self-efficacy in this regard. It has been argued that children only engage in victim support when they feel that they would be efficacious in providing help to a victimised peer (Thornberg, Landgren & Wiman, 2018; Pöyhönen & Salmivalli, 2008). This notion ties in with

Bandura's (1997; 2001) self-efficacy concept, which relates to the belief in one's capacity to satisfactory enact a particular behaviour in a specific situation. Any doubts about successfully performing a particular action is likely to compromise a person's motivation to act. As some research has shown, there is a positive association between students' perceived self-efficacy of defending and their actual victim helping behaviours (Pöyhönen, Juvonen, & Salmivalli, 2010; Gini, Albiero, Benelli, & Altoé, 2008) In fact, a lack of helping skills can also pose a barrier to enact prosocial behaviour (Rigby & Johnson, 2006). Even though the present study did not measure self-efficacy per se, it can be argued that first of all children need to be given the chance to learn about different means of victim support. If they lack this knowledge in the first place, how would they be able to gauge whether they have the capacity to engage in victim helping behaviours. In fact, some evidence showed that children did not intervene on behalf of the victim because they did not know what to do in that very situation (Bellmore et al., 2012). It seems obvious that lacking adequate knowledge on victim helping behaviours would obliterate any empathy driven motivation to act on behalf of the victimised peer. In this respect, the present study makes a valuable contribution to fill this gap. It provides children with strategies that they can refer to in peer bullying conflicts, when they may need to decide whether to help or not. Furthermore, dealing with victim support in the CATS intervention is likely to raise students' awareness of their own potential to support vulnerable peers, and also stresses the importance of help for the targeted pupil. In other words, to increase victim helping behaviours among pupils, it is necessary to allow students to take responsibility for it. It seems that, as adults or teachers, we need to trust that children can intervene to a certain degree, and that they can help to maintain (or reshape) a peaceful and friendly school environment where all children obtain an equal chance to learn without fear. These positive findings may also be interpreted in the light of the theories and the specific features that the CATS design was built upon, as will be illustrated in the following section.

3.4.3 Interpretation of the Findings with regard to the Theoretical Background and the Distinctive Features of CATS

With regard to the cross-age teaching technique, the improved performance of CATS tutors may be explained through the Vygotskyan view (Vygotsky, 1978). He claims that assisting others and explaining an issue not only increases attention and motivation, it also requires reflecting on one's own knowledge. Vygotsky also believes that the social context is a crucial element in children's learning, which may be the reason why helping others deepens an individual's cognitive processing of a specific topic. In line with the notion of cognitive elaboration, the formulation of explanations on a specific subject helps people to organise and integrate new knowledge (Renkl, 1997). Also, the explanation of topic contents is thought to facilitate meta-cognitive monitoring, as the tutors may come to notice their own deficits. Some scholars have considered meta-cognition as an alliance of self-awareness and the intention to perform an activity (Dinsmore, Alexander & Loughlin, 2008) and this is likely to have manifested during participation in the CATS intervention. Even though victim support behaviours, per se, were not tested in the present study, research with school children has shown that intervention schemes that generate meta-cognition lead to positive changes in behaviour (Whetstone, Gillmor, & Schuster, 2015; Holder, Whetstone, & Sheinker, 2008).

Considering the present findings from a role theory perspective, children are very aware of the authority role of teachers, and that this profession has typically been associated with respect, responsibility and increased attention from other people (Allen, 1976). This awareness may result in tutors' increased interest in learning and simultaneously in their higher motivation to engage with the content during the CATS lesson preparation sessions. Being aware of the adopted 'teacher role', it is also possible that tutors make a greater effort to ingest the core information, which than enables them to perceive themselves as more knowledgeable role models for their tutees.

It is likely that raising the topic of victim support stimulated the tutors to think deeper about their own behaviours towards vulnerable peers in a general sense, but also with regard to the specific types of helping. The variety of support options may

have become more tangible once tutors had the chance to look more profoundly into the victim support topic. In the fight against bullying, it is essential that children are made more aware of their potential to combat bullying, and this includes their capacity to support a victimised classmate. In turn, acting upon this capacity will help to relief cognitive dissonance and restore cognitive balance. The present findings therefore contribute to gaps that have been flagged in previous studies, where authors have called for interventions that teach students specific ways how to support a victimised peer and persuade them to engage in provictim behaviours (Pöyhönen et al., 2010).

The positive outcomes of the present study may also be explained in terms of the distinctive characteristics of CATS (see introduction Section 3.1.4), even though these unique qualities have not been the focus of this work. One of the features of CATS is the cooperative group working mode. This aspect may have added to the overall positive outcomes, as past evidence has shown that cooperative group work can enhance students' academic (Baines, Blatchford & Chowne, 2007) and non-academic learning (Blatchford, Baines, Rubie-Davies, Bassett, & Chowne, 2006). Today, it seems common sense that group working skills are highly important, not least when people begin to enter the job market. Yet, some scholars question whether our schooling practice always meets the requirements for engaging, reflecting and social learning (Brown & Campione, 1996). In favour of cooperative group work, evidence further suggested that working together is likely to encourage connectedness between students (Blatchford et al., 2006; Damon & Phelps, 1989), and strengthen the relationships and friendships among the group members (Cowie et al., 1994). In other words, getting in closer contact with each other through team work provides an opportunity for pupils to get to know more positive attributes of other peers which could change, for example, existing prejudice towards classmates and, most importantly, towards victims. In turn, this may increase chances for vulnerable children to form positive relationships with other peers which could help to protect them against victimisation. Indeed, as reported in the literature, being part of a team is likely to enhance victims' self-esteem and confidence as they would not feel that their peers shun their company (Cowie et al., 1994).

The promising effects of CATS could also be explained by tutors' individual perceptions of autonomy and ownership, which they experienced throughout the

intervention as they were free to choose the means through which they delivered the lesson content to their tutees. Beside the minimum requirement of creating a poster, CATS tutors were allowed to devise creative ideas regarding how to get the subject material across to the younger peers. They generated a wealth of ideas, including self-made board games, quizzes, power-point presentations, plays and songs. This aspect of CATS is consistent with some evidence that has shown that participants' freedom of choice within some of the parameters in the intervention programme can add to its effectiveness (Shogren, Faggella-Luby, Bae, & Wehmeyer, 2004). Similarly, Rohrbeck and colleagues' meta-analytic review (2003) of peer-assisted learning interventions in primary schools also indicated that initiatives that allowed pupils greater autonomy tended to be more effective. Having the 'freedom to choose' has also been associated with promoting self-regulation among the general student population (Eisenberg, Valiente, & Eggum, 2012; Mayworm & Sharkey, 2014).

In terms of autonomy and ownership, Boulton and Boulton (in press) even suggested that tutors should have the opportunity to also choose the content of the lesson and the peers who they would like to work with in their teams. Even though both suggestions seem reasonable, it is questionable whether the latter (choosing one's own team members) would generally benefit the acquisition or alteration of prosocial attitudes and behaviours. Collaborative group work may be more beneficial, especially with regard to prosocial skills attainment, when team members differ on this level. This may mean, for instance, that more aggressive children and those who lack prosocial skills are given the opportunity in their team to learn from non-aggressive and better behaved classmates. If children are given the choice of who to work with, it is very likely that they will select peers with similar characteristics, as posited by the homophily paradigm (for details refer to Chapter 2, Section 2.1.3.3; Cairns et al., 1988). That is, children tend to build networks of like-minded peers (Kandel, 1978). Hence, whether it is fruitful, or otherwise, to let tutors choose their teams would depend on the classroom demographic, as indicated by the distribution of participant roles (for details see the participant role approach in Chapter 1) namely, the ratio of bullies, bully-reinforcers, defenders, victims and passive bystanders. In other words, giving pupils the freedom to choose their teams can mean that bullies may select their supporters, while passive bystanders may choose peers

who also keep a low profile and avoid taking sides with a party, and so on. It may be assumed that such one-dimensional group constellations provide little opportunity for team members to benefit from collaborating with each other. Taken together, the positive effects may be a reflection of the distinctive features that the currently tested CATS design amalgamates. However, for now readers should consider that the explanations related to the elements of autonomy and ownership are currently mere speculations that need to be tested in future studies for their potential contribution to CATS' overall effectiveness.

The findings regarding students' awareness of the gains of victim support, for both the victim and the helpers, are also important. Past evidence suggested that students who lack the belief that their prosocial initiatives can decrease bullying prevalence, and are therefore unable to value the benefits of intervening, are unlikely to become victim defenders (Pöyhönen et al., 2012). That is, another explanation for the positive CATS effects may be that, through participation in the intervention, tutors come to discover meaning in both victim support and their 'mission' to help less knowledgeable peers to improve in provictim skills. In a study that investigated the most important characteristics of a peer counsellor in school, 55% of the participants rated 'the ability to offer help and/or advice' as the second most important quality (after being a patient listener; Boulton et al., 2007). It seems as if children are generally inclined to help others. However, factors such as the fear of peer disapproval (see preceding study in Chapter 2), or a lack in recognising the value of helping, can pose considerable barriers to prosocial actions which may then result in passive bystanding. Based on the present, albeit preliminary, findings it seems that CATS can make a valuable contribution to the provictim context through raising students' awareness about the benefits related to peer support behaviours.

3.4.4 Gender Moderation

The present study also tested for gender effects, and results indicated that CATS is similarly effective with both girls and boys. This result is especially encouraging given the robust evidence from anti-bullying literature which typically shows that boys are less inclined to offer victims their support (e.g. Reijntjes et al., 2016; Salmivalli et al., 1996; Pöyhönen & Salmivalli, 2008; Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004; Caravita et al., 2009; Thornberg & Jungert, 2014; Pozzoli et al., 2012), and they are

also less open to participate in peer-led intervention programmes than girls (Naylor & Cowie, 1999; Cowie, 2000; Cowie et al., 2002; Boulton, 2005; Peterson & Rigby, 1999). The lack of gender effects echoes the gender related findings reported by Boulton and associates (Boulton et al., 2016; Boulton & Boulton, in press; Boulton & Boulton, 2017), who investigated the same cross-age teaching design as employed in the present study. That is, irrespective of the very diverse factors that they have addressed in their projects (Study 1: online safety; Study 2: provocation and hostile attribution bias; Study 3: self-blame attributions and disclosure habits), the authors did not observe any gender disparity.

An explanation for the lack of gender differences may be CATS' less formal and indirect technique. The CATS approach circumvents an overt and explicit learning objective, which conveys the message to tutors that a) they have to learn about a specific topic or, in the present case, about victim support strategies, and b) that they should alter their attitudes and future behaviours accordingly. While it seems obvious that this indirect approach is likely to affect both genders, it appears as if it might be even more relevant to boys with regard to the *victim support topic.* Due to the indirect nature of CATS, participation may seem less threatening to boys' sense of masculinity compared to other peer support schemes where boys were more reluctant to take part (e.g. Cowie, 2000). Some boys prefer to demonstrate a strong self-image (Archer & Parker, 1994) which in turn encourages fighting-back responses as a means of victim support (e.g. Reijntjes et al., 2016; Menesini et al., 1997). The informal nature of CATS does not challenge boys' image or status, but rather provides an authority role where they can feel more knowledgeable and superior to their two years younger tutees. This assumption could be tested in future qualitative studies, where CATS tutors can provide first-hand feedback explaining why they endorse this intervention.

Exploring gender differences is important as this can generate relevant information for modifications of existing interventions and for the development of new programmes. There is convincing evidence, as presented in the preceding chapter (Chapter 2), that predominantly girls take on the role of victim supporters in bullying conflicts. Such gender specific characteristics can also influence pupils' reactions to an initiative or to particular elements that are incorporated in the design. An interesting finding has been reported by Flygare and collaborators (2011), who

compared individual components of anti-bullying initiatives in Swedish schools in relation to their effectiveness with girls and boys separately. Indeed, their findings revealed that some intervention features were equally effective for both genders (e.g. the active involvement of pupils in bullying preventing activities, staff training, regular evaluations of students' bullying situation). However, three of the components worked better for boys than for girls. These relate to specifically agreeing clear rules to prevent physical bullying, promoting peer relationships that generate a sense of belonging, and the use of disciplinary methods for anti-social behaviours. One element turned out to appeal more to girls and this was a well-organised system for supervising school break times. While the present findings reveal equally positive effects for both genders, it is also possible that they mask relevant gender differences at the unique CATS features level (see Section 3. 1. 4 in the introduction of this chapter) as observed in Flygare's evaluation. Therefore, it is recommended that future studies on CATS should include a measure that enables the assessment of the unique characteristics and their effectiveness for boys and girls separately. The results could then be beneficial to subsequent adjustments and further elaboration of the original design.

In terms of other gender related effects, it is important to note that the present study did not take into account the gender composition within each tutor team. Therefore, it remains unclear whether and how this may have affected the effectiveness of CATS regarding the victim support aspects studied. This is, however, an idea worthwhile considering in future research, since some evidence indicates that gender can influence the success of cooperative group work (Cowie, Smith, Boulton, & Lava, 1994; Blatchford et al., 2006). With regard to the victim defending context, some reports suggest that victim support typically occurs among same-gender peers (e.g. Sainio et al., 2010). Related to peer tutoring in the academic domain, evidence showed that the very few studies that involved same-gender teams appear to produce larger effects than those that implemented cross-gender tutoring groups (Rohrbeck et al., 2003). Therefore, it would be interesting to compare same- and cross-gender group effects in order to identify whether a specific gender composition would be more effective in the workings of CATS.

According to the present findings, CATS appears to have the capacity to enhance children's knowledge on victim support, which can empower both victims and non-

victims to become more active in their behavioural responses by helping each other or seeking the help of adults, if necessary. Dealing with bullying issues more actively is important. Past evidence has suggested that passive coping strategies in bullying conflicts are less fruitful for ending victimisation, and were related to increased levels of depressive symptoms (Machmutow, Perren, Sticca & Alsaker, 2012).

3.4.5 Satisfaction

The present study also tested the social validity of CATS and tutors' feedback regarding the acceptability of the intervention was generally very positive. The majority of the students indicated that they enjoyed taking part in the project ('a lot' = 60%; 'a bit' = 38%) and would be happy to participate again in the future ('a lot' = 44%; 'a bit' = 42%). CATS tutors also attested that the intervention was useful in terms of providing new knowledge about victim support issues ('a lot' = 58%; 'a bit' = 41%). A positive finding was also that both genders liked the initiative. Overall, both boys *and* girls reported similar levels of satisfaction on the three aforementioned items (for more details refer to Section 3. 3 Results, Chapter 3). The social validity results here reiterate the affirmative acceptability outcomes reported in Boulton's cross-age teaching studies (Boulton et al., 2016; Boulton & Boulton, in press; Boulton & Boulton, 2017). They also echo the findings observed by Vilardo and associates, who found positive acceptability rates with a cross-age teaching intervention which aimed to increase positive social behaviours in a clinical sample of children diagnosed with ADHD (Vilardo, DuPaul, Kern & Hojnoski, 2013). Tutors' positive response to CATS is of great value because evidence suggests that students' satisfaction with an initiative considerably affects their engagement in it (Witt & Elliott, 1985). Despite this notion, it seems that evaluations of intervention schemes often fail to consider the degree to which students themselves believe that a programme is helpful (Rohrbeck et al., 2003; Daunic, Smith, Brank & Penfield, 2006). Such evaluations are important as they go beyond the evidence of a performance score revealed in the reported effect size. In fact, there are initiatives that have been found to fail since children disliked the approach (Cowie et al, 1994). Also, with regard to peer counselling schemes, evidence has shown that one of the main reasons why children reject this kind of support is because they worry about being stigmatised (Boulton et al., 2007). With the integral approach of CATS,

stigmatising can be ruled out, as individual children are not singled out from the group as those who need extra treatment. Instead they are given the opportunity to learn together about victim support behaviours within their usual classroom environment, which in turn enables them to offer their gained knowledge to small groups of younger peers. This gentle and inclusive whole group approach may partly explain tutors' satisfaction in the present study.

Taken together, the present findings not only indicate that CATS has been effective in enhancing tutors' awareness about victim support issues, they also suggest that the CATS technique was well received by the current participant sample. This increases the author's confidence that CATS may represent a genuine alternative to existing peer support and anti-bullying initiatives and is worthy to be tested at a wider scale in the future.

3.4.6 Effect Sizes

To the author's knowledge, this is the first cross-age teaching study that demonstrated positive social skills effects, with specific regard to improvements in students' knowledge on victim support behaviours and their awareness of the benefits of helping other peers. With regard to the between-group findings at T2, effect sizes were very large for consoling and reducing victim self-blame behaviours, medium for victim gain, and small for personal gain. Importantly, these positive effects were sustained over a two week period without any additional CATS sessions being administered. This was evident by a very large effect for consoling and medium size effects for reducing victim self-blame, victim gain and personal gain. Within-group effect sizes varied slightly across time and outcome but, overall, they robustly confirmed the effects observed in the between-group analyses. That is, findings showed that the T1-T2 difference effects were again large for consoling and reducing victim self-blame support, and medium for personal gain. As regards the T1-T3 comparison, effect sizes were large for consoling, medium for reducing victim self-blame and personal gain. Overall, these positive findings indicate not only reliable positive changes in CATS tutors' victim support knowledge, they also attest to the practical utility of the CATS programme in the primary school environment.

The present findings generally mirror the magnitude of the intervention effects reported in the cross-age teaching studies published by Boulton and Boulton (in press

- study 2; 2017 – study 1). In terms of the between-group findings in study 1 (Boulton & Boulton, 2017), which involved victimised students, the authors reported a medium sized effect for improving victims' willingness to disclose being bullied, and very large effects for reducing self-blame attributions and promoting self-esteem for both the T2 and T3 assessment scores. These effect sizes were reiterated by the within-group outcomes. As for study 2 (in press), the same authors reported a positive effect on thinking skills. With regard to reducing hostile attribution bias, the findings revealed significant improvements almost approaching a large effect. The second aspect investigated helpful thoughts during peer provocations, which again demonstrated a very large intervention effect. Overall, the findings here are comparable with those revealed in Boulton's aforementioned studies, as their project involved the same intervention dosage as employed in the present study, namely four 60-minute preparation sessions plus one that involved the delivery of the lesson to the tutees.

Effect sizes provide a valuable index of the relative magnitude of an experimental effect and allow researchers to compare the effectiveness of interventions (Thalheimer & Cook, 2002). Yet, the actual methodological design does not allow direct comparisons with the large body of anti-bullying interventions that have been published so far, as few of these studies addressed victim support per se, and many relied on non-experimental designs. For example, according to Ttofi and collaborators' systematic review (2011), out of 622 identified anti-bullying studies only 14.3% fulfilled the inclusion criteria of some kind of controlled methodological designs (e.g. randomised experiments, before-after/intervention-control group). Another reason is that the great majority of this literature has specified bullying and/or victimisation (being bullied) as the outcome measure and did not explicitly address victim support. Nevertheless, the present findings are very encouraging considering the limited effectiveness of past anti-bullying interventions (Merrell, Gueldner, Ross, & Isava, 2008; Ferguson, Miguel, Kilburn & Sanchez, 2007) and the notion that those programmes that generated positive changes had very small effect sizes (Ttofi et al., 2011).

The same can be said with regard to the extant peer tutoring literature. Past reviews generally attest positive effects in academic attainment for students who participated in peer-assisted learning programmes compared to controls. However, despite great

variations between studies, the magnitude of the effects was generally small. For example, Rohrbeck and colleagues (2003) reported a mean effect size of .33 (Cohen's d) with both same- and cross-age tutoring studies. In a more recent review which included only cross-age tutoring programmes, the authors found again significant positive effects and these ranged from .02 to .29 (Hedges' g; Shenderovich et al., 2016). Cohen at al.'s (Cohen et al., 1982) frequently cited meta-analysis also shows significant improvements in academic performance for both same-age and cross-age experimental groups, but the mean effect size of .29 reiterated the aforementioned small effects. Again, it is important to note that a direct comparison of past peer tutoring studies with the present CATS effects is problematic, due to the variations in the domain investigated (academic versus social gains), the methodological design, dosage and so forth. Yet, a contrasting juxtaposition seems appropriate and necessary, in order to allow readers to classify the CATS effects in relation to other research and in a wider context.

Related to the magnitude of effects in the peer tutoring literature, some authors have pointed out that effects tend to be larger with locally designed studies compared to nationally standardised tests (Rohrbeck et al., 2003; Kalkowski, 1995; Cohen et al., 1982). It has been suggested that this difference may be a result of super-realisation bias, due to the fact that smaller projects may be more tightly controlled by investigators (Cronbach et al., 1980). On the other hand, large scale studies may generate more accurate results as they have higher statistical power to detect effects (Ginsburg-Block, Rohrbeck, & Fantuzzo, 2006), whereas smaller studies may be underpowered which increases the chance of false positive findings (Christley, 2010).

There is yet another issue worth mentioning with regard to study sizes. Tymms and colleagues (Tymms et al., 2011) voice their concern and point out that intervention programmes at the student level, as tested in smaller scale studies may, or may not, prove successful if implemented on a larger scale at school district level. This is certainly a valid argument that should be taken into consideration in the development and assessment of intervention programmes. On the other hand, with wide scale studies the responsibility for implementation fidelity is handed over to school teachers who are then required to precisely follow the designers' plan. Any deviation from the original design, such as leaving out components or reducing the number of

prescribed sessions, would pose a threat to the success of the programme. To provide an example of a large district level study that assessed the gains of peer tutoring on reading and mathematics attainment, Tymms and associates (2011) reported positive but again small effects. While it does seem possible to ensure intervention integrity with big-scale studies, these authors have argued that implementation quality needs to be more closely controlled and systematically assessed. While the present study certainly falls into the category of small scale and locally designed studies, it does however add to the evidence of Boulton's three cross-age teaching trials (Boulton et al., 2016; Boulton & Boulton, in press; Boulton & Boulton, 2017). Both the findings generated in Boulton's work and the outcomes of the present study, seem to exceed the effect sizes typically observed in the past peer-tutoring literature. This notion is promising in the sense that CATS could become a valuable non-obtrusive initiative that may be employed to increase victim support among school children. This study suggests that the next step would be to test CATS at a much larger scale, perhaps at district-level to include schools from diverse socio-economic areas, in order to test whether similar effects can be generated as those observed in the existing CATS trials.

3.4.7 Dosage and Implementation Fidelity

In terms of the dosage and the duration of the intervention, the present study is comparable to study 2 by Boulton and Boulton (in press), where five intervention sessions (four for the preparation and one for the delivery of the lesson) were administered over a 4-week period between T1 and T2 assessment. In their study, as in the present work, considerable improvements in tutors' knowledge were evident, both in the T2 post-test and the T3 follow-up when compared to the T1 baseline performance. Thus, based on these findings, it seems that five sessions overall are a viable dosage that generates significant improvements with regard to the specific issues that have been investigated so far. However, as shown in study 1 by the same authors (Boulton & Boulton, 2017), additional doses can also augment the positive effects that were evident with the five sessions design. In study 1, the authors administered an extra dose of two sessions between T2 and T3 assessment, which led to further improvements in tutors' performance on all variables under study (disclosure, self-blame, self-esteem). Whether an extra dose would substantially boost the present findings remains a topic worthy to be explored in the future. It is

important to identify the optimum dosage, as schools place great emphasis on the time consumption of such interventions within the formal curriculum. Furthermore, it is also important for researchers to bear in mind that the dosage at which CATS is effective may vary along with other factors that need to be considered, such as the characteristics of the participant population (e.g. students with conduct problems or language deficits, ethnic minority students).

Past meta-analytic reviews reported inconsistent results in terms of the effect of dosage on performance. While some authors report larger effects for shorter (versus longer) programmes (Cohen et al., 1982; Johnson et al., 1981), others found no relationship between intervention dosage and effect size (Shenderovich et al., 2016; Rohrbeck et al., 2003; Cook et al., 1985). Cohen et al.'s (1982) review suggested that longer tutoring programmes did not generate greater academic gains than shorter ones. This fact, Cohen et al. (1982) speculated, might be due to factors such as loosening the formal teaching structures, mastery of the subject material and/or the social interactions between tutor and tutee, with the latter perhaps more relevant in dyadic cross-age tutoring. Robinson and collaborators (2005) suggested an alternative explanation for the lack of increased academic gains in longer programmes, which they saw grounded in role theory. That is, it might be that taking on the tutor or tutee role generates a kind of novelty effect shortly after enacting the new roles, which positively influences performance. However, as time goes by this effect wears off, they argue, because the new roles are retained for the duration of the programme. In terms of the present CATS study, future replications could consider longer term follow-up tests in order to evaluate whether the improvements observed here would persist across longer time periods.

Furthermore, Rohrbeck at al. (2003) noted that the variability of effects reported in reviews is likely to be a result of the inconsistency regarding the parameter that has been used to measure and report the duration of a programme, for example in hours or in weeks. It is apparent that an indication of the implementation period does not provide any information about the intensity (hours per week) or the level of implementation rigour which, ultimately, also affects the effectiveness of a programme. Therefore, the time period of intervention implementation alone cannot provide reliable evidence in terms of the intervention effectiveness. In other words, intensive and closely controlled short-term interventions may yield larger effects

than less intensive long term programmes. It is therefore recommended that future studies set out to examine dosage as an independent variable as recently implemented by Boulton and Boulton (2017 b). What is more, with a higher dosage intervention, resources would also increase and this may then determine intervention uptake and sustainability (Barnett, Daly, Jones, & Lentz, 2004). Hence, McEvan (2012) suggested researchers should consider a cost-benefit analysis and accurately report time, personnel and material requirements, since resource scarcity has been a prominent issue in education.

3.4.8 Further Critical Evaluation

Among the strengths of the present study is the fact that the CATS design is predicated on psychological theories which increases the author's confidence that the observed effects are not a mere artefact of favourable circumstances. Admittedly, at the moment this is only speculation and needs further investigation. From the current results, it is not possible to tease apart what proportion of the positive changes in performance scores results from the newly learned subject material that was provided in the Smart Peer Helping Booklet (see Appendix 3. 4), and what proportion may stem from the distinctive design features of CATS (e.g. from stepping into the tutor role and taking on the responsibility for the given task). With regard to the present CATS design, to date, the author can only relate to the sparse literature by Boulton and Boulton (in press), which suggested that the mere exposure to the new subject material is insufficient in inducing changes in control participants' performance. These insights provide an indication that there seem to be other elements which, only in combination with the to-be-learned material, generated the observed positive effects in the present study as well as in Boulton et al.'s trials (Boulton et al., 2016; Boulton & Boulton, in press; Boulton & Boulton, 2017). Robinson and associates (2005), who reviewed peer tutoring studies, also noted that something other than the specific training and the instructions in a particular academic topic, be it maths or literacy, seemed to affect tutors' improvements.

Despite these reasonable assumptions, a related limitation of this study is that the control group was not exposed to the subject material included in the Smart Peer Helping Booklet (Appendix 3.4). Therefore, it is not possible to estimate whether, and to what degree, the obtained scores may have changed for the control

participants if they would have been provided the same materials as the CATS tutors. Based on Boulton's (Boulton & Boulton, in press) research as mentioned earlier, the mere provision of the subject material without any further elaborative activities, seemed not enough to induce improvements in the concepts under study. Nevertheless, it remains unclear whether control participants would have scored similarly as CATS tutors if they would have had the same amount of time to engage with the content of the Smart Peer Helping Booklet (Appendix 3.4). Hence, the effect of exposure to the identical lesson content is an issue which should be considered in future studies, as this will provide additional information for intervention developers.

The present findings make a valuable contribution to the extant victim support literature, through showing that CATS is an effective means in promoting children's knowledge in the victim support domain. This is an important step forward towards decreasing bystanders' non-action and promoting victim support cognitions. However, whether the positive changes in children's knowledge, as evidenced by this study, would ultimately manifest in daily pro-victim behaviours remains unknown. Past research on victim support has shown that although children condemn bullying, only a small minority actually engage in helping behaviours in a bullying incident (Tapper & Boulton, 2005; Atlas & Pepler, 1998; Hawkins et al., 2001). Knowing how and why to support a peer in need is essential, but not sufficient. Therefore, the obtained effects in the present study are limited to the improvements in tutors' knowledge and awareness. They do not reveal whether these changes would translate into actual victim support behaviour changes. Hence, in a consecutive step, future research should test for behavioural effects. This could be done with longitudinal studies, ideally using observational methods or a combination of teacher and self-reports. Victim support or victim defending is a complex behaviour that depends on a multitude of other factors such as displacement of responsibility, self-efficacy, seriousness of the situation (including trivialisation) or a students' social relationship with the peers involved in the conflict (Thornberg et al., 2018). Due to the multitude of influencing factors the investigation of provictim behaviours remains challenging.

To keep the research conditions equal among participating schools, any teacher involvement was strictly avoided during the intervention process, as well as during the three assessment points. While this was important in order to let students take ownership of their task and minimise authority bias during data collection, there was

also a downside to the 'one-researcher' (only) programme implementation. Most of the time there was no need to intervene, as the majority of participants were very enthusiastic and seemed to enjoy the ownership and responsibility for their task. Nevertheless, at times an additional helping hand from a second researcher would have been useful in order to adequately respond to participants' questions or better monitor slower teams that tended to dally. Also, with two researchers it may have been easier to facilitate each tutor's contribution to the lesson. That is, relying on only one programme facilitator may have compromised the effects to some unknown degree. With the support of a second researcher, effects might have been even larger. With further regard to these issues, which ultimately require personnel resources, an advantage of the CATS programme is that it is easy to implement. That is, in the case of a more widespread, district-level implementation, teachers could easily be trained towards guiding the CATS sessions themselves, which would considerably reduce the costs. For many schools, budgetary constraints can be one of the crucial determinants in whether (or not) to take up an intervention scheme (Boulton, 2014).

Among the merits of this study is its high ecological validity. The present intervention was conducted in the natural setting of primary schools, where tutors and tutees could participate together with their classmates in their familiar classroom environment. This may also have affected the tutors' resonance which was evident in the positive social validity scores. Another relevant aspect that typically feeds into ecological validity ratings is intervention integrity. Even though intervention integrity was not explicitly measured in this study, the CATS programme was exclusively researcher administered. Throughout the course of the project, the author placed high emphasis on the procedural details and was able to closely control both conditions (the CATS and the control group) by providing equal support to the tutor teams and restricting teachers' well-meaning involvement. Evidence suggested that high implementation integrity is associated with more positive outcomes such as decreasing victimisation rates (Haataja et al., 2014). Attention to detail is not always easy to maintain out in the real world. Some teachers find it difficult to hold back their instinct of helping out, as they may hope to speed up the process if they get involved in order to save time so that they can carry on with their curricular work. Also, some teachers seem unaware of the importance of scientific rigour, including adherence to identical study conditions, and often expect the researcher to be flexible

and accommodate any of their curricular priorities. Taken together, intervention integrity was not an issue in the present study, yet it may arise in larger scale studies where the implementation of an initiative is handed over to teachers. Therefore, in larger projects where programme developers cannot oversee the proceedings, the use of additional measures to monitor intervention integrity is highly recommended. Related to the aforementioned validity issues, it is important to note that the present study failed to gather social validity data from teachers. Requesting school practitioners' views on this aspect is however advocated, as it seems obvious that the most effective intervention programme will not be implemented, or carried out with fidelity, if teachers are unable to appreciate the value of it. This factor, in turn, may also influence the efforts that teachers are willing to invest in the implementation of an intervention (e.g. time investment). Therefore, future investigations of CATS should include additional social validity measures to establish teachers' satisfaction with this novel approach.

In terms of the generalisation of the intervention effects the present findings are limited to a specific age group of 10-11 year old pupils. That is, it remains questionable whether the magnitude of the effects observed in this project would generalise to other age groups. Interventions that have been based on the participant role approach, such as the KiVa anti-bullying programme, have shown that the effectiveness can be moderated by students' age (Kärnä et al., 2013). The authors found that KiVa was effective in decreasing bullying and victimisation in younger students aged between 7-12 years, but the effects were limited in the age group of 13-15 year olds. Also, positive effects on other factors that were assessed, such as anti-bullying attitudes, self-efficacy for defending and empathy towards the victim were only evident for 10-12 year old students. This age related variability regarding the effectiveness of intervention programmes is consistent with other research that found anti-bullying interventions to be more effective with primary school children than with secondary school students (Hanewinkel, 2004; Stevens, De Bourdeaudhuij & van Oost, 2000; Pitts & Smith, 1995; Smith & Sharp, 1994). A review by Smith (2010) also underscores these age specific tendencies. In an attempt to explain the age moderation effect, he argued that changes in children's development that are contingent upon adolescence and puberty, and organisational changes due to the transition process to a new school, may be responsible for the observed variations.

His development related argument highlights the increased peer influence and the greater importance of social reputation in the peer group as children grow older (Ojanen, Grönroos & Salmivalli, 2005). The latter explanation stresses the notion that students display increased aggression and dominant behaviours during the transition from primary to secondary school, a time when they seem to utilise aggression as a vehicle to establish their social status among new peers (Pellegrini & Long, 2002).

Relating these arguments to the present study, it is indeed possible that CATS is more effective if employed during primary school years, as implemented in the present study. However, referring back to two cross-age teaching trials by Boulton and Boulton (in press; 2017), their findings demonstrated that the programme was also effective among secondary school students. In fact, in study 2 which involved year six and year ten pupils, the authors found very similar improvements for tutors in both age groups in terms of avoiding hostile attribution bias. However, with regard to promoting helpful thoughts, the observed improvements seemed more stable across time with the younger age group compared to the older participants. Boulton's findings provide a first indication that CATS' effectiveness might not be limited to primary school aged children, but also extend to older age groups (Boulton & Boulton, in press; Boulton & Boulton, 2017). Hence, it is important to test the effectiveness of the present CATS study with different age groups, not only with older students but also with primary school students in the grades below year six.

 One of the shortcomings of the present study may be that classroom variation, such as gender composition, have not been taken into account. However, the findings of the preceding study in this thesis (see Chapter 2), and the extant literature, have indicated that gender can moderate students' engagement in victim support (e.g. Cowie, 2000) and may consequently also affect the overall effectiveness of an interventions. Even though the present findings did not reveal any gender effects with regard to the dependent variables tested, it remains unclear whether the gender composition in each classroom (or within the small tutor groups) would moderate the effectiveness of CATS. It is possible that this may not be the case, due to the indirect and inclusive nature of the CATS approach, including the aspects of autonomy and freedom which may prevent inner resistance towards the prosocial behaviours covered in the subject material. Recent research advocates that developers of new

anti-bullying interventions should also consider the classroom characteristics as part of the evaluation of the programmes (e.g. Pozzoli et al., 2012). Hence, the analysis of the CATS effects at class and group level is recommended, as this will generate the evidence for what, so far, is merely the author's speculation.

The present study did not set out to test the overall benefit of the CATS programme, which could include the additional assessment of tutees' improvements on the victim support aspects studied. This, however, does not curtail the contribution of the present findings to the anti-bullying and peer support body of knowledge. Despite the speculation by some authors that the benefit of peer tutoring schemes is greater for the tutors than for the tutees (Robinson et al., 2005), this cannot be confirmed from the present study. In fact, Boulton et al.'s (2016) pilot study on improving students' knowledge on online safety issues provides a first indication that cross-age teaching, as operationalised and implemented in the present format, can benefit both tutors and tutees. The observed effectiveness was nonetheless considerably lower for the tutees than that recorded for the tutors. So, the evidence here appears to be ambiguous. Since Boulton's pilot study did not concern social matters, as is the case with the majority of traditional peer tutoring schemes, it may be suggested to test CATS with the present social content for potential improvements in tutees' knowledge. The following section will highlight some of the implications that the present study may have on future research and school practice in the context of victim of bullying support.

3.4.9 Implications for Future Research and Practice

A collateral effect that CATS may also bring about, is for children to recognise how influential and valuable each of them is (and can be) as a peer supporter for a victimised student, as well as the potential for their wider contribution to shape a positive and non-violent school climate. It could be anticipated that an increased awareness of one's own value and potential may spark subsequent enthusiasms for future prosocial demeanour. Earlier studies investigating the effects of peer and cross-age tutoring on academic achievement reported spill-over effects that refer to positive outcomes beyond the tutored subject matter. Examples include positive attitudes towards the academic subject tutored (Cohen et al., 1982) and towards school in general (Ponzio & Peterson, 1999), as well as increases in tutors' on-task

time (Ginsburg-Block & Fantuzzo, 1997). Thus, it seems worthwhile to investigate potential side effects of CATS in future studies, such as positive attitudes towards learning, perceptions of safety in school, friendly and caring class climate, and effects on school ethos. Another important effect which researchers who evaluate CATS should be on the lookout for, is quality relationships among classmates. Positive relationships are key, and recent empirical studies continue to demonstrate this by showing that children are more likely to support victims of bullying in classrooms where student-student relationship quantity is high compared to classes where it is low (Thornberg et al., 2017). It is very likely that CATS' cooperative teamwork element strengthens the relationships among pupils, and perhaps creates new alliances with vulnerable children who may otherwise be avoided and who are denied the chance to make friends within the classroom community. This in turn may positively affect the cohesion and atmosphere in class which would make it somewhat easier for low status children to thrive and enjoy their school life.

To date, it is unclear whether CATS would be superior to other peer-led interventions in the domain of anti-bullying programmes as this is a novel programme based on a combination of distinctive features. CATS, in its present format, has never been compared directly to other peer support schemes or peer-led anti-bullying initiatives. Therefore, the author cannot claim that the present intervention would be more effective than alternative programmes that are directed by pupils and involve a similar dosage and duration. Future studies could compare CATS' effectiveness against other peer support initiatives, such as those developed by Cowie and collaborators (Cowie, 1998; Cowie et al., 2002; Naylor & Cowie, 1999; Cowie & Olafsson, 2000). Such an evaluation could provide insights as to how CATS compares to other programmes' effectiveness.

Regarding the effectiveness of CATS, the author assumes that it is the result of the combination of the specific elements in the design, such as the inclusive format, the cooperative group working mode, and the degree of autonomy and ownership that are responsible for the success of this study. This is, however, only speculation, and future studies could set out to identify which elements contribute in particular to the positive effects and which are less relevant. Researchers could manipulate these elements and include a measure that directly inquires pupils' views on the most important components of CATS. The findings could then be utilised to further adjust

and refine the current format, if necessary. The continued development of intervention programmes is crucial to ascertain effective practices. To date, in many countries schools are legally required to have some kind of anti-bullying policy in place (Smith, 2014). However, some researchers have argued that this might not be sufficient since schools may necessitate professional guidance on initiatives that were rigorously assessed in terms of their quality and effectiveness. To support schools in choosing effective anti-bullying pre-/interventions, psychologists have advocated the development of a benchmark system to rate the effectiveness of programmes (e.g. Menesini & Salmivalli, 2017; Farrington & Ttofi, 2009).

3.4.9.1 Inform Teachers about Underlying Theory

Based on the preliminary, positive effects of CATS on promoting victim support behaviours, and tutors' positive feedback to the programme, the present intervention seems very promising with regard to the aspects tested. However, the available evidence of CATS' effectiveness, and the high satisfaction of participants, may not be sufficient for the programme to be taken up in school practice if facilitators themselves do not understand the underlying mechanisms that contribute to the effectiveness. There is evidence that the uptake of interventions in the past has failed if teachers cannot grasp the underlying psychological factors, or are inflexible to deviate from their usual routine (e.g. Cowie, et al., 1994). Hence, it may be helpful to investigate the degree to which teachers understand the underlying mechanisms upon which CATS has been designed. In the case of a lack of sufficient teacher knowledge, it is important to expose teachers *and* policymakers to the theoretical background to make it more transparent to them how and why the CATS approach may work. After ensuring that teachers comprehend the basic theoretical underpinnings, they can then more readily be trained to employ CATS themselves in their schools, which would enable larger scale implementations at district-level. It would then be interesting to compare researcher administered study findings with teacher directed study results, in order to identify whether and how effect sizes and participants' social validity ratings would be affected, depending on the facilitator of the programme. As mentioned earlier in the introduction (see Section 3.1.2), teacher-led anti-bullying initiatives have partly received negative feedback from students.

3.4.9.2 Resources

It is important to mention that the majority of students in the present study were well behaved children from non-problematic backgrounds, which may have facilitated group work activities and lowered the risk of interpersonal conflicts among group members. This may also have influenced tutors' performance scores in the two post-intervention assessments. Therefore, the author suggests the current CATS design should also be replicated with pupils from more troubled backgrounds with more difficult demeanour, to test whether the present results can be confirmed with diverse student populations. Working with well behaved pupils also helped the author to tightly control tutors' engagement in the five intervention sessions. However, there were times when it was not possible to assist each participant or each team with their ideas and questions during the cooperative group work sessions. This may have discouraged some of the CATS tutors who were highly motivated, and may have had relevant questions to ask which ultimately remained unnoticed. This issue concerns the aforementioned aspect as regards the work with more challenging pupils, where one researcher alone may be unable to professionally implement CATS. Related to both aspects, future replications of the present study may test CATS with the guidance of two researchers, and compare the effects to the outcomes in this work and to those obtained from more diverse participant samples.

Related to this aspect is also the issue of the resources required to implement the intervention. That is, the implementation of CATS in more challenging schools will inevitably call for higher resources in terms of personnel to administer the programme. With an increasing number of disruptive students, it is likely that interpersonal conflicts among participants will also amplify. Hence, it would most certainly need more than one facilitator to implement CATS with integrity, and any compromise in this respect may affect the effectiveness and in turn restrain accurate comparisons of findings across studies. Nevertheless, it is important and worthwhile to test CATS in schools with high bullying rates, as those pupils may need such supporting measures most. CATS can contribute in this respect by initiating positive changes in pupils' awareness of provictim behaviours. Indeed, evidence has shown that, for vulnerable students, the risk of being bullied seems to be lower in

classrooms where at least some students intervene to support a victimised classmate (e.g. Kärnä et al., 2010).

3.4.9.3 Cooperative Group Work Skills

With regard to the resourcing of tutoring programmes, more than three decades ago Bloom (1984) pointed out the necessity for effective group teaching since one-to-one assistance is far too costly. His argument is still, or even more, valid today even though Bloom's argument referred to peer-tutoring initiatives for academic subjects and to tutees' attainment, while the present study addresses social issues on the part of the tutors. A distinctive feature and strength of the CATS approach is its cooperative group working mode. In Western Europe, cooperative group work skills for school children have become probably even more important with the recent immigration wave of people from troubled countries. In order to integrate such great numbers of children with very diverse ethnic backgrounds, it is not sufficient to build new schools and employ more teaching personnel to accommodate the increased demand. As psychologists, we know that it takes more than that for a child to be successful in school. That is, immigrated children need to be socially integrated in the school environment, which can only be achieved if they receive sufficient opportunities and support to build good social relationships with their peers in the new class community. This is a vital process, and failure in this regard could lead to increased discrimination and bullying amongst pupils. Therefore, it appears reasonable to initiate integration as soon as possible, and from a developmental perspective, primary school age seems an appropriate period (Cowie, et al., 1994), if it has not been commenced earlier. CATS's cooperative nature appears suitable for bringing together children from various backgrounds to work on a common task. As proposed by Cowie and colleagues (Cowie, et al., 1994), cooperative work can aid interaction between multi-ethnic students who might otherwise dread to connect with other peers. The CATS approach could be employed as a preventative measure in this instance, as it has the potential to accommodate any social or cultural topic. This in turn can foster a better understanding for each other's unfamiliar customs or rituals, which may prevent hostile reactions and nip bullying behaviours in the bud.

3.4.9.4 Social Validity

The social validity of an intervention in terms of its acceptability and satisfaction to students is not a trivial issue, as it can provide valuable feedback from participants on specific elements in a template which then informs developers to adjust parameters to receivers needs (Schwartz & Bear, 1991). Kazdin (1980) pointed out that there might be number of treatments with similar efficacy, however, it is also important to know whether they are equally acceptable to the receivers of the initiative. That is, it is not sufficient for an intervention to be effective with regard to the impact of an agent on the resolution of a problem, it must also be convenient and satisfy factors that are valued by the consumers (i.e. to avoid stigmatising). Related to CATS, future studies could expand on the social validity measures utilised in the present study and include more specific questions that are explicitly directed to each of the distinctive features of CATS. This would generate detailed feedback from tutors about the distinctive elements of the intervention that they consider most relevant. In turn, this will enable researchers in future trials to identify the elements that contribute (and those that do not) to the overall acceptability of the CATS programme which would allow adjustments to the original design which take into account the views of the children whom the intervention concerns most.

3.4.9.5 Consider Victims' Perspectives on an Initiative

Related to the issue of victim support, it seems also important for future research to address the question of how victims feel about being supported. To date, there is little evidence around this matter with specific regard to bullying victimisation. What we know from the scant literature is that victims of bullying who have some kind of peer or friend support fare better than those without (e.g. Kärnä, et al., 2010; Sainio, et al., 2010). Findings from peer support initiatives have shown that most children who used the scheme found it very helpful to have such a service in their schools (e.g. Cowie et al., 2002; Smith & Watson, 2004) Yet, insights from other research areas, such as the peer tutoring domain, raise a slight concern in the sense that children who receive support from fellow students in academic matters can feel inadequate or ashamed for necessitating support (e.g. Schofield, 1980). This, however, is unlikely to occur with CATS as this technique integrates all pupils in

class in the proceedings from the very start, without selecting those who lack prosocial (provictim) skills. Thus, with the CATS approach stigmatising can be avoided. Nevertheless, it is imperative that future prevention/intervention schemes consider this issue and initiate 'campaigns' that help victims and non-victims to learn that it is not justified for bullied children to feel ashamed, nor if they need help for being unjustly tormented. Every child needs to understand that it is the bullies who are in the wrong. Children, and victims in particular, have to learn about maladaptive thinking patterns and, most importantly, that negative thoughts can be abandoned and replaced with positive ones which will make them feel better about themselves (Boulton & Boulton, in press). Again, by tackling this topic with an inclusive approach, such as CATS, we can ensure that all pupils in a classroom receive the same 'message'. This is likely to also alter uninvolved students' (passive bystanders') attitudes towards victims and stop them blaming the targeted peer (Thornberg et al., 2018) or feeling ashamed to support a victim of bullying. Moreover, it would be sensible to initiate preventative measures that deal with shame and embarrassment topics since this may equip students with helpful thoughts prior to an actual incident which may then facilitate help seeking at a very early stage. This would mean that interpersonal conflicts can be resolved as soon as they arise and are not left to consolidate or develop into severe bullying attacks.

Related to the help seeking aspect, one of the learning points in the present study was that peers should encourage victims to disclose being bullied and seek help from teachers and/or parents, as well as to offer their company if victims feel apprehensive to do so themselves. As already mentioned above, "tell the teacher" was a very common response among year six students when they were asked how they could help a victimised peer. Based on the present results, it could be assumed that there is no need to particularly emphasise this specific type of victim support. However, there is ample evidence from the empirical literature showing that many children do not disclose bullying (e.g. Boulton, 2005; Naylor et al., 2001; Fekkes et al., 2005) and this is a serious issue that must be addressed. Future studies should therefore refine and adjust the present questionnaire (see Appendix 3.1) by supplementing the measures with additional items that would tap children's knowledge and awareness of more specific aspects of disclosure or help seeking. For instance, questions could address the importance or value of disclosing victimisation, for both the victim and

the bystanding peers, in stopping continued bullying. To date, we do not know whether children are aware of the importance of speaking out in our fight to reduce bullying in schools. The present study aimed to raise pupils' awareness about the value of helping others in a more general sense, including the gains for the victim and the supporters, but not about the value of disclosing bullying aggression per se. Past evidence, however, indicates that boys, in particular, are reluctant to disclose bullying to anyone (Cowie, 2000). Other evidence suggested that children only engage in victim defending if they believe that their initiative will lead to some kind of improvement of the situation in question (Pöyhönen et al., 2010). The latter finding, again, related to overall victim support behaviour and not explicitly to the disclosure issue. "Telling the teacher" seems a very sensitive topic among students not least because it appears to be associated with fear of peer disapproval (see preceding study of this thesis in Chapter 2). Yet, without disclosing bullying experiences victims cannot be helped. Therefore, future studies should expand the 'to be learned' material and adjust the present scales accordingly in order to address this topic in more depth. We need to facilitate understanding on what children already know and what they think regarding bullying disclosure. Having children reiterate "tell the teacher" but ultimately not enact the verbally pronounced behaviour, leaves many open questions that psychologist and school practitioners need to tackle.

3.5 Summary

The present study provides evidence for the effectiveness and the feasibility of a novel cross-age teaching of social issues intervention on enhancing students' knowledge and awareness of victim support strategies and the value of helping for both the victim and the helper. This study employed an experimental-control group design to compare the performance of the intervention group with the control sample on three different occasions: at baseline, post-intervention, and at a two week follow-up test. Participants in the experimental group consisted of year six pupils, who stepped into the tutor role to prepare a lesson on victim support related issues and teach it to two years younger peers. The same-aged control participants were not exposed to any treatment and followed their usual school routine. The positive findings suggested that this relatively brief and cost-efficient intervention can improve students' knowledge with regard to victim consoling behaviours and strategies to reducing victim self-blame. Despite a non-significant effect for support

to disclose bullying in the CATS-control comparison, the within-group analysis revealed that after participating in the intervention, CATS participants' knowledge significantly improved in this aspect. No positive effects were evident for the control group. Additional findings resulting from the CAT-control group comparison indicated that only the intervention group benefited from an improved awareness as regards the value of helping for both the victim and the helping peer. Importantly, the findings suggested that the observed benefits for CATS tutors were sustained over a two week period, without any supplementary intervention doses. Increased knowledge and awareness in this respect can help pupils identify with troubled peers and become more empathic towards them, which may bring classmates closer together and strengthen their relationships long term. These prolific findings were explained with regard to the distinctive characteristics on which the CATS approach is based. Features such as the non-stigmatising format, the acquisition of a prestigious role, the freedom to choose some of the elements in the course of the programme, and taking ownership for the task were assumed to be responsible for the success of this study.

Having measures like CATS in our schools which, at the same time, sensitise pupils' awareness of antisocial behaviours, may help them to detect bullying early and proactively challenge it before it becomes normative in classrooms. Early detection of bullying and early interventive measures are important as this can prevent long term health risks for victims. Clearly, more work is needed to cultivate pro-victim behaviours, compassion and moral attitudes. Therefore, discussing these topics in schools cannot be commenced early enough as pro-social skills, just like traumatising experiences, are likely to affect children's development seamlessly into adulthood. The positive findings of the present study suggest the continuation of research efforts on the CATS programme. The most effective (pre)intervention will only be found through continuous sharing of new insights between programme developers and school practitioners, while not ignoring students' perspectives.

Chapter 4   Summary, Conclusions and Personal Reflections

This chapter provides a summary of the main findings from each of the two studies in this thesis that were presented in the Chapters two and three. The following paragraphs will also outline some concluding remarks which emerged from research practice in schools and spawn suggestions and implications for future research. The final section alludes to the contribution of this work towards the knowledge base in the anti-bullying and victim support field.

The aim of the present thesis was twofold. It firstly set out to explore factors that may predict pupils' intentions to support victims of bullying in the school environment. Secondly, this research assessed the effectiveness of a novel cross-age teaching of social issues intervention on enhancing pupils' knowledge and awareness of provictim behaviours.

4.1 Summary of the Findings

Study one investigated the relationship between pupils' anticipated friend/peer consequences from helping and their intentions to engage in three sub-types of victim support (consoling, addressing the bully, getting adult help). Based on the theoretical account that perceived pressure from significant others predicts behaviour, the findings overall indicated the superior role of friends over general peers in predicting intentions to provictim behaviours from outcome expectations. In other words, perceived negative consequences from friends may prevent peer bystanders from helping a bullied pupil regardless of the type of support investigated. In addition, perceptions of undesirable outcomes from peers were associated with intentions to seek teacher help in bullying conflicts. Study one also revealed some important gender effects, indicating that boys were generally more concerned about their friends' and peers' consequences than girls. These findings demonstrate that generic victim support should be subdivided in at least three sub-types of help to enable the detection and, in turn, a better understanding of the unique barriers that prevent pupils' engagement in provictim activities.

Study two built on the findings of study one by appreciating that pupils' fear of friend/peer disapproval can prevent bystanders from engaging in victim support in a bullying incident. This study tested a novel cross-age teaching of social issues intervention (CATS) which employed an experimental-control group design. The project aimed to enhance safe victim support behaviours for both children who may be concerned about peer disapproval from helping, and for those who may simply not know what to do in a bullying conflict. This study also intended to raise participants' awareness of the gains of helping for the victim and the peer supporter. Pupils in the experimental group were invited to take on the role of a tutor, prepare and deliver a short lesson on victim support to two years younger peers. The effects of the intervention were assessed for the tutors, but not for tutees. The findings of the CATS-control group comparison suggested that tutors' knowledge on victim support strategies (consoling the victim, reducing victim's self-blame and support to victims to disclose bullying experiences) significantly improved after participating in the programme, whereas no positive changes were evident for control participants who were not exposed to CATS. The CATS intervention was also effective with regard to promoting tutors' awareness of the gains of helping. Furthermore, the findings of this study also showed that the observed positive effects for the experimental group, obtained directly after the intervention, persisted over a two week period without additional CATS sessions. The unique nature of CATS, which is based on a combination of specific features such as the acquisition of the tutor role and a non-stigmatising method, were assumed to account for the effectiveness of this programme. Hence, CATS may have the potential to help pupils overcome barriers (see Chapter 2, section 2.1.2), aside from the fear of fiend/peer disapproval, that prevent them from becoming a victim defender.

Reflecting on my own experiences throughout the course of this work and considering the findings of other researchers, I would like to remark two issues (albeit related) that warrant further attention in the future. The first relates to the context of the first study in this thesis and exemplifies how school authorities may co-shape students' provictim behaviours. The second issue relates to the intervention study, emphasising how schools' responses to novel research ideas can pose barriers to intervention development.

4.2 School Authorities Influences on Students' Victim Support Behaviours

Firstly, we know that besides the fear of peer disapproval, there are numerous other reasons for students' reluctance to intervene on behalf of a victimised peer. One of the problems appears to be that pupils do not regard helping in a bullying event as their own responsibility, but rather that of the school authorities (i.e. teachers, other school personnel). How come? One aspect that counteracts students' sense of responsibility and its development may be that they have been told to not get involved in a bullying situation and stay out of the cross-fire, perhaps for safety reasons. Another reason for advising pupils to not get involved might be teachers' unconscious beliefs that students are simply incapable of sorting out a bullying conflict among themselves. However, teachers may thereby underestimate children's problem solving skills. Yet another explanation for students' inaction may be that their empathy driven impulse to help, and their moral driven responsibility, becomes constrained by teachers' routinely strong emphasis on pupils to adhere to the set school rules. An example of this is where Thornberg (2007) reports, from his records of some students' voices, that these pupils were not allowed to return late to class after recess. Consequently, to avoid breaching the school rules, students may find themselves forced to ignore their prosocial feelings and sympathetic instinct to help a peer in need. In practice, this means that a victimised peer must be left behind by classmates who are required to go back and sit well-behaved in class or at assembly, in order for them to adhere to the school's orders. Thornberg rightly argues that this may result in students' "compliance with a competitive norm" (Thornberg, 2007, page 22), which then collides with their initiative and empathy-driven engagement in victim helping behaviours. Furthermore, children always try to make the most of their play time during recess, and therefore they may have difficulties afterwards to find the time to report a bullying conflict to their teacher before the following lesson begins. In addition, based on my own observations in schools, teachers are often under pressure to push on with the curricular schedule throughout the academic year. Therefore, more often than not, they feel compelled to keep silencing their students, thereby disabling their natural need to express an acute non-academic issue like own or others maltreatment. Through such, everyday practices, teachers might devalue "children as active moral agents" (Thornberg, 2010, p. 592), which in turn can foster

what Thornberg calls 'institutionalised moral disengagement'. Schools may not be aware of this hazard. Yet, this can have far reaching consequences in the sense that school regulations, including teachers' regimented behaviour, may indirectly nurture ignorant non-helpers instead of responsible and caring pupils. Clearly, what this shows is that there seem to be substantial gaps between psychological theory and school practice.

4.3 Barriers that Aggravate the Testing of Novel Interventions

My second reflection that warrants future attention relates to the testing of novel interventions in the field. My experience here confirms other researchers' notions that access to schools is very difficult to obtain, not least because of the time investment that some head teachers are reluctant or unable to provide (Boulton, 2014). Apart from the time issue, there seem to be numerous other reasons for this as well. Reflecting on my experience, one of the motives is related to the specifically sensitive research topic, that is, bullying among school children. It appears that schools are very much concerned about reputation damage if providing access to researchers who may detect problems that could otherwise have been disguised. As an example, one of the most astonishing arguments for denying participation in the study was that there was no bullying in that particular school (in Germany). A more realistic explanation for this, however, may be found in past research evidence that suggested teachers feel rather limited in terms of effective bullying managing skills (Boulton, Hardcastle, Down, Simmonds & Fowles, 2014), and some teachers perhaps try to hide this deficiency. Collectively, these arguments raise great concern as they exemplify that there is still a lack of open discourse about bullying in our schools, even though peer bullying is widely recognised as a global problem and many people will face this experience in their life beyond childhood. As for the present intervention, those schools that responded to the authors' enquiry seemed to value the theory based, indirect and inclusive idea of the CATS intervention. The majority of them, however, did argue that their tight daily schedule would not allow additional activities to be accommodated in the already busy school routine. The authors' alternative suggestions regarding participation as a control school, which would be less time consuming, were rejected with the argument that even the three assessments would require considerable organisational efforts and time while there was not much to be gained from the school's point of view. With funded and longer term research

projects, these practitioners' concerns could be resolved by employing a wait-list control designs. The limited resources within the course of a PhD project, however, also confine a researcher's possibilities. Based on the present experience, the author shares other psychologists' views that teachers are becoming more and more preoccupied with meeting academic performance targets, and they often regard the acquisition of non-academic skills as a distraction from, in their opinion, more urgent topics (Daunic et al., 2006). This, however, can become a major problem if teachers' non-supportive attitudes affect pupils' responsiveness to pro-social skills programmes (Polsgrove & Smith, 2004). As has been acknowledged elsewhere, the implementation of class-wide preventative programmes can be a challenging venture. However, if effective, they can offer a great opportunity for avoiding consolidation of harmful behaviours, which would then require longer and costlier specialised measures (Muhrer & Koretz, 1992). Taken together, it appears that without a policy that supports and regulates the evaluation of original research, potentially valuable ideas may remain buried in the bottom drawer prior to being extensively scrutinised. This could become an even greater ethical issue if it leads to restraining support to vulnerable children, be they victims, bullies or bully-victims.

Both issues, albeit complex, could be resolved through closer collaborations among psychologists, school personnel and policymakers. It is important that psychologists raise teachers' awareness about how school rules and related routines can impact upon pupils' helping behaviours. At the same time, it is necessary to introduce school staff and policymakers to the theoretical, psychological basis that good intervention programmes are built on, and establish a clear understanding of the negative health consequences of being bullied. Improved and regular dialogue can perhaps convince them that their support efforts and time investment would not be wasted in the long run.

4.4 Summary of the Contributions

This work contributes towards the knowledge base on peer support in the school bullying context. The present findings suggest that research on victim defending should subdivide generic victim support into sub-types of helping, and analyse the data at the sub-type level, not as a composite variable. There is robust evidence that bystanders do not constitute a homogeneous group. Significant gender differences

and variant cognitive and social competencies, require measures that are tailored to the diversity within the pupil population, and more sensitive to specific types of peer support. The outcomes of study one suggested that perceptions of friend/peer consequences, which were related to unique types of help, predicted participants' intentions to enact specific support behaviours.

Furthermore, the findings of study two add support for the need of anti-bullying/peer support initiatives that build upon both the consumers' necessities and a robust theoretical basis. Therefore, besides mere effectiveness data, it is also important that evaluations reel in pupils' and teachers' feedback and satisfaction of such programmes to enable ongoing adjustments and refinements to interventions. While it seems less of a challenge to obtain teachers' opinions about an intervention, as they naturally reside in an authority position and are generally willing to express themselves, it is easy to overlook pupils' voices even though it is them who are at the centre of any anti-bullying and peer support programme. It is important not only to allow pupils the space to take on an age appropriate proportion of responsibility for their peers and the school community, but also to listen to what they need and what they expect from their school in terms of non-academic support. This includes bullying preventative and interventive measures. It seems contradictory to teach pupils about democratic values on one hand, and dismiss their feedback on the other. Great efforts have been made by researchers such as Rudduck and others to include pupils' perspectives in learning and teaching practice, and establish a less conservative but more friendly relationship with teachers (e.g. Rudduck, 2007; Rudduck, Demetriou & Pedder, 2003; McIntyre, Pedder & Rudduck, 2005). These authors have argued that listening to children's voices about their experiences as pupils can lead to significant changes in terms of their learning success and school liking. Rudduck and colleagues have argued that there is a positive association between pupils' active contributions to learning and an increased engagement in learning (Rudduck et al., 2003). Active involvement, greater independence, and more ownership in classroom learning, are some of the examples of practice that children referred to when they were asked about what would best support their success in school (McIntyre et al., 2005). These findings not only explain the positive outcome revealed in the CATS study in this work, they also highlight children's capacity to realistically tell adults what they need. Despite such valuable insights we still tend to

underestimate children's capabilities. Pupils' perspectives related to the acquisition of academic skills may as well apply to the acquisition of prosocial abilities. It is, therefore, highly recommended that researchers utilise pupils' voices as a valuable source of information for the development of anti-bullying and peer support initiatives. However, advancements in this regard cannot be achieved if schools are not prepared to devote time and energy for non-academic, albeit essential, issues in order to explore what works best, and continuously refine interventions based on children's (and teachers') feedback.

Professionals in the bullying field have identified education as the most important prevention measure (Samara et al., 2017). Through anti-bullying education in schools, we can alert bullies and bystanders to step into the victims' shoes and learn about the harmful consequences that can result from victimisation as well as from passive ignorance. At the same time, education can help victims understand that they do not need to blame themselves, but have the courage to seek help from others which may facilitate coping with adverse experiences. As regards the bullies, it has been argued that they may not even comprehend the degree of damage that their behaviour will cause. This argument also applies to the bystanders, who witness the incident but do not intervene to support the victim. Without sufficient awareness of what bullying entails, how can we expect pupils to gauge the severity of their demeanour? The CATS programme could make a valuable contribution in advancing education on anti-bullying matters. Of course, it should be appreciated that not every child is susceptible to education (Samara et al., 2017). However, the intervention tested in this thesis takes a *learning by teaching* tactic which disguises the learning objective by conveying to tutors 'it is the tutees who need to learn about prosocial behaviour' even though, the focus was set on tutors' improvements. With this strategy, some pupils' resistance to social issues education can be bypassed. Study two of this work provides support for the use of CATS as a versatile technique, which can be employed as both a preventative *and* interventive measure, with the capacity to accommodate literally any social subject matter. Finally, interventions like CATS can also be utilised to facilitate and warrant more open communication about bullying in schools, as this can break existing taboos. Education and communication have been suggested as the first key steps in decreasing bullying rates (Samara et al., 2017).

Peer and victim support is an area of research that demands the utmost attention from psychologists, school practitioners and policymakers to better understand how bystanders can be mobilised to help prevent victimisation in school and alleviate its harming impact on vulnerable children.

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Appendix 2.1

Questionnaire

School..   **Name ....**   **Year..........**   **Class.........**

How old are you? ☐   **Boy** ☐   **Girl** ☐

(PE 4) **In the past, how often did you help someone who was being bullied to <u>feel better</u> about themselves?**

Never   Sometimes   Most of the time   All of the time

(PE 5) **In the past, how often did you help someone who was being bullied by trying <u>to stop bullies</u> doing it?**

Never   Sometimes   Most of the time   All of the time

(PE 6) **In the past, how often did you help someone who was being bullied by <u>getting an adult</u> to help?**

Never   Sometimes   Most of the time   All of the time

The following questions refer to your general peers' reaction (NOT your friend/s' reaction!)

(ESV 1) **If I helped someone who was being bullied feel better about themselves, other peers would...**

Liked me a lot less	Liked me a bit less	No change	Liked me a bit more	Liked me a lot more
Thought a lot I was a silly person	Thought a bit I was a silly	No change	Thought a bit I was a sensible person	Thought a lot I was a sensible person
Thought a lot I was a weak person	Thought a bit I was a weak person	No change	Thought a bit I was a strong person	Thought a lot I was a strong person
Would want to spend a lot less time with me	Would want to spend a bit less time with me	No change	Would want to spend a bit more time with me	Would want to spend a lot more time with me

(AB 1) **If I helped someone who was being bullied by trying to stop bullies doing it, other peers would...**

Liked me a lot less	Liked me a bit less	No change	Liked me a bit more	Liked me a lot more
Thought a lot I was a silly person	Thought a bit I was a silly	No change	Thought a bit I was a sensible person	Thought a lot I was a sensible person
Thought a lot I was a weak person	Thought a bit I was a weak person	No change	Thought a bit I was a strong person	Thought a lot I was a strong person
Would want to spend a lot less time with me	Would want to spend a bit less time with me	No change	Would want to spend a bit more time with me	Would want to spend a lot more time with me

(GAH 1) **If I helped someone who was being bullied by getting an adult to help, other peers would...**

Liked me a lot less	Liked me a bit less	No change	Liked me a bit more	Liked me a lot more
Thought a lot I was a silly person	Thought a bit I was a silly	No change	Thought a bit I was a sensible person	Thought a lot I was a sensible person

Thought a lot I was a weak person	Thought a bit I was a weak person	No change	Thought a bit I was a strong person	Thought a lot I was a strong person

Would want to spend a lot less time with me	Would want to spend a bit less time with me	No change	Would want to spend a bit more time with me	Would want to spend a lot more time with me

Please notice that the next questions refer to your FRIEND/s' REACTION only!

(ESVF 1) **If I helped someone who was being bullied feel better about themselves, <u>my friend/s</u> would ...**

Liked me a lot less	Liked me a bit less	No change	Liked me a bit more	Liked me a lot more

Thought a lot I was a silly person	Thought a bit I was a silly	No change	Thought a bit I was a sensible person	Thought a lot I was a sensible person

Thought a lot I was a weak person	Thought a bit I was a weak person	No change	Thought a bit I was a strong person	Thought a lot I was a strong person

Would want to spend a lot less time with me   Would want to spend a bit less time with me   No change

Would want to spend a bit more time with me

Would want to spend a lot more time with me

(ABF 1) **If I helped someone who was being bullied by trying to stop bullies doing it, my friend/s would...**

Liked me a lot less	Liked me a bit less	No change	Liked me a bit more	Liked me a lot more
Thought a lot I was a silly person	Thought a bit I was a silly	No change	Thought a bit I was a sensible person	Thought a lot I was a sensible person
Thought a lot I was a weak person	Thought a bit I was a weak person	No change	Thought a bit I was a strong person	Thought a lot I was a strong person
Would want to spend a lot less time with me	Would want to spend a bit less time with me	No change	Would want to spend a bit more time with me	Would want to spend a lot more time with me

(GAHF1) If I helped someone who was being bullied by getting an adult to help, <u>my friend/s</u> would...

Liked me a lot less	Liked me a bit less	No change	Liked me a bit more	Liked me a lot more
Thought a lot I was a silly person	Thought a bit I was a silly	No change	Thought a bit I was a sensible person	Thought a lot I was a sensible person
Thought a lot I was a weak person	Thought a bit I was a weak person	No change	Thought a bit I was a strong person	Thought a lot I was a strong person
Would want to spend a lot less time with me	Would want to spend a bit less time with me	No change	Would want to spend a bit more time with me	Would want to spend a lot more time with me

(IF 1) In future, when I witness a peer who is being bullied, I will comfort him/her

Very likely   Likely   Unlikely   Very unlikely

(IF 2) In future, when I witness a peer who is being bullied, I will try to stop the bullies doing it

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Very likely   Likely   Unlikely   Very unlikely

(IF 3) In future, when I witness a peer who is being bullied, I will get an adult to help him/her

Very likely   Likely   Unlikely   Very unlikely

Appendix 2.2

Participant information protocol

(Read out to all participants prior to data collection)

I would like to invite you to take part in my project where I want to find out what you think about yourself and other people. Your opinion and your beliefs will be collected via a questionnaire, but you will not be asked to write your names on it. I am not interested in what any one person says but I would like to find out what lots of children think about this kind of things. That is why I am asking you today to take part and I would appreciate it if you could try to tell me what **you really think**.

There is no need to try to copy because this is NOT a test and there are NO right or wrong answers. There is no need to look at what anybody else thinks. I would, also, recommend to protect your responses and not to talk to your peers about them.

I think you might find it interesting to take part and you can ask questions any time if you want to know more about what we are studying. It will take 40 - 60 minutes to answer the questions. This means that you will miss some of your lessons. I do not think the questions are upsetting but it is possible. Let me know if you are upset by anything I ask and put up your hand if you want any kind of help. There are specific questions that refer to your classmates. Please do not write his/her name down, only the reference number next to the name.

You do not have to take part at all. If you would prefer not to, you can tell me at any time if you want to stop, without giving a reason. If you think you don't want to answer some questions that is fine too. Remember, this is not a test. And it is up to you how many questions you want to answer. If you prefer not to give me your questionnaire at the end, that is fine. If you do give it to me, then your answers will become part of my study.

Normally, I will not tell anybody else about what you have told me in this study. But if you do, or say, something that makes me think that you need help or support, or are in danger then I will need to tell an adult from your school. If we think this is needed, I will discuss it with you first and you can let me know which person you want me to tell. Is that OK with you?

If you feel like you want to talk to somebody after I have gone, you can always tell your teacher or someone else from your school that you trust. You could, also, contact the school's social worker, he/she will help you. Ask your teacher in which room you can meet him/her.

Do you have any questions? Do you want to take part in my study?

Appendix 2.3

Dear Parent/Guardian

The head teacher of your school has decided to take part in a survey conducted by a PhD student and directed by the University of Chester (England).

The study is looking at children's views and opinions on 'victim of bullying helping behaviour'. Students' responses will provide important information on the group dynamics underlying peer helping within the classroom context. The findings of this research will help to advance the development of effective anti-bullying prevention and intervention programmes for high school students.

The researcher will come into the school to hand out the questionnaire to whole classes of pupils (year 5, 6, 7 and 8) and the class teacher will be present at all times. Participation is voluntary and the questionnaire will not include any identification details as the researcher is only interested in the general pattern of results.

The more children take part the more valuable information can be gained. Therefore, we hope that you will permit your child to take part in this study.

Should you require more information about the research project, please do not hesitate to contact the class teacher.

Thank you very much in advance for your support.

Please detach the section below and return it to your class teacher promptly.

....

Permission to take part in the survey

I give permission to my daughter/son ...., Year ....

to take part in the survey.   **YES** ☐   **NO** ☐

Date ....

Signature ....

Appendix 2.4

ETHICS COMMITTEE DATE : Click here to enter a date. 1.5.14

CHAIRS COMMENTS:

Permission for school down to supervisor.

☐ ACCEPTABLE
  Action: You may now commence with data collection subject to approval from any relevant external agencies

DATA COLLECTION IS NOT PERMISSABLE UNDER THESE CONDITIONS
☐ ACCEPTABLE SUBJECT TO SUBMISSION OF AMENDMENT FORM
  ☑ Acceptable subject to conditions listed by chair. Discuss conditions highlighted with supervisor and submit ethics application amendment form direct to office.
  ☐ Acceptable subject to conditions listed by chair: Submit ethics application amendment form direct to office.

☐ ACCEPTABLE SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS LISTED BY CHAIR:
  Action: Resubmit application for full review ensuring you have completed section B
☐ REVISE AND RESUBMIT:
  Action: Resubmit application for full review ensuring you have completed section B

SIGNATURE: _Marion E. Lafferty_

Office Use Only	DOPEC NUMBER

University of Chester

UNIVERSITY OF CHESTER, DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY
APPLICATION TO DEPARTMENTAL ETHICS COMMITTEE AMENDMENT FORM

PROJECT TITLE: Perceived peer consequences of victim of bullying helping behaviour: The interplay of personal and contextual factors.

A) **Applicant and personnel**

Applicant: Hedda Marx   Email: 0812985 @chester.ac.uk
Tel: 004922324178084
Applicant status: ☐ Postgraduate taught   ☐X Postgraduate research   ☐ Undergraduate
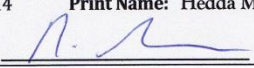
Supervisor: Prof M. Boulton   Email: m.boulton@chester.ac.uk
Tel: Click here to enter text.

B) **Declaration**

1. *Summarise the requirements made by the Department of Psychology Ethics Committee:* The Ethics Committee required written permission for data collection from German schools to be shown to the supervisor.

2. *Describe how you have addressed these requirements.* Permission letter from the head teacher Mrs. Scherer from "Franziskusschule" (including English translation) has been shown to Prof M. Boulton.

I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTOOD THE RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY ETHICAL COMMITTEE CONCERNING MY APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL. I HAVE DISCUSSED THE RECOMMENDATIONS WITH MY PROJECT SUPERVISOR AND MADE ANY REQUIRED CHANGES.
Print the completed form off onto BLUE paper with the appendices on white paper.
Handwritten applications are not accepted. Submit to the department office.

Date: 20/05/2014   **Print Name:** Hedda Marx

Signed: _____ **(Lead Applicant)**

SUPERVISOR/COMMITTEE COMMENTS
I confirm that the applicant has met the recommendations made by the committee to satisfactory ethical standards. Click here to enter text.

Date: Click here to enter a date.   **Print Name:** Click here to enter text.

Signed: _____ **(Supervisor)**

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From: Carol Leach [c.leach@chester.ac.uk]
Sent: 07 May 2013 15:23
To: HEDDA MARX
Cc: Michael Boulton
Subject: Ethics

Hi Hedda

Just to let you know your ethics amendment form has been signed off and your ethics application is, therefore, approved.

Good luck with your study.

Best wishes

Carol

Carol Leach

Psychology Departmental Secretary

Ext 1433

CCR116

Appendix 3.1

Questionnaire

Name: _____

How old are you? _____

Are you a: Boy ☐   Girl ☐

What school do you go to? _____

**Remember, there are no right or wrong answers – only what you think matters.
Please, try to answer the questions as honestly as you can.**

1. How could you help a bullied pupil, without causing other pupils to think bad things about you?

....

....

....

....

2. How could you help a bullied pupil, in a way that will not make the bully/ies pick on you?

....

....

....

....

3. How could you help a bullied pupil to feel better about him/herself, in a way that other children would not know about?

....

....

....

4. How could you help a bullied pupil to tell an adult about the problems, in a way that other children would not know about?

………

………

………

5. Might there be good things for you, if you helped someone who has been bullied?

If YES, what might this be?

………

………

……

6. Can you think <u>why</u> helping a bullied pupil might be a good thing for you to do?

………

………

………

Appendix 3.2

Social validity

For Tutors

1. How much did you enjoy working on and giving your CATS lesson?

A lot   A bit   Not at all

2. How much would you like to do CATS again next year?

A lot   A bit   Not at all

3. How much did doing <u>CATS help you learn useful things</u> about helping a bullied classmate?

A lot   A bit   Not at all

Appendix 3.3

Codebook for the 'open-ended questions'

Note, each of the 5 codes below corresponds to one of the 5 dependent variables: consoling, reducing victim self-blame, support to the victim to disclose bullying, personal gain and victim gain.

The examples provided in *quotes* were taken from actual participant responses.

Does a participant's response include the behaviour indexed by the code?

(Yes = 1 ; No = 0)

Question 1.

Code 1. (DV = consoling)

Help the victim either explicitly or implicitly to feel better about themselves.

This code applies, if the participant states any behaviour mentioned in the code definition, or any other behaviour that meaningfully depicts the code description.

The response includes interaction with the victim by saying/doing something kind to comfort the victim.

Examples:

 Ask how the victim is, and if there is anything one can do to help.

Tell the victim to try to ignore the bully.

"Go somewhere private with them and comfort them."

 "Ask them to play with you after school."

"Cheer them up and tell a joke."

Help with class work, leave a little note, ask to join a game, contact them via social media, make them laugh, say "hi", give them a smile ect.

Code 2. (DV = reducing victim self-blame)

Reduce victim's self-blame, by saying for example:

It is not your fault that you have been bullied – you are much better.

This code applies, if the participant states the behaviour mentioned in the code, or something similar that would closely mirror the phrase and/or meaningfully relieve the victim's responsibility for the victimisation.

Examples:

"Say, it's not your fault, you are not what they say about you."

 "Say it's not your fault and not to feel down."

 "Tell them it's not their fault and what they say is not true".

Code 3. (DV = support to the victim to disclose bullying)

Help the bullied pupil to tell a teacher/the parents/other trusted adult about the problems by either (must incl. interaction with the victim):

i) Suggest/Encourage the victim to speak to any adult.

Examples:

"You can convince the victim that it is a good thing to tell."

 "Whisper, if you tell an adult you will feel better and maybe a bit less upset."

AND/OR

ii) Offer to go with the victim to talk to an adult. The participant clearly states that he/she would offer to accompany the victim while going to see an adult for help.

Examples:

"Ask them if they would like you to come with them and support them."

This code applies, if the participant states any behaviour mentioned in the code and also includes interaction with the victim.

Question 2

Code 1. (DV = consoling)

Help the victim either explicitly or implicitly to feel better about themselves.

This code applies, if the participant states any behaviour mentioned in the code definition, or any other behaviour that meaningfully depicts the code description.

The response includes interaction with the victim by saying/doing something kind to comfort the victim.

Examples:

Ask how the victim is, and if there is anything one can do to help.

Tell the victim to try to ignore the bully.

"Go somewhere private with them and comfort them."

"Ask them to play with you after school."

"Cheer them up and tell a joke."

Help with class work, leave a little note, ask to join a game, contact them via social media, make them laugh, say "hi", give them a smile ect.

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Help with class work, leave a little note, ask to join a game, contact them via social media, make them laugh, say "hi", give them a smile ect.

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It is not your fault that you have been bullied – you are much better.

This code applies, if the participant states the behaviour mentioned in the code, or something similar that would closely mirror the phrase and/or meaningfully relieve the victim's responsibility for the victimisation.

Examples:

"Say, it's not your fault, you are not what they say about you."

"Say it's not your fault and not to feel down."

"Tell them it's not their fault and what they say is not true".

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Code 3. (DV = support to the victim to disclose bullying)

Help the bullied pupil to tell a teacher/the parents/other trusted adult about the problems by either (must incl. interaction with the victim):

i) Suggest/Encourage the victim to speak to any adult.

Examples:

"You can convince the victim that it is a good thing to tell."

"Whisper, if you tell an adult you will feel better and maybe a bit less upset."

AND/OR

ii) Offer to go with the victim to talk to an adult. The participant clearly states that he/she would offer to accompany the victim while going to see an adult for help.

Examples:

"Ask them if they would like you to come with them and support them."

This code applies, if the participant states any behaviour mentioned in the code and also includes interaction with the victim.

Question 4

Code 3. (DV = support to the victim to disclose bullying)

Help the bullied pupil to tell a teacher/the parents/other trusted adult about the problems by either (must incl. interaction with the victim):

i) Suggest/Encourage the victim to speak to any adult.

Examples:

"You can convince the victim that it is a good thing to tell."

"Whisper, if you tell an adult you will feel better and maybe a bit less upset."

AND/OR

ii) Offer to go with the victim to talk to an adult. The participant clearly states that he/she would offer to accompany the victim while going to see an adult for help.

Examples:

"Ask them if they would like you to come with them and support them."

This code applies, if the participant states any behaviour mentioned in the code and also includes interaction with the victim.

Question 5

Code 4. (DV = personal gain)

The participant's response clearly indicates that helping the victim will benefit the 'helper' in some way.

Examples:

Makes me feel happy/good/relieved/proud/strong/confident/trustworthy/recognised, get praise or respect from others, get a reward/certificate/sweets/stickers ect.

"They will help me back when I get bullied."

"I will gain a new friend."

"Nobody will bully you because they know that you are strong."

Code 5. (DV = victim gain)

The participant's response clearly indicates that helping a bullied peer will benefit the victim in some way, e.g. may improve their emotional well-being.

Examples:

Makes the victim feel better/happy again, it will save the victim from bullying, the victim will feel safe again, he/she will not feel lonesome or excluded.

"The bullied pupil will be happy again."

"You are helping someone enjoy school more."

"It will make the bullied person feel better."

Question 6

Code 4. (DV = personal gain)

The participant's response clearly indicates that helping the victim will benefit the 'helper' in some way.

Examples:

Makes me feel happy/good/relieved/proud/strong/confident/trustworthy/recognised, get praise or respect from others, get a reward/certificate/sweets/stickers ect.

"They will help me back when I get bullied."

"I will gain a new friend."

"Nobody will bully you because they know that you are strong."

Code 5. (DV = victim gain)

The participant's response clearly indicates that helping a bullied peer will benefit the victim in some way, e.g. may improve their emotional well-being.

Examples:

Makes the victim feel better/happy again, it will save the victim from bullying, the victim will feel safe again, he/she will not feel lonesome or excluded.

"The bullied pupil will be happy again."

"You are helping someone enjoy school more."

"It will make the bullied person feel better."

<u>Bullying is bad!</u>

AND

There are no excuses for bullying someone!
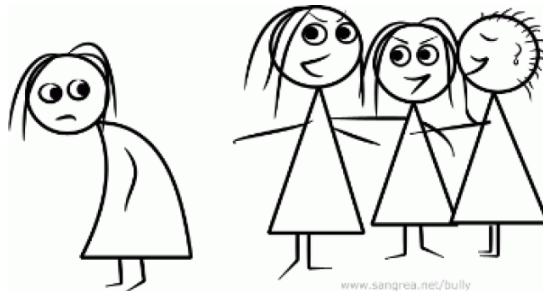
Know you can stop bullies!
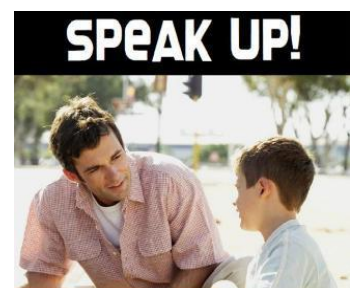
There are different ways, of how we can help a bullied classmate without causing other children to think bad things about ourselves.

1. Help the bullied person feel better about themselves in a way that other pupils do not know about.

* Find a time to say or do something kind to the person when no other pupils are there:

a) Ask how they are: "Are you OK? Can I do anything to help?"

Say something like, "Take no notice of the bully"

"Try not to show the bully/ies that you are upset."

Say "Hi" to them every day.

b) Say something like, "Bullying is wrong, it's not fair – and it is not your fault, OK! You are better then what they said."

2. Help the bullied person to tell a teacher or other adult in a way that other pupils do not know about.

*Find a time when no other pupils are there:

a) Tell them not to be frightened and suggest they shall tell a teacher and/or their parents, because they can help stop the bullying.

b) Offer to go with them, "Shall I come with you to tell a teacher?"

(They might not want to and that is their choice – respect it!)

3. Helping a bullied person, in whatever way you choose,

is *a GOOD THING FOR YOU* to do!

*WHY? Step in the victim's shoes! How would you feel?
Would you want someone to come up and offer any kind of
help?

a) It makes the bullied classmate feeling better about him/herself!

b) It makes you feel good about yourself knowing that you
have helped the upset person.

It makes you feel strong and feel proud of yourself.

**If you do not feel safe to do any of these things, and the
bullying is serious, go and fetch an adult straight away!**

Do not just walk away!

Appendix 3.5

My study wants to find out about what you think about a number of things. I would like to know, what YOU know about different ways of helping a bullied pupil. I will use this questionnaire here and collect the information in class. Try to make sure that other people cannot see what you have put. Actually, there is no need to try to copy because this is NOT a test and there are no right or wrong answers. There is no need to look at what anybody else thinks. I are not interested in what any one person says but I want to find out what lots of children think about these kinds of things. It would be very helpful if you could try and tell me what YOU really think.

I will talk with you for about 15 minutes each time. I think you might find it interesting to take part and you can ask me questions if you want to know more about what I are studying. It means you will miss some of your lessons. I do not think the questions are upsetting but it is possible. Let me know if you are upset by anything I discuss or want any kind of help.

You do not have to take part at all if you would prefer not to and you can tell me at any time if you want to stop without giving me a reason. If you think you don't want to answer some questions that is fine too. Remember, this is not a test. And it is up to you how many questions you want to answer. If you prefer not to give me your questionnaire at the end, that is fine. If you do give it to me, then your answers will become part of my study.

Normally, I will not tell anybody else about what you have told me in this study. But if you do or say something that makes me think that you need help or support or are in danger then I will need to tell an adult from your school. If I think this is needed, I will discuss it with you first and you can let me know which person you want me to tell. Is that OK with you?

If you feel like you want to talk to anybody about anything I have talked about after I have gone, you can always tell your teacher or your parent/carer. Or if you prefer, you could contact ChildLine – there are posters up around your school with their telephone number on it.

I would like to invite you to take part in something new. I think you might be able to teach some younger children useful things about staying safe online. You will work in small groups to design your own lesson about this. I think you might enjoy it a lot as other children who have done this have. Would anybody like to know more about it?

Well first of all, nobody has to do this. It is important that you want to join in. If anybody prefers not to take part, then that is ok – they can carry on with their work while the rest of us do this project. Also, you can stop at any time you like.

To help you make up your mind, I will tell you what is involved. You will work together in small teams of about five people to design a series of lessons to give to a small group of younger pupils in this school. I will give you all of the information that you need for each lesson, but it is up to you and your group members to decide exactly how you will use it. It will give you a chance to be creative.

I know this might sound a little unusual or maybe even a little bit scary but don't worry because I will give you lots of help and support.

I also know that pupils of your age in other schools have done this and really enjoyed it. Even though, they took it seriously, they had a lot of fun and laughs preparing and delivering their lessons. And the younger pupils were very grateful to them. That's why I thought I would invite your class to try it.

While it will be fun, I also have to keep in mind that the younger pupils you will teach are depending on you to give them helpful lessons. So, you will have responsibility for them. I think everyone in this class is mature enough to take this responsibility seriously.

Does anyone have any questions or concerns that they want to raise?

Appendix 3.6

Questionnaire (1)

Name: _____

How old are you? _____

Are you a: Boy ☐   Girl ☐

What school do you go to? _____

Remember, there are no right or wrong answers – only what you think matters.
Please, try to answer the questions as honestly as you can.

1. How could you help a bullied pupil, without causing other pupils to think bad things about you?

....

....

....

....

2. How could you help a bullied pupil, in a way that will not make the bully/ies pick on you?

....

....

....

....

3. Might there be good things for you, if you helped someone who has been bullied?

No   Not sure   Yes

4. If YES, what might this be?

....

....

....

5. How could you help a bullied pupil <u>to feel better about him/herself</u>, in a way that other children would not know about?

....

....

....

6. How could you help a bullied pupil <u>to tell an adult about the problems</u>, in a way that other children would not know about?

....

....

....

7. How could you help a bullied pupil, <u>in a way that the bully/ies do not know about?</u>

....

....

....

8. Can you think <u>why</u> helping a bullied pupil might be <u>a good thing for you</u> to do?

....

....

....

To answer the questions below please circle the answer you think is correct.

If you think there is more than one correct answer, you may circle several answers.

9. One of your classmates is being bullied on the playground. How might you <u>help him feel better about himself</u>, without letting anyone know you have helped him?

      1. Tell your classmate to ignore the bully when no one is around.

      2. Shout at the bully.

      3. Quietly tell your classmate, it is not their fault if they are bullied.

      4. Tell your classmate to bully others so he feels better.

      5. Tell the teacher your classmate is being bullied during a lesson.

      6. Ask your classmate if there is anything you can do to help.

10. One of your classmates is being bullied in class. How might you <u>help your classmate tell a teacher</u> or an adult without letting anyone know you have helped him?

      1. Shout to him to tell the teacher.

      2. Quietly offer to go to the teacher with him.

      3. After class, tell them not to be scared and they should tell a teacher.

      4. When school finishes, tell him to speak to his mum or dad about the bullying.

      5. Tell the teacher, during a lesson, that your classmate is being bullied.

      6. Tell your classmate to shout at the bully.

11. Your classmate is being bullied on the playground. How might <u>you tell a teacher</u>, your classmate is being bullied, without anyone knowing you told the teacher?

      1. Tell the teacher in class who is bullying your classmate.

      2. Before class, quietly tell the teacher your classmate is being bullied.

      3. Tell your friends to talk to the teacher about the bullying.

      4. Tell your classmate's friends and tell them to talk to the teacher about the bullying.

      5. On the playground, talk to the teacher when they are alone about the bullying.

6. After school, go to the teacher and tell them your classmate is being bullied.

12. Your classmate is being bullied in class. How might you <u>help them without letting the bully know</u> you are helping them?

1. When the bully cannot hear, talk to your classmate about the bullying.

2. When you two are alone, tell your classmate to talk to the teacher.

3. When the bully is in a different class, tell your classmate to tell their parents.

4. Shout to your classmate to talk to the teacher.

5. Speak to your classmate about the bullying when the bully is next to you.

6. Tell the bully to stop bullying your classmate.

13. One of your classmates has been bullied on the playground. How might <u>helping him/her be a good thing for you?</u>

1. It will make you feel happy with yourself.

2. It will make you feel strong, knowing that you have helped the upset person.

3. It will make the teacher shout at you.

4. It will make the bully try to bully you.

5. It will make you feel sad.

6. It will make you feel proud of yourself.

If you saw a pupil being bullied in future, how much would you do these things?

14. You go quietly to the bullied classmate and ask him/her how you can help.

Not at all   A lot

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

15. You go quietly to the bullied child and tell him/her to ignore the bully and that it is not their fault if they are bullied.

Not at all   A lot

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

16. You help the bullied pupil and go with him/her <u>to tell a teacher</u>, in a way that other pupils would not know about.

Not at all   A lot

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

17. You go quietly on your own <u>to tell a teacher</u> about the bullying.

Not at all   A lot

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

18. You offer your help to the bullied pupil, when the bully/ies are not there.

Not at all   A lot

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

What do you think?

19. Helping a bullied pupil is a good thing (for you) to do, because it will make him/her feel better about him/herself.

Disagree a lot   Agree a lot

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

20. Helping a bullied pupil, makes you feel good about yourself, as you know that you have supported a person in need.

Disagree a lot   Agree a lot

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

Definition of bullying:

Purposely and repeatedly hurt another person, over a longer period of time, where he/she is not able to defend him/herself.

Traditional bullying involves things like purposely being hit, kicked and pushed; being called nasty names; being ridiculed; being left out of games and other things.

1. If another child was traditionally bullied, how much do you think they need help from other children to feel better?

Not at all   Very much

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

2. If another child was traditionally bullied, how much do you think you would help them to feel better?

Not at all   Very much

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

3. If another child was traditionally bullied, how much do you think they need help from other children to stop the bullying?

Not at all   Very much

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

4. If another child was traditionally bullied, how much do you think you would help them to stop the bullying?

Not at all   Very much

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

5. If another child was traditionally bullied, how much do you think <u>they need other children to get an adult to help them </u>to feel better?

Not at all   Very much

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

6. If another child was traditionally bullied, how much do you think <u>you would get an adult to help them to feel better</u>?

Not at all   Very much

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

7. If another child was traditionally bullied, how much do you think <u>they need other children to get an adult to help stop the bullying</u>?

Not at all   Very much

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

8. If another child was traditionally bullied, how much do you think <u>you would get an adult to help to stop the bullying</u>?

Not at all   Very much

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

Cyber bullying involves bullying through electronic technology, such as via the Internet (i.e. Face book, mobile phones ect.)

Cyber Bullying

9. If another child was cyber bullied, how much do you think <u>they need help from other children to feel better</u>?

Not at all   Very much

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

10. If another child was cyber bullied, how much do you think <u>you would help them to feel better</u>?

Not at all   Very much

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

Cyber Bullying

11. If another child was cyber bullied, how much do you think <u>they need help from other children</u> to stop the bullying?

Not at all   Very much

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

12. If another child was cyber bullied, how much do you think <u>you would help them</u> to stop the bullying?

Not at all   Very much

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

13. If another child was cyber bullied, how much do you think <u>they need other children to get an adult to help them </u>to feel better?

Not at all   Very much

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

14. If another child was cyber bullied, how much do you think <u>you would get an adult </u>to help them to feel better?

Not at all   Very much

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

15. If another child was cyber bullied, how much do you think <u>they need other children to get an adult </u>to help stop the bullying?

Not at all   Very much

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

16. If another child was cyber bullied, how much do you think <u>you would get an adult</u> to help to stop the bullying?

Not at all   Very much

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

Appendix 3.7

University of Chester

UNIVERSITY OF CHESTER, DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY
APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL AMENDMENT FORM

A) Applicant and personnel

Applicant: *Hedda Marx*
Project title: *Cross-Age Teaching intervention in primary school: Promoting save strategies of victim helping behaviour, and moral engagement.*
Applicant status: ☐ Staff → Go to Section B   x PGR   ☐ Undergraduate   ☐ Postgraduate taught
Supervisor: *Prof M. Boulton; Dr J. Lloyd*

B) Declaration

1. x I have submitted an application for ethical approval to the Department of Psychology Ethics Committee and I am required to make the following amendments to my application.
    List the recommendations of the committee. CHAIRS COMMENTS: *1) "We need details of any co-researcher on the project (names, role, contact details). This can be via letter/ email to chair."*   *2) "You need to show (a) letter(s) confirming access prior to commencing data collection."*
    Describe how you have addressed these requirements. *1) In order to speed up data collection before the schools close for the summer holidays, Mr Ian Garner has agreed to help out. He received a Masters Degree (in 2014) from our University/Dept of Psychology. Ian has got experience with Cross-Age Teaching interventions in Primary School, as his masters dissertation involved a very similar project to that of the author. This is his email address: 0914464@chester.ac.uk .   2) Research cannot be carried out without written permission from each of the participating schools that must then be shown to the principal supervisor, Prof M. Boulton. The schools, however, tend to not provide a letter of permission before they are reassured that the project has received ethical approval.*

2. ☐ I have submitted an application for ethical approval to the Department of Psychology Ethics Committee that was approved on Click here to enter a date.
    I wish the committee to consider the following amendments I would like to make to the research plan (attach the original approved application form)

☐ I am a member of staff.   **Signed:** _____   **Date:** Click here to enter a date.
Print the amendment form on BLUE PAPER and submit to the Dept. Office
☐ I am an UG/PGT/PGR student. I have discussed any amendments with my project supervisor.
Print the amendment form on BLUE PAPER and submit to the Dept. Office

Signed: _____   **(Lead Applicant) Date:** Click here to enter a date.

Supervisor comments:
I have discussed the recommendations of the committee with the applicant and I am satisfied they have met the stated requirements./I support the amendments to the research plan. (delete as appropriate)
 ☑ Yes   Sign and date the form   ☐ No   Comments: Click here to enter text.

☐ I am a member of staff.   Signed: _____   **Date:** Click here to enter a date.

Print the amendment form on BLUE PAPER and submit to the Dept. Office

☒ I am an UG/PGT/PGR student. I have discussed any amendments with my project supervisor.

Print the amendment form on BLUE PAPER and submit to the Dept. Office

Signed: _____ (Lead Applicant) **Date:** Click here to enter a date.   *10.04.2015*

Supervisor comments:

I have discussed the recommendations of the committee with the applicant and I am satisfied they have met the stated requirements./I support the amendments to the research plan. (delete as appropriate)

☐ Yes Sign and date the form   ☐ No   **Comments:** *Click here to enter text.*

Signed: _____ **(Supervisor)   Date:** Click here to enter a date.

Signed: _____ **(Supervisor)   Date:** Click here to enter a date.

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COMMITTEE COMMENTS:

☑ **ACCEPTABLE: You may now commence with data collection subject to approval from any relevant external agencies.**

Copies of
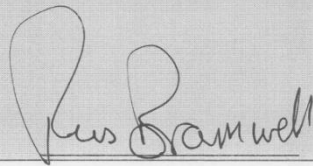Letter from schools to be seen by
supervisor prior to starting data
collection + copy to be submitted
to ethics secretary (Carol) for filing.

DATA COLLECTION IS NOT PERMISSABLE UNDER THESE CONDITIONS

☐ **ACCEPTABLE SUBJECT TO SUBMISSION OF FURTHER AMENDMENT FORM.**

    ☐ Acceptable subject to conditions listed by chair. Discuss conditions highlighted with
      supervisor and submit ethics application amendment form direct to office.

    ☐ Acceptable subject to conditions listed by chair: Submit ethics application amendment form
      direct to office.

Signed: _Rus Bramwell_   **Date:** Click here to enter a date. 17/4/15.