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Social Experiences of Youth Who Have Moved to New Schools

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Honours Psychology Thesis
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London, Ontario, Canada
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Abstract

Newcomers to social groups may experience victimization depending on their ethnic background. The current study's goal was to investigate whether ethnic minority newcomers to social groups are victimized more than newcomers who belong to ethnic majority. Eighty-one female participants completed several questionnaires about: ethnic background, victimization incidents, social support, personality traits, self-esteem, social anxiety and life satisfaction. Participants were divided based on whether they were newcomers and whether they belonged to an ethnic minority or ethnic majority. Newcomers who belong to ethnic majority were victimized more than ethnic minority, while newcomers belonging to ethnic minorities had significantly lower self-esteem and life satisfaction scores, and higher social anxiety. Results revealed a significant negative correlation between victimization and social support.

Social Experiences of Youth Who Have Moved to New Schools

For decades, researchers have been investigating the prevalence of bullying. Research has focused on the physical and psychological effects of bullying. Moreover, it has been found that certain factors such as ethnicity may contribute to victimization. This is concerning because in Canada, about 19% of the Canadian student population consists of immigrant children that are newcomers (Statistics Canada, 2011). Students are placed in classrooms where they are the visible minority, and that may result in increasing their risk of victimization (Shumann, Craig, & Rosu, 2013). Victimization may have a lasting impact on students, which may persist to early adulthood.

One struggle that researchers face is that there is no single definition of bullying. One of the ways to define it is by Olweus (1994, p. 1173) who described it in an educational setting: "A student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students." These negative actions are intended to do harm and are characterized by power imbalance, where the victim does not feel that they have the ability to stop it. Furthermore, there are various forms of bullying. Bullying may vary from physical (e.g., hitting and kicking) to verbal (e.g., name-calling) to relational (e.g., exclusion, gossiping, and spreading rumors) and recently, can be in the form of cyber bullying (bullying done through electronic means and over social media; Crick & Grotpeter, 1995; Österman et al., 1994; Rivers & Smith, 1994; Williams & Guerra, 2007). The necessity for defining bullying in a school institution setting is critical. This can be highlighted in recent data showing that 2% to 32% of students have experienced victimization in school from peers ranging from minor incidents (verbal bullying) to more serious ones (physical bullying; Shumann, Craig & Rosu, 2013).

Male and female victims could experience different types of bullying. For example, Olweus (1994) reports that male victims tend to be victims of direct bullying (physical and

verbal), whereas females are generally victims of relational bullying. Nevertheless, it is not just gender, but there are also specific types of individuals who are more prone to fall as victims of bullying.

At an early age, children begin to form their friendship groups based on similarities. These similarities may be the child's belief system, cultural background, physical characteristics, etc. (Vitoroulis & Vaillancourt, 2015). Characteristics that appear to be *different* than the norm have been found to be associated with victimization. These characteristics may include different physical appearances such as being overweight, physically weak, or even ethnicity.

Ethnicity can act as a visible characteristic which could increase the likelihood of students from an ethnic minority to become targets of bullying. According to the in-group bias theory, which states that people form their friendships based on similarities and shared characteristics, alike people tend to exclude those who are different (Larochette, Murphy & Craig, 2010). By excluding them, students may deliberately not invite, not talk to, and not allow members of the out-groups to engage in activities with them. These rejected individuals are considered as members of the out-group. Moreover, out-group members are often perceived as different and threatening (Larochette, Murphy & Craig, 2010). Thus, in-groups can create racial and prejudice thoughts, which may result in aggressive behaviour towards students who are not similar to them in racial or ethnic terms.

Research has recently shifted towards peer ethnic victimization. In schools, children are placed in a diverse educational environment, but this is not always to their advantage because they may be members of a minority group. Newcomer students may be enrolled in a school where they are a member of a visible minority. Also, some Canadian born youth belong to an ethnic minority group (Vitoroulis, Brittain, & Vaillancourt, 2016). For example, almost 45% of youth who belong to an ethnic minority were born in Canada. As mentioned before,

children usually form their friendships based on shared characteristics, and this contributes to the formation of in-groups (Schumann, Craig, & Rosu, 2013). Groups are sometimes formed depending on ethnic similarities. Moreover, children favor their in-group peers, while they begin to be spiteful towards their out-group peers. This results in children perceiving differences between the two groups and then be threatened by those dissimilarities (Larochette, Murphy & Craig, 2010). In addition, the two groups may then hold prejudicial attitudes towards one another (Vitoroulis, Brittain, & Vaillancourt, 2016). Interethnic conflict and bullying may then be the result of uneven numerical ethnic group representations and the attitudes formed between in- and out-groups. Besides being victimized due to ethnicity or belonging to an out-group, sometimes certain personality traits may contribute to increasing the vulnerability of being bullied.

Studies have investigated certain personality characteristics and factors that may place children at a more vulnerable position to be bullied (Sekol & Farrington, 2016; Mitsopoulou & Giovazolias, 2015). Research has focused on the Big Five factors of personality that can describe people in a constant manner. The Big Five factors are: neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness.

Relating this back to victimization, being introverted, high in neuroticism and being low on agreeableness have been associated with higher levels of victimization (Mitsopoulou & Giovazolias, 2015). For example, bullied students were found to be neurotic, introverted and low on conscientiousness (Sekol & Farrington, 2016). The reason behind why victims score high on neuroticism may be due to increased hypersensitivity to negative incidents in their environment. Moreover, it has been reported that children who struggle with emotional regulation are also more prone and vulnerable to victimization (Shields & Cicchetti, 2001). Emotionally dysregulated children may have reactions such as hyperarousal and fear to novel social situations, and this anxious reaction might be what contributes to being victimized. In a

study done by Sekol and Farrington (2016), it was found that victims in comparison to non-victims were significantly less agreeable and less conscientious. Thus, children who are introverted and withdrawn, who display low conscientiousness by being emotionally reactive (aggressiveness, distress and sadness or run away), who possess poor social understanding, or have few or no friends to stand up for them are found to be more vulnerable to bullying (Wolke, Copeland, Angold, & Costello, 2013).

Certain personality traits may contribute to increasing one's vulnerability of being victimized, but there are also personality traits that can protect people from being victimized. Research has focused on investigating what characteristic traits are common in victimized students, but it has not focused on characteristic traits that may act as protective factors against victimization. Even if victimized, students may have characteristic traits that aid in lessening the negative impact that victimization may have on them, but that is yet to be researched. Focus must also be placed on the effects bullying can have on the victims, for the consequences they face are potentially damaging.

Being bullied can have both physical and psychological consequences on the victim. Studies show that victimization is associated with depression, anxiety and physical aggression. Physical consequences that may result from being bullied include change in appetite, sleep disturbances, abdominal pain, headaches, respiratory problems and feelings of fatigue (Zarate-Garza et al., 2017). Moreover, bullying victimization may have an impact on childhood social anxiety, separation anxiety and young-adult suicidal ideation. In a study done by Wolke et al., (2013) it was found that children between the age of nine and 13 were more likely to be diagnosed with a psychiatric disorder or a serious illness. Furthermore, depressive behaviour in both male and female kindergarten victims is apparent for 18 months since the start of victimization (Synder et al., 2003). Not only do the negative experiences of victimization result in decreased levels of self-esteem and anxiety, but it can also impact

student's academic performance (obtaining lower grade point average, higher absenteeism etc.; Reuger & Jenkins, 2014).

Many studies have investigated the effects of victimization, but very few studies have explored the long lasting effects of victimization that may persist to a student's early adulthood life. Juvonen, Nishina, & Graham (2006) explained how victimized students in sixth and seventh grade report being depressed, lonely and having lower self-worth a year after being victimized. Moreover, a study done by Reuger and Jenkins (2014) discovered that victimized students in seventh and eighth grade reported significantly higher levels of anxiety, depression and lower self-esteem, and those students were also exhibiting negative attitudes towards school and a decrease in both grades and school attendance. Lastly, lower self-esteem has also been seen as a main negative consequence of victimization. The findings of Sekol and Farrington (2016) show that victimized students between the age of 11 and 21 have lasting low self-esteem after bullying incidents begin. In summary, victimization not only negatively affects a person internally (low self-esteem, anxiety etc.) but also externally (higher absenteeism, poor academic performance etc.). Victimization can be a stressful experience that negatively affects students.

Besides the psychological and physical consequences of victimization, stress must also be explored, as researchers view victimization as a source of stress (Zarate-Garza et al., 2017; Ouellet et al., 2011). The definition of bullying stresses the repeated exposure that the victim experiences, and therefore Zarate-Garza et al. (2017) have classified bullying as a form of *chronic social stress*. Research has shown that early and chronic stress may contribute to harmful physical health such as increasing one's risk for obesity, cardiovascular disease, or cognitive impairment (Zarate-Garza et al., 2017). In a study by Ouellet et al. (2013), through examining monozygotic twins where one child had been victimized but not the other, the researchers were able to link victimization to a lasting impact of hormonal stress when

exposed to stressful situations. Normally, stress contributes to an increase in cortisol levels, but the researchers found that there was a decrease in cortisol levels in victimized twins which means that victimization may result in dysregulating hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis reactivity to stress. When cortisol is secreted inadequately in response to small stressors, cortisol may have detrimental effects over time such as increased risk for depression, social anxiety and behavioural problems (Ouellet et al., 2011). Although being bullied can take a negative toll on the victim, students may be able to protect themselves from the detrimental effects bullying leaves on them.

Being bullied has negative consequences on victims, but there are protective factors that can help modulate the impact of bullying. Studies show that social support can operate as a protective factor against bullying victimization, reduce the effects of bullying on the victim, and even reducing the susceptibility of being bullied (Mishna et al., 2016). Social support can be defined as when one perceives they are being cared for, valued, and included in social groups in their surroundings (Westermann, 2007). Social groups may include family, peers, and friends. Supportive relationships with family, peers and even teachers have been associated with decreasing peer victimization (Khoury-Kassabri, Benbenishty, Astor, & Zeira, 2004). Herráiz and Gutiérrez (2016) found that students between the age of 13 and 17 were at a higher risk of all types of bullying victimization when they self-reported lower levels of social support, that is lower perceived social support. On the other hand, students who perceived high social support from their peers were at a lower risk of victimization. A study showed that when social support was available, it decreased externalizing behaviour in victimized ninth to twelfth grade students (Prinstein, Boergers, & Vernberg, 2001). Moreover, a study done by Rigby and Slee (1999) reported that when victimized students have low or no social support, they were more likely to report higher levels of suicide ideation in comparison to victimized students who had high social support.

Bullying victimization is an ongoing phenomenon that has negative consequences on students. People that are identified as different due to their physical characteristics, belief systems, or cultural background are prone to an increased risk of victimization (Vitoroulis & Vaillancourt, 2015). Moreover, when forming friendships, people form their groups according to similarities, excluding students that are different. Those students who are different are then considered to be members of the out-group and are viewed as threatening (Larochette, Murphy & Craig, 2010). Out-group members may be different due to their physical characteristics such as ethnicity, which may place them at an even higher susceptibility of being bullied. There is mixed evidence to whether students who belong to an ethnic minority group are actually more likely to be victimized than the ethnic majority group. Some studies have reported that students from ethnic minorities are indeed bullied more than their ethnic majority peers (Llorent, Ortega-Ruiz, & Zych, 2016; Larochette, Murphy, & Craig, 2010; Schumann, Craig & Rosu, 2013; Pottie, Dahal, Georgiades, Premji & Hassan 2015; Vervoort, Scholte, & Scheepers, 2011), while other studies have shown that students from both ethnic minorities and majorities are equally victimized (Vitoroulis, Brittain & Vaillancourt, 2016). For example, in a meta-analysis done by Vitoroulis & Vaillancourt (2015), it was found that there were no differences in victimization between students who belong to an ethnic minority and students who belong to an ethnic majority. Although a lot of research has been done on ethnic minority students being victims of bullying, there still remains a gap in the literature that confirms the findings

The current study explored whether newcomers, from ethnic minorities and majorities, are victimized equally or not, and if so, is the victimization due to their ethnic background or simply because they are newcomers to a new social group. The research also addressed whether social support operates as a protective factor for newcomers. Lastly, the study explored the lasting impacts that victimization has on newcomers. Newcomers were defined

as members to a new social group and classified as: newcomer students who are members of a visible minority, newcomer students who belong to the ethnic majority, not a newcomer member of a visible minority, not a newcomer member of ethnic majority, and not a newcomer student who attended school outside of Canada.

To test the relationship of being a newcomer and the risk of being bullied, measures of traditional bullying, relational bullying and cyberbullying were used. A unique questionnaire was utilized to divide participants into one of the five testing groups; not a newcomer majority, not a newcomer minority, newcomer majority, newcomer minority, and attended school outside of Canada. Victimization was tested using two different questionnaires. First, a questionnaire developed by Demaray and Malecki (2003), and modified by Westermann (2007), and it was used to test whether students have been victims of bullying. The questionnaire asks about bullying instances that may have occurred in the past. Second, a questionnaire that focused on relational and cyberbullying developed by Hinduja & Patchin (2010) was used. As discussed, two variables that may act as protective factors are social support and personality trait factors. Social support was measured using the *Child and Adolescent Social Support Scale* (CASSS; Malecki, Demaray, & Elliott, 2000). Personality traits were measured using the *Revised Interpersonal Adjective Scales* (IAS-R; Wiggins, Trapnell, & Phillips, 1988), which examines the Big Five factors of extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience. The IAS-R was used to investigate the relationship between personality traits and vulnerability to victimization. To evaluate the impact of victimization newcomers may have experienced self-esteem, social anxiety and life satisfaction were measured. Self-esteem was measured using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE; Rosenberg, 1965). Social anxiety scores were measured using The Social Anxiety Scale for Adolescents (SAS-A; La Greca & Lopez,

1998). Lastly, the Brief Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (BMSLSS; Seligson, Huebner, & Valois, 2003) was used to assess life satisfaction.

Based on previous research, it is still unclear whether being a member of an ethnic minority may increase a student's vulnerability of being bullied. The current study investigated whether newcomers are victimized due to their ethnicity or their newcomer status. Previous research has also shown that victimization negatively effects students, but it is unclear whether the negative impacts persist through early adulthood. In other words, very limited studies have investigated the lasting impact of victimization. This study explored whether victimization leaves a long lasting negative impact on victimized students who are newcomers and belong to an ethnic minority group. Lastly, the study focused on whether protective factors such as having sufficient social support helps lessen the negative impact of victimization.

The current study had three hypotheses: first, students who belong to an ethnic minority and are newcomers to a new social group are more likely to be victimized than newcomers who belong to the ethnic majority group. Second, if students who are newcomers to a social group have sufficient social support, then they are less likely to experience victimization than students who do not have sufficient social support. Third, if newcomer students are victimized, then this will have a greater and longer lasting negative impact on them than students who are not newcomers to the social group.

Method

Participants

Female Brescia University College students enrolled in Psychology 1000 were recruited using the Brescia Psychology Research Participation System (n = 84). Participants' age ranged from 18-38 (M = 19.36). A newcomer to a social group in this study is defined as a student who has changed schools within Canada or has changed schools to Canada from

elsewhere. As mentioned earlier, participants must belong to one of the five categories: not a newcomer majority, not a newcomer minority, newcomer majority, newcomer minority, and attended school outside of Canada.

Materials

To measure nationality, a questionnaire was developed to indicate the following information about each participant: age, where they were born, what country they were raised in, what country their parents were born and raised in, if they have recently immigrated to Canada, if they have been newcomers to a new social group, and what age they were a newcomer to a new social group. Some questions were open-ended questions, while other questions were yes/no questions. There were nine questions total in the questionnaire. The items of this questionnaire can be viewed in Appendix A.

Bullying was assessed using self-report questionnaires. The participants were provided with a list of questions asking them about if they were victimized between the ages of 10 and 18 at school. The victimization questions involve the different types of bullying discussed in the introduction. The first questionnaire, Things That Happened at School (TTHS), is a questionnaire developed by Demaray and Malecki (2003), and modified by Westermann (2007). The questionnaire consisted of 14 questions and students were asked to rate each item on a 5-point Likert scale (0= *Never*, 1= *1 to 2 times*, 2= *3 to 5 times*, 3= *6 to 9 times*, 4= *10 or more times*).

To assess traditional bullying and cyberbullying the questionnaire Other School Experiences (OSE) by Hinduja & Patchin (2010) will be utilized. The questionnaire consists of 19 items that participants will respond to using a 5-point Likert scale (1= *Never*, 2= *Once or twice*, 3= *A few times*, 4= *Many times*, 5= *Everyday*). The first ten questions of the questionnaire ask about traditional bullying and the following nine questions ask about cyberbullying.

Perceived social support was measured using the *Child and Adolescent Social Support Scale* (CASSS; Malecki, Demaray, & Elliott, 2000). The original scale was designed to measure students' support from five sources (parents, teachers, classmates, close friends, and people in the school), but for the purposes of this study only be three were used; social support from students' parents, classmates, and close friend(s). Research has reported that the most important social support victimized students have reported is from those three sources and that is why it was chosen to only utilize them (Bentley and Li, 1995; Westermann, 2007). There was a total of 36 questions, 12 for each measure, and the participants were instructed to rate the occurrence of each item on a 6-point Likert scale (1= *Never*, 6= *Always*) and the importance of the item on a 3-point Likert scale (1=*Not important*, 3= *Very important*).

Participants' personality traits were measured using the *Revised Interpersonal Adjective Scales* (IAS-R; Wiggins, Trapnell, & Phillips, 1988), which looks at the Big Five factors of extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience. Participants were asked to rate each adjective on the scale on an 8-point Likert scale ranging from *extremely inaccurate* to *extremely accurate*. The IAS-R originally contains 92 adjectives that participants have to rate, but for the purposes of this study only 40 adjectives were used. The 40 adjectives were picked depending on relevance and easiness to understand. For each factor, eight adjectives were selected, where the first four of each factor measure the particular personality trait and the next four measures the opposite. For the purposes of review, the items on this scale are separated, but when given to participants the items were intermingled. Questions 1-8 were related to extraversion, questions 9-16 were related to agreeableness, questions 17-24 were related to conscientiousness, questions 25-32 were related to neuroticism, and questions 33-40 were related to openness to experience. The four adjectives for each factor that measure the opposite of the construct are reversely scored (questions 5-8, 13-16, 21-24, 29-32, and 37-40).

Participants were also asked to complete the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE; Rosenberg, 1965), which deals with general feelings about one's self. The RSE contains 10 questions, each where participants were asked to rate each question on a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from 1=*Strongly Agree* to 4=*Strongly Disagree*. Question 1, 3, 4, 7, and 10 were reversely scored.

The Social Anxiety Scale for Adolescents (SAS-A; La Greca & Lopez, 1998) was utilized to measure students' social anxiety. The SAS-A contains 18 questions with three subcategories: fear of negative evaluation (questions 1-8), social avoidance and distress of new situations (questions 9-14), and social avoidance and distress of general situations (questions 15-18). There were headlines that separate the questions in the original questionnaire, but for the purposes of review, participants received the questionnaire where items are combined. The SAS-A will be scored by participants on a 5-point Likert scale, where 1=*Not at all* and 5=*All the time*.

Lastly, the Brief Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (BMSLSS; Seligson, Huebner, & Valois, 2003) was utilized. There are five statements that participants were asked to rate on a 7-point Likert scale (1=*Terrible*, 2= *Unhappy*, 3= *Mostly dissatisfied*, 4= *Mixed*, 5= *Mostly Satisfied*, 6= *Pleased*, 7= *Delighted*).

Procedure

Participants were tested in groups of ten. The only instructions given were to let participants know that they can raise their hand to ask questions if they are confused about anything, but all instructions were printed on the questionnaires provided to each participant. The questionnaires were given in the same order mentioned above for all participants. Participants were provided with 30 minutes to complete the questionnaires. After completing the questionnaires, all participants were debriefed.

Results

A between-factor Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was completed to assess the relationship between the five newcomer groups with each score from the questionnaires. Tukeys HSD post hoc tests were also completed to determine which groups differed significantly from one another. The five newcomer groups are: (1) not a newcomer majority (n = 37), (2) not a newcomer minority (n = 10), (3) newcomer majority (n = 9), (4) newcomer minority (n = 12), and (5) attended school outside of Canada (n = 13). Three participants were excluded because they skipped multiple questions. Also, there were 15 cases where participants missed answering individual items, missing values were estimated by the participant's average items on that scale.

There were three measures of bullying. An ANOVA was completed to assess the relationship between newcomer status and the first questionnaire of bullying, TTHS. Participants in group 3 had the highest mean score on the questionnaire (see Figure 1). The main effect of newcomer status on the first bullying score was found to be significant $F(4, 76) = 3.02$, $p = .023$, and participants in group 3 differed significantly from group 2, $p = .009$.

The second bullying questionnaire, OSE, was divided to two subcategories: bullying and cyberbullying. An ANOVA was completed to assess the relationship between newcomer status and traditional bullying. Participants in group 3 had the highest mean score on the questionnaire (see Figure 2). The main effect of newcomer status on traditional bullying was found to be significant $F(4, 76) = 3.20$, $p = .017$. Post hoc tests revealed that participants in group 2 differed significantly from participants in group 3, $p = .011$, and participants in group 3 differed significantly from participants in group 5, $p = .040$.

An ANOVA was completed to assess the relationship between newcomer status and cyberbullying. There was no significant main effect of newcomer status on cyberbullying, $p > .1$.

Three different ANOVAs were completed to assess the relationship between newcomer status and social support. Social support is divided into three subcategories: how often parents provided social support, how often classmates provided social support, and how often a close friend provided social support.

An ANOVA was completed to assess the relationship between newcomer status and how often parents provided social support. Participants in group 1 had the highest mean score on the questionnaire, whereas group 4 had the lowest mean scores (see Figure 3). The main effect of newcomer status on how often parents provided social support was found to be significant $F(4, 76) = 4.21$, $p = .004$, and group 1 and group 4 differed significantly, $p = 0.26$.

The ANOVAs completed to assess the relationship between newcomer status and how often classmates and a close friend provided social support revealed a non-significant main effect of newcomer status on both subcategories of social support, $p > .1$.

An ANOVA was completed to assess the relationship between newcomer status and self-esteem from the RSE scale. Participants in group 1 had the highest mean scores on the questionnaire, whereas group 2 and group 4 had the lowest mean scores (see Figure 4). The ANOVA revealed a significant main effect of newcomer status on self-esteem, $F(4, 76) = 3.92$, $p = .006$. Post hoc tests revealed a significant difference between group 1 and group 2, $p = .022$, and a significant difference between group 1 and group 4, $p = 0.26$

Three separate ANOVAs were completed to assess the relationship between newcomer status and social anxiety from the Social Anxiety Scale for Adolescents (SAS-A). The questionnaire was divided into three subsections: social anxiety of negative evaluation, social avoidance and distress of new experiences, and social avoidance and distress of general experiences. The ANOVA revealed non-significant main effects of newcomer status on all three measures of social anxiety, p's $> .1$.

The last ANOVA was completed to assess the relationship between newcomer status and life satisfaction from the BMSLSS. Participants in group 1 had the highest mean score on the questionnaire, whereas group 3 and group 4 had the lowest mean score (see Figure 5). The ANOVA revealed a significant main effect of newcomer status on life satisfaction, $F(4, 76) = 2.85$, $p = .029$, however, post hoc analysis found no significant pairwise comparisons.

Pearson correlational analysis were used to further explore data. A two-tailed Pearson correlation was completed to analyze the relationship between the Big Five personality traits and the three measures of victimization. Personality traits were measured using the IAS-R. The Big Five personality traits are: extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience. Conscientiousness was significantly positively correlated with bullying, measured from the OSE, $r(81) = .25$, $p = .025$, indicating that as scores on conscientiousness increase, victimization scores also increase. Neuroticism was significantly positively correlated with bullying measured through the bullying questionnaire TTHS, $r(81) = .30$, $p = .007$, significantly positively correlated with both bullying, $r(81) = .38$, $p = .0005$, and cyberbullying $r(81) = .30$, $p = .007$, measured from the OSE. This indicates that as scores on neuroticism increase, bullying scores also increase. All other personality measures showed no significant correlations.

A two-tailed Pearson correlation was completed to further assess the relationship between the three measures of bullying and social support. Social support has three subcategories: how often parents provided social support, how often classmates provided social support, and how often a close friend provided social support. It was planned to include social support as a between groups factor ANOVA, however, coding participants as high versus low social support and treating social support as a second between factor led to some group conditions having too few members and too great variability in group size

between cells. Therefore, the relationship of social support and bullying was explored using correlation.

Social support was measured using the CASSS. Classmates' social support showed a significant negative correlation with bullying scores from TTHS, $r(81) = -.36$, $p = .001$ (see Figure 6), and a significant negative correlation with bullying scores from the OSE questionnaire, $r(81) = -.40$, $p = .0005$. This indicates that as classmates' social support increased, victimization scores decreased.

Moreover, a close friend's social support showed a significant negative correlation with bullying scores from the OSE questionnaire, $r(81) = -.24$, $p = .032$ (see Figure 7). This indicates that as a close friend's social support increases, victimization scores decrease.

A two-tailed Pearson correlation analysis was also completed to assess the relationship between the three measures of bullying with self-esteem, social anxiety and life satisfaction. Self-esteem was measured using the RSE and showed a significant negative correlation with both bullying, $r(81) = -.25$, $p = .024$ (see Figure 8), and cyberbullying $r(81) = -.25$, $p = .025$, subcategories of the OSE. This indicates as victimization increased, self-esteem decreased.

Moreover, social anxiety was measured using the SAS-A and was divided into three subcategories. Social anxiety of negative evaluation was significantly positively correlated with bullying from TTHS questionnaire, $r(81) = .34$, $p = .002$ (see Figure 9), and significantly positively correlated to both bullying $r(81) = .46$, $p = .0005$, and cyberbullying $r(81) = .39$, $p = .0005$, from the OSE questionnaire. This indicates that as victimization increased, social anxiety of negative evaluation also increased. Lastly, social avoidance and distress of general experiences showed a significant positive correlation with bullying from the TTHS questionnaire, $r(81) = .28$, $p = .011$, and bullying from the OSE questionnaire,

$r(81) = .29$, $p = .008$. In other words, as victimization increased, social avoidance and distress of general experiences also increased.

Furthermore, life satisfaction was measured using the BMSLSS, and was found to be significantly negatively correlated with bullying from TTHS questionnaire, $r(81) = -.32$, $p = .003$ (see Figure 10), and significantly positively correlated to both bullying $r(81) = -.38$, $p = .0001$ and cyberbullying $r(81) = -.23$, $p = .042$, from the OSE questionnaire. This suggests that as victimization increased, life satisfaction decreased.

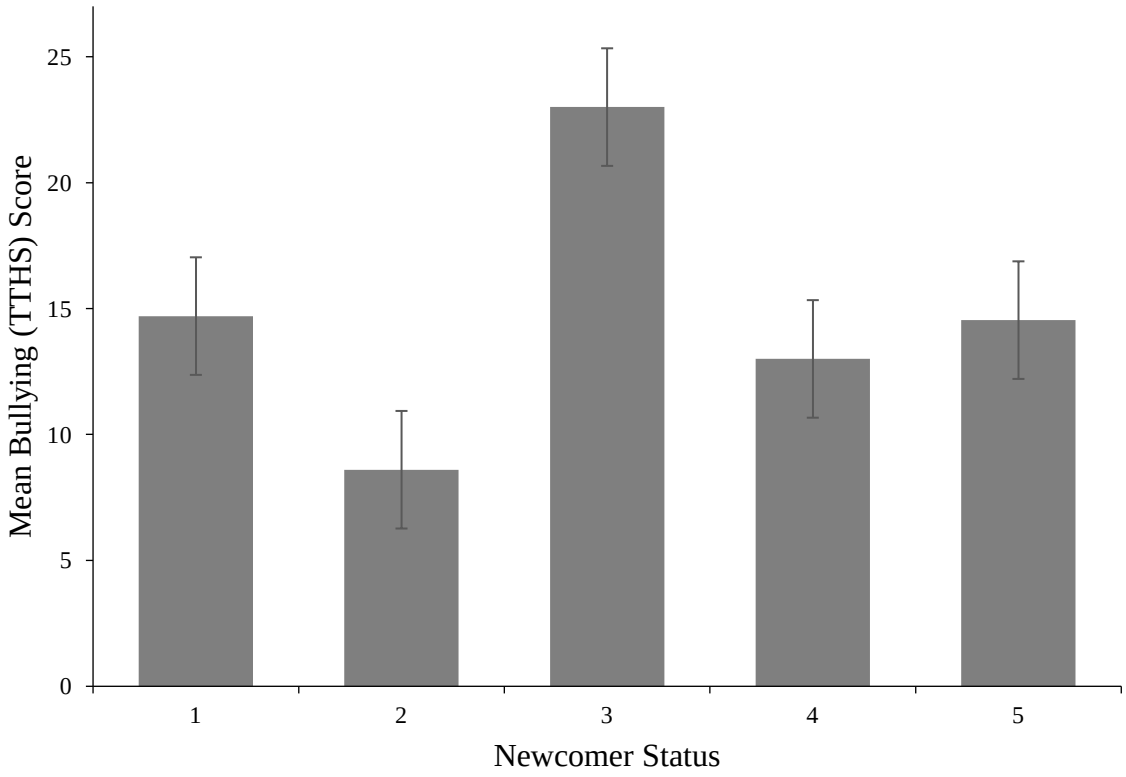

Figure 1. Bar graph illustrating mean bullying (TTHS) score for the five newcomer status groups. The error bars represent standard error of mean.

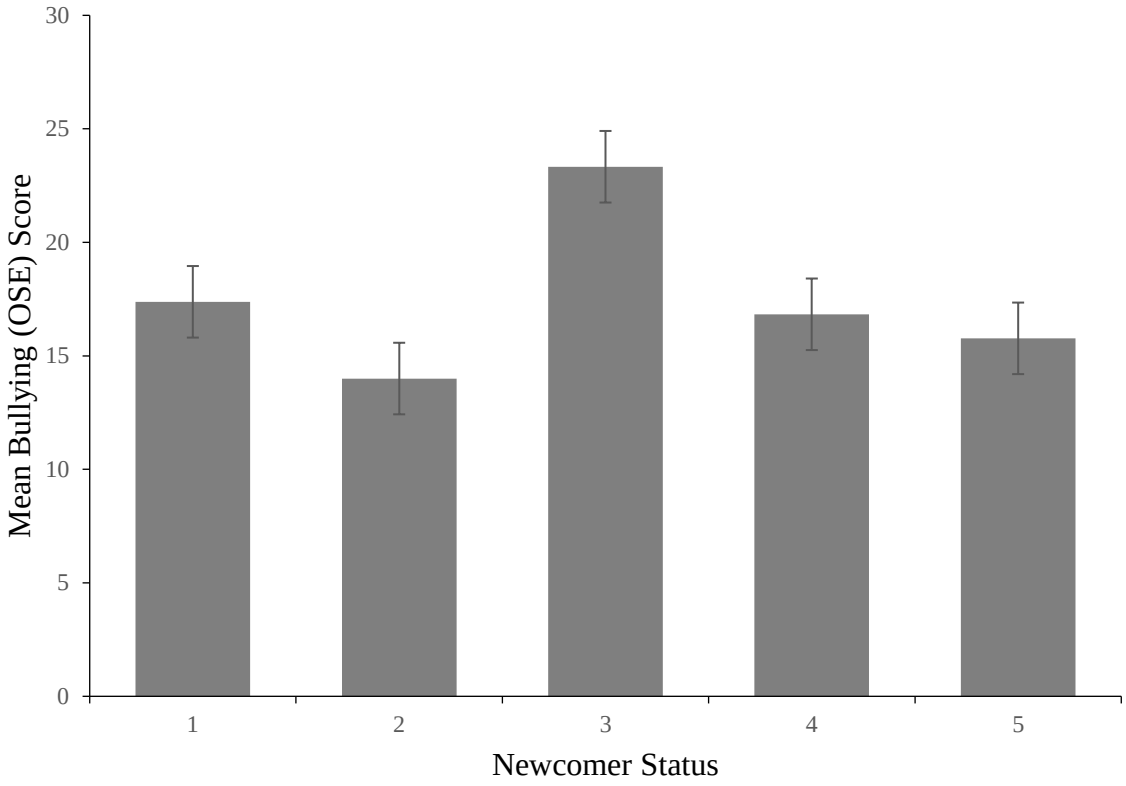

Figure 2. Bar graph demonstrating mean bullying (OSE) score for the five newcomer status groups. The error bars represent standard error of mean.

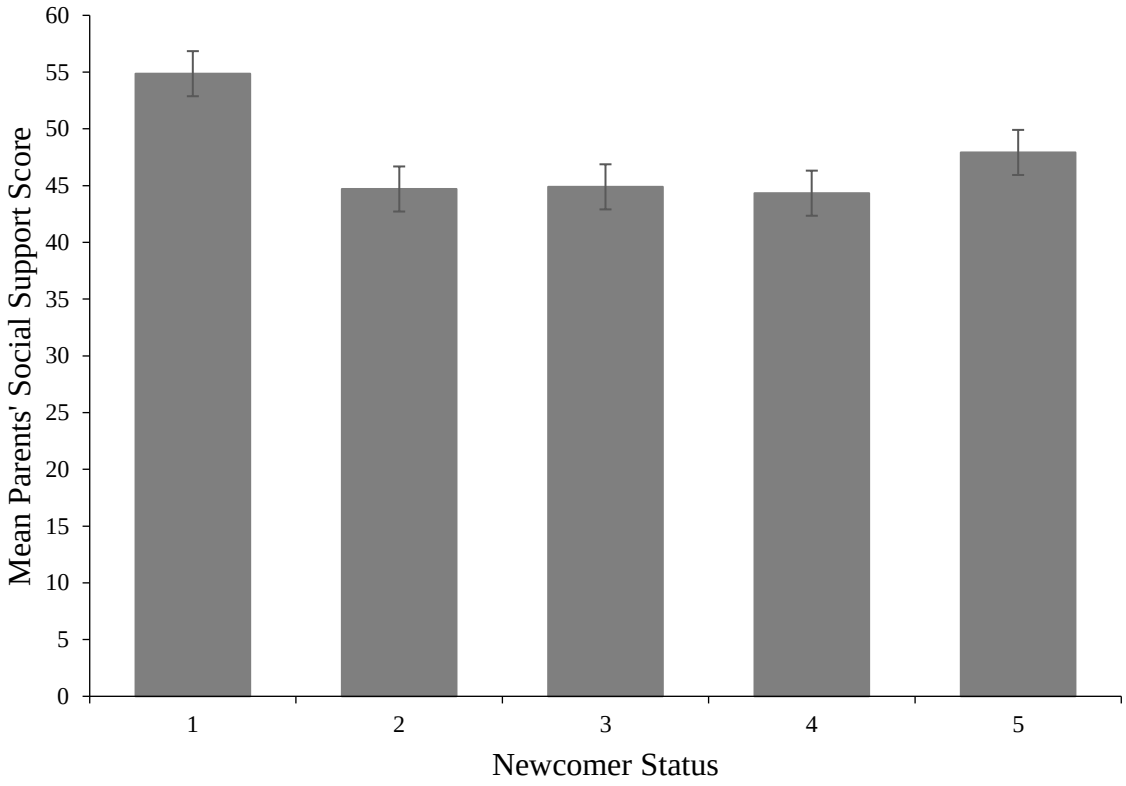

Figure 3. Bar graph showing mean parents' social support score for the five newcomer status groups. The error bars represent standard error of mean.

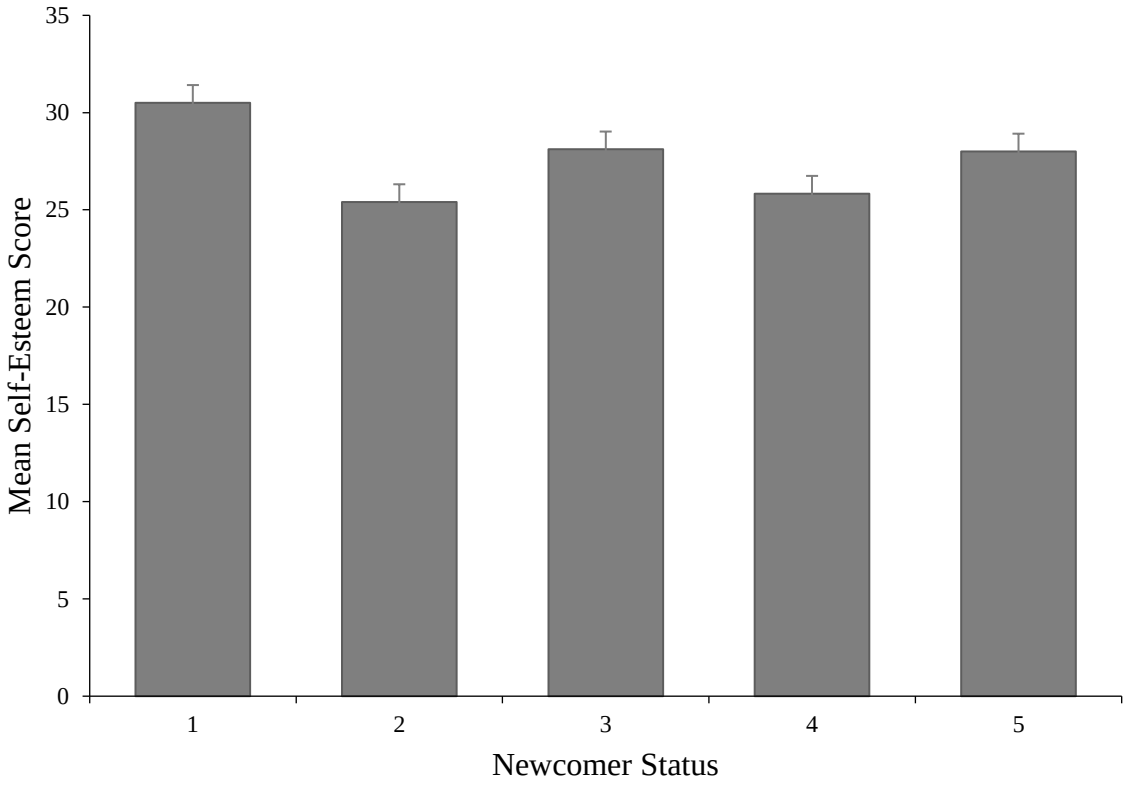

Figure 4. Bar graph showing mean self-esteem score of the five newcomer status groups. The error bars represent standard error of the mean.

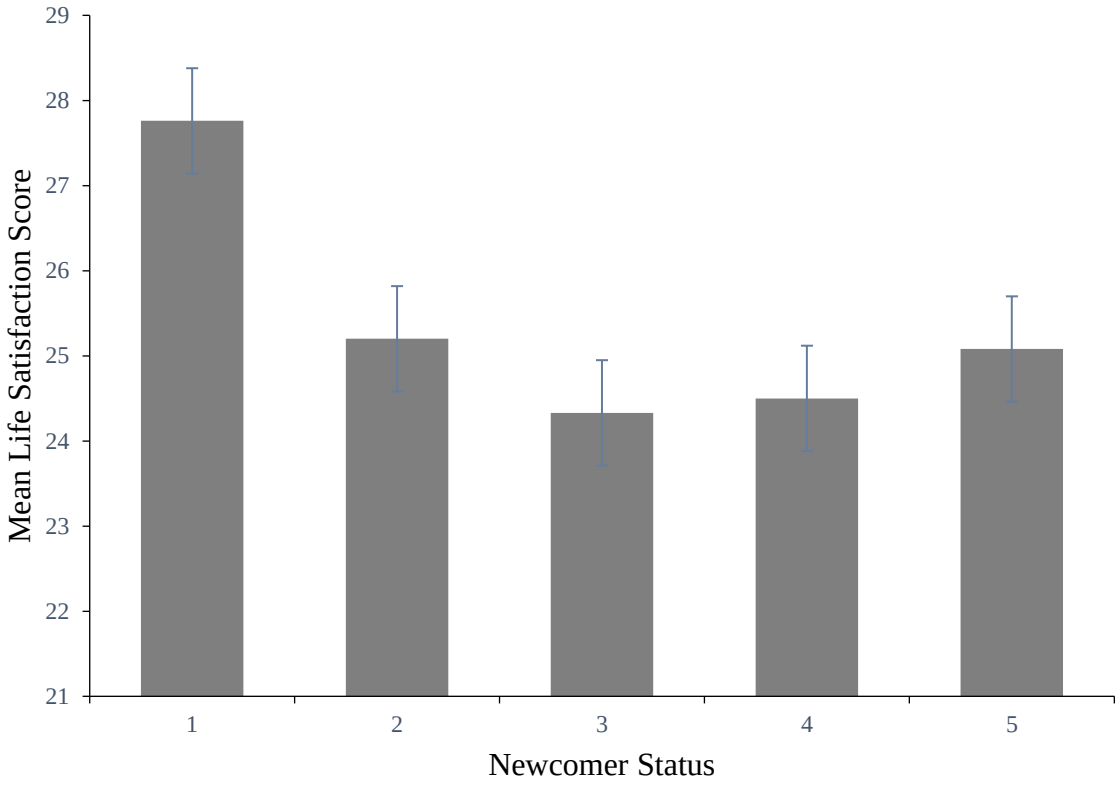

Figure 5. Bar graph demonstrating mean life satisfaction score for the five newcomer status groups. The error bars represent standard error of the mean.

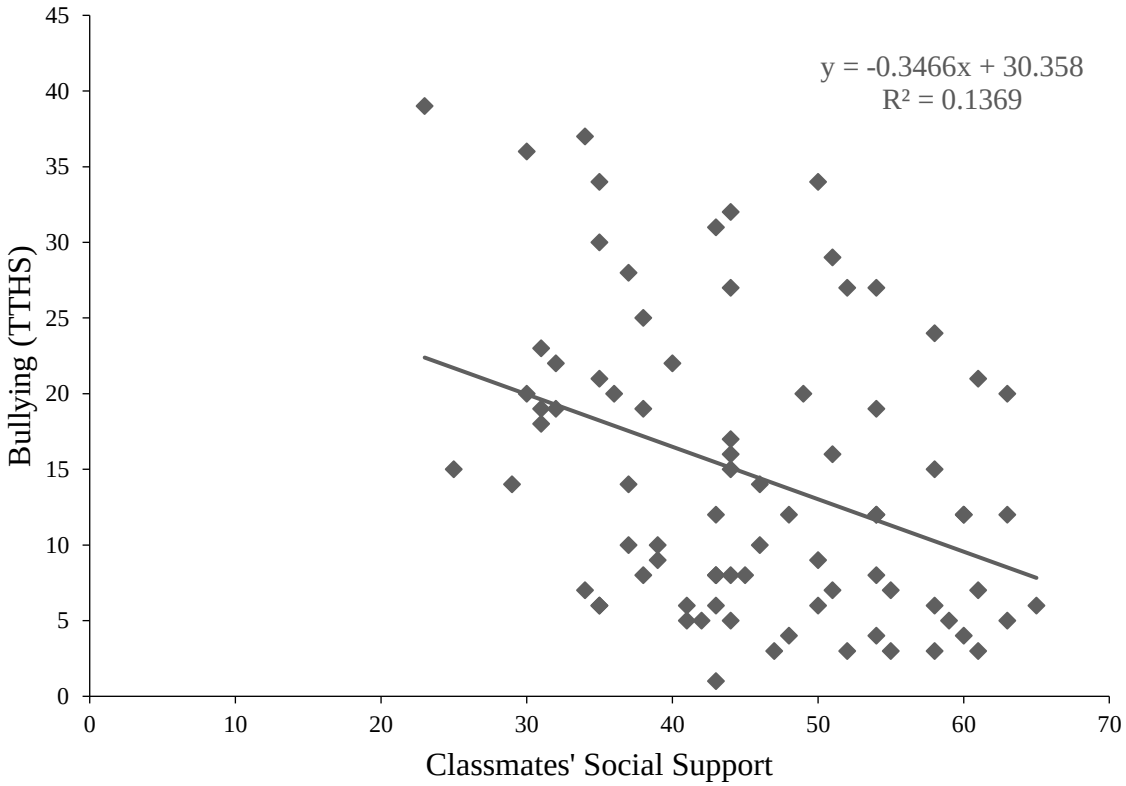

Figure 6. Scatterplot showing the relationship between classmates' social support and bullying (TTHS) score. There is a significant negative correlation.

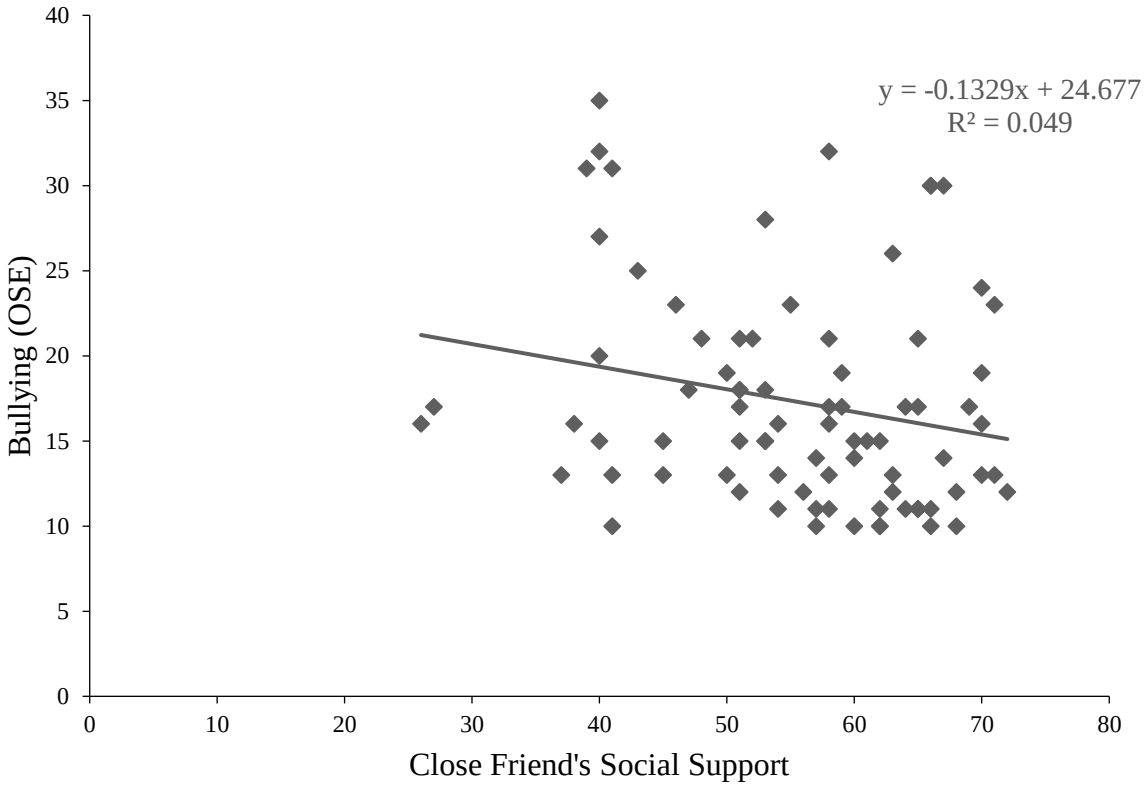

Figure 7. Scatterplot showing the relationship between a close friend's social support and bullying (OSE). There is a significant negative correlation.

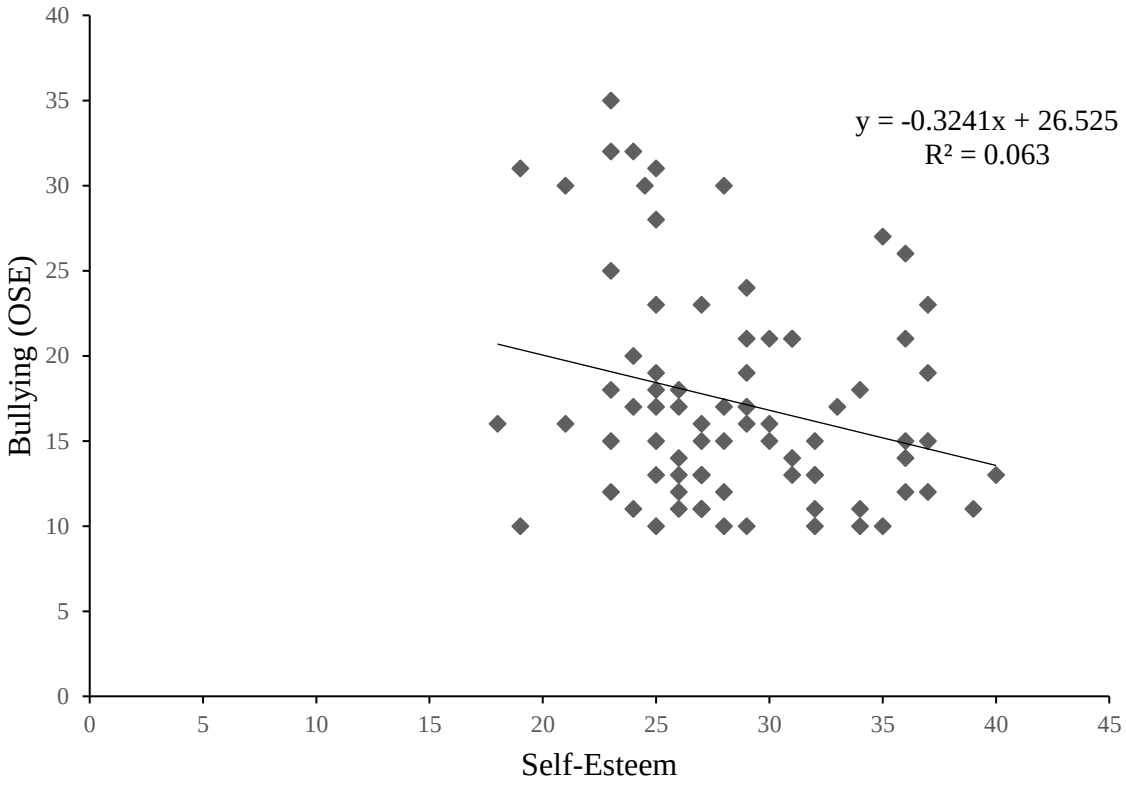

Figure 8. Scatterplot showing the relationship between self-esteem and bullying (TTHS). There is a significant negative correlation.

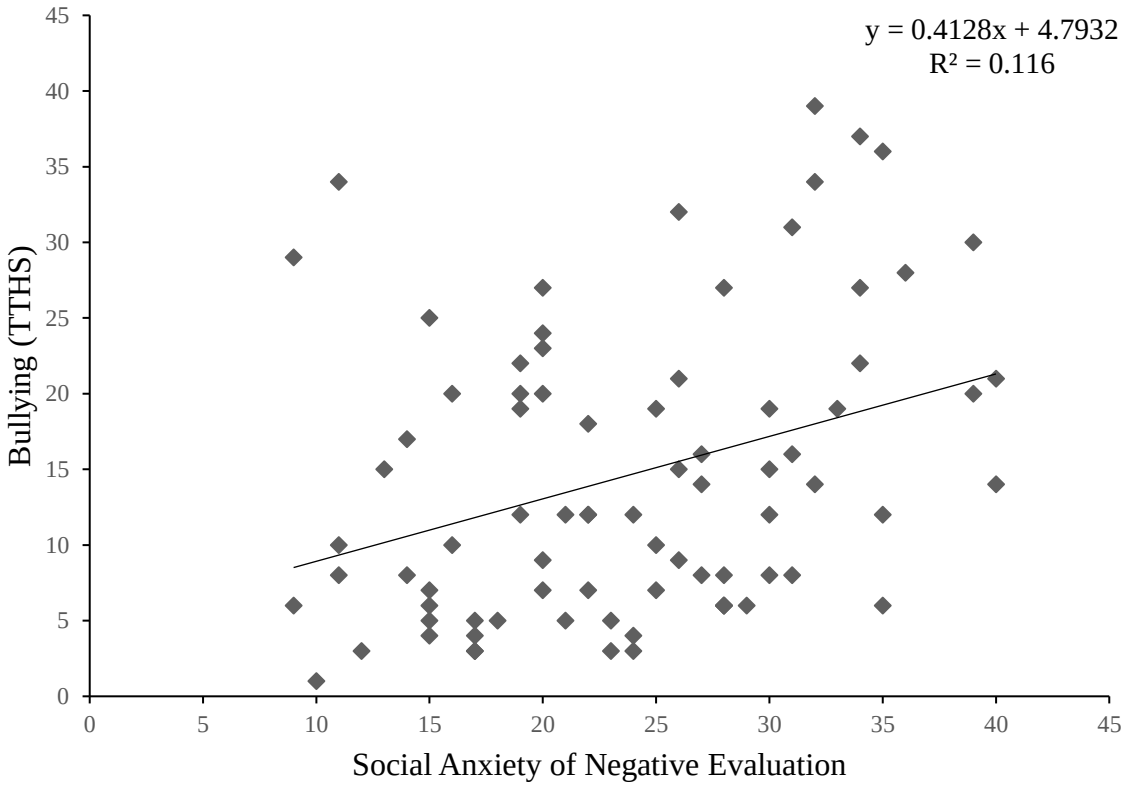

Figure 9. Scatterplot showing the relationship between social anxiety of negative situations and bullying (TTHS). There is a significant positive correlation.

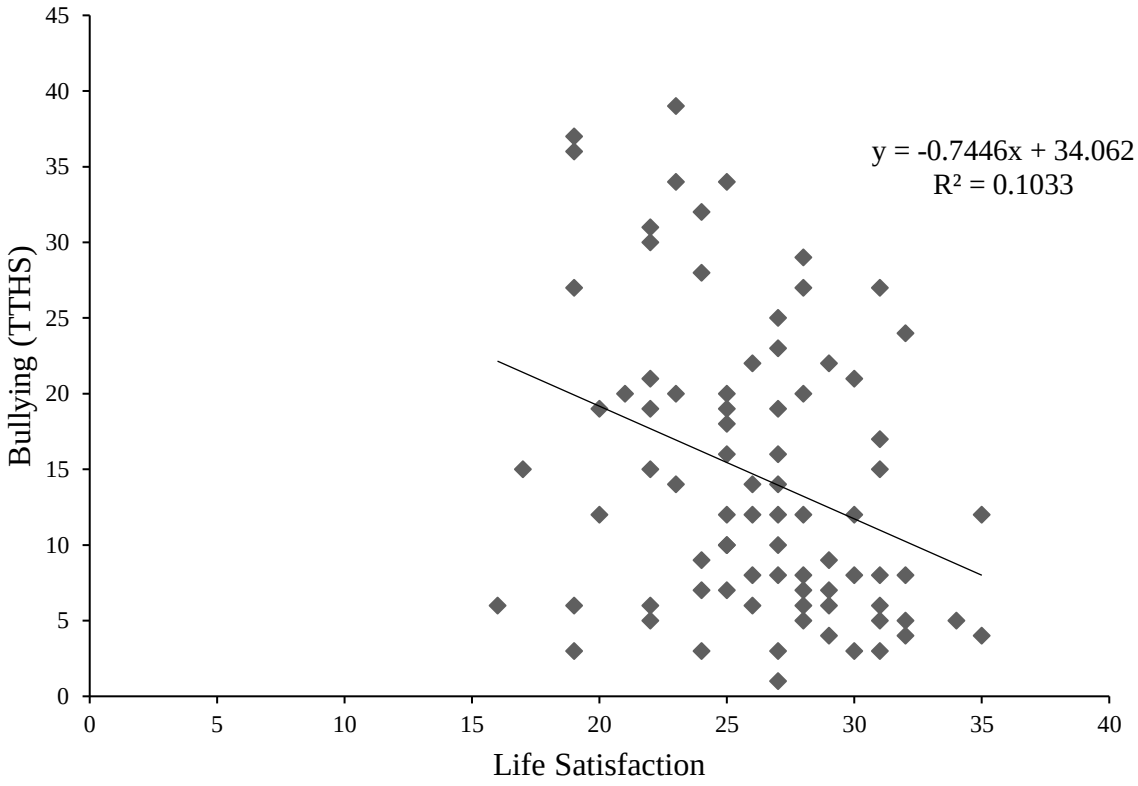

Figure 10. Scatterplot showing the relationship between life satisfaction and bullying (TTHS). There is a significant negative correlation.

Discussion

The current study hypothesized that newcomers who belong to an ethnic minority group are more likely to be victimized than newcomers who belong to an ethnic majority group. The between-factor ANOVA results from the current study showed a non-significant relationship between victimization and belonging to a newcomer ethnic minority group. Instead, results revealed a significant relationship between victimization and the newcomer ethnic majority group. Correlational results from the current study revealed that as social support increases, victimization decreases. The results from the correlational analysis also revealed that as victimization increased, negative effects such as increased social anxiety and decreased self-esteem and life satisfaction were present. Lastly, the results from the between-factor ANOVA revealed that newcomer students who belonged to an ethnic minority actually had greater and longer lasting negative life-satisfaction, social anxiety and self-esteem, but they weren't victimized. Each of the results can be supported with relevant literature and past research, and they will be mentioned sequentially.

It is not yet clear whether members of a new social group who belong to a minority or a majority group are victimized more than the other. The findings of the current study revealed that newcomers to a social group who belong to a majority group were more likely to be victimized than newcomers who belong to a minority group. This is why it is important to consider the class ethnic composition, which may help in understanding whether ethnic minorities or ethnic majorities of the classroom are more likely to be victimized (Vitoroulis, & Vaillancourt, 2015). In other words, when classifying students as ethnic minority or majority, it would depend on the ethnic composition of the city as a whole and also the ethnic composition within a specific neighbourhood or specific school. Students may belong to the ethnic majority of a city, but then belong to an ethnic minority in a specific neighbourhood or school. Tying this back to the in-group bias theory, students who are newcomers to a school

and are classified as ethnic minority due to the ethnic composition of the classroom may be at a higher risk of victimization (Vervoort, Scholte, & Scheepers, 2011; Larochette, Murphy & Craig, 2010). Moreover, the ethnic majority students of the classroom may try and exert their dominant status by exhibiting more bullying behaviour towards the ethnic minority members of the particular classroom (Hawley, Little, & Pasupathi, 2002). Therefore, the current study's first hypothesis was not supported because ethnic majority newcomers were more bullied than ethnic minority newcomers.

The current study also hypothesized that students who are newcomers to a social group but have sufficient social support are less likely to experience victimization. As mentioned earlier, social support was not used as a second between factor in the ANOVA because when participants were coded in high versus low social support groups, the group sizes were too small to reveal useful data. Therefore, correlations from the current study revealed consistent results with the literature and revealed a significant negative correlation between bullying and classmates' and close friend's social support. In other words, participants who had high social support from classmates and close friends were less likely to be victimized than students who had lower social support. The findings are consistent with previous literature, which has found that social support may serve as a protective factor against bullying victimization (Mishna et al., 2016; Khoury-Kassabri, Benbenishty, Astor, & Zeira, 2004). Previous literature has also shown that when students had no or low social support from peers and friends they were more likely to be victimized than children with higher levels of social support (Herráiz and Gutiérrez, 2016). Also, when analyzing the relationship between newcomer status and social support, it was revealed that classmates' social support was lowest for newcomers who are members of the majority group, who, as mentioned earlier, were found to be significantly victimized. The current study also revealed that parents' social support was lowest for newcomers who are members of the minority group but were not

victimized. Relating this to previous literature, lack of social support from parents of newcomers who belong to a minority group may result in lower social and psychological adjustment (Herráiz and Gutiérrez, 2016). The current study's findings are consistent with previous literature, because as social support decreased, victimization increased. The second hypothesis for this study was supported.

It was also hypothesized that newcomer students who are victimized will have a greater and longer lasting negative impact of victimization than victimized students who are not newcomers to the social group. Correlational results revealed a negative significant relationship between self-esteem and victimization, and life satisfaction and victimization. On the other hand, a positive significant correlation was revealed between social anxiety of negative evaluation and victimization, and social avoidance and distress of general experiences and victimization. This means that as victimization increased, self-esteem and life satisfaction decreased but social anxiety increased. Previous literature revealed that victimized children are more likely to experience higher levels of anxiety, depression and lower self-esteem (Reuger & Jenkins, 2014; Juvonen, Nishina, & Graham, 2006). The current study's results were consistent with past research and the findings support the third hypothesis.

Results revealed that newcomer students who belonged to an ethnic minority actually had greater and longer lasting negative self-esteem, social anxiety and life-satisfaction, but they were not victimized. As mentioned earlier, participants who are newcomers to a social group and belong to the minority group compared to newcomers who belong to the majority group are not at a higher risk of being bullied. However, being a member of a minority group and a newcomer to a social group resulted in experiencing lower self-esteem and life satisfaction. Tying this together, the current study revealed that students who belong to an

ethnic minority and are newcomers to a social group, but were not victimized, experienced lower self-esteem, social anxiety and general well-being.

The findings of the current study were unexpected, but some literature may explain what happened. In a study by Ryff (1989), the focus was on how social changes may affect psychological well-being, where psychological well-being was defined through self-acceptance, autonomy, environmental mastery (an individual's ability to be in an environment suitable for them), positive relationships with others, purpose in life (an individual's feelings that there is purpose and meaning to life), and personal growth (an individual's potential continues to develop and grow). Ryff (1989) found that social change, such as moving, effected self-acceptance, environmental mastery, life satisfaction, self-esteem and emotional stability. Moreover, the current study's findings that newcomer students who belong to an ethnic minority had lower scores on self-esteem, social anxiety and life satisfaction could be a result of the change of their social settings and may not be linked to bullying.

It is important to highlight the limitations of the current study which may explain the inconsistency of results with previous findings. The first hypothesis, that newcomers who belong to an ethnic minority are more likely to be victimized than newcomers who belong to an ethnic majority, was not supported. First, previous research has indicated that when testing for ethnic minority versus majority victimization, one must consider the class diversity of the new social group (Vitoroulis, & Vaillancourt, 2015). Doing so may have aided in explaining whether participants belonged to an ethnic minority or ethnic majority of the new social group. But, for the purposes of this study, it was beyond the ability of the researcher to access such data. Second, it may be possible that participants were engaging in social desirability bias and answering the questionnaires in a desirable manner that could have distorted the results. Lastly, the questionnaires regarding victimization reflected past experiences of being

bullied, which means that participants may have either forgotten the amount of times the incidents may have occurred and therefore answer the questionnaire depending on the most recent occurrence.

The current study consisted of eighty-one female participants, which means that there is the limitation of generalizability. Therefore, the current study cannot be generalized to male students. Additionally, in the current study there was difficulty recruiting participants who belonged to an ethnic minority and especially minority newcomers. Although there were enough participants involved in the current study, recruiting more minority newcomer participants would have been beneficial.

Results from the current research revealed that students who belong to an ethnic minority group and are newcomers to a social group had significantly lower scores of self-esteem and life satisfaction, and higher scores of social anxiety, but these students were not victimized. As discussed previously and reported by Ryff (1989), this may be due to moving, and not related to victimization. Moreover, the current study did not take into account any previous history of each participant's specific experiences when moving to new social groups. For example, participants were not asked about tragic/sad experiences that may result in lower self-esteem and life satisfaction. Minority students who have moved to new social groups may experience greater social and cultural change than a majority student who has moved. Therefore, future research should include information about social change.

Although the results of this study did not support one out of the three hypotheses, results showed that newcomer status and victimization may depend on class diversity, and that newcomer students who are victimized do not necessarily have to be more negatively impacted than non-victimized newcomer students. Longer lasting negative self-esteem and life satisfaction, and high social anxiety may be due to confounding variables, such as major social changes. Finally, the current study confirms that social support may act as a protective

factor to bullying. Future research should clarify the relationship between victimization and newcomer status, and clarify whether victimization leaves a long lasting negative impact on newcomer students or whether their newcomer status impacts them more negatively.

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Appendix A
Background Information

1. Age: _____
2. Country of birth: _____
3. Please indicate the country you were raised in. If more than one, write the country, city and how old you were when you lived there:
    - _____ age: _____
    - _____ age: _____
4. Country mother was born: _____
5. Country father was born: _____
6. What is your first language? _____
    - If your first language was not English, when did you learn English?

      _____
7. Did you immigrate to Canada? Yes No
    - If yes, how long ago did you immigrate to Canada? _____
8. What is your ethnic background? _____
9. Between the age of 10 and 18, did you change schools? University does not count. Check all that apply.

    ___ No

    ___ Local elementary school to local high school

    ___ From one elementary school to another elementary school within the same city

    ___ From one elementary school to another elementary school within Canada

    ___ From one high school to another high school within the same city

    ___ From one high school to another high school within Canada

    ___ To an elementary school from a school outside of Canada

    ___ To a high school from a school outside of Canada