

Introduction

- Non-Suicidal Self-Injury (NSSI) has been consistently associated with childhood trauma experiences (Serafini et al., 2023)
- Peer bullying profoundly impacts emotional well-being (Zhao et al., 2023) and has been extensively linked to the development of NSSI (Serafini et al., 2023)
- Emotion dysregulation is a key predictor of NSSI and is closely related to PB (Wolff et al., 2019)
- Although literature suggests emotion dysregulation may explain the PB-NSSI link, its role as a potential mediator is yet to be tested

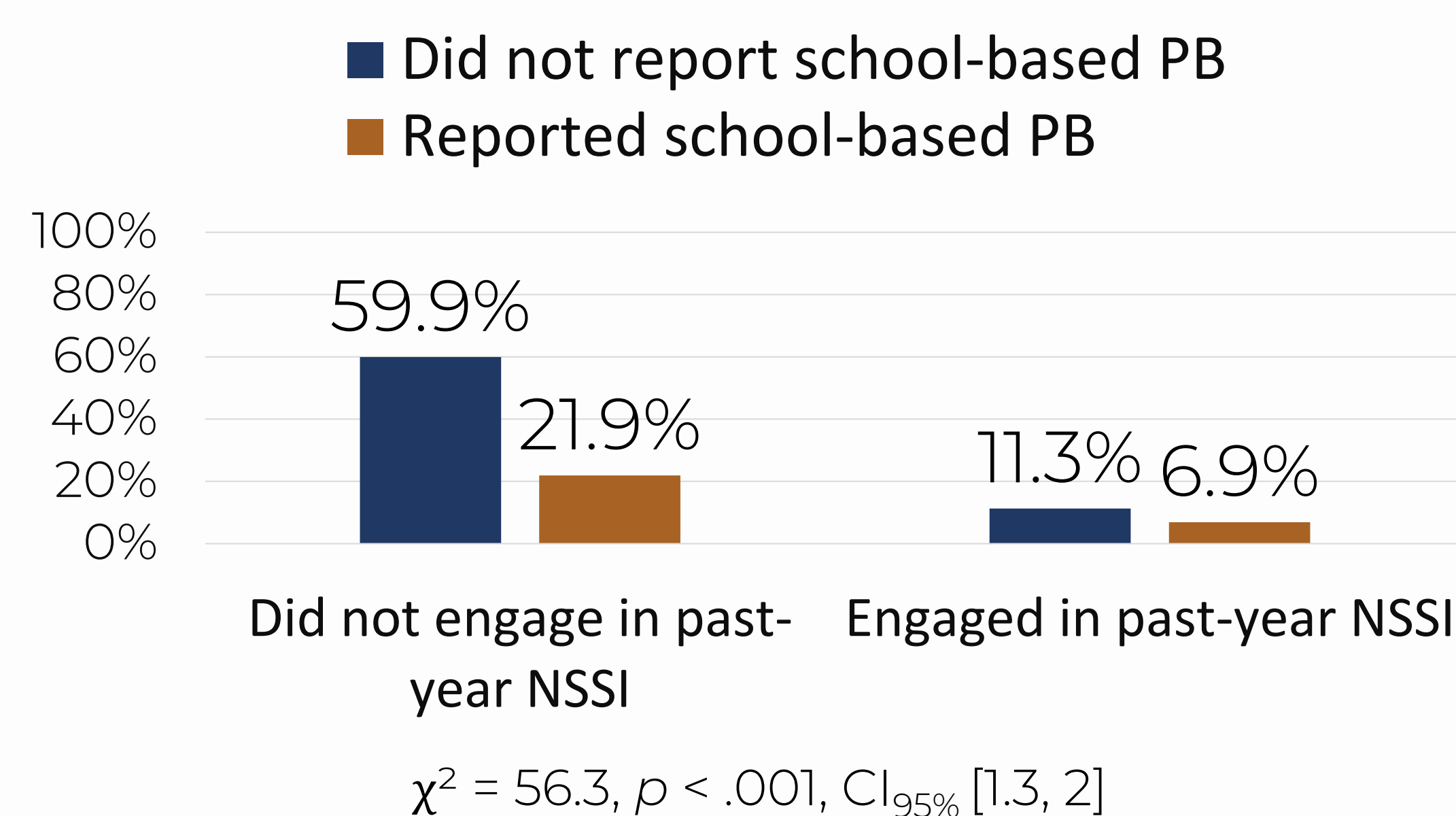
Study Purpose

- The present study explores how PB experiences in childhood indirectly relate to past-year NSSI in young adults through emotion dysregulation

Method

University students aged 17-25 (57.6% Caucasian), completed a set of questionnaires:

- Retrospective Bullying Questionnaire
- Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale
- Ottawa Self-Injury Inventory



Proportion of participants who engaged in self-injury within the past year based on self-reported school-based PB experiences.

Analyses

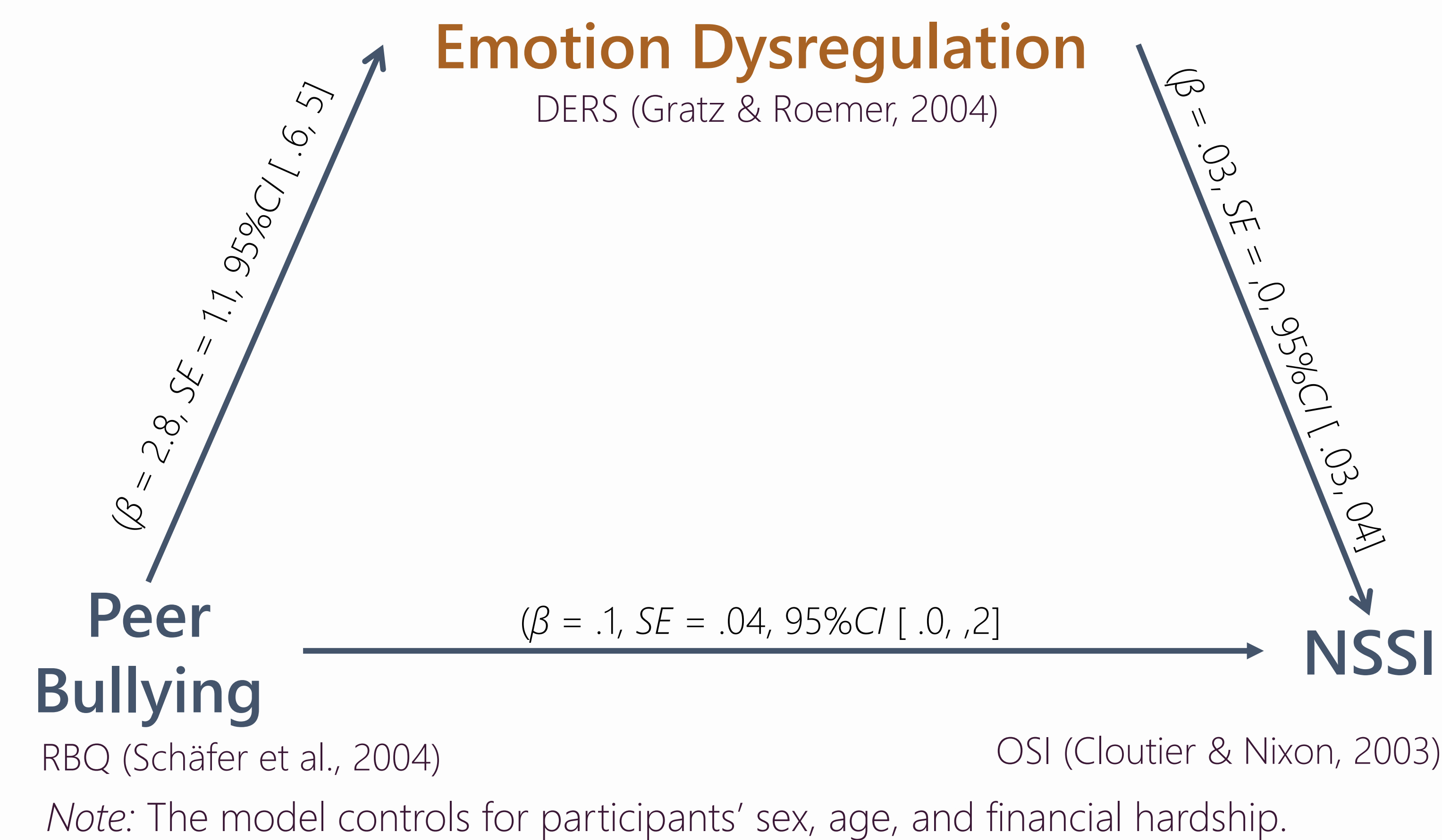
- A regression analysis explored the relationship between peer bullying experiences and NSSI behaviours
- Mediation analyses explored the indirect relationship between PB and NSSI through emotion dysregulation and its dimensions

Results

- A logistic regression revealed that young adults who reported experiences of peer victimization in school were **1.6 times more likely to self-injure in the past year than those who did not report PB experiences** ($R^2 = .04, p < .001$)
- Mediation analyses showed that PB was indirectly related to past-year NSSI through general emotion dysregulation ($\beta = .1, CI_{95\%} [.02, .17]$)
- Specifically, two emotion dysregulation dimensions were significant mediators in the PB-NSSI link:
 - Limited access to emotion regulation strategies ($\beta = .12, CI_{95\%} [.05, .19]$)
 - Difficulty engaging in goal-directed behavior ($\beta = .05, CI_{95\%} [.00, .09]$)

Emotion Dysregulation significantly mediated the indirect link between Peer Bullying and Non-suicidal Self-Injury

$N = 2,353; M_{age} = 18.95; SD_{age} = 1.52$ Female = 75.4%



Conclusions

- Peer bullying and Non-suicidal Self-Injury are major public health concerns, often found to be correlates
- These findings suggest that emotion dysregulation, in particular two key dimensions, may explain the link between childhood PB and NSSI during youth:

- Limited access to emotion regulation strategies

Individuals with PB experiences may engage in self-injury to cope with unpleasant emotions

- Difficulty engaging in goal-directed behaviour

For youth who experienced PB, challenges in sustaining goal-driven activities during emotional distress can exacerbate reliance on self-injury as a maladaptive mechanism

Future Directions

- Further longitudinal research is needed to understand how emotion dysregulation explains the link between youths' trauma history and NSSI
- Our study can help professionals better understand why young people with bullying histories may resort to NSSI, which can help identify targets for intervention, detect high-risk individuals for NSSI, and provide resources to improve emotion regulation skills