Personality and Individual Differences xxx (2017) xxx–xxx

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Personality and Individual Differences

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/paid

Understanding the relationship between cyber-victimisation and cyber-bullying on Social Network Sites: The role of moderating factors

Michelle Hood *, Amanda L. Duffy

Menzies Health Institute Queensland and School of Applied Psychology, Griffith University, Australia

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:
Received 1 August 2016
Received in revised form 16 March 2017
Accepted 2 April 2017
Available online xxxx

Keywords:
Cyber-bullying
Cyber-victimisation
Moral disengagement
Empathy
Social Network Sites

ABSTRACT

The strongest predictor of engagement in cyber-bullying is having experienced cyber-victimisation oneself. We examined the extent to which trait (moral disengagement, cognitive empathy, affective empathy), demographic (age, sex), and situational factors (Internet use, parental Internet monitoring) moderated the strength of the relationship between victimisation and bullying on Social Network Sites (SNSs). We surveyed 175 adolescents (M age = 14.82 years; SD = 1.52; 53% male) who had a SNS profile. Higher moral disengagement strengthened the cyber victim-bully relationship, whereas greater parental monitoring weakened this relationship. Neither affective nor cognitive empathy, age, sex, nor time online moderated the relationship. Overall, 30% to 48% of the variance in cyber-bullying frequency was explained. The results suggest that cyber-bullying interventions need to also focus on experiences of victimisation and that reducing the adolescent's moral disengagement and educating parents about the importance of monitoring adolescent Internet use would be most effective.

© 2017 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Cyber-bullying is the use of computers, mobile phones, and other devices to engage in deliberate, repeated, aggressive acts to harm others (Smith et al., 2008). Unlike traditional face-to-face (F2F) bullying, cyber-bullying is not limited by time (e.g., school hours) or location (e.g., school playground), and acts can be anonymous, viewed asynchronously and repeatedly, and more widely disseminated/shared by others (Slonje, Smith, & Frisén, 2013). Cyber-bullying can occur via mobile phone calls, instant or text messaging, email, online fora, blogs, personal websites, gaming sites, and Social Networking Sites (SNS; Kowalski, Giumetti, Schroeder, & Lattanner, 2014). We focused on cyber-bullying on SNSs. Facebook is the leading SNS; 71% of all American 13- to 17-year-olds have a Facebook profile (Lenhart, 2015). Statistics are similar for adults up to middle age and in Australia where the current study was conducted (Australian Communication and Media Authority, 2013).

Acts of cyber-bullying on SNSs include (a) posting intentionally hurtful, offensive, or intimidating messages, comments, or status updates; (b) creating hate groups; (c) sharing humiliating images; and (d) excluding someone from events, networks, or conversations (Nocentini et al., 2010; Palladino, Nocentini, & Menesini, 2015; Smith et al., 2008). We focused on the first group, "written-verbal" cyber-bullying behaviours, which are more strongly associated with global frequency of cyber-bullying and with victims' internalizing problems than were other forms of cyber-bullying (Nocentini et al., 2010).

Reported prevalence rates of cyber- bullying and victimisation vary greatly due to differing definitions. In general, Zych, and Ortega-Ruiz,, and Del Rey, R.'s (2015) meta-analysis reported mean prevalence rates of 16% of students cyber-bullying and 15% being cyber-victims. Prevalence rates of 11% to 14% are reported for engaging in or being victims of written-verbal cyberbullying on SNSs, including Facebook, over the timeframe of the previous 30 days (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010; Kwan & Skoric, 2013), with rates of around 57% when the timeframe is the previous year (Renati, Berrone, & Zanetti, 2012). While these prevalence statistics are for school-aged samples, Kowalski, Giumetti, Schroeder, and Reece (2012) reported that over 30% of college students were cyber-victimised for the first time during college.

Consistently, the strongest predictor of engaging in cyber-bullying is having been cyber-victimised oneself (mean weighted effect size r = 0.51, Kowalski et al., 2014; Kwan & Skoric, 2013). Prevalence rates for cyber bully-victims (i.e., victims who also bully) range from 3.3% (Renati et al., 2012) to 7% (Kowalski & Limber, 2007). Cyber bully-victims report more adverse outcomes than pure cyber-bullies or victims (Kowalski & Limber, 2013). For example, bully-victims were 3 to 4 times more likely to think about or attempt suicide (Holt et al., 2015). Thus, understanding individual differences and situational factors that moderate the cyber victimisation-bullying relationship is important.

We found no studies that had examined moderators of this relationship. However, research that identified correlates of being a cyber bully-victim (for review, see Wolke, Lereya, & Tippett, 2016) informed the current study. We examined personality-based individual differences

* Corresponding author at: School of Applied Psychology, Griffith University, Parklands Drive, Southport QLD 4215, Australia.
E-mail addresses: michelle.hood@griffith.edu.au (M. Hood), a.duffy@griffith.edu.au (A.L. Duffy).

http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2017.04.004
0191-8869/© 2017 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Please cite this article as: Hood, M., & Duffy, A.L., Understanding the relationship between cyber-victimisation and cyber-bullying on Social Network Sites: The role of moderating fact..., *Personality and Individual Differences* (2017), http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2017.04.004

ARTICLE IN PRESS

(moral disengagement, cognitive and affective empathy), demographic characteristics (age, sex), and situational factors (Internet use, parental Internet monitoring) as potential moderators.

Moral disengagement involves disengaging from moral responsibilities via vilification of the victim, morally justifying the behaviour, and using euphemistic labelling in order to harm others without experiencing guilt or a bad conscience (Bandura, 1999). Kowalski et al. (2014) found mean weighted effect sizes of 0.27 between moral disengagement and cyber-bullying and 0.15 between moral disengagement and cyber-victimisation. It is likely that victims who cyber-bully others need to morally disengage in order to preserve their self-concept and conscience. F2F bully-victims indicated that aggressive behaviour was right at greater than chance levels (Perren, Gutzwiller-Helfenfinger, Malti, & Hymel, 2012) and exhibited higher callous unemotional traits (a lack of both guilt and empathy) than did pure victims or non-involved adolescents (Fanti & Kimonis, 2013), indicative of moral disengagement. Based on this limited literature from F2F bully-victims, we hypothesised that stronger moral disengagement would strengthen the cyber victimisation-bullying relationship.

Empathy is the ability to understand and experience another's emotional state (Eisenberg & Strayer, 1987). Affective empathy is the ability to experience and share another person's emotional state, whereas cognitive empathy is the ability to understand the other person's emotional state (Cohen & Strayer, 1996). Kowalski et al. (2014) showed that empathy had a weak protective effect against cyber-bullying ($r = -0.12$), but was unrelated to cyber-victimisation. However, when the separate dimensions of empathy are considered, findings are mixed. Some studies find that only affective empathy (Renati et al., 2012; Schultze-Krumbholz, Schultze, Zagorscak, Wölfer, & Scheithauer, 2016) or only cognitive empathy (Barlińska, Szuster, & Winiewski, 2013; Steffgen, König, Pfetsch, & Melzer, 2011) are associated negatively with cyber-bullying, although other studies (Del Rey et al., 2016; Topcu & Erdur-Baker, 2012) find that both are.

There is limited work on empathy and bully-victims. Whereas F2F bully-victims show significantly lower empathy than pure victims (Perren et al., 2012), cyber bully-victims show lower empathy than pure cyber-bullies, but do not differ from pure victims or non-involved adolescents (Steffgen, König, Pfetsch, & Melzer, 2009). However, the relationships might depend on the specific empathy dimension and the platform on which the cyber-behaviour occurs. When it occurs on the Internet (i.e., on computers), there are no between-group differences in cognitive empathy (Almeida, Correia, Marinho, & Garcia, 2012; Renati et al., 2012). When it occurs via mobile phones, Almeida et al. (2012) found that bully-victims showed significantly lower affective empathy than pure victims, but did not differ from pure bullies or non-involved adolescents, but Renati et al. (2012) still found no group differences. When behaviour on computers and mobile phones was combined, Pettalia, Levin, and Dickinson (2013) found that cyber bully-victims scored higher on cognitive empathy than non-involved children but not pure victims or bullies, and higher on affective empathy than both non-involved children and pure bullies but not pure victims. SNSs can be accessed on both computers and mobile phones. Based on the mixed findings and the lack of studies that specifically examined behaviours on SNSs, we explored each dimension of empathy as a potential moderator.

The prevalence of cyber bully-victims increases with age to a peak around mid-adolescence (Mishna, Khoury-Kassabri, Gadalla, & Daciuk, 2012), mirroring the trend seen for cyber-bullying (Kowalski & Limber, 2013; Tokunaga, 2010). Thus, we expected the cyber victimisation-bullying relationship to be stronger in younger adolescents. There is no strong evidence of sex differences in cyber-victimisation (Tokunaga, 2010) or cyber-bullying (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010). Generally, cyber bully-victims are more likely to be girls (Kowalski & Limber, 2007; Mishna et al., 2012), although Yang and Salmivalli (2013) found it was boys. As cyber-bullying is more indirect and verbal than F2F bullying, it has been suggested that female victims feel more enabled to engage in it (Mishna et al., 2012). Thus, we expected that the cyber victimisation-bullying relationship would be stronger for girls.

Parental monitoring of adolescent Internet use and the time that adolescents spend online are also potential moderators of the cyber victimisation-bullying relationship. Meta-analyses showed that parental monitoring or supervision has weak protective effects against cyber-bullying, victimisation (Kowalski et al., 2014), and bully-victim status (Lereya, Samara, & Wolke, 2013). Therefore, we expected that more parental monitoring would weaken the cyber victimisation-bullying association. The time adolescents spend online is a weak risk factor for cyber-bullying and victimisation ($rs = 0.20$ and 0.17, respectively, Kowalski et al., 2014), but has not been examined for cyber bully-victims. Therefore, we explored time online as a potential moderator.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

We recruited 175 high school students (approximately 20% from each of Grades 8 to 12) who had a SNS profile (all had Facebook). They were aged 12 to 19 years ($M = 14.82$ years; $SD = 1.52$; 53% male, 3 did not report sex). The most common nationalities were Australian (49%) and New Zealander (15%). Family SES (Hollingshead's, 1975, weighted index of parental education and occupational status) was available for 118 students and ranged from 14 to 63 ($M = 37.48$, $SD = 12.15$). Higher scores indicate higher SES (potential range is 8–66).

Most (91%) reported that they mainly accessed their SNSs on the home computer, although 57% also accessed them on mobile phones. For 62%, the home computer was in a location where their parents could not see what they were doing. Most (98%) reported that they accessed SNSs on school days and 96% reported they accessed them on weekends. Half reported they left their SNSs open whenever they were on the Internet.

2.2. Materials

A pen-and-paper questionnaire included Internet and SNS use, cyber-bullying and victimisation, moral disengagement, empathy, parental monitoring, and demographic questions.

2.2.1. Cyber-bullying and victimisation

Seven items each were written to assess written-verbal cyber-bullying and cyber-victimisation on SNSs (Table 1), based on existing measures (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010; Kwan & Skoric, 2013; Palladino et al., 2015). Participants indicated the frequency with which they engaged in or had experienced each behaviour from 1 (never) to 5 (all the time). Exploratory factor analyses using principal axis factor extraction and varimax rotation revealed a single cyber-bullying factor (loadings 0.56 to 0.83; $\alpha = 0.85$), and a single cyber-victimisation factor (loadings 0.59 to 0.83; $\alpha = 0.89$).

2.2.2. Moral disengagement

The 32-item moral disengagement scale (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 1996) assesses "proneness to … different forms of detrimental conduct in diverse contexts and interpersonal relationships" (p. 367). Items tap a range of cognitive strategies (e.g., displacement of responsibility, diffusion of responsibility) across various immoral activities (e.g., verbal abuse, deception, physical injury). For example, "Teasing someone does not really hurt them". Bandura et al. (1996) demonstrated validity by expected correlations with prosocial, aggressive, and delinquent behaviours and internal consistency was good ($\alpha = 0.82$). We adapted the original 3-point agree-disagree response format to a 5-point strongly disagree-strongly agree response

Please cite this article as: Hood, M., & Duffy, A.L., Understanding the relationship between cyber-victimisation and cyber-bullying on Social Network Sites: The role of moderating fact..., *Personality and Individual Differences* (2017), http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2017.04.004

Download English Version:

https://daneshyari.com/en/article/7248493

Download Persian Version:

https://daneshyari.com/article/7248493

Daneshyari.com