



Face-to-face bullying and cyberbullying in adolescents: Trans-contextual effects and role overlap



Lambros Lazuras^{a,*}, Vassilis Barkoukis^b, Haralambos Tsorbatzoudis^b

^a Department of Psychology, Sociology & Politics, Sheffield Hallam University, United Kingdom

^b Department of Physical Education & Sport Science, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 22 August 2016

Received in revised form

8 December 2016

Accepted 9 December 2016

Available online 4 January 2017

Keywords:

Traditional bullying

Cyberbullying

Adolescence

Role overlap

ABSTRACT

Objective: While seemingly utilizing different means and methods, traditional bullying and cyberbullying may be linked together in intriguing ways. The present study assessed whether the association between face-to-face bullying and cyberbullying in adolescents is explained in terms of trans-contextual experiences and role overlap among bullies and victims.

Method: A two-stage cluster sampling approach was used, and structured questionnaires were administered to a representative sample of 1004 randomly selected secondary school students (M age = 14.88 years, $SD = 1.02$).

Results: Cluster analysis indicated that participants formed two distinct groups in relation to traditional bullying behavior and victimization. The analysis showed that trans-contextual experiences in bullying aggression and victimization were observed, whereby traditional bullies tended to engage in cyberbullying more often than non-bullies, and victims of traditional bullying experienced cyberbullying victimization more often than non-victims. Accordingly, in support of the role overlap hypothesis, bullying victims engaged in cyberbullying more often than non-victims.

Conclusions: Bullying can be seen as a trans-contextual phenomenon, involving both online and offline episodes. Accordingly, traditional bullying victims may change roles and become cyberbullying perpetrators, compared to non-victims of traditional bullying. Preventive interventions should focus on the ways bullying and cyberbullying relate to each other, and tackle trans-contextual and role overlap effects among perpetrators and victims.

© 2017 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Bullying is defined as a repetitive intentional act of aggression against one or many victims, who usually cannot defend themselves, or possess less power than their perpetrators [20,24]. A large body of research has demonstrated that bullying can be direct, involving acts of physical aggression (e.g., pushing, shoving, kicking, and hitting), or indirect, including rumor spreading and denigration of the victims [28]. Social exclusion may also emerge as a form of bullying, and can be initiated as early as pre-adolescence [29]. Typically, bullying incidents involve distinct perpetrator and victim roles, but research has shown that a 'victim/bully' role may also emerge [2,28]. Bully/victims are usually individuals who engage in both bullying perpetration and victimization roles and

represent a small but distinct group in bullying research [8,30]. Research has shown that bullies, victims and bully/victims are equally disliked [31], and that bully/victims tend to be more aggressive than bullies in both proactive and reactive aggression [25]. Accordingly, bully/victims tend to experience the same detrimental effects of bullying with bullies and victims, including psychosomatic symptoms, depression, anxiety, poor academic performance and drop-out from school, withdrawal and social isolation, and suicidal ideation and attempts [5,12,15].

1.1. The emergence of cyberbullying

Over the last fifteen years the advent of information and communication technologies (ICT) has radically changed the way individuals and social groups communicate, interact, and exchange information. While this technological revolution has yielded numerous benefits in diverse domains in the society (e.g., in education, entertainment, business, and healthcare) some unintended

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: L.Lazuras@shu.ac.uk (L. Lazuras).

negative consequences have also been observed, including online crime, internet and gaming addiction, pornography, sexual harassment, and cyberbullying [13,21,32]. Cyberbullying represents a newly emerged form of bullying behavior that is realized through the use of contemporary ICTs and includes a rich repertoire of online activities (e.g., flaming, hacking other people's accounts, posting denigrating messages, sending threatening text messages) that aim to hurt another individual or group of people [1,27]. Studies have shown that, alike traditional (face-to-face) bullying, cyberbullying has been associated with a wide range of mental health symptoms among adolescents, such as withdrawal and social isolation, lower self-esteem, dropping out of school, depression, and suicidal thoughts and attempts [15,17].

1.2. Distinctive characteristics of traditional bullying and cyberbullying

The differences between face-to-face bullying and cyberbullying are rather obvious and straightforward. While the former is based on physical contact and power imbalance (i.e., assumed power or actual greater physical power of the perpetrator over the victim), the latter does not necessarily involve physical power or strength, it can be done completely anonymous, reaches a much bigger audience (potentially millions of other ICTs users) and may utilize multiple means to victimize others, ranging from mobile phone use aggression (e.g., aggressive texting), to more severe forms of cyberbullying, such as creating libelous blogs, hacking personal accounts and stealing sensitive personal data, and posting embarrassing and denigrating videos against victims [1,27,16,21].

Those differences aside, however, face-to-face bullying and cyberbullying may have more things in common than one might expect. Using the ABACUS model [23] argued that electronic and traditional aggression do not necessarily represent distinct phenomena, but, rather can be seen as interrelated forms of aggression that share common features, such as, intentionality and repetitiveness. Both face-to-face bullying and cyberbullying are repetitive and intentional, than one-off random events [18,23]. There is also emerging evidence showing that traditional bullies also tend to engage in cyberbullying [10]. Such findings can have different interpretations and some scholars have even argued that cyberbullying reflects a subtype of traditional bullying. However, recent evidence from an international study involving adolescents in six European countries showed that cyberbullying is structurally different from traditional bullying [33]. Specifically, whereas traditional bullying is usually classified in four categories (i.e., uninvolved, bullies, victims, and bully/victims), cyberbullying seems to fit better in three distinct categories (i.e., noninvolved, bully/victims, and bullies with mild victimization). This evidence suggests that, although traditional bullying and cyberbullying perpetration can co-occur, this does not mean that cyberbullying is necessarily a sub-type of traditional bullying.

Furthermore, evidence has shown that cyberbullying and traditional bullying victimization can co-occur. For instance, studies showed that perpetrators of physical aggression tend to engage in online aggression and that victims of traditional bullying also tend to be cyberbullying victims [9,10,14]. Also, traditional bullying and cyberbullying victims suffer from equal levels of negative emotions and sadness and exhibit the same risk of suicidal ideation and attempts [19,26].

1.3. Bully and victim role overlap in traditional bullying and cyberbullying

Role overlap is the tendency of bullies to become victims, and victims to become bullies [28]. Past studies have shown that

aggressive retaliation may occur in the context of traditional bullying, whereby bullying victims become bullies themselves to fight back against their aggressors [6,7,8]. Nonetheless, aggressive retaliation in the physical (offline) world may require certain resources and capabilities, such as physical power, peer support, and self-efficacy, and not all bullying victims have access to and can utilize these resources for retaliation purposes. To date, very few empirical studies have addressed the ways bully and victim roles emerge and overlap in both traditional bullying and cyberbullying contexts.

1.4. The present study

The present study aimed to further explore the co-occurrence of traditional bullying and cyberbullying, as well as bullying and cyberbullying victimization, and two specific hypotheses were formed. The first hypothesis referred to the trans-contextual nature of both bullying behaviour and victimization and posited that traditional bullies will self-report more frequent engagement in cyberbullying as compared to non-bullies; accordingly, traditional bullying victims would also report more frequent cyberbullying victimization as compared to non-victims of traditional bullying. The second hypothesis was concerned with role overlap, and posited that traditional bullying victims will report significantly more frequent engagement in cyberbullying as aggressors, as compared to non-victims of face-to-face bullying.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

A two-stage cluster sampling approach was used. At the first stage, 12 secondary schools were randomly selected from the official lists of the Ministry of Education in 8 regions of Greece. At the second stage, a random sample of the students attending the selected schools was recruited. Overall, 1004 adolescent students were recruited and agreed to take part in the study (M age = 14.88 years, SD = 1.02, 51.1% were females).

2.2. Measures

2.2.1. Traditional bullying

Traditional bullying behavior was assessed with a newly developed instrument (European Cyberbullying Intervention Project Questionnaire - Bullying (ECIPQ-B [9] Schultze-Krumbholz et al. [33]) based on the classification of bullying behavior by Ref. [20]. This measure included a checklist describing seven bullying behaviors. Two versions were developed, one for the victim and one for the bully. In the Victim version, students responded to the stem question "Have you experienced any of the following behaviors in the last 2 months?" followed by seven bullying victimization items (e.g., "Someone hit, kicked, or pushed me"). The responses were recorded on a 5 point continuous scale (0 = No; 1 = Yes, one or two times; 2 = Yes, once or twice month; 3 = Yes, about once a week; 4 = Yes, more than once a week), and a summative score was created ranging from 0 to 28. Higher scores reflected a greater frequency of bullying victimization.

In the Bully version students responded to the stem "Have you taken part in any of the following behaviors in the last 2 months?" following by seven different bullying behaviors (e.g., "I hit, kicked, or pushed someone"). Students responded to a 5 point continuous scale (0 = No; 1 = Yes, one or two times; 2 = Yes, once or twice month; 3 = Yes, about once a week; 4 = Yes, more than once a week). A summative score (from 0 to 28) was generated, with higher scores denoting more frequent involvement in bullying.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/4941806>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/4941806>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)