Cyber bullying victimization and social anxiety among secondary school students

Sajeeth Kumar Gopalakrishnan* and Suresh Sundram

Annamalai University, Chidambaram, India

*Corresponding author

KEYWORDS	A B S T R A C T
Cyber bullying, Cell phones, Adolescent	This study examined the association of cyber bullying behaviour with social anxiety of secondary school students. The sample was 150 school students randomly selected from four different states of south India. Measure of cyber bullying and online aggression survey by Hinduja and Patchin (2009) and Social Anxiety Scale for Adolescents (La Greca and Lopez, 1998) to respondent. Data collected were analyzed using F-test and correlation. The results indicate that the students with high level of social anxiety are involved in cyber bullying offending and cyber bullying victimization.

Introduction

Bullying of school aged children is not a new phenomenon and it has been well established as a common and serious problem in society. It is likely that most children and adults have stories to share about either their own experiences of bullying or victimization or witnessing acts of aggression toward others. Using this new form of bullying, known as cyber bullying, online harassment, or internet bullying, bullies torment their victims in cyberspace with various forms of technology such as e-mails, instant messaging, chat rooms, and web sites. Text messaging over cell phones and phone cameras has also become new mediums for bullying (Campbell, 2005; Paulson, 2003; Peterson, 2002). Cyber bullying, a term for Internet bullying that was coined by Canadian educator Bill

Belsey (2005) is defined as the targeting of a child or adolescent by another youth using technology (e.g., e-mail, cell phone and pager text messaging, instant messaging, defamatory web sites and polling sites) for the purpose of intentionally humiliating, tormenting, threatening or harassing the individual. It is being increasingly used to harm individuals (Finkelhor *et al.,* 2000). As with face-to-face bullying, cyber bullying can occur among groups as well as individuals. It is important to note that cyber bullying does not involve adults targeting minors; if adults are involved, it is no longer considered bullying and instead is considered cyber-stalking or sexual exploitation (in the case of adults trying to lure children or adolescents via technology

for the purpose of engaging in sexual activities) (Finkelhor *et al.,* 2000). Since technology is now being used as a vehicle for bullying, serious attention is warranted to investigate the extent and nature of this new form of aggression and the possible psychosocial effects is has on youth. Knowledge gained from the study and exploration of face-to-face bullying has allowed for increased awareness of its effects on both perpetrators and victims and has led to the development of interventions. Cyber bullying, on the other hand, is a new phenomenon that is little understood. Thus, the purpose of this study was to provide information about the incidence of cyber bullying and social anxiety among secondary school students.

Unfortunately, being highly attuned to social cues does not necessarily result in a more successful social world. Devoting an excessive amount of attention to social monitoring is a common symptom of social anxiety.

Classified as the third most common mental disorder in the United States population, social anxiety is defined as a chronic fear of social situations that put one in the position of evaluation by others (Barlow, 2002; Craske, 1999). Individuals with social anxiety often fear that they will embarrass themselves in front of other people or that they will be scrutinized. They doubt their ability to make a good impression on others. Due to these fears, socially anxious individuals are likely to avoid social events that are likely to provoke the disorder's symptoms (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). While the most common fear reported in those with social anxiety is public speaking, other situations that cause distress include eating in public, attending parties, speaking in group meetings, going on dates, and starting conversations (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). However, social anxiety is more than a basic fear of being negatively evaluated. Individuals with social anxiety see themselves more negatively, are more likely to remember unsuccessful social situations and blame themselves for the outcome, and are more prone to perceiving social events in a negative way, even when they are wrong (Craske, 1999). Rather than a contributing source to the social world, a person with social anxiety sees himself or herself as a powerless object placed in the middle of a social situation. While those who are socially anxious realize that their fears are unreasonable and exaggerated, their own thoughts and actions keep them as victims to the anxiety.

Materials and methods

This study implemented survey method the self reported questionnaires were used to collected the data for all two variables of the study along with the personal data sheet. The selected school students of (N=175) were given the standardized questionnaire under personal supervision. In spite of supervision it was found that some questionnaires were partially responded and hence only 150 were considered for the analysis.

Sample

The sample consists of secondary school students from four different cities of south India namely a) Hyderabad b) Thiruvananthapuram c) Bangalore d) Chennai. Random sample technique was been employed. The sample was classified in terms of gender (male 79 and female 71) and the birth order (only child, 1st born, 2nd born and later born). The F-test and Pearson correlation were used to analyze which are significant are presented in the tables.

Tools

Cyber bullying and online aggression survey

Cyber bullying and online aggression survey by Hinduja and Patchin (2009)

To assess the cyber bullying a 14 item which contains components a) Cyber bullying victimization, b) Cyber bullying offending, it is a five point likert- type scale (e.g. "Have you been made fun of in a chat room?"). Cyber bullying victimization scale: Items 1–9 Cyber bullying offending scale: Items 10–14 scale score created by summing item scores. Range of the victimization scale is 0–36; range of the offending scale is 0–20. Higher values represent more involvement with cyber bullying.

Social Anxiety Scale

Social Anxiety Scale for Adolescents (SAS-A; La Greca and Lopez, 1998)The SAS-A contains 18 items that are self-statements (e.g."I worry about what others think of me"). Items are rated on a 5 point Likert scale according to how much the item "is true for you", ranging from 1 (not at all) to 5 (all the time). Items from scale are summed so that higher scores reflect greater social anxiety. The test-retest reliability coefficient of this scale was found to be 0.85.

Results and discussion

Table.1 show that the only child in the family shows more social anxiety (48.46) than the other birth order groups and which is significant at 0.05 level. The only child in the family shows more cyber bullying victimization (7.27) and cyber bullying

offending (4.36) but which is not significant at 0.05 level.

Table 2 shows that the male students show more social anxiety (44.89) than the female students (40.82) and which is not significant at 0.05 level. The male students show more in cyber bullying victimization (5.90) and cyber bullying offending (3.51) then the female students but which is not significant at 0.05 level.

Table 3 indicates that there is positive relationship between social anxiety, cyber bullying victimization, cyber bullying offending. Hence the results indicate that the students with high level of social anxiety are involved in cyber bullying offending and cyber bullying victimization.

In this study it was found that there was relationship between birth order and social anxiety among the secondary school students. Individuals are often motivated by a need to feel a sense of belonging; however, those with social anxiety may find it difficult to fulfill this social need because of the Internet. For socially anxious individuals, the internet and socially interactive technologies (text messaging) can have both positive and negative results. Kraut *et al.* (1998) found that online interaction greatly reduced face-to-face social interaction. In the present study also it was found that boys were shown more social anxiety than girls. Some researcher found that the adolescent girls may be more vulnerable than boys to feelings of social anxiety, and this may have implications for their social functioning (La Greca and Lopez, 1998). There is no influence of birth order on cyber bullying offending and cyber bullying victimization. In the present study gender has no relationship with cyber bullying behavior.

Table.1 shows the mean, SD and F-value for social anxiety and cyber bullying of school students on the basis of birth order

Variables	Birth order	N	Mean	S.D	F-Value
Social Anxiety	Only Child	11	48.46	11.463	
	First born	92	40.25	12.728	3.950*
	Second born	28	48.00	12.574	
	Later born	18	43.50	10.101	
Cyber bullying victimization	Only Child	11	7.27	5.387	
	First born	92	4.20	5.403	1.933 NS
	Second born	28	6.61	6.887	
	Later born	18	5.22	5.483	
Cyber bullying Offending	Only Child	11	4.36	3.557	
	First born	92	2.26	3.425	2.644 NS
	Second born	28	4.14	4.774	
	Later born	18	3.72	4.309	

NS – Not Significant *Significant at 0.05 level

Table.2 shows the mean, SD and t-value for social anxiety and cyber bullying of school students on the basis of gender

Variables	Group	N	MEAN	S.D	't'
Social Anxiety	Female	78	40.82	13.053	1.972 NS
	Male	72	44.89	12.028	
Cyber bullying Victimization,	Female	78	4.18	4.199	1.834 NS
	Male	72	5.90	7.031	
Cyber bullying Offending	Female	78	2.44	3.144	1.688 NS
	Male	72	3.51	4.532	

NS – Not Significant

Table.3 Correlation between social anxiety and cyber bullying of school students

	1	2	3
1.Social Anxiety	-		
2.Cyber bullying victimization	.398**	-	
3.Cyber bullying offending	.310**	.839**	-

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

It has been found that females are proportionately more likely to be cyber bully victims than bully victims, but males are proportionately more likely to be victims of both forms of bullying (Hinduja and Patchin, 2008; Li, 2006; Smith *et al.,* 2008; Ybarra and Mitchell, 2004). In the present study also it was very much found that boys were shown more cyber bullying behavior than girls. Some writers have suggested that an increase in Internet use is associated with symptomatology consistent with high level of social anxiety (Amichai-Hamburger *et al.,* 2002). The results indicate that there is relationship between cyber bullying victimization, cyber bullying offending and social anxiety. The students with high level of social anxiety are increase in internet use. So the students are involved in cyber bullying offending behaviour and cyber bullying victimization.

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