

Predictors of Cyberbullying amongst Adolescents: The role of
Empathy, Moral Disengagement
and Self-Esteem

By

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the roles of moral disengagement, empathy and self-esteem within cyberbullying. Participants were 119 adolescents from Dublin ranging in age from 12 – 18 years old. The participants answered a questionnaire consisting of a Cyberbullying Measure, Bandura's Moral Disengagement Scale, a Basic Empathy Scale (BES) and Rosenberg's Self Esteem scale. Results showed higher scores in females than males for affective and cognitive empathy, with the greater differences in affective empathy. There were lower scores in cognitive and affective empathy among cyberbullies. No differences were found in self-esteem between those involved in cyberbullying and those not involved. Higher Moral disengagement scores were found amongst cyberbullies. Age and gender differences were observed. Results and implications are discussed further within the study.

Introduction

Cyberbullying has been defined as “an aggressive, intentional act or behaviour that is carried out by a group or an individual repeatedly and over time against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself” (Smith, Mahdavi, Carvalho, Fisher, Russell, & Tippett, 2008). This definition was further expanded upon by Price & Dagleish (2010):

“Cyberbullying is the collective label used to define forms of bullying that use electronic means such as the internet and mobile phones to aggressively and intentionally harm someone. Like “traditional” bullying, cyberbullying typically involves repeated behaviour and a power imbalance between aggressor and victim”.

The commonality across these definitions is the use of the terms aggressive, intentional and repeated behaviour of the bully together with an imbalance of power in the relationship between the bully and victim. It has however been noted that there is difficulty in the application of some of these aspects to cyberbullying (Slonje, Smith, Frisen, 2012). According to Slonje et al (2012) the application of the word “repeated” to describe behaviour of the cyberbully within the definition of cyberbullying is not always straightforward due to the “snowball” effect of the technology being used. For example, if a picture is uploaded to the internet, and distributed by many other individuals, this single act by the cyberbully is repeated by others and therefore the effect is experienced repeatedly by the victim, even though the repetition is not carried out by the initial aggressor (Dooley, Pyszalski, and Cross, 2009; Menesini, 2012). Secondly, there is a question over the imbalance of power aspect within instances of cyberbullying (Slonje et al, 2012). Some studies state that the imbalance of power is due to the anonymity of the cyberbully (Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2008) and that greater knowledge of information technology may contribute to anonymity with Ybarra and Mitchell (2004) reporting that those involved in cyberbullying rate themselves as having

higher competence in the use of the Internet than non-involved parties. However not all cyberbullies are anonymous to their victim with as many as 40-50% of victims knowing their victimiser (Kowalski & Limber 2007; Wolak, Mitchell & Finkelhor, 2007) Dooley et al (2009) found that a power imbalance may occur due to the victim of cyberbullying finding themselves feeling more powerless due to their inability to remove offensive material about themselves from the realms of cyberspace.

The debate in relation to the definitions of constructs such as repetition and imbalance of power within the area of cyberbullying is ongoing but there is a general agreement in relation to the definitions cited above (Slonje et al, 2012; Hinduja & Patchin, 2012)

History and Incident Rates of Cyberbullying

Research into the area of traditional bullying began in the 1970's when Olweus first published his book, *Aggression in the Schools: Bullies and Whipping boys*, in 1978, following which there has been a great number of studies carried out in an attempt to universally define bullying and investigate its effects (Olweus, 1993; Hodges & Perry, 1999; Neary & Joseph, 1994; Slee, 1995; Craig, 1998; Cleary, 2000; Espelage & Holt, 2001; Fekkes, Pijpers, & Verloove-Vanhorick, 2004). In today's society, bullying is no longer confined to face-to-face aggression and cyberbullying has emerged as a new phenomenon to be contended with apart from and alongside "traditional" bullying (Kowalski, Limber, Limber, & Agatson, 2012; Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004; Smith & Slonje, 2012). The emergence of this new type of bullying is mainly due to the vast increase in the use of „information and communications technologies“ (ICT's) which have become an integral part of the lives of adolescents who have been referred to as “digital natives” by one researcher (Prensky, 2001)

With this in mind, cyberbullying has emerged as a global problem (Campbell 2005) and the most common form of harassment faced by adolescents (Slonje & Smith, 2008; Smith et al 2008). A study by Li (2006) found that 25% of participants within a Canadian sample had been cyberbullied while 17% of participants were involved in cyberbullying others. A recent study carried out in the U.S.A by Hinduja and Patchin (2012) found that around 20% of the 4,400 participants between the ages of 11 and 18 years old reported having been a victim of cyberbullying. A further meta-analysis of over 35 peer-reviewed journals by Hinduja and Patchin (2012) revealed that 24% of students have been a victim of cyberbullying whilst 17% of students admitted to being involved in cyberbullying others.

In Ireland, 4% of 9-16 year olds reported being bullied online or through mobile phone communication which is lower than the EU average of 6% and is 50% less than rates of cyberbullying within the UK, where 8% of 9-16 year olds are victims of cyberbullying (O'Neill & Dinh, 2013). There appears to be a significant impact upon the victims of cyberbullies in Ireland. It was reported that 52% of victims described themselves as being very upset or fairly upset by cyberbullying and 44% reported this as being a lasting effect (O'Neill & Dinh, 2013). In a large scale study carried out on the issue of cyberbullying in Ireland, O'Moore (2012) found that within a sample group of over 3000 adolescents, 13.9% of the participants within the study reported being a recent victim of cyberbullying and 8.6% of the participants admitted being involved in cyberbullying others

Cyberbullying can occur in several forms through the media of information technology. The spreading of rumours, gossip, exclusion and attacks against reputations and relationships have been cited as the most common forms of cyber-aggression (Jackson, Cassidy & Brown, 2009) and is mainly perpetrated through the use of text messages, pictures/video clips, phone calls, emails, chat-rooms, instant messaging and websites (Smith, Mahdavi, Carvahlho & Tippett, 2006). Smith et al (2008) found that picture/video clips had

the highest impact on victims followed by phone calls. Text messages and websites were found to have a “neutral impact” while email, chat rooms and instant messaging had slightly lower impact factors and were perceived as less hurtful to victims (Smith et al., 2008).

The use of electronic communication tools also allows greater anonymity in some cases for bullies together with constant access to their victims - whilst there is no place for the victim to hide from their victimiser, the bully is benefited by a sense of invisibility (Slonje & Smith, 2008). Although, in some cases, there are mechanisms available to identify bullies, the victim sometimes does not have the knowledge or administrator rights to identify the user of an anonymous source of communication (Hinduja & Patchin 2009). Some research suggests that cyberbullying is a phenomenon that can occur anywhere and at any time with no escape for the victim (Willard 2006).

Gender differences in cyberbullying

There is conflicting research in relation to gender differences in the involvement of cyberbullying and Tokunaga (2010) described the area of gender differences as complex and „fraught with inconsistent findings“. The majority of studies suggest that gender is not an attributable factor to cyberbullying victimisation (Beran & Li, 2007; Didden et al 2009; Hinduja & Patchin, 2008; Ybarra, Diener-West, & Leaf 2007; Ybarra & Mitchell 2004; Livingstone, Haddon, Görzig, & Ólafsson, 2011). Nonetheless, there may be relatively greater involvement of girls in cyberbullying, when compared to traditional physical or verbal bullying (Smith, 2012). Some researchers argue that gender does play a significant role in predicting those individuals who are more likely to become a victim of cyberbullying (Dehue, Bolman & Vollink, 2008; Ybarra & Mitchell, 2008). These studies suggest that females are more likely to become the victim of online bullying than males. A meta-synthesis of data carried out by Tokunaga (2010) was unable to draw any definite conclusions in

relation to gender and cyberbullying and found that neither males nor females are more likely to become victims of cyberbullying when both groups were compared.

Gender and Types of Cyberbullying

Some of the literature has cited differences in the types of cyberbullying between genders. Girls are more likely to engage in cyberbullying by mobile phone and through instant messaging, emails or chatrooms whereas photos or videos posted online is the most common form of cyberbullying among boys (Abeele & De Cock, 2013; Menesini, Nocentini & Calussi, 2011). Furthermore, boys tend to engage in more physical forms of bullying whilst girls engage in social exclusion and relational bullying (Bjorkqvist, Lagerspetz & Kaukiainen, 1992; Cullerton-Sen & Crick, 2005).

However, gender differences remain inconsistent across studies probably due to different samples, methodologies and historical changes such as increased use of social networking in girls especially (Patchin & Hinduja, 2010).

Age and Cyberbullying

There is no clear indication in the research at present with regard to the relationship between age and cyberbullying. Many studies indicate that age is not a significant predictor of cyberbullying among adolescents between the ages of 12 and 18 years (Beran & Li, 2007; Didden et al., 2009; Smith et al, 2008; Wolak et al., 2007; Ybarra 2004). Other studies have indicated that age may be a significant factor (Dehue et al., 2008; Hinduja & Patchin, 2008; Slonje & Smith, 2007; Ybarra & Mitchell, 2008; Ybarra et al., 2007) with the rates of cyberbullying most prevalent amongst 15 to 17 year olds (Ybarra and Mitchell, 2004). A recent study by Robson & Witenberg (2013) further supports the link between older students and cyberbullying.

Although the research remains conflicted with regard to the relationship between age and bullying, it has been found that older students have increased access to many forms of electronic communication such as mobile phones with internet access and therefore tend to use it more often (Lenhart 2009; Lenhart, Madden & Hitlin, 2005). Frequency of use of ICT's has been found to be correlated with incidences cyberbullying (Topcu, Erdur-Baker, Capa-Aydin, 2008; Didden et al, 2009; Li, 2007).

Effects of Cyberbullying

The effects of Cyberbullying are far reaching and can affect modern adolescents in many ways. Previous research has found correlations between cyberbullying and self-harm and suicidal ideation (Hay & Meldrum, 2010; Klomek, Marrocco, Kleinman, Schonfeld, & Gould, 2008), a negative effect on academic achievements (Beran, 2009; Beran & Li, 2007) together with increased absence from school (Katzner, Fetchenhauer, & Belschak 2009). Furthermore, one fourth of victims attribute the acts of cyberbullying as causing problems in their home life (Patchin & Hindjua, 2006) and others develop psychosocial problems such as social anxiety and lowered self-esteem (Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Didden et al, 2009). Studies in relation to long-term effects on those involved in carrying out bullying have found that bullies are more likely to engage in antisocial and/or violent behaviour in later life (Patchin & Hinduha, 2006; Kulig, Hall & Kalischuck, 2008). Research in this area is developing and efforts are being made to understand the interpersonal traits, attitudes and cognitive mechanisms which lead those who engage in cyberbullying and aggressive behaviour to do so (Leary, Twenge & Quinlivan, 2006; Krieglmeier, Wittstadt & Strack, 2009; Schultze-Krumbholz, Jakel, Schultze, & Scheithauer, 2012)

A recent meta-analysis supports the assumption of differing roles in bullying relating to different psychological profiles (Cook, Williams, Guerra, Kim & Sadek, 2010). Among the individual variables which have been shown to predict cyberbullying are empathy and moral disengagement (Renati, Berrone & Zanetti, 2012). Renati et al (2012) found that participants who identified themselves as cyberbullies or cyberbully/victims showed significantly higher levels of overall moral disengagement and a lack of affective empathy. Perren and Gutzwiller-Helfenfinger (2012) found that cyberbullies have stronger deficits in morality than bullies using “traditional” means of bullying but morally disengaged justifications were not predictive for cyberbullying .

Empathy

Empathy is defined as “an emotional response that stems from another’s emotional state or condition” (Eisenberg & Strayer 1987, p.5) and emotional reactions that are orientated toward other people and include feelings of compassion, sympathy and concern (Batson & Oleson, 1991).

It is important, however, to note that empathy is considered to be a “multi-dimensional construct with cognitive and emotional components (Davis, 1994; Jolliffe & Farrington, 2004). It is defined by the ability to both understand and share in the emotional state of another (Cohen & Strayer, 1996). Therefore an empathic person has the ability to not only feel what another person is feeling, but also understands why the person is feeling this way (Azar, 1997; Darley, 1993; Duan, 2000)

Research suggests that empathy is an essential element for pro-social behaviour and moral development and lower scores of empathy have been consistently correlated with anti-

social and aggressive behaviour in the past (Jolliffe & Farrington, 2004; Jolliffe & Farrington, 2006). Feshbach (1987) found that cognitive and affective empathy were important to consider in the prevention of physical aggression, and placed particular importance on affective empathy.

In considering different components of empathy and bullying, current research suggests that low affective empathy is associated with traditional bullying and whereas low cognitive empathy is not (Jolliffe and Farrington, 2011).. Research carried out by Jolliffe and Farrington (2006) found that low affective empathy was significantly related to bullying in females only and that low overall scores of empathy were related to violent bullying for males and relational bullying by females. No significant results were found for bullying and cognitive empathy for either gender (Jolliffe & Farrington, 2006).

Research specifically examining the relationship between empathy and cyberbullying, is relatively new. Some research has found that cyberbullying is associated with lower levels of both affective and cognitive empathy (Ang & Goh, 2010). Gender differences were observed in this study, whereby lower cognitive empathy predicted cyberbullying among males, independently of their scores in affective empathy. Conversely, affective empathy cushioned the effect of lower cognitive empathy in cyberbullying among girls. In relation to gender, Jolliffe and Farrington (2006) found that females score significantly higher than boys in both cognitive and affective empathy with a greater difference to be found in relation to affective empathy. A recent study by Renati et al (2012) found that cyberbullies displayed a lack of affective empathy and similarly, Steffgen, Konig, Pfetsch and Melzer (2011) found that lack of empathy assists cyberbullying behaviour.

Moral Disengagement

Moral Disengagement is a theory put forward by Albert Bandura (Bandura, 1986; Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 1996) based on a set of eight cognitive mechanisms that allow individuals to endorse behaviours conflicting with their set of moral values without feeling guilty. According to Bandura's theory, moral standards are used in a self-regulatory process to evaluate the potential consequences of intended behaviour for themselves through self-monitoring, judgement and self-reactions (Bandura et al, 1996). If their moral standards are going to be violated by way of self-condemnation or guilt, then the behaviour is not realised (Bandura 2002). However, Bandura (1990) argued that "self-regulatory mechanisms do not operate unless they are activated" and that there are "many psychological processes by which moral reactions can be disengaged from inhumane conduct" (Bandura, 1986). Therefore, it is possible for individuals to engage in behaviours that are not in accordance with their moral standards without feeling guilty (Bandura 2002; McAlister, Bandura & Owen, 2006). Dehumanisation of the victim allows endorsement and justification of immoral behaviours by viewing the recipient of the behaviour as a subhuman creature. For example: "Some people deserve to be treated like animals" (Bandura et al, 1996)

Bandura's social cognitive theory of human agency offers an inclusive framework within which the moral dimensions of bullying can also be described (Bandura, 2002). Previous research has indicated that bullies may have lower levels of morality (Hymel, Schonert-Reichl, Bonanno, Vaillancourt & Henderson, 2010). Most studies carried out in relation to morality have concentrated on traditional bullying behaviour and aggression (Arsenio & Lemerise, 2004; Hymel et al 2010). Limited research has been carried out in

relation to cyberbullying and moral disengagement however it has been posited that moral disengagement is a positive predictor of cyberbullying (Pornari & Wood, 2010; Bauman & Pero, 2011; Hymel, Rocke-Henderson, & Bonanno, 2005). A recent study by Robson & Witenberg (2013) found that moral disengagement with specific emphasis on diffusion of responsibility and attribution of blame was a predictor of cyberbullying. Research has suggested that due to the invisibility of the cyberbullying victim, it may be easier for cyberbullies to act immorally than traditional bullies (Slonje & Smith, 2008) and to apply cognitive strategies to escape from moral responsibility (Almeida et al 2008). In contrast, Perren & Gutzwiller-Helfenfinger (2012) suggest that morally disengaged justifications were not predictive for cyberbullying behaviour.

Self Esteem

Rosenberg (1989) defined self-esteem as “a favourable or unfavourable attitude toward the self.” It is described by Leary and Downs (1995) as “an internal representation of social acceptance and rejection”. It is a measure by which a person can monitor their level of inclusion/exclusion by others (Leary & Downs, 1995). This suggests that self-esteem is a perception which is influenced by a belief of one’s personal value which is affected by the level of one’s participation in their social world.

There is much research to suggest that traditional bullying is associated with lower levels of self-esteem amongst victims than non-victims (Wild, 2004; Salmivalli, Kaukiainen, Kaistaniemi, & Lagerspetz, 1999; Olweus, 1978). Sharp (1996) found that whilst high and low self-esteem scores were found in bullying victims, those with lower self-esteem scores had been bullied to a greater extent and experienced greater stress as a result. It is unclear whether the experience that the experience of being victimized decreases self-esteem or that those who have low self-esteem are more likely to become victims of bullying due to this

very fact (Egan & Perry, 1998). Research focusing on the relationship between cyberbullying and self-esteem is limited however there have been a number of emerging studies which have found a correlation between low self-esteem and cyber-victimisation (Spade, 2007; Willard, 2006; Patchin & Hinduja, 2010; Katzer et al 2009; Didden et al, 2009) One recent cross-sectional study carried out by Patchin and Hinduja (2010) found that those involved in cyberbullying reported lower levels of self-esteem than those not involved in cyberbullying and that the relationship between cyberbullying victimization and self-esteem is stronger than that of cyberbullying offending and self-esteem. Research regarding the relationship between offenders of cyberbullying and self-esteem is limited and inconsistent and the current study will attempt to build on same.

Purpose of the current study

Research in the area of Cyberbullying is relatively new. Of significant importance is the causes of cyberbullying and attempts to understand why it occurs which can accordingly lead to development of an appropriate intervention or to reduce or minimize occurrences of this phenomenon. The purpose of this current study is to examine the rate of occurrences of bullying in an Irish sample together with an exploration of the intrapersonal traits such as empathy, levels of moral disengagement and self-esteem to determine whether or not these scores determine involvement in cyberbullying. Gender differences will also be observed. The aim of this study is to provide a valuable contribution to the existing research and to be of practical assistance to parents and educators in trying to find ways to better equip our young people to deal with this modern problem. Educators can look to research in order to develop programs designed to target empathic and moral beliefs of adolescents in order to reduce cyberbullying and its effects.

Main Hypotheses

1. There will be significantly higher scores in females than males in both affective and cognitive empathy, with the greater difference in scores evident for affective empathy.
2. Cyberbullying is associated with lower levels of both affective and cognitive empathy.
3. There will be lower self-esteem scores in victims of cyberbullying than uninvolved parties.
4. There will be lower self-esteem scores in victims of cyberbullying than cyberbullies
5. There will be higher scores in Moral disengagement for those involved in cyberbullying than uninvolved parties.
6. There will be gender differences regarding involvement in Cyberbullying
7. Rates of cyberbullying will increase with age.

Method

Participants

The sample used was a convenience sample and consisted of 119 participants between the ages of 12 and 18 from two secondary schools in Dublin. There were 29 girls and 90 boys, mean age (14.2, SD 1.75). The participants were recruited by way of writing to the two secondary schools for permission to gain access to a sample of secondary schools students for the purpose of carrying out this research. The participants took part in the study on a voluntary basis with informed consent given.

Design

The research was a quantitative comparative correlational non-experimental design. The predictor variable was cyberbullying with the criterion variables being cognitive and affective empathy, moral disengagement and self-esteem. Demographic variables were age and gender. A correlational design was used to investigate the role of cognitive and affective empathy, moral disengagement and self-esteem on instances of cyberbullying

Materials

The materials used in this research was a self-administered questionnaire which consisted of 74 questions (See Appendix A)

Cyberbullying Scale

A scale developed by Sticca, Ruggieri, Alsaker and Perren (2013) which measures different aggressive behaviours used via electronic means was used for this study. 6 items were used to measure cyberbullying ($\alpha=.62$) and 6 items were used to measure victimisation ($\alpha=.76$) whereby participants were asked to rate how often they engaged in cyberbullying

behaviours and how often they had been a victim of cyberbullying behaviours. Questions were asked in relation to the types of cyberbullying and how often they occurred (e.g., “Have you ever sent/received mean or threatening messages to anyone (text messages, MSN, Facebook, etc.?)”, “Have you posted mean or embarrassing messages or spread rumours about anyone on the Internet (Facebook, YouTube, etc.?) Responses ranged from 1(never) to 5 (almost daily). Participants who scored higher than one on at least one of the cyberbullying items were classified as cyberbullies while those who scored higher than one on at least one of the cybervictimisation items were classified as cybervictims.

Basic empathy scale

A questionnaire developed by Jolliffe and Farrington (2006) consisting of a 20-item measure assessing cognitive and affective empathy using a 5-point Likert Scale. The cognitive empathy subscale consisted of 9 items and measures understanding of another’s emotions (e.g., “ I can usually figure out when other people are happy”. The affective empathy subscale consisted of 11 items and measures the sharing and feeling of another’s emotions (e.g., “ Other people’s feelings don’t affect me at all”. Questions 1, 6,7,8,13, 18,19,20 were reversed. The nine cognitive items are calculated to produce a score on the cognitive empathy scale and the eleven remaining items are calculated to produce a score on the affective empathy scale. Reliability for the Basic Empathy Scale has been reported at .74 (cognitive empathy) and .86 (affective empathy) (Albiero, Matricardi, Speltri & Toso,2009)

Moral disengagement scale

A 32 item self-report questionnaire (Bandura et al., 1996) consisting of eight 4-item subscales which each measure a specific mechanism of moral disengagement. The mechanisms measured include moral justification, euphemistic language, advantageous comparison, displacement of responsibility, diffusion of responsibility, distorting

consequences, attribution of blame and dehumanisation. A four point Likert scale was used for each question ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. A higher score indicates higher levels of moral disengagement. Internal consistency reliability has been reported as .82 (Bandura et al, 1996)

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale

A 10 item self-report questionnaire invented by Rosenberg (1965) which contains a variety of questions to measure self-esteem. The responses were coded on a 4 point scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree) with items 2,5,6,8 and 9 recoded. The questionnaire contains an equal number of positively and negatively worded items (eg., “I am able to do things as well as most other people”, “I certainly feel useless at times”). The scores are totalled to provide an overall measure of self-esteem. A high score indicates higher self-esteem. Rosenberg reported internal consistency reliability ranging from .85 to .88 (Rosenberg, 1965)

Procedure

Approval was sought from the Dublin Business School Ethics Committee by way of submission of a proposal to the committee in writing and permission was then granted to carry out the research. Authorisation was obtained from two secondary level schools in Dublin in order to gain access and distribute questionnaires to a sample of students within the school for the purposes of carrying out this research. Permission to carry out the study within the schools was obtained by way of making an application in writing to each school. One of the schools did not require parental consent whilst the other school obtained passive parental consent for the students to take part. Questionnaires encompassing the above described measures were distributed to the participating students during school hours. Prior permission was obtained from each teacher to distribute the questionnaire to the students. Before completion of the questionnaire, the goals of the study was explained to participants and that the information gathered would be submitted to Dublin Business School as part of a final year thesis for a BA Hons Psychology course. It was further explained that participation in the study was entirely anonymous and voluntary. Participants were also given a brief overview of Cyberbullying and how it occurs so they were familiar with the definition of Cyberbullying and the methods through which it can occur. A separate information sheet was given to participants with the contact details of organisations who can assist and offer help to those affected by cyberbullying (See Appendix B)

Results

Data Analysis

Statistical analysis was carried out using SPSS for Windows, Version 21

Descriptive Statistics

The following table lists the categories of participants and the frequency of involvement in Cyberbullying.

Table 1. *Cyberbullying Categories and rates of involvement*

Category	Frequency	Percent
Not involved	45	37.8
Bully/Victim	38	31.9
Victim	24	20.2
Bully	12	10.1

Participants were categorised into four categories – Not involved, bully/victim, bully and victim. As can be seen from the Table 1 above, 37.8% of participants were not involved as either a victim or a bully. There was a strong overlap in bullying and victimisation with 31.9% of participants being involved as both a bully and a victim. According to the data, only a small percentage of the sample were categorised as pure bullies (10.1%) and pure victims (20.2%)

The following table demonstrates the frequency of usage of the internet among participants

Table 2. *Frequency of Use of Internet*

Use of Internet	Frequency	Percent
Once a day	28	23.5
Several times a day	64	53.8
Once per week	3	2.5
Several times per week	21	17.6
Once a month	1	.08

The majority of participants (77.3%) use the internet on a daily basis with over half (53.8%) citing their use of the internet as being several times per day.

Inferential Statistics

Hypothesis 1. There will be significantly higher scores in females than males in both affective and cognitive empathy, with the greater difference in scores evident for affective empathy.

Females (Mean = 37.4, SD = 3.93) were found to have higher levels of cognitive empathy than males (Mean = 33.2, SD = 5.88). The 95% confidence limits shows that the population mean difference of variables lies somewhere between -6.55 and -1.92. An independent samples t-test found that there was a statistically significant difference between cognitive empathy levels of females and males ($t(117) = -3.6, p = .000$). Therefore the null can be rejected.

Females (Mean = 42.86, SD = 6.28) were found to have higher levels of affective empathy than males (Mean = 34.37, SD = 7.98). The 95% confidence limits shows that the population mean difference of the variables lies somewhere between -11.71 and -5.27. An independent samples t-test found that there was a statistically significant difference between affective empathy levels of females and males ($t(117) = -5.2, p = .000$). Therefore the null can hypothesis be rejected.

The above scores show a greater difference in affective empathy for females. Therefore the null hypothesis can be rejected

Hypothesis 2. Cyberbullying is associated with lower levels of both affective and cognitive empathy.

The mean scores for cognitive empathy was 34.24 (SD = 5.75) and for bullying was 7.08 (SD = 2.48). A pearson correlation coefficient found that there was a significant relationship between affective empathy and bullying ($r(117) = -.20, p= 0.26$). Therefore the null hypothesis can be rejected.

The mean scores for affective empathy was 36.44 (SD = 8.42) and for bullying was 7.08 (SD = 2.48). A pearson correlation coefficient found that there was a significant relationship between affective empathy and bullying ($r(117) = -.24, p=.008$). Therefore the null hypothesis can be rejected.

Hypothesis 3. There will be lower self-esteem scores in victims of cyberbullying than uninvolved parties.

Those not involved (mean=30.61, SD = 4.04) were found to have higher levels of self-esteem than victims (mean = 28.58, SD = 5.29). The 95% confidence limits shows that the population mean difference lies somewhere between - .26 and 4.32. An independent samples t-test did not find a statistically significant difference between self-esteem levels in those not involved and bully/victims ($t(66)= 1.770, p = .081$). Therefore the null is accepted.

Hypothesis 4. There will be lower self-esteem scores in victims of cyberbullying than cyberbullies

Bullies (mean = 29.83, SD = 7.29) were found to have higher levels of self-esteem than victims (mean = 28.58, SD = 5.29). The 95% confidence limits shows that the population mean difference of the variables lies somewhere between -5.57 and 3.07. An independent samples t-test did not find a statistically significant difference between self-esteem levels in bullies and victims ($t(34) = -.587, p = .561$). Therefore the null is accepted.

Hypothesis 5. There will be higher scores in Moral disengagement for those involved in cyberbullying than uninvolved parties.

A Mann-Whitney U test was used to test the hypothesis that there will be higher scores in moral disengagement for those involved in cyberbullying than uninvolved parties. Those not involved had a mean rank of 24.67 compared to a mean rank of 42.54 for cyberbullies. The Mann-Whitney U revealed that those not involved and cyberbullies differed significantly in terms of moral disengagement scores ($z = -3.36, p = .001$). Therefore the null can be rejected.

Hypothesis 6. There will be gender differences regarding involvement in Cyberbullying

Males (mean = 7.26, SD = 2.80) were found to have higher involvement in cyberbullying than females (mean = 6.55, SD = .783). The 95% confidence limits shows that the population mean difference of the variables lies somewhere between .051 and 1.35. An independent samples t-test found that there was a statistically significant difference between males and females in terms of involvement in cyberbullying ($t(115.72) = 2.13, p = .035$). Therefore the null can be rejected.

Females were found to have higher involvement in victimisation (mean = 8.86, SD = 4.86) than males (mean = 7.26, SD = 4.86). The 95% confidence limits shows that the population mean difference of the variables lies somewhere between -3.49 and .28. An independent samples t-test did not find a statistically significant difference between males and females in terms of victimisation ($t(30.93) = -1.73, p = .093$). Therefore the null is accepted

Hypothesis 7. Rates of cyberbullying will increase with age.

The mean scores for victims was 7.65 (SD = 2.99) and for age was 14.27 (SD = 1.75). A pearson correlation coefficient did not find a significant relationship between age and victimisation ($r(116) = .10, p = .272$). Therefore the null is accepted

The mean scores for cyberbullies was 7.08 (SD = 2.48) and for age was 14.27 (SD = 1.75). A pearson correlation coefficient did not find a significant relationship between age and cyberbullying ($r(117) = .008, p = .928$). Therefore the null is accepted

Additional Analysis

A Kruskal-Wallis one-way Anova showed that affective empathy ($X^2(3) = 9.30, p=.026$) and moral disengagement ($X^2(3) = 16.29, p=.001$) differed significantly amongst participants from each category – not involved, bully/victim, victim and bully. The bar chart below shows the mean rank of affective empathy and moral disengagement among each of the categories of participants. These results provide further confirmation of the findings of the independent t-tests in relation to Hypothesis 1, 2 and 5 regarding empathy and moral disengagement.

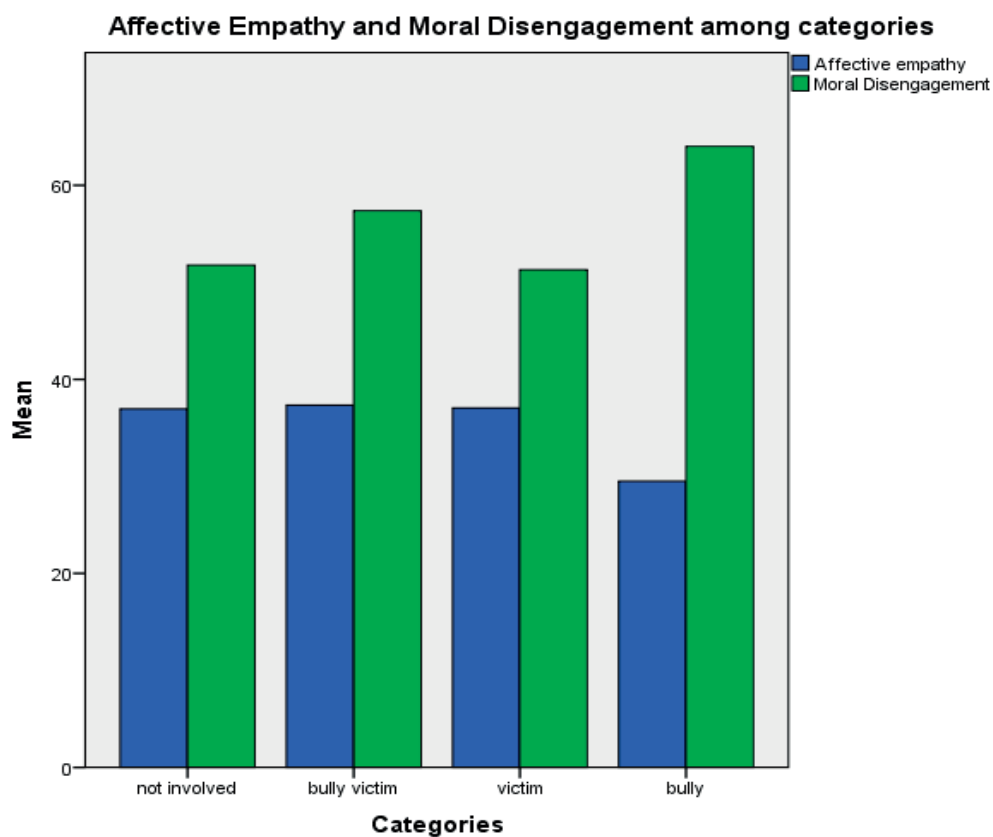


Figure 1. *Affective empathy and moral disengagement mean ranks among categories*

Table 3. *Kruskal-Wallis mean rank scores for each category and variable.*

Categories	Cognitive Empathy	Affective Empathy	Self-Esteem	Moral Disengagement
Not involved	56.27	62.47	64.83	48.81
Bully/Victim	63.00	63.79	56.64	66.64
Victim	70.60	63.73	51.48	50.59
Bully	43.29	31.29	65.04	88.29

As can be seen from the table above, the mean rank of cognitive and affective empathy scores of bullies were lower than all of the other categories. Bullies had a higher mean rank on self-esteem than all other categories, with victims having the lowest score. However, self-esteem scores were generally high in all of the participants. The greatest variance in mean ranks is evident in the moral disengagement variable, with bullies scoring significantly higher than all other categories, in particular the greater difference between bullies and victims/those not involved.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the prevalence of cyberbullying among Irish adolescents and its relationship to empathy, self-esteem and moral disengagement in order to attempt to make correlates between these attributes and how they might facilitate cyberbullying.

Within the sample in this study, 62.2% of participants had experienced incidences of cyberbullying as either a victim, a bully or as both a bully and a victim. Rates of pure bullying and victimisation as separate categories were low with only 20.2% of participants being victims and 10.1% being bullies.

The prevalence of cyberbullying in this study is slightly lower when compared to previous research. Li (2006) reported victimisation at 25% compared to 17% participating in cyberbullying and Hinduja and Patchin (2012) found victimisation rates to be 24% and 17% bullies. However, the prevalence of cyberbullying was slightly higher than those reported by O'Moore (2012) at 13.9% victims and 8.6% bully. There was a strong overlap in bully/victim category and this is comparative to previous research by Li (2007) who argues that we must consider bullies, cyberbullies and victims as an integrated group rather than separate groups. This has implications for interventions in that a universal approach should be considered when implementing strategies to combat cyberbullying as well as considering individual differences.

Gender and Cyberbullying

The findings of this study reported that males had higher involvement in cyberbullying. This conflicts with previous research which stated that females were more likely to be involved in cyberbullying than males (Smith et al, 2012). This research found that mean scores for females were higher in terms of victimisation although it did not produce a statistically significant result. This result, although not statistically significant, is comparative to previous research where females were found to be more likely to be a victim of cyberbullying (Dehue et al, 2008; Ybarra & Mitchell, 2008). The results in relation to gender may be reflective of the sample used in this study whereby the majority of participants were male. A more even distribution of gender may have produced different results.

Age

Previous research is conflicted regarding the significance of age and cyberbullying. This study predicted an increase in the cyberbullying amongst older participants but did not find a significant result in this regard. Ybarra and Mitchell (2004) found that cyberbullying was more prevalent among 15 to 17 year olds. Within the present study, only 34.5% of participants were within this age group, with the remainder and the majority being aged between 12 and 14 years old. It has been posited that this age group would have less access to electronic communication and this may contribute to lower levels of cyberbullying among these participants (Lenhart, 2009; Lenhart et al, 2005)

Empathy

As predicted, results from this study produced significantly higher scores in respect of cognitive and affective empathy in female participants when compared to males, with the greater difference evident in affective empathy scores. This result is supportive of previous findings by Jolliffe and Farrington (2006).

Lower levels of affective and cognitive empathy were found in those involved in cyberbullying which is supportive of previous research by Ang and Goh (2010) and Renati et al (2012) who found a significant association between affective empathy and cyberbullying. Previous studies have found that low levels of affective empathy are associated with traditional bullying but low cognitive empathy is not (Jolliffe & Farrington, 2006). The findings from this study indicate that there may be differences in the effect of empathy in traditional bullying and cyberbullying.

Moral Disengagement

This study hypothesised that there would be a correlation between higher moral disengagement and cyberbullying and this hypothesis was upheld. In line with the vast majority of previous research (Pornari & Wood, 2010; Bauman & Pero, 2011; Hymel et al, 2005; Robson & Witenberg, 2013; Renati et al, 2012), cyberbullies were found to have significantly higher moral disengagement scores. A Kruskal-Wallis analysis found that the mean rank of scores of moral disengagement of those in the bully category were significantly higher than those in any of the other categories (bully/victim, victims, and those not involved)

Self-Esteem

It was hypothesised that there would be lower levels of self-esteem in victims when compared to uninvolved parties and lower self-esteem in victims than in bullies. The findings contrasted with previous research which found low levels of self-esteem in victims (Spade, 2007; Willard, 2006; Patchin & Hinduja, 2010; Katzer et al, 2009; Didden et al, 2009). The results in the present study may be reflective of the sample and the fact that self-esteem scores were quite high among the participants overall.

Limitations of the study

There were 119 participants in this study which is a relatively small sample size and age and gender were not evenly distributed across the sample. A larger sample with a more evenly distributed variance of age and gender may provide richer results. Categories of bullies and victims were quite low which somewhat inhibited comparison of the four categories of participants (See table 1). The low rate of bullying may be attributable to the small sample size but also due to the fact that the two schools in question are quite proactive in dealing with the issue of cyberbullying and have incorporated cyberbullying material into the school curriculum. Another limitation of this study is the use of self-reporting measures (questionnaires) to gather data. Although all participants completed the questionnaires on an anonymous basis, under-reporting of cyberbullying activities may have occurred due the influence of social desirability and the participants being reluctant to label themselves as cyberbullies.

A strength of this study is that instead of using a single item questionnaire to measure bullying, a multiple scale was used to capture the specific behaviours involved in bullying (i.e., text messages, picture messages, videos, spreading of rumours online). Multiple-item

measures are arguably more reliable as it is unlikely that a single-item questionnaire can fully capture the complexity of a construct such as cyberbullying (Nunnally, 1978). In addition to the above, another strength of this study was that the results generally reinforced findings from previous research in terms of the relationship between empathy and moral disengagement and the rate of cyberbullying was comparable to previous studies.

Future Studies

To address some of the limitations in this study, a study within Ireland with a larger, more representative sample should be carried out to further examine the effects of empathy, moral disengagement and self-esteem within an Irish sample. The vast majority of the research to date has used samples outside of Ireland and given that Genta et al (2011) has identified cultural difference in respect of cyberbullying, a national study within Ireland would be of interest.

The effects of gender and age remain conflicted within the literature to date and further studies are required in this regard.

Difficulties in relation to definition and measurement issues have been discussed in this study as posited by previous researchers particularly in respect of repetition and power imbalance as concepts within the definition of cyberbullying and Slonje et al (2012) calls for clarification of these issues. Tokunaga (2010) posits that an overall theoretical approach with consistent conceptual and operational definitions used will significantly enhance the body of research encompassing cyberbullying. Future research should address these issues.

Application and implications

The results of this study have corroborated with previous research and confirmed that cyberbullying is prevalent amongst adolescents in Ireland (O'Moore, 2012). Statistically significant results were found in relation to the influence of empathy, with a particular emphasis on affective empathy, and moral disengagement. This finding has practical implications for interventions and preventions of cyberbullying. Empathy training and education has been shown to be effective in reducing traditional bullying behaviours (Bjorkqvist, K., Osterman, & Kaukiainen, 2000). Ang and Goh (2010) and Campbell (2005) have suggested that the incorporation of empathy training into the education system in order to improve cognitive and affective empathy skills can impact involvement in cyberbullying incidences. In addition, the promotion of awareness and skills in relation to morality so that adolescents can be more morally engaged with victims of cyberbullying can be a helpful intervention (Bauman, 2010).

Furthermore, awareness of the impact of cyberbullying upon victims should be promoted among adolescents. Campbell, Slee, Spears, Butler & Kift (2013) found that most of those who engaged in cyberbullying did not feel that their behaviour was harsh nor did they realise that their behaviour had an impact on their victims. Patchin and Hinduja (2008) also found that cyberbullies perceive their behaviour to be humorous rather than damaging to their victim. This indicates that cyberbullies, at least in some cases, do not fully comprehend the damaging consequences of their behaviour. Educators have a role to play in creating awareness amongst young people regarding the victim impact associated with cyberbullying. Although cyberbullying is more likely to happen out of school than in school (Smith et al, 2008), schools are in appropriate environment to develop and apply interventions due to the school having access to the population at large which is mainly involved in cyberbullying.

However, a holistic approach must be taken in employing strategies to deal with cyberbullying which involve educators, parents, legislators, policy makers and social media stakeholders. It is of particular importance that parents are aware of their children's activity online and in the use of ICT's. Prenksy (2001) has stated that the advancement of technology has created a disconnect and a generational divide between adolescents and parents. Parents in some cases do not have the technological skills or knowledge to comprehend the online world and how its negative aspects may affect young people. Previous research has indicated that students are more inclined to report instances of cyberbullying to parents than teachers (Cassidy et al, 2011) and so parents need to be equipped to respond in the appropriate manner should their child confide in them regarding cyber victimisation.

The vast advances made of ICT's over the past number of decades have brought an array of benefits and positive gains to young people. ICT's can be used for access to educational resources, maintaining friendships and sharing of information amongst friends and has become an integral part of everyday life for young people (Todd, 2008). However, with these benefits come risks, of which cyberbullying is to the forefront and is a negative experience young people are most likely to encounter (Slonje & Smith, 2008; Smith et al 2008). Parents and educators must be aware of the risks faced online and guide adolescents and equip them with the skills and knowledge necessary to navigate the internet in safe and healthy manner.

Conclusion

The aim of this study was to examine whether intrapersonal characteristics such as empathy, moral disengagement and self-esteem have a role to play in the prediction of cyberbullying behaviours. Results found that there was a significant correlation between affective and cognitive empathy and moral disengagement and no correlation was found in relation to self-esteem. Males were found to have more involvement in cyberbullying, whilst females were more likely to be victims, albeit not significantly so. Self-esteem, age and gender were not found to have a significant role. It is hoped that future research will continue to advance in this area so that a comprehensive understanding can be gained into the causes and effects of cyberbullying which will lead to effective intervention and prevention strategies being implemented to curtail this growing phenomena.

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Appendices

Appendix A **Questionnaire**

Appendix B **Information sheet provided to participants**

APPENDIX A

Cyberbullying Questionnaire

My name is Donna McNulty and I am a final year BA (Hons) Psychology Student at Dublin Business School. I am interested in increasing form of bullying called cyberbullying and how young people are affected by the misuse of information technology.

You do not have to complete this questionnaire, but I would grateful if you did. The items in this questionnaire will relate to your use of the internet and any experience of bullying or cyberbullying you may have had. Please read each question carefully and answer each question as fully as you can. If you feel unable to answer a question please move on to the next question.

The results of the questionnaire will be submitted as part of my final year project, however all of your answers to this questionnaire will remain confidential and will not be shown to anyone in your school. It is also completely anonymous and you will not be identifiable, so please do not write your name on the questionnaire.

Thank you

Name of school: _____

Class/year: _____

Your age: _____

Gender: Male Female

General information about internet use

Q1. Have you ever used a computer?

 Yes No

Q2. Have you ever been online?

 Yes No

Q3. How often do you use the internet?

- Do not use the internet
- Once a day
- Several times a day
- Once a week
- Several times a week
- Once a month
- Other (please state) _____

Q4. On average, how long do you spend on the internet per week?

- 0-5 hours
- 5-10 hours
- 10-15 hours
- 15-20 hours
- 20 or more hours

Q5. Where are you most likely to use the internet? (please tick all boxes that apply)

- I do not use the internet
- In my bedroom
- At home, not in my bedroom
- At school
- Friend's house
- Work
- At the local library
- Internet café
- At a relative's house
- Other (please state) _____

Q6. What activities do you use the internet for? (please tick all boxes that apply)

- I do not use the internet
- Surfing the Net
- Chat rooms
- To send/receive emails
- Instant Messaging i.e MSN Messenger/AOL/Yahoo
- Schoolwork
- Downloading music, films or programs
- Playing games
- Online shopping
- Other (please state) _____

Q7. How would you rate your ability to use computers?

- Have never used a computer
- Not very good
- Okay
- Excellent

The following questions will ask about your experiences of **Cyberbullying**.

Definition of cyberbullying:

Cyberbullying is a new form of bullying which involves the use of e-mail, instant messaging, chat rooms, websites, mobile phones or other forms of information technology to deliberately harass, threaten, or intimidate someone. Cyberbullying can include such acts as making threats, sending personal, racial or ethnic insults or repeatedly victimizing someone through electronic devices.

Cyberbullying includes bullying

- **through text messaging**
- **through pictures/photos or video clips**
- **through phone calls (nasty, silent etc.)**
- **through email**
- **in Chat rooms,**
- **through Instant Messaging**
- **through Websites such as Ask.fm**
- **through social media networking sites such as Facebook**

Bullying can happen through text messages/pictures/clips/email/messages etc **sent to you**, but also when text messages/pictures/clips/email/messages etc **are sent to others, about you**.

Have you sent mean or threatening messages to anyone (text messages MSN, Facebook, etc.)

Never	1-2 Times	1 x/month	1x/week	Almost Daily
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Have you sent mean or threatening pictures or videos to anyone (picture messages, Facebook, etc.)?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Have you sent mean or embarrassing messages or spread rumours about anyone to your friends (text messages, MSN, Facebook, etc.)?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Have you sent mean or embarrassing pictures or videos of anyone to your friends (picture messages, Facebook, etc.)?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Have you posted mean or embarrassing messages or spread rumours about anyone on the Internet (Facebook, YouTube, etc.)?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Have you posted mean or embarrassing pictures or videos of anyone on the Internet (Facebook, YouTube, etc.)?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

Have you received mean or threatening messages from anyone (text messages Daily MSN, Facebook, etc.)	Never	1-2 Times	1 x/month	1x/week	Almost
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you received mean or threatening pictures or videos from anyone (picture messages, Facebook, etc.)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you received mean or embarrassing messages or had rumours spread about you to your friends (text messages, MSN, Facebook, etc.)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you received mean or embarrassing pictures or videos of you (picture messages, Facebook, etc.)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you received mean or embarrassing messages or had rumours spread about you on the Internet (Facebook, YouTube, etc.)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you had mean or embarrassing pictures or videos of you posted on the Internet (Facebook, YouTube, etc.)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Instructions: Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feelings about yourself.

Please circle the answer which best applies to you

1. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

2. At times I think I am no good at all.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

6. I certainly feel useless at times

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

7. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

9. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

10. I take a positive attitude toward myself.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

The following are characteristics that may or may not apply to you. Please tick one answer for each statement to indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement. Please answer as honestly as you can.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. My friend's emotions don't affect me much.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. After being with a friend who is sad about something, I usually feel sad.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I can understand my friend's happiness when she/he does well at something.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I get frightened when I watch characters in a good scary movie.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I get caught up in other people's feelings easily.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I find it hard to know when my friends are frightened.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. I don't become sad when I see other people crying.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Other people's feelings don't bother me at all.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. When someone is feeling 'down' I can usually understand how they feel.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. I can usually work out when my friends are scared.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. I often become sad when watching sad things on TV or in films.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
12. I can often understand how people are feeling even before they tell me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Seeing a person who has been angered has no effect on my feelings.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. I can usually work out when people are cheerful	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. I tend to feel scared when I am with friends who are afraid.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. I can usually realise quickly when a friend is angry.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. I often get swept up in my friend's feelings.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. My friend's unhappiness doesn't make me feel anything.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. I am not usually aware of my friend's feelings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. I have trouble figuring out when my friends are happy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
1. It is alright to fight to protect your friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Slapping and shoving someone is just a way of joking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Damaging some property is no big deal when you consider that others are beating people up	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. A person in a gang should not be blamed for the trouble the gang causes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. If people are living under bad condition they cannot be blamed for behaving badly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. It is okay to tell small lies because they don't really do any harm	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Some people deserve to be treated like animals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. If kids fight and misbehave in school it is their teachers fault	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. It is alright to beat someone who bad mouths your family	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. To hit obnoxious classmates is just giving them "a lesson"	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Stealing some money is not too serious compared to those who steal a lot of money	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. A person who only suggests breaking the rules should not be blamed if other people go ahead and do it	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. If kids are not disciplined they should not be blamed for misbehaving	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Others do not mind being teased because it shows interest in them	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. It is okay to treat badly someone who has behaved like an "idiot"	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. If people are careless where they leave their things it is their own fault if they get stolen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. It is alright to fight when your group's honour is being threatened	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- | | Agree | Neutral | Disagree |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 18. Taking back someone's bicycle without their permission is just "borrowing it" | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 19. It is okay to insult a classmate because beating him/her is worse | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 20. If a group decides together to do something harmful it is unfair to blame any kid in the group for it. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 21. Kids cannot be blamed for using bad words when all their friends do it. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 22. Teasing someone does not really hurt them | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 23. Someone who is obnoxious does not deserve to be treated like a human being | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 24. People who get mistreated usually do things that deserve it | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 25. It is alright to lie to keep your friends out of trouble | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 26. It is not a bad thing to "get high" once in a while. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 27. Compared to the illegal things people do, taking some things from a shop without paying for them is not very serious | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 28. It is unfair to blame a person who had only a small part in the harm caused by a group | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 29. People cannot be blamed for misbehaving if their friends pressured them to do it. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 30. Insults among children do not hurt anyone | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 31. Some people have to be treated roughly because they lack feelings that can be hurt | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 32. Children are not at fault for misbehaving if their parents force them too much. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

APPENDIX B**PLEASE KEEP THIS SHEET**

If you have a problem with any of the issues relating to bullying or cyberbullying mentioned in this questionnaire, please talk to someone such as a teacher who will be able to help you. If you do not feel comfortable talking to someone in your school you can talk to a parent or guardian, and they can come with you to talk to a teacher or can contact an internet service provider about the problem.

The following helplines may also be of assistance to you:

Samaritans

Email: jo@samaritans.org

Helpline: 1850 60 90 90

Samaritans Ireland provides 24-hour emotional support to anyone struggling to cope.

Teen-Line

Email: info@teenline.ie

National Freephone: 1800 833 634

Teen-Line Ireland is a free-phone service open every day of the week from 7pm to 11p.m. Lines are also open early on Wednesdays from 4 p.m. to 11p.m All calls are confidential.

Childline

TeenText: 'talk' or 'bully' to 50101

Helpline: 1800 666 666

Children and teenagers talk to Childline about a lot of different things. You don't have to have a problem to contact them.

It is important to remember that bullying and cyberbullying happens to many people, and you are not alone. There are people in your school and trained professionals who can listen and offer advice.

REMEMBER**KEEPING QUIET ABOUT BULLYING ALLOWS IT TO GO ON**