Cyberbullying Among Adolescent Bystanders: Role of Affective Versus Cognitive Empathy in Increasing Prosocial Cyberbystander Behavior

Engl. transl.: Cross-Cultural Validation of the Compulsive Internet Use Scale in Four Forms and Eight Languages

# Keywords

* cyberbullying
* cyberbystanders
* adolescents
* affective empathy induction
* cognitive empathy induction
* prosocial cyberbystander behavior

# Details

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Internet usage, practices and engagement

## Sample

Study 1: "Participants were junior high school students (N = 271, comprising 121 boys and 151 girls) from 10 public junior high schools located in an average socioeconomic status neighborhood in three Polish districts. All students were between the ages of 11 and 17 years (Mage = 13.05 years, SDage = 0.80)."(Barlinska J, Szuster A. and Winiewski M. (2018) Cyberbullying Among Adolescent Bystanders: Role of Affective Versus Cognitive Empathy in Increasing Prosocial Cyberbystander Behavior. Front. Psychol. 9:799. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2018.00799, p. 5).
Study 2: "Participants were junior high school students (N = 265, comprising 168 girls and 96 boys) of nine public junior high schools located in an average socioeconomic status neighborhood in three Polish districts. All students were between the ages of 10 and 16 (Mage = 14.14 years, SDage = 1.65)." (Barlinska J, Szuster A. and Winiewski M. (2018) Cyberbullying Among Adolescent Bystanders: Role of Affective Versus Cognitive Empathy in Increasing Prosocial Cyberbystander Behavior. Front. Psychol. 9:799. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2018.00799, p. 7).

## Implications For Parents About

Parenting guidance / support

## Implications For Educators About

Digital citizenship

## Implications For Policy Makers About

Creating a safe environment for children online

## Implications For Stakeholders About

* Researchers
* Industry
* Healthcare

# Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate if affective (vicarious sharing of emotions) and cognitive empathy (mental perspective taking) induction may stimulate adolescent online bystanders’ intervention in cyberbullying cases. The role of reporting the abuse is crucial because it is a form of active support to the victim, initiated by children, to stop the bullying. The effectiveness of empathy activation in decreasing negative cyberbystander reinforcing behavior has been proved in previous studies. The effects of affective and cognitive empathy activation on positive cyberbystander behavior, defined as reporting the bullying online, were explored in two follow-up studies N = 271 and N = 265. The influence of experiencing cyberbullying as perpetrator, victim, and as determined by gender on prosocial cyberbystander behavior was also controlled. The results indicate that only cognitive empathy activation increases the likelihood of intervening bystander behavior. Neither affective empathy induction, previous experience of cyberperpetration, cybervictimization, nor gender affected the engagement in prosocial bystander behavior. The conclusion of the research is that a program consequently activating more reflective cognitive empathy induction can contribute toward the establishment of healthier behavioral patterns among bystanders to cyberbullying, increasing the probability of their reporting the cyberbullying acts.

# Outcome

- Study 1: "To assess the impact of affective empathy on cyberbystander intervening behavior, we conducted a logistic regression analysis. The analysis showed that the model was not significant. There were no missing values and all analyses were conducted on the full sample. All the overall model statistics turned out to be suboptimal. Neither manipulation of affective empathy nor any of the controls (cyberbullying history, age, or gender) turned out to be significant in predicting helping bystander behavior. "(Barlinska J, Szuster A. and Winiewski M. (2018) Cyberbullying Among Adolescent Bystanders: Role of Affective Versus Cognitive Empathy in Increasing Prosocial Cyberbystander Behavior. Front. Psychol. 9:799. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2018.00799, p. 6)
- Study 2: "Our main result shows that cognitive empathy activation has a significant and substantial effect on increasing the tendency to report the abuse. Participants in the experimental condition, in
which cognitive empathy was activated, were six and one half times more likely to choose a helping reaction than participants in the control condition. It is worth mentioning that this effect was independent of all other controls." (Barlinska J, Szuster A. and Winiewski M. (2018) Cyberbullying Among Adolescent Bystanders: Role of Affective Versus Cognitive Empathy in Increasing Prosocial Cyberbystander Behavior. Front. Psychol. 9:799. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2018.00799, p. 8).