Full length article

Prevalence of cyberbullying and predictors of cyberbullying perpetration among Korean adolescents

Changho Lee a,*, Namin Shin b

**National Youth Policy Institute, 370, Sicheong-daero, Sejong City, 30147, South Korea**
**Department of Education, Dongguk University, 30, Pildong-ro 1, Seoul, 04620, South Korea**

**Article info**

Article history:
Received 10 August 2016
Received in revised form 20 November 2016
Accepted 23 November 2016

Keywords:
Cyberbullying
Smartphone
Kakao talk
SNS
Online games

**Abstract**

This study aimed to investigate the prevalence of cyberbullying and factors in cyberbullying perpetration with a national sample of 4000 adolescents selected through multi-stage cluster sampling. The respondents were 2166 boys (54.1%) and 1834 girls (45.9%) in 7th through 12th grades at 24 middle and 24 high schools across South Korea. Statistical analyses of the survey data are summarized as follows. First, 34% of the respondent students were involved in cyberbullying as bullies (6.3%), victims (14.6%), or both bullies and victims (13.1%). Boys had a higher percentage of cyberbullying perpetration than girls. Second, variables for time spent on chat services and Social Network Services (SNS), the experience of being cyberbullied, and offline bullying perpetration tended to increase the probability of students being perpetrators of cyberbullying. However, the cognitive empathy variable contributed to decreased cyberbullying perpetration behaviors. Third, the variables of parental attachment and satisfaction with school life had little impact on perpetration of cyberbullying. These results were discussed to improve the understanding of the characteristics of cyberbullying among Korean adolescents and the youth population in general, while providing educators and researchers information on cyberbullying with practical consideration to its prevention.

© 2016 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

**1. Introduction**

Cyberbullying has become an important youth issue worldwide (Kowalski, Giumetti, Schroeder, & Lattanner, 2014). Cyberbullying is defined as intentional acts to intrigue or harass someone using email, chat services, SNS, or other electronic communication media (Patchin & Hinduja, 2011, p. 728). Given the emerging concerns about adolescent cyberbullying, the Korean government revised a school violence law in 2012 to view cyberbullying as its own type of school violence, distinguished from traditional in-school bullying. Despite society’s efforts, however, rates of cyberbullying have tended to increase compared to other kinds of social violence (Ministry of Education, 2014).

Many reasons for the spread of cyberbullying among youth can be speculated on. The increased use of smartphones, for example, has been regarded as one main reason. As of 2013, over 80 percent of Korean students owned smartphones (Statistics Korea, 2014) and were actively and daily using a variety of mobile applications, such as chat or SNS applications, which have unfortunately served as major platforms for cyberbullying (Lee & Lee, 2013). A survey showed that many cyberbullying incidents occurred through “Kakao talk,” a popular real-time chat service that is freely available via the Internet or mobile devices in Korea (Lee & Shin, 2014). For example, perpetrators of cyberbullying invite a target student to the chatroom and insult him or her within the group. Additionally, perpetrators intentionally isolate a target victim from their peer group chat by not inviting him or her to Kakao talk. After being harassed by dozens of friends via Kakao talk, one high school girl committed a suicide in August of 2012 (recited in Lee & Lee, 2013). Especially for girls, cyber victimization has been strongly related to depression, which itself correlates to suicide attempts (Bauman, Toomey, & Walker, 2013).

Given the serious consequences of cyberbullying, many studies have attempted to investigate the motivations for it. Some explain that mean or cruel attacks on others can be made particularly easily in the digital world because of a kind of “online disinhibition effect” or “anonymity” (Espelage, Rao, & Craven, 2013). In addition, cyberbullying is often related to relationship problems among adolescents, such as break-ups, envy, intolerance, or behaviors of...
ganging up (Hoff & Mitchell, 2009). Other internal motives for cyberbullying included jealousy and the seeking of approval or revenge (Varjas, Talley, Meyers, Parris, & Cutts, 2010). Students were often cyberbullied because of their appearance, personal characteristics, homosexuality, disabilities, and religions (Hoff & Mitchell, 2009).

Although many studies have addressed the factors in cyberbullying occurrences, research thoroughly investigating motivations for cyberbullying is still needed to preempt incidents. To our knowledge, few studies have analyzed the cyberbullying phenomenon with a national sample. Thus, the present study aimed to identify the prevalence of cyberbullying and factors significantly affecting cyberbullying perpetration among Korean adolescents. To achieve this goal, we used a national sample of 4000 students enrolled in middle and high schools across the country.

First, we will examine how often cyberbullying occurs among adolescents, focusing on the gender difference in cyberbullying perpetration and victimization. Then, we will investigate the effects of empathy, parental attachment, satisfaction with school life, and smartphone-based applications such as chat services and SNSs (Social Network Services) on cyberbullying perpetration. This study will particularly examine the relationship between offline bullying and online bullying. More concretely, it will investigate to what extent offline experiences of bullying or being bullied are associated with experiences of online bullying. Our main concern is the relationship between experiences of being cyberbullied and the perpetration of cyberbullying.

1.1. Predictors of cyberbullying perpetration

1.1.1. Gender

The effect of gender on cyberbullying is controversial. Some studies have shown that boys are more likely to be perpetrators of cyberbullying than are girls (Ang & Goh, 2010; Chang et al., 2015; Cross et al., 2012; Lee & Lee, 2013) and that girls are more likely to be targets of cyberbullying than are boys (Cross et al., 2012; Fenaughty & Harré, 2013; Smith et al., 2008; Waasdorp & Bradshaw, 2015). Additionally, girls were found to be more distressed by electronic harassment than were boys (Fenaughty & Harré, 2013). Other studies, however, indicate no gender effect on cyberbullying perpetration (Roberto, Eden, Savage, Ramos-Salazar, & Deiss, 2014; Sticca, Ruggieri, Alsaker, & Perren, 2013).

1.1.2. Application use

The use of smartphone applications, like SNSs, appears to be the most influential factor in the occurrence of cyberbullying. One study showed that Facebook and the MSN messenger service were the most popular platforms for cyberbullying among British children (Beatbullying, 2012). Moreover, SNS applications have been found to be the medium through which most harmful messages were posted (Waasdorp & Bradshaw, 2015). According to a study done with Korean adolescents (Shin & Ahn, 2015), time spent gaming on weekdays and active use of a mobile phone were positively related to adolescents' involvement in cyberbullying. In addition, Korean adolescents who were frequent users of Kakaotalk and Facebook were more involved in cyberbullying than were others (Lee & Lee, 2013). Likewise, teenagers in the U.S. with SNS profiles and who participated in chat rooms were at higher risk of cyberbullying (Mesch, 2009). In a Turkish context, however, the effect of frequent use of communication tools, such as MSN and chatrooms, on cyberbullying was significant only for female students (Erdur-Baker, 2010).

In summary, the level of involvement in online communication or social activities either through mobile devices or computers seems to be significantly related to cyberbullying (Mishna, Khoury-Kassabi, Gadalla, & Daciuk, 2012; Sticca et al., 2013). Smartphones have become the main medium through which cyberbullying occurs, as they have spread among young people.

1.1.3. Empathy

Empathy can be defined as “a way of assessing what another person is thinking, feeling, or doing from a quasi-first-person point of view,” usually including both affective and cognitive aspects (Hollan, 2012, p. 71). Affective empathy is similar to involuntary emotional sharing (Hoffman, 2001) and facilitates affective sharing of other people’s emotional states (Ze, Thoma, & Suchan, 2014). On the other hand, cognitive empathy refers to one’s ability to understand and process another person’s emotions cognitively (Lazarus, Barkoukis, Ourda, & Tsorbatzoudis, 2013; Steffgen, König, Pfetsch, & Melzer, 2011). Empathy generally contributes to decreasing both traditional bullying and cyber aggression (Casas, Del Rey, & Ortega-Ruiz, 2013). Adolescents with low levels of empathy are most likely to be cyberbullying perpetrators (Breuer & Kerslake, 2015). Furthermore, among students with low affective empathy, those with low cognitive empathy engage in cyberbullying at a higher rate (Ang & Goh, 2010). Nonetheless, some studies showed no effect of empathy on cyberbullying (Lazarus et al., 2013). To our knowledge, relatively few studies have examined the effect of both affective and cognitive empathy on cyberbullying.

1.1.4. Parental attachment

Attachment to parents is critical in deterring delinquent acts by adolescents (Hirschi, 1969). According to social control theory, an individual’s bond to society plays an important role in the decrease of deviant behaviors (Hirschi, 1969). Parenting was found to play an important role in reducing not only bullying but also cyberbullying (Wang, Iannotti, & Nansel, 2009). Research found that students who had family troubles were more involved in cyberbullying than others (Patchin & Hinduja, 2011). In addition, parental attachment was negatively associated with not only Internet addiction but also cyberbullying perpetration (Chang et al., 2015). Higher rates of parental support also had a negative association with school bullying including cyberbullying (Wang et al., 2009).

1.1.5. Satisfaction with school life

By and large, students who are satisfied with school life are less likely to be involved in cyberbullying. For example, in one study, students who had more quarrels with friends and who made trouble in school participated in cyber harassment more often than other students (Hinduja & Patchin, 2008). In another study, students who had a low sense of belonging at school were more involved in cyberbullying perpetration behaviors than were other students (Wong, Chan, & Cheng, 2014). However, yet another recent study failed to see a significant relationship between students’ satisfaction with school life and cyberbullying (Shin & Ahn, 2015).

1.1.6. Cyberbullied experience

One of the characteristics of cyberbullying, compared to bullying in the physical world, is the high probability of role exchange between bully and victim. Research shows that adolescents who are bullied online are more likely to participate in bullying others in cyberspace (Lee & Lee, 2013). In other words, cyberbullying victimization was an important predictor of cyberbullying perpetration (Roberto et al., 2014). Kwan and Skoric (2013) also showed that Facebook victimization was an important predictor of Facebook bullying. Therefore, it is expected that the experience of being cyberbullied contributes to cyberbullying perpetration.
دریافت فوری متن کامل مقاله

امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه‌شده مقالات
پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات