

The Importance of Emotional Competence in Preventing Cyberbullying: The Role of Family as Moderator

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Abstract

Developing high emotional competency is important as it affects an individual's future social ability, psychological and emotional wellbeing. Especially in children and adolescents, emotional competency must be shaped and enhanced during that period. Therefore in that stage, the family plays an important role in helping children and adolescents to develop emotional competency. If emotional competency was not well developed, when children and adolescents moved to later stages in life, they tend to engage in deviant and risky behaviors, such as cyberbullying. In this paper, the antecedents of emotional competency are discussed, by putting the focus on the role of family education and family as a role model. Family is the closest environment a child or adolescent gets in touch with. Without a proper education regarding emotions, they might not have the ability to properly recognize, be aware and regulate emotions. Besides that, this paper will also discuss several aspects related to cyberbullying such as its prevalence among children and adolescents, factors influencing cyberbullying, and the role of the family in strengthening or weakening the relationship between emotional competence and cyberbullying. In a nutshell, family plays a vital role in creating environments that could positively enhance children's and adolescents' learning of emotional expressivity, emotional understanding, and emotional regulation. Subsequently, reduce the prevalence of cyberbullying.

Keywords: Children, Adolescents, Cyberbullying, Emotional Competence, Parenting, Parents

Introduction

With the increasing contact between children and adolescents with their peers, the social environment they face becomes more complex, and the possibility for peer injury increases gradually. As social media becomes more accessible and relied upon, nurturing real-life self-concepts becomes inadequate, while more adolescents find personal popularity and value in the virtual space a necessity (Dilmac, 2014). Therefore, more adolescents choose to attack, invade and harass their peers on the Internet. It is worth noting that the popularity of cyberbullying in recent years has seriously threatened the mental health of adolescents. This has become a major problem in the education industry.

Besides that, past studies have also revealed that cyberbullying is a serious issue currently happening among children and adolescents. According to a review on the prevalence of cyberbullying among adolescents by Brochado et al (2017), the prevalence rates of cyberbullying victimization in the last year was ranged from 1.0% to 61.1% while perpetration was varied from 3.0% to 39.0%, and overall cyberbullying episodes were ranged from 5.0% to 64.3%. In addition, if to recall any cyberbullying experiences happened at any point of the life among the adolescents, the prevalence rates of cyberbullying victimization were varied from 4.9% to 65.0%, perpetration was ranged from 1.2% to 44.1% whereas overall cyberbullying experiences were between 5.0% to 64.3% (Brochado et al., 2017). However, the review was focused on papers published between the years 2004 and 2014.

Among recent studies, Rodríguez-Hidalgo et al. (2020) found 8.8% of adolescents in Spain were victimized by cyberbullying, 3.1% were the perpetrators while 4.9% were involved in cyberbullying both as victims and perpetrators. On the other hand, in Ecuador, 8.7% of adolescents were victims of cyberbullying, 5.1% were the perpetrators whereas 14.3% were victims/perpetrators of cyberbullying (Rodríguez-Hidalgo et al., 2020). In addition, among Malaysian adolescents, the prevalence of cyberbullying victimization and perpetration in the past month was 20.9% and 31.6%, respectively (Sivabalan et al., 2020). Within the past three months, the prevalence rates were doubled: 73.7% for cyberbullying victimization and 64.2% for cyberbullying perpetration (Sivabalan et al., 2020). Overall, the prevalence of cyberbullying among adolescents from recent studies is consistent with the range suggested by Brochado et al (2017), however, the higher prevalence in the latter research could be due to the methodology (Sivabalan et al., 2020).

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic today, several researchers examined the prevalence rates of cyberbullying within this period as individuals including adolescents spend more time in their homes on electronic devices (Utemissova et al., 2021). As discovered by Utemissova et al (2021), 62% among 32 Kazakhstan adolescents reported having experienced cyberbullying at the beginning of the pandemic. In addition, it was also found that the prevalence of cyberbullying increased during the outbreak of COVID-19 in 2020, in which 11% of adolescents in China reported they were the victims of cyberbullying, while 5% were the perpetrators. In contrast, Shin and Choi (2021) found the prevalence of cyberbullying perpetration among South Korean adolescents was 9.5%, which has decreased after the onset of COVID-19. However, the victimization rate has increased slightly, which was 19.7% (Shin & Choi, 2021). These findings suggest that cyberbullying is a serious issue that currently occurs among children and adolescents.

Many previous studies have discussed the various causes of this behavior. Among them, the study found that personal emotional competence is an important influencing factor. More results showed that many youngsters now have a rising crime rate because they cannot control their emotions well (Hessler & Katz, 2010). Therefore, studies have proved that this personal emotional competence is a significant predictor of cyberbullying, and children's emotional competence is closely related to their families.

Family is the specific environment in which teenagers grow up after birth, which has a very important impact on their present and future life. As "important others", parents have a direct and permanent impact on the lifelong development of adolescents. Past studies have shown that family is another important factor affecting cyberbullying among adolescents (Elsesser et al., 2017; Kowalski et al., 2019). Parents' communication style, upbringing style, and monitoring ability become the protective factors of adolescents' cyberbullying, or the important factors that lead adolescents to become victims or perpetrators. Therefore, it is advisable for necessary preventive measures towards cyberbullying to be taken from the family level. Hence providing positive growth for the children.

In this article, several aspects related to children's and adolescents' cyberbullying behaviors will be discussed under three themes; emotional competence, cyberbullying, and role of family. The purpose of this writing is to shed light on the effective prevention that can be taken to reduce cyberbullying by understanding the influence of children's and adolescents' emotional competence and the role of the family towards this problematic behavior. Previous relevant studies will be reviewed. As a result, this might help uncover the theoretical help and support required by these children and adolescents for a healthy growth environment.

Emotional Competence

Emotion is a natural component in human beings which serves multiple functions for a basic need to survive. Emotions assist individuals in interpersonal interactions, in either dyadic, group, or cultural contexts, by building relationships, forming collectivity, or identifying cultural norms (Keltner & Haidt, 1999). Individually, emotions act as a source of learning whereby emotional feelings could give meaning to experiences, such as compliments elicit good mood and death elicits sadness (Izard, 1989). Therefore, emotions are very important for human beings, which also brings onto the focus on emotional competence. Emotional competence is an ability that develops throughout an individuals' lifespan, whereby the competency increases while our age increases. It incorporates a few components; emotional expressivity (meaningful expressiveness of emotion in an individual with purpose), emotional understanding (comprehensiveness of emotions an individual is feeling), and emotional regulation (the ability to minimize or maximize the intensity of their own emotional experiences) (Denham et al., 2015). Every individual needs to have well-developed emotional competencies, especially among children and adolescents. This is because many negative impairments could occur due to the lack of these skills.

The Importance of Emotional Competence

According to a longitudinal study by Hessler and Katz (2010), they examined the events of emotions of sadness and anger which coexisted in participants, through their middle childhood till adolescence. They have found that participants who have difficulties in

emotional awareness, regulation, and expression possess a very high risk of performing risky behaviors, such as using hard drugs, engaging with many sexual partners, and behavioral adjustments issues. Other than that, another research has found that adolescents with poor emotional competence tend to have internalizing symptoms such as depressive mood and anxiety, more than adolescents with better emotional competency (Schoeps et al., 2020).

Furthermore, emotional competency was also found to be an important protective factor from externalizing aggressive behaviors. When children can regulate their own emotions and understand others' emotions, they tend to show comparatively lesser oppositional behaviors because through, emotional competency, children acquire the skills to properly express their behaviors and emotions in any situations (van den Bedem et al., 2020). Riley et al (2019) have found that adolescents who have lower emotional competency, tend to be victims of overt peer victimization. According to this study, emotional competency showed a significant effect on victimization, as adolescents with lower emotional competency may have a lower ability to adapt to social interactions, hence facing difficulties in avoiding negative social outcomes, which in this case is peer victimization.

Other than that, some studies have found the positive effects of emotional competency on individuals. One study has found that adolescents with high emotional competency were less affected by adverse experiences, which in this study is cyberbullying victimization. The 'high emotional competency' adolescents were found to experience lesser negative effects on their mental health (Urano et al., 2020). This study, therefore, correlates with the study which was mentioned above by Riley et al (2019), whereby emotional competency could effectively serve as a protective factor in adolescents' mental health. According to a few longitudinal studies, they found that children or adolescents who have developed emotional competency would have a lesser tendency to be involved in risk behaviors, gain healthier relationships, increase academic outcomes in later study years, and stable employment (Domitrovich et al., 2017). The reason emotional competency is very important to be developed from a young age is that individuals who are equipped with emotional competency have better adaptation in new environments, particularly in school environments. When their adaptability is high, they would then easily build healthy relationships and positive attitudes, hence promoting good cognitive development. These chain reactions are interconnected with each other, thereby stressing the importance of emotional competence in children and adolescents (Alzahrani et al., 2019).

Cyberbullying

Definition of Bullying and Cyberbullying

Bullying is defined as repetitive and intentional aggressive behavior by one or more individuals against a victim that is difficult to defend him or herself due to the imbalance of power in the relationship between the harasser and victim (Olweus, 1994). Bullying can be direct (e.g., open attack against the victim) or indirect (e.g., social isolation), and maybe in physical, verbal, or relational form (Olweus, 1994; Smith et al., 2008). Meanwhile, Cyberbullying refers to "an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual, using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly and overtime against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself" (Smith et al., 2008, p. 376).

Through Social Networking Sites (SNSs), users can share content such as in words, photos, or videos, comment on each other's profile pages or postings, communicate via private messages, form interest groups, and so on (Kwan & Skoric, 2013). Cyberbullying occurs on these platforms through flaming, harassment, denigration, impersonation, outing, trickery, exclusion, or cyberstalking (Willard, 2007). As noted by Kwan and Skoric (2013), due to the nature of SNSs, cyberbullying has three core characteristics that distinguish it from traditional bullying. First of all, as SNSs have a large user base, therefore the humiliation of the victim may be witnessed by broader audiences, even by unknown users who are not belong to one's social circle (Arató et al., 2020; Kwan & Skoric, 2013). Secondly, with the Internet's unlimited capacity in storing content, abusive content can be available for a long period and be downloaded and uploaded repeatedly (Arató et al., 2020; Kwan & Skoric, 2013). Lastly, cyberbullies can be anonymous whereby they conceal their identity in real life and use fake names for SNS accounts (Kwan & Skoric, 2013; Marr & Duell, 2020).

Risk and Protective Factors of Cyberbullying

A body of research has identified the risk and protective factors of cyberbullying from several aspects, including individual, peer, school, and community factors (Kowalski et al., 2019). From individual aspects, first and foremost, technology use is a crucial factor for both cyberbullying perpetration and victimization (Kowalski et al., 2019). Time spent online, especially on SNSs is positively associated with cyberbullying perpetration and victimization (Kowalski et al., 2019). In addition, Chen et al (2017) noted that risky use of information and communications technology (ICT) is one of the main predictors of both cyberbullying perpetration and victimization. Risky ICT use refers to risky online activities, for instance, sharing one's personal information or photos online and adding strangers as friends on SNSs (Chen et al., 2017). Conversely, the low frequency of technology use is found to be one of the strongest protective factors to cyberbullying perpetration and victimization (Ansary, 2020; Chen et al., 2017). Moreover, cyberbullying perpetration was discovered to be associated with online disinhibition, which refers to "any behavior characterized by an apparent reduction in concerns for self-presentation and judgment of others" (Joinson, 1998, p.44). With the online disinhibition effect, people act more openly on the Internet, doing and saying things they would not express in the face-to-face world (Suler, 2004). According to the findings by Lee (2017), online disinhibition is revealed to be the strongest predictor of cyberbullying perpetration among African American college students.

The other individual factors include experiences with traditional bullying (Kowalski et al., 2019). It was found middle and high school students who engaged in traditional bullying as perpetrators are more likely to involve in cyberbullying perpetration (Kowalski et al., 2019). On the other hand, other studies revealed that college students who have been the victims of traditional bullying and cyberbullying are also more likely to become cyberbullying perpetrators themselves (Kowalski et al., 2019). Furthermore, other individual risk factors of cyberbullying perpetration are low levels of empathy, self-control, self-esteem, high levels of thrill-seeking behaviors, impulsivity, sadism, narcissism, psychopathy, and moral disengagement (Ansary, 2020; Kowalski et al., 2019). In reverse, high levels of self-esteem, emotional management, social competence, problem-solving, empathy, and life satisfaction have been identified as protective factors of cyberbullying perpetration (Kowalski et al., 2019; Zych et al., 2019). In addition, some studies also discovered sexuality as a risk factor of

cyberbullying among adolescents, which LGBTQ adolescents may have a higher risk of cyberbullying as compared to heterosexual peers (Abreu & Kenny, 2017; Duarte et al., 2018).

Several studies have identified the influences from peers. In general, if cyberbullying perpetration is normalized among peers, then an individual is more likely to be involved in cyberbullying (Kowalski et al., 2019). For instance, according to a study by Lianos and McGrath (2017), a significant relationship was found between association with deviant peers on the Internet and cyberbullying perpetration among young adults. Additionally, lack of prosocial peers is also a risk predictor of cyberbullying perpetration (Kowalski et al., 2019). Besides that, peer rejection and social isolation significantly predict cyberbullying as well (Kowalski et al., 2019). In contrast, positive peer influence and peer support were found to be the protective factors of cyberbullying (Zych et al., 2019).

Lastly, school and community have also been identified to be factors of cyberbullying. Firstly, both cyberbullying perpetration and victimization were found to be associated with students' perceptions of school climate and safety (Kowalski et al., 2019). Other than that, lack of teacher support and clear school rules about cyberbullying also significantly predicts high rates of cyberbullying perpetration among students (Kowalski et al., 2019). On the contrary, a positive school climate and students' satisfaction with school were revealed to be protective factors of cyberbullying (Kowalski et al., 2019; Zych et al., 2019).

Impacts of cyberbullying on victims

Like traditional bullying, cyberbullying leads to negative impacts on the victims, which include physical and mental health issues and academic problems (Vaillancourt et al., 2017). In terms of physical health issues, research has revealed adolescents who have been the victim of cyberbullying perceived themselves as having poorer physical health as compared to non-bullied peers, which the victims have experienced more symptoms such as headaches, stomach aches, lack of appetites, and sleep disturbances (Vaillancourt et al., 2017). Moreover, negative outcomes of cyberbullying on the victims' mental health include a greater level of depression, suicidal ideation, anxiety, loneliness, emotional problems, and decreased levels of self-esteem (Kowalski et al., 2019; Vaillancourt et al., 2017). Among the impacts of cyberbullying on academics, several studies have found cyberbullying leads to increased absenteeism and poor academic performances among students (Vaillancourt et al., 2017).

Overall, researchers have found cyberbullying and traditional bullying bring similar outcomes to victims, but cyber bullying may be more detrimental (Vaillancourt et al., 2017). It may be due to the aforementioned three core characteristics of cyberbullying, which the attack or humiliation online can be widely spread and accessible to more audiences, the capacity of the Internet enables the contents last for a long period, and the anonymity of the perpetrators (Vaillancourt et al., 2017). These characteristics may induce more sense of insecurity, lack of control, and hopelessness in the victims; therefore, the outcomes may be more damaging than traditional bullying (Vaillancourt et al., 2017).

Emotional Competency and Cyberbullying

As it was mentioned earlier, poor emotional competence was found to be a factor in risky and deviant behaviors (Hessler & Katz, 2010), and studies have further found that the behavior of cyberbullying is closely related to one's emotional competency. According to the

study conducted by Llorent et al (2020), they found that emotional competency acts as either a risk or protective factor against cyberbullying. They found that perpetrators of cyberbullying possess low self-awareness, whereby having low self-awareness may relate to a low emotional awareness as well. In this study, the researchers developed an emotional education program for secondary school students in the means of preventing cyberbullying. They found that the intervention program successfully reduced cyberbullying, and the intervention groups reported an increase in emotional understanding and emotional regulation during the program. Therefore, it could be seen that through enhancing emotional competency, cyberbullying could be reduced.

Moreover, cyber-perpetration was also found to have a negative relationship with the subscales in emotional competency, which are emotional expression, perspective, understanding, and regulation (Marin-Lopez, 2020). This study further emphasized that emotional competency plays an important role in reducing cyberbullying, as emotional competence could contribute to forming healthy relationships with others, hence acting as a protective factor against cyberbullying. From these studies that have been presented, emotional competency is indeed a salient predictor for cyberbullying. Research by Arato et al (2020) further explained that cyberbullies were unable to understand their own emotions hence facing difficulties to understand others' as well. This shows that cyberbullies lack emotional understanding which is one of the important components in emotional competency. Further, they have also found that the lack of understanding of one's own and others was because they tend to suppress feelings of guilt, therefore not only showing a decrease of emotional competency, but also a strong moral disengagement. Not only that, but they have also found a potential risk whereby cyber victims will turn to be cyberbullied if they adopted maladaptive emotional competence strategies to deal with negative emotions. Another study also further supported that emotional competency was found to have a significant relationship with cyberbullying, whereby the cyberbullies showed a low self-awareness in their own emotions and thoughts, low social awareness in understanding others' emotions and thoughts (Zych, 2018).

From the above research that has been presented, it could be seen that emotional competency plays a vital role in managing children and adolescents' emotions. Hence, understanding factors that could contribute to the development of emotional competency are important.

Role of Family

Family as Key Component in Social Emotional Learning (SEL) among Children and Adolescent

According to American Psychological Association (2021), the family can be defined as a kinship unit that consists of individuals bonded by blood, marital, adoptive, or other intimate relationships. Family plays an integral part in the development of human life and influences a person's well-being. The family also plays a vital role in shaping a child's social and emotional learning. A social and emotional learning model known as the Ways of Being Model (Figure 1) (Blyth et al., 2017) proposes the importance of 'feeling' (skills to identify and make sense of own emotions), 'relating to others' (skills to interact with others, understand and develop relationships) and 'doing' (skills to approve each task and achieve goals) for the development of emotional competence. It is believed that these three components can be acquired through socialization and family is the primary socializing agent. This is because family is normally a

child's first context of socialization and it also provides opportunities for a safe and supportive SEL environment. Learning can take place through modeling (implicit) (Bandura, 1977) or communication (intentional) (Gomez-Ortiz et al., 2018). Besides that, family is also important as it teaches children emotions that are culturally desirable. By providing opportunities for SEL, children could understand the connection between emotions, behaviors, and well-being (Dworkin & Serido, 2017). Hence, raising the importance of examining family factors that could influence emotional competence development.



Figure 1: Ways of Being Model (Blyth et al., 2017)

Family as a Factor Influencing Emotional Competence Development

The family environment plays a significant role in developing a child's emotional competence. A study by Ornaghi et al (2018) investigated the parents' emotional socialization styles and their effects on their children's emotional competency. They found that children developed low emotional competency when their mothers adopted an emotion dismissing style. This type of coaching style usually showed a lack of emotional awareness of their children and themselves, furthermore ignoring or responding negatively to displays of emotion, especially negative emotions (Lunkenheimer et al., 2007). On the other hand, if children's mothers adopt an emotion coaching style, their children will develop high emotional competency. This type of style help to increase awareness of their own and children's emotions, hence are always open to discussion and conversation over emotions (Lunkenheimer et al., 2007).

This is further supported by Meybody et al (2019) who found a beneficial practice for parents to improve their children's emotional competence. This practice is called Turning in to Kids (TIK), where this practice is an emotion-focused parenting program. Parents were taught ways to enhance emotional awareness, identify and label emotions, and empathize with their children. It also taught parents how to regulate their own emotions through self-care procedures and anger management. These skills were applied especially when their children experienced emotions. After the intervention, their children showed significant changes in their behavior and behaved less negatively compared to pre interventions. This study hence further affirmed the importance of family in children's emotional competence development. Subsequently, suggesting the role of the family in influencing cyberbullying behaviors.

Family and Cyberbullying

The role of the family in influencing the prevalence of cyberbullying among children and adolescents has been extensively researched in many studies. It can contribute to a person being a cyberbully, cyber-victim, or both cyberbully/victim. Several aspects concerning family and cyberbullying will be discussed as follows;

Parenting Styles / Strategies

Parents or Progenitors are among those who are directly involved in a child's development since infancy. Each parent develops their parenting strategies in shaping their child which can either bring good or harm to the SEL experiences on what is morally right or wrong in the society. Parenting strategies can be classified into several categories such as autonomy, controlling/strict, democratic, permissive, and authoritarian. According to Legate et al (2019), autonomy parenting is very supportive in fulfilling their children's needs to behave according to their own beliefs and values. Conducive environments encourage children to make meaningful choices at the same time, setting up appropriate boundaries and prohibiting any inappropriate behaviors. They deal with children's unpleasant attitudes by explaining rationally why the attitudes are unacceptable and need to be changed. On the other hand, controlling parenting does not provide freedom to the child. To ensure the child behaves in the desired ways, strategies such as using guilt, shaming, and threats of punishment will be applied. No explanations are given to correct the undesirable attitudes. The link between these two strategies with cyberbullying has been conducted by Legate et al (2019) with 1004 British adolescents. They found a significant correlation between autonomy and control in predicting cyberbullying. Autonomy is related to lower cyberbullying in contrast to control. At the same time, there is mixed evidence for controlling. The use of guilt, shaming, and conditional regards related to more cyberbullying than the use of punishment. This might be due to the higher feelings of reactance towards parents found among those in the prior conditions driving them to commit the prohibited behaviors. Meanwhile, the use of punishment in this sample study may serve as clear and consistent rules for any problematic behavior, it might be seen to provide a conducive environment in supporting adolescents' needs for autonomy (Grolnick & Pomerantz, 2009). Nonetheless, the severity level of the punishment is unknown. Hence, there is a possibility for the punishment exerted in this study to be minimal and non-aggressive.

Parenting strategies that involve the use of violence and aggressive behaviors could cause adverse effects on adolescents' development and beliefs about cyberbullying. Victims of childhood maltreatment were found to be involved in the 'cycle of violence and have the tendency to bully others as they age (Hong et al., 2012) and this tendency is consistent despite the types of childhood maltreatment such as physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, and physical and emotional neglect (Wang et al., 2016). This might be due to the presence of moral disengagement shown by the parents which are then copied by the children through modeling. Moral disengagement (MD) theory proposes that people used intra-psychological processes to reconstruct their moral judgments which make them disassociate with their moral standards (Newman et al., 2019). They are involved in a process that helps to reduce the tension experienced when behaving immorally.

Wang et al (2019) investigated the relationship between childhood maltreatment (CM), MD, and cyberbullying perpetration (CB) with a group of adolescents along with their

parents. Results showed that CM is significantly associated with adolescents' MD which is significantly associated with CB. Mothers' MD (when high) was found to moderate the link between CM and CB while fathers' MD (when high) significantly positively predicted the association between CM and adolescents' MD. These suggest how the use of harsh or abusive parenting styles could indirectly be shaped cyberbullying behaviors through the moral disengagement learning process. In line with this, adolescents who experienced punitive democratic, authoritarian and strict parenting styles which lack emotional warmth and also used more disciplinary and psychological control strategies (generate guilt and withdrawal of affection upon displaying undesired behaviors) showed clear involvement in cyberbullying either as bullies or victims (Gomez-Ortiz, 2018; Gomez-Ortiz, 2019). Hence, further supports the importance of being authoritative and warm to prevent cyberbullying (Lereya et al., 2013).

Type of Parental/Family Communication

Besides parenting styles, the type of communication practiced among family members (mainly parent-child) is also vital in predicting cyberbullying. There are three main types of communication namely open, offensive and avoidant. Buelga et al. (2017) found that both cyberbullying perpetration and victimization were significantly and positively related to offensive and avoidant communication with parents (avoidant with the father, offensive and closed with the mother) while at the same time, negatively associated with openness. These findings are consistent in several other studies (Baron et al., 2019; Lereya et al., 2013). An explanation of these might be due to the experience of psychological distress by the cyberbullies/victims. Psychological distress is the unpleasant feelings and emotions due to anxiety or depression which usually leads to impaired psychological functioning at the behavioral, cognitive, and emotional levels. It has been found that cyberbullies/victims tend to show symptoms of psychological distress (Cenat et al., 2014; Wang & Kenny, 2014) and these symptoms are also present in families with problematic parent-child communication (Curran & Allen, 2017). Communication that promotes disclosure by the children to the parents and having a sense of humor could be protective factors from cyberbullying (Gomez-Ortiz, 2018). Hence, suggesting that children raised with unsupportive parental communication might have problems dealing with conflict interaction which subsequently makes them bullies/victims. Nonetheless, research that examines the direct relationship between parental communication, psychological distress, and cyberbullying in a study might need to be conducted to draw a stronger relationship.

Use of technology: Parental Phubbing and Supervision

Another interesting point to be highlighted in relation to family and cyberbullying is Parental Phubbing. It can be defined as the extent to which parents use or are distracted by their smartphones while communicating with their children (Wang et al., 2020a). Parental phubbing (mainly by mothers) was found to significantly predict a child's internalizing (eg; depression, feeling easily hurt by others) and externalizing behaviors (eg; tantrums, hot temper) (McDaniel & Radesky, 2018). Accordingly, Wang et al (2020b) has found that adolescents whose parents have high parental phubbing behaviors were more likely to cyberbully others with moral disengagement as its mediator. Based on the frustration-aggression hypothesis (Berkowitz, 1989), aggression can be the result of frustration if a person's desired goal was not achieved. They might feel neglected when their emotions are ignored and they experience less parental warmth. Thus, children whose needs or

interactions with parents do not receive proper care and attention might express their frustrations by cyberbullying others.

On another note, the meta-analyses study also stressed the importance of parental monitoring and supervision of technology use by children to curb cyberbullying (Zych, 2019). It is useful in decreasing a person’s involvement in different cyberbullying roles. Through supervision, parents could monitor and control their children’s online behaviors. Hence, allowing them to identify if their children faced any cyber victimization or are involved in any cyberbullying perpetration.

Family Environment

Finally, the family environment which can be grouped into cohesion, conflict, and expressiveness also contributes to cyberbullying. While family conflict is positively related to cyberbullying perpetration, family cohesion and expressiveness are negatively associated with both cyber-perpetration and victimization (Buelga et al., 2017). Children in families who are unhelpful in decision-making and have bad financial states were also more susceptible to being victimized (Rakic et al., 2021). On top of not having a quality environment for optimum socio-emotional development, affected children living in an unsupportive family environment with a negative upbringing might experience an unsatisfactory life. Subsequently, increase their desire to get some enjoyment by cyberbullying others. This is supported by Livazovic (2019) who found that lower life satisfaction is related to cyberbullying.

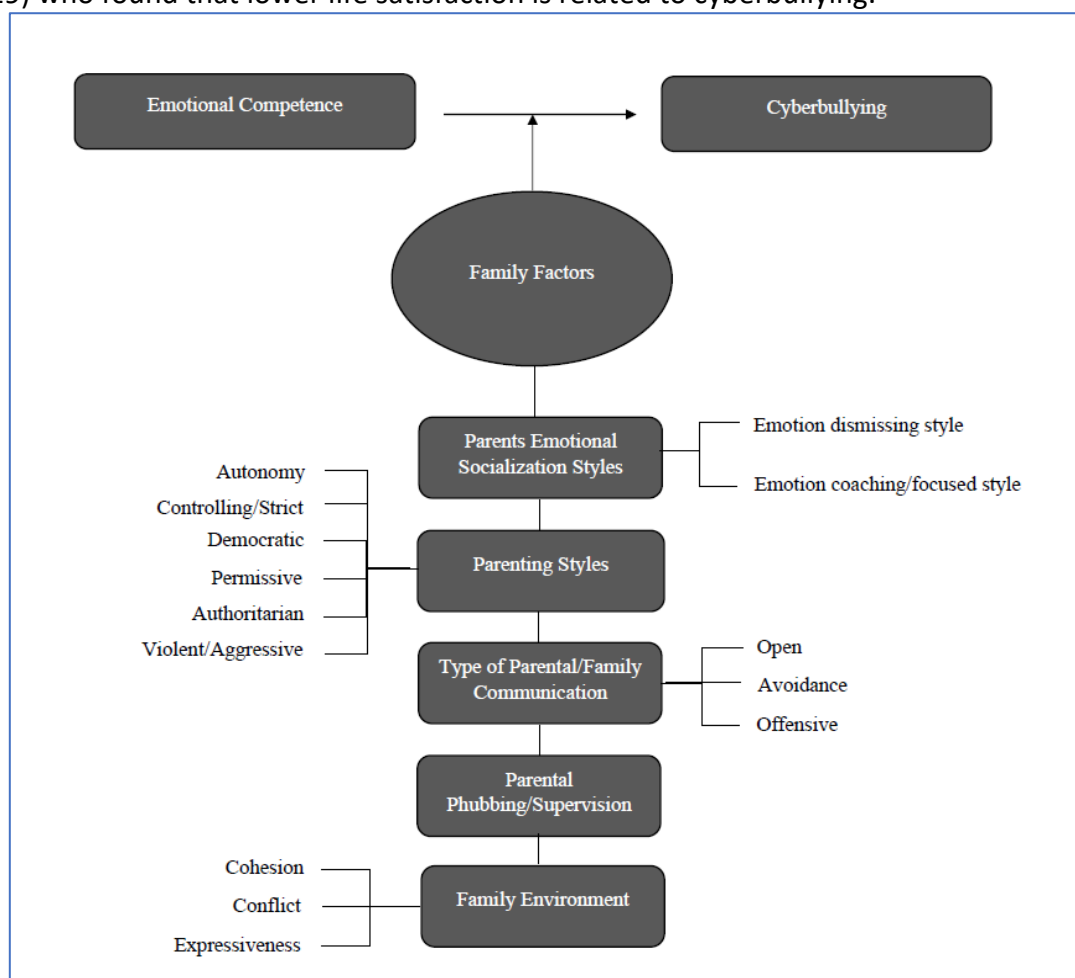


Figure 2: The relationship between emotional competence and cyberbullying with family factors as its moderator

Conclusion

Today's children and adolescents grow up and live in an era of vigorous development of the Internet and technology. Online social platforms and media have almost become necessities for them. The open space on the internet has raised some negative side effects such as cyberbullying and this has a profound impact on the growth of the affected children and adolescents. Through the review of past research, it has been found that personal emotional competence and family factors play a great role in the victimization and perpetration of cyberbullying (Figure 2). It is crucial for each family, especially parents, to provide an environment and interactions that are supportive, warm, and loving that could enhance children's emotional competence. Therefore, the prevention and intervention of children's and adolescents' cyberbullying should implement relevant measures, to provide the ability and psychological support for the healthy growth of adolescents.

Contribution

Our study makes an important theoretical contribution in that the results help in articulating the mediating role of family on emotional competence in preventing cyberbullying among children and adolescents. We make a theoretical contribution by explaining relevant theories on cyberbullying to improve youngsters' social ability, psychological and emotional wellbeing. In doing so, we address the impacts of cyberbullying to draw on emotional competency to better understand how children and adolescents develop their well-being. In doing so, it expands previous studies that have based on the mediating role of family plays to develop emotional competency among youngsters. This study would assist researchers and practitioners to focus their educational efforts and investments better on cyberbullying among children and adolescents. This is particularly significant since existing literature is almost silent on the investigation essential psychological theories.

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