Cyberbullying among middle schoolers: Focusing in on the causes and consequences

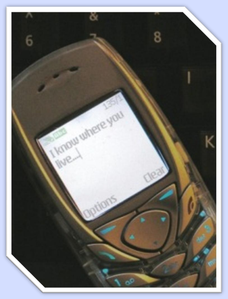
Trevor Lippman ❖ lippmatc@uwec.edu ❖ Faculty Advisor: Justin Patchin ❖ patchinj@uwec.edu
Criminal Justice Program ❖ Department of Political Science ❖ University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

Why Research School Climate & Its Relation to Cyberbullying?

Although there has been ample research on traditional forms of bullying, little research has been done addressing cyberbullying. This study attempts to discover what school climate factors may lead to cyberbullying behaviors. If certain school characteristics can be discovered that make a juvenile more prone to cyberbullying behaviors, school policies can be put into place to reduce the amount of cyberbullying going on in and out of the school setting.

Hypothesis

Those School Climate Factors that Influence Traditional Bullying and Victimization will be the same factors that contribute to Cyberbullying and Cyberbullying Victimization



Definition of Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is the willful and repeated harm inflicted through the medium of electronic text. It is when somebody repeatedly makes fun of another person online or repeatedly picks on another person through email or text message or when someone posts something online about another person that they don't like.

Correlation Between Traditional Bullying and Cyberbullying

❖There has been an abundant amount of research relating a lower perceived school climate to a higher level of traditional bullying. Our individual level findings suggest a similar relationship between school climate and cyberbullying.

❖Found some counterintuitive findings from the school level.


Source: Chris Kasurak

Methodology & Research

❖Surveyed approximately 2,000 middle school students from a large school district in the South

Descriptive Statistics (N=1963)

	Mean	Std. Dev.	Range
Percent Male	50.1		
Percent White	40.6		
Percent Black	23.4		
Percent Hispanic	19.6		
Age	12.8	1.12	10-16
School Climate	2.90	0.61	1-4
Cyberbullying Victim	0.10	0.31	0-1
Cyberbullying Offender	0.09	0.29	0-1
Traditional Bullying Victim	0.19	0.39	0-1
Traditional Bullying Offender	0.22	0.41	0-1

Independent Variables

❖Individual Level → Perception of School Climate
- ❖I enjoy going to school
- ❖I feel safe at school
- ❖I feel that teachers at my school care about me
- ❖I feel that teachers at my school really try to help me succeed

❖School Level
- ❖Absentee Rate
- ❖Number of Students
- ❖Percent of Students who receive free or reduced lunches
- ❖Percent of Students who have been suspended throughout the school year

Dependent Variables

❖Traditional Bullying and Bullying Victimization
- ❖I have participated in bullying other students at school in the last 30 days
- ❖I have been bullied at school in the last 30 days.

❖Cyberbullying And Cyberbullying Victimization
- ❖I have participated in cyberbullying others in the last 30 days
- ❖I have been cyberbullied in the last 30 days

Individual Level Findings

Bullying and School Climate (t-tests) – Individual

		N	Mean School Climate
Cyberbullying Victim**	Yes	185	2.7896
	No	1587	2.9156
Cyberbullying Offender***	Yes	160	2.6870
	No	1631	2.9265
Traditional Victim***	Yes	354	2.8032
	No	1499	2.9263
Traditional Offender***	Yes	402	2.7583
	No	1449	2.9377

** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed)

Noteworthy Observations from the Individual Level Findings:

❖*As expected, traditional bullies and traditional bullying victims rated their school climates as significantly lower than those students who were not bullied or bullying in a traditional style.*
❖*Cyberbullying Victims and Cyberbullying Offenders both rated their school climates as significantly lower than those students who were not cyberbullied or cyberbullying others, a finding that supports our hypothesis.*

School Level Findings

Correlation Matrix and Descriptive Variables – School Level (N=30)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1 Absentee Rate									
2 % Free Lunch	.141								
3 Number of Students	-.350*	-.530**							
4 % Suspended	.328	.801**	-.734**						
5 Mean Climate	.232	.009	-.256	-.102					
6 Cyberbullying Victim	.364*	.195	-.479**	.486*	-.046				
7 Cyberbullying Offender	.135	.229	-.476**	.502**	-.141	.556**			
8 Traditional Bullying Victim	.150	-.278	.099	-.083	-.049	.017	-.065		
9 Traditional Bullying Offender	-.052	.119	-.269	.417*	-.257	.210	.278	.183	
Mean	3.12	46.79	1066	20.18	2.91	0.10	0.09	0.19	0.21
Std. Dev.	1.25	25.52	246	13.79	0.11	0.06	0.04	0.06	0.07
Range	1-8	14-92	141-1552	1-58	2.68-3.09	.02-.23	.02-.23	.10-.33	.11-.35

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed)

Noteworthy Observations from the School Level Findings:

❖*Being a cyberbullying offender was significantly related to being a cyberbullying victim*
❖*There was a significant negative correlation between school size and being a cyberbully or cyberbullying victim*
❖*Absentee Rate was significantly related to being a cyberbullying victim but not to being a cyberbullying offender*
❖*Percent suspended was significantly related to being a cyberbullying offender or cyberbullying victim*

Limitations

❖Small school sample (n= 30)
❖Basic School climate Measure (only four variables)
❖Simple Method (need to rerun in HLM)

Acknowledgements

Funding for this research came from the University of Wisconsin- Eau Claire Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (Faculty/ Student Research Collaboration Grant) and Differential Tuition