

Preventing Cyberbullying: What Is the Parental Role in this Issue?

[Předcházení kyberšikaně: Jaká je role rodičů v této problematice?]

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Abstract: With the rise of social networks, bullying has also developed in this space, where we talk about cyberbullying. This makes students much more exposed to bullying, as cyberbullying encroaches on their personal space through the online world. The current study explores how the role of parents can help mitigate the effects of cyberbullying on secondary school students. Primary data was collected through an online survey in the chosen secondary schools. In total, responses were obtained from 267 students who completed surveys measuring their participation in cyberbullying, including parents' roles when using the Internet. The results show that parental control and behaviour have a significant effect on mitigating cyberbullying perpetration. Additionally, a link was found between parental control, behaviour, and social media use behaviour. An interesting finding is that when there is parental control, children are much more often inclined to use social networks than when they are not so monitored. The results show that parental control for monitoring Internet content or apps has a negative effect on the social media use of the children monitored. They are much more likely to use social media to forget personal problems or use it so much that it has a negative impact on their studies. It has been found that when parents explain how to use the internet safely, children are very rarely able to limit the use of social networks. The research suggests that parental behaviour appears to be much more crucial in the parenting role than parental control.

Keywords: cyberbullying, online behaviour, parental control, secondary school students.

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Introduction

According to Peter and Petermann (2018) cyberbullying is a form of traditional bullying that reaches people in all ages as a result of the ubiquity and anonymity of social networks. Langos (2012) described cyberbullying as “bullying that transpires on a technological platform”. Based on the previous evidence (Görzig and Machackova 2015) traditional bullying and cyberbullying seem to be correlated. Despite some commonalities, cyberbullying differs from traditional bullying in important ways that affect the outcomes experienced by victims of these two types of bullying (Giumetti and Kowalski 2016). This includes specific features like a wider audience and impact enhancing its negative effects; anonymity making it easier for both sides; permanence, acts remain active longer; minimal restrictions making it difficult to control (Evangelio et al. 2022). Cyberbullying is featured by negative social relationships through digital devices and the Internet (Kowalski, Limber and Agatston 2008; Smith et al. 2008). Everyday use of digital devices makes cyberbullying more present, especially for adolescents.

For adolescents, parental support and positive mutual communication play a key role in terms of promoting social competence and preventing problem behaviours (Padilla-Walker and Son 2018). Parents often seek to be involved in their adolescent children's lives through various monitoring activities. They may supervise their teens, request direct information about their activities or relationships, or try to influence them (Stattin and Kerr 2000). They may also request information from them or from competent persons such as friends, neighbours, or

teachers (Waizenhofer, Buchanan and Jackson-Newsom 2004). These two strategies, along with one of their potential products, parental knowledge of activities outside the home, are typically conceptualized as parental monitoring (Dishion and McMahon 1998). Although, parental knowledge is also the result of adolescents' spontaneous disclosure of information about their life activities, relationships, and hobbies; thus, research has identified adolescents' disclosure of information as a strong predictor of how much parents know (Keijsers et al. 2010, Stattin and Kerr 2000).

Parental supervision has been examined in the context of cyberbullying, with varying results across studies. Some studies (Lwin, Stanaland and Miyazaki 2008; Mesch 2009) indicate that when parents of adolescents supervise the use of electronic technology, the risk of adolescents experiencing cyberbullying and being exposed to unwanted pornographic content is reduced. Also, Hood and Duffy (2018) reported that parental control is a moderating variable that reduces the likelihood of becoming a victim of cyberbullying.

On the other hand, the findings of Katz et al. (2019) study show that when parents use a controlling style in general, their children report greater participation in cyberbullying. Their findings confirm a previous study by Laurin et al. (2015) that pointed to this negative aspect of parental controlling strategies. Moreover, Katz et al. (2019) intend that cyberbullying should be added to the list of related problems of this parental style.

The role of parents differs for girls and boys. Boys reported higher rates of cyberbullying. Also, they do not perceive their parents as willing to educate them. This may have meant that they did not inform them about the risks of using the Internet and how to use it the best. Boys perceive lower parental control over online activities. No parental role was significantly associated with boys' cybervictimization. A different pattern emerged for girls. While parental supervision of online activities, education, and control were not significantly associated with cyberbullying, girls who indicated higher levels of cybervictimization were among those who were more likely to report higher levels of parental monitoring (Wright 2017; Baldry, Sorrentino and Farrington 2019). If a girl reported being a victim of cyberbullying, as Floros et al. (2013) also found, this may result in increased parental monitoring because parents may be concerned and want to know what is going on and will monitor their daughters.

The question of how parental control or supervision of their children's online activities corresponds to their engagement in cases of cyberbullying lacks a definitive consensus. Hence, it becomes imperative to elucidate this matter within the context of our specific conditions. This endeavor entails addressing the inaugural research question: *What is the relationship between cyberbullying and parental control? (RQ1)*.

Elsaesser et al. (2017) indicate negative associations between parental warmth and victimization of cyberbullying, and perpetration, suggesting that positive parent-child relationships can prevent cyberbullying. Effective strategies of coping, such as open communication or social support, protect high school students against the risks associated with the victimization of cyberbullying and perpetration (Mishna et al. 2016, Offrey and Rinaldi 2017). Honig and Zdunowski-Sjoblom (2014) examined the social supports available to victims of traditional bullying, including parents, siblings, other relatives, friends, and school staff. Children who experienced victimization reported feelings of relief when supported at home and school. Given that youth tend to hide incidents of cyberbullying, proactive parenting strategies may be particularly important for reducing the likelihood of negative consequences for children (Cassidy, Brown and Jackson 2012). For example, Lösel and Farrington in 2012 declared a

communication environment at home can reduce victimization of cyberbullying and perpetration among youth and consequently improve the well-being of children and adolescents.

In 2018, Padilla-Walker et al. (2018) supported these outcomes with their own findings of higher effectiveness of parental discussion and higher levels of connective co-use in reducing the risk of cyberbullying than restrictive approaches to media monitoring, such as setting strict time limits or rules about the type of media children can use. Connective co-use involves actively experiencing media with children in order to engage with it.

Results from another study (Doty et al. 2018) identified a negative relationship between parental connectedness (as measured by listening, talking, and concern for the child) and the likelihood of victimization of cyberbullying and perpetration. In fact, parental connectedness was more significant than parental monitoring of young people's online activities. Researchers have suggested that positive parent-child communication can directly reduce youth involvement in cyberbullying.

To support or to disprove these arguments will be possible by answering the second research question: *How does cyberbullying relate to parental behaviour? (RQ2)*

The unique context of online media use requires a combination of different parenting strategies to create an environment of healthy media use across the family (Gabrielli, Marsch and Tanski 2018). Active monitoring, which refers to instructional and communication strategies (i.e., talking with adolescents about their online activities), serves as a buffer between media use and children's risky behaviours (Wisniewski et al. 2015). Given that cyberbullying typically takes place at home and can be hidden from adults (Kowalski et al. 2012; Monks, Mahdavi and Rix 2016), in addition to co-use, active monitoring involves discussing online media use and educating children about the risks to ensure that children engage with media safely (Gabrielli, Marsch and Tanski 2018). Parents who actively participate in their children's online environment are more likely to be aware of and discuss issues that arise than those who take a less attentive approach to media monitoring (Mesch 2009).

One specific aspect of monitoring technology use is limiting media exposure (e.g., screen time, frequency) given the positive associations with victimization of cyberbullying and perpetration (Chen, Ho and Lwin 2017). Access to technology provides many enriching opportunities for young people, but it also poses significant risks to adolescent development. For example, the number of hours spent looking at the screens is associated with other issues like poor sleep (Hale and Guan 2015), depressive symptoms (Gunnell et al. 2016, Maras et al. 2015, Sampasa-Kanyinga and Hamilton 2015), or course cyberbullying (Walrave and Heirman 2011). With a profound increase in average screen time among adolescent parental concerns about the problems associated with limiting screen time and fears about the negative consequences of technology grow (e.g., Monks, Mahdavi and Rix 2016).

Restrictive social network sites mediation involves parents who can enforce strict rules regarding social media usage. These parents may impose such rules without receiving input from their children, which reduces the possibility that these teens will discuss instances of unwanted or unpleasant experiences through social media. Such a suggestion is supported by the literature because parents who use restrictive mediation are unlikely to discuss solutions to unwanted or problematic experiences (Mesch 2009). In addition, restrictive mediation could function similarly to an overprotective parenting style. In this style of parent-child interaction,

parents typically do not allow their children to develop the necessary problem-solving and social skills needed to resolve peer conflicts (Clarke, Cooper and Creswell 2013; Lereya, Samara and Wolke 2013; Ungar 2009). Adolescents' use of electronic technology increases their risk of being exposed to undesirable and/or problematic online experiences. Therefore, it is unlikely that adolescents can avoid all of the potential risks associated with social media usage, increasing their risk of cyberbullying victimization (Wright 2018).

Kowalski et al. (2014) reported that Internet use increases the likelihood of being a victim of cyberbullying. These results are consistent with a long-term study by Gámez-Guadix et al. (2013), who declared a positive, significant correlation between cyberbullying and overuse of the Internet. With all this, a third research question arises: *How does parental control and behaviour about internet use relate to use of social media? (RQ3)*

1 The role of parents in cyberbullying

In contrast to several previous studies recommending parents to use restrictive mediation strategies for reducing cyber risks (Ho, Chen and Ng 2017; Lee 2013), Katz et al. (2019) suggest that the frequency of using restrictive mediation strategies was not a predictor of lower reported cyberbullying involvement. However, they declared the style that parents used when implementing these mediation strategies was a predictor. More precisely, the results show that parents inconsistent in their cyber mediating style (i.e., they set rules but do not enforce or follow through) significantly increase the likelihood that their adolescents will engage in cyberbullying. These results corroborate previous studies (Farkas and Grolnick 2010, Grolnick and Pomerantz 2009) on the importance of consistency in parenting (using a consistent educational approach over time), and on the risks related to inconsistent parenting (Dwairy 2010). The study of Katz et al. (2019) suggests that despite a controlling style is not recommended when considering cyber risks, in the case when parents use this style in everyday interactions, they should also use it in cyber mediation. Messages regarding online activities that conflict with messages to which the adolescents, used on controlling style, are generally accustomed and they may encourage them to use their relative freedom in the cyber environment to act irresponsibly.

Wisniewski et al. (2013) state that parental restrictive monitoring to limit time spent online on the one hand admittedly reduces media time but on the other hand may not maximize opportunities to correct mistakes made in the online context. As mentioned, Mesch (2009) found that setting rules about which websites children can visit reduce the risk of cyberbullying. More recent studies (Ghosh, Badillo-Urquiola and Wisniewski 2018; Padilla-Walker et al. 2019) are consistent with these results, but also emphasize the importance of restrictive supervision combined with educational practices that promote autonomy. These findings highlight the importance of applying restrictive strategies while supporting the development of child autonomy in creating an effective mix of monitoring strategies (Helfrich et al. 2020).

Baldry, Sorrentino and Farrington (2019) regard parental supervision online could protect teens from cyberbullying and cybervictimisation, but it depends on whether teens perceive adults as competent and the extent to which teens feel that parents can support them rather than interfere in their lives, control them or take away their devices. Also, in terms of possible intervention strategies, it follows that if parents are to be active online, this should not mean that they should turn off their children's electronic devices, but rather they should know what is going on, share their concerns with them and provide them with knowledge about the Internet, but also set rules and limits if necessary. This way of dealing with potential online risks by parents means being

authoritative and supportive parents, rather than controlling and supervising what is happening in their children's online activities as a "helicopter" parent (Schiffrin et al. 2014).

It follows that if parents want to prevent cyberbullying of their children, they should support them rather than restrict them, give them some autonomy and also be consistent in their actions. Within this framework, children might see parents as competent to be listened to when they talk about threats related to the online environment.

2 Method

In order to meet the aim of the research, quantitative research was conducted using the method of questionnaires. The research technique was an online questionnaire. This was distributed through a link to a specific Google form, which was always forwarded to the contact persons of selected secondary schools. They only gave it to those students whose parents confirmed that they agreed to involve their children in this research.

Participants

The participants were secondary school students (N=267) from six schools in the Moravian-Silesian region. Table 1 presents the characteristics of respondents in terms of gender and hours spent online during the school day and weekend.

Table 1: Characteristics of the respondents

The number of hours spent on the internet	The number of hours per day	Gender					
		Boys		Girls		Agender	
		n=122	%	n=143	%	n=2	%
During the regular school day	0 hours	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	50.00
	1-2 hours	23	18.85	35	24.48	0	0.00
	3-4 hours	31	25.41	46	32.17	0	0.00
	5-6 hours	40	32.79	43	30.07	0	0.00
	7-8 hours	17	13.93	12	8.39	1	50.00
	9-10 hours	7	5.74	4	2.80	0	0.00
	11- 12 hours	3	2.46	1	0.70	0	0.00
	13-14 hours	0	0.00	1	0.70	0	0.00
	15 hours and more	1	0.82	1	0.70	0	0.00
During a normal weekend	0 hours	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
	1-2 hours	19	15.57	25	17.48	0	0.00
	3-4 hours	24	19.67	46	32.17	1	50.00
	5-6 hours	33	27.05	44	30.77	0	0.00
	7-8 hours	20	16.39	14	9.79	1	50.00
	9-10 hours	12	9.84	9	6.29	0	0.00
	11- 12 hours	8	6.56	0	0.00	0	0.00
	13-14 hours	3	2.46	4	2.80	0	0.00
	15 hours and more	3	2.46	1	0.70	0	0.00

Source: own research

There is a fairly balanced proportion of boys and girls in the sample. The table shows that boys spend slightly more time on the internet during the regular school day than girls. The same situation also occurs in the case of time spent on the internet during and normal weekend.

There were only 2 respondents who were in the agender group. The Czech Republic is a very conservative country in this respect, which is probably why in the open question on gender there were answers like "we have only two genders - men and women". Apart from these two respondents who did not feel themselves to be either female or male, there were no other gender types in the answers.

Measures

To investigate cyberbullying, questions were taken from the European Cyberbullying Intervention Project Questionnaire, from which 11 items were selected. Those variables that expressed different forms of cyberbullying were chosen. For each statement, respondents indicated how often they engaged in the behaviour stated in the statement. Some example items from this measuring scale include: "I said nasty things to someone or called them names using texts or online messages" and "I spread rumors about someone on the Internet". Five closed-ended response options were used in the measurement. These include the following: "never", "once or twice a year", "once or twice a month", "approximately once a week", and "more than once a week".

The Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale was chosen to measure social media addiction, which includes six items. This type of measurement examined how often in the past year respondents had engaged in activities related to social media use. For example, questions explored time spent thinking about and planning social media (SM) use, felt an urge to use SM more and more, used SM to forget about personal problems, or tried to cut down on the use of SM. In this case, a five-point measurement scale from Very rarely to Very often was used.

Measures from parental mediation and control from EU Kids Online were used to examine the parental role. Overall, four items under parental mediation and three items under parental control were selected. In the case of parental mediation, for example, the following has been examined: "explains how to use the internet safely" and "helps you if you are worried about something online". Here, respondents answered on a scale from 1 (never) to 5 (very often). In the case of parental controls, the use of parental controls or other means of blocking, filtering, keeping track or rules determine how long or when they can use the internet was examined. In this case, respondents answered whether their parents used these types of controls. Alternatively, they could choose the answer "I don't know".

Procedure

Written consent was required from parents and children of the chosen secondary schools in the Moravian-Silesian Region to participate in this study. Students did not receive any benefits for participating in the study. Participation was entirely voluntary. Only one student did not give consent to participate in the research. A total of 267 students agreed to participate in the research. Primary data was collected through an online questionnaire that students could complete in their own time.

Data analysis

Factor analysis and regression analysis were conducted to determine how cyberbullying is related to parental control and behaviour. Using factor analysis, the variables were matched to the theoretical concepts. These were then named according to the variables assigned to each factor. Subsequently, regression analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between the independent variables (parental control and behaviour) and the dependent variable (cyberbullying).

3 Results

The results are divided into preliminary analysis and main analysis. The preliminary analysis examines the means and standard deviations of responses to all variables. The main analysis then focuses on examining the influence of parental control and behaviour on the perpetration of cyberbullying and children's social media use.

Preliminary analyses by means and standard deviations are shown in Table 2. The analysis is carried out both from an overall perspective and within the framework of gender in this case divided into boys and girls.

Table 2: Preliminary analyses by means and standard deviations

Assumed construct and variables	Total		Boys		Girls	
	N	M (SD)	N	M (SD)	N	M (SD)
Parental control/other means of blocking	267	1.129 (0.33)	122	1.161 (0.39)	143	1.100 (0.27)
To block or filter some types of content (V1)	267	1.142 (0.49)	122	1.180 (0.53)	143	1.112 (0.45)
For viewing internet content or using apps (V2)	267	1.135 (0.48)	122	1.172 (0.54)	143	1.105 (0.42)
For setting rules about how long and when they can use the internet (V3)	267	1.109 (0.35)	122	1.131 (0.38)	143	1.084 (0.30)
Parental behaviour	267	2.396 (1.13)	122	2.217 (1.07)	143	2.568 (1.15)
Explains how to use the internet safely (V4)	267	2.184 (1.16)	122	1.984 (1.04)	143	2.371 (1.21)
Helps when they are unable to do something or find something (V5)	267	2.524 (1.45)	122	2.418 (1.42)	143	2.636 (1.48)
Explains why some content is dangerous (V6)	267	2.109 (1.25)	122	1.975 (1.21)	143	2.238 (1.27)
Helps when they are worried about something on the internet (V7)	267	2.768 (1.52)	122	2.492 (1.47)	143	3.028 (1.52)
Cyberbullying perpetration	267	1.301 (0.39)	122	1.369 (0.46)	143	1.239 (0.29)
Said nasty things to someone or called them names using texts or online messages (V8)	267	1.663 (1.00)	122	1.877 (1.20)	143	1.476 (0.75)
Said nasty things about someone to another person, either online or via text messages (V9)	267	1.798 (0.97)	122	1.852 (1.03)	143	1.741 (0.92)
They threatened someone via text messages or online messages (V10)	267	1.142 (0.54)	122	1.238 (0.72)	143	1.063 (0.30)
They hacked into someone's email account or profile and stole their personal information (V11)	267	1.045 (0.27)	122	1.074 (0.37)	143	1.021 (0.14)
Hacked into someone's account and pretended to be him/her (V12)	267	1.052 (0.30)	122	1.082 (0.40)	143	1.028 (0.17)
Created a fake account and pretended to be someone else (V13)	267	1.161 (0.53)	122	1.139 (0.47)	143	1.175 (0.57)
They have published personal information about someone online (V14)	267	1.052 (0.30)	122	1.082 (0.40)	143	1.028 (0.17)
They posted embarrassing videos or photos of someone else on the internet (V15)	267	1.360 (0.71)	122	1.352 (0.75)	143	1.357 (0.67)
Retouched photos or videos of another person that were posted on the internet (V16)	267	1.097 (0.41)	122	1.164 (0.54)	143	1.028 (0.20)
Excluded or ignored someone on a social network or internet chat room (V17)	267	1.824 (1.13)	122	2.057 (1.24)	143	1.629 (0.99)
Spread rumours about someone on the internet (V18)	267	1.116 (0.41)	122	1.139 (0.47)	143	1.084 (0.32)

Source: own research

The minimum value for parental control study variables was 1, while the maximum was 2 (number three was the response that respondents had no idea whether parental controls or content blocks were in place on the internet); the minimum value for parental behaviour and cyberbullying perpetration was 1, while the maximum value was 5. For the parental control and behaviour variables, higher values indicate that individuals experience more parental control. Higher values for the cyberbullying perpetration variables indicate that individuals are more likely to engage in the behaviour. Within gender, two respondents did not identify as either female or male. Therefore, they are included in the table as part of the overall examination, but their values are missing in terms of gender.

Using KMO and Bartlett's Test, the suitability of the data for factor analysis was examined. Since $\text{sig} < 0.05$, the primary data used are suitable for factor analysis. Therefore, a factor analysis was conducted and the results are shown in Table 3. The factor analysis was conducted by SPSS software.

Table 3: Factor scores

Variables	Factor scores			
	1	2	3	4
V1				.666
V2				.791
V3				
V4		.771		
V5		.746		
V6		.852		
V7		.752		
V8			.729	
V9			.725	
V10			.554	
V11	.802			
V12	.780			
V13	.452			
V14			.404	
V15			.564	
V16	.624			
V17			.554	
V18			.414	

Source: own research

Using factor analysis, four factors were created to which most variables were assigned. The first factor was named Fraping and Masquerading behaviour. The second factor was named Parental behaviour, as was assumed based on variables. The third factor was named Outing, Dissing and Exclusion. The fourth factor was named Parental control. It was assumed that in the fourth factor, the third variable will be included. That situation did not happened due to the low factor loading score.

For further investigation, the different types of cyberbullying are combined into a single entity named cyberbullying perpetration. In the following investigation, the focus was on how parental control and parental behaviour are related to cyberbullying perpetration. The premise is that parental control and behaviour have a positive effect on mitigating cyberbullying perpetration. The results of the regression analysis are shown in the following table.

Table 4: The results of the effect of parental control and behaviour on the perpetration of cyberbullying.

Dependent variable		β	SE β	Sig	R ² change
Cyberbullying perpetration	Regression model results			0.001	0.049
	Parental control (or other means of blocking)	0.234	0.062	0.000	
	Parental behaviour	0.130	0.062	0.037	

Source: own research

Both parental control (or other means of blocking) and parental behaviour have a significant effect on cyberbullying perpetration ($p < 0.05$).

The next field of research was how parental control and behaviour are related to social media use. In this case, the Kuskal-Wallis H Test was used. The test results are included in the following table.

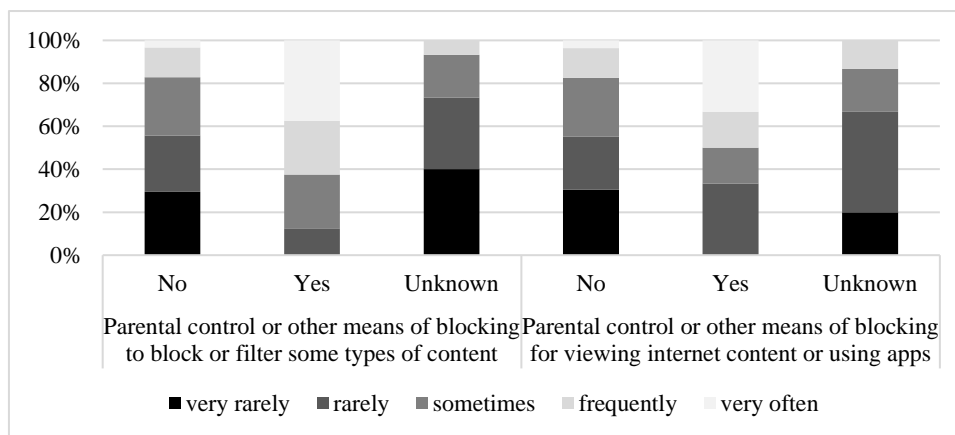
Table 5: The results of the effect of parental control and behaviour on children's social media use

Dependent variable	Results of Kurskal-Wallis H Test	Variables						
		Rules about using the internet	Parental controls or other means of blocking the type of content	Parental controls for monitoring internet content or apps	Explains how to use the internet safely	Helps when they are unable to do something or find something	Explains why some content on the internet is good or bad	Helps when children are worried about something on the internet
Thinking about SM and their use	Chi-Square	1.184	2.965	0.587	5.523	0.047	0.765	0.876
	Df	1	2	1	4	1	4	4
	Sig.	0.277	0.227	0.444	0.238	0.829	0.943	0.928
The urge to use SM more and more	Chi-Square	2.169	12.125	4.100	5.673	4.931	4.272	2.740
	Df	1	2	1	4	1	4	4
	Sig.	0.141	0.002	0.043	0.225	0.026	0.370	0.602
Using SM to forget personal problems	Chi-Square	0.008	1.439	7.951	2.978	0.002	1.190	2.498
	Df	1	2	1	4	1	4	4
	Sig.	0.930	0.487	0.005	0.561	0.968	0.880	0.645
Attempt to restrict the use of SM without success	Chi-Square	0.012	0.559	6.505	12.201	0.159	9.149	1.485
	Df	1	2	1	4	1	4	4
	Sig.	0.912	0.756	0.011	0.016	0.690	0.057	0.829
Being restless or troublesome when banned from using SM	Chi-Square	1.982	1.720	5.060	5.342	0.082	3.951	2.065
	Df	1	2	1	4	1	4	4
	Sig.	0.159	0.423	0.024	0.254	0.775	0.413	0.724
Using SM so much that there was a negative impact on studying	Chi-Square	0.711	5.049	4.384	2.187	0.528	6.705	1.997
	Df	1	2	1	4	1	4	4
	Sig.	0.399	0.080	0.036	0.701	0.468	0.152	0.736

Source: own research

The compulsion to use social media is increasingly linked to parental controls or other means of blocking the type of content and parental control for monitoring internet content or apps. Parental control for monitoring internet content or apps has an impact on the use of social media for forgetting personal problems, attempting to restrict social media use without success, restlessness or trouble in banning social media use and using social media so much that there is a negative impact on the stage. Attempting to limit social media use without success is also influenced by whether parents explain how to use the internet safely.

Interestingly, in the frequency analysis (Fig. 1), it was found that when there is parental control or other means of blocking by content type, or parental control to monitoring internet content or apps, the urge to use SM is much more frequent than when respondents are not so monitored. In addition, it was found that if the respondent is unaware of whether any parental controls or blocking features are used by their parents, the tendency for frequent compulsion to use social media is the same as when these controls are not used. Thus, there is not as frequent a compulsion to use SM more often.

Figure 1: The association between the urge to use SM more often and parental control

Source: own illustration

Other results in the study field (Table 6) show that parental controls for monitoring Internet content or apps have a negative impact on respondents' social media use. The use of this parental control leads to more frequent use of social media to forget personal problems. When parents use this type of control, there are up to 54% more respondents using social media to forget personal problems very frequently than in the group of respondents where these controls were not used. In the case of the non-use of this parental control track, unsuccessful attempts to limit SM use do not occur as frequently. Almost 70% of respondents without parental controls had the experience of having tried unsuccessfully to limit SM to only rarely or very rarely. Whereas only 17% of respondents who are controlled have succeeded in doing so. The use of the mentioned type of parental control also has an impact on anxiety or difficulties if SM is banned. When often and very often only 7% of the respondents from the group without parental control experience this anxiety. Conversely, a substantial 33% of survey participants subjected to parental control reported experiencing heightened levels of anxiety on a frequent basis. It is much more common for respondents under parental control to use social networking sites so much that it impacts their studies.

Table 6: The association between identified dependent use of SM and parental control or other means of blocking for viewing internet content or using apps

Use of SM	Frequency of specified behaviour	Parental control or other means of blocking for viewing internet content or using apps		
		No	Yes	Unknown
SM to forget personal problems	very rarely	32,52%	0,00%	33,33%
	rarely	19,11%	16,67%	13,33%
	sometimes	20,73%	0,00%	26,67%
	frequently	15,04%	16,67%	13,33%
	very often	12,60%	66,67%	13,33%
Attempt to restrict the use of SM without success	very rarely	52,03%	16,67%	33,33%
	rarely	17,89%	0,00%	20,00%
	sometimes	16,26%	33,33%	33,33%
	frequently	9,76%	16,67%	6,67%
	very often	4,07%	33,33%	6,67%
Being restless or troublesome when banned from using SM	very rarely	63,01%	16,67%	46,67%
	rarely	18,70%	50,00%	33,33%
	sometimes	11,79%	0,00%	20,00%
	frequently	4,47%	33,33%	0,00%
	very often	2,03%	0,00%	0,00%
Using SM so much that there was a negative impact on studying	very rarely	47,56%	16,67%	53,33%
	rarely	19,92%	16,67%	26,67%
	sometimes	18,29%	16,67%	13,33%
	frequently	7,72%	16,67%	6,67%
	very often	6,50%	33,33%	0,00%

Source: own research

For outcomes related to parental behaviour, it was found (Table 7) that when parents frequently explain to their children how to use the internet safely, there is very little failure in trying to limit social media use.

Table 7: Association between failed efforts to reduce SM and the identified independent variable in the parental behaviour section

Attempt to limit SM without success	Parent explaining how to use the internet safely				
	never	almost never	sometimes	often	very often
very rarely	52,04%	43,66%	55,74%	68,00%	8,33%
rarely	14,29%	22,54%	16,39%	12,00%	33,33%
sometimes	16,33%	16,90%	14,75%	20,00%	41,67%
frequently	11,22%	9,86%	13,11%	0,00%	0,00%
very often	6,12%	7,04%	0,00%	0,00%	16,67%

Source: own research

These findings suggest that parental behaviour has a greater impact on the positive direction of children's social media use than prohibitions in the form of parental control.

4 Discussion

This study focused on the importance of the role of parents in cyberbullying. The study also included an examination of the influence of parents on social media use and the feelings that arise when using social media. The research results show that parental control and behaviour are factors that have a positive effect on mitigating cyberbullying perpetration. Interestingly, the results reveal a difference between parents' use of parental control and behaviour on subsequent social media use and feelings about their children's social media use. Altogether, what particularly stands out is parental behaviour in the form of explaining how to use the Internet safely. This has the most positive impact on children's social media use behaviour of all the variables examined.

Regarding parental monitoring, some studies (Baldry et al. 2015) have highlighted a negative association with cyberbullying, and other studies (Álvarez-García et al. 2015, Sasson & Mesch 2017) have found a positive association. However, Shapka & Law (2013) have also fairly consistently found a negative relation between the associated dimension of children's disclosure and cyberbullying. The broad conceptualization of parental monitoring could explain these inconsistent results. Stattin & Kerr (2000) alleged parental monitoring was commonly meant as an umbrella term referring to the parental solicitation, control, and knowledge that are accompanied by adolescents' disclosure. Potentially, these particular dimensions of parental monitoring can be interpreted in terms of how different they are related to cyberbullying behaviour, with the more collaborative aspects (e.g., parental knowledge and adolescent disclosure combined) more likely to be negatively associated with cyberbullying.

Consistent with these considerations, Bartolo et al. (2019) suggest their point of view on parental monitoring activities. These may be also perceived in the context of less collaborative versus more collaborative strategies. Concretely, solicitation and parental control (active parent requests) can be perceived as fewer collaborative strategies, whereas the interplay between adolescents' disclosure and parental knowledge can be perceived as more collaborative ones. The results of our study confirm the findings of Wright (2018) suggesting different associations of parental mediation strategies for social media with cyberbullying victimization via these media. The author states restrictive mediation is assessed as a risk factor for cyberbullying victimization via social media, while on the other hand, co-viewing or instructive mediation for social media protects against these experiences. According to Livingstone et al. (2011),

co-viewing or instructive mediation strategies could serve the same function as social support and allow adolescents to share their experiences of cyberbullying with their parents.

Wright (2015) indicates that interactions between adolescents and their parents may potentially lead parents to communicate effective strategies for eliminating or reducing adolescents' exposure to risk through social media. Thanks to this communication with parents, adolescents could seek support from them concerning cyberbullying exposure or potential exposure via social media (Nikken & Haan 2015, Talves & Kalmus 2015). Offrey & Rinaldi (2017) confirm open communication is fundamental for eliminating risks related to cyberbullying or traditional bullying among middle school students. Buelga, Martínez-Ferrer & Cava (2017) specified that low open communication of adolescents with their mothers and evasive communication with their fathers cause adolescents to become cyberbully victimized. Especially, according to our results, explaining how to use the Internet safely should be the main content of communications between adolescents and their parents for the purpose to avoid cyberbullying.

Limitation

As with most survey designs, responses may have been affected by non-careless answers. The topic of cyberbullying was certainly a very sensitive one for the respondents. Therefore, there may have just been non-careless responses where some respondents may have been worried about giving truthful answers. Despite the fact that respondents were advised at the beginning of the research that the research would be anonymous and that their responses within the questionnaire could not be linked back to a specific respondent, some respondents may have still been suspicious.

Future Directions

An important extension of this work in the future would be to examine the effectiveness of parent training as a means of reducing the perpetration of cyberbullying. Attention could focus on specific methods within intervention and prevention programs that work to reduce bystander bullying/cyberbullying. This could in turn support the reduction of inappropriate behaviour in children that is associated with cyberbullying. Thus, given the results of this study, encouraging appropriate (methodologically) behaviours in parents could lead to a reduction in cyberbullying by their children. It would be useful to examine the resulting effect on behaviour, both in the group of children who engage in this behaviour and in the group of children who are bullied. Thus, for future research, it would be useful to include methods in parent education that will help reduce cyberbullying in bullying groups. At the same time, for the second group, the bullied, use methods that lead to education on how to behave when supporting the bullied. To ensure objective results, it would be useful to also involve two groups without parental influence in the study. These two groups (bullies and bullied) would be targeted for direct intervention. It would be useful to investigate for which personality type (e.g. in terms of introverted and extroverted) a particular type of help (direct/indirect via parents) is more appropriate. The possibility of a complex interaction between the two variables should also be considered.

Conclusion

The results reported here confirm that open communication between parents and adolescents is considered as one of the most important issues to prevent cyberbullying. The parents should be rather supportive than restrictive, but mainly consistent in their behaviour and announcements. The present findings might help to solve the problem of arising a number of cyberbullying cases. In this online era is more than ever crucial to educate adolescents about the threats of the

Internet. These results emphasize the importance of open communication which could be a good base for that.

The findings of the current study can be beneficial in practice as some guidelines for designing educational programs focused on eliminating participation in cyberbullying of adolescents. These programs should focus on engaging different actors at different levels by providing opportunities for adolescents, their parents, and schools to work together in a more collaborative and ethical environment. In particular, actions should promote improvements in adolescents' moral development, parents' relational and communication skills, and a positive school environment, including mutual trust, support, and active involvement of students, teachers, and school staff. These measures should also consider gender and age differences, for example by strengthening activities that promote a positive school climate for older adolescents. This could lead to better informativeness of society about cyberbullying and eventually, it could cause a decreasing tendency of this dangerous phenomenon.

Certainly, based on the trends in parenting and the study's findings, in the following text are some additional ways parents can adapt their behaviour to address cyberbullying and promote healthy online behaviour among their children. The first way is to stay informed. Parents should actively educate themselves about the digital world, including social media platforms, apps, and online gaming communities. Understanding the platforms and technologies their children use enables more informed conversations and guidance. Another way can be to use positive behaviour patterns on the internet. Parents should set an example and show that they behave considerately and responsibly online. Children often imitate their parents, so good online etiquette can have a significant impact. Teaching critical thinking is also an important element. Help children develop critical thinking skills so they can distinguish between reliable and unreliable information on the Internet. Encourage them to question sources and think critically about the content they encounter. Promote digital literacy and the development of digital skills such as media literacy, online safety and privacy awareness. Encourage children to think critically about the content they share and consume. The final recommendation might be to create a balanced lifestyle online and offline. Encourage children to maintain a balance between their online and offline lives. Encourage physical activity, personal social interactions and hobbies outside the digital sphere. By incorporating these strategies into their parenting approach, parents can help create a safer and more positive online environment for their children while effectively addressing the challenges posed by cyberbullying.

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