MORAL DISENGAGEMENT AND PARENTAL MONITORING AS PREDICTORS OF CYBERBULLYING AMONG FIRST YEAR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Abstract: The purpose of this study was to investigate the combined effects of two variables, namely, moral disengagement, parental monitoring on one outcome measure, namely, cyberbullying. Moreover, it aimed to investigate the relative contribution of moral disengagement, parental monitoring to cyberbullying among first year secondary school students in Egypt. Additionally, the aim was to find out if there were correlations between and among moral disengagement, parental monitoring and cyberbullying among first year secondary school students. A total of 140 (80 males, and 60 females) students participated in this study. They ranged in age from 15 to 16 years (M = 15.90, SD =1.03). Quantitative survey research was employed. The Cyberbullying-specific Moral Disengagement Questionnaire (CBMDQ-15) (DAY and LAZURAS (2016), Parental Monitoring Scale (Kerr, Stattin and Burk, 2010) and Revised Cyber Bullying Inventory (RCBI, Erdur-Baker and Kavsut 2007) were employed for data collection. Findings indicated that moral disengagement correlated negatively with parental monitoring. On the other hand, moral disengagement was found to be positively correlated with cyberbullying. As predicted, moral disengagement related positively and significantly to students' cyberbullying. The two independent variables (moral disengagement, parental monitoring), as presented in table 2, when put together yielded a coefficient of multiple regression (R) of 0.631 and a multiple correlation square of 0. 626. This shows that 62.6% of the total variance in cyberbullying of those who participated in the study is accounted for by the combination of moral disengagement, parental monitoring.

Keywords: moral disengagement, parental monitoring, cyberbullying, pre-adolescents

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INTRODUCTION

Electronic bullying (Cyberbullying) research began since the 2000s. This phenomenon is considered as an indirect form of traditional bullying (face to face aggression). Olweus (2012), the leading person in this field, defined Cyberbullying as "intentional, aggressive act carried out against a victim by one or more perpetrators repeatedly and over time, causing an imbalance of power". It can be done via the internet or other digital communication devices. The bulls hide their identity, and this may goes to be extended to cause harm and damage to a wide range of audiences. Both the bulls and the victims find it difficult to disconnect from the cyber environment, and as such, this can increase the vulnerability of the victims (Smith, 2015).

Cyberbullying creates a climate that allows for moral disengagement. In cyberbullying the bulls can send or post harmful written texts, messages and pictures to the victims. However, they do not actually see their victims' reactions towards these harmful written texts, messages and pictures. So the bully is safe from harm. However, the consequences of cyberbullying for victims can be very serious, and include insomnia, depression, panic attacks and even suicide, that is to say they are not able to protect or defend themselves (Bauman, Toomey and Walker 2013). One can assume that the digital world where we live may be asocial context that promotes moral disengagement. It was documented that people who were aggressive conducted behaviours contrary to their ethical and moral standards so that these behaviours were to be acceptable, that is to say they were morally disengage (Diana and Sheri 2018).

Among the potential protective factors from cyberbullying is social protection through parents or friends. Davidson and Demaray (2007) found that parental support moderated the relationship between victimization and internalizing distress from bullying in female adolescents.
The aim of the current study was to investigate the predictive role of moral disengagement and parental monitoring on cyberbullying among first Year secondary school students in Egypt.

MORAL DISENGAGEMENT AND CYBERBULLYING

Moral Disengagement is a common feature of cyberbullying of those who practise it, based on the desensitization of prosocial values and emotional empathy towards another person (Kyriacou and Zuin 2016). It has been posited that moral disengagement is a positive predictor of cyberbullying (Pornari and Wood 2010). Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, and Pastorelli (1996) put forward the theory of Moral Disengagement that was based on a set of eight cognitive mechanisms that allow individuals to endorse behaviours conflicting with their set of moral values without feeling guilty. The morally disengaged persons dehumanize their victims, and this allows them to endorse and justify their immoral behaviours by viewing the recipient of the behaviour as a subhuman creature (McNulty 2014).

It is possible for individuals to engage in behaviours that are not in accordance with their moral standards without feeling guilty (Bandura 2002). Moral standards and moral affect are important to understand individual differences in engagement in both traditional and cyberbullying (Sonja and Eveline 2012). Probably, the bully does not directly see the emotional impact of his/her actions on the victim. The absence of direct contact gives the chance to the bully to act immorally without feeling guilty (Slonje and Smith, 2008). Pornari and Wood (2010), in their study, found that moral disengagement correlated with cyber aggression. Those who were involved in bullying produced justifications that were morally disengaged and less morally responsible (Sonja and Eveline 2012). Higher moral disengagement scores were found in McNulty's study (2014) amongst cyberbullies.

On the other hand, moral disengagement is used by cyberbullying victims as well, in their search for convincing explanations to justify they're not confronting the aggressions they suffer and minimize their moral self-sanctioning. In this regard, they; cyberbullying victims; can disengage themselves morally so as to justify their inaction and even the aggressions they have suffered (Luo and Bussey 2019).

PARENTAL MONITORING AND CYBERBULLYING

Regression analyses revealed that family climate predict cyber-victimization in adolescence. In a study that addresses the following question "Does parental monitoring moderate the relationship between bullying and adolescent non-suicidal self-injury and suicidal behaviour Jantzer, Haffner, Parzer, Resch, Kaess (2015) found that parental monitoring had a significant protective effect on suicidal behaviour in victims of occasional bullying. However, parental monitoring did not show any protective effect in victims of repetitive bullying. Accordino and Accordino (2011) reported that students who had close relationship with their parents were less likely to be exposed to cyberbullying.

Parental monitoring has been defined as "a set of parenting behaviours that involves attention to and tracking of youth whereabouts, activities, and friendships" (Elsaessera, Russellb, McCauley Ohannessianc, Patton 2017, 63). A growing body of evidence indicates that parents try hard to control their children's activity online, including their potential involvement in cyberbullying (Elsaessera et al. 2017). One can assume that diminished parental monitoring may be a risk factor for exposing their children to be victims of cyberbullying, however, it can be hypothesized that adequate parental monitoring may protect these children to be victims of cyberbullying because parents may identify the bullying, provide emotional support to their children, and seek professional help for their victimized children (Jantzer et al. 2015). Wienke Totura et al. (2009) found that the level of adult monitoring negatively correlated with bullying behaviours. Shapka and Law (2013) found that parental monitoring of their children's behaviour and strategies to regulate children's internet use (i.e., internet restriction) may help to reduce cyberbullying. Caitlin et al. (2017) suggest that there are weak correlations between control strategies used by parents, such as restricting the Internet, and their children's involvement in cyberbullying victimization and perpetration. In contrast, strategies that are more collaborative with in nature (e.g., evaluative mediation and co-use) are more closely connected to cyberbullying victimization and perpetration.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Advances in cyberbullying, as a result of development and proliferation of technology is a threat to individual and social lives of adolescents. Rosen (2007) pointed out many parents were "unsure what their children were doing online, but didn't know how to approach the subject with their teens" (p. 80). McQuade, Colt, and Meyer (2009) found that 93 percent of parents stated they established Internet rules for their child's; however, 37 percent of children reported being given no rules from their parents on the Internet activity. To the best of my knowledge, there are less data concerning protective factors, namely moral disengagement and parental monitoring as predictors of cyberbullying among first year secondary school students in Egypt.

This study poses the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: There are significant correlations between and among moral disengagement, parental monitoring and cyberbullying.

Hypothesis 2: There are combined effects of moral disengagement, parental monitoring on cyberbullying.

Hypothesis 3: There are relative contribution of moral disengagement, parental monitoring to cyberbullying.

METHOD

DESIGN

For the purpose of this study, quantitative survey research was employed. The independent variables are moral disengagement, parental monitoring, cyberbullying is the dependent variable.

PARTICIPANTS

For the purpose of this study, convenient sampling method was used to recruit the participants. The researcher selected five secondary schools from Sadat City, Menoufia, namely El Khattabah Experimental Secondary Language School, El Khattabah Secondary School, El Sadat Secondary School for Girls, Al - Farouk Omar Bin Al - Khattab Secondary School for Boys and Omar Bin

Abdul Aziz Secondary School. After obtaining the informed consent from the school and all students involved, a total of 140(80 males, and 60 females) students participated in this study. They ranged in age from 15 to 16 years ($M = 15.90$, $SD =1.03$). The researcher confirmed that any information students would provide would be top secret and confidential. It would not be revealed to anyone.

INSTRUMENTS

The Cyberbullying-specific Moral Disengagement Questionnaire (CBMDQ-15) (DAY and LAZURAS (2016). The purpose of this questionnaire was to assess moral disengagement in the context of cyberbullying. It is a 15 items with a 5-point Likert scale from 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree. The scale takes only 10 minutes to complete. The English version of the scale was translated into Arabic by the researcher. Total scores typically range from 15 – 75. The reliability of the scale was calculated using internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's α = .91) and split-half reliability (Spearman-Brown = .89). The authors used Construct validity. The CBMDQ-15 is significantly correlated in the expected direction with attitudes (r = .19, $p < 0.05$), subjective norms (r = .18, $p < 0.05$), anticipated regret (r = .30, $p <$ 0.001), and intentions to engage in cyberbullying (r = .33, $p < 0.001$). In this study, the test-retest reliability value was 0.81. For convergent validity of The Cyberbullying-specific Moral Disengagement Questionnaire (CBMDQ-15), correlation with the Cyber Bullying Scale (Ashour 2016) was significant (r= 0.53, p< .01).

Parental Monitoring Scale (Kerr, Stattin and Burk 2010). The purpose of this scale was to assess the extent to which the student believed his /her parents knew about his/her whereabouts and activities. It is a 9 items with a 5-point Likert scale from (1) never to (5) always. The English version of the scale was translated into Arabic by the researcher. Total scores typically range from 9 – 45. Students reported on how often their parent(s) know, for example: Do your parents know what you do during your free time? CFA revealed a single factor solution, with loadings ranging from 0.59 to 0.75, and a rho of 0.89 (Khurana, Bleakley, Jordan and Romer 2015). In this study, the test-retest reliability value was 0.77. For convergent

validity of Parental Monitoring Scale, correlation with Al Sersi and Abdul Maksoud 's Social Support Scale(2001) was significant [r=0.59, p <0.0l).

Revised Cyber Bullying Inventory (RCBI, Erdur-Baker and Kavsut, 2007). It is a 28 items scale with a 4-point Likert scale from 0 = Never, 3 = More than three times. Two subscales: first if they have performed the fourteen listed behaviours (Bully scale), and second, if others have used behaviours against them (Victim scale) during the previous twelve months. In this study, the researcher used the Bully scale (14 items). The English version of the scale was translated into Arabic by the researcher. Total scores typically range from 14 – 56. The reliability of the scale was calculated using internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's α = .87) and split-half reliability (Spearman-Brown = .83). For convergent validity of Revised Cyber Bullying Inventory (RCBI), correlation with the Cyber Bullying Scale (Ashour 2016) was significant (r= 0.57, p< .01).

PROCEDURES

Prior to administering the scales, students' parents were informed and given the option of accepting or refusing to allow their children's participation in the study. Students were also informed about purpose of the study. The researcher instructed them to honestly complete the scales and not to look at others' documents while answering the scales questions and items. They were told not to identify themselves in any way on the scale paper to ensure honesty and sincerity. Their participation in the study was voluntarily and their responses were for research purposes only. Each questionnaire took about 10-15 minutes to complete. All data were entered in an SPSS file.

DATA ANALYSIS

To test the hypotheses of the study, Pearson correlation and moderated hierarchical multiple regression analyses were conducted.

RESULTS

DESCRIPTIVE DATA AND INTER-CORRELATIONS

Table 1. shows the means, descriptive statistics, inter-correlations, and internal consistency coefficients of moral disengagement, parental

monitoring and cyberbullying. Moral disengagement correlates negatively with parental monitoring ($r = -0.33$). On the other hand, moral disengagement was found to be positively correlated with cyberbullying ($r = 0.39$).

Table 1. Descriptive statistics and inter-correlations of emotional intelligence, cyberbullying and Perceived Family Support

Variables	1	2	3
moral disengagement	1.00		
parental monitoring	- .33**	1.00	
cyberbullying	.39**	-.31**	1.00
Mean	46.70	19.74	29.02
Standard deviation	8.60	6.07	7.75
** P <.01			

MORAL DISENGAGEMENT, PARENTAL MONITORING AS PREDICTORS OF CYBERBULLYING

The results presented in *Table 2*. show that the two independent variables (moral disengagement, parental monitoring) when put together yielded a coefficient of multiple regression (R) of 0.631 and a multiple correlation square of 0. 626. This shows that 62.6% of the total variance in cyberbullying of those who participated in the study is accounted for by the combination of moral disengagement, parental monitoring.

Table 2. The regression results of the Predictor Variables (moral disengagement, parental monitoring) and the Outcome Measure (cyberbullying).

Model		R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
						R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
n	1	.793a	0.546	.543	3.73833	0.546	154.0285	1	128	.000
0	2	.795b	0.631	.626	3.38171	0.085	29.4204	1	127	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), MD

b. Predictors: (Constant), MD, PM

c. Dependent Variable: CB

Table 3. Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis between the Predictor Variables (moral disengagement, parental monitoring) and the Outcome Measure (cyberbullying). ANOVA[c]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2152.573	1	2152.573	154.029	.000[a]
	Residual	1788.819	128	13.975		
	Total	3941.392	129			
2	Regression	2489.024	2	1244.512	108.824	.000[b]
	Residual	1452.368	127	11.436		
	Total	3941.392	129			

a. Predictors: (Constant), MD

b. Predictors: (Constant), MD, PM

c. Dependent Variable: CB

As for results displayed in *Table 4*, each of the two independent variables made significant individual contributions to the prediction of cyberbullying. The results indicated that the following beta weights which represented the relative contribution of the independent variables to the prediction were observed. Moral disengagement (b = 0. 346, t = 4.500; P < 0.01) and parental monitoring (b = 0. 359, t = 5.424, P < 0.01). Although the two variables made significant relative contribution to the prediction of cyberbullying, parental monitoring is a more potent predictor.

Table 4. Relative Contribution of the Independent Variables to the Prediction of cyberbullying Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	10.848	1.878		5.778	.000	7.133	14.563
	MD	.668	.054	.739	12.411	.000	.561	.774
2	(Constant)	9.973	1.706		5.846	.000	6.597	13.349
	MD	.346	.077	.382	4.500	.000	.194	.497
	PM	.359	.066	.461	5.424	.000	.228	.490

a. Dependent Variable: CB

Regression Standardized Residual, Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual, and Regression Standardized Predictive Value were shown in Figs. 1-3. Here is a histogram of the residuals with a normal curve superimposed. The residuals look close to normal. Figure 2 checked for normality of residuals with a normal P-P plot.

The plot showed that the points generally followed the normal (diagonal) line with no strong deviations. This indicated that the residuals were normally distributed.

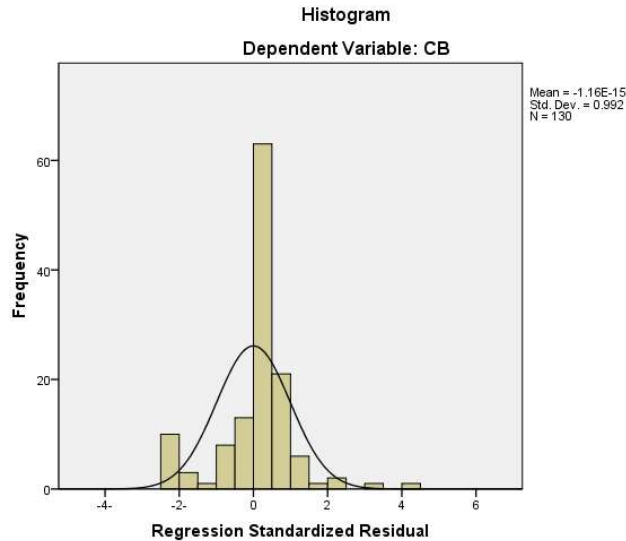Figure 1. Regression Standardized Residual

Figure 2. Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual
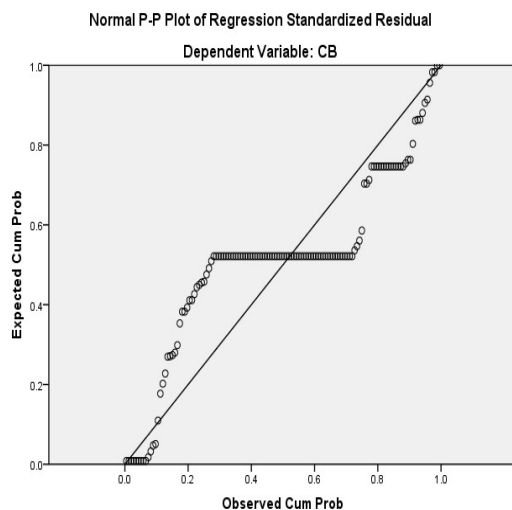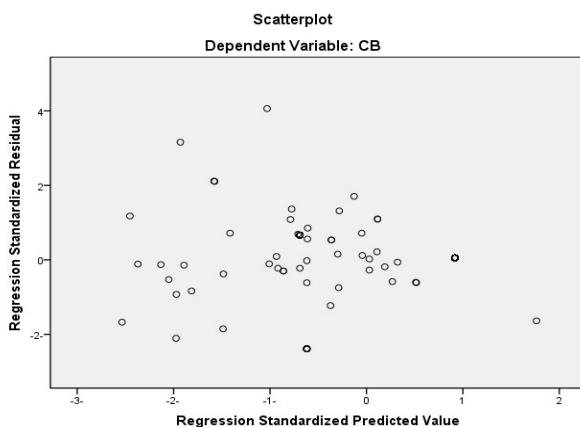

Figure 3. Scatterplot

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate the combined effects of two variables, namely, moral disengagement, parental monitoring on one outcome measure, namely, cyberbullying. Moreover, it aimed to investigate the relative contribution of moral disengagement, parental monitoring to cyberbullying among first year secondary school students in Egypt. Additionally, the aim was to find out if there were correlations between and among moral disengagement, parental monitoring and cyberbullying among first year secondary school students. In this regard, the findings extend our knowledge on the association between moral disengagement, parental monitoring and cyberbullying among first year secondary school students in Egypt.

Findings from *Table 1.* indicated that moral disengagement correlated negatively with parental monitoring. On the other hand, moral disengagement was found to be positively correlated with cyberbullying. As predicted, moral disengagement related positively and significantly to students' cyberbullying. This goes in the same line with Pornari and Wood (2010) who reported a relationship between moral disengagement and cyberbullying. It is reported that students involved in cyberbullying have lower levels of morality (Perren and Gutzwiller-Helfenfinger 2012).Severe patterns of maladjustment were reported among youth involved with cyberbullying (Gradinger, Strohmeir, and Spiel 2009).

On the other hand, moral disengagement correlated negatively with parental monitoring. Parental monitoring may also serve to reduce the risk for becoming online victim. This goes in the same line with Korchmaros et al. (2014) who reported that lack of parental monitoring might be a significant risk factor for children to be perpetrated and victimized online. Children's self-disclosure and parental solicitation might be protective factors against online perpetration and victimization. Parents' awareness of their children's whereabouts and activities are more likely to be involved in their children's lives and thus may be protective factors against online harassment by preventing their children from dealing or affiliation with harmful peers (Atika et al. 2015).

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The two independent variables (moral disengagement, parental monitoring), as presented in *Table 2.,* when put together yielded a coefficient of multiple regression (R) of 0.631 and a multiple correlation square of 0. 626. This shows that 62.6% of the total variance in cyberbullying of those who participated in the study is accounted for by the combination of moral disengagement, parental monitoring.

APPLICATION AND IMPLICATIONS

The results of this study have corroborated with previous research and confirmed correlations between and among moral disengagement, parental monitoring and cyberbullying among first year secondary school students. These finding have practical implications for interventions and preventions of cyberbullying among first year secondary school students. Furthermore, awareness of the negative impact of cyberbullying upon students as cyberbullying victims should be promoted among first year secondary school students.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the aim of this study was to investigate the predictive role of moral disengagement and parental monitoring on cyberbullying among first year secondary school students in Egypt. Moreover, it aimed to investigate the combined effects of two variables, namely, moral disengagement, parental monitoring on one outcome measure, namely, cyberbullying. Findings from this study indicated that there were correlations between and among moral disengagement, parental monitoring and cyberbullying. The two independent variables made significant individual contributions to the prediction of cyberbullying. Parental monitoring was a more potent predictor. It is hoped that future research will continue to advance in this area so that we can gain a more comprehensive understanding into how to combat cyberbullying with implementing effective intervention and prevention strategies. The study findings expand our knowledge of moral disengagement, parental monitoring and cyberbullying among first year secondary school students in Egypt.

LIMITATIONS

This study has some limitations. First, this study did not take age into account. The age of students may have had some sort of influence on the results. Students at the end of adolescence might have moral values, hence they are not morally disengaged, compared to those at the beginning and middle of adolescence. That is to say their moral development is settled, which will have great impact on their moral disengagement. Second, as cross-sectional study, there has to be caution in making any generalization of the results. Nevertheless, results provide supporting evidence for developing interventions to help combat cyberbullying through parental monitoring. Third, convenient sampling method was used to recruit the participants. Therefore, the findings of the study have limited generalizability in other regions and age groups.

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