Research Proposal

Effects of Presentation Styles and Personality Traits on Cyberbullying

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Capital University

Author Note

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Description of the Proposed Project

Scholarly Context

Cyberbullying has become increasingly prevalent in today's society as digital culture is incorporated into everyday life, leading to prolonged negative effects on victims' mental health and academic success (Supawadee, 2019). Research has been conducted to find predictors of cyberbullying and ways to detect it, with the hope of preventing cyberbullying. Prior studies have investigated the relationship between personality traits (using the five-factor model) and the roles of victim, bully, and bystander in online environments. While personalities can vary across these roles, it seems likely that interactions in trait profiles can facilitate the dynamics of bullying behavior.

Research suggests that social networking encourages impression management, controlling one's projected image based on the need to appear desirable to the audience (Lang & Barton, 2015). Presentation styles, a component of impression management, reflect methods of portraying one's self-image to others. Schütz (1998) classifies presentation into four styles: assertive, offensive, protective, and defensive. Each style is characterized with identifiable behaviors that define how a user acts online. While personality traits may be expressed through presentation styles, they are not the same thing; future research is needed to more thoroughly explore the interplay between personality, presentation style, and bullying dynamics.

Project Question, Method, and Expected Outcomes

The goal of this project is to bridge this gap in the research and investigate how presentation styles and personality traits interrelate with one another through the combined actions of bully, victim, and bystander. This project could provide crucial insight into cyberbullying that may assist in the identification of at-risk individuals and aid intervention plans in minimizing cyberbullying.

This project will consist of two phases. In Phase One, a survey will be administered to estimate presentation styles and personality trait interactions in the target population (young, college-aged adults), as well as demographics information. In Phase Two, results of the survey data will be

used to inform an agent-based model of cyberbullying. This model, which will simulate the interactions of individual users in a social network, will be parameterized to behave according to the presentation and personality attributes of the survey sample. Comparisons will be made between this model and variations on this parameterization to better understand the dynamics of cyberbullying as they relate to these factors. For instance, if a particular cross-section of society is at greater risk for cyberbullying or bystander non-intervention, what collection of traits and presentations summarize that demographic? The agent-based model will allow for quick and ethical experiments on non-human agents to test for ways to mitigate negative outcomes in these populations.

Results of this project may show a correlation between personality traits and presentation styles, as well as systematic relationships between traits, styles, and the roles of bully, victim, and bystander. Presentations that actively try to look good by relaying positive information or putting others down may be associated with the bully. Additionally, more passive presentations focused on not looking bad by avoiding negative impressions may be associated with the victim and bystander. Model simulations will likely reveal highly interdependent interactions between these factors.

Student and Mentor Roles/ Student Experience

The student's roles will be to conduct a literature review of cyberbullying, presentation styles, and personality research, as well as create and disseminate the survey. The student will also perform statistical analysis of the survey data. In addition to overseeing and advising the student, ▇▇▇▇▇▇ will develop the core of the agent-based model software, as he has experience making such models. ▇▇▇▇▇▇ and the student will then parameterize several model variations to investigate the dynamics of these processes.

The student has taken two statistics classes, research methods, and experimental psychology (where she is conducting research on cyberpsychology to be presented at the Symposium on Undergraduate Research). The student has also conducted research for multiple classes and is familiar with using Qualtrics and Capital's SONA system to administer surveys.

Supporting Materials

Dissemination Plan

In addition to the presentations with the Capital community at the end of the summer and the Symposium on Undergraduate Scholarship during the spring of 2020, other possible presentations at scholarly meetings could include the National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR), the APA Convention, and the Midwestern Psychological Association (MPA) convention with Psi Chi. If results of the project are significant and provide imperative insight into cyberbullying, a possible area of publication is in the journal, *Computers in Human Behavior*.

Timeline

Week 1	Literature Review	Write and Disseminate Information about Survey
Week 2	Develop Dissemination Plan for Survey	
Week 3	Open Survey	Work with Dr. ▉▉▉ on Agent-Based Modeling Literature Review
Week 4	Write Literature Review and Methods Section of Research Paper	
Week 5	Close Survey	
Week 6	Statistical Analysis of Survey Data	Write Drafts of Research Paper
Week 7	Work with Dr. Van Horn on Agent-Based Modeling	
Week 8		Revise Research Paper
Week 9		
Week 10	Work on Research Poster	Prepare for Presentation

Travel/Trips

With the purpose of collecting as large a sample as possible, there will be trips to college campuses around Columbus (OSU, Columbus State, Otterbein, Denison, etc.) and local areas (libraries, coffee shops, community centers, etc.). to advertise the survey. Information regarding permission to recruit participants in these locations will be assessed.

IRB or IACUC Proposal.

As this project will involve human participants, IRB approval will be needed prior to beginning the project.

References

Lang, Caroline and Barton, Hannah (2015). Just untag it: Exploring the management of undersirable Facebook photos. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 43, 147-155.

Schutz, Astrid (1998). Assertive, offensive, protective, and defensive styles of self-presentation: A taxonomy. *The Journal of psychology*, 132(6), 611-628.

Supawadee Charoenwanit. (2019). The relationship of cyber-bullying and academic achievement, general health, and depression in adolescents in Thailand. *Walailak Journal of Science & Technology*, 16(4), 231–241. Retrieved from http://capital.ohionet.org/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=133759642&site=eds-live