

Hearing the Victims' Voices: The Impact of Enhancing Empathic Skills Training on Reducing Cyberbullying among Adolescents

Ashraf Atta MS Salem^{1*}, Mosaad Abu Al Diyar²

Department of Psycholinguistics, College of Management Sciences, Alexandria, Egypt
Department of Psychology, Suez University, Ismailia, Egypt

Abstract

The current study investigates the impact of developing empathy skills on reducing cyberbullying in a sample of adolescents using the single experimental group design. Participants were 50 adolescents in the intermediate stage (average age $15.1 \pm SD 1.5$ years). The measures used include the empathy scale and cyberbullying scale. The quasi-experimental research design has been adopted to achieve the study objectives. Results showed that there were statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group in the pretesting and the post-testing of the empathy scale (the average of the pretesting was higher). It has been shown that there were statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group in the pretesting and the post-testing of cyberbullying scale (average of the posttesting was higher). In addition, it has been revealed that there were no significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group in the post-testing and the follow-up measurement on empathy and cyberbullying scales (after two months of post-testing of study measures).

Keywords:

Empathy • Cyberbullying • Adolescents

Introduction

Adolescence is a vital developmental period during which the person undergoes social, emotional, and physical changes that can lead to poor self-perceptions. It is the period of growth and development that occurs between childhood and maturity. Adolescence is the period between the ages of 10 and 19 years, and it is during this time that children and adolescents develop knowledge and skills, learn to control emotions, and acquire characteristics and talents that will be necessary for them to enjoy their adolescent years and adult duties. The world's adolescent population is estimated to be 1.2 billion. Therefore, adolescence is viewed as a phase of transition from infancy to adulthood. Adolescents may experience problems during this time that affect both their personal growth and their relationships with others. According to the study, external problems that teenagers confront, which may lead to aggressive conduct, are the result of negative parental control and peer pressures. Previous research has found that emotions have a large role in teenage behavior, and that violence in adolescents is a risk factor for the development of internalizing issues such as anxiety and depression. Furthermore, the co-occurrence of behavioral, emotional,

and cognitive issues is causing increasing worry. Adolescents' aggressive behavior is a concerning phenomenon. There could be underlying causes for this violence, such as adaptive or maladaptive emotional states. Aggression is defined as conduct whose primary or exclusive purpose or function is to physically or psychologically harm another person or entity. Aggressiveness can be manifested in two ways: directly (physical aggression) or indirectly (verbal aggression) (spreading rumors or psychological insult) aggressiveness has emotional and motivational elements. When seen emotionally, aggression is the result of imminent fury. Aggression, on the other hand, is a motivating behavior that is intended to harm others. Physical aggressiveness, verbal aggression, rage aggression, and hate aggression are the four types of aggressive behavior. These aggressions are then manifested in the three domains of psychomotor, emotional, and cognitive aggression. Aggression is the well-studied of all child behavior issues, and it may be classified into two types: direct-physical aggression and indirect-relational aggression, based on the mode of harm. Direct aggressiveness damages others' physical well-being and encompasses both physical and verbal hostility, whereas indirect aggression damages others' social ties. Aggressiveness manifests itself in a variety of ways, from social and verbal aggression to physical aggression and more

*Address to Correspondence: Ashraf Atta MSS, Department of Psycholinguistics, College of Management Sciences, Alexandria, Egypt, E-mail: sirashrafams@hotmail.com

Copyright: © 2021 Ashraf Atta MSS. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the creative commons attribution license which permits unrestricted use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

Received: 03 October, 2021; Accepted: 17 October, 2021; Published: 24 October, 2021

serious types of violence. Threats of bodily harm, physical fighting, and violent crimes such as robbery, rape, and homicide are examples of physical aggressiveness. Social aggression, on the other hand, includes many types of non-physical aggressiveness, such as indirect and relational aggression, in which activities are aimed at harming social relationships rather than causing or threatening bodily harm. Grooming, socially excluding or alienating someone, and attempting or threatening to harm someone's social standing within a group are examples of socially aggressive activities. Youth in nonmetropolitan areas are prone to both sorts of aggressiveness. Although many researchers have looked at the causes of violence, few have looked at how these behaviors evolve during adolescence. Physical and social aggressions have diverse associations with risk factors and psychological variables, as well as varied repercussions for perpetrators and victims. For example, social aggression is less likely to be noticed and punished by the authorities or avenged by victims than physical aggression. One of the prominent manifestations of aggression is bullying. Bullying is a widespread occurrence that has a detrimental impact on the lives of hundreds of millions of teenagers each year. Bullying behaviors increase around adolescence, and schools are commonplace for them to occur. Bullying is a social problem characterized by persistent aggressive violent behavior that has a negative influence on victims and subjects, and it occurs at school [1]. This social problem is a form of violent action that is done forcefully with discrete harm, either physically, verbally, or psychologically, through an intermediary or without an intermediary, violates the rights of the offender and victim, and is repeated. Bullying has become a cause of worry all over the world in recent years, with the majority of incidents occurring in children and adolescents, particularly at school age.

Most victims of bullying, according to, would experience negative consequences in the form of hurdles to actualization, mental diseases, and psychosocial problems. This is due to students' perceptions of anguish, anger, or insecurity, as well as a sense of worthlessness, difficulty concentrating, difficulties socializing with others, low self-esteem, and depression, which can hinder academic performance and even lead to suicide. Bullying has several negative consequences, one of which is a drop in academic achievement. According to the findings of the higher the level of bullying experienced by victims of bullying, the poorer their academic accomplishment. The continual and relentless development of information and communication technology, followed by the rapid expansion of personal computers and mobile phone use, has enhanced practically every aspect of human life, but it has also created an opportunity for many sorts of abuse. Traditional bullying has the potential to transcend the bounds of real-life and be transferred into the virtual realm of communication, thanks to increasing ease of access and a growing variety of electronic gadgets utilized by children and young people. Technology, it may be said, has been added to the arsenal of techniques available to bullies to damage others.

Therefore, advances in communication technologies may open up new avenues for cyberbullying among teenagers. By joining groups, publishing images and videos, and commenting on others' posted content, social networking sites unintentionally enable and maintain cyberbullying. Because the majority of middle and high school kids in industrialized nations utilize the Internet and other technologies like mobile phones, there is a high risk of harmful behavior.

Cyberbullying is defined as the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to commit a series of acts (direct cyberbullying) or a single act (indirect cyberbullying) with the intent of harming another person (the victim) who is unable to defend themselves. Combined existing definitions into the following cyberbullying description: any behavior performed through electronic or digital media by individuals or groups that repeatedly communicates hostile or aggressive messages intended to inflict harm or discomfort on others." Due to the victim's 24/7 accessibility, lack of emotional input, a wide potential audience, the archival nature of the internet, and the lack of repercussions due to the perpetrator's undisclosed identity, cyberbullying is conceptually different from typical school bullying. Therefore, cyberbullying is a form of aggressive online behavior, which uses digital means to harass, humiliate, or insult others. It is considered one of the most serious problems that adolescents suffer from as bully students are bullying others through verbal harassment or rumors. Cyberbullying may be induced by the lack of respect for social values, the absence of parental follow-up, poor guidance, or by heavy pressure put on the bully himself/herself. Some adolescents use cyberbullying as a means to abuse one another. Through the internet, the abuse extends on a large scale. As a result, if the victim hasn't a strong personality, self-confidence and if the bullied person isn't in contact with family, bullying will negatively affect his/her mental health. Several correlational research studies have found that cyberbullying is an extension of traditional bullying. That is, cyberbullying is defined as "covert psychological bullying communicated through technological channels". It is also defined as "an aggressive act or behavior that is carried out using electronic means by a group or individual repeatedly and overtime against a victim who cannot easily defend himself or herself" cyberbullying should not be distinguished from regular bullying because the two are highly associated (about 30% of traditional bullies were also cyberbullies and one in three victims of traditional bullying were also victims of cyberbullying there is an overlap between cyber and traditional bullying, but they correctly warn that this overlap is minor and that cyberbullying contains certain distinct characteristics. Several researchers have discussed some fundamental differences between cyber and traditional bullying, which are the result of cyberspace communication characteristics.

Cyberbullying has some distinct qualities, like the possible anonymity of bullies, the accessibility of victims, and a limitless audience. A cyberbully is frequently unknown or virtually anonymous; he or she can reach the victim 24 hours a day, seven days a week, wherever the target may be, and their audience may be anywhere on the planet.

Cyberbullying is commonly characterized as destructive and intentional communication behavior that takes advantage of any type of technology instruments, such as the Internet or mobile phones. It entails the use of information and communication technologies to assist an individual's or a group's planned, repetitive, and hostile acts that are meant to hurt others. Bullying in cyberspace is commonly manifested through the use of common electronic communication tools such as instant messaging, which refers to real-time communication via the Internet with individuals on one's buddy or contact list; electronic mail, or email; texting using mobile telephones and multimedia messages; various social networking sites; chat rooms; and blogs, or weblogs, which are a type of online diary. Even

though cyberbullying is a hot research issue, we still know very little about the dynamics of perpetration and victims. According to emerging study evidence, cyberbullying can have substantial physical and psychological consequences, such as psychosomatic and depressive symptoms, anxiety, self-harming behavior, and substance misuse.

As a result, to deal with cyberbullying and its implications, preventative and intervention programs are required. To build these programs, a specialized study is required to understand the individual and social dynamics that influence cyberbullying participation. The need to address cyberbullying as a part of youths' life is reflected in the prevalence rates as well as in negative outcomes suggested by previous studies. Across some studies from different countries, Modecki, Minchin, Harbaugh, Guerra, and Runions computed mean prevalence rates of 15.2% for cyberbullying victimization and 15.5% for cyberbullying perpetration based on meta-analytic data. Few studies have evaluated the effectiveness of cyberbullying prevention/intervention programs and on the other side, some studies found that training on the positive variables like empathy, self-esteem, and tolerance will lead to significant improvement in getting rid of the negative and psychological problems, especially cyberbullying agrees with in defining cyberbullying as the use of technology to deliberately and habitually abuse someone inappropriately and flagrantly. Adolescents and adults may underestimate the danger of cyberbullying and not realize its predicted effect which may take the forms of abusive texts, e-mails, inappropriately sharing messages or images related to social forums, sharing abusive images, comments, or making fun of others [2]. Therefore, cyberbullying refers to any abusive electronic behavior shown by a student or more against another student or more for an extended period. It is a behavior induced by an imbalance of power, as indicated by the score that the student obtained from the electronic cyberbullying scale in the current study.

Empathic skill for reducing cyberbullying

Empathy is a fundamental human personality trait that is thought to facilitate social interactions and interpersonal communication in at least two ways: first, affective empathy is natural and allows individuals to assimilate and display compassion in response to other people's emotional states; second, cognitive empathy requires more conscious deliberation and allows individuals to understand and display compassion in response to other people's emotional states. This distinction is supported by both self-reported measures and neuroscientific evidence empathy refers to a psychological phenomenon based upon sharing what one feels with others. It has a primitive image, which the physical empathy represented in the actions of one person is being copied by another through spontaneous imitation as we see in laughing and clapping. In addition, it has a psychological aspect of shared awareness, as we observe in two or more persons having the same psychological conditions such as fear, happiness, or anger. Real empathy has two elements: emotional and interactive. The emotional element is to feel what affects others, while, the interaction element is to support and help them to bear what annoys them.

Empathy is the individual's awareness of passions and positive emotions in him and others and the social interaction based upon

acquire through their responses to the scale items made for the current study. Most of the previous studies indicate the importance of developing empathy in reducing cyberbullying. In the study of, meta-analyses reveal a negative association between aggressive behavior and empathy, or the ability to comprehend and share the feelings of others. Based on theoretical considerations, it was suggested that cyberbullies, in particular, may exhibit a lack of empathetic reactivity.

In this study, 2,070 Luxembourg secondary school students participated in an online survey that contained a cyberbullying questionnaire and a new empathy short scale. The findings both support and significantly expand on previous studies on the association between empathy and aggressive conduct. From an educational standpoint, the current findings show that training in empathy skills could be a significant aid in reducing cyberbullying. In addition, tackled the relationship between bullying behavior, the emotional and social relationships, and the imbalance of power among 612 students of the seventh and eighth graders; it was found that the discrepancy of power causes anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem and that the bullying behavior has a negative effect on the emotional and social relationships. Furthermore, study has also tackled bullying and positive social behavior (e.g., Cooperation, assurance, empathy, self-restraint) in a sample of 636 middle school students, and its results indicated that there is a significant negative correlation between bullying (in all its types: physical, verbal and electronic) and cooperation, assurance, empathy, and self-restraint. In addition, it has been shown that there are statistically significant differences between bullying types and males' attitudes; females are found to be far superior in the positive attitudes, cooperation, assurance, empathy, and self-restraint conducted a study that examined variables, which could predict traditional bullying, cyberbullying, traditional victimization, and cyber-victimization. A sample of 2,329 gymnasium students from 120 classes, grade 7 to 9, from six Cypriot schools, completed self-report questionnaires.

Cyberbullying was predicted by traditional bullying and academic variables. Traditional victimization was predicted by cyber victimization, socio-emotional variables, and being male. Cyber-victimization was predicted by traditional victimization and academic variables. Compared with uninvolved adolescents, traditional, cyber, and mixed bullies had lower levels of academic variables; traditional and mixed victims had higher levels of emotional problems and affective empathy, and mixed bully victims had lower levels of both academic and socio-emotional variables. Also, validated measures to evaluate empathy are required. In addition, additional research into the relationship between empathy, bullying, cyberbullying and other antisocial behaviors are required in a wider range of geographical areas. The Basic Empathy Scale, as well as questionnaires that examined bullying, cyberbullying, and other antisocial behaviors, were used in this cross-national study with Spanish and Polish children and adolescents.

A total of 1,052 children and adolescents aged 9 to 16 were included in the Polish sample. There were 1,483 children and adolescents in the Spanish sample, ranging in age from 9 to 17. In both Poland and Spain, factor analyses revealed that a short 12-item version of the Basic Empathy Scale with only positive worded items had the best fit. Affective and cognitive empathy were both proven as important. Low empathy was linked to a high level of participation in antisocial behaviors such as bullying, cyberbullying, vandalism,

stealing, assault, substance abuse, and status crimes. The Basic Empathy Scale's 12-item version had outstanding psychometric characteristics. Although longitudinal and experimental studies are needed to prove causal relationships between empathy and antisocial behavior, this study shows that addressing empathy in the prevention and reduction of antisocial behavior in children and adolescents has a lot of promise. As a result, promoting empathy in schools would be beneficial in combating these behaviors investigate the characteristics of cyberbullying and assess whether empathy and friendship traits play a role in the prevalence of cyberbullying among Indonesian adolescents or not. Adolescents between the ages of 14 and 18 took part in the study. Interviews and focus groups were used to gather qualitative data from the 18 participants.

The findings revealed that cyberbullying is a frightening activity. The qualitative findings are characterized by a lack of empathy and low friendship quality. The quantitative data was collected from 553 respondents after they completed assessments measuring cyberbullying tendencies, empathy, and friendship quality. The findings revealed that empathy and friendship quality have a detrimental impact on cyberbullying. As a result, empathy and friendship quality are characteristics that prevent teenagers from developing cyberbullying behavior. In addition, the study of is one of the few that investigates the long-term association between empathy, social-emotional issues, and cyberbullying. It assesses if low affective and cognitive empathy ratings at wave 1 (t1) can predict cyberbullying five months later (t2). Furthermore, whether cyberbullying involvement at t1 predicts psychopathological symptoms and social withdrawal at t2 was investigated. The study participants were 7th and 8th-grade kids from a control group in a pre-/posttest short-term longitudinal evaluation research of a general anti-bullying program (mean age_{t1} = 12.53 years, SD = 0.68; gender_{t1} = 54.5 percent males, 45.5 percent girls) took part in the study. Traditional bullying and victimization were included as control variables in separate quasi poison regression analyses. At t2, low affective empathy, but not cognitive empathy, predicted cyberbullying but not cyber victimization. As measured in this study, neither cyberbullying nor cyber victimization predicted social withdrawal or psychopathological symptoms at t2. Although the research hypotheses were only partially supported, evidence for the role of (affective) empathy in cyberbullying perpetration was discovered in this study employing short-term longitudinal data. Due to a lack of empathy, found that there is an online disinhibition impact, which can lead to adolescent cyberbullying.

Empathy works as a social anchor, preventing antipathic behavior in adolescents during face-to-face interactions. Empathy is made up of two processes: first, the cognitive process represents one's ability to comprehend and convey other people's experiences and emotions; second, the affect process promotes emotional comprehension and communication, especially vicarious emotional sharing. Empathy, for example, is thought to be linked to adolescent involvement as cyberbullying perpetrators discovered that male and female adolescents with low empathy have higher cyberbullying scores. Cyberbullying perpetrators and victims, according have lower empathy levels than those who are not engaging in cyberbullying found the same thing, with adolescent cyberbullying perpetrators scoring much lower on empathy than

Context of the study problem

The international statistics indicate that the prevalence rate of cyberbullying was around 20-35%, and that its effect extended from the digital world to real-life with school and university students 55% of cyberbullying's victims face this type of bullying more than one time by the same person. Developing a positive personality helps in establishing and improving relations with others, and it also helps take responsibility to face problems and different situations of life.

Since cyberbullying has been considered relatively one of the most recent subjects that are scantily researched in Arabic societies, several scholars have suggested studying the phenomenon in adolescents to reduce its negative effects through a cognitive-behavioral program for empathy to alleviate the symptoms of cyberbullying. Therefore, the problem of the study tackles some questions:

- Are there statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group in the pre-and the post-measurement for empathy and cyberbullying?
- Are there statistically significant differences between the scores of the experimental group in the pre and follow-up measurements for empathy and cyberbullying?

Methods

The study adopted the quasi-experimental research method based on measuring the expected change upon the dependent variables i.e., empathy and cyberbullying and that is done through the techniques of the cognitive-behavioral program on the independent variable, cyberbullying [3].

Participants

The basic sample of the study consisted of 50 adolescents, average age 15.1 ± SD 1.5 years. The study experimental group of the study consists of 50 adolescents divided into 25 males and 25 females, ranging from 14 to 16 years. Participants have been chosen intentionally after applying the empathy and cyberbullying scales. The main inclusion criterion was that they should acquire the lowest scores on the empathy scale and the greatest one on cyberbullying. The two groups; males and females have been controlled to make sure they are the equal experimental group in terms of age, intelligence, empathy, and cyberbullying as follows:

Variable		males	Females	Mann-Whitney U	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Mean			
Demographic variables	Age	13.39	17.6	61	-1.192	0.139
	Intelligence	14.31	15.63	85.5	-0.42	0.362
	Socioeconomic class	8.8	7.16	22.2	-1.12	0.136
Basic tests	Empathy	13.21	16.67	70	-1.13	0.137

Cyberbullying	17.64	13.43	85.5	-1.03	0.938
---------------	-------	-------	------	-------	-------

Table1: Mean scores and values of (U) and (Z) in the variables of the study (age, socioeconomic class, general intelligence, empathy, and cyberbullying) for the experimental sample in the pre-testing and post-testing.

Measures

Raven's Progressive Matrices RPM consists of 60 matrices divided into 5 groups each containing 12 matrices graded in difficulty from the accuracy of observation to the scale of recognition of the public relations associated with abstract mental aspects, appropriate for ages from 6 to 60. El-Raouf (2004) Arabized and codified the scale and the results showed higher rates of reliability and validity the socioeconomic list for family. It consists of 10 items including 5 variables that measure the socioeconomic level of the individual, the monthly income of the individual, the level of education of the head of the family, male or female, and his/her job [4]. The jobs have been distributed in 9 levels, the education level in 8 categories, while income has been categorized into 7 levels; the list is of validity and reliability the cyberbullying scale: It was developed it consists of 20 statements. In addition, it depends on the Likert's scale graded from 5 responses that determine the number of occurrences of the intended behavior. The degree is given according to the number of occurrences from 1 to 5 scores or it is zero if the answer is no. Empathy scale It was designed by, the main purpose of this scale has been identified to recognize the ability of the student to interact with others' feelings and to share with them their emotions. The test consists of 25 statements that measure the behavior of empathy through a graded scale of four responses (never/ often/ sometimes/always). The student will be given zero if his response is "never"; 1 point if his response is "sometimes"; two if his response is "often"; three if the response is "always". The greatest degree is 75 and the lowest one is zero.

Therapy behavioral-cognitive

The general purpose of the program: This program aims at recognizing the impact of behavioral-cognitive intervention based on improving empathy skills to reduce cyberbullying, through measuring both empathy and cyberbullying behavior to stand on recognizing the sustainability of the real impact of the program one month after of applying the intervention.

The stages of designing the program: As for sources of the program and its justifications, the content of the suggested counseling program was extracted from the following sources:

- A questionnaire has been designed to collect the behavioral, cognitive counseling methods to improve empathy. The questionnaire included open-ended questions addressed to a sample of teaching staff in departments of psychology, mental health, and several psychologists.
- Reviewing previous studies which designed counseling programs for bullies and their victims.
- Reviewing previous studies on bullying's victims particularly the study series of Olweus

- Consulting previous studies on empathy and its relations with bullying.
- Reviewing some techniques of the cognitive-behavioral counseling set out and shown on nine arbitrators and specialists in counseling psychology, educational psychology, and mental health. The agreement rates on the validity of the content of the session ranged from 85 to 100%.

The contents of the program and its techniques: Topics that researchers and practitioners have tackled can be conducted over several sessions as follows: 20 sessions divided into two sessions per week and each session range from 45 to 60 minutes. The following is the counseling methods used in the program.

No.	The definition	The counseling methods that are used
1	A collection of opinions is exchanged between the researcher and the sample to recognize the positive and negative aspects among each other and to train them to freely express their feelings.	Discussion and dialogue
2	It is considered one of the methods that measure the ability of the sample in the counseling sessions.	Feedback
3	The incidents that some people had in daily life through narration.	The story
4	When one person acts the role of others to clarify the image and meaning.	Role-play
5	It is a kind of interaction and opinion among the members of the counseling group.	Exercises
6	Adding fun and cheerfulness to move from anguish to fun and pleasure.	Fun and humor
7	It is a fictional style accompanied by images of achievements, superiority, developing self-esteem, and improving the quality of life for a group of difficulties in reading.	Imaginary modeling
8	Hosting persons who succeeded in achieving their goals by their strong ability.	Live to model
9	When the mentor encourages any positive behavior done by a male or female student.	Positive reinforcement
10	A discussion that solve any problem through collecting all the spontaneous ideas of the individuals.	Brainstorming

11	To ask a group of people to do any homework.	Homework
----	--	----------

Table2: Counselling methods used in the program.

Results

Table 3 shows that there are differences in the mean scores of the empathic skills between the pretesting for the experimental group on the empathy and cyberbullying scales in comparison with the post testing [5]. T-test scores are significant at the level of ($p = .01$) which denotes the positive impacts of the empathy-based intervention on alleviating the cyberbullying levels among adolescents.

Tests	Measurement	Mean	Std. Deviation	T. Test
Empathy	Pre-test	3.22	46.41	**4.18
	Post-test	5.33	52.21	
Cyberbullying	Pre-test	3.16	22.23	**3.06
	Post-test	3.03	19.46	

Table3: Significant differences between the two averages of the individuals' scores in the experimental group on empathy and cyberbullying before and after applying the program (N=50).

It is clear that there were statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group members in the pre-and post-measurement on the Empathy scale (average of the pre-measurement was higher). There were statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group members in the pre-measurement and the post-measurement on Cyberbullying scale (the average of the post-measurement was higher). Table 4 shows that there are no differences between the averages of the scores of the post and the follow-up measurement on the scale of cyberbullying for the individuals of the experimental group. To ensure its validity, scholars used the "T. Test" shows the results of the assumption. the significant differences between the two averages of the scores for the individual in the experimental group on the post and the follow-up measurement on the scale of empathy and cyberbullying (N = 50).

Discussion

The current study aims at investigating the effectiveness of developing empathic skills training on reducing cyberbullying levels in a sample of adolescents using a single experimental group. It has been shown that there are significant differences in the scores of the experimental group on the pretesting and post-testing of both empathic skills scale as well as cyberbullying scale. Cyberbullies were found to have less empathy for people who are being victimized than non-online bullies, those who have become both cyber bullies and victims, and those who have not been involved in cyberbullying at all. In comparison to victims, bully-victims, and non-involved people, cyberbullies were not shown to have a lack of empathy, possibly due to the use of a different assessment instrument for empathy. Participants showed increased empathic skills after the remedial intervention through empathetic skills training that coincides

with the findings of several studies. Enhanced empathic skills leading to reduced cyberbullying levels of adolescents are resulted from improving adolescents' social skills. Social skills relate to enhancing relations between adolescents and their peers, the joint responsibility among them has been acquired through the activities the intervention program includes.

Counseling intervention has also led to enhancing cognitive processes, expectations, and behavioral factors. In addition, participants were able to justify their behavior once they were exposed to constant interaction with their environment. It is evident that there is a decline in the cyberbullying of participants after the counseling remedial intervention, which coincides with the other studies. Researchers and therapists are interested in bullying, and a range of intervention approaches have been offered to decrease or prevent it. Some of these programs have targeted interventions specifically at the students involved (i.e., the bully/cyberbully, the victims, and onlookers), while others try to influence the social atmosphere in general (e.g., whole-school approaches). Students' noticeable improvement in terms of their scores on empathic skills is attributed to activities, exercises, and reinforcing methods the remedial counseling program contains. These activities were crucial in reducing the cyberbullying intensity and reinforcing the aspect of normal behavior in adolescents. Since bullies usually target weaker students, they do not accept others' opinions, nor accept any discussion while playing with them, they usually harass them physically and/or mentally. However, bullying behaviors remarkably declined among adolescents due to the remedial counseling intervention leading to strengthening empathy towards others. Results if this kind agrees with other studies cyberbullies in the study upon exposure to the remedial intervention - realize that their victims will undoubtedly help them once they need help. Therefore, bullies feel self-satisfaction and appear reluctant to use such maladaptive behavior. As a result, adolescents act in a manner that is socially appropriate to introduce themselves in front of others and express their positive feelings.

Cyberbullies used activities in the cognitive-behavioral program contribute to learning several types of positive social behavior and show the importance of the family role in reinforcing promising behaviors and strengthening positive personality traits. In line with this, , cyberbullying is linked to low self-esteem and feelings of loneliness as a result of friendship problems (among male adolescents) and experiences of being ignored or alienated by others (in female adolescents). The drive to form an identity throughout the transition from childhood to adolescence is marked by a strong emphasis on autonomy and independence from parents. Rapid changes in the structure and organization of their peer groups may also occur as a result of the shift. Although the brief intervention was insufficient to dramatically reduce cyberbullying across the board, it was sufficient for individuals with improved cognitive empathy abilities to lessen their cyberbullying behavior.

Conclusion

Despite succeeding to achieve its goals; increased empathic skills which led to low cyberbullying levels, there are certain limitations to the current study. One of these limitations is that the study was conducted on the Egyptian students with its Middle Eastern nature; this should be taken into consideration once researchers elsewhere

try to reproduce the same study in other geographical contexts. In addition, the two measures used in the study were designed by the researchers, reconsideration of the psychometric properties of these assessment tools is crucial to assure the study findings.

References

1. Powell, Melissa D, and Linda D. Ladd. "Bullying: A Review of the Literature and Implications for Family Therapists." *Ame J Fam Thera* 38, (2010): 189-206.
2. Garaigordobil, Maite, and Martínez-Valderrey Vanesa. "Impact of Cyberprogram 2.0 on Different Types of School Violence and Aggressiveness." *Front psychol* 7 (2016): 428.
3. Helfrich, Emily L, L Doty Jennifer, Su Yi-Wen, and L Yourell, et al. "Parental Views on Preventing and Minimizing Negative Effects of Cyberbullying." *Child. Youth Serv Rev* 118 (2020): 105377.
4. Jennifer, Dawn, and Cowie Helen. "Listening to Children's Voices: Moral Emotional Attributions in Relation to Primary School Bullying." *Emot Behav Diffic* 17, (2012): 229-241.
5. Ackers, Melanie Jane. "Cyberbullying: Through the Eyes of Children and Young People." *Educ Psychol* 28, (2012): 141-157.

How to cite this article: Atta MS Salem Ashraf, Abu Al Diyar Mosaad. "Hearing the Victims' Voices: The Impact of Enhancing Empathic Skills Training on Reducing Cyberbullying among Adolescents." *Clin Schizophr Relat Psychoses*15 (2021) : 165.