

DISENTANGLING THE RELATION BETWEEN EMOTION REGULATION STRATEGIES AND CYBERVICTIMIZATION: PROSPECTIVE EFFECTS AND THE INTERVENING ROLE OF BLAMING OTHERS AMONG ADOLESCENTS


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INTRODUCTION & AIMS

From the socio-ecological framework, numerous individual factors are considered to contribute to **cybervictimization (CV)**. Among them, emotion regulation has been found to act as a key predictors to affect CV (e.g., Arató et al., 2020; Camerini et al., 2020; Georgiou et al., 2021). However, little is still known about the cognitive aspects of emotion regulation and, more specifically, how **cognitive emotion regulation strategies (CERS)** can contribute to CV trajectories over time during adolescence.

This study **aims** to examine the **incremental validity of CERS in the prospective associations of CV in a sample of adolescents.**

METHOD

Convenience sample: 841 participants (55.4% girls; M= 13.71; SD= 1.31). 

Instruments

- European Cyberbullying Intervention Project Questionnaire (ECIPQ; Del Rey et al., 2015). Wave 1 and 2. Cronbach's alpha .85 and .89.
- Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (CERQ; Chamizo-Nieto et al., 2020) Wave 1. Cronbach's alpha: .60-.82.

Procedure: 2 waves (four months apart), 5 schools; Ethical Committee of the University of Málaga; informed consents.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The findings showed that **blaming others** was the unique (maladaptive) strategy in contributing prospectively to CV after controlling for previous experiences of CV (see Table 1).

Table 1.

Regression analysis on CV wave 2.

	R ²	ΔR ²	F	β	t	95% CI
Step 1	.01	.01**	5.73			
Age				.02	.71	-.01 - .03
Gender				-.03	-.96	-.09 - .03
Step 2	.28	.27***	107.75			
CV wave 1				.50***	16.54	.54 - .69
Step 3	.30	.02**	29.22			
Self-blame				.02	.65	-.03 - .05
Blaming others				.10**	2.86	.02 - .09
Rumination				-.02	-.46	-.05 - .03
Catastrophizing				.05	1.38	-.01 - .06
Positive refocusing				-.04	-1.17	-.05 - .01
Positive reappraisal				.02	.46	-.03 - .05
Refocus on planning				.00	.03	-.04 - .04
Putting into perspective				.00	.06	-.04 - .04
Acceptance				.05	1.30	-.01 - .07

Note: CI = confidence intervals. β = standardized regression coefficient for the final equation. **p < .01; ***p < .001.

- Findings are in line with previous results, indicating that victimized roles (e.g., victims and bully-victims) engage in more maladaptive CER strategies (Potard et al., 2021).
- Blaming others, instead of self-blaming (e.g., Arató et al. 2020), seems to be a relevant strategy associated with the duration of CV.

DISCUSSION

From the learned helplessness model (Maier & Seligman, 2016), CV might offer external, stable and uncontrollable explanations for continued cyberbullying. Blaming others may increase the existing negative emotions individuals may experience, and, at the same time, it may allow one to display more positive and tolerating attitudes toward these emotions (Erreygers et al., 2018).

Although future works should consider complementary measures and longitudinal designs, this is the first study addressing the predictive role of CERS in the role of CV over time. Also, it supports the specific contribution of CERS as key factors for intervention initiatives targeting online victimization over time.



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