

The Cyberbullying-specific Moral Disengagement Questionnaire (CBMDQ-15)

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The Cyberbullying-specific Moral Disengagement Questionnaire (CBMDQ-15)

The CBMDQ-15 is a questionnaire that measures moral disengagement in the context of cyberbullying and was developed by Ms Samantha Day and Dr Lambros Lazuras at the Department of Psychology, Sociology & Politics, Sheffield Hallam University.

Background

The questionnaire items were developed following thematic analysis of focus group interviews with 10 undergraduate university students in the UK who were asked to think and report of conditions and situations under which cyberbullying could be justified. Eight themes emerged reflecting the moral disengagement mechanisms proposed by Bandura (1991), and two items per theme were elicited resulting in a 16-item questionnaire.

Reliability

The initial questionnaire had 16 items and high reliability as indicated by the internal consistency reliability coefficient (Cronbach's $\alpha = .89$), and the split-half reliability coefficient (Spearman-Brown = .87). However, one item was dropped because of low correlation with the other items of the measure.

The revised 15-item measure (CBMDQ-15) has high internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = .91$) and split-half reliability (Spearman-Brown = .89).

Validity

The CBMDQ-15 has face and content validity as indicated by the reports of researchers with expertise in the development of moral disengagement questionnaires.

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 ($r = .33, p < 0.001$).

Predictive validity: Hierarchical linear regression analysis showed that the CBMDQ-15 uniquely predicted (Adjusted R^2) 11.7% ($B = 1.20, \beta = .352, p < .001$) of the variance in intentions to engage in cyberbullying. The predictive effect of the CBMDQ-15 was retained ($B = .615, \beta = .181, p < .05$) even after controlling for the effects of other social cognitive variables relevant to cyberbullying.

Factor structure

In line with the four-factor structure model of moral disengagement (e.g., McAllister et al., 2006) Principal Components Analysis using Varimax rotation and eigenvalues > 1 showed that the CBMDQ-15 consisted of four components that accounted for 70.5% of the variance. Internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's α) was high for each component (ranging from .70 to .86).

The items of the CBMDQ-15 and their respective components with factor loadings and internal consistency reliability coefficients for each component are presented in Table 1.

Scoring instructions

All the items are scored in one direction using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). There are no reverse scorings and the total CBMDQ-15 score is produced by calculating the mean of the 15 items. Higher scores reflect higher moral disengagement.

Copyright issues and citation of the CBMDQ-15

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	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3	Component 4
1. Cyberbullying should be justified if you have been mistreated by others		.828		
2. It is alright to cyberbully others when they have treated you unfairly		.719		
3. Cyberbullying is a way to protect yourself from being bullied by others		.803		
4. I think that the consequences of cyberbullying are exaggerated	.657			
5. Cyberbullying is not as harmful as face-to-face bullying or physically attacking someone	.575			
6. Cyberbullying should not be considered as bad as bullying happening in the 'real world'	.662			
7. Someone cannot be blamed for cyberbullying if s/he has been pressured to do it			.681	
8. Someone cannot be blamed for cyberbullying where there are no regulations to prevent cyberbullying			.613	
9. It is unfair to blame an individual if s/he had a small part in the cyberbullying caused by a group			.757	
10. Cyberbullying doesn't really hurt anyone	.794			
11. People don't mind being cyberbullied because these things happen online	.757			
12. People can always turn off social media if they don't want to have any negative online experiences like cyberbullying				.736
13. It's not cyberbullying if the person/recipient said they don't care				.719
14. Some people can't be hurt by cyberbullying because they lack feelings				.444
15. People who are cyberbullied have probably bullied someone else before			.517	
Cronbach's α	.87	.86	.72	.78

Note. Factor loadings > .50 were used to define each component, and the highest loadings are presented in the Table. Item 14 had lower loading than .50 but it was retained based on the internal consistency reliability of the component if the item was deleted, and on the inter-item correlations within the component. The components have been indicatively labelled as follows: Component 1 = Minimization of harmful effects; Component 2 = Moral justification; Component 3 = Denial of responsibility; 4 = Dehumanization