

# Groups of cyberbullying victims: Differentiating role of harm extent



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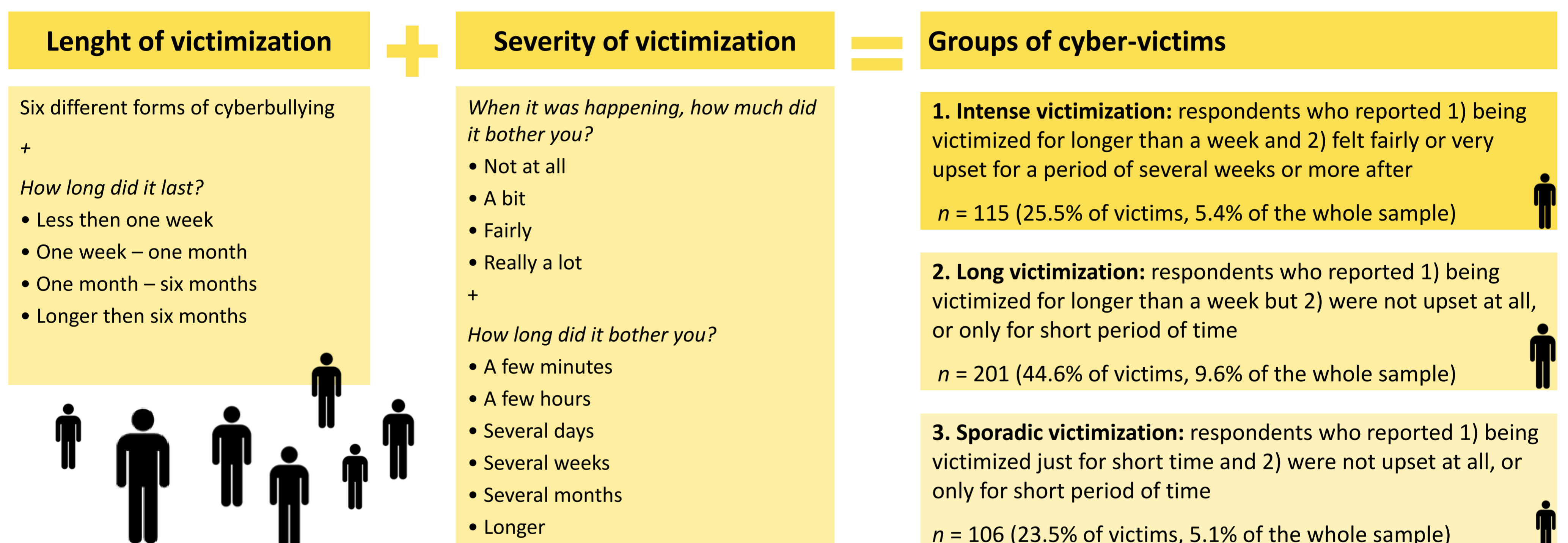
## INTRODUCTION

Cyberbullying represents relatively “young” research area with many issues yet to be solved. One of them is the very basic one: its definition and measurement, which varies a lot within current body of research and resulted in differences in terms of prevalence as well as findings about cyberbullying predictors and outcomes (Kowalski et al., 2014; Tokunaga, 2010; Vandebosch & Cleemput, 2008).

Our aim is to explore whether we can identify distinct types of cyberbullying victims that differ significantly in both individual characteristics and outcomes of cyberbullying. In this study, we distinguish different types of cyberbullying victims based on the 1) intensity of the attacks and 2) extent of their harm, and explore the difference between them on individual and contextual level.

## SAMPLE

The data comes from survey on 2,092 Czech adolescents aged 12-18 from a random sample of 34 primary and secondary schools. The sample for this study consists only of respondents who reported being cyberbullied ( $N = 422$ ; 21% of the whole sample; age:  $M = 15.27$ ,  $SD = 1.84$ , 68.2 % females). For the purpose of the study, we divided respondents into three groups based on the severity and length of their victimization:



## RESULTS: Group differences

	Intensively victimized (a)	Long victimized (b)	Sporadically victimized (c)	CHI/F-test
Gender (F)	90% (103)	66% (132)	50% (53)	41.018**
Offline victimization	75%(85)	57%(115)	36%(38)	32.819**
Age				ns
Self-esteem	2.46 (.56) <sup>bc</sup>	2.74 (.58) <sup>ac</sup>	2.91 (.58) <sup>ab</sup>	17.759**
Peer-rejection	1.87 (.70)	1.99 (.78) <sup>c</sup>	1.78 (.69) <sup>b</sup>	3.221**
Peer-ambivalence	2.55 (.84) <sup>c</sup>	2.33 (.77)	2.14 (.74) <sup>a</sup>	7.492*
Parental-alienation	2.81 (.90) <sup>c</sup>	2.65 (.74)	2.50 (.76) <sup>a</sup>	4.204*
Parental-trust				ns
Parental-communication				ns
Externalizing behaviors	0.76 (.67) <sup>c</sup>	0.74 (.73) <sup>c</sup>	0.42 (.60) <sup>ab</sup>	9.254**
Internalizing behaviors	2.97 (.72) <sup>bc</sup>	2.09 (.84) <sup>ac</sup>	1.77 (.82) <sup>ab</sup>	69.758**

\* =  $p < .05$ , \*\* =  $p < .01$ ; all  $df = 2$ ; the upper-letters indicate significant differences between groups in post-hoc tests

## DISCUSSION

The main differences were found with relation to gender, offline victimization and self-esteem, and outcomes in terms of internalizing and externalizing behavior. The pattern indicates that outcomes are more severe with increasing victimization. Our findings also support the notion that there is a connection between severe cyberbullying and offline, school bullying.

Results regarding individuals' resources in form of parental and peer relationships do not show so clear picture: yet, some differences were found, mainly between groups of the least and most severely victimized, suggesting worsened relationships with both parents and peers for intensively victimized.

Our results thus show the importance of distinguishing between cyberbullying experiences based on their severity (e.g. the length of incidents and perceived harm) and underscores the need of precise cyberbullying definition and measurement in order to adequately evaluate its correlates – in both forms of outcomes and predictors.

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