A COMPARISON OF ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN PATERNAL AND MATERNAL PRACTICES AND ADOLESCENTS’ CYBERBULLYING: GENDER DIFFERENCES

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Parental practices have been long acknowledged as a critical predictor of children’s outcomes (e.g., Bois, Lalanne, & Delforge, 2009; Smokowski, Bacallao, Cotter, & Evans, 2014). Until recent decades, researchers have examined different roles fathers and mothers play in children’s behaviour (Lamb, 2004). However, studies addressing different linkages between paternal and maternal practices and fathers’ and mothers’ same-gender and opposite-gender children’s behaviour yielded divergent results (e.g., Bronte-Tinkew, Moore, & Carrano, 2006; Gallarin & Alonso-Arbiol, 2012; Gaylord Harden, Campbell, & Kesselring, 2010). This study aimed to compare the associations between paternal and maternal practices and cyberbullying engagement among male and female adolescents in China.

A total of 277 Chinese adolescents (Mage = 15.5, SDage = 1.64, 166 boys) completed measures of parental practices through the Child Report of Parent Behaviour Inventory (Schaefer, 1965), Perceived Parental Autonomy Support Scale (Mageau et al., 2015), and Psychological Control Scale–Youth Self-Report scale (Barber, 1996), as well as cyberbullying involvement using Bullying Behaviour Questionnaires (Konishi, Miyazaki, & Hymel, 2017). Structural equation modeling was used to address the research questions.

As seen in Figure 1, results demonstrated significant effects of paternal warmth and psychological control on boys’ cyberbullying behaviours. Also, effects of maternal warmth and psychological control showed similar results. However, regarding parental practices effect on girls’ cyberbullying, only paternal psychological control, not maternal, showed a significantly contribution on girls’ cyberbullying behaviours (Figure 2).

Given the special role of father in cyberbullying engagement among adolescents, especially girls, interventions that specifically focus on paternal practices in adolescent cyberbullying should be given more attention. Additionally, it would be helpful in the future research to extend the effects of parental practices to other bullying behaviours.
Figure 1. The model of paternal practices as predictors of boys’ cyberbullying behaviour. Paths in the structural model include paternal warmth, autonomy support and psychological control to boys’ cyberbullying behaviours. \( p < .05 \).

Figure 2. The model of paternal practices as predictors of girls’ cyberbullying behaviour. Paths in the structural model include paternal warmth, autonomy support and psychological control to girls’ cyberbullying behaviours. \( p < .05 \).