UNIVERSITY OF WEST LONDON
The Career University

UWL REPOSITORY

repository.uwl.ac.uk

Does young people's tendency to experience risks reach across the online/offline divide?

Görzig, Anke ORCID logoORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7623-0836 (2018) Does young people's tendency to experience risks reach across the online/offline divide? Other. UK Safer Internet Centre.

This is the Published Version of the final output.

UWL repository link: https://repository.uwl.ac.uk/id/eprint/4848/

Alternative formats: If you require this document in an alternative format, please contact: open.research@uwl.ac.uk

Copyright:

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

Take down policy: If you believe that this document breaches copyright, please contact us at open.research@uwl.ac.uk providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Rights Retention Statement:

Research Highlights for
Children's Online Safety #123
January, 2018

UK COUNCIL FOR CHILD INTERNET SAFETY

www.eukidsonline.net

Does Young People's Tendency to Experience Risks Reach Across the Online/Offline Divide?

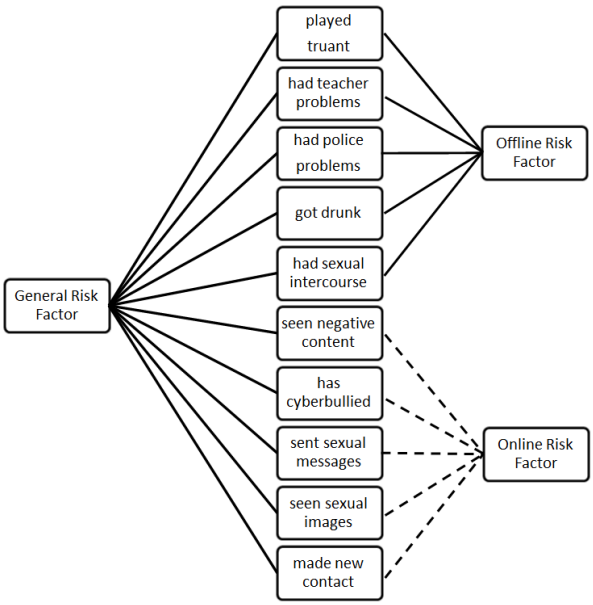
Aims

Research on offline risk experiences has demonstrated that across a range of risk behaviours, young people who engage in them share common personality and behavioural factors[1]. Yet, it is not clear whether online risk experiences share the same or similar common underlying factors, and how much (if any) of adolescents' risk experiences can be explained by the specific environment (offline vs. online). This study aimed to determine whether an underlying factor for risk experiences would apply across the offline/online boundary. It examined whether online and offline risk experiences: a) are behaviourally distinct, b) share the same common underlying propensity to experience risks, or c) both – show a mixture of joint and distinct properties.

Key Findings

The best fitting statistical model showed that all offline and online risks share a common underlying *general risk factor*. Whilst offline risk experiences additionally share a separate underlying *offline risk factor*, this was not the case for online risk experiences (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Joint and distinct factors for online and offline risk experiences.



Note: Dashed lines indicate statistically insignificant and solid lines statistically significant associations.

These findings reiterate previous research showing that offline and online risk experiences do often co-occur for the same individuals. Moreover, offline risk experiences are associated with factors that go beyond the *general risk factor* and are tied to the specific environment (offline). This suggests that factors associated with the offline environment only may play a role for those risk experiences. In contrast, online risk experiences could not be explained by factors that go above and beyond the general propensity to experience risks. These findings are in contrast to recent alarmist assumptions that new technologies bring with them new risks specific to, and driven by, the environment. The findings suggest that online risk experiences are not unique to digital technology, and that appropriate policy and practice

responses should address the problems in a holistic manner. That is, interventions should target risk and protective factors that can account for adolescents' experiences across risk types (online and offline).

Methodology

Data came from the LSE EU Kids Online study (www.eukidsonline.net), a random sample of 25,000 Internet-using children aged 9-16 across 25 European countries. For ethical reasons answers from 11-16 year olds only were used for this study, resulting in a sample of 19,406 (50% girls). Data across a range of risks that young people experience online and offline was amalgamated and the most likely commonalities between risks was determined using structural equation modelling.

The offline risk experiences included:

"Had so much alcohol that I got really drunk" (8.2%), "Missed school lessons without my parents knowing" (12.6%), "Had sexual intercourse" (5.5%), "Been in trouble with my teachers for bad behaviour" (15.4%), "Been in trouble with the police" (2.9%).

The online risk experiences included:

Seen sexual images online (16.6%), sent sexual messages online (2.9%), bullied others online (3.2%), made a new contact online (33.5%), seen negative user generated content (i.e., hate messages that attack certain groups or individuals, content promoting bulimia/anorexia, self-harm or drug use; 21.4%).

Background

Adolescence is a period of increased risk experiences and those engaging in one type of risk behaviour often do so in others. It has been argued that in adolescence, a combination of sensation-seeking with a relative lack in impulse control may contribute to this phenomenon[2]. A common underlying factor across risk experiences has been identified that recognises the influences of behavioural and personality factors in adolescence[1]. Previous research findings suggest that, analogous to offline risk experiences, online risk experiences do often co-occur[3]. Moreover, it was shown that despite the onset of new technologies, long term measures of harm from risk experiences have not risen in this period[4], suggesting that online risk experiences may not contribute an additional or different type of underlying propensity for risk experiences beyond those occurring offline.

Source Görzig, A. (2016). Adolescents' experience of offline and online risks: Separate and joint propensities. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 56, 9–13. (http://repository.uwl.ac.uk/id/eprint/1398/)

Research Team EU Kids Online (UK Team, LSE), Dr. Anke Görzig
Contact information Dr. Anke Görzig (anke.goerzig@uwl.ac.uk)

1. Jessor, R. (2013). Problem behavior theory. In R. M. Lerner, A. C. Petersen, R. K. Silbereisen, and J. Brooks-Gunn (Eds.), *The Developmental Science of Adolescence: History Through Autobiography* (pp. 239-256). New York: Psychology Press.
2. Steinberg, L., Albert, D., Cauffman, E., Banich, M., Graham, S., & Woolard, J. (2008). Age differences in sensation seeking and impulsivity as indexed by behavior and self-report: evidence for a dual systems model. *Developmental Psychology*, *44*(6), 1764–78. doi:10.1037/a0012955
3. Hasebrink, U., Görzig, A., Haddon, L., Kalmus, V., & Livingstone, S. (2011). *Patterns of risk and safety online: in-depth analyses from the EU Kids Online survey of 9-to 16-year-olds and their parents in 25 European countries*. London, UK: EU Kids Online, London School of Economics and Political Science. Retrieved from http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/39356/
4. Maughan, B., Collishaw, S., Meltzer, H., & Goodman, R. (2008). Recent trends in UK child and adolescent mental health. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*, *43*(4), 305–10. doi:10.1007/s00127-008-0310-8