

DO THESE VIOLENCE DELIGHTS HAVE VIOLENT ENDS

Social Norms, Alcohol, & Sexual Cyberbullying

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BACKGROUND

Sexually aggressive behavior is well-documented among college students. However, little is known about the role technology may play in facilitating this behavior. Given that social norms have been established as a useful framework for understanding problematic and risky behavior in college students, the current authors sought to determine whether this theory might also provide insight into the use of technology to facilitate sexually aggressive behavior. We hypothesized 1) that sexual cyberbullying would be associated with negative psychosocial outcomes for both victims and perpetrators 2) that being a victim of sexual cyberbullying would be associated with being a victim of face to face violence and coercion, 3) that perceived social norms of sexually aggressive behavior would predict engagement in face to face sexual aggression and that this relationship would be mediated by engagement in sexual cyberbullying, and 4) that the aforementioned mediation would be moderated by alcohol use.

METHOD

PROCEDURE

The study consisted of an online survey. Students were recruited through an online research participation system and emails sent to those in undergraduate psychology classes..

PARTICIPANTS

Participants were 641 undergraduate students attending a university in the south-eastern US ($n_{Male}=169, n_{Female}=470, n_{Transmale}=2$) with a mean age of 19 years old. Participants' ethnic makeup was as follows: 78.8% White, 14.4 Black or African, and 6.8% Other ethnicities. The majority of participants identified as heterosexual (91.4%) . 59.1% of participants described their relationship status as Single, 12.8% reported they were Dating Casually, 27.2% reported they were Dating in a committed relationship, and .9% reported they were Engaged or Married.

MEASURES

- Sexual Strategies Scale (SSS)
 - Participants' first asked about what strategies they believed "Other students at UM" employed to assess social norms, later were asked about strategies they used
 - Measure modified to include sexual cyberbullying items (in addition to face to face)
- Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT)
- Sexual Experiences Survey (SES)
- Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale (DASS-21)
- UCLA Loneliness Scale Short Form (UCLA-8)

DESCRIPTIVE RESULTS

- Thirty percent of participants reported engaging in some form of sexually aggressive behavior offline, and 15.6% endorsed engaging in sexual cyberbullying.
- 100% of participants endorsed the belief that their peers were engaging in some form of sexually aggressive behavior.

H1 & H2 RESULTS

- Individuals who were victims of sexual cyberbullying reported significantly higher scores on measures of depression, anxiety & stress than non-victims
- Individuals who were perpetrators of sexual cyberbullying reported significantly higher scores on measures of anxiety and stress than non-perpetrators
- Being a victim of sexual cyberbullying significantly predicted status as a victim of face to face sexual aggression

H3 & H4 RESULTS

- Alcohol use did not moderate any of the predicted relationships.
- Sexual cyberbullying mediated the relationship between perceived social norms of sexually aggressive behavior and engagement in face to face sexual aggression and coercion

DISCUSSION

- The present work highlights the importance of understanding sexual cyberbullying behavior (and more broadly the relationships between offline and online behavior)
- Findings also highlight the psychosocial impact of sexual cyberbullying on both victims and perpetrators

SEXUAL CYBERBULLYING MEDIATES THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEIVED SOCIAL NORMS OF SEXUALLY AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR AND FACE TO FACE SEXUAL VIOLENCE



Figure 1. Sexual Aggression Perpetration Rates

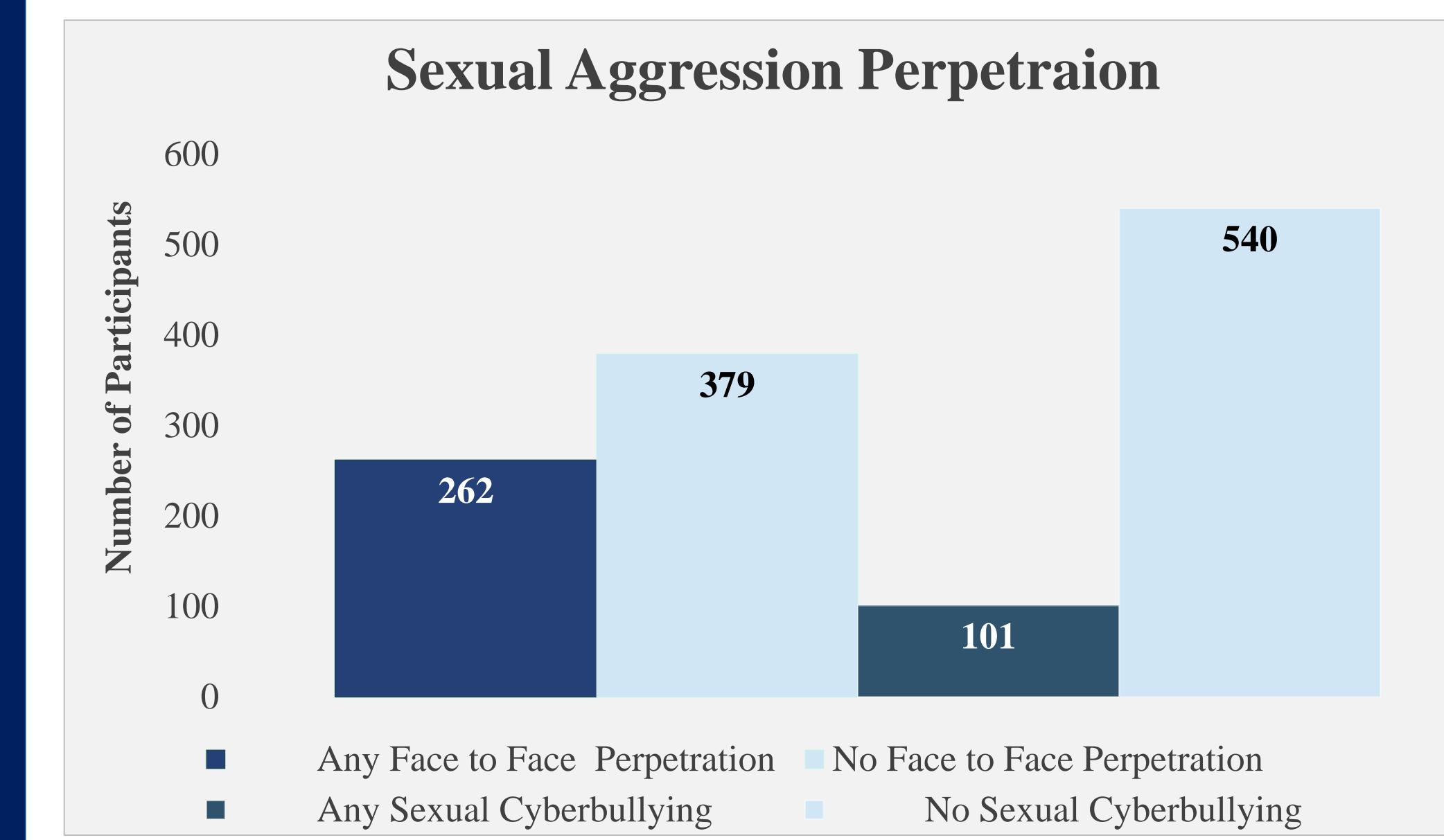


Figure 2. Sexual Aggression Victimization Rates

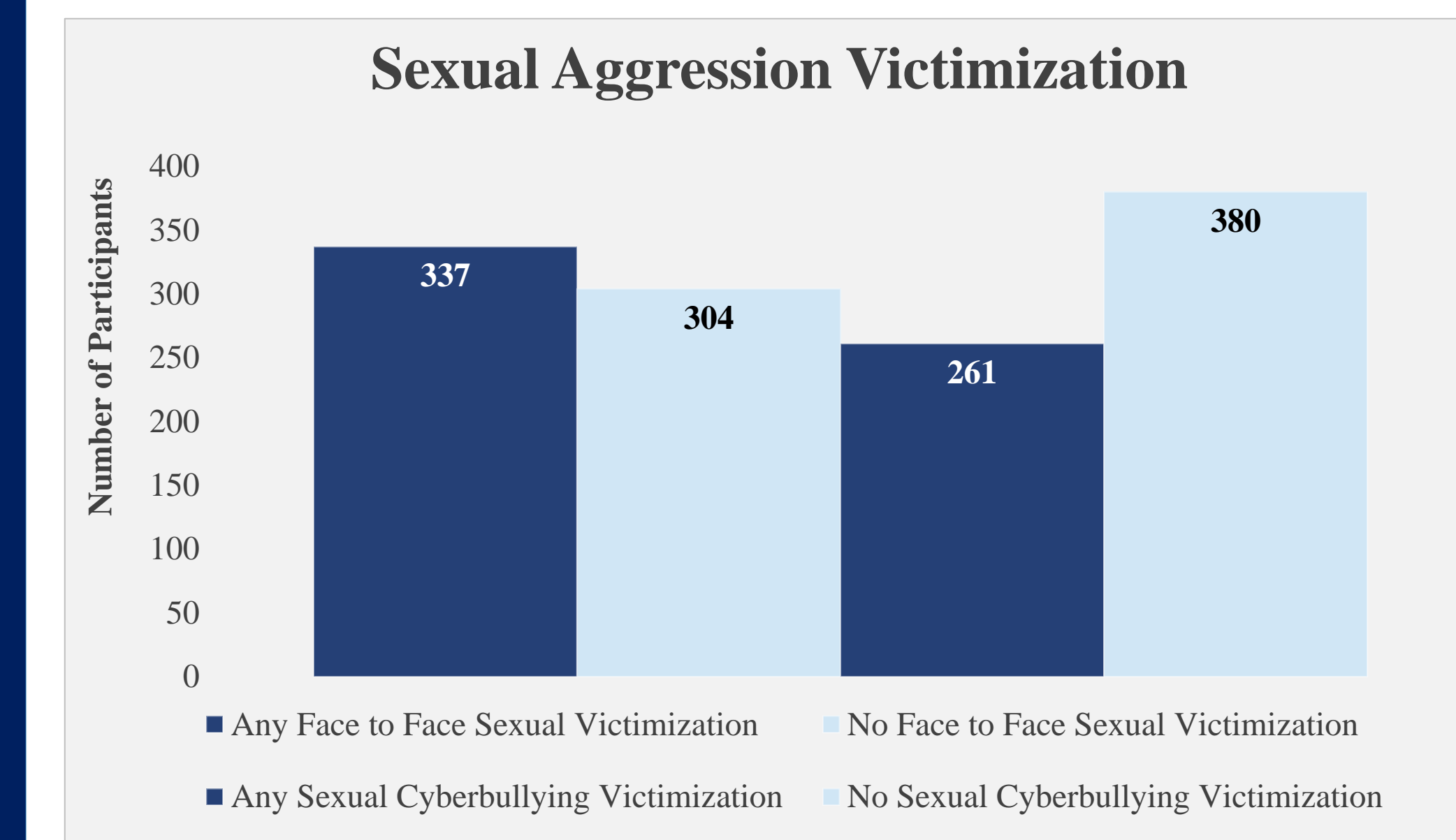


Table 1. Mean Differences in Psychosocial Outcomes

	Non-Victim	Victim	Perpetrator	Non-perpetrator
Depression	5.88	8.47*	7.84	6.78
Anxiety	5.25	8.27*	7.78	6.27*
Stress	9.12	11.83*	10.96	10.10*
Loneliness	6.55	7.38	7.65	6.75

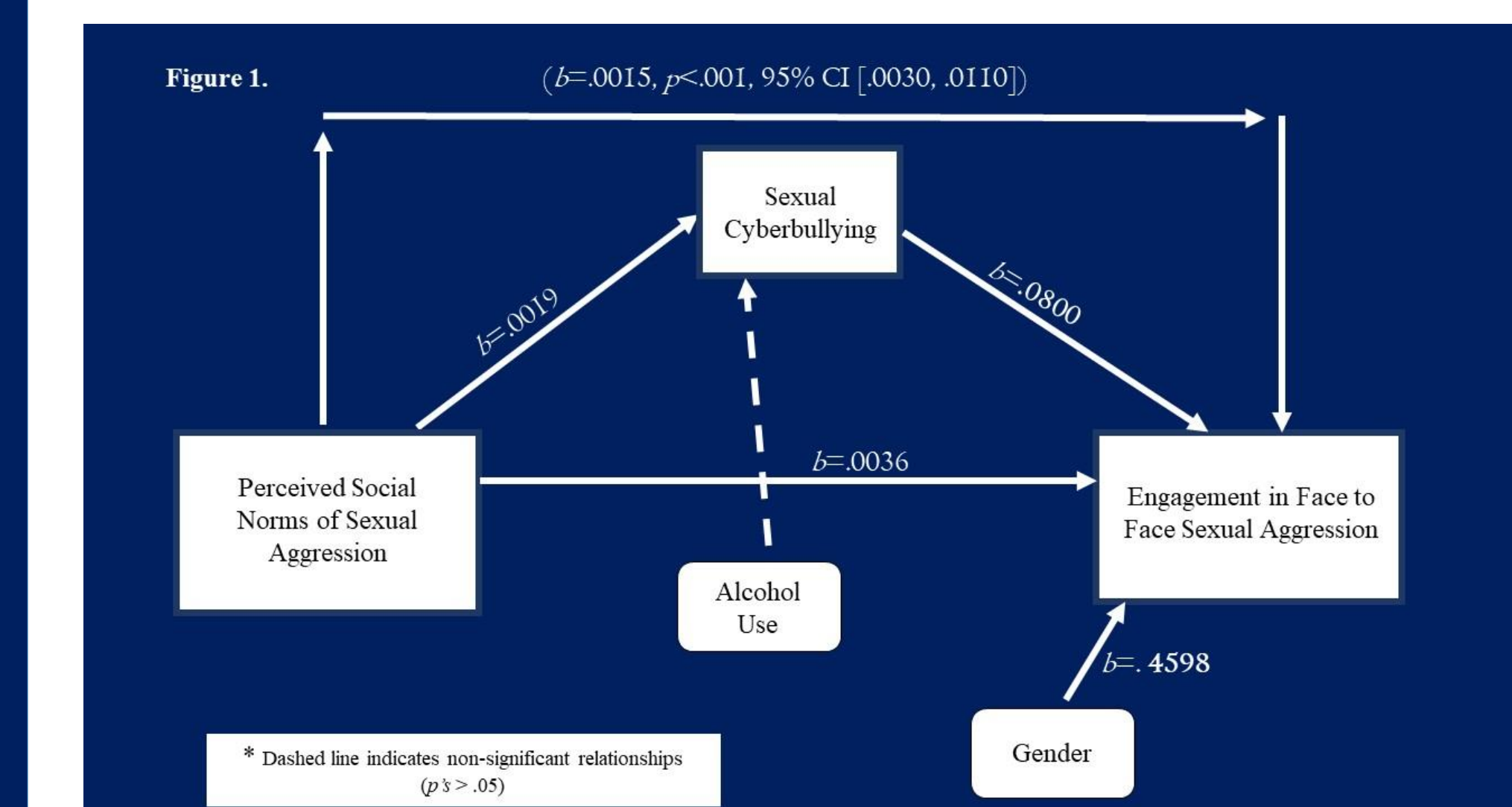
Notes. Wilks' lambda for victims : (F(15,16)=1.779, $p<.01$, $\eta_p^2=.044$). Wilks' lambda for perpetrators: (F(10,11)=1.999, $p<.05$, $\eta_p^2=.033$). Asterisks indicate statistically significant differences.

Table 2. Regression Predicting Face to Face Sexual Victimization from Sexual Cyberbullying Victimization

	β	F	p
Intercept	6.471	185.553	<.0001
Sexual Cyberbullying Victim Status	3.995	7.636	<.0001*
Gender	.005	.135	.714
Sexual Cyberbullying Victim Status* Gender	.448	1.428	.172

Notes. Overall Model was significant. ($R^2=.210$, F(15,25)=3.995, $p<.001$)

Figure 3. Sexual Cyberbullying Mediation Model with Gender and Alcohol Use Covariates



Overall Model Predicting Sexually Aggressive Behavior: $N=663$, ($R^2=.1506$, F(4,559)=24.7739, $P<.0001$).