

The Impact of Physical Intimidation in the Way Cyberbullying Happens

Literature Review

Prevalence of Cyberbullying

The term 'cyberbullying' is a relatively new one, and has recently turned into a social phenomenon in the modern society. Most of the time, it leaves students unable to deal with their bullies, leaving them feeling helpless and alone. Fowler, Jordan and Camper (2014) conducted a study on 1825 students in four Universities in Florida, and discovered that 24.1 percent among the participants had been victims of cyberbullying during a period of 12 months. These numbers are not just shocking, but they also show that one in four people have experienced becoming victims of this scenario. This data is interesting because when it is compared with studies conducted among younger students, the numbers are unbelievably different. Welner, Van Heigen and Egger (2014) also found that among 2,458 13 to 14 year old students, less reported experiencing being cyberbullied. A similar discovery was also presented by Walsch and Grey (2011) who found that about 1052 12-18 year old students, 11.1 percent had admitted becoming victims of cyberbullying. This study concludes that the phenomenon of cyberbullying seems to be more prevalent among students as they get older. Wesley et al. (2014) also mentioned that 30.8 percent had fallen victims of the so-called traditional bullying.

This presents the question as to why there is less prevalence among younger students. One possible reason is that they may not have enough access to the methods and tools used in cyberbullying compared to what students at university level have. Another reason is that they may not be as exposed to technological advancements yet as the older ones. These continues to raise some questions regarding the problem of cyberbullying, and what classifies the student perpetrators, including their reasons for doing this to others.



People who bully. One important factor that should be given attention when analyzing the issue of cyberbullying is understanding the different types of people who are considered as the aggressors. The very first thing that should be discussed in analyzing is the matter of gender. Stallone and Van Westen (2010) discovered that when it comes to the issue of cyberbullying, males are less likely to become the aggressors with other males who are reported as victims of cyberbullying far more often compared to females. They also noted that 36.2 percent of the students were actually unaware of the actual gender of the bullies. This is quite intriguing because it is the very same percentage as the number of bullied males, and it only goes on to show that about 1 in 3 students do not know who their aggressors are, adding to the stigma and fear that is often associate with cyberbullying.

Types of victims. Various researchers have conducted their own studies regarding the types of people who become victims to cyberbullying. This is often called 'cybervictimology'. Allen and Cook (2013) performed a study, concluding that the gender of the victims greatly varied depending on the type of cyberbullying done. It has been discovered that males are usually the receivers of direct cyberbullying. On the other hand, females are more likely to be cyberbullied indirectly, such as being victims of online gossip. These findings seem to remain true in social norms where the males are often viewed as confrontational, while females are being stereotyped for gossiping.

While there are a few studies looking at the gender of the victims, several others do research on certain things like the characteristics and personalities of the victims. Fray et al (2014) discovered that there are a lot of reasons why people fall victims of cyberbullying. Among these reasons include their personal appearance, issues within peers, as well as contrasting views.



David, Randolph and Orion (2015) conducted a study involving victims, as well as their demographics, looking at the reasons why people are being cyberbullied. Some of the results in the study addressed several other reasons for being cyberbullied, discovering that 14 percent of the victims were bullied because of their sexual orientation.

All of these factors are highly important because they fit in to the classification of traditional bullying that a lot of people are familiar of. At the same time, it also shows that it now transcends to the cyberworld now. This further leads to more questions regarding the relationship between these two, and how cyberbullying has further influenced the way harassment is continuing.

Bully and victim relationship. The relationship that exists between the bully and the victim is another thing that is researched heavily among the professionals. Bayer and Lee (2009) performed a study involving 532 middle school students, concluding that just below half of the students fell prey to cyberbullying and traditional bullying. This also proves true among several other studies. Walter et. al. (2014) also concluded that those who were bullied in a traditional way had higher likelihood to falling victims to cyberbullying. An interesting relationship between the bullies and the victims is that studies also show that those who become victims have the tendency to become aggressors in the virtual world online.

References

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