CYBERBULLYING: RESPONSES OF ADOLESCENTS AND PARENTS TOWARD

DIGITAL AGGRESSION

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Cyberbullying is a category of bullying that occurs in the digital realm which affects our students at astonishing rates. Unlike traditional bullying, where displays of aggression may be evident to bystanders, the ramification of cyberbullying occurs through unconventional ways (e.g., text messaging; online weblogs; video sharing), which results in many cases being camouflaged by the advancement in technology. Nonetheless, the effects of this digital form of peer aggression can be as detrimental as face-to-face bullying. The characteristics of cyberbullying and its influences on adolescents and parents of adolescents were examined. The data accrued is based on an anonymous survey through one of the following methods: (a) paper-pencil survey for adolescent group with 37-question items on the adolescent questionnaire and (b) web-based survey for the parent group with 22-question items on the parent questionnaire. Each survey was systematically coded according to the participating group and assigned code numbers (i.e., 1 represents adolescent group and 2 represents parent group) was provided to ensure confidentiality of the study. Survey examined individual variables among the two target groups: (a) adolescents between 13 and 17 years of age and (b) parents of adolescents between 13 and 17 years of age. Specifically, individual variables examined include (a) demographics, (b) personal experiences, (c) vicarious experiences, and (d) preventative resources. A total of 137 participants (62 adolescents; 75 parents) responded to the survey. Results indicated that 90% of the participants from the adolescent group have reported to experience either as victims or

as bystanders of cyberbullying. In addition, 70% of the victims have been cyberbullied 1 to 2 times within a month period and 50% of the victims did not know the perpetrator. Secondly, 89% of parent participants indicated to be knowledgeable about the issues relating to cyberbullying and 89% reported to have no knowledge if their child has or has not been a victim of cyberbullying. Furthermore, qualitative findings of personal perspectives toward cyberbullying from each participating group are discussed. A review of literature is provided and results and analysis of the survey are discussed as well as recommendations for future research.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my "heavenly father"; may your will be done. To all the families that have been affected by cyberbullying; it is my hope that this dissertation be used as a tool to increase the awareness of this issue and provide a voice for all the silent victims. Dr. Lyndal M. Bullock (Major Professor): Dr. B, thank you for believing in me and being such an admirable mentor throughout my doctoral studies. It is truly an honor to learn from you and I am eternally grateful to be a permanent member of your doctorate family. Thank you for your time and guidance in sharing with me your expertise and wisdom in the field of special education. You have inspired me to achieve greater tasks in life and to believe that I too can leave a mark in this world like you have done for a number of years. Dr. Eric Fritsch (Minor Professor): Dr. Fritsch, thank you for your unconditional support and your willingness to share with me your expertise in criminal justice. I have gained a tremendous amount of knowledge from you and words cannot express how much I appreciate your involvement in my dissertation process. Thank you for always being there and believing in my passion for this research. Dr. Lloyd Kinnison (Committee Member): Dr. Kinnison, thank you for sharing with me your wisdom in the field of special education as well as in life! My Support Team (God's Blessings): To my family, thank you for all your support. To the LaBelle family, thank you for always being proud of me. To my special friends and colleagues: Jerry, Maureen, Beatrice, Marie, Andrea, Remi, Sylvia, Mrs. B, Jeanie, and Fred, thank you for your daily encouragement and support. Special thanks to my husband, Alex and BLo for being my fourth and fifth "committee members" and praying for me along the way.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

As society becomes more technologically advanced, we must become familiar with a new breed of bullying, *cyberbullying*, which affects students beyond the walls of our schools. Cyberbullying is the utilization of technological medium, such as the Internet, cellular phones, and social networking websites to exhibit aggressions toward an individual or a group of individuals (Belsey, 2004; Bhat, 2008). Evidence of cyberbullying manifests in nontraditional ways (e.g., text messaging, online polling websites), and as a result, can deteriorate an individual's sense of self, and hinders relationships with his/her peers (Keith & Martin, 2005).

According to the UCLA Internet Report (2003), which surveyed behavior and attitudes about Internet use and non-use of 2,000 households throughout the United States, it is estimated that 91% of children between 12 to 15 years old and almost 99 percent of adolescents between the ages of 16 to 18 use the Internet. According to Ybarra and Mitchell (2004a), the prevalence rates of Internet usage among youth continue to increase, as a result, demonstrations of online peer aggression (e.g., demeaning insults, threatening languages), have been taunted as contributing to high-profile bullying cases in 2003 and 2006. For examples: (a) Josh Patrick Halligan in 2003, Vermont (Halligan, 2009); and (b) Megan Meier in 2006, Missouri (Meier, 2009). These prominent cases are merely a glimpse of cyberbullying instances between the years of 2006 and 2008. In spite of the rise in the occurrences of cyberbullying, many individuals remain to perceive cyberbullying among adolescents as inconsequential (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009).

Statement of the Problem

The elevated prevalence rates of cyberbullying have emerged in the media spotlight across the United States. Consequently, suicidal ideations and death rates among adolescents continue to rise in the 21st century (e.g., Hinduja & Patchin, 2007; Raskauskas & Stoltz, 2007; Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004a). Research specific to cyberbullying remains to be relatively limited; however, the available findings continually support the significance of this emerging issue among school-aged children and youth (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009; National i-SAFE Survey, 2004). Through extended research, associated elements of cyberbullying would become more prominent and help prepare professionals as well as parents to contend with this digital form of aggression.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine the characteristics of cyberbullying and its influence on adolescents and parents of adolescents. Two specific groups were the focus of the study: (a) adolescents between 13 and 17 years of age and (b) parents of adolescents between 13 and 17 years of age. Individual variables examined included (a) demographics, (b) personal experiences, (c) vicarious experiences, and (d) preventative resources. Data were based on an anonymous survey through one of the following methods: (a) paper-pencil survey for adolescent group with 37-question items on the adolescent questionnaire and (b) Web-based survey for the parent group with 22-question items on the parent questionnaire. Each survey were systematically coded according to the participating group and assigned code numbers (i.e., 1 represent adolescent group and 2 represent parent group) were provided to ensure confidentiality of the study.

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Research Questions

The research questions of the study were organized into three sections. Section 1 focused on the personal and vicarious experiences of cyberbullying from the adolescent group. Section 2 inquired about the understanding of cyberbullying and experiences of parents with adolescents as victims, bystanders, and perpetrators of cyberbullying. Section 3 focused on responses toward preventative measures of cyberbullying from both the adolescent and parent groups.

Section 1 – Personal and Vicarious Experiences of Adolescents

Research Question 1: What are the rate, types of devices, and the differences in the effects of methodologies used on cyberbullying?

Research Question 2: To what extent do adolescents experience and respond as victims, bystanders, and perpetrators of cyberbullying?

Section 2 – Parental Understanding and Experiences

Research Question 3: To what extent do parents understand the ramifications related to cyberbullying?

Research Question 4: How do parents respond to their child as a victim, bystander, or perpetrator of cyberbullying?

Section 3 – Preventative Resources

Research Question 5: What preventative measures, if any, are implemented by parents when their child is a victim, bystander, and perpetrator of cyberbullying?

Research Question 6: Are there differences in the responses from adolescents and parents of adolescents in relation to the preventative measures of cyberbullying?

Significance

There is an apparent need to enhance the understanding of factors related to cyberbullying. The information derived from the proposed investigation may be utilized to increase awareness as well as the development of preventative strategies tailored to the specific needs of individuals affected by cyberbullying. Further, it is hoped that the findings of the study may be used to guide additional research of this prominent phenomenon that affects young people.

Limitations

Limitations of the study that may influence the generalizability of the results include the following: (a) the age restriction to the sample population of adolescents between 13 and 17 years old and parents of adolescents between 13 and 17 years old, (b) the sample population was based upon convenience sampling as opposed to randomized sampling, and (c) the sample population was restricted by the demographic location of the study.

Definition of Terms

Bullying: A form of abuse that is based on an imbalance of power (Campbell, 2005); may be physical, including behaviors such as hitting, punching, verbal assaults, and spitting (DiGiulio, 2001).

Cyberbullying: "Willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices" (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009, p. 5).

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Cyberbullying, an unfamiliar terminology for the general public, represents a unique phenomenon that creates lasting memories to those who are and who have experienced it (Kowalski, Limber, & Agatston, 2008). Cyberbullying is defined by Hinduja and Patchin (2009) as "willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices" (p. 5). As our society continues forward into the realm of advanced technology and communicative devices, accesses to the digital world for young people are immeasurable (Shariff, 2008). Unlike traditional bullying, where aggressive behaviors are exhibited face-to-face, cyberbullying presents novel challenges for parents and educators (Li, 2005). Researchers have noted the difficulties in convincing the general population about the significance of cyberbullying (e.g., Hinduja & Patchin, 2009; Kowalski et al., 2008; Shariff, 2008). However, with the heightened statistics relating to cases of cyberbullying, recognition of this imperative issue begins to surface across national headlines and government officials (Finn, 2004; Strom & Strom, 2005; Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004b). The purpose of this review is to examine the existing literature related to the effects of cyberbullying. The review will begin with a summary of issues and factors relating to (a) aggression and violence (i.e., definition and characteristics; etiology and risk factors; and functions), (b) bullying (i.e., characteristics and gender differences of bullies and victims; and effects), and (c) cyberbullying (i.e., definition and methods; characteristics, prevalence, effect; risk factors and involvement; and prevention/intervention). The timeframe of the literature review is based on professional journal articles, Educational Resources Information

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Center (ERIC) database, and scholarly works published within the period of 1990 to 2009.

<p style="text-align:center">Aggression and Violence</p>

Aggressive and violent behaviors perceives to be a relatively common phenomenon among school-age children and youth and the tolerance of these demonstration of threatening acts mirrors a certain amount of societal ambiguity (Van Acker, 1995). Moreover, increasing numbers of children and youth admit carrying weapons such as knives and bottles to defend themselves against peer violence and aggression ("Fear Factor," 2008). Yet, Americans are hesitant to enact meaningful legislation to protect these children and youth (Sullivan, Cleary, & Sullivan, 2004; Tolan & Guerra, 1994). Frequently, the media glamorizes violence and presents it as acceptable means of dealing with societal problems (Van Acker, 1995). A multitude of school shootings in conjunction with heightened media attention to violence in our schools has made prevention of violence a topic of national priority (Van Acker, 2007). Specifically, incidents of school shootings have been witnessed and experienced by the citizens of the United States between 1999 and 2007 (Butler & Platt, 2008). For examples: (a) Columbine High School in 1999 at Littleton, Colorado; (b) Santana High School in 2001 at Santee, California; (c) Red Lake High School in 2005 at Ojibwe Reservation, Minnesota; and (d) Virginia Tech in 2007 at Blacksburg, Virginia.

Efforts by lawmakers to reduce violence through recent federal legislative acts such as Zero Tolerance and the Gun Free Act of 1994 have done little to combat the problems associated with aggression and violence in our schools (Black, 2004; Grant & Van Acker, 2002; Skiba & Knesting, 2001). Gable and Van Acker (2004) noted

<p style="text-align:center">6</p>

interventions that have proven ineffective are those that utilize punitive disciplinary systems that focus on suspension and expulsion such as zero tolerance. Researchers persistently advocate for the development of effective prevention and intervention strategies to address aggression and violence in today's children and youth (Butler & Platt, 2008; Nickerson & Martens, 2008; Van Acker, 1995).

Definition and Characteristics

Literature has provided several explanations of aggression and violence, each phrased slightly different, but the fundamentals remain similar. For example, in examining aggression: (a) Rutherford (1995) defined it as gestural, verbal, or physical behavior that can cause physical, material, or psychological pain/injury to another person; (b) Van Acker (2007) stated aggression, though less extreme, can either be physical or verbal, and can result in physical, psychological, or emotional harm. Further, researchers have defined violence as the following: (a) Van Acker (1995) defined violence as serious behavior that could result in serious harm to people or property; and (b) Grant and Van Acker (2002) explained violence as aggressive acts that could cause serious harm such as aggravated assaults, rape, robbery, and homicide.

In addition, researchers have discussed several traditional types of school violence. For example, Gable and Van Acker (2004) identified three patterns of aggression: (a) impulsive aggression, which occurs suddenly and subsides quickly, (b) affective aggression, which involves intense anger and rage and typically seen among abused children, and (c) instrumental aggression, which is used to get one's way through intimidation, humiliation, coercion, and bullying. Furthermore, Van Acker (2007)

identified four types of adolescent violence that have specific implications for educational professionals: (a) situational violence, which is aggression that is a result of a specific situation or environmental issue such as overcrowding or overheating; (b) relationship disputes, described as aggressive acts perpetuated by an interpersonal dispute such as an argument between significant others; (c) predatory violence, which is intentional, premeditated violence for personal gain, such as bullying; and (d) psychological violence, which involves intentional and premeditated acts of violence but personal gain may be less obvious.

Etiology and Risk Factors

Warger (1995) stated that it is likely best to realize and accept that there is no single cause for violence and aggression, meaning there is no single remedy or cure. That is why some people resort to violence and others resolve their conflicts in more peaceful ways (Van Acker, 1995). Violence is a "heterogeneous phenomenon," which results from a complex interaction between biological, psychological, environmental, social, and behavioral factors (Guetzloe, 1995).

Moreover, "at-risk" implies that a child displays or has been exposed to a condition or an event that will increase the likelihood that he or she will engage in serious aggressive and violent behavior some time in his or her development (Grant & Van Acker, 2002). The risk factors for the development of violence and aggression include (a) individual influences, such as neurological, hormonal, or other physiological abnormalities stemming from genetics (Rutherford, 1995), (b) family influences, which includes poor parenting and child management practices (Cantrell & Cantrell, 1995), (c) peer influences, such as gang involvement and peer relations (Grant & Van Acker,

2002), (d) school influences, which involves classroom management procedures, school-wide discipline policies, and the nature of teacher interaction with aggressive and antisocial youth (Walker, Colvin, & Ramsey, 1995), and (e) community influences, which includes support and partnership through community agencies (Short, 1997).

Furthermore, there is no single factor that explains the extent and/or intensity of violent behavior (Grant & Van Acker 2002). Walker and colleagues (1995) identified several precipitating factors of violence. They explained that violent acts are typically preceded by one of three events, or a combination of temporal proximity, situational risk factors, and activating events. Grant and Van Acker (2002) indicated that these behaviors are complex, and only when (a) there is a convergence of a number of risk factors and (b) this convergence involves both individual and environment risk factors is it possible to predict aggressive or violent behavior. Ultimately, aggression and violence are learned behaviors that can be unlearned with the appropriate prevention and intervention measures (Grant & Van Acker, 2002).

Functions

For the most part, researchers indicated that children and youth do not simply choose to engage in problematic behavior without it serving a function (Grant & Van Acker, 2002; Nickerson & Martens, 2008). Violent and aggressive behaviors typically serve to meet specific legitimate needs; nevertheless, these behaviors often serve their desired function (Grant & Van Acker, 2002; Van Acker, 1993). With the passage of the 1997 amendments and the reauthorization in 2004, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA; U.S Department of Education, 2009), required schools to conduct functional assessments of behavior and to develop a behavioral intervention plan for

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any student with a disability or suspected of displaying an education disability in order to address behaviors that impact learning and prior to the enactment of certain disciplinary action (USDE, 2009). Moreover, Fagen and Wilkinson (1998) identified four functions: (a) achieving or maintaining status, (b) material gains, (c) power and control, and (d) social control.

Literature indicates that children and youth may feel disenfranchised from social institutions (e.g., family, church, school, community) and hold the belief that they must fight for their own existence and right the wrongs that have befallen them. For example, Grant and Van Acker (2002) found that children and youth are drawn to gain affiliation with gangs and the adoption of their street code with the purpose of achieving consistency and predictability in their lives. In addition, functions suggested that violence may be a very meaningful and effective means for children and youth to meet a number of legitimate developmental needs (Gable & Van Acker, 2004). Self-esteem, possession of material goods, power and control, justice, self-help, and independence are reasonable and honorable goals (Grant & Van Acker, 2002).

Furthermore, Tolan and Guerra (1994) noted that predatory violence, or that which is perpetrated intentionally as part of a pattern of criminal or antisocial behavior and generally results in some personal gain. Within the school setting, bullying and gangs are two forms of predatory violence (Grant & Van Acker 2002; Van Acker, 2007). Specifically, bullying is the intimidation coercion, and threats to safety and well-being; gangs and gang affiliation, especially those in disorganized and impoverished neighborhoods, provide youth with a sense of security (Van Acker, 2007).

Bullying

Bullying has been identified by researchers as the intention to hurt another person or behaving in a way that causes harm to others (Aresnio & Lemerise, 2004; Bosacki, Marini & Dane, 2006; Nucci, 2004). Historically, bullying was not seen as a problem that needed attention; but more recently it is accepted as a fundamental and normal part of childhood (Campbell, 2005; Limber & Small, 2003). Bullying among school-aged children and youth is not a new trend (Crothers & Kolbert, 2008; Olweus, Limber, & Mihalic, 1999). In the last two decades, however, this view has changed, schoolyard bullying and cyberbullying are seen as serious problems that warrant attention (Shariff, 2008). The advancement on school bullying has prompted researchers and educators to examine further the variables associated with this persistent issue. It was not until the early 1970s that it was made the object of systematic inquiry (Shariff, 2008). Research conducted during the period of 1993 and 2007 revealed the following: (a) an estimated one-fourth of all students were bullied (Lee, 1993); (b) more than 160,000 students missed school each day due to the fear of being bullied (Lee, 1993); and (c) 54% of 504 high school students in Grades 9 through 12 were bullied within the last thirty days (Holt & Espelage, 2007).

Characteristics and Gender Differences of Bullies and its Victims

Campbell (2005) defined bullying as a form of abuse that is based on an imbalance of power; it can be defined as a systematic abuse of power. Bullying may be physical, including behaviors such as hitting, punching and spitting, or it may involve verbal assault, teasing, ridicule, sarcasm and scapegoating (DiGiulio, 2001). Further, girls and boys display similar levels of bullying (Smith & Brain, 2000). However, boys

report bullying more often and generally engage in overt, physical forms of bullying, whereas, girls tend to engage in covert, psychological bullying (Pepler & Craig, 1997; Li, 2005). Nonetheless, there is existing evidence of a trend in increased physical bullying and violence by females (Smith, Cowie, Olafsson, & Leifooghe, 2002). Tremblay (1991) indicated that the disparity between genders is due to extensive focus on male aggression and lack of focus on female aggression. In addition, research suggests that male students are more likely to carry a weapon onto school property and they constitute 83 percent of all victims of school-related homicides or suicides (DiGiulio, 2001; Olweus, 1993). According to DiGiulio (2001), it was reported that boys are more likely to fight among themselves, whereas, girls fight with either sex (DiGiulio, 2001). Further, Holt and Espelage (2007) found that females are more likely to have experienced "psychological abuse in dating relationships" than males; and males are more likely to have experience "physical dating violence and childhood sexual abuse" than females.

Research specific to the characteristics of bullies and victims indicated various discrepancies. For example, The National Crime Prevention Council (1997) reported that perpetrators are generally unpopular, whereas, a number of more recent studies have confirmed that perpetrators exhibit high levels of leadership and confidence and are often popular with peers and teachers (e.g., Boulton, Trueman, & Flemington, 2002; DiGiulio, 2001). Specifically, DiGiulio (2001) found that perpetrators are popular with teachers because of their leadership skills and academic abilities, unlike the stereotypical bully who is perceived as being unpopular or rejected by their peers.

On the contrary, research relating to victims of bullies reported that individuals are targeted by bullies based on whether he/she is perceived as "different" or "odd" among the peer group (Boulton et al., 2002). Additional motivators for exclusion or being targeted by bullies include (a) race or religion (Andershed, Kerr, & Stattin, 2001); (b) socio-economic status (Butler & Platt, 2008); and (c) academic achievements (Drake, Price, & Telljohann, 2003). Further, the self-image of the bullies was found to be another motivator toward identifying potential victims. Interestingly, researchers found that victimizing others based on their differences allows the bully to gain status and fill an emotional void resulting from their personal lack of confidence or self-worth (Drake et al., 2003; Shariff, 2008).

Effects

Although most young people who carried out shootings took their own lives (e.g., Columbine and Virginia Polytechnic University), most of the shooters were victims of bullying by peers at some point in their lives (Butler & Platt, 2008).   In most cases, it was discovered that they resorted to violence only after the school administration repeatedly failed to intervene, as in the case of the shootings in Virginia and Columbine (Shariff, 2008). Furthermore, bully-victim cycles are found where individuals are both bullies and victims (Gini, 2008; Hunter & Boyle, 2002). Numerous surveys of students have found that face-to-face bullying by peers in school is a frequent experience for many children (Boulton et al., 2002; Bradshaw, Sawyer, & O'Brennan, 2007). For example, one in six children report being bullied at least once a week, with the estimated figure as high as 50% if the duration of the bullying is taken as lasting only one week (Bradshaw et al., 2007; Campbell, 2005). In 2001, Andershed and

colleagues found that out of 2915 participants (14 years of age) in their study, 40 percent of adolescents reported having been bullied at some time during their schooling. Whereas, Boulton and colleagues (2002) indicated the percentage of students in their study (*n*=170) report longer term bullying of six months or more, decreases to between 15% and 17%. Lastly, Shariff (2008) noted that typically only extreme bullying cases are reported by the media, thus giving an inaccurate picture of its frequency and seriousness.

Cyberbullying

Research on cyberbullying has emerged as society continues forward into the world of advanced technology and communicative devices. Cyberbullying among peers draws a significant amount of media attention, however, there have been few vocal calls by educators for strong action (Kowalski et al., 2008). Cyberbullying among students has been assumed to be an extension of traditional bullying that has nothing to do with school responsibilities because it generally takes place from home computers and personal cell-phones (Goddard, 2008). Furthermore, Juvonen and Gross (2008) indicated that certain peers possess a power advantage over their target(s) through physical or virtual aggression. Shariff (2008) emphasized that there is disagreement among parents and schools as to who is responsible for monitoring and preventing children and young people from bullying their peers online. Specifically, researchers noted that students, civil liberties advocates, and some parents defend student rights to free expression in cyberspace, whereas educators, teachers' unions, other parents and government officials want to restrict them (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009; Shariff, 2008).

Definition and Methods

Researchers have provided various perspectives in explaining the emerging phenomenon of cyberbullying. It is emphasized throughout the literature that the definition of cyberbullying must not be vague and the complexities about how and why each incident occurs should be considered. For example, Kowalski and colleagues (2008) defined cyberbullying as "the use of information and communication technologies such as email, cell-phone, instant messaging, websites, and defamatory online personal polling websites, to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behavior by an individual or group that is intended to harm others" (p. 43). While, Belsey (2004) defined cyberbullying as speech that is defamatory, constitutes bullying, harassment, or discrimination, discloses personal information, or contains offensive, vulgar or derogatory comments. Furthermore, researchers highlight the importance of educators and practitioners being cognizant of the fine line between youth expression that we generally accept when they interact among themselves and that which is truly harmful and offensive (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009; Kowalski et al., 2008; Shariff, 2008). Specifically, the commonality between all definitions of cyberbullying is the fact that communications technology tools and media are being used to engage in online bullying, that the communication is, as with general bullying, deliberate and willful, repeated and exclusionary in nature (Shariff, 2008).

Aftab (2006) identified two methods of cyberbullying: (a) direct cyberbullying, where messages are transmitted directly from the bully to the victim, and (b) cyberbullying by proxy, using others to participate in the bullying act toward the victim. Specifically, cyberbullying by proxy is exemplified when the bully alters the victim's

online accounts and email hateful messages to all of victim's friends; consequently, the victim would be accused by his/her friends of the hurtful messages and suffers from the consequences (Aftab, 2006). Presented below are descriptions of some common tools and technology where cyberbullying occurs:

1. E-mail: Sending threatening emails, and forwarding a confidential email to all address-book contacts, thus publicly humiliating the first sender (Anti-Defamation League, 2008; Hinduja & Patchin, 2009).

2. Chat rooms: Online environments where individuals directs damaging comments in real time (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009; Wiredsafety, 2009).

3. Voting/rating Websites: A website where bully uploads a photo of the victim and visitors can access to rate aspects of the victim's physical attractiveness or personality (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009).

4. Instant/text messaging: Text messaging of derogatory insults via cell phones or personal digital assistant (i.e., Blackberry and iphone), with bullies showing the message to others before sending it to the target (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009).

5. Photoshopping: Application to image or photo modifications; cyberbullies may use this tool to alter victim's photo and recreate an image with compromising features (Cyberbully Alert, 2009; Hinduja & Patchin, 2009).

6. Sexting: The sharing of sexual images and texts through cell phones (Brunker, 2009; Netsmartz, 2009).

Prevalence, Characteristics, and Effects

Ybarra and Mitchell (2004b) conducted telephone surveys of 1,501 Internet users between the ages of 10 and 17 and found that 15% of the respondents harassed others online and 7% were victims of cyberbullying. Furthermore, in 2006, Patchin and Hinduja conducted an online survey of 384 children and youths under the age of 18 and found that 29% of the respondents were victims of cyberbullying and 11% reported as perpetrators of cyberbullying. Ybarra, Mitchell, Wolak, and Finkelhor (2006) suggested that victims of cyberbullying were more likely than non-victims, to have social problems, and to be victimized in other situations. Further, Kowalski and Limber (2007) found that victims of cyberbullying were more likely to spend time using email, instant messaging, online shopping, and web surfing, than non-victims.

Other researchers found that accessibilities to electronic media allow for traditional forms of bullying to take on characteristics that are specific to cyberspace (Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Shariff, 2008). Several components of cyberbullying include (a) anonymity, (b) unlimited audience, (c) prevalent sexual and homophobic harassment, (d) permanence of expression, and (e) online social communication tools. Specifically, the anonymous nature of cyberspace allows the perpetrators to be shielded by screen names that protect their identity, which add to the challenges for schools (Kowalski et al., 2008). Further, the consequences of cyberbullying can impact learning in the school environment and can be psychologically devastating for victims and socially detrimental for all students (Bhat, 2008; Campbell, 2005).

Next, research suggested that 30% of onlookers and bystanders support perpetrators instead of victims (Boulton et al., 2002; Ma, Stewin, & Mah, 2001). As a

result, the longer the bullying persists, the more bystanders join in the abuse (Ma et al., 2002; Nickerson & Martens, 2008), which creates an imbalance between the power of victim and perpetrators (Shariff, 2008). Furthermore, cyberspace can easily be accessed globally; therefore, the received information can be distributed across the world within a few seconds (Kowalski et al., 2008). Consequently, the widespread of information through cyberspace can alter an individual's psychological and social well being within a split second (Keith & Martin, 2005).

Further, Shariff (2008) indicated that the sexual and homophobic harassment is emerging as a prevalent aspect of cyberbullying. Specifically, Herring (2002) indicated several types of the specified issue (a) online contact leading to offline abuse, (b) cyber stalking, (c) online harassment, and (d) degrading online representations of women through words or images that invite disrespect or put-downs. In addition, Adam (2001) found that the majority of perpetrators in cases of cyber-violence are men and majority of victims are women. It was indicated that as many as one in three female children reported having been harassed online (Adam, 2001). Further, Finkelhor, Mitchell, and Wolak (2000) found that among children, girls appear to be targeted twice as much as boys.

Another component of cyberbullying relates to the permanence of online communication and its difficulty to completely erase stored information (Shariff, 2008). Researchers noted the inseparability of cellular phones, which makes it more difficult for victims to ignore waiting inappropriate messages (Finkelhor et al., 2000; Herring, 2002). In addition, an insecure transfer of emails or photographs on personal computers can be easily downloaded or saved at another's desk or laptop computers (Herring, 2002).

Moreover, online social communications tools (e.g., MySpace, Facebook, YouTube) manifested into popular networking devices that attract millions of individuals that have access to the world-wide web. Specifically, within three years since the launch of Facebook, it has become the sixth most trafficked site in the United States, with more than 19 million registered users, and one percent of all Internet time is spent on Facebook.com (Kowalski et al., 2008). Especially for girls, who engage in more social and verbal form of communication, these networking tools are perfect avenues to connect with friends but also can be utilized as a way to exclude peers, harass, and demean them (Shariff, 2008).   Interestingly, researchers identified a hierarchy between Facebook and MySpace users based on socio-economic class differences. It was noted that Facebook users were perceived as "good kids, who are from families that are wealthier and emphasize a college education, are predominately white, take honors classes and live in a world dictated by after school activities"; while MySpace users were perceived as "geeks, from lower-income families and do not have high values in college education" (Boyd & Jenkins, 2006; Harris, 2007).

Additionally, researchers have noted that the characteristics and effects of cyberbullying can be highly complicated and variable depending on the victim as well as the perpetrator (Shariff, 2008). However, the effects of cyberbullying tend to parallel those of traditional bullying (Kowalski et al., 2008). Victims of traditional schoolyard bullying often report feelings of depression, low self-esteem, helplessness, social anxiety, alienation, and social ideation (Ybarra et al., 2006).   Although very little research exists to-date, victims of cyberbullying seem to report similar effects of their victimization (Kowalski et al., 2008). Specifically, data from the Youth Internet Safety

Survey (YISS-1; Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004a) highlight the emotional turmoil as being the victims of cyberbullying. Of the data accrued from 1,501 Internet users between the ages of 10 and 17, 33% of those who were bullied online, 16% reported feeling emotionally distressed and indicated highest levels of stress. A follow-up study was conducted on the YISS; findings revealed that 38% of the harassed youth (135) reported distress as a result of an incident (YISS-2; Ybarra et al., 2006).

Further, researchers have discussed the lack of longitudinal data on the effects of cyberbullying, however, they suggest that the lasting effects of cyberbullying are just as bad, if not worse, than those that accompany traditional bullying (Ybarra et al., 2006). Specifically, Keith and Martin (2005) indicated that a child who is electronically bullied is never really free unless he or she ceases to communicate electronically. In comparison to traditional bullying, the public nature of cyberbullying heightens the potential negative impact of cruelty relative to traditional bullying (Kowalski et al., 2008).

Risk Factors and Involvement

In regards to research on parental involvement and cyberbullying, a survey by i-SAFE America (2005-2006) found that while 93% of parents felt they had a good idea of what their child was doing on the Internet, 41% of students in Grades 5-12 said they did not share with their parents what they do or where they go online. A year prior, i-SAFE America (2004-2005) indicated 52% of children prefer to surf the Internet alone. Furthermore, it was found that older adults are less familiar and less likely to have a profile on a social networking site, thus leading to a situation where young people are virtually unsupervised as they develop their online profile (Kowalski et al., 2008). Additionally, researchers have noted some warning signs that may indicate a child is

being victimized by cyberbullies or other associated problems, such as: (a) child appears upset after being online, (b) child appears upset after viewing a text message, (c) child withdraws from social interaction with peers, and (d) possible drop in academic performance (Keith & Martin, 2005).

Further, Kowalski and colleagues (2008) provided recommendations for parents in addressing cyberbullying. These recommendations include: (a) saving evidence, such as printing out any threatening or harassing emails or instant messages that they receive; (b) reporting techniques, which includes knowing when to ignore, block, or react, being mindful of the language being utilized and respond appropriately; (c) tracking strategies, such as tracing emails and text messages, become familiar with tracing or blocking options; (d) controlling options, such as request that the web site or social networking site remove the offensive material; and (e) reporting methods, which includes contacting the parents of the cyberbully and appropriate authorities.

Parents are encouraged to take a proactive approach by informing schools of incidences of cyberbullying. Researchers suggested that it would be helpful if parents provided the school with a copy of the evidence of cyberbullying and share it with school counselors or administrators (Campbell, 2005; Keith & Martin, 2005). Although schools may not be able to administer consequences for cyberbullying occurring outside of school premises, it is possible that incidents (cyberbullying or traditional bullying) are occurring on campus as well (Kowalski et al., 2008).

By providing the school with evidence of cyberbullying, the administration can monitor the potential bullying situation more closely and, where necessary, implement a school safety plan for the student (Campbell, 2005; Shariff, 2008). If offenses are

determined to be occurring using school technology, the school district has a responsibility to address the situation. Researchers suggested that these incidents should be documented by the parents who often provide the counselors or administrators with information about when and where incidents occur. If one student is using a cellular phone to cyberbully another student while at school, the administration may be able to intervene as well (Kowalski et al., 2008). Furthermore, literature has suggested general strategies in enhancing the awareness of cyberbullying in school. These include: (a) provide staff training on cyberbullying, (b) develop common goal and definition of cyberbullying across all levels of school personnel, (c) present clear rules and policies about cyberbullying, (d) encourage the reporting of cyberbullying, (e) distribute resources with parents, (f) allocate class time on the topic of cyberbullying, (g) educate students about online etiquette, (h) provide training and student mentorship, and (i) encourage partnership between the community, parents, and schools (Keith & Martin, 2005; Kowalski et al., 2008; Shariff, 2008).

Prevention/Intervention Strategies

Kowalski and colleagues (2008) provided nine intervention tips for responding to cyberbullying. These include:

1. Save the evidence, print copies of messages and web sites.

2. For a first offense, if minor in nature, ignore, delete or block the sender.

3. If a fake or offensive profile targeting your child is set up on a social networking site, report it to the site host.

4. Investigate your child's online presence.

5. If the perpetrator is another student, share evidence with the school personnel.

6. If the perpetrator is known and cyber bullying is continuing, contact the child's parents and share your evidence.

7. If the parent of perpetrator is unresponsive and the behavior continues, contact an attorney or seek legal advice.

8. Report the cyberbullying to the police.

9. If your child expresses emotional distress or thoughts of self-harm seek help from a school counselor or other mental health professional immediately.

In addition, education is a key component for prevention and intervention in regards to cyberbullying. Researchers have noted that adults cannot give a message one time and expect that children have received it appropriately. Specifically, Kowalski and colleagues (2008) conducted a focus group that asked students about strategies adults could implement to prevent cyberbullying. The following methods were communicated to researchers: (a) provide age-appropriate guidelines, (b) communicate about appropriate ways to deal with conflict, (c) observe children's use of the Internet, (d) provide supervision, not snoopervision, (e) examine warning signs, and (f) educate themselves.

Further, researchers (e.g., Keith & Martin, 2005; Shariff, 2008) stressed that parents and educators can find ways to engage youth in using popular technologies in meaningful ways. Specifically, incorporating popular youth technology would be to teach youth how to use a social networking site to promote themselves in a positive manner that would appeal to prospective admissions counselors, employers and peers

(Keith & Martin, 2005). In addition, educators can develop lessons that teach students to appropriately post their opinions on blogging sites using topics that engage youth such as the environment, politics, and community service (Hinduja & Patchin, 2007).

Although the Internet can be a hazardous environment for children, there are many web sites that provide great learning tools for parents attempting to learn more about monitoring their child's Internet use (O'Moore & Minton, 2005). These websites include (a) Netsmartz.org, (b) WiredSafety.org, (c) i-SAFE.org, and (d) iKeepSafe.org, which provide guidelines for parents on how to supervise their children on the Internet. In addition, the Department of Health and Human Resources, Health Resources and Services Administration have provided the Stop Bullying Now Campaign, which provide helpful tips for parents on bullying and cyber-bullying intervention (Woods & Wolke, 2003). In addition, researchers have suggested that parents "google" their children's names occasionally to see what is and isn't posted online (Shariff, 2008).

Conclusion

As research on the topic of cyberbullying continues to develop, presumably programs and policies will be put in place with the intent of decreasing the incidence of cyberbullying (Shariff, 2008). As with traditional bullying, it is unlikely that cyberbullying will disappear completely. Thus, additional research using a variety of methodologies is needed to investigate the characteristics of targets and perpetrators of cyberbullying (Kowalski et al., 2008). As indicated in the literature, researchers provided various tips and strategies for parents and educators in responding to cyberbullying. However, the findings emphasized that punishing the victim by banning his or her use of technology or telling students that educators are not able to intervene in cyberbullying situation will

cause more damage than good (Hinduja & Patchin, 2007). Specifically, the lack of

support and action on the part of the adults may led to a failure of young people to trust

adults to respond in a helpful manner, thus discouraging their reporting of abuse

(Kowalski et al., 2008). Furthermore, by taking a proactive approach in collaborating

and educating parents, school personnel, and citizens in the communities about

cyberbullying would be one step toward prevention of this evolving issue.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

Chapter 3 discusses the methodology that was used in the investigation,

including (a) instrument and measurement, (b) target population and sample selection,

(c) data collection, and (d) data analysis.

Statement of the Problem

The elevated prevalence rates of cyberbullying have emerged in the media

spotlight across the United States. Consequently, suicidal ideations and death rate

among adolescents continue to rise in the 21st century (e.g., Hinduja & Patchin, 2007;

Raskauskas & Stoltz, 2007; Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004a). Research specific to

cyberbullying remains to be relatively limited; however, the available findings continually

support the significance of this emerging issue among school-aged children and youth

(Hinduja & Patchin, 2009; National i-SAFE Survey, 2004). Through extended research,

associated elements of cyberbullying would become more prominent and help prepare

professionals as well as parents to contend with this digital form of aggression.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine the characteristics of cyberbullying and

its influence on adolescents and parents of adolescents. Two specific groups were the

focus of the study: (a) adolescents between the ages of 13 to 17 years of age and (b)

parents of adolescents between the ages of 13 to 17 years of age. Individual variables

examined included (a) demographics, (b) personal experiences, (c) vicarious

experiences, and (d) preventative resources. Data were based on an anonymous

survey through one of the following methods: (a) paper-pencil survey for adolescent

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group with 37-question items on the adolescent questionnaire and (b) web-based survey for the parent group with 22-question items on the parent questionnaire. Each survey was systematically coded according to the participating group and assigned code numbers (i.e., 1 represent adolescent group and 2 represent parent group) were provided to ensure confidentiality of the study.

Research Questions

The research questions of the study were organized into three sections. Section 1 focused on the personal and vicarious experiences of cyberbullying from the adolescent group. Section 2 inquired about the understanding of cyberbullying and experiences of parents with adolescents as victims, bystanders, and perpetrators of cyberbullying. Section 3 focused on responses toward preventative measures of cyberbullying from both the adolescent and parent groups.

Section 1 – Personal and Vicarious Experiences of Adolescents

Research Question 1: What are the rate, types of devices, and the differences in the effects of methodologies used on cyberbullying?

Research Question 2: To what extent do adolescents experience and respond as victims, bystanders, and perpetrators of cyberbullying?

Section Two – Parental Understanding and Experiences

Research Question 3: To what extent do parents understand the ramifications related to cyberbullying?

Research Question 4: How do parents respond to their child as a victims, bystanders, and perpetrators of cyberbullying?

Section 3 – Preventative Resources

Research Question 5: What preventative measures, if any, are implemented by parents when their child is a victim, bystander, and perpetrator of cyberbullying?

Research Question 6: Are there differences in the responses from adolescents and parents of adolescents in relation to the preventative measures of cyberbullying?

Subjects

The target populations were (a) adolescents between 13 and 17 years of age and (b) parents of adolescents between 13 and 17 years of age. The sample participants were recruited through either recommendations or referrals from community-based agencies.

Instrumentation

A combination of previous literature (e.g., Hinduja & Patchin, 2009; Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Kowalski et al., 2008; Kowalski & Limber, 2007) and web-based resources (e.g., Anti-Defamation League, 2008; Netsmartz, 2009) on cyberbullying, were used as a guide for the development of the parent and adolescent questionnaires in the study. Question stems were formed to accurately reflect the current trends of technological mediums and to assist in answering the specific research questions. For example, the answer stems for selected questions were designed to accommodate the appropriate age range for the participating groups. In addition, the answer choices for questions relating to social networking sites were written to mirror the current advancement in technology (e.g., Facebook, Twitter). Further, questions were generated by the researcher for the surveys that reflect the concerns and comments available through

cyberbullying websites. For example, questions regarding the current methods of cyberbullying, "sexting" and "polling," were included in the surveys.

Two survey instruments were developed for the study: (a) adolescent questionnaire, which is an anonymous, paper-pencil instrument for the adolescent group with 37-items and (b) parent questionnaire, which is a web-based instrument for the parent group with 22-items. Four components were included in both surveys: (a) demographics, (b) personal experiences, (c) vicarious experiences, and (d) preventative resources. Definition of bullying (Campbell, 2005; DiGiulio, 2001) and cyberbullying (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009) were included on the front page of the survey to help clarify their meanings. Contact information for free help lines and related services for cyberbullying were provided at the end of both questionnaires for any participant in need for additional support.

Both questionnaires included open-ended and closed-ended questions. Open-ended questions were utilized to query participants about details of their cyberbullying experiences and additional comments. Closed-ended questions were utilized to query demographic information and variables relating to cyberbullying. To address the responses of participants relating to preventative measures, questions were rated on a Likert scale from "not involved" to "highly involved."

Pilot Study

In order to ensure the face validity and readability of the instrument, a pilot study was conducted. Three individuals with knowledge and expertise related to aggression and bullying, as well as digital communication, were invited to review the instruments. Their comments and suggestions were reviewed and incorporated into the instruments;

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thus, resulting in the instruments to be used in the study. Further, three adults, who were parents of adolescents, and three adolescents were invited to review the instruments for clarity and readability. No suggestions were made for revision from all reviewers of the instrument.

Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected through one of the following methods: (a) paper-pencil survey for adolescents with 37-question items on the adolescent questionnaire and (b) web-based survey for the parents with 22-question items on the parent questionnaire. Each survey was systematically coded according to the participating group (i.e., 1 as adolescent group and 2 as parent group).

Adolescent Group

Participant recruitment from the adolescent group began with the inclusion of an invitation of the upcoming adolescent survey within each of the participating community-based agencies' weekly announcements (see Appendix A). Included within this invitation was a reminder for parent(s) that detailed parental consent forms would be sent home with their child in the near future. Shortly after the weekly announcements were distributed, the researcher visited various youth groups from the participating community-based agencies. During this visit, adolescents were informed of the proposed research and were invited to participate. Next, the parental consent forms (see Appendix B) were distributed to each interested participant. Individuals who were interested in participating in the study was asked to have their parent(s) sign their parental consent form and then return it to their youth group meeting within one week.

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Participants were asked to place their signed parental consent form in a sealed box with a slot at the front office of their community-based agency.

Following a week time period for adolescents to return their signed parental consent forms, the researcher returned to each participating community-based agency to administer the cyberbullying survey. The paper-pencil surveys were administered during the adolescents' weekly scheduled youth meetings. The survey took 10 to 15 minutes to complete. Prior to survey administration, youth directors were consulted to determine an appropriate time and location for their adolescents to complete the survey. Regardless of the specific location chosen, efforts were taken to ensure tables were spread out from one another to help ensure participant confidentiality. Moreover, the youth directors were not present while the survey was being administered and collected. At the conclusion of the survey, participants were asked to place completed surveys into a sealed box with a slot.

Parent Group

Participant recruitment from the parent group began with the inclusion of the upcoming parent survey within each of the participating community-based agencies' weekly announcements (see Appendix A). A brief overview of the study and a hyperlinked invitation to participate in the survey was provided in the announcement. Through the hyperlinked invitation, participants were able to view the informed consent form (see Appendix B) and survey via any personal computer meeting the minimum technological requirements with an Internet connection. Prior to the start of the parent survey, participants were asked to read and consent to participate in the proposed study by clicking on the appropriate button. Access to the parent survey (see Appendix C)

was denied without agreement of the informed consent. Upon reading the question

items in the survey, participants were asked to indicate their responses by clicking on

the appropriate button. Additionally, the final survey item contained an open text box

section in which participants were able to enter additional comments. At the conclusion

of the survey, participants were able to click the submit button to forward the completed

survey to a database which was hosted on a University of North Texas (UNT) server.

Finally, the study was approval by the Institutional Review Board at UNT (See Appendix

D).

Data Analysis

Data accrued from adolescent and parent groups were exported to a

computerized spreadsheet and entered into a computer application for statistical

analysis. A comparative analysis examined (a) responses on the personal and vicarious

experiences of cyberbullying from the adolescent group, (b) parental responses in

relation to the understanding of cyberbullying and experiences of parents with

adolescents as victims, bystanders, and perpetrators of cyberbullying, and (c)

responses of preventative resources of cyberbullying between the adolescent and

parent groups.

Additionally, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to examine any possible

relationships or associations between items in the collected data. Furthermore, an

analysis between the two specified groups was conducted to examine any possible

relationships or associations between items in the preventative measures section of the

survey.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF DATA AND DISCUSSION

The study reported herein was conducted with the intent of examining the characteristics of cyberbullying and its influence on adolescents and parents of adolescents. The data were collected through an anonymous survey through one of the following methods: (a) paper-pencil survey for adolescent group with 37-question items on the adolescent questionnaire and (b) web-based survey for the parent group with 22-question items on the parent questionnaire. Each survey was systematically coded according to the participating group and assigned code numbers (i.e., 1 as adolescent group and 2 as parent group) were provided to ensure confidentiality of the study.

Demographic Information

Demographic information is provided to enhance the understanding of the data results of the survey. A total of 137 participants (62 adolescents; 75 parents) responded to the survey. The data indicated 24 (39%) adolescent participants were male between the ages of 13 to 17, and 38 (61%) adolescent participants were female between the ages of 13 to 17. In addition, the data from the parent group indicated 18 (24%) were male between the ages of 36 to 61, and 57 (76%) were female between the ages of 30 to 76. Table 1 delineates the demographic data (i.e., gender and ethnicity) for the respective groups.

Table 1

Demographic Information for Adolescent Group and Parent Group

Adolescent Group (*n*=62)		
Gender	*n*	%
Male	24	39
Female	38	61
Ethnicity		
Asian or Pacific Islander	36	58
Black or African American	2	3
Hispanic or Latin American	1	2
White or Caucasian	18	29
Inter-racial	5	8
Gender and Ethnicity		
Male, Asian or Pacific Islander	14	22
Male, Black or African American	0	0
Male, Hispanic or Latin American	0	0
Male, White or Caucasian	7	11
Male, Inter-racial	3	5
Female, Asian or Pacific Islander	22	35
Female, Black or African American	2	3
Female, Hispanic or Latin American	2	3
Female, White or Caucasian	11	18
Female, Inter-racial	3	5
Parent Group (*n*=75)		
Gender	*n*	%
Male	18	24

(*table continues*)

Table 1 (*continued*)

Parent Group (*continued*)		
Female	57	76
Ethnicity	*n*	%
Asian or Pacific Islander	16	21
Black or African American	5	7
Hispanic or Latin American	5	7
White or Caucasian	46	61
Inter-racial	3	4
Gender and Ethnicity		
Male, Asian or Pacific Islander	6	9
Male, Black or African American	1	1
Male, Hispanic or Latin American	0	0
Male, White or Caucasian	9	12
Male, Inter-racial	2	3
Female, Asian or Pacific Islander	10	13
Female, Black or African American	4	5
Female, Hispanic or Latin American	5	7
Female, White or Caucasian	37	49
Female, Inter-racial	1	1

Accessibility and Usage of Technological Devices and Social Networking Mediums

Participants in the adolescent group were asked to response to inquiries relating to the accessibility and usage of technological devices (i.e., computer and cellular phone). Overall, 62 (100%) adolescents reported to have access to a computer at home, 30 (48%) participants use computers at home 2 to 4 hours per day, 59 (95%) adolescents reported to have computer access at school, 56 (90%) adolescents use computers at school less than one hour per day, 52 (84%) adolescents reported to have

a cellular phone, 43 (69%) participants use cellular phone between 1 to 6 hours per day.

Additionally, 42 (68%) adolescents reported to be members of multiple social

networking websites (i.e., Facebook, MySpace, Friendster), 51 (82%) adolescents

reported to have Instant Messaging (IM) accounts, and 23 (37%) adolescents reported

to have multiple IM accounts (i.e., Yahoo, Gchat, AOL).

Academic Variables: Adolescent Group

Adolescents were asked to indicate their academic average. Self-report data

indicated that participants are enrolled in school between the grade levels of 6th to 12th.

In addition, the result indicated that 56 (90%) adolescents have above academic

average (80% or higher) and 6 (10%) adolescents have academic average of (60 to

79%).   Table 2 delineates the academic variables according to the participants from the

adolescent group.

Table 2

Academic Variables Among Adolescents (n=62)

Grade Levels	*n*	%
6th grade	4	6
7th grade	13	21
8th grade	14	23
9th grade	11	18
10th grade	12	19
11th grade	6	10
12th grade	2	3
Academically Above average (80% or higher)	56	90
Academically Average (60% to 79%)	6	10
Below average (Below 60%)	0	0

Analysis of Data and Discussion

The aforementioned demographics are informational and only serve to complement the data accrued in regards to the research questions of the study. The data accrued will be discussed in three sections. Section 1 will focus on the responses of the survey in relation to the personal and vicarious experiences of cyberbullying from the adolescent group. Section 2 will focus on the parental responses of the survey in relation to the understanding of cyberbullying and experiences of parents with adolescents as victims, bystanders, and perpetrators of cyberbullying. Section 3 will focus on the responses of the survey in relation to the preventive measures of cyberbullying between the adolescent and parent groups.

Section 1 – Personal and Vicarious Experiences of Adolescents

Research Question 1: What are the rate, types of devices, and the differences in the effects of methodologies used on cyberbullying?

As noted in Table 3, a total of 20 (32%) adolescents reported to have experienced cyberbullying. The demographic results of the victims of cyberbullying are: 8 (40%) are males and 12 (60%) are females; 8 (40%) adolescents represent Asians or Pacific Islander origin, 7 (35%) adolescents represent Caucasian origin, 3 (15%) adolescents represent Inter-racial origin, 1 (5%) adolescent represents Black or African American origin, and 1 (5%) adolescent represents the Hispanic or Latin American origin. In addition, 19 (95%) adolescents reported academically above average (80% or higher) and 1 (5%) adolescent reported academically average (60%-79%).

Table 3

Demographic Information Among Adolescent Victims of Cyberbullying (n=20)

Gender	*n*	%
Male	8	40%
Female	12	60%
Ethnicity		
Asian or Pacific Islander	8	40
Black or African American	1	5
Hispanic or Latin American	1	5
Caucasian	7	35
Inter-racial	3	15
Academically Above average (80% or higher)	19	95
Academically Average (60% to 79%)	1	5

As noted in Table 4, adolescents were provided a list of common types of devices used in cyberbullying. The responses provided by the participants reflected a diverse range technological medium used in cyberbullying with 12 (60%) participants indicated being cyberbullied via social networking websites. In addition, 11 (55%) victims of cyberbullying reported to have been victimized by more than one type of devices.

Table 4

Technological Medium Used in Cyberbullying Among Adolescent Victims (n=20)

	n^*	%
Email	4	20
Instant messaging	11	55
	(*table continues*)	

Table 4 (*continued*)

	*n**	%
Text Message by a cellular phone	7	35
Online game	6	30
Picture or webcam	0	0
Social networking sites	12	60

*Participants were allowed to select more than one device.

As noted in Table 5, adolescents were also asked to select from a list of common types of perpetrators that may be responsible to their cyberbullying experience. The responses by the participants indicated that 10 (50%) were cyberbullied by someone they do not know and 4 (20%) were reported to have been cyberbullied by more than one perpetrator.

Table 5

Types of Perpetrator Among Adolescent Victims (n=20)

	*n**	%
By friend	7	35
By people/person at their school	6	30
By people/person at another school	2	10
By people/person outside of school	4	20
By someone they do not know	10	50

*Participants were allowed to select more than one perpetrator.

As noted in Table 6, adolescents were questioned about the frequency and duration of their cyberbullying experience. The responses by the participants indicated that 14 (70%) have been cyberbullied 1 to 2 times within the last 30 days, and 15 (75%) have been victimized for a period of less than 3 months. In addition, survey results

indicated that 5 (25%) victims reported to have been bullied in person by the person who bullied them online.

Table 6

Frequency and Duration of Victimization Among Adolescents (n=20)

Frequency	*n*	%
1-2 times within the last 30 days	0	0
3-5 times within the last 30 days	24	30
2-3 times more than 30 days ago	2	2
Duration		
Less than 3 months	15	75
Between 6 months to 1 year	3	15
1 to 3 years	2	10

In addition, adolescents were asked to indicate their reactions toward cyberbullying. Results revealed that 17 (85%) of cyberbullying victims have received messages via electronic devices that were threatening in nature. When inquired about their response to the threatening messages, 14 (70%) victims ignored the messages, 7 (35%) victims either wrote the perpetrator back or told a trusted adult about the messages, and 5 (25%) victims utilized more than one responses. The responses by the participants are listed in Table 7.

Table 7

Responses From Adolescent Victims of Cyberbullying (n=20)

	n^*	%
Wrote him/her back	5	25
Ignored the message	14	70
	(table continues)	

Table 7 (*continued*)

	*n**	%
Deleted the message	7	35
Told a trusted adult about the message	2	10

*Participants were allowed to select more than one response.

Adolescents were asked to indicate their feelings as being victims of
cyberbullying. Results revealed that 9 (45%) felt angry, 4 (20%) did not want to go back
to school after the incidents, and 9 (45%) reported no feeling toward the incidents.
Table 8 discusses the results in more detail.

Table 8

Feelings Among Adolescent Victims of Cyberbullying (n=20)

	*n**	%
Sad/hurt	7	35
Angry	9	45
Embarrassed	4	20
Afraid	1	5
Anxious	2	10
Did not want to go back to school	4	20
Blamed themselves	1	5
Did not bother me**	9	45

*Participants were allowed to select more than one feeling.
***p* =.001; there is statistical differences between gender in
   this particular feeling; 8 males and 1 female.

As noted in Table 9, adolescents were asked if they had told someone about the
cyberbullying incidents; if so, did the process helped and if not, what were the reasons
in choosing not to share with someone.   Results indicated 9 (45%) did not report to
anyone, 6 (30%) participants told a friend, and 6 (30%) participants told a parent about

their victimization. In addition, 16 (80%) participants reported that telling someone about their victimization helped. On the contrary, participants who refrained from telling someone about their victimization reported that they did not think it would help (40%), did not know who the bully was (25%) or thought by telling someone would make the matter worse (15%).

Table 9

Reporting and Non-Reporting Among Adolescent Victims of Cyberbullying (n=20)

Reporting	*n**	%
Did nothing	9	45
Confronted the person who did it	1	5
Told a parent	6	30
Told a teacher	2	10
Told a friend	6	30
Telling someone was helpful	16	80
Not Reporting		
Did not think it would help	8	40
Did not have any proof	1	5
Did not know who the bully was	5	25
Thought would get punish by parents	2	10
Thought it would make the matter worse	3	15

*Participants were allowed to select more than one choice.

Research Question 2: To what extent do adolescents experience and respond as victims, bystanders, and perpetrators of cyberbullying?

As noted in Table 10, adolescents were asked if they know of someone who has been victims of cyberbullying and their response as bystanders of the cyberbullying

incidents.   Results indicated 36 (58%) participants know of someone who has been

cyberbullied. In addition, 16 (44%) participants reported to have ignored the

cyberbullying incident, 6 (36%) participants reported to have joined in the cyberbullying

incident and 8 (22%) participants watched but did not participate in the cyberbullying

incident.

Table 10

Responses Among Adolescents on Vicarious Experience of Cyberbullying (n= 36)

	n*	%
I watched but didn't participate	8	22
I joined in	6	36
I ignored it	16	44
I told the bully to stop	7	19
I told a parent	1	3
I told a teacher	4	11
I told a friend	4	11
I told someone online	1	3

*Participants were allowed to select more than one feeling.

Comparatively, results from the victims of cyberbullying indicated that 15 (75%)

have experienced both being victims and bystanders of cyberbullying. Additionally, 56

(90%) participants reported to experience being either victims or bystanders of

cyberbullying.

Section 2 – Parental Understanding and Experiences

Research Question 3: To what extent do parents understand the ramifications relating

to cyberbullying?

Research Question 4: How do parent(s) respond to their child as a victim, bystander, or perpetrator of cyberbullying?

Parents were asked to provide a response in relation to their own awareness of cyberbullying. Overall, 67 (89%) parents indicated being knowledgeable, while 8 (11%) parents reported to have no knowledge with the issue of cyberbullying. When inquired about if the parents talk to their children about the potential danger being online, 68 (91%) parents have and 7 (9%) parents have not talk with their children about online danger. In addition, 46 (61%) parents utilize and 29 (39%) parents did not utilize parental controls on their child's computer.

Table 11 delineates the parents' responses in relation to social networking websites and text/instant messaging. Overall, 72 (96%) parents indicated as being familiar and 3 (4%) parents indicated as being unfamiliar with social networking websites such as MySpace and Facebook. In addition, 67 (89%) parents reported as being aware of and 8 (11%) parents are not aware of their child's account on a social networking site. Further, 53 (79%) parents monitor and 14 (21%) parents do not monitor their child's account on a social networking site. Moreover, 41 (62%) parents reported to have access to their child's user name and password as one of the methodologies in monitoring their child's account on a social networking site. In regards to text or instant messaging, 41 (55%) parents monitor and 34 (45%) parents do not monitor their child's text or instant messaging. Twenty-nine (72%) parents review their child's text or instant messaging logs with their child's permission, and 28(68%) parents indicated that they build channels of open communication with their child.

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Table 11

Parental Knowledge, Experience, and Response on Cyberbullying, Social Networking Sites, and Monitoring Methodologies (n= 75)

Cyberbullying	*n*	%
I am aware of cyberbullying	67	89
I am NOT aware of cyberbullying	8	11
I talk to my children about the dangers online	68	91
I do NOT talk to my children about the dangers online	7	9
I utilize parental controls on my child's computer	46	61
I do NOT utilize parental controls on my child's computer	29	39
Social Networking Sites		
I am familiar with social networking sites	72	96
I am NOT familiar with social networking sites	3	4
I am aware of my child's account on a social networking site	67	89
I am NOT aware of my child's account on a social networking site	8	11
Monitoring		
I monitor my child's account on a social networking site	53	79
I do NOT monitor my child's account on a social networking site	14	21
I monitor my child's text or instant messaging	41	55
I do NOT monitor my child's text or instant messaging	34	45
Monitoring Methodology*		
I am a friend of my child's social networking site with their knowledge	30	45
I am a friend of my child's social networking site without their knowledge	1	1
I have access to my child's user name and password	41	62
I supervise my child's online activities	37	55
I review my child's text or instant messaging log with their knowledge	29	72

(*table continues*)

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Table 11 (*continued*)

	n*	%
I review my child's text or instant messaging logs without their knowledge	7	17
I limit access to who my child can text or instant message	10	24
I build channels of open communication with my child	28	68

*Participants were allowed to select more than one choice.

Parents of Victims

Parents were asked to provide a response on their experience with cyberbullying in relation to their children as victims. Overall, 8 (11%) parents reported to have experienced that their child as victims of cyberbullying, while 67 (89%) parents reported to have no knowledge if their child has or has not been a victim of cyberbullying. Out of the 8 (11%) parents who have experienced their children as victims of cyberbullying, 4 (50%) responded to the situation by reporting the incident directly to the social networking site. Table 12 delineates the participants' responses in relation to having personally experienced cyberbullying as a parent of the victim.

Table 12

Parental Personal Experiences and Responses of Cyberbullying (n= 75)

Personal Experience	n	%
Yes, I am aware that my child has been a victim	8	11
No, I am not aware if my child has ever been a victim	67	89
Parental Response (*n*=8)*		
Reported to my child's school	2	25
Reported to the police	1	13
Talk to parents of bullies	2	25
Reported to the social networking site(s)	4	50

*Participants were allowed to select more than one response.

Parents of Perpetrators

Parents were asked to provide a response on their experience with cyberbullying in relation to their children as perpetrators. Overall, 2 (3%) parents reported to have experienced that their child as a perpetrator of cyberbullying, while 73 (97%) parents reported to have no knowledge if their child has or has not been a perpetrator of cyberbullying. Out of the 2 (3%) parents who have experienced their children as perpetrators of cyberbullying, 2 (100%) parents responded to the situation by talking to their children directly.

Section 3: Preventative Measures

Research Question 5: What preventative measures, if any, are implemented by parents when their child is a victim, bystander, and perpetrator of cyberbullying?

Research Question 6: Are there differences in the responses from adolescents and parents of adolescents in relation to the preventative measures of cyberbullying?

ANOVA summary tables were compiled to identify differences between responses in relation to the preventative measures of cyberbullying. In general, both adolescents and parent groups agreed in terms of the preventative measures of cyberbullying. However, the results also demonstrated four areas of statistical significance in the responses between the genders within the adolescent and parent groups (i.e., prevention strategies among teachers and principals, and prevention strategies among parents). Specifically, results indicated that more female parents chose "expel or suspend cyberbullies" than other groups (i.e., male parents, male adolescents, and female adolescents) as one of the prevention strategies among teachers and principals. In addition, results indicated that more male parents chose

"communicate with their children about cyberbullying" than other groups (i.e., female

parents, male adolescents, and female adolescents) as one of the prevention strategies

among parents.

Furthermore, results indicated that more male parents and adolescents chose

"remove computer or cell phone privileges from bullies at home" than other groups (i.e.,

female parents and adolescents) as one of the prevention strategies among parents.

Additionally, results indicated that more parents (male and female) and male

adolescents chose "communicate with their children about cyberbullying" as one of the

prevention measures among parents. The results of the ANOVA calculations are listed

in Tables 13 and 14.

Table 13

ANOVA Summary Table for Preventative Measures Between Adolescent and Parent Groups

Response		*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*Sig.*
Expel	Between Groups	3.824	3	1.275	5.581	.001
	Within Groups	31.062	136	.228		
	Total	34.886	139			
Educate	Between Groups	1.903	3	.634	4.337	.006
	Within Groups	19.890	136	.146		
	Total	21.793	139			

*Level of significance set at .05.

Table 14

ANOVA Summary Table for Preventative Measures Between Adolescent and Parent Groups

Response		SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Removal	Between Groups	2.080	3	.693	2.957	.035
	Within Groups	31.891	136	.234		
	Total	33.971	139			
Communicate	Between Groups	2.178	3	.726	6.301	.000
	Within Groups	15.672	136	.115		
	Total	17.850	139			

*Level of significance set at .05.

Qualitative Responses – Adolescent and Parent Groups

Upon conclusion of the paper-pencil (adolescent group) and web-based (parent group) survey, all participants were offered an opportunity to enter additional comments about their experiences with cyberbullying in the respective groups' survey. Twenty-three individuals (7 adolescents; 16 parents) provided additional descriptive responses. The qualitative findings provided personal perspectives of cyberbullying for each participant. Interestingly, the data revealed vast differences in the opinions toward cyberbullying delineated from each participating group.

Commentaries provided by the adolescents include the following: (a) "sometimes bringing in adults can lead to even more painful comments…it is also important that the parent does not provoke the situation further," (b) "cyberbullying generally takes place on sites like MySpace, Facebook, etc…I think this is because when you're on a website where no one knows who you are in real life, it's easier to deflect attacks with humor

and sarcasm, even if it's not something you would normally do," and (c) "sometimes getting the school involved makes things worse for the victim and the bullier…keeping things anonymous and behind the scenes is better."

Comments delineated from the parent group portrayed a different perspective of cyberbullying. Specifically, parental comments revealed more personal experiences and reflections from their children's encounter with cyberbullying. For examples: (a) "my child has been cyberbullied by his ex-girlfriend…I tried to talk to my child and was hesitant in speaking with her parents…it might escalate the situation," (b) "removing privileges does not prevent them from finding other access…if it gets too extreme, just as with other offenses of threatening children, the police need to be involved," (c) "my child was afraid to go to school after receiving threatening text messages," and (d) "cyberbullying is very strong in our community, parents and teachers need to get involved."

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

An anonymous survey through one of the following methods: (a) paper-pencil survey for adolescent group, and (b) web-based survey for the parent group, was used with participants to accrue data on the characteristics of cyberbullying and its influences on adolescents and parent(s) of adolescents. This chapter includes (a) summary, (b) implications, and (c) recommendations.

Summary

Cyberbullying is a category of bullying that occurs in the digital realm which affects young people at astonishing rates. Unlike traditional bullying where displays of violent or aggressive behavior may be evident to bystanders, the ramification of cyberbullying is often camouflaged by the advancement in technology (e.g., text messaging; online weblogs; video sharing). Nonetheless, the effects of this digital form of peer aggression can be as detrimental as face-to-face bullying.

Data from this study provides further evidence that the rate of cyberbullying incidents continues to rise among school-age youth and the call for preventative actions are echoed throughout the victims, bystanders, perpetrators themselves, as well as the parents of adolescent children. Results from the victims of cyberbullying indicated that 75% have experience both as victims and bystanders of cyberbullying and 90% of the participants have reported to experience either being victims or bystanders of cyberbullying. In addition, 70% of the victims have been cyberbullied 1 to 2 times within a month and 50% of the participants did not know the perpetrator. Secondly, 89% of parent participants indicated they were knowledgeable about the issues relating to

cyberbullying. Ninety-one percent reported to have communication with their children about online dangers. Additionally, 89% reported to have no knowledge if their child has or has not been a victim of cyberbullying.

In general, the data demonstrated various levels and types of experience and responses among the participants in each respective group. However, there was no conclusive pattern of characteristics in which incidents of cyberbullying occurs or the effects in the difference in methodologies used by perpetrators of cyberbullying. In regards to preventive measures, both participating groups revealed an importance of increasing the awareness of the severity of cyberbullying, as well as, the significance of involving parents and educators as a part of the prevention process.

Implications

The results from this study have revealed varying degrees of understanding of the associated elements related to cyberbullying. As mentioned previously, the elevated prevalence rates of cyberbullying among adolescents continue to rise in the 21st century (e.g., Hinduja & Patchin, 2007; Raskauskas & Stoltz, 2007; Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004a). In supporting the trend of research of cyberbullying, findings delineated from this study signify the seriousness of the issues relating to cyberbullying as well as the preventative elements in combating this digital form of aggression among adolescent students.

Specifically, the findings revealed several interesting elements that should be considered. Ninety percent of the participants in the adolescent group reported to have either directly or indirectly experience cyberbullying. Out of the victims of cyberbullying, 60% were female adolescents, 40% were male adolescents, and overall 95% of the

victims reportedly were academically above average. In addition to the discrepancies between genders, the reported academic average raise questions about the general academic profiles among victims of cyberbullying. Another interesting element derived from the findings revealed gender differences in the responses from the parents in relationship to preventative measures of cyberbullying. For example, data indicated that more mothers than fathers chose the response of "expel or suspend cyberbullies"; while, more fathers than mothers chose the response of "communicate with their children about cyberbullying". Moreover, differences in the results derived from the adolescent and parent groups relating to personal experiences of cyberbullying should be recognized. For example, data from this study reported that 89% of parents are not aware if their child has ever been a victim of cyberbullying, while 90% of adolescents reported to have either directly or indirectly experience cyberbullying. The surveys of this study were administered and coded anonymously, which limit the possible indications of any direct family connection between the findings from the adolescent and parent groups. However, the difference in their responses raise the notion of parental acknowledgment in regards to recognizing the victimization of cyberbullying in their children.

The choral responses from both adolescents and parents in regards to increasing awareness of cyberbullying should be noted. Findings revealed that each group possesses diverse views in the methodologies used to prevent cyberbullying. However, distinct perspectives delineated from the study reflect the individualization among the cases of cyberbullying as well as the manifestations on the effects of its victims.

Recommendations

Given the results within the context of the study, the following recommendations are provided for future research. Additional research is needed to examine discrepancies between victims' and parents' reported rates of cyberbullying. Evidence in this study indicates measurable differences in the responses of prevalence rates of cyberbullying, as reported by adolescent and parent groups. Through further examination of the possible discrepancies between the responses delineated from the adolescent and parent groups, the findings may enhance the overall understanding of such differentiation. Further exploration of distinctive attributes (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic background) among victims, bystanders and perpetrators of cyberbullying should be considered. Findings derived from this study highlighted the demographic data of the victims, bystanders and perpetrators of cyberbullying. In conjunction to the demographic limitation of this study, additional research that includes larger sample populations from each category of ethnicity may increase the generalizability of the results. Moreover, additional research on the possible relationship of victims, bystanders, and perpetrators of cyberbullying and students with disabilities should be conducted. According to Halligan (2006), Ryan Patrick Halligan (13 years old) who was a victim of cyberbullying, had received special education services from pre-school through fourth grade. In addition, Meier (2009) reported that Megan Meier, 13 years old, committed suicide after prolonged emotional distress as a victim of cyberbullying. By examining the possible associated factors of individuals with disabilities (e.g., adolescents with emotional and/or behavioral disorders) as it relates to attributes of victims, bystanders, and perpetrators of cyberbullying, the

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findings may embellish the current evidence of understanding in this evolving phenomenon. Furthermore, an examination on the effectiveness in preventative measures of cyberbullying should be highlighted. Parallel to the findings of this study, research in the effectiveness of preventative strategies and its implementation process should be considered. Empirical findings relating to the efficiencies of prevention strategies against cyberbullying should be examine to further comprehend the possible mechanisms that may decrease the prevalence rates of cyberbullying among school-age children and youth. Furthermore, the findings delineated from this study portray purely a snapshot of the realistic perspectives and alarming features of cyberbullying. Recommendations for additional research mentioned should be carefully considered in recognizing the seriousness of cyberbullying as well as its camouflaged influences it may have on students in the 21st century.

APPENDIX A

INVITATION

Insert for Weekly Announcement
Cyberbullying: A Call for Research

My name is Mickie Wong. I am a doctoral candidate at University of North Texas (UNT) Department of Educational Psychology, Programs in Special Education. As a part of my dissertation requirement, I will be conducting a research study on the characteristics of cyberbullying and its influence on adolescents between 13-17 years of age and parent(s) of adolescent(s) between 13-17 years of age.

Cyberbullying is a prominent issue that affects our students beyond the walls of our schools. There is an apparent need to enhance the understanding of factors related this evolving phenomenon. Therefore, I would like to invite you and/or your child(ren) to participate in a short, anonymous survey to adolescents (13 to 17 years old), who attend the youth groups at this local community-based agency. The information from this research may be utilized to increase the awareness as well as the development of preventative strategies for individuals affected by cyberbullying.

I will be visiting (name of community-based agency) this week to recruit participants from the youth groups. During this visit, I will distribute information about the study and parental consent forms. If you are interested in having your child to participate in this study, please sign the Parental Consent Form and return/have your child return it to next week's youth group meeting.   I will be returning to administer the survey to all eligible participants in the near future.

If you are a parent of adolescent(s) between 13 to 17 years of age and would like to participate in the parent survey, please visit this link (insert web address here) to gain access to an anonymous, web-based survey.

Thank you for your participation.

Principal Investigator: **Research Supervisor:**

Mickie Wong, Doctoral Candidate   Dr. Lyndal M. Bullock
Department of Educational Psychology   Department of Educational Psychology
Program in Special Education   Program in Special Education
Leadership Program in Behavioral Disorder   University of North Texas
University of North Texas   940-565-3583
940-565-2169   lyndal.bullock@unt.edu
Mickie.Wong@unt.edu

APPENDIX B

CONSENT FORMS

University of North Texas Institutional Review Board

Parental Consent Form

Before agreeing to your child's participation in this research study, it is important that you read and understand the following explanation of the purpose, benefits and risks of the study and how it will be conducted.

Title of Study: Cyberbullying: Responses of Adolescents and Parents Toward Digital Aggression

Principal Investigator: Mickie Wong, Doctoral Candidate, University of North Texas (UNT) Department of Special Education.

Purpose and Procedure: You are being asked to allow your child to participate in a research study which examines the characteristics of cyberbullying and its influence on adolescents and parent(s) of adolescent(s). This task will be accomplished by administering a short, anonymous survey to adolescent(s) between thirteen to seventeen years of age. It is anticipated that your child will take 10 to 15 minutes to complete this paper-pencil survey.

Foreseeable Risks: There is a small possibility that some participants may feel uncomfortable answering some of the survey questions. However, all participants are free to choose not to answer any question that makes them feel uncomfortable. There is also a risk that some participants may realize that they are at risk of encountering cyberbullying and, therefore, may experience a negative emotional reaction. As a precaution, contact information for free help lines and other related services are provided at the end of the survey for any participants in need.

Benefits to the Subjects or Others: This study is not expected to be of any direct benefit to your child. However, the results of the study may be utilized to increase the awareness as well as the development of preventative strategies of individuals affected by cyberbullying.

Procedures for Maintaining Confidentiality of Research Records: Although the data from this research project will be published and presented at conferences, the data will be reported in summative form, so that it will not be possible to identify individuals. Moreover, the consent forms will be stored separately from the survey, so that it will not be possible to associate a name with any given set of responses. Your child will be asked NOT to record his/her name on the survey.

Questions about the Study: If you have any questions about the study, you may contact *Mickie Wong* at telephone number 940-565-2169.

Review for the Protection of Participants: This research study has been reviewed and approved by the UNT Institutional Review Board (IRB). The UNT IRB can be contacted at (940) 565-3940 with any questions regarding the rights of research subjects.

Research Participants' Rights: Your signature below indicates that you have read or have had read to you all of the above and that you confirm all of the following:

- *Mickie Wong* has explained the study to you and answered all of your questions. You have been told the possible benefits and the potential risks and/or discomforts of the study.
- You understand that you do not have to allow your child to take part in this study, and your refusal to allow your child to participate or your decision to withdraw him/her from the study will involve no penalty or loss of rights or benefits. The study personnel may choose to stop your child's participation at any time.
- You understand why the study is being conducted and how it will be performed.
- You understand your rights as the parent/guardian of a research participant and you voluntarily consent to your child's participation in this study.
- You have been told you will receive a copy of this form.

_____
Printed Name of Parent

_____   _____
Signature of Parent   Date

For the Principal Investigator or Designee: I certify that I have reviewed the contents of this form with the parent or guardian signing above. I have explained the possible benefits and the potential risks and/or discomforts of the study. It is my opinion that the parent or guardian understood the explanation.

_____   _____
Signature of Principal Investigator or Designee   Date

Child Assent Form

You are being asked to be part of a research project being done by the University of North Texas Department of Educational Psychology-Programs in Special Education.

The purpose of this study is to examine the characteristics of cyberbullying and its influence on adolescents and parent(s) of adolescent(s).

You will be asked to complete a short, anonymous paper-pencil survey and will take about 10 to 15 minutes.

If you decide to take part of this study, please remember you can stop participating at any time.

If you would like to be a part of this study, please sign your name below.

_____
Printed Name of Child

_____   _____

Signature of Child   Date

_____   _____

Signature of Principal Investigator   Date

University of North Texas Institutional Review Board

Informed Consent Form

Before agreeing to participate in this research study, it is important that you read and understand the following explanation of the purpose, benefits and risks of the study and how it will be conducted.

Title of Study: Cyberbullying: Responses of Adolescents and Parents Toward Digital Aggression

Principal Investigator: Mickie Wong, Doctoral Candidate, University of North Texas (UNT) Department of Special Education.

Purpose and Procedure: You are being asked to participate in a research study which examines the characteristics of cyberbullying and its influence on adolescents and parent(s) of adolescent(s). This task will be accomplished by administering an anonymous, web-based survey to parents of adolescent(s) between thirteen to seventeen years of age. The anticipated completion time of the survey will take 10 to 15 minutes.

Foreseeable Risks: There is a small possibility that some participants may feel uncomfortable answering some of the survey questions. However, all participants are free to choose not to answer any question that makes them feel uncomfortable. There is also a risk that some participants may realize that they are at risk of encountering cyberbullying and, therefore, may experience a negative emotional reaction. As a precaution, contact information for free help lines and other related services are provided at the end of the survey for any participants in need.

Benefits to the Subjects or Others: This study is not expected to be of any direct benefit to you. However, the results of the study may be utilized to increase the awareness as well as the development of preventative strategies of individuals affected by cyberbullying.

Procedures for Maintaining Confidentiality of Research Records: Although the data from this research project will be published and presented at conferences, the data will be reported in summative form, so that it will not be possible to identify individuals. Moreover, the consent forms will be stored separately from the survey, so that it will not be possible to associate a name with any given set of responses. You will be asked NOT to record your name on the survey.

Questions about the Study: If you have any questions about the study, you may contact *Mickie Wong* at telephone number 940-565-2169.

Review for the Protection of Participants: This research study has been reviewed and approved by the UNT Institutional Review Board (IRB). The UNT IRB can be contacted at (940) 565-3940 with any questions regarding the rights of research subjects.

Research Participants' Rights:

Your signature below indicates that you have read or have had read to you all of the above and that you confirm all of the following:

- *Mickie Wong* has explained the study to you and answered all of your questions. You have been told the possible benefits and the potential risks and/or discomforts of the study.
- You understand that you do not have to take part in this study, and your refusal to participate or your decision to withdraw will involve no penalty or loss of rights or benefits. The study personnel may choose to stop your participation at any time.
- You understand why the study is being conducted and how it will be performed.
- You understand your rights as a research participant and you voluntarily consent to participate in this study.
- You have been told you will receive a copy of this form.

_____
Printed Name of Participant

_____   _____
Signature of Participant   Date

For the Principal Investigator or Designee:

I certify that I have reviewed the contents of this form with the subject signing above. I have explained the possible benefits and the potential risks and/or discomforts of the study. It is my opinion that the participant understood the explanation.

_____   _____
Signature of Principal Investigator or Designee   Date

APPENDIX C

ADOLESCENT AND PARENT QUESTIONNAIRES

CYBERBULLYING: RESPONSES OF ADOLESCENTS AND PARENTS TOWARD DIGITAL AGGRESSION

<u>**Definitions**</u>

What is Bullying?

Bullying is a form of abuse that is based on an imbalance of power (Campbell, 2005);

may be physical, including behaviors such as hitting, punching, verbal assaults, and

spitting (DiGiulio, 2001).

What is Cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying is a "Willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell

phones, and other electronic devices" (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009, p. 5).

Thank you for your participation.

<u>**Principal Investigator:**</u>   <u>**Research Supervisor:**</u>

Mickie Wong, Doctoral Candidate   Dr. Lyndal M. Bullock
Department of Educational Psychology   Department of Educational Psychology
Program in Special Education   Program in Special Education
Leadership Program in Behavioral Disorder   University of North Texas
University of North Texas   940-565-3583
940-565-2169   lyndal.bullock@unt.edu
Mickie.Wong@unt.edu

Adolescent Questionnaire
(Please, Do NOT Write your name on the survey)

The survey on cyberbullying will be used to examine four areas regarding to the characteristics and influences cyberbullying has on adolescents between 13 to17 years of age) and parent(s) of adolescent(s) between 13 to 17 years of age. The four areas include (a) background, (b) personal experiences, (c) vicarious experiences, and (d) preventative measures.

Directions: Please read each statement carefully and check on the response(s) which *best* represents your answer.

Part I: Background:

Please Check one.

1. Gender: __Male   __Female

2. Age:_____

3. Current Grade in School:

   __6th __7th __8th __9th __10th __11th __12th

4. I describe myself as:

   __American Indian/Alaskan Native   __Asian or Pacific Islander

   __Black or African American   __Hispanic or Latin American

   __White or Caucasian   __Inter-racial, Please Specify _____

5.   My school grades are usually:

   __Above average (80% or higher)

   __Average (60% to 79%)

   __Below average (Below 60%)

6.   I have access to a computer at home:

   __Yes   __No (skip to Question # 9)   __I do not have access to a computer

7.   I use computers at home:

   __Never   __less than one hour per day   __2-4 hours per day

   __4-6 hours per day   __more than 6 hours per day

8. Most of the time I am supervised when I use a computer at home:

  __Yes   __No

9. I have access to a computer at school:

  __Yes   __No   __I do not have access to a computer

10. I use computers at school:

  __less than one hour per day

  __2-4 hours per day

  __4-6 hours per day

  __more than 6 hours per day

11. Most of the time I am supervised when I use a computer at school:

  __Yes   __No

12. I have a cellular phone:

  __Yes   __No   __I don't use/own a cellular phone

13. I use my cellular phone to: (Check all that apply)

  __call   __text messaging

  __video recording or sharing __photo or photo sharing

  __surf the web   Other/ please specify: _____

14. I use my cellular phone:

  __less than one hour per day

  __2-4 hours per day

  __4-6 hours per day

  __more than 6 hours per day

15. I am a member of social networking site(s): (Check all that apply)

  __Facebook __MySpace __Friendster __Twitter

  Other, please specify:_____

16. I have an Instant Messaging account:

  __Yes (If yes, check all that apply):

    __Yahoo   __gchat   __aol   __MSN messenger

    other-please specify:_____

  __No

....

Personal Experiences

17. I have been cyberbullied:

  __Yes   __No (Skip to Question # 29)

18. If yes, I was cyberbullied via: (Check all that apply)

  __Email

  __Instant messaging (e.g., Yahoo, gchat, aol, MSN messenger)

  __Text message by a cellular phone

  __Online game

  __Picture or webcam

  __Social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, MySpace)

  Other, please specify: _____

19. If yes, I was cyberbullied by: (Check all that apply)

  __Friend(s)

  __People/person at my school

  __People/person at other schools

  __People/person outside of school

  __I don't know who cyberbullied me

  Other, Please specify: _____

20. If yes, I have been cyberbullied:

___0-2 times (within the last 30 days)

___3-5 times (within the last 30 days)

___6-10 times (within the last 30 days)

___10 or more times (within the last 30 days)

___ more than 30 days ago: Approximately how many times? _____

21. How long have you been a victim of cyberbullying?

___less than 3 months

___3 to 6 months

___6 months to 1 year

___1-3 years

___3 years and higher

22. Have you ever received an electronic message from someone that made feel threatened?

___Yes   ___No

23. If yes, what did you do about it? (Check all that apply)

___I wrote him/her back   ___I ignored the message

___I deleted the message   ___I told a trusted adult about the message

Other (please specify)   _____

24. If you have been cyberbullied, how did it made you feel? (Check all that apply)

___sad and hurt   ___angry   ___embarrassed

___afraid   ___anxious   ___I didn't want to go back to school

___Difficulty concentrating   ___blamed myself   ___did not bother me

Other, please specify: _____

25. If yes, what did you do about it? (Check all that apply)

__Nothing   __Confronted the person who did it   __Told a parent

__Told a teacher   __Told a friend

__Told someone online (e.g., reported to social networking site(s))

Other, please specify: _____

26. Did any of the checked above helped?

__Yes   __No, Why not? _____

27. If you did not informed anyone, why not? (Check all that apply)

__I didn't think it would help

__I didn't have any proof

__I didn't know who the bully was

__I thought I would get punish by my parents

__I didn't think anyone would care

__I didn't think anyone would believe me

__I thought it would make the matter worse

Other, please specify: _____

28. Did the person who cyberbullied you attempted to bully you in person?

__I don't know   __Never   __Once/twice

__A few times   __Many times   __Almost daily

. . . .

Vicarious Experiences

29. I know someone who has been cyberbullied:

__Yes   __No (skip to Question # 31)

30. If yes, what did you do about it? (Check all that apply)

__I watched but didn't participate

__I joined in

__I ignored it

__I told the bully to stop

__I told a parent

__I told a teacher

__I told a friend

__I told someone online (e.g., social networking site(s))

Other, please specify: _____

Preventative Measures

31. When adults at school know about cyberbullying, they try to stop it:

    __Yes   __No   __Not certain

32. If yes, are their efforts to stop cyberbullying helpful?

    __Yes   __No

33. When my parents know about cyberbullying, they try to stop it?

    __Yes   __No   __Not certain

34. If yes, are their efforts to stop cyberbullying helpful?

    __Yes   __No

35. What do you think teachers and principals can do to help stop and prevent

    cyberbullying? (Check all that apply)

    __Remove computer or cellphone privileges from bullies at school

    __Expel or suspend cyberbullies

    __Involve parents of bullies and victims

    __Involve police

    __Teach students at school about cyberbullying and its effects

    __Set up an anonymous line at school (e.g., hotlines) where students can

        report cyberbullying

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Other, please specify: _____

36. What do you think parents can do to help stop and prevent cyberbullying? (Check all that

apply)

__Remove computer or cell phone privileges from bullies at home

__Tell the parents of the other students involved

__Tell the school

__Tell the police

__Talk to their children about cyberbullying

Other, please specify:_____

37. Additional comments or share an experience with being bullied online?

NOTICE:

If completing this survey brings up any feelings that you need to talk to someone about, below are some free help lines options:

- www.wiredsafety.org
- www.wiredkids.org
- www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov

Parent Questionnaire
(Please, Do NOT Write your name on the survey)

The survey on cyberbullying will be used to examine four areas regarding to the characteristics and influences cyberbullying has on adolescents between 13 to17 years of age) and parent(s) of adolescent(s) between 13 to 17 years of age. The four areas include (a) background, (b) personal experiences, (c) vicarious experiences, and (d) preventative measures.

Directions: Please read each statement carefully and check on the response(s) which *best* represents your answer.

Background

Please Check one.

1. Gender:

    __Male

    __Female

2. Age: ____

3. I describe myself as:

    __American Indian/Alaskan Native

    __Asian or Pacific Islander

    __Black or African American

    __Hispanic

    __White or Caucasian

    __Inter-racial, Please Specify _____

4. I am aware of cyberbullying

    __Yes

    __No

5. I talk to my children about the dangers they may encounter online.

    __Yes

    __No

6. I utilize parental controls on my child's computer.

    __Yes

    __No

7. I am familiar with social networking sites as such MySpace, Facebook.

    __Yes

    __No

8. I am aware of my child's account on a social networking site.

    __Yes

    __No (skip to Question #11)

9. I monitor my child's account on a social networking site.

    __Yes

    __No

10. If yes, how do you monitor your child's account on a social networking site? (Check all that apply)

    __I am a friend of my child's social networking site with their knowledge

    __I am a friend of my child's social networking site without their knowledge

    __I have access to my child's user name and password

    __I supervise my child's online activities

    Other (Please specify)_____

11. Do you monitor your child's text messaging or instant messaging?

    __Yes

    __No

12. If yes, how do you monitor your child's text messaging or instant messaging? (Check all that apply)

    __I review my child's text messaging or instant messaging logs with their knowledge

    __I review my child's text messaging or instant messaging logs without their knowledge

    __I limit access to who my child can text message or instant message

    __I build channels of open communication with my child

    Other (Please specify)_____

Personal Experiences

13. To your knowledge, has your child ever been a victim of cyberbullying?

    __Yes

    __No, (skip to Question #15)

    __Not Applicable

14. If yes, how did you respond to the situation? (Check all that apply)

    __Reported to my child's school

    __Reported to the police

    __Talk to parents of bullies

    __Reported to the social networking site(s)

    Other (Please specify) _____

15. To your knowledge, has your child ever perpetrated an incident of cyberbullying?

    __Yes

    __No

    __Not Applicable

16. If yes, how did you respond to the situation? (Check all that apply)

    __Reported to my child's school

    __Reported to the police

    __Talk to parents of bullies

__Reported to the social networking site(s)

Other (Please specify)_____

17.   To your knowledge, has your child ever been involved as a participant in an incident of cyberbullying?

__Yes

__No

__Not Applicable

18.   If yes, how did you respond to the situation? (Check all that apply)

__Reported to my child's school

__Reported to the police

__Talk to parents of bullies

__Reported to the social networking site(s)

Other (Please specify)_____

▪▪

Preventative Measures

19. How much responsibility should the teachers, principals, and schools be involved with

issues relating to cyberbullying?

Likert scales (0 as Not involved to 5 as Highly involved)

20. What do you think teachers and principals can do to help stop and prevent cyberbullying?

(Check all that apply)

__Remove computer or cellphone privileges from bullies at school

__Expel or suspend cyber-bullies

__Involve parents of bullies and victims

__Involve police

__Teach students at school about cyberbullying and its effects

__Set up an anonymous line at school (e.g., hotlines) where students can

report cyberbullying

Other, please specify: _____

21. What do you think parents can do to help stop and prevent cyberbullying? (Check all that

apply)

__Remove computer or cell phone privileges from bullies at home

__Tell the parents of the other students involved

__Tell the school

__Tell the police

__Talk to their children about cyberbullying

22. Additional Comment or share an experience anonymously?

NOTICE:

If completing this survey brings up any feelings that you need to talk to someone about, below are some free help lines options:

- www.wiredsafety.org
- www.wiredkids.org
- www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov

APPENDIX D

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD - APPROVAL NOTICE

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