

LIMITATION OF RIGHTS OF CYBER-BULLYING VICTIMS AMONG TEENAGERS

N. Dmitrenko, Candidate of Education, Associate Professor
Vinnitsia State Pedagogical University named
after M. Kotsyubinskii, Ukraine

Despite the numerous benefits of ICT, their rapid and constant development has created a number of rather negative side effects. One of these is the problem of cyber-bullying. Cyber-bullying is defined as an aggressive, intentional act made by a group or an individual using electronic forms of contact repeatedly and over time against a victim who cannot easily defend him- or herself. Cyber-bullying refers to bullying and harassment of others by means of new electronic technologies, primarily mobile phones and the Internet. Currently cyber-bullying has received significant media attention as certain cases have resulted in civil and criminal law suits filed against a perpetrator and/or a school. This article thus highlights the limitation of on rights of cyber-bullying victims among teenagers; authors discuss potential problems with such an approach. They also discuss current cyber-bullying prevention practices. The results have important implications for the types of strategies used to enhance the approachability of school staff and families to provide appropriate help and support for young people being bullied.

Keywords: bullying, cyber-bullying, cyber-bullying victim, limitation of rights, sociological research.

Conference participant, National championship in scientific analytics

With the increase and diffusion of modern technologies a new form of aggression and bullying has emerged. Many researchers refer to these new forms with the term *Cyberbullying*, *Electronic Bullying* or *Internet Bullying*. These terms refer to intentional and repeated assaults against another person through electronic means, which can be: the use of offensive e-mail or text messages, insulting through chat rooms or instant messaging, isolating and excluding members from a virtual community and shooting photos or videos posted to the web. Recently, in parallel with the widespread use of new technologies, some studies have been conducted in different cultural contexts to understand the characteristics of cyberbullying. Researchers, pupils, parents, teachers, unions, and local, regional and national authorities, are all in various ways starting to grapple with the issues involved in cyberbullying, in consultation with mobile phone companies and internet service providers.

This article highlights the restriction on rights of cyberbullying victims among teenagers in Ukraine, and discusses potential problems with such an approach. It also discusses current practices to prevent cyberbullying.

Many young people who are bullied do not tell anyone. School staff therefore are often unaware of which students are being victimised and when to provide support or assistance. A critical strategy to overcome this problem is to encourage victimised students to seek help and report this bullying. This study aims to analyse dissemination of cyberbullying among young people in Ukraine and

examine main strategies to master this problem.

To clear up the problem of dissemination of cyberbullying among Ukrainian teenagers we conducted the sociological research. The main results of it are represented here:

1. *Theme of sociological research.* Cyberbullying: coping with negative and enhancing positive uses of new technologies, in relationships in educational settings.

2. *Aim of sociological research.* To increase the understanding of the concept of cyberbullying; to investigate the nature and extent of cyberbullying among school pupils in Ukraine (Vinnitsia region).

3. *Problem of sociological research.* Detection of positive and negative uses of new technologies for relationships in the Ukrainian schools and what kinds of electronic aggression and its specific type – cyberbullying is the prevalence among Ukrainian adolescents.

4. *Actuality of sociological research.* Increasing use of new technologies causes that cyberbullying is becoming more prevalent. This kind of bullying is a fairly new concept, and research into cyberbullying is opportune and urgent, though it is still in its initial phases in Ukraine.

5. *Practical or theoretical value of this sociological research.* During research a hypothesis was confirmed about wide character of cyberbullying in the teenagers' environment in Ukraine.

6. *Description of informative base of sociological research.* The informative base of sociological research is the questionnaire. It consists of 54 questions

which are united into 6 blocks: negative and positive influence of new electronic technologies, part and attitude to cyberbullying, the most widespread kinds of cyberbullying and ideas about those who can be perpetrators and targets. Some questions are analogical to the questions from the questionnaires of J.Pyzalski and P.Smith. It comprises multiple-choice closed or half-closed questions with some qualitative sections, and takes 30-35 minutes to complete.

7. *Description of method of this sociological research.* The research took place in 20 schools of Vinnitsia region, among them: 4 schools in Vinnitsia, 8 schools in district towns (Illyntsi, Kozyatyn, Lypovets), 8 village schools. The research is carried out by the students of Vinnitsia state pedagogical university during their pedagogical practice. Before the pedagogical practice the students were informed about the topic of questionnaire and the conditions of its realization.

8. *Description of selection of sociological research.* A questionnaire was returned by 490 school pupils aged between 14-17 years, among them: 25 % – 14 years, 51 % – 15 years, 21 % – 16 years, 3 % – 17 years. Distribution according to gender: boys – 51 %, girls – 49 %.

9. *Description of the received results.* During research a hypothesis was confirmed about a wide character of cyberbullying in a juvenile environment: 37 % teenagers appeared in the situation, when they were cyberbullied (25 % – several (1-3) times, 12 % – more than 3 times); 48 % teenagers were the witnesses of cyberbullying (62 % adolescences didn't interfere in the situation, 28 % –

interfered and took side of those who were cyberbullied, 10 % – interfered and took side of those who cyberbullied); 12 % pupils cyberbullied others (2 % – several (1-3) times, 10 % – more than 3 times); 53 % teenagers thought that cyberbullying could have heavy results; 60 % supposed that cyberbullying took place out of school and 8% – in school; cyberbullying occurred more frequently between persons of the same year (32 %), elders who cyberbullied younger (28 %), younger who cyberbullied elders (18 %); among those who engaged in cyberbullying more frequently boys (54 %), girls (22 %); 28 % teenagers couldn't appeal for help or protecting from cyberbullying to anybody (among people to whom the pupils (71 %) could appeal were: friends (33 %), relatives (20 %), police (16 %), site's administrator (14 %) and others (small per cent)); 75 % adolescences didn't know about the punishment for cyberbullying at the legislative level; 67 % juveniles considered the level of their knowledge how to counteract cyberbullying was not sufficient. The teenagers' main questions which were related to cyberbullying were: how to behave in the situation, when they were cyberbullied (24 %), to whom applied, when they were cyberbullied (18%), more details about rights (19 %), about the forms of cyberbullying (18%), how to avoid cyberbullying (18 %).

As for the most widespread kinds of cyberbullying the teenagers picked up in the list what they did during the previous month and what at least once in their lives, in general: 33 % insulted others during online games, 31 % commented on Internet forum in order to hurt or make laugh of others, 32 % insulted others on the chat, 29 % sent SMSs in order to insult/hurt somebody else, 28 % sent messages through Internet in order to frighten/insult somebody, 20 % sent intentionally a computer virus to someone, 28 % lied through telephone or online in order to hurt others, 27 % made a picture/film with somebody else in an unpleasant situation and sent it to the friends or put online, 19 % used someone's else telephone/account (without consent) to send unpleasant messages to others, 18 % changed a film/picture on another person with the help of software and then published it online.

Among the most 'popular' targets of cyberbullying were: accidental persons (34 %), acquaintances from school or district (29 %), acquaintances from Internet (27 %) and others (smaller per cent).

As for the perpetrator the teenagers wrote that usually they didn't know that person (persons) (50 %), acquaintances from school or district (34 %), acquaintances from Internet (24 %) and others (smaller per cent).

Analysing dates of positive and negative influence of new technologies on school pupils it was cleared up teenagers could create a web-site (65 %), had their own web-site (51 %) and put their own creative work on Internet (42 %). At the same time 42 % school pupils spent free time sitting at the computer, 38 % got bored when one day they had no access to Internet connection, 52 % felt better when nobody knew what they did on Internet.

10. Conclusions of sociological research. Coming from the conducted sociological research, it is possible to suppose that cyberbullying is becoming increasingly prevalent, as the use of technology increases by young people in Ukraine. As for the further analyzing it is worth to compare age and gender differences and dissemination of cyberbullying among city and village school pupils.

According to the results of research and the literature reports the following findings and results on strategies for preventing cyberbullying are proposed:

1. Peer-intervention (i.e. peer support by trained student leaders) is used in school to prevent cyberbullying in school by: creating bullying awareness in the school; developing leadership skills among students; developing intervention practices in the student community to prevent bullying; developing team-building initiatives in the student community; by students behaving proactively as bystanders.

2. Technology enabled prevention strategies in use: switching a screen name, blocking a particular name and sending a warning to someone to prevent cyberbullying are some of the technology enabled strategies. Also, some students/youth argue that they know about safety strategies in cyberspace.

3. Parental supervision:

parents set limits on computer and online use and monitor their pre-teens and young teens more than their older teens. Parenting styles are related to experiences, behaviours and attitudes.

teens with authoritative parents have limits and are monitored more than those with authoritarian and permissive parents. Specifically, neglectful parents set fewer limits and monitor their teens the least, while authoritative and authoritarian parents are more likely to set limits on computer behaviour than permissive and neglectful parents. In the same way, authoritative and authoritarian parents are more likely to set limits on MySpace use and less likely to allow computers in teens' bedrooms.

4. In addition, a number of other prevention tactics are existed, such as: trying to sort out issues face to face rather than online; better education about the Internet, something widely favoured by parents and teachers as much as by students themselves; a code of conduct for better communication amongst students, something arguably supported more and viewed less critically and less as a challenge to defy by students than introducing rules and bans at school.

Overall the literature argues that we should draw upon previous experience from face-to-face bullying prevention strategies so as to apply prevention of cyberbullying along the following lines:

1. Awareness raising initiatives in order that teachers, parents and students be made aware of cyberbullying. More specifically: professional development for teachers is needed, explaining what cyberbullying is and the real consequences of severe and continuous cyberbullying; parents also need to be made aware of cyber bullying methods, such as student texting on mobile phones under the bedcovers in the middle of the night and sending hurtful emails from the computer in their bedroom; the adults' responsibility for making youth aware of the possible consequences of sharing personal information online.

2. School policies to respond to the challenge of cyberbullying and implement a range of prevention policies accordingly.

More specifically, it is suggested: an intensified whole school approach that

requires full commitment from all stake holders and focuses on ongoing education for adults in identifying and responding to bullying; schools to include the issue of cyberbullying into the whole school policy, including specific social skills training and more effective disciplinary efforts such as restrictions of usage of mobile phones, email, chat sites and social networking.

3. School programmes are at the core of the suggestions of some literature and they are outlined as frameworks to incorporate the direct teaching of values education, empathy training and the use of stories and drama in the curriculum. Also, according to the literature, direct teaching of 'netiquette' and other classroom and teacher interventions could help to prevent cyberbullying [1].

4. More broadly, social programmes and curriculum programmes are suggested as means to motivate students towards taking action against cyberbullying. Some of the suggested programmes include peer support programmes, buddy programmes teaching values in education, empathy training, teaching of 'netiquette' and other anti-cyberbullying elements integrated into teaching.

5. Adult supervision is also identified as an important prevention strategy that consists of the following guidelines: teachers must be vigilant with students and supervise them when using computers; parents must have a greater role to play in supervision to prevent bullying by technology; parents need to take back the power to control the technology and should pay attention to where the home computer is located; schools could assist in parent education to this end and encourage parents to talk to young people about the technology.

6. More specifically, regarding parental intervention it is suggest the following: parents should set limits and monitor their child's use of computers; it is not recommended that children have computers in their bedrooms; parents should be involved in their children's use of the internet and should avoid neglecting their parenting role in this domain.

Hence, it should be stressed the importance of both family and education/school and points out to the

role that community/authority wide interventions can play in preventing and stopping cyberbullying (e.g. legal issues/rulings) [2,3]. In this respects it becomes apparent how many of the suggested and reported prevention strategies are common or at least similar between traditional bullying and cyberbullying. At the same time, there is cyberbullying specific literature that stresses the need for empowering children and making them the key actors deciding about and implementing prevention strategies through appropriate cyberspace usage and youth's input into relevant psychosocial interventions [4,5].

Apart from the above-mentioned empirically based findings, it should make several recommendations for systematic education about safety strategies, ensuring support from IT specialists for children and adolescents (e.g., tracing harassers, blocking unwanted messages) [6]. These recommendations can be represented into more detailed suggestions, specifically into a list of technical actions that victimized individuals can consider:

1. Contact the mobile phone company when dealing with mobile phone bullying.

2. Contact the ISP of the bully and look on the ISP site for a 'Contact us' e-mail address when cyberbullying occurs by e-mail.

3. Contact the relevant webmaster when cyberbullying takes place online - or go to the host company website and file a complaint through the 'Contact us' e-mail address.

4. Try to identify the cyberbullying if possible (to be able to take further/legal action if needed).

Some studies report that telling a parent about cyberbullying is one of the most popular coping strategies [7]. However, others and our on social research show that seeking support from adults was not popular although it was effective regarding helpfulness [8]. In fact only a very modest percentage of cybervictims and of students that knew about cyberbullying told their parents or adults about it (according to our research only 20 % of teenagers). There are also empirical findings providing evidence that telling a teacher or principal was


relatively effective. Empirical studies found that the percentage of cybervictims that told their teachers about the abuse was minimal [9]. In a focus group study, students reported that they would discuss cyberbullying with their school counsellor. But the truth is they usually do not talk with their parents or other adults, including from school, about cyberbullying.

The fact is that students do have a perception that bullying is ignored or not noticed by school staff for almost half of the time [10]. Some also perceive negatively the prevention strategies carried out by the school and believe that, because cyberbullying occurs *outside* school, teachers cannot do anything. But others believe that, even if it occurred outside school, school authorities should and would deal with cyberbullying. Students aged between 13 and 15 expressed their preference for dealing with problems themselves and the older ones (16-17 years) relied even more on themselves. They used various strategies to be safe on the cyberspace and considered that it was only necessary to involve adults in exceptional circumstances [11].

Although younger students (10-13 years) believed that help from adults was a positive solution they were more favourable to the idea of peer mediation to combat cyberbullying than to an adult intervention. Early adolescent students (13-15 years) also expressed their preference for the peer group, in particular the possibility of discussing cyberbullying with older peers. The older students considered that they had a responsibility to younger peers, in advising them, discussing their cyberbullying experiences and helping them with strategies to combat it [11].

These preliminary results have important implications for the types of strategies used to enhance the approachability of school staff and families to provide appropriate help and support for young people who are being bullied.

References:

1. Campbell, M.A. (2005). Cyber bullying: An old problem in a new guise? *Australian Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 15(1), pp. 68-76.  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1375/ajgc.15.1.68>

2. Smith, P.K., Mahdavi, J., Carvalho, M., Fisher, S., Russell, S., & Tippett, N. (2008). Cyberbullying: Its nature and impact in secondary school pupils. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, Vol. 49(4) <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-7610.2007.01846.x>
3. Willard, N. E. (2007). The authority and responsibility of school officials in responding to cyberbullying. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, Vol. 41(6, Suppl) <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2007.08.013>
4. Ybarra, M.L., & Mitchell, K.J. (2004). Online aggressor/targets, aggressors, and targets: A comparison of associated youth characteristics. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, Vol. 45(7) <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-7610.2004.00328.x>
5. Young, A., Young, A., & Fullwood, H. (2007). Adolescent Online Victimization. *Prevention Researcher*, 14(1), pp. 8-9. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/e591532007-005>
6. Stacey, E. (2009). Research into Cyberbullying: Student Perspectives on Cybersafe Learning Environments. *Informatics in Education-An International Journal*, Vol. 8_1, 115.
7. Smith, P.K., Mahdavi, J., Carvalho, M., Fisher, S., Russell, S., & Tippett, N. (2008). Cyberbullying: Its nature and impact in secondary school pupils. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, Vol. 49(4) <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-7610.2007.01846.x>
8. Price, M., & Dalglish, J. (2010). Cyberbullying: Experiences, Impacts and Coping Strategies as Described by Australian Young People. *Youth Studies Australia*, 29(2), pp. 51-59.
9. Aricak, T., Siyahhan, S., Uzunhasanoglu, A., Saribeyoglu, S., Ciplak, S., Yilmaz, N. et al. (2008). Cyberbullying among Turkish adolescents. *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, Vol. 11(3).
10. Genz, H. (2010). Education, prevention, and intervention of traditional and electronic bullying in middle school. *Dissertation Abstracts International Section A: Humanities and Social Sciences*, 70(12-A), 4537.
11. Stacey, E. (2009). Research into Cyberbullying: Student Perspectives on Cybersafe Learning Environments. *Informatics in Education-An International Journal*, Vol. 8_1, 115

Information about authors:

1. Natalia Dmitrenko - Candidate of Education, Associate Professor, Vinnytsia State Pedagogical University named after M. Kotsyubinskii; address: Ukraine, Vinnytsia city; e-mail: dmitrenko_n@svitonline.com



INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCE AND HIGHER EDUCATION



International Academy of Science and Higher Education (IASHE, London, UK) is a scientific and educational organization that combines sectoral public activities with the implementation of commercial programs designed to promote the development of science and education as well as to create and implement innovations in various spheres of public life.

Activity of the Academy is concentrated on promoting of the scientific creativity and increasing the significance of the global science through consolidation of the international scientific society, implementation of massive innovational scientific-educational projects

While carrying out its core activities the Academy also implements effective programs in other areas of social life, directly related to the dynamics of development of civilized international scientific and educational processes in Europe and in global community.

Issues of the IASHE are distributed across Europe and America, widely presented in catalogues of biggest scientific and public libraries of the United Kingdom.

Scientific digests of the GISAP project are available for acquaintance and purchase via such world famous book-trading resources as amazon.com and bookdepository.co.uk.

www: <http://iashe.eu>

e-mail: office@iashe.eu

phone: +44 (20) 32899949