

A SELECTED REVIEW OF EFFECT OF CYBER BULLYING ON VARIED CORRELATES

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Abstract

The concept of cyber bullying has been new in India; there is a wide scope to explore this area especially it is pertinent to find out the nature of cyber bullies and victims. The present investigation takes into account selected review of literature relatable to the varied correlates of cyber bullying.

Keywords: *Cyber bullying, Correlates, Selected Review*

Introduction

Adolescence, a transitional period between childhood and adulthood is a time of enormous biological, intellectual, and psychological changes. The various bio-psycho-social transitions accompanying adolescence results in the development of new attitudes, behaviors, and ideologies that shape future career options, quality of life, and health. Hormonal upsurge, development of cognitive abilities, increased awareness of sexuality, redefinition of parent—child relationship, identity crisis, struggles for autonomy, and greater orientation towards the peer group during this time increase the growing child's penchant towards embracing lifestyles and behaviors which not only threaten their own well-being, but the health and safety of others.

Historically adolescents have been describes as “trapeze artists”, ‘temporary misfits’ ... individuals who have not yet found their place in life, trapped in developmental ‘no man's land’ between childhood and adulthood. Most youngsters adapt themselves as healthy members of the society without much difficulty, while for a majority of this population it's troublesome to conceptualize a meaning of their life or develop a perspective for future.

Cyber Bullying

Cyber bullying, a term coined by Bill Belsey in 2004, involves the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, hostile and repeated and hostile behavior by an individual or group that is intended to harm others (Belsey, 2004). Bullying is often defined as being an aggressive intentional act or behavior that is carried out by a group or an individual repeatedly and overtime against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself (Olweus, 1994).

According to Oxford Dictionary (2014) cyber bullying is the use of electronic communication to bully a person, typically by sending messages of an intimidating or threatening nature. According to U.S. Legal Definitions (2013), cyber-bullying could be limited to posting rumors or gossips about a

person in the internet bringing about hatred in other's minds; or it may go to the extent of personally identifying victims and publishing materials severely defaming and humiliating them.

Cyber-bullying, a component of cyber-abuse, encompasses online abusive interpersonal behaviors that are overly aggressive in nature (Kowalski et al., 2014). According to Stephenson and Smith (as cited in Patchin and Hinduja, 2006), bullying is a form of social interaction in which a more dominant individual (the bully) exhibits aggressive behavior which is intended to and does, in fact, cause distress to a less dominant individual (the victim). The aggressive behavior may take the form of a direct physical and/or verbal attack or may be indirect as when the bully hides a possession that belongs to the victim or spreads false information about the victim.

Cyber bullying has been conceptualized as harassments where an electronic medium is used to threaten or harm and to inflict humiliation and fear. Many aspects of cyber bullying are similar to those of traditional bullying although there are some important differences.

Victims of cyber bullying are, for example, never left alone since harassments can reach them almost everywhere. Unlike traditional bullying, cyber bullying does not have to be repeated since a single episode can be reposted and forwarded. Electronic communication also allows bullies to remain anonymous and, because of absence of direct reactions from the victim, there is risk of increased cruelty. Furthermore, unwanted contacts and harassments online are often of sexual nature. Cyber bullies often believe that they are anonymous to the victims therefore tend to say more hurtful things to the victims, than they would if they were face to face (Juvonen and Gross, 2008).

Most prevalent form of cyber bullying is making private information public, which includes e-mails, text messages and pictures (Lenhart, 2007). Cyber Bullying is more likely than other forms of bullying to go unreported to parents and school administrators. It is due to victims feeling that they would deal with it independently, having the fear that if their parents would come to know then their internet privilege would be taken away. The victims may feel depressed, develop low self-esteem etc. The victims also feel unable to concentrate on studies resulting in poor grades. It may have some serious consequences also like suicide and violence. Suicide brought on by bullying is referred to as "bullycide" (Marr and Field, 2001).

Recent technological advancements have resulted in the emergence of a novel form of peer victimization among adolescents known as cyber bullying which is neither clearly physical nor verbal. It is multifaceted and is considered to be more psychologically harmful compared with traditional bullying as it is usually conducted anonymously.

The concept of cyber bullying has been new in India; there is a wide scope to explore this area especially it is pertinent to find out the nature of cyber bullies and victims. The present investigation takes into account selected review of literature relatable to the varied correlates of cyber bullying.

Review of Selected Literature

A brief account of some related studies is being provided to understand the nature of cyber bullying and its impact of various facets of adolescents' life.

Li (2005) examined the nature and extent of adolescents' cyber bullying experiences. The results showed that almost 54% of the students were bully victims and over a quarter of them had been cyber-bullied. More than half of the students knew someone being cyber-bullied. Over 40% cyber bully victims had no ideas who cyber-bullied them. Further, there was a close tie among bullies, cyber bullies, and cyber bully victims. Stomfay-Stitz and Wheeler (2007) focused on middle school girls. Cyber bullying has emerged as a new, insidious, and harmful way of getting back at an individual girl who may be "different" or disliked for a physical or social trait. This column proposed that an ongoing discussion should take place about how cyber bullying violates all the principles of the Peaceable School and Classroom, causing great emotional damage. Consequences for incidents of cyber bullying should be set and acted on by the school administrators. At an appropriate time, a Peer Mediation model should be initiated to settle the more difficult student conflicts.

Beebe (2010) examined the impact of cyber bullying on academic, social, and emotional college adjustment. The findings highlighted the need for universities to address cyber bullying by implementing education and awareness-based programs. Proactive steps to decrease opportunities for cyber bullying victimization by developing and enforcing policies, and implementing consequences for individuals who perpetrate cyber bullying victimization. Hay and Meldrum (2010) revealed that both types of bullying (traditional bullying and cyber bullying) were positively related to self-harm and suicidal ideation, net of controls. Moreover, those relationships were partially mediated by the negative emotions experienced by those who are bullied and partially moderated by features of the adolescent's social environment and self. Regarding the latter, exposure to authoritative parenting and high self-control diminished the harmful effects of bullying victimization on self-harm and suicidal ideation. Patchin and Hinduja (2010) examined the relationship between middle school students' experience with cyber bullying and their level of self-esteem. This work found that students who experienced cyber bullying, both as a victim and an offender, had significantly lower self-esteem than those who had little or no experience with cyber bullying. A moderate and statistically significant relationship was reported between low self-esteem and experiences with cyber bullying.

Carter (2011) examined the impact of cyber bullying on adolescents' physical (e.g., headache, stomachache, etc.) and psychosocial (e.g., self-esteem, depression, post traumatic stress syndrome, etc.) outcomes. Individuals who experience repeated traditional bullying were at increased risk for experiencing repeated incidents of cyber bullying. It was revealed that adolescents from urban and suburban areas were similar in their views of what constitutes cyber bullying and the emotions that are associated with cyber bullying. Adolescents were more likely to view cyber bullying activities more seriously if they are

closely attached to their peers and parents. The results also revealed that adolescents may be less likely to report cyber bullying incidents. Physical and mental health did not appear to be problematic for these students. Campbell et al. (2012) sought to compare victims' perceptions of the harshness and impact of bullying by traditional and cyber means. The major findings showed that although students who had been victimized by traditional bullying reported that they felt their bullying was harsher and crueler and had more impact on their lives than those students who had been cyber bullied, the correlates of their mental health revealed that cyber victims reported significantly more social difficulties, and higher levels of anxiety and depression than traditional victims. Jose et al. (2012) investigated the stabilities of and interrelationships among traditional (i.e., face-to-face) bullying, traditional victimhood, cyber bullying, and cyber victimhood among adolescents over time. The results of the study indicated that all four dynamics were moderately stable over time. The following variables were found to bidirectionally reinforce and predict each other over time: traditional bullying and traditional victimization; traditional bullying and cyber bullying; and traditional victimization and cyber victimization. These results indicate that bullying and victimhood in both face-to-face and cyber-based interactions are related but not identical interpersonal dynamics.

Kowalski et al. (2012) found that the relationship between traditional perpetration and victimization was stronger for females than males as was the effect of traditional victimization on cyber-victimization. Ortega et al. (2012) analyzed the emotional consequences of cyber bullying for victims. It examined the relationship between background variables (age and gender), victimization variables (duration of aggression and victim role, victim vs. bully/victim), individual variables (peer self-esteem, perceived support of parents and friends, and coping strategies used) and the different profiles of emotional consequences. Results suggested that the emotional impact of cyber bullying on the victim depends on some individual variables but also on the type of cyber bullying. Piotrowski (2012) examined the scope and extent of research interest on the topic in scholarly publications. It was highlighted that on a reference citation analysis of the database PsycINFO, using the term cyber bullying in a keyword search, the major foci of the research involved the issues of intervention or treatment, profile of offenders, comparisons to traditional bullying, legal implications, risk factors, social dynamics, gender, prevalence, and measurement issues. Lindfors et al. (2012) examined exposure to cyber bullying, its frequency and perceived seriousness among 12 to 18-year-old adolescents in Finland. They studied four dimensions of cyber bullying: being a victim, bully, or both victim and bully of cyber bullying, and witnessing the cyber bullying of friends. It was concluded that adolescents are commonly exposed to cyber bullying, but it was rarely frequent or considered serious or disruptive. Cyber bullying exposure differed between sexes, such that girls more often than boys witness cyber bullying of friends and boys more often act as the bully than girls. Wang et al. (2012) examined patterns of engagement in cyber bullying and four types of traditional bullying using latent class analysis

(LCA). Results suggested that most cyber bullies belong to a group of highly aggressive adolescents who conduct all types of bullying.

Annerbäck et al. (2013) analyzed background factors for bullying and associations between bullying victimization and health problems. The study concluded that bullying is a serious public health problem among young people and healthcare professionals have an important task in identifying exposed children. Children who were "different" were more exposed to bullying, which implied that school personnel, parents, and other adults in these children's social networks can play an important role in paying attention to and preventing the risk of bullying. Baas et al. (2013) explored children's perspectives on the problem of cyber bullying. The research revealed several ambiguities that should be addressed in interventions against cyber bullying. First, it appears difficult for all parties involved to distinguish cyber bullying from innocent pranks. Frequency and intention are key variables, but these are ambiguous in the context of cyber bullying. Second, cyber bullies may have very different motives, not all of which have to do with their relationship with the victim. Third, the expectations children have of the way their parents or teachers will react to incidents of cyber bullying are an obstacle for seeking help. Children are particularly afraid of overreaction and the subsequent loss of their Internet privileges.

Brito and Oliveira (2013) performed a situational analysis of bullying and self-esteem in municipal school units, by estimating the prevalence of bullying, according to gender, age, and role in bullying situations; and to identify the level of self-esteem of students by gender and role in bullying situations and correlate with the involvement in bullying situations. The findings indicated a large number of students involved in the several roles of bullying, identifying an association between these characteristics and sex/gender and self-esteem of those involved. Kowalski and Limber (2013) examined the relationship between children's and adolescents' experiences with cyber bullying and traditional bullying and psychological health, physical health, and academic performance. Those in the bully/victim groups (and particularly the cyber bully/victim group) had the most negative scores on most measures of psychological health, physical, health, and academic performance. There appears to be a substantial, although not perfect, overlap between involvement in traditional bullying and cyber bullying. Additionally, the physical, psychological, and academic correlates of the two types of bullying resembled one another.

Låftman et al. (2013) investigated the prevalence of cyber bullying among students in Stockholm, Sweden; the overlap between cyber bullying and traditional forms of school bullying, and the association between the experience of cyber bullying and subjective health. It was found that many students who were involved in cyber bullying were not involved in traditional bullying. Litwiller and Brausch (2013) examined the relationship between victimization from both physical and cyber bullying and adolescent suicidal behavior. The findings showed that both physical bullying and cyber bullying associated with substance use, violent behavior, unsafe sexual behavior, and suicidal behavior.

Price et al. (2013) studied to gain a better understanding of cyber bullying by examining its prevalence, its relationship with traditional bullying, and the relationship between bullying, anxiety, and depression in a sample of rural and ethnoracially diverse youth. Results suggested that while cyber bullying does occur in rural communities, it often co-occurs with traditional bullying. Additionally, a novel cyber bullying measure was developed and utilized, and information regarding its reliability and validity is included. Wright and Li (2013) indicated that both peer rejection and cyber victimization were related to peer-nominated and self-reported cyber aggression, both relational and verbal, after controlling for gender and cyber aggression. Albdour and Krouse (2014) reviewed the current literature on bullying and victimization among African American adolescents. It highlighted bullying and violence disparity among African American adolescents, associated risk and protective factors, and effects of bullying on adolescent health. This review found strong associations among bullying involvement, substance abuse, and family factors. Bullying also had a significant impact on adolescent health, particularly psychological symptoms and school performance.

Ang et al. (2014) examined cyberbullying among adolescents across United States and Singapore samples. Specifically, the purpose of the investigation was to study the differential associations between proactive and reactive aggression, and cyberbullying across two cultures. The findings showed proactive aggression to be positively associated with cyberbullying, after controlling for reactive aggression, across both samples. Likewise, as hypothesized, reactive aggression and cyberbullying was not found to be significant after controlling for proactive aggression across both samples. Dredge et al. (2014) examined adolescent victims' understanding of cyber bullying, the specific types of cyber bullying events experienced in social networking sites and the impact of these events. Results showed that the basic criteria for the definition of cyber bullying published in previous research were either not referenced by participants, or they were more complex than initially anticipated. The most referenced criterion was the extent to which the experience had an impact on the victim, which is not a current definitional criterion. It was also found that 68% of victims reported experiencing a combined emotional, social and behavioural impact for each cyber bullying experience, and 12% reported no impact at all. Kowalski et al. (2014) provided a critical review of the existing cyber bullying research. Results from a meta-analytic review were presented to highlight the size of the relationships between cyber bullying and traditional bullying, as well as relationships between cyber bullying and other meaningful behavioral and psychological variables. Mixed effects meta-analysis results indicate that among the strongest associations with cyber bullying perpetration were normative beliefs about aggression and moral disengagement, and the strongest associations with cyber bullying victimization were stress and suicidal ideation.

Malhi et al. (2014) examined the prevalence of school bullying and investigated the behavioral, emotional, socio-economic and demographic correlates of bullying behaviors among Indian school going adolescents. Bully-

victims had a higher risk for conduct problems and hyperactivity and were the most likely to have academic difficulties. Bullies had relatively better school grades and high self esteem but had higher risk for hyperactivity and conduct problems as compared to controls. Bullying and victimization was widespread among the Indian school going youth. Rienke et al. (2014) examined whether traditional and cyber bullying victimization was associated with adolescent's mental health problems and suicidal ideation at two-year follow-up. Gender differences were explored to determine whether bullying affects boys and girls differently. No significant interaction between gender and traditional or cyber bullying victimization on suicidal ideation was found. Traditional bullying victimization was associated with suicidal ideation, whereas cyber bullying victimization was not associated with suicidal ideation after controlling for baseline suicidal ideation. Traditional bullying victimization was associated with an increased risk of suicidal ideation, whereas traditional, as well as cyber bullying victimization is associated with an increased risk of mental health problems among girls. Shireen et al. (2014) studied the association between suicide and bullying among teenagers and adolescents in school besides exploring strategies to prevent acts of bullying. It was found that the risk of suicide attempts was higher in girls, who were involved in bullying, either as the victim or perpetrator, than in boys. Involvement in bullying increases the likelihood of suicidal ideation and attempts in children and teenagers.

Conclusions

It can therefore be concluded that varied studies are conducted in an arena of bullying especially cyber bullying with respect to number of variables viz academic, social, and emotional adjustment; self-harm; suicidal ideation; self-esteem; physical and psychosocial (e.g., self-esteem, depression, post traumatic stress syndrome, etc.) outcomes. The adolescents have remained the main target sample of these studies. Further comparative account of traditional bullying as well as cyber bullying has remained focus of attention for a multitude of studies. The characteristics of bullies and victims of traditional and cyber bullying were also highlighted in some studies. The role of parents and schools is also elucidated as educational implications in the selected literature cited in the present study.

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